Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 19th July 2016

Present
Professor Sue Gibson, Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), 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
Mr Chun-Yin San, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

In attendance:
Mr Luke McCrone, Imperial College Union, incoming Deputy President (Education)
Mr Richard Monk, Assistant Registrar (Senate and Review)
Ms Karen Tweddle, Head of Teaching and Quality, Business School

Apologies:
Mr David Ashton, Academic Registrar
Mr Liucheng Guo, Graduate Students' Union President
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul
Dr Edgar Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes, Business School
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services

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.2015.75
	The unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 17th May 2016 were approved and Committee actions were noted.	QAEC.2015.75i
3.	**Matters arising from the Minutes**	
	The Committee discussed matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.	
3.1	Further to minute 3.2, concerning the Policy for the Admission of Applicants who disclose Criminal Convictions, it was noted that consideration of this item had been postponed until the September meeting.	
	Action: Ms Mel Peter	
3.2	Ms Karen Tweddle reported that discussion had not yet taken place	

between the Business School's Admissions Team and the Registry Admissions Team regarding the new arrangements for the consideration of special case entrants (Minute 6.5) but it was hoped a meeting would take place soon.

Action: Ms Mel Peter/Business School

4. **Terms of Reference for QAEC sub-committees**   QAEC.2015.76
The Committee considered the terms of reference for the QAEC sub-committees: the Faculty Education Committees (FECs), the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) and the Programmes Committee (PC) for 2016-7.

4.1 The Committee agreed to recommend the changes to the PRQC and PC for Senate approval.

4.2 In addition to the proposed changes to the FEC terms of reference, the Committee agreed to change

- To approve changes to the general and additional entry requirements for existing programmes of study

To

- To recommend for QAEC approval changes to the threshold and additional entry requirements for existing programmes of study

It was further noted, that should QAEC agree, it was no longer necessary to use special cases panels to approve special qualifying examinations for individual candidates (see item 16 Paper QAEC.2015.91), then FEC would not need to appoint special case panels. The Committee agreed to recommend the changes to the FEC terms of reference for Senate approval.

5. **Academic Standards Framework**
Professor Sue Gibson reported that the Academic Standards Framework Project was making good progress and that Ms Judith Webster had been asked to put together a timeline for the implementation of the project.

6. **Periodic Review**

6.1 **PGT periodic Review for the Centre for Environmental Policy (CEP) for**   QAEC.2015.77
2014-15
Mr Richard Monk presented that the PGT periodic Review for the Centre for Environmental Policy (CEP) for 2014-15.

6.2 The Committee were pleased to note the many examples of good practice and in particular were impressed with the strong and continuing relationship the CEP maintained with their alumni.

6.3 The Committee noted that the CEP had been working on amendments to the MSc in Environmental Technology programme to address the

recommendations in the report. CEP had originally planned to implement changes from 2016-7 but on further reflection had decided they needed a longer lead in period to develop the programme further. The changes will therefore be submitted to Programmes Committee in 2016-7 with the changes coming into effect for the 2017-18 entry.

6.4   QAEC agreed that CEP should provide an update in May 2017 to confirm that this work had been completed.

Action: CEP

7.   **Imperial and University of Sao Paulo Joint PhD Programme – Proposed Change to Qualification Type (joint to dual award)**   QAEC.2015.78
Mr Richard Monk presented a recommendation to re-designate the joint PhD with University of San Paolo (USP) as a dual award.

7.1   QAEC heard that the Imperial-USP programme is currently defined as a joint PhD, leading to a joint award conferred by both Imperial and USP (i.e. a single degree certificate awarded jointly by both institutions). Students on the programme are expected to undergo a private examination at Imperial and a public examination at USP in order to be awarded a joint degree. Under the terms of the agreement with USP a student passing one examination and not the other will be considered to have met the requirements of the institution at which they have passed and will therefore be eligible to receive a single PhD award from that institution (but not a joint degree). This differs from practice seen in other Imperial Joint PhD programmes (e.g. HKU, NUS, NTU) where the final examination is conducted jointly by Imperial and the partner institution, governed by a single set of examination regulations and leading to the award of a joint degree to successful students. It was further noted that new guidance published by QAA categorised the Imperial/USP arrangements as a dual award rather than a joint award (i.e. students would receive two separate degree certificates on from each institution).

