fcustomSt George's, University of London

Senate

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2016

Present:

Dr Anne-Marie Reid (Chair)	Professor Jane Lindsay
Dr Rachel Allen	Dr Elizabeth Miles
Tanisha Amin	Dr Janette Myers
Professor Annie Bartlett	Professor Jane Saffell
Dr Iain Beith	Dean Surtees
Professor Deborah Bowman	Professor Michael Ussher
Corey Briffa	
Sue David	

In attendance:

Derek Baldwinson (secretary)
Dr Julie Leeming (for item 6)

Apologies for absence have been received from Professor Judith Cartwright, Denise Cooper, Dr Aileen O'Brien and Dr Iain MacPhee.

1. **Minutes of the meeting of 19th May 2016**
   The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2016 were received and approved.

   Paper QAEC/16-17/1/A

2. **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19th May 2016 (and previous meetings) not covered elsewhere**

   2.1. An *Action Points* list providing an update on actions taken since the May 2016 meeting and previous meetings was received for discussion.

   Paper QAEC/16-17/1/B

   2.2. **Student Procedures (arising from 2.2) -** fast track criteria for considering discretionary panel applications had now been developed for all applicable programmes and would inform the decision-making of panels meeting in 2017.

   2.3. **External examining (arising from 2.6) -** Polly Goodfellow was leading on the development of new report forms. The preparation of the forms had been delayed and would now be circulated to examiners and course directors for comment.

   2.4. **Student Experience Internal Audit by Deloitte (arising from 2.7) –** Professor Bowman would work with colleagues to meet the Deloitte requirements (action: DFB).

   2.5. **Education Strategy (arising from 2.**8) – the development of an Education Strategy was on hold pending the approval of the Strategic Plan.

   2.6. **External Examining (arising from 2.9):** the appointment of the MSc Healthcare Practice external who had not submitted a report had been terminated by Senate.

   2.7. **Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body – QAA characteristics statement (arising from 2.11) –** The International Committee had agreed that the

concurrent award arrangement with UNic regarding the MSc Family Medicine can continue. The position will be reviewed when the MSc is due for periodic review.

2.8. **Quality assurance and governance of CPPD and short course provision (arising from 2.12**) - a meeting to discuss quality assurance and governance arrangements had yet to take place (Action: DB/AB).

2.9. **Appointment of a learning technologist (arising from 2.13)** - an application to establish a learning technologist project post to support Turnitin/EMA would be submitted to SRC in October 2016.

2.10. **HEFCE Revised operating model for quality assessment (arising from 6) –** HEFCE had confirmed that SGUL's Council was required to provide assurances that it had received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. The report and plan would be submitted to Council in November 2016.

2.11. **QAA review of transnational education in Cyprus (arising from 8)-**
   - A discussion paper on the credit-rating of MBBS programmes would be taken to the next meeting of the MBBS course committee (Action: Soosan Atkins).
   - The UNic franchise programme has been included in the periodic review schedule for 2016-17. The review panel would be asked to review the implementation of the SGUL-UNic franchise agreement as part of the review process. More generally, Derek Baldwinson and Simon Fitch would be meeting to commence a review of the impact of SGUL's collaborative provision procedures.

3. **Showcasing Best Practice**

   3.1. Pete Roberts had set up a site on moodle and was working with Janette Myers on content for the site.

   3.2. It was noted that it would be useful for Dr Myers and Professor Saffell to meet to discuss ways in which the personal review process in IMBE could be used to identify examples of good practice for the moodle site. Other points discussed were:
   a) The usefulness of developing a template for capturing good practice case studies;
   b) The impact of good practice that could be observed.

4. **Membership, terms of reference and schedule of business**

   4.1. The Committee's terms of reference, membership and schedule of business for 2016-17 were received for confirmation.

   Paper QAEC/16-17/1/C

   4.2. The following points were noted:
   a) Representation from the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education and additional members would be confirmed shortly (action: JL).
   b) The preparation of an Education Strategy was in hand and would be progressed after the Strategic Plan had been signed off by Council. Possible themes for the Strategy were the engagement with students as partners in their educational experience; parity between education and research; and the balance between clinical and educational research. The Education Strategy was envisaged as a succinct and tightly focused document.

    c) The development of a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA) would be added to terms of reference of the Committee. Consideration of the LTA strategy would be added to the Committee's schedule of business.

    d) QAEC usually scheduled an annual open-agenda meeting to which all course directors were invited. The annual meeting had been valued by course directors and would be retained in 2016-17.

