

Quoracy of School Programme and Approval and Review Committees (PARC)

Summary

This paper is in response to an action arising from the minutes of the Education and Student Committee [Meeting 8, 22/09/15, item 15] to review the quoracy of PARC meetings.

Recommendation

Education and Student Committee is asked to:

- **Receive** this report and to **note** actions where necessary.
- **Discuss** issues arising from this report.

Quoracy of School Programme and Approval Committees (PARC)

University Regulations

The PARC Terms of Reference and Composition Regulation (appendix 1) outlines that the Programme Approval and Review Committee should comprise the following:

- i. Associate Dean – Education (Chair)
- ii. Members of staff by reason of their role as determined by the Board of Studies
- iii. Students by category of representation to be determined by the Board of Studies
- iv. Appointed External member/s for consideration of specific proposals

This regulation also states that the composition of PARC should not total more than 8 members.

In accordance with the regulation, Standing Orders for Boards of Studies and their Sub-Committees (appendix 2), the quorum for the Board of Studies or a Sub-Committee has been set at 50% of the members being present.

Academic governance arrangements are due to be reviewed during 2016/17 in light of HEFCEs revised operating model for quality assessment, which will provide an opportunity for quorum requirements to be considered.

PARC Quoracy during 2015/16

The data in this report has been, where possible, taken from the minutes of PARC meetings for the 2015-16 academic year.

As this table shows, almost every School PARC (with the exception of SMCSE) comprised more than the maximum of 8 members set out in the Regulation.

NOTE: This report does not include conclusive data on the composition of SHS PARCs, as clarification was still being sought at the time of writing. However, initial information suggests that regulation quoracy has been achieved.

School	Members of PARC (average across meetings)	50% to represent quoracy of actual PARC members
City Law School	16	8
Cass Business School	21	11
SMCSE	8	4
SASS	10	5
SHS	TBC	TBC

For the purposes of addressing quoracy as fully as possible in this report, then, information has been recorded in two ways in the table following this report:

1. The ticks in the left-hand column represent quoracy according to University Regulations (i.e using the regulation 8 members as the maximum compositional number for PARC and establishing 50% attendance in each instance).
2. The ticks in the right hand column reflect 50% of the *average* number of members who usually comprise the PARC, according to attendance recorded at the meetings.

It should be noted that, according to University Regulations, all PARCS were quorate, with at least 50% of the regulation 8 members in attendance.

The review observed that the PARC meetings were generally well-attended by the relevant members of staff, and the minutes of meetings demonstrated that discussion formed a vital part of the proceedings.

There were, though, inconsistencies in current practice of PARCs. As laid out in the Terms of Reference, student representation at PARCs is permitted. Cass Business School was, though, the only School to have student representation at PARCs, and student representatives attended with regularity throughout 2015-16.

The review also noted that there were significant inconsistencies in the number of PARC members, despite the regulations which govern this.

Recommendations for further consideration:

- i) Consider whether the maximum number of PARC members set out in the Regulation requires review, or agree action to be taken to ensure compliance with the current Regulation.
- ii) Consider whether there should be greater consistency in student representation at PARCs.

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Student and Academic Services

