

# fQuality Assurance & Enhancement Committee



Tuesday 10th March 2020

## Minutes

**Present:** Prof Deborah Bowman (Chair); Dr Aileen O'Brien; Derek Baldwinson; Ms Pippa Tostevin; Prof Iain Beith; Prof Jane Lindsay; Jenny Laws; Dr Godfrina McKoy; Verity Allison; Dr Vanessa Ho; Dr Carwyn Hooper; Sally Mitchell; Dr Rachel Allen; Dr Mark Bodman-Smith; Dr Fran Gibson

**In attendance:** Glen Delahaye (clerk)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Reported

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Rosie MacLachlan, Syed Islam, Dr Saranne Weller, Dr Marcus Jackson, Prof Jane Saffell, Dr John Hammond; Beth Ward

1.2 The Committee welcomed Iain Beith as the new FHSCE representative.

### 2. Minutes

To receive and consider: the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Paper QAEC/19-20/6/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/19-20/6/B

Reported

3.1 **13th Nov 2019 ref 4.5:** *Internal Quality Audit Report (assessment)* – RA and GD would be meeting on the 13th March 2020 to agree a plan to complete the IQA.

3.2 **15th Jan 2020 ref 4.2:** *A supplementary report on External Examiner reports for postgraduate programmes for 2018-19 would be provided to the March 2020 QAEC meeting.* – A number of reports had still not been received by QPD, but had likely been completed and sent to course directors. A generic email address for external examiners to submit to would help to ensure proper circulation of reports. DB and JLa would be meeting about this and would feed back to QAEC. **Action: DB and JLa**

3.3 **12th Feb 2020 ref 1.3:** *There had not been a student present at QAEC since the November 2019 meeting. DFB would contact the student members to ensure they could be involved in future meetings.* – DFB had made contact with the student members, but they had still not yet been able to attend.

3.4 **12th Feb 2020 ref 5.10:** *There continued to be a need to standardise record keeping across the institution. Jenny Laws would raise this through SEOG.* – Jenny Laws had met with Rachel Allen, as Director of IMBE. Mary Hennessy was also being kept in the loop. It would likely take a few months before the action could be reported on to QAEC. The action would be revisited in the summer.

3.5 **12th Feb 2020 ref 8.1:** *It was not clear if the conditions of validation for the MSc Heart Failure would be met on time to allow a September 2020 launch. It was agreed that the Director of the Molecular and Clinical Sciences Research Institute, to whom the programme's course directors report, should be contacted to agree the next steps.* – DB and CH had met with Prof Dot Bennet and she was attempting to arrange a meeting with the two course directors.

### 4. Faculty Quality Committee Annual Programme Monitoring Overview Report

To receive and consider: the annual overview report for 2018-19.

Reported

Data

- 4.1 Progress had been made in the issuing of data to course directors, but some course directors were not entirely clear about the process to request data and had also expressed difficulties in analysing POLAR data, as it was unfamiliar and there was uncertainty about the commentary that was expected.
- 4.2 Similar concerns had been reported through UMBEC and TPCC.
- 4.3 The Data Improvement Group (DIG) had been reflecting on the annual monitoring cycle and was considering how to provide further support to course directors. For example, providing a three-year snapshot of course data and both institutional and external benchmarks would make it easier for course directors to determine how well their course was performing and to identify where action may be needed.

Support for new course directors

- 4.4 A programme of support for new course directors would be welcomed, which could include guidance on quality assurance, student compliance and exams.

Facilities

- 4.5 There was a request for the upgrading of the Physiotherapy practical labs, which were considered by the course team to be “no longer fit for purpose and in need of urgent refurbishment”.

Agreed

- 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 they want. **Action: JL and RA**
- 4.7 IB would discuss the Physiotherapy practical labs with colleagues as Head of School. If required, following IB’s discussions, DFB could explore further with Derek Bannister to understand responsibilities in relation to the space. **Action: IB and, if required subsequently, DFB**

**5. Taught Postgraduate Courses Committee Annual Programme Monitoring Overview Report**

To receive and consider: the annual overview report for 2018-19.

