

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee



Wednesday 7th October 2020 2pm-4pm

Minutes

Present: Prof Deborah Bowman (Chair); Prof Jane Lindsay; Dr Carwyn Hooper; Derek Baldwinson; Dr Fran Gibson; Dr Godfrina McKoy; Dr John Hammond; Prof Jane Saffell; Jenny Laws; Dr Marcus Jackson; Dr Mark Bodman-Smith; Philippa Tostevin; Dr Rachel Allen; Sally Mitchell; Sarah Jones; Dr Saranne Weller; Prof Iain Beith (from 3pm); Dr Vanessa Ho (from 3pm)

In attendance: Glen Delahaye (clerk); Soosan Atkins

1. Apologies for absence:

Reported

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Aileen O'Brien; Syed Islam

2. Minutes

To receive and consider: the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2020.

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/A

Agreed

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

To receive and note: notification of the approval of a revised process for the recording of teaching activities off-campus, considered by circulation

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/B

Noted

2.2 The committee noted that it had approved the revised process for the recording of teaching activities off-campus by circulation on the 8th September 2020.

3. Action points and matters arising not covered elsewhere

To receive and consider: the action points arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere.

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/C

Reported

15th Jan 2020 ref 4.9: To consider how the administration of external examiner reporting could be improved and to report back to QAEC in April 2020 and a generic email address for external examiners to submit to would help to ensure proper circulation of reports.

3.1 A meeting had been held in August 2020 to consider how to improve the administration of external examiner reporting. A number of actions were agreed, including to develop a webpage to hold all external examiner resources, including programme regulations and Schemes of Assessment, as well as to consider developing a standard template for reports.

3.2 The generic email address for external examiners had been set up.

3.3 An update on the progress of these actions would be submitted to QAEC in December 2020, following the return of a key member of the team who was currently on extended leave. **Action: JL**

10th March 2020 ref 4.6: Jane Lindsay and Rachel Allen would devise a plan for the programme of support for new course directors and would report back to QAEC once they had a sense of what would be valuable.

3.4 Work had begun on the programme of support for new course directors, as well as possibly a handbook that could be provided to course directors. **Action: JL and RA to provide an update to QAEC in January 2021.**

10th March 2020 ref 4.7: IB would discuss the Physiotherapy practical labs with colleagues as Head of the Joint Faculty. If required, following IB's discussions, DFB could explore further with Derek Bannister to understand responsibilities in relation to the space.

- 3.5 Derek Bannister had now left St George's and a new Director of Estates and Facilities would be in place from December 2020.
- 3.6 The lighting issues in the labs had been fixed over the summer. There remained a need to consider governance in relation to larger-scale capital improvements to teaching and learning facilities and how those inform the planning round. These are questions that should be considered as part of the strategic alignment work for the new Centre for Allied Health.

21st April 2020 ref 6.16: A report would be written reflecting on the effectiveness of decisions taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

- 3.7 Additional questions had been added to the Annual Programme Monitoring Report template for the 2019/20 academic year, which would prompt course directors to comment on the impact of Covid-19 on assessment and the student experience, including differential impacts. These would help to generate information for a wider institutional review of the response to Covid-19 by the University at a later date if such a review is planned.

4. QAEC Terms of Reference (ToR) and Membership 2020-21

To receive and confirm: the Committee's ToR and membership for 2020-21

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/D

Agreed

- 4.1 To prompt discussion and engagement with members, it would be helpful to include simple, but specific, questions in papers, that would invite specific members to consider how the proposals within that paper would impact their respective areas.
- 4.2 Sub-groups of the committee, such as the ongoing Internal Quality Audit of Assessment, had proven useful in prompting more in-depth discussions than had been possible at QAEC. Such groups should continue and members of the committee are expected to participate in those groups and other activities between meetings.
- 4.3 The ToR could be rewritten to better reflect the aims both to quality assure and to enhance, perhaps by creating different sections and themed groupings within the ToR.
- 4.4 The agenda and Schedule of Business could be mapped to the ToR, ensuring that the aims of the Committee were being met and modelling to members how their contributions inform the University's quality assurance and enhancement responsibilities. One or two themed meetings within the academic year could help to facilitate deeper engagement with questions of quality and enhancement and the sharing of good practice in specific areas that are currently not discussed elsewhere.
- 4.5 There was currently no representation from Centre for Technology in Education (CTiE). Baba Sheba, the Head of the Centre, would be added to the membership to address this.
- 4.6 Judith Francois, who was appointed to provide maternity cover for the role of Associate Dean for Access and Participation in June 2020, would also be added to the membership.
- 4.7 The Terms of Reference and Membership would be amended and considered for approval by circulation ahead of the November meeting. **Action: GD**

5. QAEC Schedule of Business 2020-21

To receive and confirm: the Committee's schedule of business for 2020-21

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/E

Agreed

- 5.1 Approval of the Schedule of Business was deferred until the Terms of Reference had been considered and, if appropriate, approved. Following which the Schedule of Business would then be aligned and shared with members for their consideration (also by circulation). **Action: GD and DB**

6. **Quality Manual 2020-21**

To receive and note: the planned updates for the 20-21 reissue of the Quality Manual

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/F

Reported

- 6.1 Several sections of the Quality Manual had been updated and provided individually to QAEC during the 2019/20 academic year.
- 6.2 The paper provided an overview of those updates, as well as other minor updates to the Quality Manual that had been completed for the 2020-21 edition.

7. **Modifications**

To receive and confirm: a proposed modification to the Examination of the Newborn Postgraduate Module (MSc Healthcare Practice), referred to QAEC by TPCC for early implementation.

