Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 17th April 2018

Present
David Ashton, Academic Registrar – Chair
Nicholas Burstow, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative
Dr Anita Hall, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Professor Peter Lindstedt, Senior College Consul
Luke McCrone, GSU President
Dr Edgar Meyer, Chair of Programmes Committee
Sue Smith, Faculty of Medicine representative for Martin Lupton
Claire Stapley, CLCC/CHERS representative
Karen Tweddle, Business School representative
Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Lucy Heming, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) - Secretary

In attendance
Hannah Bannister, Director of Student Services (for item 16.1)
David Parrott, Deputy Head of Admissions (for item 8)
Men-Yeut Wong, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

Apologies
Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine Representative
Professor Anthony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Veronica Russell, Business School representative

1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Announcements**	

1.1   The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted. The Chair welcomed Hannah Bannister, who was attending to speak to item 16.1, and David Parrott, who was attending to speak to item 8.

2.	**Minutes of the Previous Meetings**	QAEC.2017.50a&b

2.1   The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) meetings held on 16 January and 23 March 2018.

3.   **Matters arising from the Minutes**   QAEC.2017.50c

3.1   The Committee noted that the actions set out in the action log.

4.   **QAA Quality Code**   QAEC.2017.51

4.1   The Committee considered the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which was published in March 2018 by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA). The Code was redeveloped to ensure it could meet the requirements of divergent quality assurance regulatory systems within the different nations of the UK, including the establishment of the Office for Students (OfS) and the passing of the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) in England.

4.2   The revised Code comprises three main sections: the Code as published sets out the first two elements (expectations; practices (core and common)) and the third element (advice and guidance) will be developed during 2018. It is anticipated that a fully revised Quality Code will be published in late 2018. Members of the Quality team in Registry will be contributing to events in May through which the 'advice and guidance' will be developed.

4.3   Key points noted were:
- The streamlining of the Code to focus on 'core principles in quality assurance improve its accessibility and guarantee its fitness for purpose in an evolving regulatory landscape'
- The focus on outcomes rather than processes
- The new expectations and practices underpin the quality and standards conditions of registration that new providers will need to meet when seeking OfS registration
- The potential relationship between metrics, such as those used in the Teaching Excellence Framework and demonstrating engagement with the Quality Code
- The tension between ensuring students achieved successful outcomes and grade inflation
- The importance of managing applicant and student expectations, particularly around their need to attend regularly and engage fully in their studies in order to achieve successful outcomes

4.4   There would be an onus on the College to demonstrate how it meets the expectations and engages with the practices. This would involve collecting, reviewing and responding to relevant data; having clear and robust records and processes; seeking cross-College understanding on issues such as how the College determines what are successful outcomes.

4.5 Each year the College sets out in a statement its policies and procedures for assuring Quality and Standards. It was agreed this would be reviewed in the light of the revised Code as currently published and on an ongoing basis as further supporting layers to the Code are produced.

ACTION: Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

5. **2018/19 Academic Regulations** QAEC.2017.52

5.1 The Committee considered a paper outlining the approach to updating the regulations for 2018/19. It was noted that, although a new single set of regulations would be in place for 2019/20, the existing regulations would run out over a number of years so the College needed to ensure they were fit for purpose.

5.2 An initial review of the existing regulations had identified significant similarities between them as well as some gaps, which had proved difficult in providing clarity when responding to complaints and appeals. This meant there was an opportunity for increasing alignment, reducing duplication and filling in the gaps from 2018/19. Revised regulations would be considered at the next Committee meeting.

ACTION: Secretary

5.3 The Committee agreed the regulations 'BSc and MSci (students registered before 1 October 2007)' should be removed as there were only two students registered under these regulations, both of whom were due to complete their studies in summer 2018. This would need to be recommended to Senate.

ACTION: Secretary

5.4 To progress the 2019/20 single set of regulations, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee and the Vice-Provosts' Advisory Group for Education would be held on 14 June 2018 and chaired by the Provost.

6. **Assessment Feedback Timelines** QAEC.2017.53

6.1 The Committee considered an evaluation by Imperial College Union's Deputy President (Education) of the College's performance in meeting the turnaround times for providing feedback as set out in the Policy of Academic Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students, which was implemented in 2017/18. This set out a general principle of returning feedback within 10 working days, with variations possible dependent on the type of assessment.