Reported

- 5.1 A special TPCC meeting was held to review the APMRs, which was well-attended and led to useful discussion through which the major issues became clearer.

SOLT

- 5.2 The new SOLT survey had been problematic. Postgraduate course directors had regularly been reporting their frustration with the survey to TPCC. It was also reported that it has potential to adversely affect staff promotions. Dr Marcus Jackson had been invited to the next TPCC to listen to staff views and explain the future plans for the survey.
- 5.3 QAEC discussed whether there might be a lack of clarity about the purpose of SOLTs which could contribute to the reported difficulties. For example, if it is a quality assurance mechanism, the SOLT survey would be more naturally owned by professional services colleagues rather than academic staff.

Assessment and Feedback

- 5.4 The timeliness of feedback was highlighted as having improved, but still remained an issue. The issues around delivering timely feedback related mainly to a lack of available resource.
- 5.5 Efforts were being made on MBBS to link assessment and feedback to personal reviews and to distribute it amongst staff as evenly as possible to avoid it becoming a burden. This would hopefully improve the quality.
- 5.6 A new feedback policy had been drafted and reviewed by QAEC in the previous academic year, but it had not yet been approved.

Resource

- 5.7 The increase in student numbers had not been matched by an increase in supervisors. Instead a small pool of supervisors had volunteered to supervise more students, but this could not be sustained. This would feed into DFB's ongoing project on workload distribution and she would also follow up with Prof Jon Friedland.

Enrolment

- 5.8 The option to apply for PgCerts and PgDips instead of a full MSc had been removed from a number of Masters degrees. This was due to the administrative challenges involved in setting up and maintaining them. It had caused frustration amongst course directors, as there had been demand for these awards.

Agreed

- 5.9 DFB would raise the concerns regarding the SOLT survey with Dr Marcus Jackson on behalf of QAEC. **Action: DFB**
- 5.10 QAEC would review the feedback policy in its next meeting.
- 5.11 DFB would refer the discussion over PgCert and PgDip awards within Masters degrees to Prof Jane Saffell for possible consideration at ESSC. **Action: DFB**
- 5.12 Postgraduate programmes typically have an early and late enrolment point each year and there was an ongoing effort to encourage all courses to synchronize their enrolment to the same time periods. **Action: JLa and CH to discuss this and report back to QAEC.**

**6. Research Degrees Committee Annual Report**  
To receive and consider: the annual report for 2018-19.

Paper QAEC/19-20/6/E

Reported

- 6.1 PGR and PGC held a joint Staff Student Liaison Group meeting in November 2019, led by MBS and CH. Eight students attended. There were no serious issues raised, except for a shortage of online storage for the students. A bid for more online capacity had since been approved at Research Committee.

There had been difficulty in engaging with MD(Res) students in feedback processes, including representation on the RDC. This had been discussed with students, but no resolution had been found yet. Many of these students considered themselves to be too busy to be actively involved in feedback processes, but they were aware of reporting structures should problems arise.

- 6.2 RA and JS were thanked for their efforts in the previous academic year to improve submission rates. A number of amendments had been made to improve submission and completion time or to enhance the student experience, including steps to improve networking and a newly opened Post-Graduate Centre for both PGR and PGC students.
- 6.3 There was a need to make the programmes more attractive to overseas students and meetings had been arranged to consider ways to achieve this.

**7. Any other Business**

Reported

7.1 There were no further items of business.

**8. Dates of Meetings in 2019-20**

21 April 2020  
20 May 2020  
23 June 2020

8.1 All meetings will start at 2pm.

**Matters for Report**

**9. \*Revisions to QAA qualification Characteristics Statements**

To receive and note: the QAA has published revised qualification Characteristics Statements, which are available on its website.

**Paper QAEC/19-20/6/F**

**10. \*MSc Sports Cardiology**

To receive and note: the report of the Periodic Review held 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

**Paper QAEC/19-20/6/G**

GD/April 2020