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Joint Quality and Standards and Education Committee Meeting

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 09 November 2016**

Duration of meeting: **14.00 to 17.30**

Location: **S3.04, High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio - Chair
Marcus Wood	Academic Quality Directorate	Secretary (QSC)
Kirstie Ward	Academic Quality Directorate	Secretary (EDU)
Ellie Smith	Academic Quality Directorate	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Lorraine Watkins-Mathys	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Sue West	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Sue Leddington	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Joe Collins	Students' Union	Ex-officio
Jenny Wade	Students' Union	Ex-officio
Yvette Scott	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Roger Bradburn	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Ben Clayton	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Agnes Fanning	Society & Health	Nominated
Carol Pook	Society & Health	Nominated
Sabir Bashir	Society & Health	Nominated
Peter Brown	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Ruth Gunstone	Student Services Directorate	Ex-officio
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Nic Fryer	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Ash Mistry	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Rebecca Rochon	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Nominated
Ciaran O'Keefe	Society & Health	Nominated
Ian Chisolm-Bunting	Society & Health	Nominated
Daniel Dedman	Students' Union	Nominated
Alpha Collins	Students' Union	Nominated

Guests and Observers

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Marianne Whitehead	UCFB	Academic Partner
Steve Caldecott	UCFB	Academic Partner
Paula Kavanagh	Aylesbury College	Academic Partner
Charlotte Scheffmann	Accrington & Rossendale College	Academic Partner
Kath Clarkson	Accrington & Rossendale College	Academic Partner
Lisa Portland	Amersham & Wycombe College	Academic Partner

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Martha Wiekens	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Julia Williams	Society & Health	Nominated
Jayne Francis-Shama	Society & Health	Nominated
Gavin Butler	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Paul Cassell	College of Football Business	Academic Partner
Jackie Watt	Amersham & Wycombe College	Academic Partner
Alison Wheatley	East Berkshire College	Academic Partner
Jan Selfridge	Berkshire College of Agriculture	Academic Partner

Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Tim Coole	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Andreas Fabian	Design, Media & Management	Nominated

Welcome and Introductions

- 16.93 The Chair welcomed members and invited guests to the special joint meeting of the Quality and Standards and Education committees to consider the reports presented as part of the Strategic University Review and Evaluation (SURE) process.
- 16.94 The aim of the meeting was to assure through the scrutiny of the reports that the quality assurance of the awards was maintained, to identify and disseminate good practice, to identify themes arising, and areas for development.
- 16.95 It was noted that the aim of all actions for improvement were designed to enable the achievement of the challenging but achievable targets within the strategic plan; such as all subject areas performing in the top third of the National Student Survey (NSS).
- 16.96 Auditors had been assigned from each committee and were tasked with reviewing the reports with respect to the remit of the committee they were representing.

Apologies for Absence

16.97 Apologies for absence were noted and it was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

16.98 No specific conflicts were identified although it was reported that a number of the reports had been prepared by individual members.

University Progression and Achievement Statistics

16.99 The report presented an analysis of progression and achievement for 2015/2016, based on data provided by the Business Planning Directorate, census date 20 October 2016. It was agreed that consideration of the assessment process in order to facilitate earlier analysis of the data is required and will be taken forward by Quality & Standards Committee.

16.100 It was noted that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metrics will be included in subsequent reports.

16.101 The committee's attention was particularly drawn to the decline in progression rates, noting that this figure related to non-progression, rather than non-continuation rates.

16.102 It was also highlighted that the numbers of 'awards' had also decreased overall, despite improvements in collaborative partners. It was noted that one of the criteria on which retention of a tier 4 license is an 85% pass rate for students holding a study visa.

16.103 Analysis of the number of 'good' degrees, as defined by the sector benchmark of first and upper second class classifications, was below the sector average by approximately 5 percentage points however, the figures had improved from the previous year.

16.104 The analysis had identified a clear attainment gap for students classified as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) and addressing this would have a significant impact.

Action: Equality and Diversity committee to review report and identify specific actions/interventions.

16.105 It was noted that there was clear evidence that students entering with a low tariff score showed strong learning gain.

