Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee
Tuesday 19th January 2021 2pm-4pm

St George's
University of London

Minutes

Present: Prof Rachel Allen (Chair); Baba Sheba; Prof Iain Beith; Dr Carwyn Hooper; Derek Baldwinson; Dr Fran Gibson; Dr Godfrina McKoy; Dr John Hammond; Prof Jane Lindsay; Dr Marcus Jackson; Dr Mark Bodman-Smith; Dr Aileen O'Brien; Philippa Tostevin; Sally Mitchell; Sarah Jones; Dr Saranne Weller

In attendance: Glen Delahaye (clerk); Soosan Atkins; Riaghnach Loughran

1.   **Apologies for absence:**

   Reported

   1.1   Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Vanessa Ho; Syed Islam; Prof Jane Saffell; Eoin Jardine; Jenny Laws

2.   **Minutes**
   To receive and consider: the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2020.
                                                                    Paper QAEC/20-21/4/A

   Agreed

   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/20-21/4/B

   Reported

   8th December 2020 ref 11.2: JS and CH to meet to discuss the number of postgraduate courses being launched simultaneously to determine whether all of them could be supported.

   3.1   JS and CH had met and found that as Covid-19 had delayed the development of some of the new postgraduate courses, there would no longer be a high number of them launching simultaneously.

4.   **Annual Report on External Examiner session 2019-20**
   To receive and consider: the annual report on external examiner session 2019-20
                                                                    Paper QAEC/20-21/4/C

   Reported

   4.1   Within the 2019-20 academic year, assessments were affected significantly by the closure of the campus in March 2020 and the immediate need to plan for the delivery of the remaining semester 2 assessments online and remotely.

   4.2   In view of the fact that feedback from external examiners had already been considered, and accepting the exceptional nature of the 2019-20 session, no further analysis of the content of reports had been attempted for this year's Annual Report. Instead, the report focused on providing confirmation that reports had been received and responded to and found that:

   a.   all Boards benefited from the input of externals;
   b.   no adverse issues in relation to assessment practice, the achievements of students or academic standards were raised (despite the challenge of the pandemic);
   c.   a number of reports have yet to be received and were being chased by QPD;
   d.   responses to reports may not have been sent to externals in all cases

   4.3   Although it was apparent from the report that the University had received the majority of reports for BSc Intercalated, Registry did not appear to have forwarded all of them to the course team.

   Agreed

4.4 **Action: QPD to ensure that the Course Director for BSc Intercalated was provided with all of the external examiner reports received thus far and to report this issue back to Jenny Laws.**

5. **Real Patient info and consent documentation**
   <u>To receive and consider:</u> A Consent, Data Storage and Centralisation Process for the use of Real Patients in Teaching and Assessment Programmes

Reported

5.1 The use of real patients in teaching and assessment provides an invaluable resource for students, but requires a confidential, accurate and well-maintained patient database.

5.2 New documentation, including information and consent forms, had been created and formatted into standardised templates and were presented to QAEC for approval. The need for these had largely been driven by MBBS.

5.3 These documents were specifically for use for activities that were not being recorded, but involved real patients.

Agreed

5.4 The process was approved, subject to:
   a. BS following up with IB and JLi to clarify how it would apply to courses within the Centre for Allied Health
   b. It would only be applied to unpaid patients for the time being.
   c. The reference to the "medical school" on the consent form would be replaced with "the University".

6. **Recurrent themes raised at QAEC during 2019-20**
   <u>To receive and consider:</u> the review of reports received by QAEC in 2019-20

Reported

6.1 A number of reports were received by QAEC throughout the 2019-20 academic year and there were recurrent themes within them. QAEC agreed in its February 2020 meeting that it would be useful to review reports received in the 2019-20 academic year to identify these themes and to determine ways to address them at an institutional level.

6.2 The report highlighted work that QAEC had initiated, but that had not yet concluded. It was largely the work of the Task and Finish Groups that remained outstanding.