4.3. The Committee's terms of reference, membership and schedule of business for 2016-17 were confirmed.

5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

5.1. The current draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was received and noted.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/D

5.2. A working group had been established by Dr Reid to carry forward the development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and to have oversight of TEF preparations. When the LTA strategy had been approved, an action plan would be developed and arrangements for evaluating the impact of the strategy and implementation plans would be established.

6. Teaching Excellence Framework

6.1. The Committee received presentations on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) year 2 specification.

6.2. TEF identified three aspects of quality: teaching quality; the learning environment; student outcomes and learning gain. TEF assessors will use metrics based on preexisting data to assess quality in each of the three aspects of quality. The data are derived from the NSS, HESA data and the DLHE. Data are benchmarked based on the characteristics of students at the provider institution.

6.3. There are six core TEF metrics. The metrics are presented in a series of subgroups (called splits) to reflect widening participation priorities. Metrics (and splits metrics) which are significantly different from the benchmark are highlighted using a process called flagging. After the flagging process, TEF assessors will use the metrics to derive an initial rating as follows:

    a) Institutions with 3 or more positive flags and no negative flags would achieve an initial rating of gold.

    b) Institutions with 2 or more negative flags would achieve an initial rating of bronze regardless of the number of positive flags.

    c) All other institutions will be considered initially as silver

6.4. Institutions can submit additional evidence (referred to as the provider submission) to support its case for excellence. The provider submission will be considered by assessors alongside the metrics as part of the decision-making process. The TEF2 specification suggests that the institutions with several negative significance flags might find it difficult to persuade assessors to uprate the initial ratings referred to above.

6.5. SGUL's illustrative metrics as provided by HEFCE are:

	Core	Significance on split by characteristics		
		+ve	none	-ve
Full-time students				
The teaching on my course	not sig	0	13	3
Assessment and feedback	-	0	6	10
Academic support	-	1	8	7
Non-continuation	not sig	0	13	0
Employment or further study	-	1	7	5
Highly skilled employment	-	0	5	8

6.6. SGUL's illustrative metrics indicate that SGUL can expect a bronze rating in TEF2. The illustrative metrics will be updated to include the 2016 NSS results (to replace the 2013 NSS results). The inclusion of the 2016 NSS results will not change the number of significance flags because the 2016 NSS results are similar to 2013 results.

6.7. As noted, the TEF2 specification suggests that institutions with more than two negative significance flags might find it difficult, through its provider submission, to achieve an uplift to the initial ratings. Even so, the Committee supported the preparation of a provider submission. Possible case studies for the provider submission were:
   a) The new promotion criteria which recognise and reward teaching and scholarship;
   b) SHINE impact;
   c) Innovative practice and advanced scholarship in TEL;
   d) Widening participation initiatives;
   e) Employability linked to assessment of professionalism in the MBBS curriculum.

6.8. An analysis of the open comments in the SES suggests that variability in the quality of teaching remains an issue. The Committee discussed whether SGUL should adopt a process (e.g. a phone-based app) to enable students to provide immediate feedback on the quality of teaching so that unsatisfactory teaching could be picked up straightaway. The Committee also considered whether the SES, in its current format, might be too long. It was agreed that a review of feedback mechanisms might be timely. The Student Experience Committee, when formally constituted, would be well-placed to lead in this area. Regardless of the feedback systems that are in place at any one time, the ways in which SGUL closes feedback loops needs to be more effective.

6.9. The preparation of the provider submission would have a number of benefits including:
   a) Raising the profile of teaching at SGUL;
   b) Influencing the development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy;
   c) providing a catalyst for the development of improvement/action plans;

d) making the case for investment in teaching and learning and the student experience. For example, additional income from TEF2 should be ring-fenced for investment in education.

