

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee

Tuesday 8th December 2020 2pm-4pm



Minutes

Present: Prof Rachel Allen (Chair); Prof Jane Lindsay; Dr Carwyn Hooper; Derek Baldwinson; Dr Fran Gibson; Dr John Hammond; Prof Jane Saffell; Jenny Laws; Sally Mitchell; Sarah Jones; Dr Saranne Weller; Dr Vanessa Ho; Baba Sheba; Dr Aileen O'Brien; Eoin Jardine; Dr Godfrina McKoy; Philippa Tostevin

In attendance: Glen Delahaye (clerk); Soosan Atkins; Rachael Bevilacqua (Agenda Item 9 only)

1. Apologies for absence:

Reported

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Marcus Jackson; Dr Mark Bodman-Smith; Prof Iain Beith; Syed Islam

2. Minutes

To receive and consider: the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020.

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/A

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

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/20-21/3/B

Reported

16th November 2020 ref 6.6: GD to find a suitable date for the Assessment Advisory Group to meet.

- 3.1 GD had not yet contacted members about a date, but would do so shortly.

16th November 2020 ref 7.3: SM to review the recommendations of the Assessment and Feedback Project and map them against the recommendations of the IQA Assessment.

- 3.2 SM had been reviewing the recommendations and would bring the results to the Assessment Advisory Group.

16th November 2020 ref 9.7: DB to send a further message to course directors to clarify which process they would need to follow depending on when they wanted to implement their proposed change and whether its purpose was to mitigate against Covid-19.

- 3.3 DB had sent the message and QPD continued to be available to course directors for guidance.

4. QAEC Terms of Reference and Membership 2020-21

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

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/C

Reported

- 4.1 As agreed at the previous meeting, the Terms of Reference had been simplified by combining similar Terms into groups. There were now only six terms in total.

- 4.2 The Terms of Reference were approved, subject to Dr Vanessa Ho's title being updated in the membership. **Action GD**

5. QAEC Schedule of Business 2020-21

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

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/D

Reported

- 5.1 The Schedule of Business had been mapped to the revised Terms of Reference and an Enhancement-themed meeting had been created in February 2021.

Agreed

- 5.2 The Schedule of Business for 2020-21 was approved.

6. External Examiners update

To receive and consider: an update from registry on the administration of external examiners at St George's

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/E

Reported

- 6.1 The administration of external examiners was being streamlined and as part of this new webpages were being created. The primary audience for the pages would be External Examiners, but the pages would also be a source of up to date information and documentation for internal staff.
- 6.2 The webpages would include forms, templates and guidance to support the full journey of an external examiner, from nomination to claiming expenses. QAEC agreed that it would also be helpful to indicate where responsibility for all those stages lay.

Agreed

- 6.3 A further update on the administration of external examiners would be provided to QAEC in March 2021. **Action: JLa**

7. Internal Quality Audit – future plans

To receive and consider: suggested topic for the next Internal Quality Audit (IQA)

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/F

Reported

- 7.1 The Committee was invited to consider topics for the next Internal Quality Audit.

Academic Integrity

- 7.2 Academic Integrity had been suggested as a possible topic, following the QAA's publication of a new [Academic Integrity Charter](#), which aimed to provide a baseline position upon which providers could build their own policies and practices to ensure that qualifications are genuine, verifiable and respected.
- 7.3 A broad approach could be taken, which could include good academic practice.

Student welfare and self-care

- 7.4 An audit of student welfare and self-care was suggested, as it was not clear how much it was being included in the curriculum. It could also link into the UUK self-assessment on mental health that would be completed in 2021. The self-assessment was a tool designed to help institutions reflect on their provision and was mostly focussed on students.

Review of PGR provision

- 7.5 A review of PGR provision was suggested as a possible focus for an audit, as there was currently no process for reviewing it. This could be a review of all provision or subsets of it, for example looking at MDs and PHDs separately.

Agreed

- 7.6 Academic Integrity was agreed as the topic for the next IQA. The next step would be to determine a lead. **Action RA to discuss with SM and JS.**

- 7.7 Student welfare and self-care was agreed as the topic for QAEC's February 2021 meeting, which would focus on enhancement. **Action: VH to write a brief cover paper for the February meeting to provide context.**
- 7.8 A process should be determined for reviewing PGR, which could be adapted from an existing one. **Action: QPD to consider an approach**

8. Request to postpone the periodic review of MPAS

To receive and consider: a request from TPCC to postpone the periodic review of the Masters in Physician Associate Studies Programme, which is due in the 2020-21 academic year.

