

Faculty Education Committee (NSEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

Date: Wednesday 17 February 2016

Confirmed Minutes

Meeting #1

Present

Prof Alan Spivey (ACS)	vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair), Chemistry
Dr Bridge Duncombe (BD)	DUGS, Chemistry
Dr Huw Williams (HW)	DUGS, Life Sciences
Prof Anne Dell (AD)	DUGS, Life Sciences
Prof David Evans (DE)	DUGS, Mathematics
Dr Robert Forsyth (RF)	DUGS, Physics
Dr James Wilton-Ely (JWE)	PGT Representative, Chemistry
Dr Niki Gounaris (NG)	PGT Representative, Life Sciences
Prof Alexei Skorobogatov (AS)	PGT Representative, Maths
Dr Nick Voulvoulis (NV)	CEP Representative, CEP
Mr Chun-Yin San (CYS)	Deputy President (Education), IC Student Union
Ms Moira Sarsfield (MS)	Senior Learning Technologist, FoNS
Prof John Seddon (JS)	College Consul, Chemistry
Prof Richard Thompson (RT)	College Consul, Physics
Ms Kate Ippolito (KI)	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Ms Nazia Hirjee (NH)	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS
Mr Dan Smith (DS)	Registry Representative, Registry Office
Mrs Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Coordinator, FoNS

Apologies

Prof Stefan Maier (SM)	PGT Representative, Physics
Dr Mirabelle Muuls (MM)	Grantham Institute Representative
Prof Martin Siegert (MJS)	Grantham Institute Representative
Mr John Conway (JC)	Senior Learning Technologist, FoNS

In attendance

Mrs Judith Webster	Head of Academic Services
Miss Kasia Kmiecowski (KK)	Administrative Assistant, FoNS

1 Welcome and Apologies

The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as above, were noted.

2 Presentation by David Lefevre (BS) on the development of EdX courses in the Business School

Dr David Lefevre, the Director of the Educational Technology Unit within the Business School, gave a presentation on the EdX learning platform currently used by the Business School. A 3 year contract has been signed between the College and EdX to produce 12 courses. The goal of the project is to deliver high quality educational courses, using innovative teaching and providing interactive materials. A secondary benefit is the potential marketing publicity that this should also generate for the Business School. The aim is not to make any direct financial profit, hence there are no course fees.

Currently, pre-MBA courses in areas such as maths, accounting and finance using the platform are being developed by the Business School. It is intended that in the future, the platform will be used to deliver some of the core Business School curriculum.

In terms of time and work spent on producing the courses and course length, it was noted that:

- It takes approximately 5 months to build one course
- The academic staff member typically spends approximately 30 hours to create one course
- Additional support is provided by the Technology team consisting of 14 people
- The on-line support is conducted mainly by PhD students so there is no need for senior staff input.
- Each course runs 3 times per year
- The length of the course is 5 weeks with 10 teaching hours per week.

Dr Lefevre confirmed that he and his team would be happy to share their expertise and experience in this area and would encouraged other faculties/ departments to consider using EdX to produce courses.

ACTION: ACS and RM to follow up with DUGSs re-the prospects of developing School-Uni Transitional/pre-sessional materials via this platform.

3 Terms of Reference and Membership 2015/16 [NSEC.2015.01]

The group noted the terms of reference and membership.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Wednesday 11th November 2015 [NSEC.2015.02] and the Committee Action Tracker [NSEC.2015.03]. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated. It was agreed to create a new action tracker document for all the actions raised at the NSEC.

ACTION: KK to create a new action tracker document for all the actions raised at the NSEC.

5 Matters arising from the Minutes

Dean's List – ACS updated the committee that the Dean's List proposal had been modified following discussions with the ICU such that the designation would appear on relevant transcripts along with Year Total marks, but that ranking positions would be held departmentally. This proposal will be discussed at the next QAEC and then hopefully pass to Senate for final approval for start June 2016.

