

**Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)**  
Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on  
Wednesday 16 May 2018

---

## **Present**

Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair  
Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar  
Mr Nick Burstow – ICU Deputy President (Education)  
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office  
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development  
Mr Martin Lupton – QAEC representative  
Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering  
Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences  
Dr Edgar Meyer – Business School representative  
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)  
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services  
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)  
- Secretary

## **In attendance**

Mr Robert Cashman – Strategic Planning (for item 5)  
Ms Carole Hobden – Senior Strategic Planning Officer (for item 5)  
Mr Gideon Shimshon – Director, Digital Learning Hub (for item 4)  
Ms Hailey Smith – Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office  
Ms Men-Yeut Wong – Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

## **Apologies**

Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning  
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School  
Professor Des Johnston – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

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

## **2. Minutes**

**2.1** The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2018. LTC.2017.48

**2.2** Committee actions were noted as follows:

**2.2.1** Minute 5.6 refers: The paper and recommendations have been considered by Provost's Board and the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC). PRQC also considered a paper on "Review of Pastoral Care Structures in Departments" which addresses many of the issues that the original report raised surrounding pastoral care for PhD students. The Pastoral Care paper and its recommendations

were approved by PRQC and these will be actioned by Registry and the Graduate School. The Vice Provost (Research) and Vice Provost (Education) will oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

- 2.2.2** Minute 8.2.2 refers: The notes of the discussion on the University of Europe would be circulated before the next Committee meeting.
- 2.2.3** Minute 9.1.3 refers: The roadmap for Curriculum review had been circulated to the relevant staff members.
- 2.2.4** Minute 14.1 refers: The notes from the previous Online Learning Innovation Group meeting had been circulated to members outside of the meeting.

### **3. Matters Arising**

- 3.1** There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **4. Digital Learning Strategy**

- 4.1** The Committee received an update from the Director of the Digital Learning Hub on the Digital Learning Strategy. LTC.2017.49
- 4.2** An overview of the general strategy was provided, noting that the Digital Learning Strategy was rooted in and supportive of the overarching Learning and Teaching Strategy. The digital remit was focused on: Experience (providing an excellent experience for students and teachers); Innovation (pioneering new ways of learning); and Extension (taking the Imperial learning experience beyond the College campus).
- 4.3** The Strategy was being taken forward via a portfolio of projects; these included: Programme Developments; Short Courses; and distinct Projects taking place across multiple departments. The different elements were at different stages of development and delivery.
- 4.4** The process for development of massive open online courses (MOOCs) started through identifying what the College wanted learners to be able to do and how they could demonstrate this and only then thinking about the right instructional materials to achieve this.. A good example of this was the Creative Thinking Technique MOOCs project, which followed this backwards design template.
- 4.5** Updates were provided on a number of projects, included the fully online MSc Global Public Health, which was being launched with Coursera in 2019, and the Digital MBBS. With these projects, it was important to manage the scaling up of numbers as growing interest and awareness led to growing enrolments.
- 4.6** It was important to consider how these new developments would be managed; this would include ensuring College regulations covered students on online degree programmes not based on campus, managing support for those students and having clarity on what made an online student distinct from a campus-based

student. It was important to learn from other institutions which had experience in dealing with these queries and to share the learning from initial digital developments in specific subject areas across the College. It was noted that supporting online Imperial degree students could be included as a strand in the Student Services strategy and that the College would need to ensure it was able to provide an agreed level of support alongside its commitments to campus-based students.

**4.7** The Education Development Unit was doing work on supporting students develop strategies for dealing with and learning from failure; it was hoped this in the future would free up some resource within Student Services.

**4.8** The Mathematics for Machine Learning programme had started and feedback from students was positive. A range of analytical information from the first iteration of the programme was available and would be used to inform further developments.

**4.9** The Charing Cross site has a digital learning space and the vision for an experimental active learning classroom and a studio at the South Kensington site was taking shape. As well as the physical infrastructure, the human resource to support this was very important. It was reiterated there needed to be a partnership approach in embedding digital learning, bringing together content experts and digital learning experts to develop new approaches to curriculum design and delivery.

**4.10** It was noted that in Medicine, the regulator had not yet caught up with the new learning and teaching approaches planned and further dialogue would be needed to ensure they were on board with the changes being made.

**4.11** A concern was raised about how competitor institutions would react to the College's move into digital provision. It was noted the arrangement with Coursera allowed institutions an element of individual ownership of specific subject areas, thus limiting direct competition, while also providing opportunities for collaboration. Being part of a platform like Coursera provided some protection as they would support the College in making a success of their digital provision with them as this would protect Coursera's revenues.

## **5. Office for Students and Teaching Excellence Framework**

### **5.1 Registration with the Office for Students**

LTC.2017.50a

**5.1.1** The Committee received an update on the registration with the Office for Students. The registration submission had been made on 30 April 2018 and comprised of two self-assessments and two plans. It was expected that the plans would be the subject of dialogue with the OfS and therefore there would be scope to amend them based on their feedback.

**5.1.2** It was important to note from the Student Protection Plan that if the College failed to deliver a course as advertised, students could seek compensation and liability for this would lie with the relevant Department.

