Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 17th May 2016

Present
Professor Sue Gibson, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Dr Lorraine Craig, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Engineering
Professor Des Johnston, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Dr Martyn Kingsbury, Director of Educational Development, EDU
Professor Emma McCoy, Chair of the Programmes Committee
Dr Edgar Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes, Business School
Mr Chun-Yin San, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

In attendance:
Mr Chris Harris, Head of Programme Management

Apologies:
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Mr Liucheng Guo, Graduate Students' Union President
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul

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

2.   Minutes of the Previous Meeting   QAEC.2015.55
        The minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC)   QAEC.2015.55i
        held on Tuesday 15th March 2016 were approved.

2.1 The Committee noted progress on the action for the Our Principles
        document. The document would be revised after the completion of the
        College's review of culture and gender equality. It was expected that the
        findings of the review would be reported to the Provost's Board in
        September and the Our Principles document could then be considered in
        light of these at the following QAEC meeting.

3.   Matters arising from the Minutes
3.1 Further to Minute 3, it was noted that the Faculty of Medicine second
        marking pilot proposal had been delayed whilst further testing was carried
        out.

3.2 Further to Minute 5, it was noted that the Policy for the Admission of
        Applicants who disclose Criminal Convictions would be considered at the

next meeting in July 2016.

3.3 Further to Minute 7.2.1, it was noted that a response from the School for Public Health on provision of statistics training was outstanding and being chased.

3.4 Further to Minute 11, it was noted that an update on the On-line module pilot for Faculty of Engineering Undergraduate Students – Corporate Finance module - would be considered at the July 2016 meeting.

4. **Terms of Reference and Membership for QAEC for 2016-7**   QAEC.2015.56
The Committee approved the amendments terms of reference and membership for QAEC for 2016-7 subject to the following amendment:

To advise the Senate on the requirements and procedures for the quality assurance **and assessment** of Higher Education.

5. **Academic Standards Framework**
The Committee received a verbal update regarding the Academic Standards Framework and noted that a hybrid credit framework had been agreed. It was noted that the Admissions Task and Finish Group would be considering any issues which would arise from the introduction of the new framework.

5.1 It was further noted that the intended time line for implementation in 2017-8 was very tight and that it was therefore the intention to put agreed principles for the regulations to the June 2016 Senate with the full regulations following at the October 2016 Senate.

6. **Admissions Policies**

6.1 **Special Cases for Admission to Postgraduate Programmes of Study**   QAEC.2015.57
Following discussion at the last meeting, the Committee considered a proposal for a revised policy for the consideration of special cases for admission to postgraduate programmes with effect from 2017-8 entry.

6.2 For applicants who hold a degree which is below a UK Lower Second Class Honours, it was agreed that a special case would only be valid for someone who has appropriate and relevant work experience. Departments would be able to decide what is appropriate in terms of the number of years and relevance of the work experience (i.e. work experience does not need to be post – graduation and there would be no requirement for a minimum number of years). It was further agreed that these special case decisions should continue to be overseen by the Faculty Education Committees (FEC).

6.3 It was agreed that a Special Qualifying Examination (SQE) will be required where an applicant is not a graduate but has professional qualification(s) which fall below the College's minimum entry requirement; or where an applicant is a graduate from an institution where the College has no previous experience or knowledge following an assessment by Admissions. These applicants should have relevant work experience.

6.4 It was further agreed that special case procedure should make it clear that the FEC decides whether a programme can set Special Qualifying Examinations (SQE), that the FEC approves the panel for approving the SQE and the FEC oversees the SQE decisions, as at present.

6.5 It was noted that these changes would have significant impact on the Business School in particular and it was agreed that the Business School should discuss arrangements with Admissions shortly.

Action: Mel Peter/ Chrystal Grant

7. Language Learning Policy QAEC.2015.58
The Committee considered the introduction of a Language Learning Policy with effect from entry 2017-8 and noted that the policy had been written in response to a recommendation made as a result of the periodic review of CLCC.

7.1 It was felt that the document was a statement of current practice rather than a policy and it was agreed that the CLCC should be asked to revise and re-submit the policy for further consideration at the September meeting. In particular, QAEC requested the following amendments:

- Clarification of the term "multilingualism" in the context of the policy
- Inclusion of details surrounding how decisions were made on what languages would a be provided
- Inclusion of details about when languages would be provided (e.g. how they would be timetabled and for which groups of students)
- Inclusion of details relating to how much language provision different groups of students could expect (e.g. year aboard students)
- Clarification of whether the "general public" and/or staff would attend the same language sessions as students of the College
- Clarification of which parts of the policy related to students, staff and the general public.

