

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee

Tuesday 21st April 2020



Minutes

Present: Prof Deborah Bowman (Chair); Dr Aileen O'Brien; Prof Iain Beith; Beth Ward; Dr Carwyn Hooper; Derek Baldwinson; Dr Fran Gibson; Dr Godfrina McKoy; Prof Jane Saffell; Jenny Laws; Dr John Hammond; Prof Jane Lindsay; Dr Marcus Jackson; Dr Mark Bodman-Smith; Dr Rachel Allen; Dr Rosie MacLachlan; Syed Islam; Sally Mitchell; Dr Saranne Weller; Dr Vanessa Ho;

In attendance: Glen Delahaye (clerk); Soosan Atkins

1. Apologies for absence

Reported

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Pippa Tostevin; Verity Allison

2. Minutes

To receive and consider: the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2020.

Paper QAEC/19-20/7/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/19-20/7/B

Reported

3.1 No further updates were reported, aside from those already recorded in the Paper.

4. UMBEC Annual Programme Monitoring Overview Report

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

Paper QAEC/19-20/7/C

Reported

SOLTs

4.1 BSc Biomedical Science and iBSc had found the process of entering and distributing SOLTs survey data cumbersome and the number of students engaging with it had been low (~10% response rate). Problems with SOLTs had also been reported through TPCC.

4.2 Dr Marcus Jackson had since attended TPCC to provide guidance to staff on SOLTs and would be reviewing it through QAEC in the summer.

International students

4.3 The majority of the International students would be trained in the UK, making matching to residency places in the US and Canada more difficult, as developing supportive clinical contacts for students in the US form a crucial part of achieving interviews and places. Initiatives to support electives abroad and for SGUL to develop effective networks would be necessary.

PORT

4.4 There continued to be a need for more clarity about the expectations and frequency of PORT. There was also a lack of data available on PORT to support the APMR writing process.

4.5 There had been discussions about the use of MyWorkplace to record PORT data, which would improve the availability of data on staff who had completed PORT. CIDE had an intention to revisit this idea and would be focussing on it this academic year.

- 4.6 The Learning and Teaching strategy, once developed, would signal high level expectations of behaviours, commitments and values in relation to PORT. There had been some delays to the development of the strategy, as staff involved in it had been focussing on mitigating the impact of Covid-19.

Agreed

- 4.7 QAEC acknowledged the difficulties with matching residency places for international students, but did not consider itself well placed to act on them. **Action: DB and RA to discuss with Dr Judith Ibison to determine what support was needed and to report back to QAEC to provide assurance that a solution would be found.**
- 4.8 **Action: SW and SM to consider the value and purpose of PORT, as well as how it should be captured and connected to other monitoring mechanisms, and to table a paper for QAEC to discuss how it might be implemented.**
- 4.9 Prof Jane Lindsay would be available to support SW and SM, providing insight into the Faculty's PORT model and ensuring alignment.

5. Force Majeure Regulations

To receive and consider: the Force Majeure regulations and supporting documentation

Paper QAEC/19-20/7/D

Reported

- 5.1 QAEC recorded its gratitude to Derek Baldwinson and those involved in developing the Force Majeure Regulations, which had been developed at short notice and under challenging circumstances.
- 5.2 The Regulations had guided decisions and provided a framework to help students to understand how decisions were being reached.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 5.3 Consistent and considerate decision making for mitigating circumstances was essential, particularly as the University had taken the decision not to adopt a no-detriment policy.
- 5.4 It was not obvious where the mitigating circumstances policy was owned within the institution.
- 5.5 A review of mitigating circumstances processes had previously been considered as a possible Operational Excellence project.

Agreed

- 5.6 It was agreed that a review should take place into how mitigating circumstances had been enacted and decisions reached. This review could be completed by a selection of QAEC members, sampling successful and unsuccessful mitigating circumstances claims across programmes. **Action: DFB and GD to commence this work.**

6. Effectiveness of quality assurance processes during site closure

To receive and consider: the operation of quality assurance processes since the University site closure, including the quality of online teaching, assessment, student engagement and other matters.

Paper QAEC/19-20/7/E

Reported

- 6.1 The paper provided an update to QAEC on actions taken to mitigate disruptions to teaching, learning and assessment resulting from the closure of the campus to students and staff from the 25th March 2020.

Student consultation

- 6.2 There was an ongoing need to consult with students as much as possible on decisions being made to mitigate disruptions.

- 6.3 Unitu had proven to be an invaluable source of information highlighting the concerns of students. QAEC acknowledged that Unitu on its was not sufficient consultation.
- 6.4 Negative feedback received through Unitu had been impacting staff, as it was at times personal.
- 6.5 Beth Ward had organised a focus group on Unitu and would be working on a campaign aiming to encourage students to use Unitu more appropriately.

Teaching and delivery

- 6.6 The decision to move to online delivery of teaching was taken by the BCP Education team, who also put in place the framework for developing suitable materials.
- 6.7 There had already been a desire amongst course teams to make greater use of online technology and the move to online teaching had been met by both excitement and anxiety. Some colleagues were less experienced with the technology.
- 6.8 Microsoft Teams had been very effective for one-to-one student support.
- 6.9 It was not yet clear whether the next academic year would be commencing online, which may lead to significant changes in how courses were taught and assessed compared to how they had been advertised.
- 6.10 There would be a need to plan how changes would be communicated with new and returning students, with CMA implications in mind, as well as how the quality of teaching continued to be assured.
- 6.11 The Faculty had been developing guidance for good practice and was holding fortnightly meetings to discuss it. Anyone would be welcome to attend these meetings.

Welfare

- 6.12 Welfare provision was available to students remotely and had been effective, including occupational health and counselling services. Additional support had been made available for students who were entering practice earlier than expected.
- 6.13 The student societies had also been moving online, arranging such activities as meditation and support groups. QAEC welcomed these initiatives and suggested that Comms be made aware of them to ensure the available opportunities were widely communicated to students. **Action: BW**

Additional quality mechanisms

- 6.14 Exam boards were still expected to be quorate.
- 6.15 Several validation and periodic review events had been deferred.

Agreed

- 6.16 A report would be written reflecting on the effectiveness of decisions taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. It would take into account good practice, problematic areas and the extent to which students were consulted with prior to decisions being reached.
- 6.17 Derek would write a paragraph that captured the university's approach to consultation at institutional and course level. **Action: DB**
- 6.18 DFB would discuss initially and agree how QAEC members could feed into the project with examples. **Action: DFB and GD**

7. Oral feedback from Monitoring Committees and the SU

To receive and consider: any feedback from Monitoring Committee Chairs and representatives of the Students' Union, including on any issues that may have impacted their work.

Reported

7.1 TPCC had met virtually and the meeting had been as effective as when held on site. An increase in attendance by members was also observed.

7.2 FQC had also successfully held its meeting virtually.

8. Any other Business

Reported

8.1 The *George's for George's* 1.5 million metre challenge was underway and would raise money for the St George's Hospital Charity Coronavirus Appeal. Further information was available at <https://twitter.com/StGeorgesUni/status/1251782767622438914?s=20>

9. Dates of Meetings in 2019-20

20 May 2020

23 June 2020

9.1 All meetings will start at 2pm.

Matters for Report

10. QAA Guidance

To receive and note: new detailed advice from the QAA, drawing on emerging practice in higher education, to support the sector in its response to the COVID-19 challenge.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>

GD/May 2020