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/G

Reported

- 7.1 There were questions about the extent of the consultation with the Student Systems Team (SST), which was a matter not addressed in detail on the form.

Agreed

- 7.2 The proposal was deferred and would be considered through circulation once the concerns over implications on SST had been addressed. **Action: GD to ensure that inquiry and discussion with the SITS team took place, was formally captured, and reported back to QAEC.**

8. **Principles of effective algorithm design**

To receive and note: an update on the extent to which current practice at St George's aligns with the principles of effective algorithm design

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/H

Reported

- 8.1 UUK, QAA and GuildHE had carried out a review of practices and methods used to classify degrees on behalf of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance. That review resulted in the publication of [principles for effective algorithm design](#) in July 2020. The principles were subsequently endorsed by government, the OfS and the sector.
- 8.2 The publication included descriptions of ways in which the six principles might be implemented when algorithms were designed and applied in the context of individual students. The guidance referred to weightings, discounting, borderlines, rounding and the use of multiple algorithms.
- 8.3 The OpEx project would include recommendations that align with the guidance, including around rounding. Its proposals would be submitted to ESSC in due course.
- 8.4 The University did not typically review its degree algorithm, except when prompted to do so by the OfS. Having a regular cycle of reviewing St George's degree algorithm would be useful in the future. It was also noted that communication of the degree algorithm and its purpose was not part of the University's communication with students.
- 8.5 The proportion of good degrees awarded in 2019-20 rose by 6.3% in comparison with 2018-19 (from 78% to 84.3%). The proportion of first-class degrees awarded rose from 26.7% to 36.3% (9.6%). The data would be subject to further analysis at the Data Improvement Group and reported back to QAEC in due course.

9. **Validation of University of Nicosia's clinical site at Baltimore**

To receive and note: the report on the formal validation visit to University of Nicosia's clinical site at Baltimore Washington Medical Center

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/I

Reported

- 9.1 The University of Nicosia had an agreement with Baltimore Washington Medical Center (BMW) to offer clinical placements to students enrolled on the MBBS programme delivered by UNIC under a franchise agreement with St George's. That agreement had now ended.

- 9.2 In view of the difficulties with the Baltimore experience (evidenced by the volume of validation panel requirements and two group complaints from students), the following was agreed between St George's and UNIC to ensure that the lessons from the Baltimore experience were learned and acted upon before any new site was contracted to offer placements:
- the School's due diligence processes must be strengthened so that they provide assurance to the two universities regarding a new site's capacity to offer a high-quality learning experience to SGUL-UNIC students.
 - If and when a new site is identified, evidence captured at the due diligence stage must be shared with St George's so that it can form its own opinion about the site.
 - St George's would need to see agreements before they are signed to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
 - Kevin Hayes (academic liaison for UNIC) would lead an independent validation visit to a new site before the first students arrive.
- 9.3 There were lessons to be learned from BMWC experience that could be applied to St George's local MBBS programme and its arrangements for offering clinical placements, particularly in relation to responsibilities during Covid-19 e.g. for occupational health services.

To receive and consider: the arrangements for new Clinical Education Providers, UNIC's process for determining whether a possible clinical site has the capacity to offer a high-quality learning experience to SGUL-UNIC students.

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/J

Agreed

- 9.4 The Arrangements for new Clinical Education Providers were approved.
- 9.5 It would be helpful to receive an update later in the academic year on the progress of the process.

10. Healthcare Science Practitioner (degree) apprenticeship

To receive and confirm: proposals for the retrospective approval of the Healthcare Science Practitioner (degree) apprenticeship

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/K

To receive and note: an apprenticeship mapping document that could be adapted for St George's

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/L

Reported

- 10.1 It was proposed that the Healthcare Science Practitioner (degree) apprenticeship be approved retrospectively through a panel-based approach.
- 10.2 Panel membership would be consistent with that of a validation, as defined in section A of the Quality Manual. The approval would be event-based and the panel would have the authority to approve/not approve the proposals in the form in which they were presented to the panel.
- 10.3 They would receive a document base that included a programme specification adapted for apprenticeships, module descriptors and a template mapping the content of the modules to the apprenticeship standards.
- 10.4 There were currently five apprentices on the Healthcare Science Practitioner (degree) apprenticeship.

Agreed

- 10.5 The proposal was approved.

11. Updated Exam and Assessment Procedure

To receive and confirm: Procedure for additional assessment and examination arrangements for students with disabilities or Specific Learning Difficulties

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/M

Agreed

- 11.1 The procedure was deferred, as the Committee had a number of questions that were not addressed through the paper, including:
- how the procedure would be adapted for an online environment.

- how course directors would be informed when a student was eligible for additional arrangements.

11.2 It would be helpful for Emma Catlow, the Disability Adviser, to attend the November QAEC to present the procedure. **Action: JL to support Emma Catlow's preparation for the November meeting and advise on the questions QAEC would like her to consider in relation to the paper.**

12. Any other Business

12.1 The Committee thanked Prof Deborah Bowman for her role in Chairing QAEC, which she would be stepping down from and acknowledged how much her leadership had helped to transform QAEC into an effective Committee.

13. Dates of Meetings in 2020-21

16 November 2020	22 February 2021	19 May 2021
8 December 2020	25 March 2021	22 June 2021
19 January 2021	20 April 2021	

13.1 All meetings will start at 2pm and will take place online until further notice.

Matters for Report

14. *Periodic Review Reports

To receive and note: MSC Genomic Medicine Periodic Review Report

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/N

To receive and note: PgCert ICAG Periodic Review Report

Paper QAEC/20-21/1/O

GD/Oct 2020