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Joint Quality and Standards and Education Committee Meeting

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 25 November 2015**

Duration of meeting: **14.00 to 16.30**

Location: **WW1.12 High Wycombe**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Ellie Smith	Academic Quality Directorate	Ex-officio - Chair
Liz Bell	Academic Quality Directorate	Secretary
Shabana Hussain	Academic Quality Directorate	Minutes Secretary (QSC)
Kirstie Ward	Academic Quality Directorate	Minutes Secretary (EDU)
Barbara Dexter	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Steve Hoole	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Ruth Gunstone	Student Services 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
Rebecca Rochon	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Nominated
Lauren Griffiths	Society & Health	Nominated
Agnes Fanning	Society & Health	Nominated
Carol Pook	Society & Health	Nominated
Ciaran O'Keefe	Society & Health	Nominated
Ian Chisolm-Bunting	Society & Health	Nominated
Sabir Bashir	Society & Health	Nominated
Peter Brown	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Tim Coole	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Bill Schaaf	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Yvette Scott	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Christine Parsons	Design, Media & Management	Nominated

Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Martha Wiekens	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Maurice Gledhill	Design, Media & Management	Nominated

Guests and Observers

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Ian Goldthorpe	Amersham & Wycombe College	Academic Partner
Charlotte Scheffmann	Accrington & Rossendale College	Academic Partner
William Lishman	Academic Quality Directorate	Observer

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Stuart Norton	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Natanya Ford	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Jayne Francis-Shama	Society & Health	Nominated
Lorna Dean Gibbs	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Julia Williams	Society & Health	Nominated
Ed Roe	Students' Union	Nominated
Amin Choudhury	Students' Union	Nominated
Paul Cassell	College of Football Business	Academic Partner
Paula Kavanagh	Aylesbury College	Academic Partner
Alison Wheatley	East Berkshire College	Academic Partner
Jan Selfridge	Berkshire College of Agriculture	Academic Partner

Welcome and Introductions

15.43 The Chair welcomed members and invited guests and observers 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.

15.44 Auditors from the Education Committee were tasked with reviewing the enhancements offered or planned whilst the Quality and Standards members focused on process.

Apologies for Absence

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

Declaration of conflicts of interest

15.46 None reported.

Student Services Annual Reports 2014-15

- 15.47 This was the first year that the Student Services Directorate had produced individual reports covering the full range of services they provide. These reports were considered to be informative and were commended to the wider University as useful reading.
- 15.48 The reviewers shared that the overarching Student Services report was well written, comprehensive and informative. Although the student support was evident, the report could include information on how students access the well-being team. It was also agreed that the action's be SMART and measurable.

Action: Director of Student Services to amend report to include information on accessing the well-being team and to review actions for SMART wording.

Fitness to Study

- 15.49 The Fitness to Study process commenced in academic year 2012-13 and is growing in momentum. The reviewer suggested that the data collection and analysis be explored further and that staff understanding of and engagement with the data be supported. It was agreed that this would be included in the next reporting year.

Action: Student Resolution Officer to explore data further in next year's report

Student Complaints

- 15.50 The panel noted the good practice and highlighted that the number of complaints had dropped in comparison to the previous year. However there was some concern with the amount of financial compensation paid to the students and those complaints referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The committee discussed the implications that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) would potentially have on student complaints and it was evident that the University would need a clear process which includes consideration of the CMA.
- 15.51 The reviewers highlighted the strain on the investigating officers in dealing with student complaints. This is due to heavy workloads and the time each complaint can take to investigate. The report suggested that the University consider appointing full time complaints and disciplinary investigators as is the practice in many other institutions.

Action: Chair to flag to Senate the need to evaluate the implications of the Consumer Market Authority (CMA) legislation in relation to student complaints and to monitor the increasing level of financial compensation being awarded to students in relation to failures of University process or service delivery.

Action: Chair to flag to Senate the need to consider the allocation of a 'dedicated' resource for the investigating of student complaints.

Non-Academic Disciplinary

- 15.52 The reviewers felt that this report was clear and uncovered some serious emerging issues. For this reason it was recommended that trends be grouped and identified for next year's report, for example self-harm and cyber bullying. It was also recommended that year on year data be included in the report to allow for better analysis and monitoring.

