

QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 7 October 2014

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
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Ms Diane Morgan, Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar
Professor Sue Smith, Chair of the Medical Studies Committee, Faculty of Medicine
Professor Alan Spivey, Director of Education Faculty, of Natural Sciences
Professor Richard Thompson, Senior College Consul
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)
Mr Pascal Loose, Imperial College Union Deputy President (Education)
Ms Nida Mahmud, Graduate Students Union President

In attendance:

Dr Michael Bluck, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Mechanical Engineering (for item 4.2)
Ms Joanne Cooke, Senior Postgraduate Administrator (for item 4.3)
Professor Susan Eisenbach, Head of Department, Computing (for item 4.1)
Mr Luke Granger-Brown, student, Computing (for item 4.1)
Professor Desmond Johnston, Clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine (for item 4.1)
Dr Pat Leever, Out-going Director of Courses, Mechanical Engineering (for item 4.2)
Dr Peter McBrien, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Computing (for item 4.1)
Professor Myra McClure, Non-clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine (for item 4.3)
Mr Richard Monk, Assistant Registrar (Senate & Review)
Mr Robert O'Keefe, student, Mechanical Engineering (for item 4.2)
Mr Nicolas Prettejohn, student, Computing (for item 4.1)
Professor Paul Robinson, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Aeronautics (for item 4.3)
Mr Daniel Smith, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) – Secretary
Professor Simon Taylor-Robinson, Clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine (for item 4.2)

Apologies:

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.

1.1 The Committee noted the Committee's terms of reference for the academic year 2014/15 as approved by Senate. **QAEC.2014.01**

1.2 The committee noted that Professor Smith's role would be amended to 'Chair of the Medical Studies Committee'

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

QAEC.2014.02

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 July 2014 were confirmed with no amendments.

2.1 In respect to minute 14.2 it was clarified that under the mitigation circumstances procedure, Boards of Examiners may use their discretion to allow candidates who have performed significantly below their normal ability (based on prior performance) to re-sit assessments and receive an uncapped mark.

2.2 The Mitigating Circumstances Procedure is available on-line at:
<https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/registry/Public/Exams/MitigatingCircumstancesPolicyProcedures-Feb%202014.pdf>

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Action Log Item 'Apr 14 – 9.5' (Competence Standards)

Mr Dean Pateman confirmed that this action would be addressed and reported to the Committee at the meeting to be held on 11 November 2014.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

4. Periodic Review

4.1 Periodic Review of Undergraduate Provision in the Department of Computing **QAEC.2014.03**

Professor Desmond Johnston, Clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine and Chair of the periodic review panel, presented the findings of the above periodic review which took place on 12 March 2014.

4.1.1 The review panel made five recommendations to the department which were addressed in the departmental response to the report.

4.1.2 Professor Susan Eisenbach, Head of Department, Dr Peter McBrien, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Luke Granger-Brown, 2nd year student and Nicolas Prettejohn, 2nd year student from the department of Computing, presented the department's response to the review.

4.1.3 Regarding recommendation 3) that the department investigate whether examination timetables can be set to avoid the 'bunching' of exams, the committee heard that exams were held during the final week of term at the student's request and that it was therefore difficult to avoid some students having exams on consecutive days. The Committee recommended that the department ensure this is clearly signalled to students in advance.

4.1.4 The committee requested that the department report progress on addressing all the recommendations from the review to the committee in October 2015.

Action: Department of Computing

4.1.5 The committee was satisfied with the review and the department's

response and agreed to recommend to Senate that the next scheduled periodic review take place in 5-6 years' time.

4.2 Periodic Review of Undergraduate Provision in the Department of Mechanical Engineering QAEC.2014.04

Professor Simon Taylor-Robinson, Clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine and Chair of the periodic review panel, presented the findings of the above periodic review which took place on 26 March 2014.

