

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes from the meeting held on
Wednesday 5 June 2024

Present

David Ashton, Academic Registrar - Chair
Dr Clemens Brechtelsbauer, Chair of Programmes Committee
Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative
Dr Cloda Jenkins, Business School representative
Laura Lane, Head of Strategy and Operations, Graduate School
Katharine Manley, Head of Admissions
Prof Jonathan Mestel, Senior University Consul
Rebecca Middleton, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Jordon Millward, ICU PGR Representation Chair
Prof Jason Riley, Faculty of Engineering representative
Claire Stapley, CLCC/CHERS representative
Dr Mike Tennant, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Karen Tweddle, Business School representative
Dr Jeffrey Vernon, Faculty of Medicine representative
Judith Webster, Director of Academic Quality and Standards
Yi Yang, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Scott Tucker, Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards) – Secretary

In Attendance

Lucie Gibson, Collaborative Partnerships Officer, Faculty of Medicine [Item 8]
Annemarie Gupta, Assistant Registrar (Academic Policy)
Chris Kerr, Education and Quality Assurance Coordinator, Faculty of Natural Sciences
Prof Alan Spivey, Associate Provost (Learning and Teaching) [Item 7]

Apologies

Naraana Enkhjin, ICU PGT Representation Chair
Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine representative

1 Welcome, apologies and announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies for absence were noted.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes of 10 April 2024 as an accurate record. QAEC.2023.70

3 Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 Minute 8.3 refers: *‘Module ‘grades’ (outcomes) – agreed that the terms ‘pass’, ‘fail’, and ‘compensated pass’ were appropriate and in line with the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study. It was not deemed appropriate to use the terms ‘merit’ and ‘distinction’ as the university does not classify at module level.’*

It was clarified that an exception to the above was previously agreed whereby CLCC were also able to award ‘merit’ and ‘distinction’ to students who had completed Horizons modules for extra credit. These available outcomes were set up in Banner and would continue to be offered.

4 Update on QAEC actions

- 4.1 The Committee noted the updated action list. QAEC.2023.71

5 Academic Regulations 2024-25

- 5.1 Proposed updates to the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (‘Regs A’) QAEC.2023.72

- 5.1.1 The Committee considered proposed updates and discussed the following items:

(i) Re-application to the university following academic failure/student-led withdrawal/requirement to withdraw under fitness to study or unsatisfactory engagement

The Committee agreed with RPRC’s view that there would be circumstances in which it would be appropriate to consider a new application from a previous student; the university would not want to prevent a student from returning after a suitable period. It was recognised that it was important to ensure that those offered a place on a programme of study would be able to successfully complete.

It was noted that guidance exists in the *Fitness to Study Procedure* and that more work would be undertaken through a review of recognition of prior learning.

(ii) Re-take of full academic year (capped)

The Committee agreed with RPRC’s view that the current regulatory position was that students were not expected to be permitted to repeat modules that had been passed unless the decision fell under the ‘re-fresh’ year for undergraduates in year one or year two of their programmes (for MBBS this was only permitted in year one).

- 5.1.2 The Committee recommended the proposed updates to Senate, which included: brand updates; changes in university structures and to its ordinances; the addition of relevant information regarding the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine MBBS programme; and the use of consistent terminology for the terms for assessment/reassessment.

- 5.2 Proposed updates to the *Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD, and General Regulations* QAEC.2023.73

- 5.2.1 The Committee recommended the proposed updates to Senate, which had been recommended by both RPRC and PRQC.
- 5.3 It was confirmed that a summary of updates would be circulated and published on the academic regulations webpages as soon as possible.

Action: Secretary

- 5.4 It was noted that no significant updates were proposed for the following regulations: QAEC.2023.74
- *Academic Regulations for Short Courses*
 - Research degree regulations: EngD, MD(Res), DSc
 - *Academic and Examination Regulations* ('Regs B')

6 Board of Examiners

- 6.1 Proposed amendments to *Conduct of Board of Examiners 2023-24* QAEC.2023.75
- 6.1.1 The Committee approved the proposed updates, which included new guidance on chair's action decisions, additional guidance on when external examiners should be consulted, and reference to the academic appeals procedure.
- 6.2 Proposed updates to *Board of Examiners Notes 2023-24* QAEC.2023.76
- 6.2.1 The Committee approved the proposed updates including the streamlining of sections related to the pandemic and industrial action, and an updated section on consideration of borderline candidates.
- 6.3 It was confirmed that the updated Board of Examiners documentation would be circulated and published as soon as possible.