6.2 There was no central mechanisms for recording this data. Therefore the audit was based on data on assessment deadlines and expected feedback turnaround schedules, provided by departments, and actual feedback

turnaround times provided by student representatives, along with qualitative feedback in some cases. The audit only looked at data relating to the first year of undergraduate programmes.

6.3 During the audit period, 207 pieces of data were collected across the College and overall 89% of feedback was returned within stipulated timeframe. However, there were variations between Faculties.

6.4 In 22 cases, feedback had been provided late. Out of these, in only five instances had students been informed why the feedback would be late. This was an area which required improvement.

6.5 The audit paper had been out for discussion in the Faculty Education Committees and they had committed to following up with particular areas to improve practice. This would include broader discussions around assessment and marking burdens as well as more targeted discussions on providing clear messages to students where feedback was late. One area that made it difficult to meet the deadline was where there was the use of multiple markers and/or external markers.

6.6 It was noted that the audit was limited as it had considered only first year undergraduate feedback turnaround times. It was explained that this was due to there being easier accessibility of data for the first year. Discussions would take place with the Union's new Deputy President (Education) about whether the audit would be repeated and whether this would look at other years, however, the onus should be on faculties and departments to audit their own data.

ACTION: Secretary

6.7 The Business School would carry out its own audit of feedback turnaround times but was experiencing difficulties in obtaining the data.

6.8 The importance of providing quality feedback as well as timely feedback was reinforced.

7. **Collaborative Provision: Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas** QAEC.2017.54

7.1 The Committee considered and approved the proposal to support exceptionally the development of collaborative provision between the Faculty of Medicine and the Lee Kong Chain School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), Nanyang Technology University (NTU) for awards of Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert), Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) and Master of Science (MSc).

7.2 This was exceptional as the College regulations stated that collaborations would not normally be considered for PGCert and PGDip awards. However, given the existing relationship with LKCMedicine, the clear demand for postgraduate Medicine qualifications and the difficulties for potential students to sign up to and complete a full Master's programme given they are already full-time health care professionals with a number of demands on them.

7.3 The Committee considered whether the College's current approach to collaborations might be reducing the College's ability to take advantage of opportunities and enabling its competitors to reap the benefits. This was a concern but equally the Committee emphasised the need to ensure the quality and standards of its provision by being careful about whom it decided to partner with. Therefore the Committee would not recommend at this stage to change the regulation restricting collaborations for PGCerts and PGDips.

7.4 The Committee agreed to recommend that Senate endorse the decision to permit exceptionally the development of collaborative provision with LKCMedicine at the level of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma as part of a nested Master's degree.

ACTION: Secretary

8.   Admissions

8.1   Postgraduate Master's Level Entry Requirements (2019-20)   QAEC.2017.55

8.1.1 The College undertook an annual review of entry requirements for postgraduate programmes. Following this review, a small number of changes were being recommended which would come into effect for 2019/20 entrants.

8.1.2 The Committee approved, on the recommendation of the Faculties, the entry requirements for Master's programmes for 2019/20 entry, noting that these would appear in the postgraduate prospectus which was due to be published shortly.

8.1.3 There were some ongoing discussions about further changes to entry requirements in relation to foreign language requirements for specific postgraduate business programmes and English language entry requirements for a specific postgraduate programme in Medicine. If changes were needed, these would be brought to the Committee.

8.2   PGT Special Case Admissions   QAEC.2017.56

8.2.1 Admissions provided a special report to the Committee with an analysis of PGT students admitted to the College via the special case procedure from

years 2011-2016. The report included contextual information on: applicants' qualifications, previous institution and admitted grades vs college requirements, as well as applicants' Imperial degree outcomes.

8.2.2 The special case and degree outcome analyses conducted this year informed one proposed change to postgraduate entry requirements for Nigeria from 2019 entry which was agreed by QAEC. The change removed the requirement for postgraduate applicants with a MBBS from Nigeria to have achieved a minimum pass mark of 65%.

8.2.3 It was noted that the review was a positive contribution and provided opportunity for further analyses moving forward, for example looking at correlations between grade attainment and degree outcome and why some applicants did not register at the College or did not complete their target award. The small sample size made this more difficult but looking into correlations or other statistical analyses would assist in enhancing this process in the future.

ACTION: Deputy Head of Admissions

8.2.4 The analyses conducted this year would inform additional 'contextual information' sections in 'Registry's guidance on international qualifications' for departments for 2019 entry. It was noted that this would be a useful and welcomed development.