Consideration of SURE reports

16.106 Auditors of the reports were invited to share their review of the reports allocated, from their remit from either the Quality & Standards or Education Committee.

Faculty Achievement Reports

16.107 The following points emerged from the discussion of the faculty reports:

- Data provided in order to complete the reports was an improvement in previous years;
- Consideration of enabling the data to be embedded in report template, prior to dissemination should be given;

Action: Chair to liaise with Business Planning

- The template did not give specific mention or guidance relating to equality and diversity analysis of the data and in reviewing DHLE outcomes. Additional guidance was requested in relation to the expectations in the report;
- Additional support and training in the use and analysis of the data to be requested from Business Planning for report authors;

- A process of peer-review, coordinated by the Faculty Quality Coordinators, had considered the Programme Review & Enhancement (PRE) level reports, on which the SURE report was built. In this review areas of good practice and actions had been identified;
- The data set provided to partners' should be of the same specification as that provided to the faculties.

Action: QSC secretary to liaise with Business Planning

Faculty of Design, Media & Management

16.108 The report was commended for the detailed information. Particular points raised by the auditors were that:

- In some areas it was not clear how the 'loop' had been closed in areas identified for improvement;
- It was not always clear how the extensive data set related to the actions detailed in the action plan. An example given was that the auditor was aware of initiatives that has been taken that had not been included in the report;
- Analysis of data in relation to equality and diversity was limited, and that for DHLE.

16.109 In the report concerns were raised regarding the current exception reporting method for module evaluations. The Deans from each faculty supported returning to all modules requiring formal written evaluation.

Recommendation: Consideration of the requirements for module reports in the review of PRE SURE.

16.110 Agreed that auditor would liaise with the Dean regarding minor clarifications and corrections identified.

Faculty of Society & Health

16.111 Reported to be a detailed review of the performance within the faculty, with strong use of evidence to support, however as previously noted with other reports it was missing analysis of equality and diversity aspects. Particular points raised by the auditors were that:

- Not all actions identified within in the report could be easily identified within the action plan;
- Concerns raised by external examiners of the differences in the level of in-script annotation on Turnitin by markers should be reviewed by Quality & Standards Committee to agree an expected standard to be disseminated to all staff;
- There was a request from the Faculty for consideration of an institutional moderation policy, beyond that which is written in Assessment of Students;
- Clear indications of dissemination of good practice.

Diploma of Foundation Studies in Art and Design

16.112 This report was presented for consideration by the committee, rather than the usual faculty process, as the programme was subject to Ofsted inspection. Particular points raised by the auditors were that:

- Actions had been identified to improve provision;
- 'Feedback fatigue' had been identified by the students and that a specific action to address this was required;
- Greater reference to development of staff was required within the report;

- Further clarity on the accreditation and inspection regime was needed within the report, including the production of the SED.

Action: Report to be reviewed and agreed by Chair's Action

- 16.113 The committee noted that within the institution further development of knowledge and understanding relating to the needs and expectations of Ofsted programmes was required. Support for the team was offered by Accrington & Rossendale College, and accepted by the Chair.

Academic Partner Achievement Reports

Accrington & Rossendale College (ACCROSS)

- 16.114 The auditors reported that this was a good report, with SMART actions that were well evidenced.

Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA)

- 16.115 It was noted that the auditors, nor a representative from BCA had been able to attend the meeting. On review it was agreed that this report should be brought to the next meeting of QSC, once the full review and any possible amendments had been taken.

Action: Auditors to liaise with BCA and QSC secretary over the report

Amersham & Wycombe College

- 16.116 The auditors agreed that whilst the report covered most aspects, greater detail could have been provided with regards to strengths identified, and that data reporting could be improved. It was noted that retention and staff development were areas which needed further attention in particular.

- 16.117 Additional particular points raised by the auditors were that:

- Actions in regards to NSS was required;
- That only positive feedback had been included, which raised concerns that negative responses may not have been sufficiently addressed;
- Review of the feedback from External Examiners could have been extended;
- Some of the actions were considered to be vague and needed additional detail.

