

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 28 April 2015

Present:

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Dr Lorraine Craig, Associate Dean Learning & Teaching, 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 Sue Smith, Chair of the Medical Studies Committee, Faculty of Medicine
Professor Richard Thompson, Senior College Consul

In attendance:

Mr Chris Harris, Quality and Educational Development Manager
Mrs Clare Scheibner, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)
Mr Daniel Smith, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) – secretary

Apologies:

Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Ms Nida Mahmud, Graduate Students' Union President
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)
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 Tuesday 3 March 2015 and noted the QAEC action plan.

QAEC.2014.64

QAEC.2014.64a

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

3.1 Minute 2.2.3 - Professor Gibson confirmed that the postgraduate meeting of QAEC and chairs of the Staff-Student Committees would be divided between postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students.

3.2 Minute 6, Our Principles - Professor Humphris confirmed that the review of 'Our Principles' would be delayed in order 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.

3.3 Minute 10, Competency Standards – the committee noted that Mr Dean Pateman would provide a progress report on his review of Competency Standards at the next meeting of the Committee.

3.4 Minute 12, Academic Integrity Working Groups – Mr Pateman confirmed that terms of reference for two ‘task and finish’ groups related to the Academic Standards Framework were nearing completion.

4. Periodic Review Reports

4.1 Periodic Review of Master’s Programmes in the National Heart & Lung Institute Qaec.2014.65

The Committee considered the reviewers’ reports, Chair’s summary and departmental response.

4. The review panel made 8 recommendations for the Department and the Chair of the panel confirmed he was satisfied with the Department’s response to these.

4.1 The Committee was pleased that the overall impression of the programmes under review was very positive. The reviews found the programmes to be of high quality and well organised. Staff were found to be enthusiastic and committed to delivering excellent education and training in their field. In general, students reported that the programmes met or exceeded their expectations and they were very appreciative of the training that they receive. They commented particularly on the contributions from external lecturers and the pastoral support provided, even for overseas students.

4.2 The panel identified some aspects that were felt to be open to improvement and the Committee considered the recommendations and the NHLI’s responses.

4.3 *NHLI Postgraduate Education Strategy* – At the time of the review, the panel found that there was a lack of coordination between different programmes and the panel were not convinced that NHLI had a coherent overall strategy for the future development of its Master’s level provision (including the balance between science and vocational programmes). Since the review the Institute has been supporting the development of the Faculty of Medicine Taught Postgraduate Harmonisation Strategy and has developed a postgraduate taught strategy focussing on a small suite of clinical and science-based programmes which have a clear business case and match the Institutes research and scientific strengths. Since the periodic review the Institute has been granted Senate approval for a further programme, the MSc in Genes, Drugs & Stem Cells – Novel Therapies. The Institute is also intending to seek approval for one further programme, the MSc in Genomic Medicine.

4.4 *Need for greater collaboration between courses* - at the time of the review the panel recommended that collaboration between the course leaders could lead to better integration and harmonisation of the programmes as

well as an improvement of documentation and more consistency in the operation of the programmes and the use of e-learning. Since the review the Institute has reinigorated the Postgraduate Taught Committee to ensure focussed, termly meetings. The development of the Faculty of Medicine Taught Postgraduate Harmonisation Strategy has also enabled greater collaboration between programmes and the PGT Committee is identifying additional areas for shared teaching.

4.5 *Benefits of standardised course documentation* - At the time of the review, the panel did not get the impression that the programmes were well integrated with each other, and this was reflected in the lack of coordination between them and the different style and quality of documentation, for example, the panel considered the programme handbook for Preventive Cardiology to be excellent, but those for the other programmes did not follow a similar template and could be significantly improved. The panel recommended that coordination between programmes and a standard format for student handbooks could improve this. The Department confirmed that programme documentation would be addressed by the revised PGT committee.

4.6 *Requirement for cohort building* - The panel reported that students lacked a sense of belonging outside of their individual programme. Most students did not identify themselves as being part of the NHLI, Faculty or College, leading to a feeling of isolation in some cases. The Department confirmed that cohort Identity would be enhanced by the introduction of new social events such as a shared welcome and induction event, annual lecture and prize-giving and spring and winter social events. The Committee was sympathetic to the difficulties of building a cohort identity as a perennial issue for Faculties which ran a diverse range of provision and academic programmes on multiple sites.

4.7 Additionally, the panel identified a small number of specific points about each of the programmes and these were adequately addressed in the Departments' response.

4.8 Overall, the Committee was satisfied with the Departments action to the recommendations and congratulated the NHLI on an overall positive review.