9. Surveys

9.1 Autumn 2017 UG SOLE and PGT SOLE results   QAEC.2017.57

9.1.1 The results from the Autumn term SOLE surveys for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students were provided for information. SOLE results considered at Faculty Education Committees in the Spring term would be discussed with students at upcoming Staff-Student Liaison Committees and responded to fully through the annual monitoring process.

9.1.2 SOLE surveys take place at module level; the collated data is provided at Department, Faculty and College level. The real value of the data from SOLE is at module level and aggregating the data up can make it difficult to draw robust conclusions. However, the aggregated data could help identify areas needing further exploration, particular where results were noticeably different from College or Faculty averages or where results within a subject area varied considerably from previous years, though changes in participation rates and differences between student cohort sizes could affect comparison of results.

9.1.3 It was confirmed that Faculty Education Committees were following up on the results through relevant staff. It was reinforced that colleagues found the feedback from students through SOLE valuable for informing reflections on provision and the student experience.

9.2 **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey**

9.2.1 The Committee noted the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is open from Thursday 17 May to Friday 15 June 2018.

10. **Programmes Committee (PC)** QAEC.2017.58

10.1 The Committee considered the latest report from the Programmes Committee from the meeting held on 27 March 2018.

10.1.1 Modifications to the following programmes were approved:

Business School
- BPES Programmes - Electives, with effect from October 2018
- MSc Climate Change, Management and Finance, with effect from September 2018
- MSc Finance, with effect from September 2018
- MSc Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management, with effect from September 2018
- MSc International Health Management, with effect from September 2018
- MSc Management, with effect from September 2018
- MSc Strategic Marketing, with effect from September 2018
- Joint Honours (with Management Pathways), with effect from October 2018

Faculty of Engineering
- MEng Computing (Security and Reliability), with effect from October 2019
- MSc Computing (Artificial Intelligence) & MSc Computing (Machine Learning), with effect from October 2018
- UG Geology, Geophysics and Earth Science, with effect from October 2018
- MEng Chemical Engineering, with effect from October 2018
- MSc Advanced Chemical Engineering; MSc Advanced Chemical Engineering with Biotechnology; MSc Advanced Chemical Engineering with Structured Product Engineering; MSc Advanced Chemical Engineering with Process Systems Engineering, with effect from October 2018
- BEng Mechanical Engineering; MEng Mechanical Engineering; MEng Mechanical Engineering with a Year in Industry; MEng Mechanical Engineering with a Year Abroad; MEng Mechanical Engineering with a Year in Industry and a Year Abroad;
- MEng Mechanical Engineering with Nuclear Engineering and Year in Industry; MEng Mechanical with Nuclear Engineering, with effect from October 2018

- MSc Engineering Fluid Mechanics for the Offshore, Coastal and Built Environments, with effect from October 2018
- MEng Aeronautical Engineering; MEng Aeronautical Engineering with a Year in Industry; MEng Aeronautical Engineering with a Year Abroad, with effect from October 2018
- BEng Design Engineering & MEng Design Engineering, with effect from October 2018

Faculty of Medicine
- MSc Allergy, with effect from October 2018
- MSc Health Data Analytics, with effect from October 2018
- MBBS/BSc Medical Sciences with (Specialism), with effect from October 2018
- BSc Medical Biosciences, changes to come into effect from October 2018 and October 2019

10.1.2 In-year minor modifications to the following programmes were approved with immediate effect:
- MBA – Suite of Electives
- MSc Investment & Wealth Management

10.1.3 The following programmes were withdrawn with immediate effect
- MSc |PG Diploma |PG Certificate Process Automation, Instrumentation and Control
- MSc Computing (Artificial Intelligence)
- MSc Computing (Machine Learning)
- MEng Mathematics and Computer Science (Pure Maths and Computational Logic)
- MEng Mathematics and Computer Science (Computational Statistics)

10.1.4 The following programmes were suspended with immediate effect
- MRes Biomedical Sciences (Toxicological Sciences) (suspended for 2 years)
- MSc Innovations in Clinical Cardiology (suspended for 1 year)

10.2 It was noted that the full Programmes Committee minutes/papers can be found at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC.

10.3 The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team would undertake annual monitoring of minor modifications in August 2018. This would include a review of the number of Chair's Actions taken during the year.

11.   Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)   QAEC.2017.59

11.1 The Committee considered the latest report from the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee from the meeting held on 21 February 2018.

11.2   The Committee agreed to recommend to Senate the outcomes of the Precept Reviews for the Department of Chemical Engineering and the Department of Medicine.

