Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Minutes from the meeting held on
Wednesday 20 September 2023

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
Prof Jonathan Mestel, Senior College 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
Chris Kerr, Education and Quality Assurance Coordinator, Faculty of Natural Sciences

Apologies
Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine representative

1.   Welcome, apologies and announcements

1.1   The Chair welcomed attendees to the first QAEC meeting of the academic year, including the
         following new members:
         - Dr Cloda Jenkins (replacing Prof Richard Green as Business School Representative)
         - Jordon Millward (replacing Chengning Yao as ICU PGR Representation Chair)
         - Yi Yang (replacing Jason Zheng as ICU Deputy President (Education))

         Apologies for absence were noted.

2.   Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1   The Committee confirmed the minutes of 7 June 2023 as an accurate record.   QAEC.2023.01

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   No matters arising.

4.   Update on QAEC actions

4.1   The Committee noted the updated action list.   QAEC.2023.02

5.   QAEC terms of reference, constitution and membership

5.1   The Committee recommended to Senate the following updates to the QAEC terms of reference,   QAEC.2023.03
         constitution and membership for 2023-24:
         - Minor changes to the terms of reference to provide clarity on the existing remit of the
           Committee.
         - New members as noted in minute 1.1.

6.   Annual monitoring

6.1   PGT Annual Monitoring Faculty Reports 2022-23 (reporting on 2021-22)   QAEC.2023.04

6.1.1   The Committee considered the Faculty level reports, including areas of good practice,
         commendable achievements, and recommendations for action at College level. These had been
         incorporated into the PGT Annual Monitoring College Report 2022-23 (reporting on 2021-22), as
         noted in 6.2.

6.1.2   The Committee received verbal summaries from Faculty representatives, and noted the
         following comments:

         (i) Business School
         Examinations were being delivered back on campus, which had led to issues with space, and the
         required power to accommodate bring your own device exams. Online proctoring would
         eliminate the power issue but further exploration would need to be undertaken in this area.

         (ii) CLCC/CHERS
         The MEd University Learning and Teaching programme continues to offer a foundation from
         which participants can make a significant contribution to the College, and the wider HE sector, in
         the area of learning and teaching. However, participants are finding it difficult to negotiate
         sufficient time away from their Departmental commitments to fully engage with the
         programme.

         (iii) Faculty of Engineering
         A number of problematic areas were identified as follows: Banner, and a proliferation of local
         systems; MEQ; study spaces; access to DAS; academic regulations; College website updates; and
         student casework timelines.

(iv) Faculty of Natural Sciences
Significant work had been undertaken to support student mental health. Challenges included staff workload and space issues.

(v) Faculty of Medicine
Issues included student casework timelines, English language competency, and the VLE.

6.1.3   The ICU PGR Representation Chair highlighted that an area where student satisfaction is low, as evidenced in NSS scores, was organisation and communication. It was reported that some satellite sites tend to have more issues with receiving relevant communications.

6.1.4   Following previous QAEC meetings, the Chair reiterated that the student casework team was in the process of recruiting and restructuring. The Faculty of Engineering representative thanked the casework team for efficiently processing the majority of academic misconduct cases whilst the team was still under resourced.

6.2   PGT Annual Monitoring College Report 2022-23 (reporting on 2021-22) and Annual monitoring College summary of issues   QAEC.2023.05
    QAEC.2023.06

6.2.1   The Committee considered good practice across the College as well as College level issues raised by Faculties, including the following:

- Insufficient support for space sharing
- Issues with facilities and AV support
- Issues with room bookings
- Insufficient support for online invigilation
- Issues with Blackboard
- Issues with data quality in Banner
- Issues with the MEQ
- Concern over existing modification deadlines
- Agreement that the existing annual monitoring process was no longer fit for purpose
- Delays with student casework timelines
- A request for College PGT term dates to be agreed and published
- Out of date information on study webpages
- A request to reintroduce a PGT Open Day
- Issues with shuttle buses

6.2.2   The College level summary of issues will be circulated to service providers for response. Where issues fall within the remit of a committee of working group, the relevant secretaries will be contacted. Responses from service providers and/or committees would be reported to FECs in the Spring Term.

Action: Secretary

6.3   Review of Annual Monitoring - Programme Monitoring Task and Finish Group

6.3.1   The Committee previously agreed that the Annual Monitoring process undertaken for UG and   QAEC.2023.07
         PGT programmes was no longer fit for purpose and required urgent review. To support the
         review, it was proposed that a Task and Finish Group was established to oversee the process
         and ensure there was input from across College. The Committee considered the proposed terms
         of reference. The Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) provided feedback pre-
         meeting that it would be appropriate to recognise the workload of key staff involved in
         programme monitoring and how the feedback loop was closed.