October 2016

School		Meeting One	Meeting Two	Meeting Three	Meeting Four	Meeting Five	Meeting Six	Meeting Seven	Meeting Eight	Meeting Nine	
Cass	Date	27/10/2015	26/11/15	02/02/16	15/03/16	03/05/16	15/06/16				
	Quorate?	✓	X (11)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Notes	PARC 23	PARC 24	PARC 25	PARC 26	PARC 27	PARC 28				
Law	Date	17/09/15	23/03/16	11/05/16							
	Quorate?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Notes	Quorate, but 5 senior members of staff were absent.									
SASS	Date	18/06/15	18/09/15	15/10/15	26/11/15	17/03/16	05/05/16				
	Quorate?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Notes	Meeting 22	Extra PARC (PARC Papers)	Meeting 23	Meeting 24	Meeting 26	Meeting 27				
SMCSE	Date	30/09/15	06/11/15	04/12/15	03/02/16	15/03/16	11/05/16	15/06/16	24/06/16	20/07/16	
	Quorate?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Notes	PARC 11	PARC 12	Extra PARC	PARC 13	Extra PARC 2	PARC 14	Extra PARC 3	Extra PARC 3 (pt.2) – continuation of Extra PARC 3.	Extra PARC	
SHS	Date	22/10/15	06/11/15	26/11/15	01/03/16	12/08/16					
	Quorate?	✓	?	✓	?	✓	?	✓	?	?	
	Notes		Only 4 members (all present) for this PARC meeting.	School PARC Stage 2 <u>Report</u> . Does include indication of membership presence.	School PARC Stage 2 <u>Report</u> . Does include indication of membership presence.	Extraordinary PARC – outcome report (summary of discussion, rather than full minutes).					

Programmes Approval and Review Committee Terms of Reference and Composition Regulation

Responsibilities

Programme Approval and Review Committees are responsible to the Board of Studies for the peer-review scrutiny of the development of new or amended programme proposals as well as for the preparations of periodic reviews. The Committee will also normally oversee preparations for PSRB visits for accredited programmes.

Specific Duties

- i. To provide support to Programme Committees in undertaking the development of new or revised provision and for periodic review preparations.
- ii. To ensure that proposals are underpinned by appropriate market research and link clearly to the University Strategy and any School sub-strategy.
- iii. To ensure that the development of new or amended provision is in accordance with the University's academic policy and regulatory framework and any additional PSRB requirements.
- iv. To ensure the quality of information contained within programme and module specifications that which will be provided to students.
- v. To ensure the quality of information provided for University-level approval or review panels.
- vi. To engage with external panel members in accordance with the University Programme Approval Policy.

Composition

- i. Associate Dean - Education (Chair).
- ii. Members of staff by reason of their role as determined by the Board of Studies.
- iii. Students by category of representation to be determined by the Board of Studies.
- iv. Appointed external member/s for consideration of specific proposals

The composition should not total more than 8 members.

A Committee Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Studies.

The Committee has the authority to invite other members of University staff to meetings for discussion of specific matters. This may include colleagues from relevant Professional Services to support development of the programme/s and the student learning experience.

Frequency of Meetings

Three times per year, or more frequently as determined by the Board of Studies.

Standing Orders

Programme Approval and Review Committees operate in accordance with the Standing Orders for Boards of Studies and their Sub-Committees

Standing Orders for Boards of Studies and their Sub-Committees (new stand-alone regulation)

1. Duties of Members

All members of Boards of Studies and their sub-committees shall be required:

- i. To act always in the best interests of the University as a whole, with this obligation to be observed in priority to any duty as a member may owe to those electing or appointing him or her;
- ii. To act in good faith, honestly and for a proper purpose;
- iii. To exercise appropriate care and diligence;
- iv. Not to improperly use their position to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else; and
- v. To disclose and avoid conflicts of interest.

2. Timing of Meetings

Meeting dates should normally be set at times when all students, notably undergraduates, are present in the School.

3. Special Meetings

A Special Meeting of a Board of Studies or a sub-committee of a Board of Studies may be convened at any time by its Chair. At least seven clear days notice of any Special Meeting will be sent to each member stating the nature of the business to be transacted. No other business than that stated is to be discussed.

4. Reserved Business

Student members shall withdraw from the meeting of the Board of Studies or of any committee of the Board of Studies when it is declared by the Chair that the meeting is about to discuss a reserved area of business and shall not return to the meeting until discussion on the reserved area of business is concluded. Papers for consideration at any such meeting and minutes and other records relating to reserved areas of business shall not at any time be made available to a student. Reserved areas of business include those concerning decisions upon the appointment, promotion and other matters affecting the personal position of individual member of the staff of the University or students and on the academic assessment of individual students. Subject to this, in any case of doubt the Chair shall decide whether a matter is reserved or not.

