

Faculty Education Committee (FEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

Wednesday 22 February 2017

13:00 – 15:00

Skempton Building, Room 064a

Confirmed minutes

Meeting #4

1 Welcome and Apologies

Present

Prof Alan Spivey (ACS)	vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair), Chemistry
Dr Huw Williams (HW)	DUGS, Life Sciences
Prof David Evans (DE)	DUGS, Mathematics
Prof Jing Zhang	Senior Tutor, Department of Physics
Prof Stefan Maier (SM)	PGT Representative, Physics
Dr James Wilton-Ely (JWE)	PGT Representative, Chemistry
Dr Niki Gounaris (NG)	PGT Representative, Life Sciences
Mr Luke McCrone (LM)	Deputy President (Education), IC Student Union
Ms Moira Sarsfield (MS)	Senior Learning Technologist, FoNS
Prof John Seddon (JS)	College Consul, Chemistry
Dr Felicitas Starr-Egger (FSE)	CLCC representation
Mr Stefan Hoyle (SH)	Faculty Safety Representative
Mr Will Bennett (WB)	Information and Communication Technologies
Mr Dan Smith (DS)	Registry Representative, Registry Office
Mrs Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Coordinator, FoNS

Apologies

Dr Erik van Sebille (ES)	Grantham Institute Representative
Prof Martin Siegert (MJS)	Grantham Institute Representative
Mr Ahmed Shamso (AS)	GSU President
Prof Emma McCoy	Department of Mathematics
Dr Bridge Duncombe (BD)	DUGS, Chemistry
Dr Robert Forsyth (RF)	DUGS, Physics
Dr Nick Voulvoulis (NV)	CEP Representative, CEP
Ms Sinziana Giju (SG)	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Prof Lesley Cohen (LC)	College Consul, Physics
Ms Kate Ippolito (KI)	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Mr James Balloch (JB)	Registry Representative
Ms Nazia Hirjee (NH)	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS

In attendance

Miss Kasia Kmiecowskiak (KK)	Administrative Assistant, FoNS
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2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Wednesday 12th October 2016 [**NSEC.2016.70**] and the Committee Action Tracker [**NSEC.2016.71**]. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated.

3 Matters arising from the Minutes

Action 14 - RM presented the list of FoNS representation on the Senate and QAEC during 2016/17, obtained from the Academic Governance webpages. It was noted that Prof Jordan Nash will step down from his role as FoNS HoD Representative on Senate when he steps down as HoD.

Action 16 - RM reported that the Week Zero Working Group had been established by Jane Neary (Director of Campus Services). The list of members was presented. RM noted that she

had provided Jane Neary with a list of volunteers from Departments who would have liked to be involved in Week Zero discussions. However, none of them had been invited to the membership of Week Zero Working Group. It was agreed that that RM would discuss this with the Working Group. She will also request a document outlining the process of week zero implementation. It was noted that it had not been decided yet, whether the week zero will definitely be introduced.

ACTION: RM to discuss with the Week Zero Working Group the issue of not including FoNS Department Representatives on the Week Zero Working Group membership and request a document outlining the process of week zero implementation.

Action 19 – ACS reported that BD had a meeting with Dr Edgar Meyer to discuss details of the change in the assessment weighting for the two Joint Honours modules (*Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship*). BD had been satisfied with the justification provided. ACS added that Dr Edgar Meyer had been provided with the Faculty's Good Practice Guide on Group Work.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

4 New Programme Proposals

4.1 MRes in Modern Molecular Synthesis [NSEC.2016.72.01]

The committee considered an initial outline proposal from the Department of Chemistry to develop the above new course. JWE outlined the rationale for developing the course. The course is envisaged to commence in the academic year 2018/19. The committee supported this initial proposal and will wait to receive the formal documentation.

5 Modifications to Existing Programmes and Changes to Schemes for Award of Honours

5.1 Advanced Bacterial and Eukaryotic Cell Biology [NSEC.2016.73.01]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Life Sciences to develop a new module titled: *Advanced Bacterial and Eukaryotic Cell Biology* as an elective, to be introduced in the 2017/18 academic year.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposal.

5.2 Vertebrate Form and Evolution [NSEC.2016.73.02]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Life Sciences to develop a new module titled: *Vertebrate Form and Evolution* as an elective, to be introduced in the 2017/18 academic year.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposal.

