

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 2nd June 2015

Present:

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School
Mr Pascal Loose, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)
Ms Diane Morgan, Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Professor Richard Thompson, Senior College Consul
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) -secretary

In attendance:

Mr Chris Harris, Quality and Educational Development Manager
Mr Richard Monk, Assitant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review)
Mr Bojan Cvijan, Quality Assurance Administrator
Dr Matthew Prime, Clinical Research Fellow and Senior Registrar in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (for item 6.1)
Ms Sarah Henderson, Operations Director, HELIX, Institute of Global Health Innovation (for item 6.1)

Apologies:

Ms Nida Mahmud, Graduate Students' Union President
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Sue Smith, Chair of the Medical Studies Committee, Faculty of Medicine
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 28th April 2015 and noted the Committee Actions.

QAEC.2014.72

QAEC.2014.72a

- 2.1 It was noted that "Our Principles" would remain unchanged for 2015-6 session, with a view to being revised for 2016-7 and this would be explained further under item 11.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Further to Minute 9.1, it was noted that Professor Debra Humphris and Mr Dean Pateman would discuss the governance and reporting lines of the Short Course Quality Committee with Professor Emma McCoy, the Committee's Chair.

Action: Professor Humphris/Mr Pateman

- 4. QAEC Terms of Reference** QAEC.2014.73
- The Committee approved the terms of reference and membership for QAEC for 2015-6 with the following amendments:
- “To oversee the processes of quality assurance and enhancement for the undergraduate Imperial Horizons and Humanities programme” would be replaced by “To oversee the process of quality for the College’s short course provision (including Imperial Horizons and BPES modules) via the Short Course Quality Committee”
 - To change to the job title for Professor Alan Spivey to Vice Dean Education
 - To record that Professor Sue Smith attends the meeting in her capacity as Chair of the Medical Studies Committee
 - To record the Deputy Director of the Graduate School as TBC
- 5. Academic Standards Framework**
- The Committee received an update regarding the Academic Standards Framework and noted the Terms of Reference of the two new “Task and Finish” groups:
- Academic Integrity (Chaired by Professor Richard Thompson) QAEC.2014.74
 - Complaints and Appeals (Chaired by Professor Andrew Parry). QAEC.2014.75
- 5.1** It was noted that Faculties had been asked for their representatives. Mr Pascal Loose proposed the ICU Deputy President (Welfare) for the Complaints and Appeals group and it was confirmed that there would be suitable student representation on both groups.
- 6.1 Joint MRes in Healthcare Innovation Design (School for Design, RCA/Department of Surgery & Cancer, Imperial)** QAEC.2014.76
- The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Surgery & Cancer to pursue a joint MRes award with RCA.
- 6.1.1** Dr Matthew Prime, Clinical Research Fellow and Senior Registrar in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery and Ms Sarah Henderson, Operations Director, HELIX, Institute of Global Health Innovation, presented the proposal and explained that the purpose of the proposed joint MRes would be to equip students from a wide range of professional practice backgrounds, from NHS Managers, clinicians and designers to entrepreneurs and information scientists, with the tools and techniques to instigate and lead innovation healthcare systems, services, spaces and products.
- 6.1.2** Professor Peter Cheung raised concerns that there may be some content overlap with programmes in the Department of Bioengineering and in particular, the MRes in Medical Device Design and Entrepreneurship (MDDE). It was agreed that before programme could be approved, there would need to be reassurances about the content of the programme and that the non-device focus of the programme would have to be made clearer. It was also suggested that the non-device focus of the programme should

also be reflected in the programme title to avoid confusion.

Action: Programme proposers to discuss with Department of Bioengineering

6.1.3 Generally, whilst supportive of the proposal to collaborate on a new programme with the RCA, the Committee were not wholly convinced by the arguments for a joint award and requested that alternative modes of collaboration were also considered.

6.1.4 It was agreed that the programme developers should meet with the Academic Registrar outside of the meeting to discuss modes of collaborations before a revised proposal could be re-submitted to the Committee.

Action: Dean Pateman and programme developers

6.2 Offering Global MBA Modules to Undergraduates in Engineering

QAEC.2014.77

The Committee considered a proposal from the Business School to deliver online modules from their Global Online MBA programme to Faculty of Engineering undergraduate students as a replacement for current business teaching provision. It was noted that, longer term, the Business School also wished to allow the undergraduate engineering students who had successfully passed GMBA modules to be able to join an MBA programme in the Business School within a set time after graduation via an “accelerated entry route”.