7.2   The Committee were not comfortable with the recommendation to change the designation of the award. It was commented that rather than being two separate examinations, the USP public examination and the private examination at Imperial were two phases of the same assessment for the same body of work and to view this differently would result in double counting of work. The Committee were also mindful of changing the designation of the Imperial-USP programme on the grounds that it may set a precedent for possibly allowing future dual awards which the Committee felt it could not support.

7.3   It was agreed that in the short term, that the programme should continue as originally conceived but that a review of the programme and collaborative arrangements should be instigated. The review of the programme should consider whether the two examinations could be harmonised/jointly assessed and/or whether the clause which allowed students who failed an examination from one of the partners to receive an award from the other institution should be removed.

7.4   It was also agreed that, if possible (i.e. the agreement was about to expire), recruitment to the programme should be suspended whilst the nature of the collaboration was being reviewed.

Post Meeting Note
The Imperial/USP agreement had only recently been extended for a further 5 years. It would therefore not be practical to suspend recruitment without invoking the termination clause although amendments could be made to the agreement with the agreement of both parties.

8.   Receipt of External Examiner's Reports and Termination of Appointments – Proposal to Introduce Cut-Off Dates   QAEC.2015.79
The Committee approved the proposal to introduce formal cut off dates for the submission of external examiner reports with effect from 2016-7.

8.1   The cut off dates would be:
- 1 October annually – for undergraduate reports
- 1 February annually – for postgraduate reports

8.2   External examiners who did not submit at this time would be at risk of having their appointment terminated. In the event of non-submission, the Registry's External Examining Team would work with departments on a case by case basis to agree the course of action required.

9.   Business School sample second marking pilot   QAEC.2015.80
The Committee considered the end of sample second marking pilot report from the Business School and considered a proposal to allow the Business School to continue with sample second marking indefinitely.

9.1   The Committee reviewed the report and noted there had been improvements in marking practice across the School and this had received favourable comment from the external examiners.

9.2   QAEC considered the proposal to continue with the sample second marking noting the proposal covered all examinations for all Business School Master's programmes with the exception of the Finance suite MSc programmes.

9.3   QAEC agreed the Business School could continue with sample second marking until the implementation of the new academic regulations. It was agreed that second marking would be discussed as part of the Academic Standards Framework and as part of this discussion a decision could be taken about whether sample second marking should be allowed across the College.
Action: Assessment Task and Finish Group

9.4   It was agreed that the individual programme specifications and handbooks for each of the affected programmes should clearly show that the second marking regulation had been suspended.
Action: Business School

10. **Student Name Changes Post-Graduation**   QAEC.2015.81
The Committee agreed, to recommend for Senate approval, a
modification to General Regulation 5.4 concerning name changes on
degree certifications with immediate effect. The modification would
allow changes to student's name after graduation if the name change was
related to a gender reassignment.

11. **Duties of External Examiners**   QAEC.2015.82
The Committee agreed, to recommend, for Senate approval, the
amendments to the Examination Regulations and supporting documents
concerning the role of external examiners in disputes in marking with
effect from 2016-17. The modifications clarified that external examiners
should comment on but should not adjudicate in disputes between
markers.

12. **Statement of Quality Assurance (QA) procedures for 2016-17**   QAEC.2015.83
The Committee approved the statement of quality assurance procedures
for 2016-17. It was noted that the 2016-17 QA procedures would mostly
be considering 2015-16 data and that the document would likely be an
appendix to the proposed annual QA report to Senate.

13. **Programmes Committee**   QAEC.2015.84
The Committee noted the latest reports from the Programmes Committee QAEC.2015.84i
(PC) meetings held on 30th May and 30th June 2016. It was noted all
recommendations had been approved by Chair's Action on behalf of
QAEC. It was further noted that for the 2016-17 academic session PC
meeting dates had been aligned with QAEC and that the PC Chair would
run through the recommendations made in the report for consideration
and approval by QAEC prior to presenting to Senate.

13.1 Professor McCoy reported that many of the weaknesses identified with
new programme proposals had been the wording of Learning Outcomes
and the EDU had agreed to work with Registry to provide guidance for
departments in this area. Departments were also being encouraged to
contact the EDU at an early stage in the programme development process
for support.

13.2 It was noted the Programmes Committee minutes/papers could be found
at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC

14. **Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**
The Committee noted the latest reports from the Faculty Education
Committees (FEC).