Action: Dr Roberto Trotta

8.1 Department of Computing – UG Periodic Review 2013-4 QAEC.2015.59
The Committee considered the follow up report from the UG Periodic Review of the Department of Computing.

8.1.1 It was noted that the Department's Periodic Review had been considered by QAEC in October 2014 (minute 4.1.4) and as part of the outcome of those discussions the Department had been was asked to report back to QAEC in a year's time on its progress in meeting the recommendations in the review.

8.1.2 The Committee were satisfied that all the recommendations made in the review had been satisfactorily addressed.

8.2 PGT Periodic Review 2014-5 for Centre for Environmental Policy QAEC.2015.60*
It was noted that this review would now be considered at the July 2016 meeting of the Committee.

9. **Vice Provost (Education) Staff-Student Forum/QAEC** QAEC.2015.61
The Committee considered the themes covered at the PhD and Master's level Staff-Student Forums held on 14th and 15th March 2016 respectively. It was hoped that the notes would be circulated at Staff-Student Committees as a means to stimulate discussion and share good practice. It was noted that the ICU was committed to increasing representation of postgraduate students.

10. **External Examiners Reports for Master's level programmes 2014-5** QAEC.2015.62
The Committee considered the summary of External Examiner Reports on Master's Level Programmes in 2014-15.

10.1   It was noted that many of the concerns in the report had been raised in previous years and these were now been taken forward as part of the Academic Standards Framework project.

10.2   It was further noted that the summary had been circulated to the Faculty Education Committees for further discussion.

11. **Programmes Committee** QAEC.2015.63
The Committee approved all of the recommendations in the latest reports from the Programmes Committee from meetings held on 22nd March and 12th April 2016.

11.1   It was noted that the full he Programmes Committee minutes/papers were available at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC

12. **Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)** QAEC.2015.64
The Committee approved all of the recommendations in the report from the PRQC held on 10th May 2016 and further agreed to recommend for Senate approval changes to the Regulations for PhD and MPhil to better articulate the arrangements for students who register for a standalone 12 month MPhil programme with effect from 1st October 2016.

12.1.   It was noted that the PRQC had now received all but two (Materials and Aeronautics) of the academic departmental action plans from PRES 2015.

12.2   It was noted that the full PRQC minutes/papers were available at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PRQC

13. **Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**
The Committee noted the latest reports from the Faculty Education Committees and approved the in-year changes for LKC students.

Business School Education Committee (BSEC) – 9th March 2016	QAEC.2015.65
Engineering Education Committee (EEC) – 9th March 2016	QAEC.2015.66
Medicine Education Committee (MEC) – 1st April 2016	QAEC.2015.67
School for Professional Development Education Committee (SPDEC) – 1st March 2016	QAEC.2015.68

Post Meeting Note

Following the meeting it was clarified by the Faculty of Medicine that the in-session curriculum changes to Year 4 of the LKC Medicine programmes were, in fact, not in-session but would be implemented for the Year 4 cohort starting the year in August 2016.

13.1   It was noted that the latest Natural Sciences Education Committee report (NSEC) had been considered at the previous meeting.

13.2   It was noted that the full FEC minutes/papers were available: at:..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC

14.   Surveys

14.1   Spring Term 2016 UG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation results   QAEC.2015.69
The Committee considered the UG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation results for the Spring Term 2016 survey and the BPES/Horizons module results for Autumn Term 2015 and Spring Term 2016.

14.1.1   It was noted that SOLE survey results were likely to become much more important with the advent of the new quality assurance arrangements and the introduction of the TEF.   It was noted that both new assessment methods would be data and metric driven.   Faculties were asked to encourage their departments with low participation rates to promote the importance of the surveys to their students further.

14.2   Spring 2016 PG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation results   QAEC.2015.70
The Committee considered the PG SOLE and MODES lecturer/module evaluation results for the Spring Term 2016 survey.