6.3.2   The Committee considered the results from a data collection exercise, which set out
         competitors' existing review processes across the sector. In addition, a number of proposed
         scoping questions were noted, which would be discussed in detail by the Task and Finish Group.

6.3.3   It was agreed that the intention of the review was to adopt a fresh approach to programme
         monitoring, with the aim of creating a process that met external regulatory requirements and
         internal objectives, supported programme teams to evaluate provision, and identified areas for
         development and enhancement. Members agreed that it was essential that the College
         continued to meet the OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration but that a new monitoring
         process also needed to be appropriate and useful for the College.

6.3.4   The Committee approved the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group and the
         proposed membership, noting that the QA Team would follow up post-QAEC with Faculties to
         confirm the membership. Faculties would be free to propose the most appropriate members for
         the group, which was expected to be DUGS or DPS, but could be Education Managers.

Action: Secretary

**6.5   Annual monitoring: a framework proposal from the Faculty of Medicine. A request to run a
         Faculty pilot in 2023-24**

6.5.1   The Committee considered a proposal from the Faculty of Medicine to pilot a new process for   QAEC.2023.08
         annual monitoring for 2023-24 (reporting on 2022-23), subject to the agreement of all Faculty of
         Medicine PGT programme teams. The new process would involve the completion of module
         reports and programme reports. The following benefits were identified:
         • Adaptation to Faculty of Medicine PGT circumstances
         • A focus on the module and programme, rather than the department
         • A more appropriate and accessible evidence base for the sections of the revised
           template
         • Clearer local 'ownership' of the review and its action plan and a reduced sense of
           compliance
         • A distributed effort in compiling the report
         • An adapted timeline to align with the College deadline for major modifications

6.5.2   The Committee approved the proposal to run a pilot, which would feed into the College's review
         of annual monitoring. The Committee recommended that the Faculty of Medicine considered
         how any good practice identified could be scaled up.

6.5.3   The QA Team would liaise with Faculty of Medicine to clarify the support required and
        how the outcome of the pilot would inform a College level summary this academic year.

Action: Secretary

7.   Student Surveys

7.1   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023 College results summary   QAEC.2023.09

7.1.1   The Committee noted the following PRES 2023 benchmarking reports:
        - Imperial Overall Ranking
        - Imperial vs Global Institutions
        - Imperial vs Russell Group Institutions
        - Imperial vs London Institutions
        - Imperial vs pre-1992 Institutions

7.1.2   The College's global rankings, produced by AdvanceHE, were noted in the following PRES
        measures:
        - Overall (second quarter)
        - Supervision (lowest quarter)
        - Resources (10th overall)
        - Research culture (second overall)
        - Community (highest quarter)
        - Progression (third quarter)
        - Responsibilities (third quarter)
        - Support (highest quarter)
        - Research Skills (second quarter)
        - Professional Development (highest quarter)

7.1.3   In line with the 2021 PRES, the College required improvement in the area of supervision. It was
        noted that supervision was a challenging area to address as there were often line management
        implications and, in turn, HR policies and procedures that could apply in areas of
        underperformance.

        The Graduate School would undertake further PRES analysis, which would be considered by
        QAEC on 22 November.

Action: Laura Lane

7.1.4   It was confirmed that Departments would receive Department level data in due course, with
        guidance on how to complete PRES action plans, as per previous years.

Action: Secretary

7.2   Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) 2022-23 College summary results

7.2.1   The Committee noted the following MEQ response rates and agreed that these drastically needed to be improved:

	2021-22		%	2022-23		%	% change
	Total Responses	Total Questionnaires		Total Responses	Total Questionnaires		
Autumn	16261	62861	26	12349	70439	18	-8
Spring	7140	48321	15	8394	74611	11	-4
Summer	1103	6521	17	1295	21257	6	-11

7.2.2   The Committee noted the following MEQ results, which were broadly in line with the previous academic year:

College level across question categories

Question Categories	UG	Change	PG	Change
Teaching Delivery	78%	-1%	84%	0%
Assessment and Feedback	67%	0%	76%	0%
Engagement with Staff and Students	78%	-1%	85%	-2%
Access and Support	81%	-2%	88%	-1%

'Change' indicates the percentage point change from 2021-2022
Percentage of respondents answering 'definitely agree' and 'mostly agree'

7.2.3   The Committee agreed that some of the MEQ issues previously discussed, such as the slow processing of data and poor availability of results, could be mitigated to some extent by implementing the recommendations of the MEQ Review Panel (considered and approved at Senate on 28 June 2023, Paper 22). However, QAEC agreed that, as the current questionnaire had been designed in line with a brief for module evaluation only, the College needed to clarify the purpose of the MEQ and, if both module evaluation and lecturer evaluation needed to be captured then the platform would need to be re-configured. This would require further engagement with the supplier.