6.3 The Task and Finish Group for Supervision had last met in March 2020, where it agreed to draft a revised Standards and Guidance document to be submitted to QAEC for approval in 2019-20, but this work was set aside and had not yet been revisited.

6.4 The Degree and Classification Task and Finish Group had concluded that Senate could have confidence in the integrity of the University's awards. However, it also agreed a series of recommendations linked to its findings. These recommendations were developed into an action plan, which was endorsed by QAEC when it met in February 2020. The progress of these actions had not been reviewed since then.

Agreed

6.5 **Action: GD and CH to revisit the work of the Supervision Task and Finish Group and determine the next steps.**

6.6 **Action: QPD review the Degree Classification Group action plan and to report back to QAEC later in the academic year.**

6.7 **A report reflecting on Covid-19 could be written by QPD and submitted to QAEC in the Spring of 2021, alongside or as part of the Annual Monitoring Summary report to Senate. Action: GD**

6.8 It was likely that there were other items that had been raised through QAEC, but had not yet been addressed as there may not have been an obvious group or committee through which they

could be addressed. Examples of this would likely include resource issues. It was agreed that a further reflection should be completed that would identify these sorts of items and determine how our quality assurance framework could ensure that these types of concerns could be addressed more efficiently in the future. **Action RA and QPD**

7. ~~Quality Assurance Report for Council – review draft report~~
   ~~To receive and consider: a draft report on Quality Assurance to be submitted to Council in March~~
   ~~**Paper QAEC/20-21/4/F**~~
   Agreed

   7.1 The Quality Assurance Report was not available for QAEC members to view in time for this meeting and would instead be considered by circulation. **Action: DB**

8. **External Examiners and Conflicts of Interest**
   To receive and consider: if any action is required to be taken to address a potential conflict of interest.
   Paper QAEC/20-21/4/G
   Reported

   8.1 A member of staff had highlighted to QPD that an external examiner had been acting as both a paid lecturer and as an examiner on the same course, which could be considered a conflict of interest. QAEC was asked to consider and confirm whether an examiner with a close relationship with the course team, in this case a lecturer, should also be acting as an examiner.

   Agreed

   8.2 A lecturer did not meet the definition of being "external" and therefore could not hold both roles.

   8.3 QPD would ensure that the next revision of the Quality Manual provided further guidance on selecting external examiners.

   8.4 **Action: CH to inform the external examiner that they would not be able to continue teaching on the course and to ensure that there was an interim arrangement in place to allow the modules she had already taught to be examined by another external examiner.**

9. **Programme of support for new course directors**
   To receive and note: an update on work in relation to a proposed programme of support for new course directors
   Paper QAEC/20-21/4/H
   Reported

   9.1 It was proposed that training events would be scheduled once per year to provide training and collaborative learning for new and experienced course directors. The intention was that content would be delivered in two day-long sessions spaced across the year.

   9.2 The workshop format would combine presentations from relevant directorates and leads, with case-based activities and discussions.

   9.3 Pedagogic decision making was suggested as an additional area that course directors should be supported in, including how to approach a teaching strategy in terms of the technology used.

   9.4 A checklist-format guidance document for Course Directors would be develop and circulated with various departments within St George's for consultation. It was agreed that it should be scrutinised by existing course directors.

   9.5 There was currently a yearly cycle of responsibilities for course directors, which take place at the same point in each academic year. The guidance may be able to build on this pre-existing cycle.

10. **SOLTS report**
    To receive and consider: a report on SOLTS to evidence student satisfaction in the quantity and quality of online teaching
    Paper QAEC/20-21/4/I
    Reported

10.1 A slideshow was presented to members during the meeting, which included satisfaction and participation rates for SOLTS:

Pathway	Satisfaction Mean	Range	Participation Rate Mean	Range
AHP	79.07%	39.39% - 97.22%	38.3%	1% - 71%
Biomedical Education	79.05%	61.57%-100%	24%	10-44%
Postgraduate	87.95%	30% -100%	34%	4%-72%

10.2 There continued to be concerns over the participation rates, but these had improved significantly from the previous academic year.