6 Programme Suspensions and Withdrawals [NSEC.2016.74]

The committee considered a recommendation from Department of Life Sciences, to suspend an existing module titled: *Epidemiology LS3-EPI* (part of programmes: Biology/Microbiology/ Ecology and Environmental Biology) from the 2017/18 academic year. HW outlined the rationale for suspending the module. He added that the staff in the Faculty of Medicine who run this course had supported the proposal. HW noted that it is not envisaged to re-introduce this course in the near future, hence DS suggested withdrawing it. HW agreed with this suggestion.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported this recommendation.

7 Exchange Partnerships

7.1 The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Chemistry to renew the following student exchange partnerships with:

- Ecole Polytechnique [NSEC.2016.75.01]
- Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris [NSEC.2016.75.02]
- University of Erlangen: [NSEC.2016.75.03]
- EPF Lausanne [NSEC.2016.75.04]
- ETH Zurich [NSEC.2016.75.05]

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposals.

7.2 The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics to renew the following Erasmus student exchange partnerships with:

- Universite de Paris Orsay [**NSEC.2016.76.01**]
- University of Heidelberg [**NSEC.2016.76.02**]
- EPF Lausanne [**NSEC.2016.76.03**]

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposals.

Prof Zhang, reported that it had been decided to terminate the agreements with Trento, Erlangen and Madrid. The latter two had zero outgoing over the last four years and Madrid only three. He added that the Department of Physics would consider renewing these partnerships if the demand from Imperial students were to increase in the future. He added that the above partners provide sufficient capacity for the anticipated demand over the next few years.

7.3 The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Life Sciences to renew the following student exchange partnerships with:

- ENS Lyon [**NSEC.2016.77.01**]
- Montpellier [**NSEC.2016.77.02**]
- Universite de Paris Orsay [**NSEC.2016.77.03**]
- University of Heidelberg [**NSEC.2016.77.04**]
- Universidad Autonoma Madrid [**NSEC.2016.77.05**]
- ETH Zurich [**NSEC.2016.77.06**]
- University of Strasbourg [**NSEC.2016.77.07**]

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposals.

8 Surveys

8.1 UG SOLE Lecturer/Module Autumn Results [NSEC.2016.78]

The committee considered the results from the UG SOLE Lecturer/Module Autumn 2016 survey. It was noted that satisfaction increased across all departments whereas the survey participation rates dropped in comparison to 2015. There was only a slight participation increase in the Department of Life Sciences.

It was suggested that staff should inform students about any changes that had been made as a result of feedback. LM agreed with this and added that communicating with students about such change at the start of the course would be beneficial to students.

8.2 PG SOLE Lecturer/Module Autumn Results [NSEC.2016.79]

The committee considered the results from the PG SOLE Lecturer/Module Autumn 2016 survey. It was noted that satisfaction rates remained similar across all departments in comparison to 2015, whereas the survey participation increased in the Departments of Mathematics, Chemistry and Life Sciences in comparison to 2015. There was only a slight participation drop in the Department of Physics.

NG noted that not all questions in the PG SOLE survey are relevant to MRes students, hence they are more likely to complete the PTES questionnaire, for example.

9 External Examiner Appointments

9.1 Summary of External Examiner Reports for UG Programmes [NSEC.2016.80]

The committee considered a summary of external examiners reports for UG programmes from 2015/16. ACS drew committees' attention to the '*Over-arching theme*' section. It was noted that there is currently no formal mechanism in place ensuring that the College responds to issues raised by External Examiners which lie outside the control of departments e.g. College Policy on Year Weightings. In response to that, DS said that he will discuss it further with Richard Monk.

ACTION: DS to discuss with Richard Monk a possibility of introducing a system which would ensure that the College responds to issues raised by External Examiners which lie outside the control of departments e.g. College Policy on Year Weightings.

9.2 List of Outstanding External Examiner Appointments for 2016/17 [NSEC.2016.81]

The committee noted a list of outstanding external examiner appointments for 2016/17. It was noted that CEP had a number of outstanding appointments and that RM would follow these up with NV who was not present at the meeting.

ACTION: RM to follow up the list of Outstanding External Examiner Appointments with NV.

HW reported that the Department of Life Sciences used to have 4 external examiners in the past, but they have currently only three which is sufficient. DS will seek an approval from Richard Monk regarding this matter.

ACTION: DS to seek an approval from Richard Monk regarding the reduced number of external examiners in the Department of Life Sciences.

