

St George's, University of London

Senate

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2017

Present:

Dr Anne-Marie Reid (Chair)

Dr Rachel Allen

Professor Annie Bartlett

Dr Iain Beith

Professor Deborah Bowman

Dr John Hammond

Professor Jane Lindsay

Professor Iain MacPhee

Dr Elizabeth Miles

Dr Janette Myers

Dr Ahmed Younis

In attendance:

Derek Baldwinson (secretary)

Rosie Ogden

Apologies for absence have been received from Tanisha Amin, Corey Briffa, Professor Judith Cartwright, Denise Cooper, Sue David, Dr Aileen O'Brien, Professor Jane Saffell and Professor Michael Ussher.

1. Minutes of the meeting of 19th January 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2017 were received and approved subject to:

- a) The addition of Dr Hammond to the list of attendees.
- b) The replacement of minute 10.5a with "The way in which the responsibility for the oversight of the full due diligence process was allocated needed to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest".

Paper QAEC/16-17/4/A

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19th January 2017 (and previous meetings) not covered elsewhere

2.1. An *Action Points* list providing an update on actions taken since the January 2017 meeting and previous meetings was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/4/B

2.2. **External examining (arising from 2.3)** – revised external examiner report forms had been circulated for consultation.

2.3. **Appointment of a learning technologist (arising from 2.4)** – following a recent round of interviews, an appointment had been made to the learning technologist project post to support Turnitin/EMA. However, the successful applicant had decided not to take up the post and so the post would be re-advertised. It was noted that there was sufficient resource in place to support SGUL's TEL priorities.

- 2.4. **Validation and Review: academically-led review of the programme-approval processes (arising from 2.8):** work on the review was ongoing. A progress report would be available to the Committee when it meets in May 2017 (action: DFB).
 - 2.5. **Internal Quality Audit (arising from 2.9)** – initial scoping for the IQA of the quality of feedback had been carried out. It was expected that the IQA would report in October 2017 (action: DFB).
 - 2.6. **Data package for periodic review (arising from 2.10)** – Derek Baldwinson and Julie Leeming had met with Dean Pateman to discuss the feasibility of providing enhanced data to support the periodic review process. It was intended that, if practical, centrally generated data would be available to support reviews in academic year 2017-18. A progress report on this work would be available in May 2017.
 - 2.7. **Apprenticeships** – within the Faculty, opportunities to develop apprenticeships were being explored in a number of areas. Similarly, Healthcare Science practitioner degree apprenticeship standards have been published and it was to be expected that employers might now wish to use their apprenticeship levy to fund apprenticeships. The Healthcare Science course team was therefore considering models for delivering apprenticeships that did not disrupt the core programme but provided an apprenticeship route to qualification. Developing a coherent apprenticeships offer was challenging because the apprenticeships landscape was evolving rapidly. It was suggested that it would be helpful for the Healthcare Science Programme lead to contact Jo Gregory from Joint Faculty who is currently developing an apprenticeship route for FdSc Healthcare Practice (action: AMR to liaise with Penny Murphy).
 - 2.8. **Programme Specifications (arising from 2.13)** – all 2016 entry Programme Specifications had been received with the exception of the MSc Healthcare Practice Programme Specification. This was being chased (action: DB).
 - 2.9. **Access agreement monitoring group (arising from 5)** – the minutes of the most recent meeting of the student attainment group were received and noted (annex to Paper QAEC/16-17/4/B).
 - 2.10. **External examiners – termination letter (arising from 9a)** – the delayed external examiners’ report had been received and so there was no need to issue a termination letter to the examiner concerned.
 - 2.11. **External examiners – status of Suzanne Shale (arising from 9b)** – due to an oversight, Ms Shale had not been asked to examine the iBSc/BMedSci Ethics and Law Module in 2015-16. The Reverend Bryan Vernon (Newcastle University) would examine the module in 2016-17.
 - 2.12. **Collaborative Provision Procedures (arising from 10)** – revised procedures would be brought back to QAEC for discussion and approval in due course.
- 3. International (INTO) Medicine MBBS 2015–16**
- 3.1. It was reported that the QAEC sub group that had been convened to support the international MBBS programme team in responding to the concerns of students and of the GMC. The sub group had met on two occasions. The notes of the second meeting were available for information (as an annex to Paper QAEC/16-17/4/B).
 - 3.2. It was reported that Professor Bowman was working with students to develop a bespoke system for gathering feedback from students. The system would have a number of components to help the international MBBS team to better understand the

individual and collective views of students. However, the success of the new system would depend on SGUL's capacity to respond effectively to comments and concern.