- 4.2.1 The review panel made seven recommendations to the department which were addressed in the departmental response to the report.
- 4.2.2 Dr Pat Leever, out-going Director of Courses, Dr Michael Bluck, incoming Director of Undergraduate Studies and Robert O'Keefe, 3rd year student from the department of Mechanical Engineering, presented the department's response to the review.
- 4.2.3 The Committee heard that following the appointment of Dr Juliet Varley as Academic Tutor the department was taking a more holistic approach to the student experience and academic transition and action to address a number of recommendations was already in progress.
- 4.2.4 Regarding recommendation 2) that students would like more dedicated time with less scheduling conflicts for the final year projects, the committee heard that it was difficult to balance the time spent with the proportion of marks whilst still ensuring an adequate proportion of taught content. The department committed to consider the issue further as part of an on-going internal programme review.
- 4.2.5 The committee requested that the department report progress on addressing recommendations from the review to the committee in October 2015.

Action: Department of Mechanical Engineering

- 4.2.6 The committee was satisfied with the review and the department's response and agreed to recommend to Senate that the next scheduled periodic review take place in 5-6 years' time.

4.3 Periodic Review of Postgraduate Provision in the Department of Aeronautics QAEC.2014.05

Professor Myra McClure, Non-clinical Consul for the Faculty of Medicine and Chair of the periodic review panel, presented the findings of the above periodic review which took place on 21 March 2014.

- 4.3.1 The review panel made eight recommendations to the department which were addressed in the departmental response to the report.
- 4.3.2 Professor Paul Robinson, Director of Postgraduate Studies and Ms Joanne Cooke, Senior Postgraduate Administrator, from the department of Aeronautics, presented the department's response to the review.

4.3.3 Regarding recommendation 5) that Personal Tutors be appointed to alleviate pressure on the Programme Directors the committee heard that a Deputy Programme Director had been appointed to reduce the workload and the Department would review the need for Personal Tutors at the end of the academic year.

4.3.4 The committee requested that the department report progress on addressing recommendations from the review to the committee in October 2015.

Action: Department of Aeronautics

4.3.5 The Committee was satisfied with the review and the department's response and agreed to recommend to Senate that the next scheduled periodic review take place in 5-6 years' time.

4.4 Good Practice Highlighted During Periodic Reviews Reported to Senate during 2013/14 **QAEC.2014.06**

The committee noted the summary of periodic reviews conducted in the academic year 2012/13 and reported to Senate during 2013/14.

4.4.1 The committee considered alternative methods of disseminating good practice throughout the periodic review process including widening the pool of review panel members, incorporating outcomes from the periodic review process into 'Education Day', broadening the remit and reach of 'Education Day' and providing opportunities for student and Student Reps to engage with outcomes of the periodic review process.

4.4.2 The committee noted that whilst methods of dissemination already exist within faculties and departments that it was necessary to step beyond these borders and communicate more coherently with the wider College community.

4.4.3 The committee agreed that Professor Humphris should consider methods by which good practice and periodic review outcomes could be more widely disseminated and report back to the Committee.

Action: Professor Debra Humphris

4.5 Periodic Review Schedule **QAEC.2014.07**

The committee considered the proposed review schedule for the academic years 2014/15 to 2019/2020.

4.5.1 The committee noted that the review schedule reflected on-going changes to the periodic review process including the integration of undergraduate and Master's level reviews into a single review of all taught provision. It was noted that departments would have the option to decide whether their MRes programmes would be considered during their review of taught or research provision.

4.5.2 It was noted that further consideration would need to be given to collaborative programmes and these should be reviewed with reference to the timing of their governing Memorandum of Agreement. It was

noted that Memorandum of Agreements were normally renewed every five years and that a review of the individual programme should take place prior to this to enable a decision to be taken whether the programme should continue and a new Memorandum of Agreement signed.

- 4.5.3** It was noted that the schedule would be communicated to departments shortly and that there may be a very small number of cases when it may be necessary to alter the timings of the review. A final version of the schedule would therefore be presented to the November QAEC meeting.

Action: Mr Richard Monk

- 4.5.3** The committee approved in principal the revised periodic review schedule for the academic years 2014/15 to 2019/20.

5. Regulations for Teaching Provision outside of Degree Programmes

Professor Humphris updated the committee regarding the development of regulations to govern teaching provision outside of degree provision including, but not limited to, CPD courses, Summer schools and stand-alone modules.

- 5.1** The committee noted that a sub-committee of QAEC would be developed to manage the quality assurance of this provision and to provide consistency across the College.