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/G

Reported

- 8.1 TPCC had considered the request to postpone the periodic review of the Masters in Physician Associate Studies (MPAS) programme on Friday 4th December and was recommending its approval to QAEC.
- 8.2 The review was due in the 2020-21 academic year.
- 8.3 The reasons for the request were the impacts of Covid-19 on the course team and the pending GMC regulation of the profession and quality assurance of PA programmes. It was expected that the PA national curriculum would be changed, which may trigger changes in St George's MPAS programme. The course team wished to wait until they had sight of and a chance to respond to the new PA curriculum before completing the review.
- 8.4 Although it was agreed that it should not impact the decision to delay the MPAS review, QAEC noted that there had been students this year who had not passed the national exam. The University's responsibility to support those students was not yet clear.
- Agreed
- 8.5 The request to postpone the periodic review of MPAS was approved.

9. Student Conduct and Compliance Annual Report

To receive and consider: the annual report from SC&C on complaints, appeals and fitness to practise.

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/H

Reported

- 9.1 There had been a 9.8 % decrease in the caseload for SC&C from 2018/19 to 2019/20. The greatest factor influencing the decrease in overall case figures was the decline in use of the Discretionary Panel procedure largely influenced by changes to assessment practices and higher numbers of students successfully passing examinations.
- 9.2 There had been a 64.1% increase in the number of students requesting a review of decisions made under the initial stages of procedures. Nevertheless, the number of appeals upheld at the second internal stage had remained relatively stable as had the number of complaints upheld at the external stage by the OIA.
- 9.3 The most frequently cited grounds for appeal were extenuating circumstances.
- 9.4 There had been no change in the number of student concerns and complaints raised in 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 9.5 The GMC had refused to register two Final Year MBBS students due to professionalism concerns arising at the point of graduation coupled with a lack of insight into their misconduct. There was a hope that with remediation, the students would be registered in the summer of 2021.
- 9.6 Student record-keeping remained an issue and record-keeping processes differed between courses. It was suggested that electronic record-keeping processes and the possibility of an electronic student filing system be considered, particularly in light of the changed working arrangements in the current academic year.
- 9.7 BSc Biomedical Science (including IBSc) had the highest number of allegations of assessment irregularity. This was believed to be an example of good practice and a reflection of the fact that

there were effective processes for identifying assessment irregularities in operation on the programme.

- 9.8 There appeared to be a lack of awareness amongst students of the limits of mitigating circumstances when presenting them after an assessment had taken place. The Fit-to-Sit campaign had previously been reminding students to declare mitigating circumstances ahead of their assessments, but had been less effective since staff and students had been spending less time on site due to Covid-19.

Agreed

- 9.9 There were a number of useful recommendations in the report and QAEC wanted to be reassured that they were being addressed.
- 9.10 A subgroup of QAEC would review and prioritise the recommendations and QAEC would follow up on the actions again in March 2021. **Action: RA, JS, JLi, AO**
- 9.11 Rachel Bevilacqua would indicate to the subgroup which actions were already in progress and would recommend additional members for the subgroup if she wished to. **Action: Rachael Bevilacqua**

10. Data Improvement Group report

To receive and note: an update on the work of the Data Improvement Group

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/I

Reported

- 10.1 The paper provided an update on issues discussed at the December 2020 meeting of the Data Improvement Group, the first meeting of the Group since February 2020.
- 10.2 At the December meeting, DIG agreed that it would be useful to map out in more detail the institutional environment showing the interdependencies and interrelationships as they relate to the use of data at institutional and programme levels. This would help to determine whether there was any overlap between the work of DIG and the Associate Deans who had their own accountable committees (including APPSG, Careers Group, Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team).
- 10.3 QAEC would be submitting a Quality Assurance Report to Council in February, which would include headline messages arising from the data.

11. Programmes under development – monitor

To receive and note: an update on programmes currently under development.

Paper QAEC/20-21/3/J

Reported

- 11.1 There were four courses currently progressing through the validation process and a further three that had been proposed, but had not yet formally entered the validation process. All seven of these courses were postgraduate. Delays caused by Covid-19 meant that six out of these seven proposed courses were now aiming for a 2022/23 launch, including all four of those that had already formally entered the validation process.

Agreed

- 11.2 **Action: JS and CH to meet to discuss the number of postgraduate courses being launched simultaneously to determine whether all of them could be supported.**

12. Any other Business

- 12.1 There were no further items of business.

13. Dates of Meetings in 2020-21

19 January 2021
22 February 2021

25 March 2021
20 April 2021

19 May 2021
22 June 2021

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

GD/Dec 2020