

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY COMMITTEE
MEETING 2 – 12 APRIL 2018 – UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

Name of Member	Mtg 1 13.02.18	Mtg 2 12.03.18
Professor David Bolton (Chair)	√	√
Malek Arab (SU VP Education 2017/18)	√	√
Professor Susan Blake	√	A
Dr Margaret Carran	A	√
Dr Irene Ctori	√	√
Alison Edridge	√	√ (minutes)
Dr David Flinton	√	A
Dr Cristina Gacek	√	√
Dr Anna Gaio	A	√
Mary Ann Kernan	√	A
Professor Rachael-Anne Knight	A	√
Dr Lauren Knott	A	A
Professor Pam Parker	√	√
Dr Simon Parker	√	√
Dr Martin Rich	√	√
Professor Stuart Sime	√	√
Katherine Reece Thomas	√	√

√ indicates attendance A indicates apologies have been provided

--- indicates a period when the member is on extended leave/when the person was not a member

In attendance:

Professor Laurence Solkin, SASS (representing Mary Ann Kernan and Lauren Knott)

Dr Alexander Rhys, Student and Academic Services

Apologies:

Helen Fitch, Assistant Registrar (Quality), Student and Academic Services (Secretary)

Part 1 - Preliminary Items

1. Welcome and apologies:

The Chair welcomed members to the second meeting of the Educational Quality Committee.

Apologies were received from Susan Blake, Helen Fitch, Dave Flinton, Mary Ann Kernan and Lauren Knott.

2. Minutes

The minutes of meeting 2 of Educational Quality Committee held on 12 February 2018 were **approved**.

3. Matters Arising

The report on the status of matters arising was noted.

It was **agreed** to close the outstanding action relating to one year on reports for Periodic Reviews (Education & Student Committee September 2016, Item 13). One year on reports were still outstanding for undergraduate Engineering programmes but it was noted that this provision had now been replaced by significantly revised Engineering programmes, which had undergone approval in the last 2 years. A one year on report was also outstanding for Computer Science research degrees, but these were now due for review in 2018/19, and reflection by the programme team on actions taken since the last review would take place as part of this process. The Committee noted that from a quality assurance and enhancement perspective, all these programmes had been completing the annual programme evaluation process.

4. Chair's Business

Office for Students (OfS)

The OfS was now in operation and had published details of its initial priorities. Student and Academic Services (S&AS) was coordinating the application to register with the OfS and Susannah Marsden, Director of S&AS was City's key contact for OfS. The application was being developed in close collaboration with Finance and the Governance team. Institutions could choose to apply for a deadline of 30th April 2018 with a decision due in July or a later deadline of 23rd May with a decision due in mid-September. City had elected to apply for the earlier deadline as institutions were not able to confirm to students that they were eligible for student support from Student Finance England until they were registered with the OfS, and had to publish a disclaimer in the meantime.

TEF

Analysis of City's subject level data was currently taking place within S&AS and an update would be provided to the Committee at the next meeting. The Chair reported that during programme-level meetings with Schools he had been encouraging colleagues to consider where the challenges for each programme will be with the introduction of subject-level TEF.

Industrial Action

ExCo had approved the formation of an Industrial Action Quality and Standards Working Group to oversee the institutional response to the action in relation to quality and standards. The Working Group was chaired by the Deputy President & Provost, and had academic representation from Educational Quality Committee, and representation from S&AS. The SU President was also a member of the Group. Each School had been considering the risks and mitigations for their programmes and the Working Group had received reports on the current position and mitigation plans. The main mitigations put in place to date to minimise risk to student progression and award, had been rescheduling/replacement of missed teaching or ensuring missed content was not assessed, e.g. through adjustments to exam questions. Any changes to assessment required formal approval, the process for which had been communicated to Deans and COOs in a guidance document for onward circulation to relevant staff. The Working Group was considering the approach to financial compensation based on impact. It was noted that the current position in relation to compensation was as set out in the student FAQs on the website and it was confirmed that refunds of tuition fees were not being considered. It was **agreed** that Schools should be informed each time the industrial action FAQs were updated, so that staff and students were working to the latest information.