- 5.2** Professor Sue Smith confirmed the faculty of Medicine's commitment to conform to College-wide regulations in the development of their proposed summer school but requested clarification of the approval timeline. Mr Dean Pateman agreed to discuss the approval process with the Faculty of Medicine outside the meeting.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

- 5.3** Ms Diane Morgan requested clarification for the Business School with regards to when they would be permitted to advertise the 2015 Business School Summer School. Mr Dean Pateman agreed to discuss this issue with the Business School outside the meeting.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

6. Marking of Scripts, Essays, Reports, Dissertations & Coursework

QAEC.2014.08

The committee considered changes to the examination regulations and the 'protocols for second marking' intended to clarify the distinction between second marking and double marking. The committee recommended that an additional definition be added for 'arbitration' to clarify its distinction from moderation.

Post Meeting Note

Following feedback from committee members it was agreed that the addition of a definition for 'arbitration' served to complicate the guidance. The additional definition was removed and the definition for moderation was expanded to clarify its distinction from the process for resolving differences in marks between two or more markers.

- 6.1 The committee agreed to recommend the proposed definitions and changes to the examination regulations to Senate for approval with effect from 2014-5.
7. **Research Degree Student: Transfer of Credit Procedures** **QAEC.2014.09**
The committee considered whether the College's Regulations for the award of PhD and MPhil should be updated to allow PhD students from non-UK institutions to transfer their registration to Imperial.
- 7.1 The committee agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the PhD/MPhil Academic Regulations for approval by Senate with effect from 2014-5. At the same time, the committee approved changes to the *Research Degree Students: Transfer of Credit* procedure which would now become the *Research Degree Students: Transfer of Registration for Admission* procedure.
8. **Conduct of Oral Assessments (including Viva Voce Examinations)** **QAEC.2014.10**
The committee considered revisions to guidance regarding the Conduct of Oral Assessments including Viva Voce Examinations for Undergraduate and Master's Level Programmes.
- 8.1 The committee agreed to recommend the proposed '*Conduct of Oral Assessments including Viva Voce Examinations for Undergraduate and Master's Level Programmes*' guidance to Senate for approval with effect from 2014-5.
- 8.2 The committee also noted that Precept N of the Master's Level Precepts and the Code of Practice for MRes programmes currently require all MRes programmes to be assessed by at least one viva voce examination with an external examiner. The committee agreed that in practice this assessment was more often an 'oral assessment' and recommended that the 'Precepts for Master's Programmes' and 'Code of Practice for MRes Programmes' be amended accordingly and recommended for Senate approval with effect from 2014-5.
9. **Summary of External Examiner Reports on Undergraduate Programmes in 2012/13** **QAEC2014.11**
The Committee considered a summary of undergraduate external examiners reports covering the academic year 2012/13 and considered by the Studies Committees during 2013/14.
- 9.1 The committee noted the report would be further disseminated through the Studies Committees and DUGS forums with an emphasis on highlighting examples of good practice in administration and leadership which are not currently advertised effectively.
10. **Departmental Teaching Champions** **QAEC.2014.12**
The committee considered the proposal to establish Departmental Teaching Champions across the College.

10.1 The committee heard that whilst there was support from the Faculties of Medicine and Natural Sciences as well as the Business School that there was mixed feeling within the Faculty of Engineering. Professor Cheung reported that a number of Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) within the Faculty of Engineering felt that this role fell under the remit of the DUGS.

10.3 The committee discussed the value of the role and felt that whilst the Teaching Champion role had historically fallen to the Directors of Undergraduate Studies that there was a benefit in creating a distinction between the two roles. This distinction would focus the DUGS role on programme management and increase the amount of time available to teaching champion activities.

10.4 The committee recognised that the role of 'Teaching Champion' could not be successful without the full support of all Heads of Department and Directors of Studies and recommended that Professor Humphris discuss the proposal further with DUGS's and DPGS's to gain support. Professor Humphris also agreed to discuss the proposal further with Professor Richard Thompson and Dr Martyn Kingsbury.

Action: Professor Debra Humphris

11. Roles and Responsibility Documents

QAEC.2014.13

The committee was asked to submit any concerns with the proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities document for Personal/Academic Tutors to the committee secretary by Friday 10 October 2014.