Action: Secretary to flag to author that next year's report to identify and explore emerging trends and provide comparative data

Learning Resources

- 15.53 This report was complimented on its thoroughness and well-articulated actions which had clear key performance indicators (KPIs). It was noted that there was an

action referring to the postgraduate taught experience survey (PTES) and the committee were reminded that the PTES would not be undertaken in the next academic year and therefore this action needs to be addressed alternatively.

Action: Secretary to request author to remove and replace reference to PTES 2016.

Disabilities

15.54 The reviewers agreed that this report was well summarised and covered all aspects. It was suggested where certain departments have high levels of students with learning disabilities, this information be disseminated to Heads of Academic Departments.

Action: Director of Student Services to request that the dissemination of information on disabilities to Heads of Academic Departments be included in the action plan.

Counselling

15.55 The main point discussed was the low uptake of the service evaluation; it was acknowledged that this may be due to the process being new. It was therefore suggested that this process be reviewed in the next monitoring period in detail.

Action: Secretary to flag to author that next year's report should include a review of the uptake of the evaluation service.

Accommodation

15.56 The reviewers agreed that the report actions were generalised with no timeline and no measurable KPIs. It was suggested that the action plan include a strategy on filling hall vacancies. Also the report highlighted issues with the survey monkey questionnaire, however this was not explained.

Action: Director of Student Services to ensure that the report expands on issues experienced with the survey monkey questionnaire, that the action plan includes a future strategic direction for maximizing occupancy of Halls and that actions are SMART.

Directorate Achievement Reports 2014-15

Learning and Teaching (L&T)

15.57 Overall the report was structured well with a clear evidence base. Reviewers felt that education strategy could play a bigger role as the report seemed to be process driven and would also like to see more easily accessible presentation of data along with SMART actions.

Staff Development (HR)

15.58 As requested by the Quality & Enhancement Committee (QEC) last year, the staff development report changed format this year, and brought together the development activities sponsored by the Human Resources Directorate (HR), L&T and the Academic Quality Directorate (AQD). It had been agreed that HR would produce an overall report

15.59 Reviewers felt that, although the report presented the range of activities undertaken, there was no reflection on this, no comparison with previous years and no evidence of forward planning. Links were made with the People Strategy but there was no link to the strategic direction of the University. The committee agreed that the report format should be reviewed and should include an action plan which links to the University strategy. Commentary in the report could highlight where

enhancements have been made and describe the impact that the development is having.

Action: The three directorates, HR, L&T and AQD to meet and agree how to structure next year's report. The AQD representative to arrange the first meeting.

Academic Quality Directorate Annual Reports 2014-15

Academic Appeals

15.60 Reviewers highlighted the variability of appeal amongst ethnic groups and it was evident that there were more appeals from ethnic groups than expected. There was some debate on what might be the effect on the number of appeals of the recent changes to assessment regulations where students can no longer trail modules into the next level of study.

Action: Chair to report to Senate the need to explore the reasons for the variances in relation to ethnicity that have been demonstrated by analysis of the data in relation to academic appeals and academic misconduct.

Academic Misconduct

15.61 The reviewers highlighted a variance and proportionally higher level of academic misconduct allegations under particular characteristics such as fee status or ethnicity and an increase in repeat offenders. It was agreed that the issues would need to be addressed with the possibility of providing an on-line training resource for both staff and students and to improve support for curriculum and assessment design.

Action: AQD and L&T to explore.

Mitigating Circumstances

15.62 It was agreed that there was an apparent variability between Schools with how the prima facie stage is handled and therefore what is eventually referred to panels. Further work is being undertaken to assess the significance of the data and to provide additional training and benchmarking between reviewers.

Fitness to Practise

15.63 Action timelines are not consistently recorded in the report and need to be tracked with a clearer process in place.

Action: Secretary to flag to author to check timelines and consistency of actions in the report.

Boards of Examiners

15.64 The reviewers commended the effective and professional operation of the University's formal Boards of Examiners process which many of the external examiners fully endorsed in their individual reports. They also commended the attendance of the AQD officers at the boards, which ensures consistency and better dissemination of best practice.