- 16.118 Ruth Gunstone (auditor) offered to liaise with the college in strengthening the report.

- 16.119 Areas of good practice identified by the auditors were:

- Link tutor and course team interaction;
- Staff development;
- Programme evaluation.

Action: Report to be reviewed and agreed by Chair's Action

Aylesbury College

- 16.120 The auditor comments in relation to this report were:

- Positives examples of achievements had been highlighted, particularly supporting transition to Higher Education;
- Some actions could be improved to be SMARTer.
- Use of tables to aid understanding, rather than narrative would aid the reader.
- Additional analysis of the retention statistics could have been completed.

16.121 The committee noted as provision at UCAV in Aylesbury is shared by Bucks New University and Aylesbury College students that any concerns would best be addressed together, through the BEST board.

Action: Concerns to be raised with BEST by Academic Registrar

East Berkshire College

16.122 The auditors commented that the report was well-written overall, and insightful. Particular points highlighted were:

- Improvements in engagement of the Students' Union with the partner;
- Marking criteria had been adapted to be in 'student-friendly' language;
- Actions to support retention, and related figures were to be commended.

UCFB

16.123 Reported by the auditors to be a generally comprehensive report, particular points highlighted were:

- Progression data had not been sufficiently analysed;
- Actions were clearly articulated in relation to retention issues highlighted in the report;
- Within the action plan not all actions appeared to be achievable;
- Gaining sufficient support and feedback from external examiners had been an issues, which should now be resolved with recent appointments;
- Staff development was not a clearly developed area within the report;
- Actions had been taken to improve annual monitoring within UCFB, which would be reflected in future reports;
- Equality and Diversity data was not included in the analysis.

Action: Report to be reviewed and agreed by Chair's Action

Academic Quality Reports

16.124 The Academic Registrar introduced the reports listed under this directorate. The majority of actions set for the previous year had either been completed, or if necessary moved forward to the next year.

16.125 It was highlighted that the following areas would be developed for future years, and considered as part of the review of PRE SURE:

- Agreed set of metrics to be used across all reports.
- Standard census date for all data.
- Recording of timelines for all processes to enable closer monitoring and redress as necessary.

Academic Appeals

16.126 The auditors stated that the report had analysed the data available, providing a good summary of the main findings. Ethnicity had been highlighted as potential cause for concern, though a fuller review of the causative actions was required.

16.127 It was noted that the International MBA course featured heavily in the report, but some additional information as to why this may have been the case would have been useful to the auditor.

16.128 It was suggested that data, such as ethnicity and disability could show a 5 year trend, which would aid analysis.

Action: 5 year trends (where available) should be included in this report in the future.

16.129 Noted that student misunderstandings of process led to the majority of rejected appeals, and that action had been taken to provide greater information to students.

Academic Misconduct

16.130 The report was deemed to be robust, with clear analysis of data and areas of good practice identified. Actions taken to improve the understanding of students of academic writing had been highlighted, including the purchase of 'Academic Integrity' course which all students were to be encouraged to take, and will be directed to complete should academic misconduct occur.

16.131 It was noted that Academic Misconduct policy would be under a full review, including those learning and teaching interventions to improve understanding in students, and also supporting staff in their judgements of what constitutes poor academic practice or academic misconduct.

Academic Partnerships & Erasmus

16.132 The report was deemed to be comprehensive however, it was suggested that consideration should be given to separating Erasmus and exchange from Academic Partnerships, to allow better focus.

Action: Create separate reports for Erasmus and exchange for next academic year annual monitoring exercise.

16.133 The committee considered the implications of Brexit on this sphere of activity in the institution and concluded that the partnerships team should monitor the implications and suggest strategy in regards to this.

16.134 The auditors raised the concern that there had been local, 'informal' contextualization of processes and procedures. The auditors also commented that:

- The report lacked some specific conclusions;
- Incomplete actions needed to have brought forward in to this year's action plan;
- Thematic analysis of Academic Partner reports would have been a welcome addition to the report, though it was noted that this would not have been possible due to the report deadlines.

Action: Partnerships team to analyse the Academic Partner reports and presents the findings in the next year's report.