Post Meeting Note

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12. Compliance with HEFCE's Wider Information Set (WIS)

QAEC.2014.14

The committee was asked to raise any areas of non-compliance with the WIS to the committee secretary by Friday 10 October 2014.

12.1 Mr Pascal Loose queried the current availability of survey results, in particular the availability of anonymised free-text comments and departmental action plans. The surveys working party will be asked to consider to whom results should be made available and with what level of detail.

Action: Surveys Working Party

Post Meeting Note

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13. English Language Requirements

QAEC.2014.15

The committee was asked to submit any objections to requests to adopt the higher level English Language requirements for 2015 entry to the committee secretary by Friday 10 October 2014.

Post Meeting Note

There were no objections raised to requests from programmes to adopt the higher level English Language requirements for 2015 entry. Requests were approved by Chair's action.

14. Programme Specifications **QAEC.2014.16**

The committee was asked to submit any concerns with the proposed implementation plan for the new programme specification template to the committee secretary by Friday 10 October 2014.

Post Meeting Note

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15. Strategic Approval of New Programmes

15.1 MSc in Sustainable Retirement Investment and Management **QAEC.2014.17**

The committee considered a request from the Centre for Environmental Policy (CEP) to develop an MSc programme in Sustainable Retirement Investment & Management.

15.2 The committee noted that there was a clear market for the programme but queried whether the Centre was the most appropriate home for the programme. The committee recommended that Mr Dean Pateman discuss the proposed programme with MS Diane Morgan and Dr Zen Makuch, Head of the Centre for Environmental Policy, outside the meeting.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

16. Business School Summer School 2014 Report **QAEC.2014.18**

The committee considered the report from the Business School regarding the 2014 Summer School.

16.1 The committee was satisfied with the summer school's progress and confirmed that a further report would not be required by QAEC in 2015. The committee agreed that the future quality assurance of the summer school would be governed according to the regulations for teaching provision outside of degree programmes which were currently in development.

16.2 In particular, the committee wished to recognise the key role played by Ms Katie Leung-Pah, Summer School Coordinator, in the running of the summer school and thanked her for her hard work.

17. SOLE 2014 **QAEC.2014.19**

The committee noted the results of UG SOLE lecturer/module survey for Summer Term 2014), the PG SOLE lecturer/module survey for the Business School for Summer Term 2014, the Department of Mathematics UG project survey results for Summer Term 2014 and the BPES and Horizons UG SOLE lecturer/module survey results for the Autumn Term 2013 and Spring Term 2014.

18. Chair's Action **QAEC.2014.20**

The committee noted actions taken by the Chair since the previous meeting.

- 19. Undergraduate Annual Monitoring Form** **QAEC.2014.21**
The committee noted revision to the Undergraduate Annual Monitoring Form for the academic year 2014/15.
- 20. Any Other Business**
- 20.1 Complaints and Appeals**
The committee noted that Mr Dean Pateman would shortly begin a project to review the College's complaints and appeals procedures as the current procedures are not sufficiently responsive.
Action: Mr Dean Pateman
- 20.2 Interim Arrangements for Periodic Reviews** **QAEC.2014.22**
The committee agreed proposed changes to the undergraduate, Master's level and research provision periodic review procedures for the academic year 2014/15. The committee noted that these changes were to introduce interim arrangements. Revised procedures for implementation from the academic year 2015/16 onwards would be brought to QAEC for consideration before the end of the 2014/15 academic year. The committee agreed to recommend the changes for Senate approval with effect from 2014-5.
- 20.3 Recognition of Pearson & Cambridge CAE English Language Assessments**
The committee noted that Senate would be asked to approve the recognition of Pearson and Cambridge CAE English Language Assessments. Standard equivalencies, mapped to the College's standard- and higher level IELTS requirements would be determined by Dr Julie King in the Centre for Academic English.
- 21. Dates of meetings 2014-15**
Tuesday 11 November 2014, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
Thursday 22 January 2015, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
Tuesday 3 March 2015, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
Tuesday 28 April 2015, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
Tuesday 2 June 2015, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
Tuesday 14 July 2015, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building
- 22. Reserved Area of Business**
There were no items of reserved business.