Members discussed the possibility of reducing the volume of papers submitted for consideration at the NSEC. This mainly relates to the paperwork for new programme proposals and modifications to existing programmes. It was agreed that for modifications to existing programmes only the top-level summaries of the changes will appear as part of the core papers circulated to the committee and that the full details (e.g. course handbooks etc.) will be placed in a Supporting papers file which will also be circulated but only expected to be consulted as required. Similarly, for new course proposals, only the 'new course proposal form' will be part of the core papers, all other supporting documentation will be in the Supporting papers file. Moreover, all papers – both core and supporting - will be saved/available/archived on the committee SharePoint site.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6 New Programme Proposals

6.1 MSc in Quantum Engineering [1+3] [NSEC.2015.04]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics to develop an MSc in Quantum Engineering [1+3].

Prof Myungshik Kim, on behalf of the Department of Physics, presented the proposal and noted the multi-level interdisciplinary training and research in the field of quantum engineering which the course aims to deliver. It would run for one year and compose of

core and optional lecture courses as well as full time project work. After successful completion, students would be eligible to apply for the PhD course. The planned start date is 1st October 2016, provided that the department receives final confirmation of funding from the EPSRC. As time is pressing, this course, if approved, would need to be advertised very soon to ensure the minimum number of registered students.

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

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

7.1 Second Year Biochemistry and Biotechnology, Life Sciences [NSEC.2015.05]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Life Sciences for major modifications to Biochemistry/Biotechnology curriculum in the 2nd Year.

AD and HW, on behalf of the Department of Life Sciences, presented the proposal, the rationale for which is outlined in Paper [NSEC.2015.05.03](#). The details of the proposal are as follows:

1. Reduction of module weightings for Genes & Genomics, Integrative Cell Biology, Macromolecular Structure & Function 1, and Macromolecular Structure & Function 2 from 22.5% each to 16.7% each
2. Change of names of Macromolecular Structure & Function 1 and Macromolecular Structure & Function 2 to Fundamentals of Molecular Biochemistry and Protein Science.
3. Introduction of three optional courses to be scheduled in the summer term entitled:
Topics in Biotechnology
Challenges in Cell Biology
Applied Molecular Biochemistry
(11.7% weighting).
4. Introduction of a Tutored Dissertation to run throughout the spring term with hand-in early in the summer term (11.7% weighting).

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

8 Additional Entry Criteria

No proposals to amend additional entry criteria have been received.

9 Exchange Partnerships

No proposals to develop an exchange partnership have been received.

10 Survey Results

10.1 Undergraduate SOLE Survey Results [NSEC.2015.06]

The committee considered the results of the undergraduate autumn term 2015 SOLE survey.

It was noted that survey participation rates had dropped across most the College. The Mathematics Department had achieved the highest participation rate across FoNS, which might be attributed to the fact that they offer £5 printing credit for each student who completes the questionnaire.

It was noted that student satisfaction relating to the feedback on work submitted has increased over the last 3 years. This is encouraging and hopefully is due to the various systems that have been introduced in departments to encourage academics to provide informative and constructive feedback in a timely fashion.

10.2 Postgraduate SOLE Survey Results [NSEC.2015.07]

The committee considered the results of the postgraduate autumn term 2015 SOLE survey.

It was noted that survey participation rates were low. NG explained that MRes students in Life Sciences were asked to participate in separate surveys and may have been advised that it was not compulsory for them to complete the PG SOLE Survey. In addition, 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.

The committee queried the progress of the Surveys Working Party. RM/ACS will investigate

ACTION: RM to investigate the progress of the Surveys Working Party.

11 Accreditation Reports

No accreditation reports have been received.

12 External Examiner Appointments and Reports

12.1 Outstanding External Examiner Appointments 2015/16 [NSEC.2015.08]

The committee noted a list of outstanding external examiner appointments for the academic year 2015/16.

12.2 Outstanding External Examiner Reports 2014/15 [NSEC.2015.09]

The committee considered a list of outstanding external examiner reports for the academic year 2014/15.

13 Standing items

13.1 Safety – verbal update (SH)

There were no issues to report due to SH absence.

13.2 LTDP – verbal update (RM) and Exemption Forms [NSEC.2015.10]

RM reported that:

- 6 staff members had completed their LTDP in the last 2 months. They had been asked to provide their feedback on the LTDP process as a whole and the comments received had been positive.
- The first two issues of the online LTDP Newsletter had been published. The aim of the newsletter is to keep participants engaged, to share information and highlight case studies of good teaching practice.
- Following feedback from students relating to quality of teaching via the NSS and Student Focus Groups, Student Representatives have been invited to participate in LTDP Workshop 4. The next workshop takes place on 2nd March, but only one student representative has responded. CYS will contact student representatives and encourage their participation.

