

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 May 2016 at 3pm
in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, the King's Buildings**

Present:	
Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Director of Quality Assurance, CMVM, Assistant Principal Researcher Development
Dr Linda Bruce	Head of Quality Assurance Team, Academic Services
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Erin Jackson	Co-opted Member: Distance Learning & E-learning
Dr Sheila Lodge	CMVM Head of Academic Administration
Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator
Dr Robert Mason	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Humanities and Social Science
Dr Gordon McDougall	Dean (Quality Assurance), College of Science and Engineering
Barry Neilson	Director, Student Systems
Professor John Sawkins	External Representative. Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), Heriot-Watt University
Dr Claire Phillips	School Representative (Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Dr Inger Seiferheld	School Representative (Business School), College of Humanities and Social Science
Dr Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development
Imogen Wilson	Vice President (Academic Affairs), EUSA
In attendance:	
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee
Nichola Kett	Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Apologies:	
Ronnie Millar	Director, Student Counselling Service, Representative of Student Services
Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed members and noted apologies.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 20 April 2016 were approved. QAC 15/16 6A

3. Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising. QAC 15/16 6B

4. Convener's Business

4.1 Membership

The Convener noted that several members would come to the end of their term of office in the summer.

Action: Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) to consider co-opted membership of Senate committees. Committee Secretary to report decision back to co-opted members of SQAC.

4.2 Postgraduate Research Student Progression Milestones

It was noted that the online annual progression monitoring system would become mandatory for all Schools as of September 2016.

4.3 Thematic reviews of Student Support Services

The Convener reported that 2016-17 would be used as a fallow year in order to review the process, particularly in the context of the review of the quality framework.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Quality Framework Review

5.1.1 Final proposals for approval QAC 15/16 6C

The Committee received and discussed the final proposals for revisions to the University's Quality Framework. It was noted that the framework review aimed to streamline processes while deriving maximum benefit from quality activity. The proposals had been developed following consultation with all schools and colleges, including individual consultation with each school. The proposals had been finalised following the latest consultation with schools and colleges in April 2016. Key changes included:

- School annual quality report deadline - the deadline had been moved to August following feedback from some schools indicating that June was too early for submission.
- Monitoring courses within annual programme monitoring – stronger emphasis on the programme as the key level for reflection and action due to the fact that students enrol on programmes, and the University's awards are conferred at programme level. Individual courses are discussed within the context of the programme, however reporting will be at the programme or programme cluster level. It is stressed that programmes can be reviewed in clusters as suits the local context – there is no requirement to report on individual programmes.

- School quality model template – an earlier version of the framework proposed introducing a quality model template for schools to describe their quality processes. With a view to streamlining this, it was now proposed that schools should give a brief description of how their annual programme and other monitoring processes work, describing how things happen in the annual cycle leading up to production of the annual quality report. This would also help ensure continuity between school director of quality appointments.
- Student engagement – clarification that student engagement would continue as present but would include developments in response to the ELIR recommendation.
- College role – consultation ongoing with the Deans on the College role, particularly in regard to the draft college annual report template focusing on actions in progress and planned as a result of college oversight of school reporting. Stronger emphasis on the role of peer review.

Action: TH and NK to liaise with schools to discuss the alignment of the Internal Review and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) reviews.

Resolved: The Committee **approved** the new Quality Framework.

5.1.2 School Annual Quality Report Template

QAC 15/16 6D

The Committee received and discussed the revised template for the school annual quality report for implementation in 2016/17. It was noted that the revision formed part of the review of the University's quality framework. The following was noted:

- The template would be used for all credit-bearing taught and research provision. To make this more explicit, the guidance would include the suggestion to break down each section into taught and research themes, and 'Outcomes of accrediting body reviews' would be added to data sources and scope clarified as being all credit-bearing provision.
- Some schools commented on the accuracy of centrally produced data. Getting data reports right is a two-way process. Schools and colleges have to be proactive in identifying issues.
- The first report in August 2017 would cover 2015/16 and 2016/17, plus an update on progress with actions from 2014/15. To make the composite report easier colleges would suggest to schools that they now start to collect issues as they emerge.

Action: College representatives to encourage schools to keep note of themes from this year to act as an aide memoire for the first composite report due in August 2017.

Resolved: The Committee **approved** the new the school annual quality report for implementation in 2016/17.

5.1.3 Annual Programme Monitoring

QAC 15/16 6E

The Committee received and discussed the template for annual programme monitoring for implementation in 2016/17. It was noted that the template formed part of the review of the University's quality framework. The following was noted:

- The template would be used for taught and research provision. To make this more explicit, the guidance would suggest that each section could be broken down into taught and research provision. Reporting on research provision should be at programme level (e.g. training, performance) rather than by individual student.
- The Deans agreed that the template should state that it covers all credit-bearing provision, including collaborative provision.

Resolved: The Committee **approved** the new the template for annual programme monitoring for implementation in 2016/17.