- **Action: Schools to be informed when industrial action FAQs are updated (Associate Director, S&AS, April 2018)**

City Learning and Teaching Committee

The proposed terms of reference and composition for the new City-wide Learning and Teaching Committee had now been developed. This Committee would report to the revised Education and Student Committee, which would consider the proposed terms of reference at its first meeting.

Examination period

The main examination period this year would fall within Ramadan. The Examinations Officer had worked with City's Imam to determine mitigations to support students who would be fasting during this period. These would include all examinations taking place during the daytime (no evening sessions this year), and LEaD and the University Nurse delivering training to invigilators on how to support candidates who were fasting. The SU Vice-President (Education) expressed the view that students had not been sufficiently consulted on the plans.

- **Action: Chair to feed SU VP (Education)'s comments about insufficient consultation on plans relating to exam and Ramadan to Associate Director of S&AS and SU CEO (Chair, April 2018)**

It was queried whether the removal of evening exams would increase the number of exams that students would need to sit within any given day. It was reported that the Exams Office had provided assurance that approximately 96% of students would have a 2 day gap between each exams. However, the Committee was concerned that the 4% where this was not the case could have an adverse impact for some students and **agreed** that further information on these would be useful.

- **Action: Exams Office to provide further details of where there will not be a 2 day gap between exams (S&AS, April 2018)**

Part 2 - City Developments, Priorities and Standing Reports

5. Education and Student Committee

The Chair reported that the new Education and Student Committee was yet to meet. The Committee noted a paper providing an update on work relating to the to the Education and Student Strategy which was already in motion, including progress on the Personal Support for Students review, the Distinctive Offer project and the Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring project. The Committee **agreed** it would be useful to receive the Senate report referred to in the update paper examining performance by student demographic for satisfaction, progression, attainment and employability

- **Action: Senate Performance Monitoring paper to be circulated to Committee (S&AS, April 2018)**

6. Students' Union Standing Report

The Committee considered the report on recent SU activity. The SU Vice-President (Education) highlighted the following:

- The SU had been campaigning to not having evening exams to reduce the potential impact on progression for students fasting during Ramadan.
- Walk-in sessions had been organised for students so they could discuss impact arising from the recent industrial action.
- This year's Academic Impact Awards would be held on 24th May, which enabled students to nominate the staff and students who had enhanced their academic experience at City. Nominations would close on 16th April. The awards were run in partnership with LEaD who were thanked for sponsoring the awards.
- The SU had continued to prioritise training for Programme Representatives and had organised more in-person training sessions than in previous years. There had been increases in the number of reps in some Schools, but a substantial decline in the School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering. The SU was working with the School to address this.

7. Student and Academic Services Standing Report

The Assistant Director (Quality and Academic Development) reported that the MAFS Personal Tutoring Records project had been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Leadership & Management Award (THELMA) in the Excellence in Registry Services Category. This project had involved Professional Services and School colleagues from across City. The outcome would be known by the end of June.

8. LEaD Standing Report

The Deputy Director of LEaD reported that the Educational Technology team had been reviewing how they work and the organisational structure. The opportunity had been taken to make some revisions to posts following staff departures to focus some support on immediate technical issues, freeing up the Educational Technologists to provide appropriate support to Schools. Members of the Committee indicated that this seemed to be working well. It was also reported that the DALI project was continuing and further work would take place over the summer.

9. Undergraduate Assessment Strategy Review

The Deputy Director of LEaD presented the report on the outcomes of the project to review undergraduate assessment strategies. It was considered that the project had been a success overall.

The majority of programmes had completed a mapping of assessment to programmes and a small number would complete this exercise by the end of the summer. A number of programmes had taken the opportunity to review and revise their assessments. Work would be done to embed the mapping in forms and guidance for programme approval and review so the information was maintained and considered going forward.

Work would continue until the end of the year to develop an assessment toolkit for staff and advice for student on engaging with assessment. It was also planned to develop some case studies from the review.