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

Business School Education Committee (BSEC) on 7th June 2016   QAEC.2015.85
It was noted that there had been discussion about access to examination
scripts and it was clarified that there had been a Management Board

decision in 2011 which withdrew students' access to their scripts (access had been under supervision only). It was further noted that under the Data Protection Act 98 students have no right of access to their scripts, once submitted to their examiners, at any time. The College is therefore under no obligation to make available either the actual scripts or copies of them. Students do have a right of access to the written comments made by examiners, whether internal or external, on or about students' examination scripts or written work assessments, however, students need to make a subject access request (and pay a fee) to do this. http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/legal-services-office/data-protection/further-guidance/guide-2---exam-records/

It was noted that the release of provisional marks was being considered by the Assessment Task and Finish Group.

Engineering Education Committee (EEC) on 25ᵗʰ May 2016   QAEC.2015.86
The EEC report was noted.

Medicine Education Committee (MEC) on 6ᵗʰ June 2016   QAEC.2015.87
QAEC approved the following LKC changes:
- Year 4 curriculum documentation
- Assessment Regulations
- Guidelines for External Examiners
- Procedure for Consideration of Representations concerning decisions of Boards of Examiners
- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures for Students
- Admissions Policy and Procedures
- Student Registration: Unsatisfactory Academic Progress policy

Natural Sciences Education Committee (NSEC) on 1ˢᵗ June 2016   QAEC.2015.88
The NSEC report was noted.

It was further noted that the latest report from the School for Professional Development Education Committee (SPDEC) meeting had been received at the previous QAEC meeting.

15.   Surveys

15.1   Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2016   QAEC.2015.89
The Committee noted the participation rates and College level results for PTES 2016.   The Committee were pleased to see an increase in participation and improvements in all areas with the exception of Assessment and Feedback. It was further noted that the Strategic Planning Department were currently working on including PTES (and PRES) results in ICA (as for NSS).

15.1.1 The Committee received, as a late paper, HEA's benchmarking report. It   QAEC.2015.89i
was noted that it was a stated College aim to be in the top quartile for all surveys.   It was further noted the ICU would publish their response to the results in the coming months.

15.2   HEA Surveys
The Committee considered an update from the HEA and which HEA surveys should be run at which intervals.

15.2.1   The Committee agreed PRES should continue to be offered as a biennial survey and that progress against action plans should be checked during the gap year.

15.2.2   The Committee considered whether the College should run PTES annually. It was noted that metrics for postgraduate students would become increasingly important and there had been a stated intention to included postgraduate student metrics in the TEF from Year 4.   However, the Committee were mindful that the metrics had not yet been agreed.   The Committee agreed, that for the time being, PTES should remain a biennial survey with progress against action plans being checked as part of annual programme monitoring.

15.2.3   The Committee considered whether the possibility of running UKES could be investigated further.   The Student Reps reported support for the content of questions used in UKES and it was agreed that they should work with Ms Emma Caseley to see if similar questions could be introduced to the existing Student Experience Survey (SES).

A**ction: Student Reps and Emma Caseley**

15.3.4   The Committee agreed that the Bristol-online-Survey (BOS) software should be continued to be used for PTES and PRES.

15.3   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015
QAEC noted that the PRQC has now received the action plans from all but two academic departments (Aeronautics and Materials) following the PRES 2015 survey.   It was agreed that this should be reported to Senate and included in the new annual quality report.   It was further agreed that the departments should be continued to be chased for a response.

16.   Special Case Panel for Special Qualifying Examinations (SQE) for
Postgraduate Programmes
The Committee considered how special cases for SQE should be considered with effect from 2017-18 entry.

16.1   The Committee were reminded that they had recently agreed that departments could be responsible for certain types of special case for admission decisions rather than referring them to a Special Cases Panel. The Committee noted that under the revised arrangement Special Cases Panel approval was now only required for those applicants which were not graduates but which had a 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).   The Committee noted that only two such applicants were considered by the Special Cases Panel in 2015-6.

16.2 The Committee agreed that these types of special cases could also be considered by the department but that the Faculty Education Committee (FEC) should continue to approve which programmes could offer SQEs and the FECs should also have oversight of the numbers of applicants being set SQEs and their outcomes annually. It was further noted that the terms of reference from the FECs would be updated accordingly.