5.2 **EvaSys Course Evaluation Roll-Out**

QAC 15/16 6 F

The Committee received and discussed the draft Course Evaluation Policy and Questions which were being developed to support the roll-out of the EvaSys course evaluation system.

Members noted that clarification was required in regard to the moderation of the free text boxes (in cases of inappropriate comments), the use and definition of 'appropriate' (in relation to assessment methods), and the potential use of school level question banks (to ensure that data was of specific and practical use to schools).

The Committee noted that the Student Survey Unit, the Institute for Academic Development and Schools were working together on three main strands of activity to support the roll-out: case studies, descriptions and discussion of practice; online resources and guidance notes; and workshops. Consultation meetings had taken place with all Schools and the Unions during April and May 2016 and a workshop on the draft policy and question set had been held at the Senate Symposium at the end of April. Further consultation meetings would take place with college committees and the People Committee and a final version of the policy and question set would be submitted for approval at the September 2016 meeting of Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.

5.3 **Senate Committee Planning**

QAC 15/16 6 G

The Committee received and noted a paper setting out the priorities that the Senate Committees would take to planning next session, and highlighting the key points in the session at which the Committees would be able to input into the planning.

5.4 **PT System Oversight Group**

QAC 15/16 6 K

The Committee received and noted an update from the Personal Tutor (PT) System Oversight Group on activities in relation to the mainstreaming of the PT system within School QA processes.

It was noted that the first meeting of Group was held on Wednesday 18 May 2016. The Group had received and considered two reports:

1. a report highlighting the key issues in relation to the PT system drawn from the annual College/School QA reports.
2. a report on key statistical data, relating to student feedback on academic support and PT/Tutee average ratios, for each School for the year 2014-15. The data was drawn from the National Student Survey (NSS), the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES) and the Enhancing

Student Support (ESS) project survey of on-campus postgraduate taught (PGT) students.

As part of the annual QA reporting process Schools were asked to report against a baseline KPI of 80% student satisfaction with their PT experience, with the figure drawn from NSS, ESES, and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results. Where student satisfaction fell below the KPI Schools were asked to report on action initiated. The Group noted that a number of Schools were below the target KPI, of which all but one were between 70-79% (including the University as a whole at 77%). The Group agreed that more current and detailed PT performance data was required. Once this information was available further discussions would take place with Schools failing to meet the baseline KPI to determine how to achieve greater levels of consistency and higher levels of student satisfaction.

In the context of PT performance data currently available, it was noted that the Deans were satisfied that Schools had initiated actions where student satisfaction results fell below the baseline KPI. The Deans noted the following strategic issues from their review of the annual School QA reports:

- PT/Tutee ratios
A balance must be struck between the need to maintain appropriate ratios to ensure 'personal' tutoring while also ensuring that tutees were allocated to the appropriate staff to ensure the quality of the student experience. It was noted that, in general, the statistics did not indicate a correlation between high ratios and poor experience.
- Online Distance Learning (ODL)
A review of the specific needs of ODL students and staff will be held during the 2016-17 academic session.
- IT Tools
The ongoing development of the online tools supporting the PT system will need to be considered, particularly in regard to their use to schedule and record meetings.

It was noted that the Group would consider, in the context of the annual QA reports, and approve the School Personal Tutoring Statements for 2016-17 at the next meeting, to be held on Wednesday 22 June 2016.

6. For Approval

6.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses:

Final Reports:

- PPR of Biological Sciences - Final report
- TPR of Mathematics - Final report
- TPR of Psychology - Final report

QAC 15/16 6H

The Committee **approved** the Final Reports.

Feedback to Schools:

- TPR of Archaeology 2014/15 - year on response
- TPR of Informatics 2014/15 - year on response
- PPR of Health in Social Science 2014/15 – year-on response
- PPR of Online Distance Learning Programmes, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine 2014/15 – year-on response
- TPR of Oral Health Sciences 2014/15 – year-on response

QAC 15/16 6L

Action: TH and NK to consider the issues raised via the Committee reader comments and to report back to the schools concerned.

Action: TH and NK to reflect on Internal Review feedback process to Schools, in the light of the Quality Framework Review, and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

7. For Information

7.1 Annual Report to Senate QAC 15/16 6I

The Committee received and noted the annual report to Senate.

8. Electronic Business

8.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses: QAC 15/16 6J

2014/15:

- TPR Biological Sciences - Year on response.
- TPR of Music - Year on response.
- Periodic Review of Student Disability Service - Year on response

2015/16:

- PPR of Divinity - 14 week response

The Committee noted that, subsequent to the meeting, individual Members would be invited to comment on specific responses. These comments would then be consolidated by the Convener and circulated electronically to the Committee, in order to avoid undue delay to the subsequent dissemination to the relevant subject areas and support service. The comments would then be submitted to the next meeting at which point the Convenor may wish to highlight specific points for discussion.

8.2 Subject Benchmark Statements

The Committee noted that the following Subject Benchmark Statements had been circulated to the appropriate Schools:

- Draft for Consultation: [Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies](#)

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 Thursday 8th September 2016 at 2pm in Raeburn Room, Old College