A second phase of the project to continue into 2018/19 was being considered, to provide further support to each School on assessment and feedback, ideally tailored to specific School needs.

The Deputy Director LEaD was currently running a series of focus groups with undergraduate students around how they prepare for assessments. These were leading to students providing broader feedback on their views on assessment and feedback and could inform future work in this area.

It was queried whether there could be merit in developing guidance on of volume of assessment expected in relation to the credit value for a module. It was agreed that this should not be prescriptive to accommodate disciplinary differences, but that establishing norms in terms of equivalence could be useful, e.g. how long an essay assessment or an exam for a 15 credit module would normally be. The Deputy Director of LEaD had circulated some draft guidance on this last year and had requested comments via School Learning and Teaching Committees, but had not received any feedback. It was **agreed** that this should be followed up with Schools.

- **Action: Schools to be reminded to provide feedback on draft guidance on assessment volume (Deputy Director LEaD, Associate Deans (Education), June 2018)**

Part 3 - Educational Quality

10. Annual Assurance Report to Senate and Council

The Committee was reminded that HEFCE had established a requirement for institutions' governing bodies to provide an annual assurance statement on quality and standards. An annual report was provided to Council on quality and standards to support it in making this statement. Although HEFCE had now been replaced by OfS, which was yet to confirm whether an annual assurance statement would continue to be required, it was planned to continue to provide Council with a report as good practice.

The Committee noted the updates to the action plan from the 2016/17 Annual Assurance Report, the format of which had been revised to detail the designated owners of each activity, and to illustrate which committees were responsible for oversight. The Committee noted that some of the actions were not very specific but heard that this was because the Education and Student Strategy had been undergoing revision last year when the action plan had been compiled. This would be addressed in the report on 2017/18, drafting of which had commenced.

11. Senate Regulations and Policies

a) **Policies and guidance on programme approval, amendment, termination and suspension, and periodic review.**

The Committee considered the draft revised policies and guidance which were intended to ensure appropriate alignment with the Vision and Strategy and changing external frameworks, as well as to make them more accessible. These had been subject to consultation and discussion with Boards of Studies, School quality teams, Associate Deans (Education) and the SU. Feedback from these groups had been taken on board as far as possible. A summary of the main changes was contained in the accompanying cover paper. The outcomes of the Committee's discussions were as follows:

Programme approval: The Committee **agreed** to recommend approval to Senate.

Programme amendment: The Committee discussed the proposal that all amendments for a programme were presented and considered together annually, to enable them to be considered holistically for programme coherence to be maintained, and to enable the impact of cumulative change over time to be monitored. The Committee was supportive of this in principle, but noted difficulties with implementing this in practice and there was a reluctance for programme teams to be prevented from proposing changes throughout the year. This was despite the fact that any changes, except those exceptionally approved after the annual deadline, would be for implementation the following academic year at the earliest, whenever they were proposed.

The Committee agreed that provided that the School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) took a programme-level overview of any changes and monitored the impact of cumulative change for each programme at least once per year, proposals for amendments could be made at any time (subject to the normal deadline for implementation for a given academic year). The Committee **agreed** to recommend approval to Senate, subject to this being addressed in revisions to the proposals and through an amendment to the PARC terms of reference.

The Committee was informed that the current deadline for amendments of 30th April each year for implementation the following academic year would be brought forward in future years, although the exact date was yet to be confirmed. This had been agreed by ExCo to enable work on implementing personalised timetables to progress, which was dependent on programme information being confirmed earlier to enable module selection and module registration to take place. The possibility of a retaining a later amendment

deadline for core modules was raised and it was agreed that this would be passed on to the Personalised Timetables project team for consideration.

- **Action: Personalised Timetables project team to be asked to consider the possibility of retaining a later amendment deadline for core modules (Assistant Director (QUAD), April 2018)**

Periodic Review: It was proposed to move to from a review cycle of 6 years to 5 years, which was the sector norm. In addition, it was proposed that the requirement for a one-year on report be removed from the process, and that instead progress with actions arising from Periodic Review would be embedded within the Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) process. The APE form would be revised to reflect this. The Committee **agreed** to recommend approval to Senate.