ACTION: Secretary

12.   Faculty Education Committees (FEC)

12.1   The Committee considered the following reports from the Faculty Education Committees:

- Business School Education Committee – 28 February 2018
- CLCC/CHERS Education Committee – 9 March 2018
- Engineering Education Committee – 22 November 2017, 28 February 2018
- Medicine Education Committee – 5 March 2018
- Natural Sciences Education Committee (NSEC) – 28 February 2018

QAEC.2017.60
QAEC.2017.61
QAEC.2017.62a,b
QAEC.2017.63
QAEC.2017.64

12.2   It was noted that that the FEC minutes/papers can be found at:
..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC.

13.   Learning and Teaching Committee Report

13.1   The Committee received a verbal report on the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 22 March 2018.

13.2   Items discussed included the review of the RCUK PhD funding process; progress with the subject-level TEF pilot; and updates on the Curriculum Review process including student engagement and space requirements for supporting new ways of learning and teaching.

14.   School of Professional Development

14.1   The Committee noted the decision by Provost's Board to recommend the dissolution of the School of Professional Development. This proposal would be presented to Council for formal ratification.

15.   Chair's Action

15.1   The Committee noted actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting.

16.   Any Other Business

16.1   Student Death Protocol   QAEC.2017.65

16.1.1   The Committee considered the revised Student Death Protocol.

16.1.2   The current student-focused element of the College's Death Protocol had become out-of-date following changes to a number of key roles. In addition, over the course of the past year, unfortunately the College had cause to refer to the protocol and found it to be practical in many ways but insufficient in giving guidance to departments or to individuals who might not be involved in such matters every time they arise.

16.1.3   The protocol aimed to set out individual, service and department responsibilities to ensure that:
- anyone who is notified of the death (or potential death) of a student has guidance as to the next steps
- all those who are involved in responding to a death understand their responsibilities and how they link with other parts of the College and ICU
- the College response is as sensitive to family / next of kin circumstances as possible while supporting members of its community
- there is a co-ordinator who can help support the process according to the protocol while also adjusting to individual circumstances

16.1.4   The protocol had undergone extensive consultation with different stakeholders. In recent months, the essence of the revised protocol had been used and no issues had arisen but it would be kept under review and updated as and when required.

It was recommended that a few changes were made to the Protocol, including recognising the particular circumstances that might arise when a death happened in a private area such as a hall of residence; managing communications when the College approach is not to make public statements until after a coroner's report had been issued; and, making reference to the regulations for aegrotat awards. The Director of Student Services would produce a final version taking into account these recommendations.

ACTION: Director of Student Services

16.1.5   The Committee agreed to recommend the protocol for referral to Senate for final approval. The current version of the Student Death Protocol was linked with the protocol for staff. It was suggested that these should be separate but that the staff-facing protocol might benefit from review in future.

ACTION: Secretary

16.2   **Student Protection Plan**   QAEC.2017.65

16.2.1   One of the conditions of registration with the Office for Students was evidence of a plan to manage the risks to students and protect their studies and interests as far as possible in the event of the College being unable to fulfil its duties, for example in running a programme. The draft Student

Protection Plan was presented to the Committee for consideration ahead of its submission to Provost's Board at the end of April 2018.

16.2.2 The Committee noted some other scenarios which could affect students' ability to continue their studies, such as damage to or loss of accommodation and facilities. Members were requested to provide further feedback directly to the Secretary as soon as possible in order for their feedback to be taken into account. These would be relayed to the Director of Strategic Planning before the paper went to Provost's Board.

ACTION: Members; Secretary

16.2.3 It was suggested that the level of risk assigned to loss of supervisory staff and to teaching staff responsible for a specialist area of provision may be undervalued. It was noted that Departments may wish to use the Curriculum Review process to ensure that they had alternatives in place to ensure delivery of specialist modules currently reliant on a single person.

17.   Dates for Meetings

17.1   Remaining meeting dates for 2017-18

17.1.1 Tuesday 22nd May 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Thursday 14th June 2018, joint meeting with VPAGE

17.2   Proposed meeting dates for 2018-19

17.2.1 Wednesday 3 October 2018, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 7 November 2018, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 19 December 2018, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 30 January 2019, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 13 March 2019, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 10 April 2019, 10.00-12.00
Wednesday 5 June 2019, 10.00-12.00

18.   Reserved Area of Business

18.1   There was no reserved business.