## 5.2 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

LTC.2017.50b

- 5.2.1** The College expected to receive feedback on its subject-level TEF pilot in May or June 2018. The College did not know what the pilots for 2018/19 would involve or whether the College would be invited or allowed to participate. A member of staff at Imperial was on a TEF Panel and it was hoped they would be able to provide some feedback on their experience and the process.
- 5.2.2** The Committee considered the draft response to the technical consultation on the proposed subject-level TEF. It was acknowledged that subject-level TEF would be going ahead regardless of sector feedback and the focus therefore was on providing practical feedback to guide its implementation and not make arguments solely against its introduction. However, it was agreed that the College's opposition to the TEF at provider and subject level should be noted somewhere in the response.
- 5.2.3** In the process of formulating the response to the technical consultation, a range of College members had been invited to provide feedback. Key points made in the draft response included:
- i. The need to separate out catch-all subject groupings 'Subjects allied to Medicine' and 'Business and Law' into distinct subject areas
  - ii. Support for a five year award cycle and a general mirroring of institutional elements
  - iii. Support for the use of Model A (the exception approach) with institutions given the freedom to add in other subjects
  - iv. Concern about the use of Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data
  - v. Proposal for Subject-level TEF Panels to have access to an overarching provider statement
  - vi. No support for the proposal for subject level TEF ratings to influence the overall institutional rating
- 5.2.4** The Committee provided the following feedback to be incorporated into the response, noting:
- i. The College operates on a criterion-based and not norm-referenced grading system, in relation to the concerns about grade inflation
  - i. Concerns should be raised about how non-reportable metrics would be dealt with. The proposed approach could be misrepresentative as affected subjects would no longer be assessed against subject level data and the system could be subject to game-playing if institutions were given free-reign to align subjects without reportable metrics to their strongest areas
  - ii. The College's broader concern about the lack of robustness in the data being used in the TEF
- 5.2.5** The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Universities UK (UUK) and GuildHE were continuing to lead on work around grade inflation within the sector and it was agreed this should be included as an item on a future Committee agenda.

**ACTION: Secretary**

## 6. Curriculum Review

6.1 The Committee received an update on the plans for Curriculum Review and noted the proposed composition and terms of reference for the Reference Panels. LTC.2017.51

6.2 The Reference Panels would provide a discursive environment which would help inform teams' work on Curriculum Review and would take on some of the burden of reviewing module details alongside Faculty Education Committees, allowing Programmes Committee to focus on the Programme Specifications.

6.3 All Reference Panel members would receive briefings; there was one planned for Friday 15 June 2018.

6.4 Faculties which had not yet made their nominations for taking part in the Reference Panels were requested to provide details of the nominees to the Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office.

**ACTION: Faculty representatives**

### ITEMS TO NOTE

## 7. Education Evaluation

7.1 This item was deferred to the next Committee meeting as the Director of Strategic Planning was not present.

## 8. Educational Research

8.1 The Director of Educational Development provided a verbal update and noted the following:

- i. There were plans to revise the vacant post-doctoral research post as part of an effort to build a bigger critical mass within that area
- ii. Discussions were ongoing with Harvard University about building on recent works to create more generic educational opportunities
- iii. The Centre for Higher Education Research and Scholarship (CHERS) had had a soft launch; students would be graduating from it for the first time in 2018 and it was intended to redevelop the website to showcase the range of resources and expertise available within CHERS. A formal launch would take place later in 2018/19
- iv. The number of PGR students associated with CHERS was growing; this was in part due to collaborations with other departments and faculties
- v. Following the creation of CHERS, the team had been successful in applying for and receiving funding for engagement in Conferences and upcoming presentation topics included transformational learning, authenticity in learning, and changing student identity

## 9. Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG)

9.1 The Committee noted the update from the last meeting of the Online Learning Innovation Group held on 16 April 2018. LTC.2017.53

## **10. Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC)**

**10.1** The Chair of QAEC provided a verbal update from the QAEC meeting on 17 April 2018. Key points covered included:

- i. Revisions to the Quality Code, noting the new focus on outcomes instead of process and querying the potential tension between the drive for successful outcomes with the concerns about grade inflation
- ii. A proposal to streamline the academic regulations for 2018/19, with the revised regulations due to be considered at QAEC on 23 May 2018
- iii. The audit carried out by Imperial College Union into assessment feedback turnaround times for year one undergraduate studies, noting that most feedback was returned within the expected deadlines but that more work was needed to provide explanation for why deadlines weren't met when feedback was provided late. It was proposed that in future, this monitoring and analysis should be carried out by Departments and Faculties and could be picked up on through annual monitoring
- iv. Results for students who entered PGT programmes via the special cases, which showed that the outcomes for these students were largely positive
- v. Outcomes from the SOLE surveys

## **11. Senate**

**11.1** The Committee noted the minutes from Senate could be accessed at: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate/>

## **12. Any Other Business**

**12.1** The Student Academic Choice Award ceremony had taken place on 15 May 2018. There had been a record number of nominations and Imperial College Union thanked all those who had supported the scheme.

**12.2** In relation to the earlier discussion on the registration submission to the Office for Students, it was noted that a recent bid for additional student numbers in the Faculty Medicine had been rejected and it was understood that this was due to the College's approach to widening participation, with the OfS looking for additional investment. Widening participation was an important part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and work was underway but it was agreed more needed to be done. The representative from the Faculty of Medicine agreed to provide more details on the feedback from the recent bid for additional numbers to the Chair to inform further discussion.

**ACTION: Associate Dean and Head of UG Medicine (Faculty of Medicine)**

## **13. Dates for Meetings**

### **13.1 2017/18**

**13.1.1** Wed. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 14.00-16.00, Boardroom, Faculty Building

### **13.2 Proposed meeting dates for 2018-19**

**13.2.1** Thursday 13 September 2018, 10.00-12.00

Thursday 18 October 2018, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 22 November 2018, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 20 December 2018, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 24 January 2019, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 28 February 2019, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 28 March 2019, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 16 May 2019, 10.00-12.00  
Thursday 20 June 2019, 10.00-12.00