15.65 The reviewers suggested that improvements be made with the missing marks issue because of the knock on effect on the number of chairs actions created.

15.66 There were concerns with the access to the MIS reporting system, the reviewers flagged that the system is business critical and procedures should be in place to ensure that the system is accessible at all times.

Action: Faculties to explore the reasons behind missing marks at Boards of Examiners which result in the high level of Chair's Actions and set targets to achieve a reduction in this.

Action: Chair to flag to Senate the need to ensure that access to MIS reports is available at all times and there is no single point of failure as this is business critical.

External Examiners

15.67 The reviewers commended this report, in particular the detailed statistics against the red external examiner reports. It was also noted that these reports would have been considered in the annual monitoring of programme review and enhancement and in the faculty SURE reports.

Approval

15.68 The reviewers commended the continuing and high level of student engagement in the validation process. However the numbers of approvals made the reviewers question the sustainability of such a high number of approval events.

15.69 It was suggested to include comments from the external reviewers in the report to add externality. It was agreed to include this in the next year.

15.70 The point around full time and part time definitions in the report was not clear and it was requested that these definitions be made more explicit.

15.71 It was also agreed by the committee that course amendments and how they are communicated to applicants and students needs to map to the requirements of the CMA.

Action: AQD to further consider the definitions of full time and part time modes and make more explicit to curriculum teams.

Action: Chair to flag to Senate the need to consider the sustainability of continuing to validate high numbers of courses which may not result in viable recruitment numbers and to evaluate the implications of the Consumer Market Authority (CMA) legislation in relation to course amendments.

Review

15.72 It was evident that the review process is working effectively across the University and the high level of student engagement was commended.

15.73 It was noted that the reports and action plans from the reviews are routinely reported to the Quality and Standards committee and are therefore appropriately reviewed.

15.74 It was agreed that the action plan had no timelines so some clarity was needed.

Action: Secretary to flag to author to add timelines to the action plan.

Partnerships

15.75 It was identified that the University's partnership activities lack strategic direction and there was a suggestion to include feedback from academic partners in next academic year's report.

15.76 Concern was noted with the student numbers on the Erasmus programme and a suggestion made that more support be provided to tutors to enhance this provision.

Action: Chair to flag to Senate the need to promote Erasmus more widely across the University to increase participation.

Academic Partner Achievement Reports 2014-15

Accrington & Rossendale College

- 15.77 Reviewers commended the evidence based report with linked actions and clear presentation of data.
- 15.78 The report highlighted good practices and included enhancements to employability and good links to industry.

Amersham & Wycombe College

- 15.79 Reviewers felt this was a good report although succinct in some areas. The College underwent a QAA HER visit this year with successful outcomes and had received positive External Examiner reports. Progression and retention statistics were also encouraging.
- 15.80 Good practice highlighted was the successful operation of industry-led auditions undertaken at the college and employability.
- 15.81 Reviewers felt that the updated action plan from the previous year did not give sufficient detail on specifically what had happened and what enhancements had resulted from actions undertaken. Deeper consideration of this might lead to identification of good practice and more focused actions.

Action: Secretary to flag to Amersham & Wycombe College the requirement to add more information on the completion of previous actions.

Aylesbury College

- 15.82 Areas of commendation were the successful OFSTED review and the excellent partnership working between partners and academic/PSE staff as well as the proactive work undertaken by the Students' Union to support the partner students.
- 15.83 Areas for further improvement were noted as; further exploration of employer engagement, links with other academic partners who deliver the same programme and the need to present statistical data in tabular form.

Action: Secretary to flag to Aylesbury College the request to tabulate statistical data and to explore and expand on employer engagement and links with other Bucks academic partners.

Berkshire College of Agriculture

- 15.84 The reviewers agreed that the report structure and content required some changes; the report was not evidence based and issues raised in the narrative need to be reflected in a SMART action plan. It was agreed that the report be revised and sent back to the committee reviewers for endorsement.

Action: Secretary to request that BCA to resubmit the report for February Quality and Standards Committee.