Action: Secretary

7 Generative AI for Research Degrees

- 7.1.1 The Committee considered Working Party recommendations for the use of generative AI for research degrees, including proposed updates and comments relating to the following documentation: QAEC.2023.77
- *Guidance for Early Stage Assessment*
 - *Early Stage Assessment Form*
 - *Guidance for Late Stage Review*
 - *Late Stage Review Form*
 - *Conduct of Viva Voce Examinations for Research Degrees and Related Matters*
 - Guidelines and Checklist for Examiners for **MPhil** and **PhD** degrees
 - Guidelines and Checklist for Examiners for **MD(Res)** degrees
 - *Research Degrees: Guidance for **Staff** on the Modality of Final Thesis Research Degree Vivas*
 - Appendix 1: Template agenda for examiner pre-*viva* meeting
 - *Research Degrees: Guidance for **Students** on the Modality of Final Thesis Research Degree Vivas*

- *Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD*

7.1.2 It was noted that there were a considerable number of documents referenced for update but that, in most instances, the updates were modest. Overall, the Committee agreed to the following principles put forward by the Working Group:

- That the ESA should incorporate clear guidance for the use of AI tools in the ESA report, with a student declaration to confirm if AI tools were used, or not.
- That online training courses for “AI tools and ethical use” for both staff and students should be developed and implemented. It was felt that AI training for students should be mandatory and completed prior to the ESA. It was noted that staff training might be in place by December 2024.
- That guidance around the permitted use of AI in PhD level research needed to be granular and detailed. The use of AI powered translating programmes or other forms of prompts running in parallel should be prohibited during the viva.
- That the university should explore the guidance provided to students as to any requirement to provide AI scripts for scrutiny. However, further exploration would be required as, depending on the AI tool used, this might be challenging to implement consistently.

7.1.3 It was agreed that proposed updates to the documentation listed would be made for October 2024, unless further discussion was required at the working group.

Action: Secretary

7.1.4 It was highlighted that the *Conduct of Viva Voce Examinations for Research Degrees and Related Matters* document needed revision to fall in line with the *Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD* as follows:

- That the reference to ‘Annex’ was removed (it was no longer an Annex) and that the MPhil/PhD and MD(Res) guidance documents were combined to create a standalone document.
- That any information that now appeared in the *Regulations for the Awards of MPhil and PhD* was removed (e.g. the available viva outcomes, which have been superseded).

Action: Secretary

8 LKCMedicine Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures for Medical Students

8.1 The Committee considered the *LKCMedicine Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures for Medical Students*, to apply to all students on the joint NTU-Imperial MBBS programme from 2024-25. The updated policy was based on the existing Imperial model. QAEC.2023.78

8.2 It was noted that the proposal had been scrutinised by NTU committees as well as the Faculty of Medicine FEC. In addition, the policy needed to meet external requirements in Singapore.

- 8.3 The Committee approved the policy and procedure, noting that it would need to continue to align with the Imperial policy, should any changes be made.

9 Undergraduate Annual Monitoring

- 9.1 The Committee considered the following Faculty UG annual monitoring reports 2023-24 (reporting on 2022-23): QAEC.2023.79
- Faculty of Medicine
 - Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication
- 9.1.1 Faculty representatives highlighted areas of good practice and areas for enhancement. It was noted that the issues identified for consideration at university level will be added to the university action plan.

10 Student Surveys

- 10.1 Module Evaluation Questionnaire 2023-24 Spring Term summary QAEC.2023.80
- 10.1.1 The Committee noted the Spring term summary, noting the low response rate of 15% (1,890 student responses out of 12,527 eligible students). The Committee noted that the review of the MEQ would take place in 2024-25 with changes taking effect from 2025-26.

11 Degree Outcomes Statement

- 11.1 Updated University Degree Outcomes Statement
- 11.1.1 It was noted that the sector outcome data had not yet been updated for 2022-23. As a result, the University Degree Outcomes Statement would be presented at a future QAEC, along with the B3 outcome data report.