9.3 List of Outstanding PGT External Examiner Reports for 2015/16 [NSEC.2016.82]

The committee noted a list of outstanding external examiner reports for 2015/16. RM will follow up the list of Outstanding PGT External Examiner Reports with NV in order to obtain reports from the examiners concerned.

ACTION: RM to follow up the list of Outstanding PGT External Examiner Reports with NV in order to obtain reports from the examiners concerned.

NG reported that the Department of Life Sciences has two external examiners in total and one of them had been recently replaced.

JWE reported that the two Outstanding PGT External Examiner Reports, listed as missing, had been submitted by the course director. He will investigate further to ensure the reports reach the Registry. DPS were requested to obtain any missing PGT External Examiner Reports and send them to the Registry.

ACTION: DPS to obtain missing PGT External Examiner Reports and send them to the Registry.

10 UG Annual Monitoring Reports [NSEC.2016.83]

The committee considered the Annual Monitoring Reports from 2016/17 and asked if summary data could be collated in the future. DS will feedback this request to the Registry.

ACTION: DS to investigate whether a summary of the UG Annual Monitoring Reports could be compiled by the Registry.

11 Standing items

11.1 Safety – verbal update (SH)

SH reported the following H&S activities:

- Teaching labs – there had been 17 incidents associated with Teaching labs since last meeting. All but one from Chemistry, 4 were near misses. Other Departments had been requested to remind those leading practical's, graduate assistants and technicians to encourage reporting of incidents in the teaching labs.
- Chemistry – H&S team had been working on producing standard SOPs for practical's related to synthetic chemistry as part of a bigger project to revise SOPs in the Department. Aim is to have all the basic SOPs in place and use this as a 'passport to practice' associated with a Blackboard MCQ test when UGs go into labs for research projects.
- Safety Information for PIs – SH reminded Departments to send Safety Information for PIs out when students go to labs to carry out projects (Masters and UGs).

- Safe Lab Practice session for Life Sciences UGs project students will take place on Monday 27th. If other Departments would like this session to be provided for groups of UGs entering research labs, they should contact SH to arrange suitable dates.
- Fieldwork Risk Assessment Workshop had been arranged for Masters courses in the Department of Life Sciences and CEP. Also Fieldwork First Aid courses had been set up for those who are involved in fieldwork.
- Planning for Practical Fire Safety training – Discussions have been taking place with Learning and Development Centre regarding arrangements for safety training in the autumn term. Aim is to provide Practical Fire Safety training sessions for PhDs working in labs for specific Faculties. An online booking system will be made available for individuals to book the sessions they can attend during October. Aim is to review all safety course provision so that it is loaded towards the autumn term to accommodate the PhD students.
- Safety training via Panopto – SH noted that although this is a possibility the sessions tend to be 'one off' and the basic Safe Lab Practice course does not have an associated test. Therefore, to ensure engagement the committee felt it was appropriate that safety training was done on a face to face basis.

11.2 **LTDP – verbal update (RM)**

RM reported that:

- She had received a few queries direct from participants due to complete probation, or via departments regarding LTDP completion. She noted that weekly newsletters are being sent to staff therefore all those who are required to complete the course should be aware of the full requirements.
- There is a plan to develop a refresher LTDP. She had presented a proposal of such programme at the recent Faculty Management Committee meeting. Its members had suggested that the refresher course should be made available to all staff, not only to those who need extra support. RM noted that this course would not be compulsory and would be tailored to individuals' needs. The aim is to run these workshops from the academic year 2017/18.
- RM also noted that nominations for FoNS Annual Prizes for Excellence are currently open and will close on 10th of March. The prize giving event will take place in June 2016.

11.3 **Learning Technology Matters – verbal update (MS)**

MS reported that:

- John Conway, FoNS Senior Learning Technologist, had left the College.
- The Learning Technology team had recently been joined by a new Learning Technologist, Arthur Wadsworth. The team now provides support across the whole faculty, and can be contacted using the email address FoNS Learning Technology Team (fonslt@imperial.ac.uk).
- An E-learning Services Review is currently underway to review whether the current provision meets current needs in terms of functionality and service and to identify the short and longer term actions necessary to ensure the systems continue to meet the needs of the College.
- Students at Silwood had reported an issue with course documents not being made available via Blackboard. In some cases, materials had been made available only on Facebook. ACS and MS strongly recommended using Blackboard as a primary source for all course materials. Other platforms such as Facebook, which are not managed by College, should be only used as an additional source, because of the lack of management information available and with acknowledgement that not all students are able to/ wish to access social media.
- Students have raised issues with the set-up of Blackboard courses and accessing Blackboard via mobile apps. UG Student Representatives will be asked to gather feedback from students within their Department on Blackboard, Starfish and the potential for the use of mobile apps for both packages. The outcomes will be presented at the next UG Student Staff Committee meeting on 13th of March.
- There are serious ongoing reliability problems with Blackboard. Action is being taken by ICT to address these

11.4 **FOO – verbal update (NH)**

FOO not present.