It was agreed that the MEQ Review Panel would reconvene in 2023-24 to consider further updates for 2024-25.

Action: Secretary

7.3   Annual surveys calendar 2023-24

7.3.1   The Committee noted the calendar and approved the following 2023-24 MEQ dates:

Term	UG College Term Dates	MEQ Opening Date	MEQ Closing Date
Autumn	30 September 2023 – 15 December 2023	29 November 2023	3 January 2024
Spring	6 January 2024 – 22 March 2024	6 March 2024	10 April 2024
Summer	27 April 2024 - 28 June 2024	12 June 2024	17 July 2024

8.   Degree Classification Algorithms

8.1   The Committee considered department responses as to which PGT degree classification algorithm would be adopted for each programme from October 2023, from the following available options (approved at Senate on 1 March 2023, Paper 11):

    i.   Programme Overall Weighted Average meeting the threshold mark

    ii.   Programme Overall Weighted Average **and** designated final major project mark meeting the relevant threshold mark (current algorithm)

    iii.   Threshold mark required to be met in the designated research element/final major project and in the weighted average score of the taught part of the programme.

8.2   The following Faculty summary was noted:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Total
CLCC/CHERS	2	1	-	3
FoE	4	23	41	68
FoM	19	22	1	42
FoNS	24	15	7	46
ICBS	21	-	1	22
Total	**70**	**61**	**50**	**181**

8.3   It was confirmed that the QA team would update all programme specifications in line with the Faculty responses.

Post meeting note - the following text has been added to the programme specification template: Your degree algorithm provides an appropriate and reliable summary of your performance against the programme learning outcomes. It reflects the design, delivery, and structure of your programme without unduly overemphasising particular aspects.

9.   Sub-Committees

9.1   Regulations and Policy Review Committee

9.1.1   The Committee considered the report from the RPRC meeting held on 21 June 2023. No items required approval.   QAEC.2023.13

9.2   Programmes Committee

9.2.1   The committee considered the report from the extraordinary Programmes Committee meeting held on 25 July 2023.   QAEC.2023.14

9.2.2   QAEC approved the recommendations from the Programmes Committee, including the following new programme proposal:

PC.2022.97 National Heart and Lung Institute
MSc Bioscience Futures: Communication, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- New programme proposal from the National Heart and Lung Institute to introduce the programme for delivery with effect from October 2024.

9.2.3   The Chair of the Programmes Committee raised concerns that there was a significant number of late modification proposals submitted. It was felt that, in cases where a new module leader joined the programme team, module changes should not routinely be proposed in the first instance.

9.2.4   It was agreed that the communication around modifications would be reviewed by the QA team in order to support staff plan for changes to modules and programmes, particularly those who were new to the College.

Action: Secretary

10.   Admissions Subcommittee (ASC)

10.1   The Committee noted the minutes of the ASC meeting held on 26 June 2023.   QAEC.2023.15

10.2   The Committee noted the draft minutes of the ASC meeting held on 7 September 2023.   QAEC.2023.16

11.   Chair's Business

11.1   The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Academic Quality and Standards, including the following items:

(i) Office for Students Quality Assessment Visits
The Office for Students had published the findings of two assessment visits to providers which focussed on the quality of Business and Management programmes at two Universities. The visits included on-site visits and teams of independent academic experts considering a range of evidence, including from staff and students. The OfS stated that these reports had two purposes: firstly to drive improvement in the individual institutions where assessment teams had found concerns and secondly to prompt all Universities and Colleges to consider the quality of their programmes and to act where necessary to make improvements ahead of potential regulatory action.
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/quality-and-standards/quality-assessments/assessment-reports/
The Office for Students was expected to announce the area(s) for their next quality assessment visits in due course.

(ii) English Quality Assurance Report
The QAA had published a report which considered how the system that oversees quality in English higher education could be strengthened.
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/news/an-english-higher-education-quality-system-fit-for-the-future.pdf?sfvrsn=309cae81_5

12.   Any Other Business

12.1   No other business reported.

13.   Dates of QAEC Meetings 2023-24

13.1   The Committee confirmed the dates of the QAEC meetings to be held in 2023-24:
- Wednesday 22 November 2023
- Wednesday 7 February 2024

- Wednesday 13 March 2024
- Wednesday 10 April 2024
- Wednesday 5 June 2024