Programme Termination and Suspension: It was noted that suspended programme would require formal reinstatement through Stage 1 University Programme Approval Committee approval under the proposals. The Committee **agreed** to recommend approval to Senate.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful for the policy and associated guidance for each of the above to be presented in one document rather than as separate documents.

- **Action: The Policy and Guidance for each area to be presented in one document (S&AS, April 2018)**

b) Fitness to Study Policy and Guidance

The Fitness to Study Regulation, Policy and Guidance, which had been introduced in 2016/17, had been reviewed to take account of feedback received on its operation since its introduction.

The Committee was informed that the Regulation had been received concurrently by Academic Governance Committee (AGC) by circulation, which had made a number of comments. Educational Quality Committee would be asked to consider the policy and guidance further once AGC's comments had been addressed and prior to it being received by Senate. In the meantime, the Committee provided the following feedback:

- There should be a clear statement of when the policy applies. It was considered that it was unclear how the three points set out in paragraph 5 of the Regulation related to each other. In addition, the circumstances in which the Fitness to Study process could be used did not align between the Policy and the accompanying guidance.
- There were typographical errors in Regulation 10, paragraphs 34 and 48.

c) Personal Tutoring Policy

The Committee noted the Policy which had been revised to make it more student-facing although core content, operation and monitoring processes remained the same. The Policy had been considered and endorsed by ExCo and approved by Senate.

d) Extensions and Late Participation

The Committee noted the report summarising the feedback received from the Board of Studies consultation on extensions and late participation. Further discussions would take place with the Quality Forum and the Student Case Management Forum to inform the drafting of a policy, which would come to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration. The SU Vice-President (Education) voiced his support for moving to a consistent approach across programmes for extensions and late participation.

12. Academic misconduct

The Committee noted a report on progress with City's action plan for detecting and preventing contract cheating. This had been developed in response to guidance published by the QAA earlier in the year produced in collaboration with Universities UK and the National Union of Students.

Work arising from the action plan had included a joint campaign between the SU and Marketing around the support available to students and their responsibilities, rather than inadvertently advertising contract cheating services. It was noted that these services were often marketed as 'proof-reading' or 'academic assistance'. LEaD had produced guidance on what constituted legitimate proof-reading to help students understand whether what they were being offered could amount to academic misconduct.

It was confirmed that there was no change to City's Academic Misconduct Regulation and Policy which already captured contract cheating as a form of academic misconduct. Methods to verify whether a student had produced a piece of work, e.g. through the use of a viva, were already recommended within City's guidance as part of an academic misconduct investigation. In the longer term it was intended to work with LEaD to investigate software that could support detection of contract cheating.

It was noted that the QAA had recommended institutions consider blocking known essay mill websites from their IT equipment. City's IT policy was not to block access to any websites and it was therefore not currently possible to implement this recommendation. Members of the Committee were generally not supportive of requesting a change to the policy as there were concerns about censorship. It was noted that students would still be to access these websites from their own devices whilst at City or at home so the effect of any restrictions on City's IT equipment would be limited. It was suggested that consideration could instead be given as to whether to classify accessing essay mill websites as misuse of City's IT facilities.

One of the Programme Directors from Law, Professor Sime, shared his experiences of academic misconduct on the Bar Professional Training Course and had sent a written note to the Secretary regarding this in advance of the meeting. This would be taken into account in any future review of the Regulation, Policy and guidance.

It was queried how many cases of academic misconduct City had and it was **agreed** that this would be confirmed following the meeting.

- **Action: Number of academic misconduct cases at City to be confirmed (S&AS, April 2018)**

13. Annual Programme Evaluation (APE)

The quality report for the taught postgraduate APEs 2016/17 outlining key themes, good practice, and areas for development was received. The usefulness of the report in informing Schools' APE preparations was noted.