ACTION: CYS to contact student representatives and encourage their participation in LTDP Workshop 4.

The committee reviewed and approved the LTDP Exemption Forms for:

- Prof David Evans (Department of Mathematics)
- Dr James Martin (Department of Mathematics)
- Dr Johannes Nicaise (Department of Mathematics)
- Dr Travis Schedler (Department of Mathematics)
- Dr Claude Warnick (Department of Mathematics)

13.3 Learning Technology Matters (JC, MS)

Panopto

MS informed the committee that recorded material had been transferred from the Imperial server to cloud storage, but noted that there are still some issues with accessing

migrated material as permissions and other changes had not yet been reflected in the cloud. MS also noted that since the move to the Panopto hosted service, the recording process seems to be working more effectively.

MS confirmed that she and JC would be meeting with the members of staff for whom reports on Panopto usage analysis had been produced. Following these, meetings would be set up with DUGS to discuss how to take the analysis forward.

Finally, it was noted that students and lecturers are very satisfied with the work provided by the FoNS AV team who swiftly help to solve any problems with recordings during lectures and are able to provide staff training.

13.4 FOO – verbal update (NH)
Nothing to report.

13.5 Registry - New Student Information System (JB)
JW, on behalf of the Registry, reported that the team were going through some structural changes and also that one member of staff would be specifically working on the Banner implementation project.

ITEMS TO NOTE

- 14 Minutes of the Previous Meetings of the NSEC Sub-Committees**
The committee noted the minutes from the UG sub-meeting on 2 December 2015 [NSEC.2015.11] and 27 Jan 2016 [NSEC.2015.12]; Masters sub-meeting 3 December 2015 [NSEC.2015.13] and 28 January 2016 [NSEC.2015.14].
- 15 Chair's Report [NSEC.2015.15]**
No specific actions were reported that were not covered under items 4 and 5.
- 16 Vice Provosts Advisory Group (Education) (VPAGE) Minutes**
The committee noted the minutes from the 15 October, 14 November and 3 December meetings [NSEC.2015.16]
- 17 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) Executive Summary**
The committee noted the executive summary from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.
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- 18 Senate Executive Summary**
The committee noted the executive summary from the Senate.
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- 19 Academic Standards Framework Update [NSEC.2015.17]**
The committee noted an update on progress with the academic standards framework from the steering group.
- 20 Suspended and Withdrawn Programmes [NSEC.2015.18]**
The committee noted a list of current programmes by status for the academic year 2015/16
- 21 Short Course Annual Monitoring of Delegate Numbers [NSEC.2015.19]**
The committee noted the results of the short course annual monitoring of delegate numbers exercise for the academic year 2014/15.
- 22 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2016**
The committee noted the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) had agreed that the PTES will run between Thursday 19 May and Thursday 16 June 2016. There will be no additional institutional questions.

- 23 Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)**
The committee noted the latest minutes from the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee:
<\\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\PPDC>

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 24 Academic Standards Framework (ASF): Module Size Alignment**
ACS reported that no consensus on a common module unit size had yet been agreed, and that Prof Sue Gibson was planning to consult with the Provost and Provost's Board to decide how to progress this initiative.
- 25 Chemistry Department update report on admissions task**

BD, on behalf of the Department of Chemistry, confirmed that a proposal had been brought to Science Studies Committee (SSC) in November 2015 to request to use an admissions test as part of the Chemistry UG admissions process. Some concerns had been raised by SSC regarding how to deliver an admissions test without bias. BD confirmed that the Department had now gathered evidence from the first partial run of a piloted task to further aid discussion and consideration for the implementation of a task in the near future.

The aim of the test is to examine abilities (or lack of certain skills) that cannot always be identified during the interview or via the UCAS personal statement. The questions in the test would change each week and would not repeat in future tests and a detailed marking scheme would be used. BD noted that the data collated to date from the pilot shows that the task is not gender or culturally biased.

The department intends to provide a full report on the pilot and a proposal to the next NSEC. Subject to approval, it is intended that the implementation of the test will commence in the next academic year.

- 26 Dates of Future Meetings**
Wednesday 01 June, 12:00, SALC 7

* Items marked with an asterisk will be circulated separately or tabled at the meeting