14.3   MODES progress report - Provide a progress report on the 2nd year of the   QAEC.2015.71
The Committee considered a progress report on the second year of the of the MODES pilot.   QAEC agreed that the Business School could continue with MODE for postgraduate taught programmes in place of the PG SOLE lecturer/module evaluations until such a time as the College revised its survey strategy.   It was further noted a decision regarding participation in UG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation for the proposed BSc programme would be needed in due course.

14.4   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 – Consultation Response   QAEC.2015.72
The Committee approved the College's draft response to the Higher Education Academy consultation on possible changes to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) with no changes.

14.4.1   It was agreed that the Committee were not supportive of publishing PRES results and the creation of a league table.   It was further noted that the ICU would be submitting their own response to the consultation.

Post Meeting Note
The response was submitted on behalf of the College.

15.   **Chair's Action**

The Committee noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting.

16.   **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)**

16.1   It was noted that the QAA was consulting on the following subject benchmark statement:

Physics, Astronomy and Astrophysics (for bachelors and integrated Master's awards)

16.2   It was noted that the QAA was planning to publish a series of position statements tackling big issues in Higher Education and that the first QAA Viewpoint publication concerned Plagiarism.

17.   **HEFCE Quality Assurance Updates**

17.1   The publication of HEFCE's **Revised approach to quality assessment in higher education** was noted and the Committee receive feedback on a meeting with HEFCE from Ms Judith Webster.

17.1.1 Ms Webster reported that, as the College was scheduled to undergo Higher Education Review by the Quality Assurance Agency in 2016-17, the College had been invited to attend a meeting to discuss the transition arrangements for those institutions which had been expecting the QAA HER next year. Further information would be forthcoming but HEFCE would be conducting an Annual Provider Review. As part of this, the current Annual Accountability Review return would be amended to include statements on quality assurance. The revised Annual Accountability Return would be due by 1 December 2016.

17.2   The following HEFCE blogs which also contain further information on HEFCE's plans were noted:

New way of assessing quality puts ball in sector's court

Degree standards: so what have they got to do with HEFCE?

Degree standards: doing what it says on the tin

17.3   **HEFCE publishes key data for English Higher Education**

It was noted that HEFCE had published an update to its annual publication HE in England, on the English higher education (HE) sector. The release, the first of a series of updates for 2015-16, featured data on undergraduate education, postgraduate education and the HE workforce for 2014-5. http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,107670,en.html

Key findings in the publication were:
- Numbers of FT UK and EU UG students up by 4%
- Numbers of FT UK and EU PGR students up / PT also increased

- International (non-EU) students made up 61 per cent of all entrants to PGT programmes. The numbers of Chinese students increased by 2.4 per cent, but those of Indian entrants fell by 11 per cent.
- Numbers of male and female lecturers are relatively equal, but the proportion of women declines in more senior academic positions. 49% of lecturers were female, but only 39% of senior lecturers were female and just 24% of professors were female.

18. **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area - 2015**
The Committee noted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – 2015.
http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/

18.1 It was noted that HEFCE have suggested that this document may replace the QAA Quality Code for established providers

19. <u>**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**</u>

19.1 **Master's programmes with intermediate awards – registration for part-time students**   QAEC.2015.74
The Committee considered a proposal to allow part-time Master's level students to register for the award they intend to exit.

19.1.1 The Committee agreed to recommend the change to the regulations for Senate approval with effect from 2017-8 entry.

19.2 **Approval of EngD programmes in the new governance structure**
The Committee noted that there was a gap in the new governance structure concerning how new EngD programmes should be approved. As EngD programmes include a taught element, often equivalent to a full Master's programme, it was agreed that proposals should be considered by the Programmes Committee and that the Programmes Committee terms of reference should be updated accordingly at the next meeting.
Action: Sophie White

19.3 **Preferred Bidders**
It was noted that HEFCE had announced their preferred bidders for their new quality assurance operating model as follows:
- Gateway into the higher education system (Lot 1): QAA
- Verification of a provider's approach to its own review processes (Lot 2): QAA
- Support for governing bodies (Lot 3): the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
- Unsatisfactory quality investigations (Lot 4): QAA
- Degree standards (Lot 5): the Higher Education Academy
- International activities (Lot 6): QAA

19.4 **HE White Paper: Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice**

The content of the white paper was discussed.

20.   **Dates of Meetings 2015-6**
19th July 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building –
papers by 5th July 2016

21.   <u>**RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**</u>
There was no reserved business