The School of Health Sciences undergraduate APEs had not been included in the quality report for undergraduate APEs considered at the last meeting as they had not yet been signed off the Board of Studies and submitted to S&AS. They had now been received and a separate quality report had been produced which was noted. Academic Partnership Coordinator reports for School of Health Sciences were due to be considered by the Board of Studies in April 2018 and had therefore not yet been received by S&AS.

14. Periodic Review

The Committee noted a report outlining Periodic Review activity that had taken place this academic year to date, and reviews which were due to be completed by the end of the academic year as well as in 2018/19. There was a significant volume of review activity taking place. Colleagues were encouraged to set dates as soon as possible, particularly for those reviews due later this academic year that did not yet have an agreed date.

Professor Sime requested a deferral of the Law postgraduate research review due to take place in 2018/19. The importance of the Periodic Review process in providing assurance to Council on quality and standards was noted. Any request for a deferral would therefore require a strong rationale and would need to be submitted to S&AS, who would liaise with the Deputy President & Provost on whether it could be approved.

[Secretary's note – an error in the paper for this item was identified following the meeting. The last review for the MPhil/PhD Research Degrees Computer Science took place in 2011/12 not 2007/08 as stated in the paper.]

15. External Examiners

The Committee was informed that all posts for 2017/18 had been filled. However, there had recently been 14 resignations due to UCU industrial action. Interim measures were being put in place and replacements were being sought, although a number of those resigning had indicated a willingness to resume their posts once the industrial action was over. This would be followed up as appropriate following the outcome of the UCU ballot on Friday 13th April regarding the latest pension offer, which may result in the industrial action being suspended.

58 posts were due to expire at the end of 2017/18 and S&AS were liaising with Schools to fill these vacancies.

16. Internal audit – programme development

The Committee noted the Programme Development Internal Audit report which had considered the programme approval process. The outcome of the audit was full assurance, with only two recommendations made that were at the lowest level of priority indicating that this was a well-managed process. Lucy

Dawkins, who manages the process at institutional level, was thanked for her work that had contributed to this outcome.

17. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

The summary of PSRB activity in the School of Arts and Social Sciences was noted. Information from Law was still awaited. Details of activity in the other Schools had been received at the last meeting.

18. English Language Support

The Committee noted a report on support provided to students in each School during the autumn term 2017/18, which was coordinated by the School of Arts and Social Sciences. Schools were asked to send any further support requirements to Simon Cuddihy, EAP Coordinator, who was thanked for the work he undertakes. Informal feedback had indicated that students were happy with the support provided.

19. Lecture Capture

A paper outlining work undertaken in relation to the expansion of Lecture Capture and the proposed next steps was received. The Chair of the Learning Environment Committee noted that there were some complex issues to be addressed beyond installing hardware within classrooms, such as timetabling and the way in which recordings work. An action plan with a schedule had been drafted which would be circulated in due course, but it was confirmed that realistically a new lecture capture system would not be rolled out until 2020 at the earliest. This would enable appropriate review of technological capabilities, a literature review and a trial before full roll out.

The Committee discussed some of the broader issues along with timetabling that would need to be addressed in rolling out lecture capture, such as capturing student questions and comments on recordings, the approach students who are not willing to be recorded, and the impact on attendance although the experience was that generally there was not an adverse impact on attendance.

It was reported that some staff had not received a communication about changes to rooms that were lecture capture enabled and it was agreed this would be recirculated.

- **Action: Communication about changes to lecture capture enabled rooms to be recirculated (Deputy Director, LEaD, June 2018)**

20. Sector Updates

The publication of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which was now presented on one page, was noted. QAA was coordinating work to produce guidance to accompany the revised Code and this would be published later in 2018.

21. Any Other Business

The Committee was informed that Dr Alexander Rhys was leaving City later in April to take up the post of Head of Education and Quality at the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Alex was thanked for his work and contributions to City over the last year.

22. Next Meeting

14 June 2018 – 2.00-4.00pm

Minutes: Alison Edridge (in Helen Fitch's absence)

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