Approval

16.135 The comments of the auditors were that:

- The addition of a section related to good practice would have been beneficial to the report;
- Data could have been better tabulated;
- Review of new Course Amendment Process (CAP) would have been useful, though it was noted by the panel that this is monitored by Academic Planning Committee;
- No equality and diversity data was provided in the report.

Action: Equality and diversity data to be added to the report.

16.136 The committee discussed that considering the introduction of degree apprenticeships, and how the knowledgebase within the institution could be increased.

Action: Make additional action regarding increasing the knowledgebase around degree apprenticeships for the Approval and Review team to support validation activities.

16.137 The committee considered that a useful addition to the report would be to compare the new courses validated to the number of enrolments in the first year, though it was noted by the panel that this is monitored by Academic Planning Committee.

Board of Examiners

16.138 The comments of the auditors were that:

- The report was comprehensive;
- The analysis of Chair's action could be developed to a greater depth;
- Actions in the action plan required a indicative month for completion;
- Stakeholder feedback in the board process beyond that gleaned from the external examiner reports would be a useful addition for subsequent years.

16.139 The committee agreed that the report indicated that QA process and procedures for assessment were adhered to and were fit for purpose. It was noted that this report, and that on external examiners, would be provided to the joint Senate and Council meeting.

Examinations action plan

16.140 The action plan was noted, and it was agreed the appropriateness of an action plan, as opposed to a formal report, would be considered in the review of PRE SURE.

External Examiners

16.141 The comments of the auditors were that the report was comprehensive, good practice had been identified and highlighted throughout the report.

16.142 Marcus Wood explained to the committee that an analysis of the status of the home institution of the external examiners with regards to NSS overall satisfaction scores had been undertaken. This was the basis on which the aspirational target with regards to the appointment of new externals had been made.

16.143 The committee also discussed the findings in relation to question 6 of the external examiner report. It was felt that re-phrasing of the question would ensure that an answer was not given if not applicable to the individual. The committee also noted the lack of correlation between NSS scores and external examiner report RAG rating.

Fitness to Practise

16.144 The comments of the auditors were that the report:

- Considered 3 year trend data, which was the limit to what was available;
- That analysis of BME was not present within the report and should be included in the year ahead;
- Ownership of the actions was not always clear and should be improved in the next year's report;
- Not all actions were considered to be measurable.

Mitigating Circumstances

16.145 The comments of the auditors were that the action plan in the report required timeframes and the person responsible listed. The auditors also noted the concerning trend with regards to the increased numbers of claims for stress, anxiety and depression and recommended wider consideration of the impact of this increase.

Action: Director of Student Services to take forward

16.146 The committee noted the proactive action of the mitigating circumstances panel to support students, such as through a referral to Fitness to Study.

Periodic Review

16.147 The comments relating to this report were to note the changes to the Periodic Department Review process and to suggest that comparative data in relation to staff involvement in the process (panel and programme teams) would be beneficial.

Learning and Teaching

16.148 Noted to be an interesting report, with a strong action plan. However it was considered that specific targets and timelines needed to be added.

16.149 The auditor suggested that a plan to disseminate good practice was required with the report, and also that a review of external examiner reports, to ascertain specific staff development needs would be valuable.

16.150 In the review of PRE SURE it was recommended that it be considered how the directorate could draw from the faculty staff development requirements such as through AFMT.

Staff Development

16.151 The committee noted that whilst a significant amount of training and development had been provided formally throughout the academic year, the report appeared to be a collation of data, rather than meaningful analysis of training needs and the impact of training given.

16.152 The committee agreed that this should be considered by the incoming Director of Human Resources.

Action: Director of HR to consider the appropriateness of the report for future years and the impact of training within the institution.

Student Services Directorate

16.153 The committee noted that some of the reports were new to the process this year, and that one single template was not available. It was agreed that the requirements for reports in this area would be reviewed as part of the review of PRE SURE.

Accommodation

16.154 The auditors stated that this report could have been strengthened by references to Head Tenancy Scheme (HTS) or hospital accommodation problems, though it was noted by the committee that HTS has been stopped, and that the University has no authority or remit for hospital accommodation.