17. Role and Responsibilities for Personal and Academic Tutor   QAEC.2015.92*
It was noted that changes to the role and responsibilities document for the post of Personal and Academic Tutor was currently under consideration by a working party. The working party was also considering the Senior Tutor document. It was hoped that the final documents could be presented to the September meeting of QAEC.

19. Business School end of pilot report regarding offering two online   QAEC.2015.94
modules as part of BPES programme to Faculty of Engineering students
The Committee noted the end of pilot report and the Faculty of Engineering confirmed they were happy with the outcomes of the pilot. The Committee further noted that they had previously agreed to an extended pilot for a second year with three online modules in 2016-17.

20. ICU Student Impact Report – 2015-16 Term Two
The Committee noted the ICU's Student Impact Report for 2015-16 Term Two.
https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/impact/impact-report-201516-term-two

21. Quality Assurance Update   QAEC.2015.95
The Committee noted feedback from the recent QAA Reviewer's Conference and the Academic Registrar's Council Quality Practitioner's Meeting.

22. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates
The Committee noted the following announcements from the QAA:

22.1 QAA transformation moves to next phase
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/qaa-transformation-moves-to-next-phase#.V4T6N_krKUk

22.2 Quality Code Enhancement Project
A Quality Code Enhancement Project had been set up to capture and explore examples of how universities and colleges are enhancing the quality of their provision, supported by the Quality Code.
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/the-quality-code-enhancement-project#.V4T7AfkrKUk

23. HEFCE Quality Assurance Updates
23.1 The Committee noted the Registry's Record Team were currently drafting   QAEC.2015.96*
the College response to the consultation on detailed changes to the KIS from 2017. The consultation followed on from the earlier HEFCE review

of information about learning and teaching, and the student experience in December 2015.   The deadline for responses was Tuesday 26th July 2016 and the full consultation could be found at:
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/unikis/consultations/
A copy of the final response would be circulated after the meeting.

23.2   QAEC noted the College response to the call for evidence on accelerated courses and switching university or degree.   The response had been compiled by Strategic Planning with input from the QA team.   QAEC.2015.97

23.3   QAEC noted the memorandum of assurance and accountability between HEFCE and the institutions it funds. It was noted that the memorandum should be read in conjunction with the 'funding agreement' for each institution, which gives specific conditions, funds available and educational provision agreed in return for those funds. Quality Assurance arrangements were covered on page 10.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/201612/

23.4   The Committee noted that the following HEFCE website which contains further information on HEFCE's preparation for TEF:
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,109112,en.html

24.   **HESA Consultation: Principles And Future Requirements For The UK's Public Interest Data About Graduates**   QAEC.2015.98
The Committee noted College's response to the HESA consultation.
https://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/publishing/consultations/NewDLHE_Consultation_May_2016.pdf.
The response had been led by Strategic Planning with input from the QA and Careers Service.

25.   **BIS Updates**
25.1   QAEC noted the College response to the Teaching Excellence Framework Technical Consultation. The response had been led by Strategic Planning with input from across the College including the QA team.   QAEC.2015.99

25.2   It was noted that BIS had published their provisional list of eligible providers for TEF Year One and that Imperial is included in the list and therefore has the choice to either participate in the TEF or to opt out.

25.3   **The student journey – from teenage to middle-age (speech)**
The Committee noted Jo Johnson, Universities and Science Minister, called on universities to seize the opportunity to give students more choice and better quality teaching in a speech at the Higher Education Policy Institute's Annual Conference on 9th June 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-student-journey-from-teenage-to-middle-age

26.   **Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) updates**
The Committee noted that the 2016 Student Academic Experience Survey had been published by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and revealed that, while 85% of

full-time undergraduates at UK institutions were satisfied with their course, just 37% of them perceived they got good value for money. http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2016/06/09/students-demand-better-value-money-nine-10-students-not-want-higher-fees/

27.   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
There was no other business.

28.   **Dates for Meetings 2016-7**
Tuesday 20th September 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 6th September
Tuesday 8th November 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 25th October 2016
Tuesday 10th January 2017, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 20th December 2016
Tuesday 4th April 2017, 10:00 – 12:00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 21st March 2017
Tuesday 23rd May 2017, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room. 58 Prince's Gate - papers by 9th May 2017

29.   **RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**
There was no reserved business.