- 11.5 Registry - verbal update (DS)**
No issues were reported.

ITEMS TO NOTE

12 Minutes of the Previous Meetings of the NSEC Sub-Committees

The committee noted the minutes from:

- UG Sub-meeting on 28th Sept 2016 [**NSEC.2016.84.01**]
- UG Sub-meeting on 2nd Nov 2016 [**NSEC.2016.84.02**]
- UG Sub-meeting on 7th Dec 2016 [**NSEC.2016.84.03**]
- UG Sub-meeting on 25th Jan 2017 [**NSEC.2016.84.04**] – unconfirmed
- Masters Sub-meeting 23rd Nov 2016 [**NSEC.2016.84.05**] – unconfirmed

13 *Chair's Report

The committee noted the following actions taken by the Chair on behalf of the committee:

- **MRes Molecular and Cellular Biosciences entry requirements**

The entry requirements for this course had been amended from:

"2.1 Honours degree and a commitment to a career in biosciences research"

to:

"2.1 Honours degree in a biosciences-based subject from a UK academic institution or an equivalent overseas qualification"

ACS had approved this change on behalf of the committee.

- **MSc in Mathematics and Finance - a request from a student for approval for a further deferral of examinations**

The student in question had failed four papers on his MSc in Mathematics and Finance in Summer 2015. He had been granted full credit (FC) re-sits for all four papers on the basis of mitigating circumstances. Two of these papers had re-sit papers in January 2016 and two had re-sit papers in May 2016. This had been followed by a multiple requests for further deferrals of examinations. The latest request for re-sit had been made for January/May 2018 on the basis of January exam clashing with some accounting tuition sessions. This had been clearly unrelated to the original mitigating circumstances. Therefore, there had been no legitimate reasons to further defer the exams for another year. It had been also noted that the Imperial exam dates in January 2017 had not clashed with the accounting exams, only with some tuition sessions leading up to those exams.

Therefore, ACS could not approve further deferral of the exams for the student. This outcome had been communicated in writing to the student by the Department. The student had accepted the decision.

14 Vice Provosts Advisory Group (Education) (VPAGE) Minutes [NSEC.2016.85]

The committee noted the VPAGE minutes from the 3rd November 2016 and 19th December 2016 meetings.

15 Dispensation from Anonymity at Exam Boards [NSEC.2016.86.01]

The committee noted a report of Master's programmes who applied for dispensation from anonymity at Exam Boards and the outcomes (MSc Statistics has been extended for another two years).

15.1 Dispensation from Anonymity at Exam Boards for MSc in Statistics [NSEC.2016.86.02]

The committee noted approval of extension of Dispensation from Anonymity at Exam Boards for MSc in Statistics Programme, Department of Mathematics, for another two years.

16 List of Outstanding External Examiner Appointment Due to Expire [NSEC.2016.87]

The committee noted a list of external examiner appointments due to expire at the end of 2016/17.

17 Senate Minutes

The committee noted the latest Senate minutes.

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18 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) Summary Report for Senate

The committee noted the latest summary report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

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19 FEC Reports

The committee noted the latest reports from the other FECs as reported to the last QAEC.

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**20 Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)
[NSEC.2016.88]**

The committee noted the latest minutes from the Graduate School's Postgraduate Professional Development Committee

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21 Special Cases Report [NSEC.2016.89]

The committee noted the latest special cases report for admission (anonymised).

22 Any other business

23 Dates of Future Meetings

- Wednesday, 5th April 13.00 – 15.00, Skemp 060B, Skempton Building
 - Wednesday, 27th September 12.00-14.00, Billard Room, 58 Prince's Gate
 - Wednesday, 29th November 12.00-14.00, Council Room, 170 Queen's Gate
 - Wednesday, 28th February 12.00-14.00, Council Room, 170 Queen's Gate
 - Wednesday, 18th April 12.00-14.00, Council Room, 170 Queen's Gate
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