6.10. The following additional points are noted:

a) The possibility that staff who receive negative feedback from students on their teaching should normally be ineligible for academic promotion on the basis of excellence in research.

b) SGUL's alumni relations do not facilitate the development of impact cases based on careers and career achievements.

c) Additional metrics would be added in year 3. It is unlikely that the additional metrics would make it easier to achieve a silver or bronze rating.

6.11. It was agreed that, despite the impact of the illustrative metrics, a provider submission would be prepared to support of SGUL's TEF2 submission. The decision on whether to enter TEF2 remained with the Principal.

7. MBBS Curriculum Review

7.1. A report on the MBBS curriculum review was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/E

7.2. The new MBBS curriculum plan will be launched on 19th October 2016 at an open meeting at which attendees would have the opportunity to discuss curriculum plans with the MBBS course team.

7.3. It was noted that the plans for T, P and F year would need to take into account capacity and resources issues in the NHS.

7.4. The undergraduate Biomedical Science programmes had also been through a review process. The primary aim of the Biomedical Science curriculum review had been to reduce the volume of co-teaching with the MBBS programme to provide a more bespoke and discrete learning experience for students. The new curriculum had been validated successfully on 29th September 2016.

7.5. It was agreed that the finding in relation to staff development (p4) would be reworded if the report was to be circulated more widely.

8. QAA Report on Plagiarism in Higher Education: Custom essay writing services

8.1. A paper from Dr Myers on issues raised by the QAA report on the increasing prevalence of custom essay writing services was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/F

8.2. The QAA report explored the threat to academic standards from custom essay writing services many of whom guarantee that their services are 'plagiarism free'. Custom-written work is not detected by Turnitin because Turnitin screens documents for unoriginal content by identifying similarities to existing sources.

8.3. It was agreed:

a) To block access to sites and searches on university computer network. Searches of this kind should trigger pop up warnings directing students to the support available to them.

b) That all courses to be invited to report on their plagiarism awareness/good academic conduct teaching and whether it includes specific warning about essay mills (Action DB).

c) To work with SGSU to raise awareness of dangers of this method of cheating. Students should also be alerted to the dangers of submitting their work to commercial proof-reading services (action JM).

d) To include promotion of good academic conduct in TLA strategy.

9. **Internal Quality Audit**

9.1. A paper setting out possible topics for an internal quality audit was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/F

9.2. QAEC members and Course Directors had been invited to suggest IQA topics for 2016-17 and the proposals set out in table 1 had been put forward by Course Directors.

9.3. It was thought that a review of admission processes would be timely. Since paper F had been prepared the MBBS course director had also suggested an IQA of admissions. If it went ahead, an IQA of admissions might encompass undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

9.4. It was noted that there was a possibility that a review of admissions processes, initiated by the Chief Operating Officer, was already planned. It was agreed that the status of the review would be confirmed before a decision on an IQA was taken (Action: DB).

10. **National Student Survey 2016**

The minutes of the NSS Working Group meetings held on 9th August and 13th September 2016 were received and noted. It was reported that the NSS WG and SEEG would be merged to form a new Student Experience Committee to be chaired by Professor Bowman.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/H and I

11. **Issues referred to QAEC by the Student Progress Monitoring Committee**

It was reported that in June 2016 the then chair of SPMC had referred a number of issues related to quality and management processes on the FdSc and BSc Paramedic Science to the chair of QAEC for investigation. These issues are being followed up with the Dean of Faculty and the Faculty Chief Operating Officer. Following the recent faculty restructure, the issue would be followed up by Dr Beith as the Head of School.

12. **St George's Education Day**

Staff were reminded that the Education Day 2016 was taking place on Wednesday 9 November 2016. The theme of the day is Excellence in Higher Education and the keynote speaker is Professor Dilly Fung, Professor of Higher Education Development, UCL.

13. **New course developments**

13.1. Item deferred.

Paper QAEC/16-17/1/J

14. **Dates of future meetings**

Thursday 10 November 2016
Thursday 19 January 2017
Thursday 9 March 2017
Thursday 18 May 2017

All meetings will start at 2pm (unless otherwise stated) and take place in H2.5 (unless otherwise stated).

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