16.155 The committee agreed that the action plan needed to be strengthened to be less generalised and to include timelines.

Action: Report to be reviewed and agreed by Chair's Action

Counselling

16.156 The auditors informed the committee that the report was thorough, clearly identifying the uses and the reasons for referrals.

Disabilities

- 16.157 The auditors noted the positive impact of the service for students registered with a disability. It was highlighted to the committee the enhancements to service provided by engagement with the SU, and greater use of the expertise in the team across the University was encouraged.
- 16.158 It was formally noted by the committee the effort to clearly identify and enact changes in response to feedback.

Fitness to Study

- 16.159 The auditors comments in relation to the report were:
- There was clear demonstration of the support offered to students.
 - The analysis of the data was limited as this was the second year of operation, however reviewing individuals supported through the process in comparison with institutional data such as age group would have been beneficial.
 - A good action plan was in place.

Library Services

- 16.160 The auditors noted the comprehensive report however, some of the actions identified within the body of the report were not reflected in the action plan.

Action: Report action plan to be reviewed and updated

Multi-faith Chaplaincy

- 16.161 The auditors reported that the service was trying to engage a wide range of people, and seeking feedback on their services. A concern raised within the report was that in the extension of the Bucks New Usage project to the local community whether students would be prioritised.

Action: Director of Student Services to confirm with the team

- 16.162 The committee commended the Bucks new usage project.

Student Centre

- 16.163 The report was considered to be concise, but requiring further review of feedback relating to the service and analysis of data, such as demographics of those utilising the hardship loans. It was suggested that this should include benchmarked comparison, if possible to retrieve the data.

Action: Report to be reviewed and agreed by Chair's Action

Student Complaints

- 16.164 The auditors commented that:
- Timelines for investigations, whilst improved are still beyond that stipulated in the procedure;
 - Noted peaks in submission of complaints;
 - Recommendations are tracked and reported, it is not clear what impact this has.
- 16.165 The report showed that the number of complaints was less than one percent of the student population, and that compensation paid was less than one percent of turnover. It was agreed that these types of figures would be appropriate measures when targeting setting in relation to complaints.
- 16.166 It was noted that an external provider had completed a series of training days in investigation technique and supplemented by staff however, concern had been raised

regarding the capacity of staff to undertake complaints (or other) investigations in addition to normal workload, and the report made recommendation to appoint dedicated investigators.

- 16.167 The committee recommended that Investigating Officers receive limited information related to the outcome of their investigation.

Action: EDU secretary to inform Student Resolution Manager.

Student (non-academic) Disciplinary Procedure

- 16.168 The auditors noted that:

- The proportion of the student population considered under the procedure remains low;
- Breakdown of the offences by type should be included in future reports.

Action: QSC secretary to inform Student Resolution Officer of requirement.

- 16.169 The committee agreed that the case studies contained within the report should be expanded and published for staff and students, for example on a related webpage, as a learning tool.

Summary for forwarding to joint Senate-Council Meeting

- 16.170 The committee agreed that through the evidence provided in the PRE and SURE process that:

- Higher Education programmes are being offered to an appropriate standard across all provision;
- The standard of academic awards has been maintained;
- Adherence to institutional processes is generally aligned;
- Good practice has been identified across all provision;

Therefore there can be confidence in quality and standards of the institution.

Review of Process

- 16.171 Noting that the PRE SURE process will be reviewed for 2016/2017, the committee agreed that:

- PRE process should be primarily focused at module level, without exception reporting;
- Previous years data should be utilised when completing analysis, to identify trends;
- Actions should be SMART with clear links to enhancing performance or experience;
- Consideration should be made of the extent and reach of SURE, in relation to the services/procedures it covers and should also have:
 - Standard census date
 - Clear template
 - Standard set of metrics for comparison

- 16.172 It was agreed that all Chair's action should be completed within one month.

Date of Next Meetings

- 16.173 The date of the next Quality and Standards committee meeting will be 23 November 2016 2pm in G5.05.
- 16.174 The date of the next Education committee meeting will be 8 March 2017 2pm in S3.03.