6.2.1 Ms Diane Morgan explained that, in the first instance, the Business School wished to pilot offering two online modules to 3rd and 4th year students in Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from October 2015. The two modules would be Managerial Economics in the Autumn term and Corporate Finance in the Spring term. The Committee heard that changes would be made to the modules to contextualise them to engineering students who did not have work-experience and that the assessment would mirror that for BPES modules and would consist of coursework and a written examination taken under examination conditions.

6.2.2 The Committee heard that, during the pilot stage, students would have the opportunity to choose either the standard BPES modules or the on-line module(s) as part of their degree award. It was noted that as the on-line modules were 7.5 ECTS and the BEPS modules were 6 ECTS, students opting for the on-line modules may accumulate more the required number of credits for their award.

6.2.3 It was also noted that the pilot modules would be assessed at Level 7 FHEQ and QAEC heard that the Faculty of Engineering and the Business School were confident that this would not pose a problem for the 3rd year students.

6.2.4 The Committee agreed to recommend the pilot for Senate approval and asked the Business School to submit a mid pilot and end of pilot report for their consideration, prior to a decision being taken on whether the on-line modules could be rolled out further.

7. External Examining

7.1 External Examiner Summary Report for Undergraduate Programmes for 2013-4 QAEC.2014.78a

The Committee noted the External Examiner Summary Report for undergraduate programmes for 2013-4 and noted the instances of good practice and areas for concern. It was agreed that no further action was necessary but that discussion of emerging themes should be added to the new processes for annual monitoring of programmes.

7.2 External Examiner Summary Report for Master's Level Programmes for 2013-4 QAEC.2014.78b

The Committee noted the External Examiner Summary Report for Master's programmes for 2013-4 and noted the instances of good practice and areas for concern. It was agreed that no further action was necessary but that discussion of emerging themes should be added to the new processes for annual monitoring of programmes.

7.3 Planned (and in Progress) Changes to External Examiner Arrangements QAEC.2014.78c

The Committee considered a paper from the Registry's Senate and Academic Review Team on the planned and in progress changes to external examiner arrangements and agreed to recommend for Senate approval the following changes which would require amendments to the regulations with effect from 2015-6:

a) To appoint all external examiners for the maximum 4 year term and not on an annual basis.

This change would necessitate the following changes to the regulations:

(i) To amend clause 6.7 of the Regulations for the Examination of BSc, MSci, BEng, MEng, MBBS Degrees as follows:

~~An External Examiner will be appointed annually~~ for a period of not more than four consecutive years. In exceptional circumstances, for example to ensure continuity, an External Examiner may be reappointed to serve a fifth and final year, ~~for example to ensure continuity, by the relevant Studies Committee(s).~~

(ii) To amend clause 4.8 of the Regulations for the Examination of Master's Level Degrees as follows:

~~An External Examiner will be appointed annually~~ for a period of not more than four consecutive years. In exceptional circumstances, for example to ensure continuity, an External Examiner may be reappointed to serve a fifth and final year, ~~for example to ensure continuity, by the relevant Master's Quality Committee.~~

QAEC noted that both sets of regulations include termination clauses (6.10 and 4.13 respectively) which allow for an External Examiner's resignation or termination of appointment during their period of office.

QAEC also noted that both sets of regulations would require some minor revisions in the text to update associated references to annual appointments and to reflect the decision of QAEC that external examiner

appointments will, with effect from October 2015, be approved by the Vice Provost (Education) rather than by the relevant Quality Committees.

b) to allow the appointment of external examiners from the same department of the same institution if they are on different examination boards

QAEC agreed to recommend for Senate approval removal of clause 6.5 b) of the Regulations for the Examination of BSc, MSci, BEng, MEng, MBBS Degrees and removal of clause 4.6 b) of the Regulations for the Examination of Master's Level Degrees, which state that an individual should not normally be appointed as an External Examiner if they:

“Are from the same department of the same institution as another External Examiner appointed by the College.”

and agreed to insert a new clause following 6.4 and 4.5 respectively which states:

“An examination board should not have more than one external examiner from the same department in the same institution.”

8. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for annual programme monitoring QAEC.2014.79

The Committee discussed setting KPIs for exception monitoring as part of annual monitoring of programmes. It was also noted that the new process would be piloted for Master's level programmes in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering later this term.

8.1 The Committee were supportive of the plans for exception monitoring and setting of KPIs but were concerned about what the KPIs would be. It was clarified that the paper was an early discussion document, the KPIs given in the paper were indicative illustrations only and that the Faculties would be involved in the setting of the KPIs via QAEC.