12 Subcommittees

12.1 Programmes Committee

- 12.1.1 The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the report from the Programmes Committee meeting held ('offline') on 27 March 2024. QAEC.2023.83
- 12.1.2 The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the report from the Programmes Committee meeting held on 23 May 2024, including approval of the following new programme proposals: QAEC.2023.84

Department of Earth Science and Engineering

- MSc Renewable Energy with AI and Data Science: Geology and Geophysics (READY)
- October 2025 delivery

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

- MSc Sensor Systems Engineering
- October 2025 delivery

CHERS/EDU

- Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Education
- August 2024 delivery

- 12.1.3 It was noted that there was some concern around the proliferation of pathways and streams, and that a position paper would be presented at the next RPRC, for consideration by QAEC in September 2024.
- 12.1.4 It was noted that the idea to i360 review included short courses, and that the short course documentation would be updated to accommodate a number of different proposed microcredentials, included those that would be delivered as part of the Institute of Extended Learning.
- 12.1.5 It was clarified that not all proposed major modifications required consideration by the Admissions Subcommittee, and that further clarity would be provided by updating the *Programme and Module Modification Procedure*.

Action: Secretary

12.2 Regulations and Policy Review Committee

- 12.2.1 The Committee noted the reports from the RPRC meetings held on 17 April and 15 May 2024. QAEC.2023.85

(i) Academic transcript

It was noted that the university was reviewing the content of the academic transcripts issued to students, with a view to improving the information available.

The following recommendations were set out by RPRC, and endorsed by QAEC:

- Inclusion of the module code as well as module title, to ensure accurate identification of the module instance taken by the student.
- Inclusion of the module FHEQ code.
- Inclusion of the module grade.
- Clear designation of modules taken for extra credit, which were not part of the degree programme.
- Rebrand of the transcript in line with Imperial's new visual identity.

QAEC agreed to defer discussion to Senate as to what the primary purpose of the transcript should be at the university; whether a transcript should reflect all attempts at assessment as comprehensively as possible, or whether it should reflect only the assessment attempts which have contributed towards a student's degree requirements.

Action: Secretary

12.3 Postgraduate Research Quality Committee

QAEC.2023.86

12.3.1 The Committee noted the report from the PRQC meeting held on 22 May 2024 and approved the following updates to the Research Degree Precepts for 2024-25:

- Precept 1 - to facilitate gender balance in interview panels and/or opportunities to meet other students as part of the interview process.
- Precept 10 - to align with research degree supervision policy that all students must have access to a Senior Tutor (PGR) who is an academic member of staff.

Research Degree Precepts 2024-25 to be published.

Action: Secretary

13. OIA Annual Report / Sector Updates

13.1 The Committee received updates from across the Higher Education sector as follows:

- (i) Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Annual Report – 2023
- (ii) Quality Assessment Report – BSc Computing at Bradford College

QAEC.2023.87.i
QAEC.2023.87.ii

13.2 The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair on the Office for Students Strategy Workshop

14. Admissions Subcommittee

14.1 The Committee noted the minutes for the Admissions Subcommittee meeting held on 28 February 2024

QAEC.2023.88

15 Chair's actions

15.1 The Committee noted the following Chair's actions:

- (i) The Committee noted suspensions to regulations from 8 April to 23 May 2024.
- (ii) Expanding access to the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine – a proposal to amend the admissions criteria to include UCAT
- (iii) Faculty of Medicine for the 2025 entry requirement for MSc Molecular Medicine to be increased from a minimum 2:2 to a minimum 2:1

QAEC.2023.89

QAEC.2023.90

QAEC.2023.91

16 Any other business

16.1 It was noted that the Admissions Subcommittee would explore the mechanisms by which the principles of misconduct would be applied to applicants, with a view that a policy would be developed to manage such cases appropriately.

- 16.2 The Chair thanked student representatives, subcommittee chairs and secretaries.
- 16.3 The Committee noted that Professor Jennifer Quint would replace Professor Yun Xu as Chair of PRQC.

17 Dates of QAEC meetings 2024-25

- 17.1 The Committee confirmed the following dates of QAEC meetings to be held in 2024-25:
- Wednesday 18 September 2024, 10:05-12:00
 - Wednesday 20 November 2024, 10:05-12:00
 - Wednesday 5 February 2025, 10:05-12:00
 - Wednesday 12 March 2025, 10:05-12:00
 - Wednesday 16 April 2025, 10:05-12:00
 - Wednesday 4 June 2025, 10:05-12:00