- 3.3. Students had not been receptive to proposals to strengthen peer tutoring in preparing for USMLE. Students had taken the view that peer tutoring was a less valuable alternative to expert USMLE tuition provided by faculty. Any attempt to reinforce the educational value of peer tutoring was likely to be counterproductive at this stage.
- 3.4. Students were consistent in their preference for the provision of the Kaplan lecture series which comprised 250 hours of lectures. SGUL had approved the purchase of the Kaplan lecture series and it was understood that the lectures would be available shortly. However, it would be important to guide students in the use of the Kaplan materials, to monitor usage rates and to gather feedback on their usefulness to students.
- 3.5. The subgroup will convene again shortly to review progress.

4. Faculty Quality Committee Annual Report (session 2015-16)

- 4.1. The report from FQC summarising the outcome of annual programme monitoring in session 2015-16 was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/4/C

- 4.2. Issues with data management and availability had hindered the preparation of 2015-16 annual programme monitoring reports. These issues were the result of changes to Faculty administrative structure which had in turn created challenges in terms of the continuity of administrative processes. Academic and administrative staff had been able to find work-around solutions to enable reports to be submitted in the required time scales and, on the whole, subjective appraisal suggests that this has been reasonably well achieved. Data had been collected by individual administrators and there was now a need for a standardised Faculty approach to ensure data is reliable, robust and comparable across and between modules/programmes. Steps are being taken to resolve these issues.
- 4.3. A number of cross-faculty issues had emerged in the 2015-16 cycle to be carried forward by FQC. These issues included:
 - a) developing and standardising the use of the VLE (and moving to Canvas for some programmes);
 - b) developing the personal tutor scheme (in liaison with SGUL)
 - c) increasing service user and carer/ patient participation in line with HCPC requirements);
 - d) the development of a policy on the management and conduct of practical examinations;
 - e) developing research supervisors;
 - f) Faculty level plans and actions to narrow the BME attainment.

- 4.4. It was noted that the faculty report highlighted two issues for consideration at the institutional level. These related to timetabling (which had been raised as an issue by several course directors) and the quality of teaching rooms on the Tooting site.
- 4.5. With regard to timetabling, it was reported that Dean Pateman was convening a timetabling group to review the current approaches to timetabling and to seek improvements to the way in which teaching rooms are allocated. The group was scheduled to meet in mid-March and it would report to the Student Experience Committee as part of the process for monitoring the Student Experience Action Plan.
- 4.6. The quality of teaching rooms (including the cleanliness of teaching rooms) was also a component of the Student Experience Action Plan. Cleaning teaching rooms had been externally contracted by both SGFT and SGUL. Professor Bowman was meeting with Derek Bannister to, inter alia, determine who was responsible for ensuring that externals contractors met the terms of the cleaning contracts. In this context, it was noted that students had a responsibility for removing their own litter from teaching rooms and this responsibility had been articulated through the Respect campaign. It was also noted that staff could influence student behavior by reminding students to take litter with them when they left a room.
- 4.7. In considering the faculty report, it was noted that there was an emerging issue in relation to admissions. Applications received in November had yet to be processed and interview dates had not been scheduled. Physiotherapy and Paramedic Science were cited as examples of programmes where there had been apparent delays in processing applications although this was thought to be a more widespread issue. It was understood that a process review of admissions was underway and a number of improvements had been implemented and further improvements were planned. Even so, it was agreed that the chair would follow up the QAEC concerns with Dean Pateman (action AMR).
- 4.8. The report was approved.

5. The summary report on Annual Programme Monitoring from TPCC

- 5.1. The report from UMBEC TPCC the outcome of annual programme monitoring in session 2015-16 was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/16-17/4/D

- 5.2. It was noted that the MSc Physiotherapy annual monitoring report had not been received by TPCC. The report had been prepared and reviewed at FQC and would be made available to Professor Bartlett (action: JH). PGDip Diabetes (with IHEED) had not submitted a report; programmes in their first year of operation are not required to submit reports.