5. Conduct of Meetings

- i. The Chair has discretion to determine the conduct of discussion and debate at Board of Studies and Board of Studies Sub-Committee meetings and how business is to be brought to conclusion.
- ii. The University through Council has adopted guidance and codes of practice including Procedures for Public Interest Disclosure and Freedom of Speech.
- iii. Every matter for decision shall be determined after due deliberation by those present, the Chair taking the sense of the meeting, unless any member has requested that the matter be put to a vote.
- iv. Where a member requests a vote, all those present and eligible shall vote and the result be determined by simple majority.
- v. If the vote shall be equally divided for and against, the Chair shall have a second and casting vote.

6. Quorum

The quorum for a Board of Studies or a Sub-Committee of a Board of Studies shall be 50 per cent of the members. In the case of an inquorate meeting, the meeting may be re-convened on a reasonable period of notice no less than a week.

Boards of Studies and their Sub-Committees do not need to have a quorum at the start of the meeting but do need a quorum to make decisions. A conference call from one or more individual Members can count towards the quorum as being in

attendance.

7. Actions by the Chair

The Chair of a Board of Studies or Sub-Committee of a Board of Studies has power to act on behalf of the Board or Sub-Committee in matters of urgency where that power has been delegated by the Board or Sub-Committee; the exercise of this power will be reported to the following meeting of the Board or Sub-Committee.

8. Decisions Out of Session

Decisions can be taken by a Board of Studies or Sub-Committee of a Board of Studies by correspondence and e-mail. In exercising this mechanism quoracy rules apply in that at least 50% of the members must express a view and a majority shall carry.

9. Agenda

- i. The Board or Sub-Committee Secretary is responsible for drawing up the Agenda for meetings and ensuring adequate supporting information is provided.
- ii. The Secretary will consult with the Chair of the Board or Sub-Committee on any matters of difficulty.
- iii. Any member of a Board or Sub-Committee wishing to request that an item is placed on the agenda, should communicate with the Secretary in the first instance.
- iv. The Agenda for a meeting and the Minutes of the previous meeting shall normally be despatched to each member seven days in advance of the meeting.

10. Declaration of Interest

- i. All members of Boards of Studies and their sub-committees are required to disclose at the earliest opportunity any financial or other beneficial interests they, a member of their family or any organisation in which they hold office or employment or an interest, may have in any transaction under consideration between the University and a third party or which could unduly interfere with the proper discharge of their duties as a member of the Board or Committee. Conflict of interest exists when a member personally benefits, or is perceived to benefit personally, from an activity, transaction or interaction with an individual or business. A member has a perceived or apparent conflict of interest if there is a reasonable perception, which a reasonably well informed person could properly have, that the Board or Committee member's integrity or ability to exercise an official power, or perform an official duty or function is likely to have been affected by his or her private interest.
- ii. Members should inform the Board of Studies or Committee Secretary of any relevant conflict or potential conflict of interest in advance of the meeting or to draw it to the attention of the Chair at the start of the meeting or as the member becomes aware of a conflict during the course of discussion. The circumstances in which a declaration is appropriate are when the Board or sub-committees has business which is relevant to those interests or when in the course of a meeting the member becomes aware that they have or may have a financial or other beneficial interest in the specific item of business to be transacted.
- iii. Following declaration the member should withdraw from the meeting and take no part in the discussion of said matter.
- iv. The member may return to the meeting only when the discussion is completed and any decision has been taken.

11. Record of Decisions of a Board of Studies or Sub-Committee

Decisions of a Board of Studies or Sub-Committee and the reasons leading to particular decisions are recorded in the minutes and should be regarded as in the public domain except where the Board or Sub-Committee agrees matters are confidential for commercial, personal or other good reasons.

Minutes of meetings of a Board of Studies shall be presented to the next meeting of Senate together with a report of key items of business (which may be verbal).

Minutes of meetings of Sub-Committees of Boards of Studies shall be presented to the next meeting of the Board of Studies together with a report of key items of business (which may be verbal).