8.2 Committee members were also concerned that there would be instances when departments would have good reasons for not meeting a KPI and they should not be penalised for this. It was clarified that KPIs were “indicators” only and all departments would be able to explain the reasons why they had not met an indicator. Furthermore, the KPIs would be used for capturing and disseminating good practice.

8.3 The Committee members were also concerned that the introduction of KPIs would increase the burden for departments in responding to annual monitoring. It was clarified that the KPI data would be provided to departments via the Registry and/or via ICA reports and that, in the first instance, before new records and reporting functionality came on line, only a small number of KPIs would be set where this information was readily available.

8.4 It was further explained that annual monitoring for undergraduate programmes would continue to take place in the autumn term and for

Master's level programmes in the spring term, although there may be exceptions for programmes with non-standard (e.g. non-Sept/Oct) start dates.

- 8.5 It was agreed that an example annual monitoring reports with KPIs should come to the next meeting and that the Committee should also agree the KPIs for approximately 6-10 priority areas.

Action: Senate and Academic Review Team

9. **Proposed Survey Framework and Policy**

QAEC.2014.80

The Committee considered a paper from the Student Surveys and Feedback Working Party which set out recommendations to address the Education and Student Strategic Objective 3.5 - *Implement a student survey and feedback framework which will rationalise the current range of surveys, systematically inform enhancement and create a robust feedback loop to students and staff.*

- 9.1 QAEC were supportive of the recommendations and agreed to recommend them for Senate approval with effect from 2015-6.

10. **Roles and Responsibilities Documents**

- 10.1 The Committee noted the documents have been updated for 2015-6.

QAEC.2014.81

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/goodpractice/rolesandresponsibilities>

- 10.1.1 It was agreed that the preferred abbreviation for the post of Director of Postgraduate Study was DPGS rather than DPS for.

- 10.1.2 It was agreed that it was good practice for the Director of Undergraduate Study (DUGS) not to also be a Personal Tutor and that this would be added to the roles and responsibilities documents for both posts.

- 10.2 The Committee considered the training and development which post holders need to undertake and agreed that departments should ensure that there was a proper handover and induction when staff took on new roles. It was further noted that appropriate preparation and support for role holders would be considered as part of the Academic Standards Framework.

Post Meeting Note

The roles, responsibilities and contractual arrangements for Wardens, Assistant Wardens, Sub-Wardens and Hall Seniors will now be approved by the Provost's Board as Appendix A of the Warden's Policy and Procedures document.

11. **Our Principles**

It was noted that the revising of "Our Principles" would be delayed in order for it to be informed by the work on culture and gender equality to be commissioned following the incident at Varsity Day. This would ensure that 'Our Principles' were an expression of the values and behaviour that the College would seek to embed in the future. It was intended that a revised

version of “Our Principles” would be agreed in time for the 2016-7 academic session.

12. Competence Standards

12.1 The Committee noted an update from the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Engineering on progress in providing competence standard documents for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

12.1.1 It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering’s Teaching Committee had approved a new set of standards which cover all the activities in each programme in engineering and that these were also approved by the Disability Advisory Service. The Faculty were now working through creating the set of standards for each programme and this task would be completed by the end of June 2015.

12.1.2 It was noted that the Faculty of Medicine now had a complete set of undergraduate and postgraduate documents. Mr Chris Harris agreed to send a link to the documents to Mr Dean Pateman for reference.

Post Meeting Note

This action has been completed.

12.2 It was further noted that the Academic Registrar would shortly be setting up a working party to consider how competency standards could be better integrated with programme specifications.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

13. Short Courses Quality Committee

The Committee noted minutes from the May 2015 meeting which was carried out online and the May Chair’s Report and agreed to recommend the courses for Senate approval.

QAEC.2014.82

QAEC.2014.82a

14. Items to include in student and programme handbooks

The Committee noted changes to the documents for 2015-6 and further noted that, as requested by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee, a template for collaborative research student handbooks would be created.

QAEC.2014.83

14.1 It was agreed to keep the references to “Our Principles” in the documents for 2015-6 and to add a link to the Imperial Success Guide to the undergraduate student handbook. It was further agreed to change the terminology from “welfare” to “wellbeing” where possible.

Post Meeting Note

Additional information as added to the section on placements. The documents can be found at:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/goodpractice/studentandprogrammehandbooks>

15. Surveys

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015

QAEC.2014.84

15.1 The Committee considered the PRES 2015 results (Monday 2nd March - Thursday 14th May 2015) and a comparison with the PRES 2013 results.

15.1.1 Overall, the results were consistent with PRES 2013 and overall satisfaction with the students' research experience (2015: 79% /2013: 80%) remaining at the same level.