5. Academic Standards Framework

The Committee noted that Senate had approved the establishment of a Steering Committee to oversee the Academic Standards Framework. Invitations to join the group would be issued shortly and the group would meet for the first time in the Summer Term.

5.1 The Committee further noted that 'task and finish' groups would be established which would also meet for the first time in the Summer Term.

6. QAA Institutional Audit Action Plan: Summary of action taken to address recommendations from the QAA Institutional Audit 2010 QAEC.2014.66

The Committee considered a summary of action taken to address

recommendations from the last QAA Institutional audit.

Mr Harris confirmed that the harmonisation of BSc programmes in the Faculty of Medicine was now completed.

- 6.2** Subject to Senate endorsement, the committee agreed to publish the summary of action taken to address recommendations on the College website as required by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Post Meeting Note

The summary of action taken to address recommendations from the QAA Institutional Audit 2010 has now been published on-line and is available at: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/qaareview>

7. Update on Student Consultation Framework

Mr Loose provided the committee with a verbal update on the Student Consultation Framework which was first introduced in April 2014.

- 7.1** The Committee noted projects undertaken by the College which had used the student consultation framework including the Department of Chemical Engineering, the Library, the Department of Chemistry and the Business School.

- 7.2** The committee noted that the framework was a positive and powerful tool which encouraged clear planning and expectation setting.

8. KIS Data & Programme Specifications

QAEC.2014.67

Mr Smith provided the Committee with an update on the programme specification template implementation project. The Committee noted that this work was being conducted alongside the collection of raw data for the Key Information Set.

- 8.1** The committee noted that a number of departments had already returned the Key Information Set data and that programme specifications were now in development.

- 8.2** The committee noted that the exercise had enabled positive conversations regarding quality assurance and the relationship between institutional, national and European frameworks as well as opportunities for 'myth-busting'.

9. Minutes of the Short Course Quality Committee

QAEC.2014.68

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Short Course Quality Committee held Friday 27 March 2015.

- 9.1** Professor Humphris & Mr Pateman agreed to discuss the governance and reporting lines of the Short Course Quality Committee with Professor Emma McCoy, the Committee's Chair.

Action: Debra Humphris & Dean Pateman

- 10. Chair's Action**
The Committee received a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting.
- 10.1** The Committee noted that the Chair had taken action to reduce the entry requirements of the Faculty of Medicine Summer School as it had become apparent that these had been set too high.
- 11. Arrangements for Considering Master's Level External Examiner Reports** QAEC.2014.69
The Committee noted the revised process for consideration of external examiner reports which would take place with immediate effect.
- 12. Surveys**
- 12.1 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015**
The Committee noted that PRES was launched on Monday 2 March and would close on Thursday 14 May 2015. Departments were encouraged to promote completion of the survey.
- 12.2 World Class Supervision Survey** QAEC.2014.70
The Committee noted the results of the World Class Research Supervision Survey.
- 12.2.1** The committee noted the importance of postdoctoral researchers as part of the PhD student's supervisory team and the value of the Early Stage Assessment and Late Stage Review for the student.
- 13. Strategic Review of Imperial Horizons** QAEC.2014.71
The Committee noted a strategic review of the Imperial Horizons Programme which was commissioned by the Vice Provost (Education)
- 13.1** The Committee noted that following the departure of the Head of the Centre for Co-curricular Studies that the search for a replacement was in progress.
- 13.2** The committee was generally supportive of the recommendations however there was some concern regarding recommendation 14 that the timetabled slot for languages should be split.
- 13.3** Professor Humphris confirmed that no recommendations would be taken forward for implementation without appropriate consultation.
- 14. Quality Assurance Agency Updates**
The Committee noted that the QAA are currently consulting on updated Benchmark Statements for 'Languages & Linguistics'. The Centre for Co-curricular Studies has been informed.
- 15. Update on HEFCE Review of Quality Assurance Arrangements**
The Committee noted that the College had submitted a response to the HEFCE commissioned survey on the cost of quality assurance arrangements.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16. PTES Action Plans

The Committee noted that the remaining PTES action plan had been received from the Department of Life Sciences and would be considered by the Master's Quality Committee (Medicine, Life Sciences & Professional Development) in June.

17. Master's Quality Committees (MQCs)

The Committee noted that the July meetings of the Master's Quality Committees for Business Engineering & Physical Sciences (BEPS) and Medicine, Life Sciences & Professional Development (MLSPD) had been cancelled as the schedule of business no longer required a meeting at this time. Any Unexpected items would be moved to an alternative meeting or, if appropriate, considered by Chair's action.

18. Dates of meetings 2014-15

02 Jun 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 18 May 2015
14 Jul 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 29 Jun 2015

19. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS

There were no items of reserved business.