5.3. As part of the 2014-15 monitoring cycle, a number of follow up issues had been identified and there had been partial progress in relation to these issues:

- a) The shortage of available and suitable rooms and teaching equipment required for the smooth delivery of postgraduate taught courses. It was noted that this will become more of an issue if the planned growth in student numbers was achieved (see minute 4.5).
- b) The need for an electronic application system for postgraduate courses had been highlighted and this was now in place although there were some continuing “snagging” issues with the system.
- c) The need for a dedicated postgraduate admissions officer to support students and staff had been highlighted by TPCC but was not supported by registry.
- d) The implementation of a platform for the online delivery of module and course content had been highlighted. Some progress had been made and possible next steps, based on current best practice, would now be explored.

5.4. The report identified a number of TPCC priorities for the year ahead:

- a) Consideration to be given to flexible delivery of existing course materials and to blended learning systems for all-new courses;
- b) Standardization of student feedback mechanisms to establish a minimum common dataset for all courses and to allow feedback loops to be closed;
- c) Continued development work on the common postgraduate framework;
- d) Ongoing work with the admissions team to streamline processes and to clear timelines for the processing of applications.

5.5. From the discussion of the TPCC, it was noted that there were a number of themes which were common to the FQC report. These were timetabling; the quality and suitability of teaching rooms; and admissions processes. With regard to timetabling, there was a further concern related to teaching accommodation needs for new programmes. It was unclear where and how these needs were assessed and whether the needs of established programmes took precedence over new programmes.

5.6. The report was approved.

6. Research Degrees Committee

6.1. The annual report (session 14-15) from the Research Degrees Committee was received for discussion.

Paper QAEC/15-16/4/E

6.2. The report captured data on new registrations and on submission outcomes for research degrees candidates for the period from 1st October 2015 to 30th September 2016. The report also summarized quality assurance activities and initiatives in 2015-16.

6.3. From the discussion of the report, the following points are noted:

- a) Recruitment in 2015-16 had been positive. 17 new students had registered as full-time MPhil/PhD students with 4 part-time registrants. 9 new students had registered for a full-time MD(Res) with 6 part-time registrants.
- b) Attendance at supervisor training sessions had also been good.
- c) Historically, submission and completion rates had not been strong but, following a number of quality assurances interventions, these were now improving. For the 2014-15 and 2015-16 years, completion rates within four years were in the region of 70%.
- d) A review of teaching duties undertaken by Research Degree students had been carried out in 2015-16. Survey results indicated that students valued these opportunities and would welcome more by way of training and consistency of access to teaching opportunities. Survey results are being followed up.
- e) PRES will next run in 2017. A range of formal and informal mechanisms to gather feedback from students are in place to complement the PRES.

6.4. The priorities for the year ahead are:

- a) Improve student knowledge of teaching opportunities and training available for this.
- b) Continued monitoring of the submission rates for progress reports and completion.
- c) Integration of SGUL and Doctoral Training Partnership students in cohort activities.
- d) Encourage student participation in PRES 2017.

6.5. The report was approved.

7. Plagiarism in higher education: custom essay writing services

7.1. Resources to raise awareness amongst students of issues related to academic integrity were received for consideration.

Paper QAEC/16-17/4/F

7.2. Course directors had been asked in November 2016 to report on any plagiarism awareness/good academic conduct teaching that is available to students and whether any teaching includes specific warning about essay mills. For those programmes that offered teaching in this area, a brief outline of what was covered and whether content was delivered online (or taught) was requested. A small number of responses had been received and it was agreed that monitoring committee chairs would be asked to reissue the request to students (Action: JS/AB/JL).

8. Other business

The forthcoming departures of experienced and knowledgeable senior staff in registry was raised and noted. It was noted that other staff were working under considerable pressure.

9. Dates of future meetings

Thursday 18 May 2017

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

It was agreed that an extra meeting would be scheduled to allow for the UMBEC monitoring report; the Careers Activity and Development report; and the Student Procedures – Case Analysis (2015-2016) report to be considered.

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