15.1.1 It was noted that the ICU would publish their response to the results shortly but that for future surveys the ICU and Graduate School would work together to combine the departmental action plans with the ICU response.

15.2 It was noted that departments had now been forwarded their individual reports. The PRES 2015 benchmarking reports would be available from the HEA in mid June 2015. On receipt of these reports, departments would be asked to complete an action plan which would then be considered by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee and then QAEC in the Autumn Term 2015. Action plans would have to be signed off by a departmental student rep and discussed at the Staff-Student Committee.

Post Meeting Note

The HEA released the national final response rate. The College's response rate (42.9%) was in line with the rest of the sector where it was 40.4% overall and 40.5% for Russell Group institutions.

The HEA also announced benchmarking reports would be delayed until the end of June.

15.3 UG SOLE – Spring 2015 Term Results / Autumn 2014 & Spring 2015 Term results for Horizons/BEPS

QAEC.2014.85

The Committee noted the UG SOLE results for the spring term 2015 and a comparison with the previous year. They also noted the Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 term results for Horizon/BPES modules and a comparison with the previous year.

15.3.1 It was noted that the results were consistent with Spring 2013 and that many departments had shown improvement in the scores for giving feedback on work. Faculty representatives reported that they would be investigating instances where a drop in satisfaction had occurred.

15.4 PG SOLE – Spring Term 2015

QAEC.2014.86

The Committee noted the PG SOLE results for the spring term 2015 and a comparison with the previous year.

15.4.1 It was noted that the results were consistent with Spring 2013 and that many departments had shown improvement in the scores for giving feedback on work. Faculty representatives reported that they would be investigating instances where a drop in satisfaction had occurred.

- 15.5 MODES End of Pilot Report** QAEC.2014.87
The Committee considered the end of MODES pilot report from the Business School. MODES replaced PG SOLE lecturer/modules evaluations in the Business School during 2014-5.
- 15.5.1** QAEC were content to approve a continuance of the pilot for 2015-6 academic session but wanted to see more data on the quality of responses to the MODES question set.
Action: Ms Diane Morgan
- 15.5.2** It was noted that MODES could be offered via Qualtrics if this became the College's preferred survey provider.
- 15.6 ICU – NSS 2014 response**
The Committee revisited the ICU NSS response to see what progress had been made and noted that the ICU were working on tracking improvements via departments.
<https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/sites/default/files/NSS%20Response%202014%20WEB.pdf>
- 15.7 ICU – PTES 2014 response**
The Committee revisited the ICU NSS response to see what progress had been made and noted that the ICU were working on tracking improvements via departments.
https://issuu.com/icunion/docs/ptes_response_2014?e=1424395/10418890
- 16. Yerevan Communiqué on future and priorities of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** QAEC.2014.88
The Committee noted that the Yerevan Communiqué had been adopted by ministers in May 2015 and a new ECTS User Guide would also be published:
<http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/ECTS%20Users%20Guide%202015.pdf>
- 17. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates**
It was noted that the QAA had published a new report compiling enquiries received, over the last two years, relating to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and the topics that it covers. The questions raised in [Your Questions 2013-15](#) are diverse and broad ranging, but common themes and topics recur; the document has been organised in a way that reflects this.
- 18. Update on HEFCE review of Quality Assessment Arrangements**
It was noted that an update from HEFCE is due shortly.
- 19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 19.1 Procedures for Consideration of Additional Examination Arrangements in Respect of Disability**
The Committee were asked to consider proposed revisions to the above policy and send their comments to Mr Dean Pateman by the end of June. It

was noted that the existing policy could be found at: <https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/registry/public/Procedures%20and%20Regulations/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Procedures%20for%20Consideration%20of%20Examination%20Arrangements%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>

Action: All Committee Members

20. Dates of meetings 2014-15

14 Jul 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 29 Jun 2015

Dates of Meetings 2015-6

10th November 2015, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Board Room, Level 4, Faculty Building - papers by 26th Oct 2015

19th January 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, Gabor Seminar Room, Level 6, Electrical and Electronic Engineering – papers by 5th January 2016

15th March 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, Gabor Seminar Room, Level 6, Electrical and Electronic Engineering – papers by 29th February 2016

17th May 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Drawing Room, 170 Queens Gate – papers by 3rd May 2016

19th July 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building – papers by 5th July 2016

It was noted that dates/times for meetings with Student Chairs of Staff-Student Committees would be confirmed shortly and that there would be separate meetings for undergraduate, Master's and Research students.

21. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS

There was no reserved business