College of Football Business (UCFB)

- 15.85 The committee was satisfied with the quality assurance processes as UCFB go through yearly educational oversight visits and monitoring from the QAA.
- 15.86 Further suggestions for improvements to the report included the use of table data.

Action: Secretary to flag to partner the need to tabulate all data.

East Berkshire College

- 15.87 The panel commended the excellent partnership work with the University. The College underwent a successful HER this year so their quality is assured. The plan summarised how actions had been completed and retention and progression statistics are good. The report reflected on good external examiner and student feedback.

- 15.88 Liaison with Bucks for Turnitin and library services was noted as good practice.
- 15.89 Actions were identified for further improvement from student feedback (NSS) but this is not reflected in the action plan for next year.

Action: Secretary to flag to partner to add above to action plan.

Faculty Achievement Reports 2014-15

- 15.90 The faculty quality coordinators highlighted how each faculty and partner PRE and SURE reports had been peer reviewed and it was evident that the process had been fully and thoroughly implemented by the faculties.

Design, Media and Management

- 15.91 The faculty was commended for its achievements especially in the increased NSS score and in the 3 week turnaround of assessment feedback to students.
- 15.92 Some of the detailed narrative in the report did not feed through to the action plan, for example concerns about progression rates, timetabling and low staff morale. The Faculty was also asked to ensure that targets for HEA accreditation and for staff teaching qualifications are the same as those given in the Learning & Teaching report. Members suggested that it would be useful to know how many PRE reports had been considered in the compilation of this Faculty report.
- 15.93 Overall challenges identified were; low retention and progression rates, improvement of module evaluation process – specifically evaluation of the outcomes and subsequent planning of appropriate responses – and the need to address low NSS scores on learning resources, IT access and specialist facilities.
- 15.94 The reviewer recommended that the faculty work with the AQD partnership team to address issues at partners where red and amber external examiners reports have been received, this to include engaging partner staff in staff development for marking and moderation.

Action: Faculty to ensure that all issues covered in the report narrative are reflected in the action plan, to check the staff qualification and accreditation targets with the L&T report and to add the number of PRE reports considered.

Action: Faculty to liaise with AQD with regards to actions in relation to partner red and amber external examiners reports.

Society & Health

- 15.95 The report was considered to be robust, comprehensive and reflective with SMART actions where the narrative was closely linked to actions. The range of evidence considered was wide although there was some debate on whether it would be beneficial to include some staff views into the report on how good practice might be disseminated.
- 15.96 Reviewers highlighted that consideration of equality and diversity was minimal and there was a lack of narrative around student engagement and interaction.
- 15.97 The Learning and Teaching Director felt that the faculty did not need its own Learning and Teaching strategy in addition to the institutional strategy.
- 15.98 The format of the Faculty Achievement Report was discussed briefly, with a suggestion that the number of PRE reports considered be added, along with a requirement to reflect on the level and appropriateness of support provided by directorates; Information Services and Technology, HR and Finance. An indication of the level of detail required in the action plans would also be helpful as many of the actions are described in greater detail in the PRE reports.

Summary

- 15.99 The Chair commended the joint meeting of Quality and Standards and Education committee to consider the SURE reports which provided an excellent opportunity for discussions relating to both quality and enhancement.
- 15.100 The Chair confirmed that the provision of statistical data to inform the PRE/SURE process had significantly improved from previous years.
- 15.101 The committee discussed the templates used for the PRE/SURE process, and it was agreed that the faculty and partner report templates would need reviewing for next year's reports.

Action: AQD to review faculty and partner PRE/SURE report templates

- 15.102 The academic partners suggested that they be involved in the peer review of SURE reports and it was agreed to allow for this in the next reporting year.
- 15.103 It was agreed that the Chair will compile a report for Senate which will reflect the reports presented and the discussions that took place at this meeting.

Action: Chair to compile a report for Senate.

Date of Next Meetings

- 15.104 The date of the next Education committee meeting will be 10 February 2016 2pm in G5.05.
- 15.105 The date of the next Quality and Standards committee meeting will be 17 February 2016 2pm in G5.05.