10.3 It was believed that students were aware of SOLTS, but generally were not keen on taking part.

10.4 The data suggested that no module leader had completed a reflection on the feedback received or any action planning, which was highlighted as a risk. It defeated the purpose of obtaining feedback, as the feedback loop was not being closed.

10.5 There were reports that in some cases module leaders had written responses, but that these were not being received by students.

10.6 In order for the system to be more automated, the timetabling system needed to be integrated with SOLTS to provide details of sessions, including who the lecturer and students were.

10.7 CiTE had held a number of meetings with EvaSys in recent months in an effort to introduce more automation on the SOLTS system and to reduce the administrative burden. Following these meetings, CiTE was finalising a report that had been developed together with Registry and MJ, which would include recommendations to improve the system.

Agreed

10.8 As an interim measure, responses to student feedback could be posted on Canvas to ensure that students received them.

11. PORT update
To receive and note: an update on the Peer Observation & Review of Teaching scheme for staff
Paper QAEC/20-21/4/J

Reported

11.1 QAEC was asked to consider a revised PORT scheme with a specific focus on the proposals that:
   a. there would be a reciprocal peer-to-peer model that redefines a PORT cycle as the completion of two observations (with an individual acting as both an observer and an observed teacher)
   b. the requirement for a written record for all stages of the observation would be removed from the scheme unless agreed by the peers
   c. participation in PORT would be either captured via Canvas and/or linked to HR staffing records

11.2 Members did not agree that there should be an allocation of teaching hours to observer and observed teacher for engagement in a single PORT cycle.

11.3 A small-scale pilot and evaluation of a revised PORT scheme was proposed, which would take place between February 2021 and July 2021. A full, revised scheme would then be launched in September 2021.

11.4 CIDE would develop resources and recorded training materials including guidance on the PORT scheme. The asynchronous availability of resources as a digital learning package would enable individuals to access materials as needed rather than relying on the scheduling of PORT training events in the academic year through the EduFocus timetable as with the previous scheme.

12. **Student and Consumer Protection**
To receive and note: an oral update from the Consumer Law Protection Compliance Group

Reported

12.1 It was important for the University to respect its obligations under consumer protection law and this is included within QAEC's Terms of Reference.

12.2 The minutes of the most recent Consumer Law Protection Compliance Group would be circulated to QAEC once they became available. In future, a consistent mechanism for the Group to report to QAEC would need to be agreed.

12.3 Members were reminded that they were expected to attend CMA compliance training on the 22nd February 2021 at 2pm and that QAEC had been rescheduled to 2.30pm to allow members to attend the training.

13. **Validation and review processes: evaluation**
To receive and note: a report on validation and review activity in academic year 2019-20
Paper QAEC/20-21/4/K

Reported

13.1 A reflection on validations and reviews is submitted to QAEC on an annual basis.

13.2 There had only been three periodic reviews during the 2019-20 academic year, two of which had taken place on Microsoft Teams.

13.3 There were no concerns about the validation and review processes to report to QAEC. Feedback collected from Panel members at events had been positive.

Agreed

13.4 **Action: GD would confirm if the PgCert ICAG business case had been approved by ESSC.**

14. **Any other Business**

14.1 There were no further items of business.

15. **Dates of Meetings in 2020-21**

- 22 February 2021: CMA training for QAEC members at 2pm and QAEC meeting focused on Enhancement at 2.30pm.
- 25 March 2021 at 2pm
- 20 April 2021 at 2pm
- 19 May 2021 at 2pm
- 22 June 2021 at 2pm

All meetings will take place online until further notice.

GD/Feb 2021