

SEC/2013/3/0520

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Academic Standards and Quality Committee:
minutes of a meeting held on 10 July 2013

- Present:** Professor A G Chetwynd (Chair)
Professor G Blower
Dr G Brown
Dr C Edwards
Professor L Hendry
Professor G Johnes
Dr R Lauder
Professor C Milligan
Mr J O'Neill
Professor C G Rogers
Mrs L M Wareing
- In attendance:** Ms C Geddes
Dr J Howard
Ms K Fenton
Mr A R Okey
Ms A McFarlane (Secretary)
- Apologies:** Mr I Denny, Professor M Shackleton

Section A

Introductory items

ASQC/2013/16

Minutes

Document: SEC/2013/3/0247

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record.

ASQC/2013/17 Matters arising

17.1 Postgraduate fees

Minute ASQC/2013/8.4.2 refers

At the May meeting the Committee had noted concerns that postgraduate fees were being set too late and that this affected recruitment. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had confirmed that fees would be set by December this year and the timing reviewed for the following cycle.

17.2 Assessment and Feedback

Minute ASQC/2013/11 refers

At the May meeting the Committee had discussed a paper from Richard Clark (LUSU Vice-President, Academic) *Working together to improve assessment and feedback at Lancaster*. It was noted that the report of the review of assessment and feedback undertaken in 2010 had been forwarded to LUSU for information and would be reviewed by the incoming LUSU VP Academic, Mr Joe O'Neill.

17.3 APL/APEL Policy

Minute ASQC/2013/8.3.6 refers

It was noted that the QAA had announced a consultation on a new draft chapter on APL/APEL. The chapter would be published in October 2013. A new policy on APL/APEL would be brought to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee once the new chapter of the *Quality Code* was available.

Section B Items for discussion

ASQC/2013/18 Lancaster University Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research programmes

Document: SEC/2013/3/0358

The Committee approved a proposal from the Dean of Graduate Studies for introduction of a revised Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Programmes, with effect from October 2013. The revised Code replaced the University's 2005 Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research programmes and was informed by and aligned with Chapter B11 of the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The Committee noted that it was a QAA requirement that all institutions had such a code in place. The Dean of Graduate Studies Advisory Group (DoGS-AG) and the faculties had been consulted in its revision. Faculty representatives were asked to remind their faculties of the requirements of the University's Code, and to note in particular the requirements regarding supervisory time. The Dean of Graduate Studies commented that the Code was aimed at several different audiences and he would be working with the Secretariat on how best to communicate it via the web.

Action: Faculties/Dean of Graduate Studies/Secretariat

ASQC/2013/19 Lancaster University Medical Degree

19.1 Update on introduction of the Lancaster University MBChB

Document: SEC/2013/3/0366

The Committee **received** an update from the Lancaster Medical School (LMS) on the introduction of the Lancaster MBChB degree and the decoupling of the arrangement with Liverpool University. Members heard that the first cohort of students admitted to the Lancaster medical degree would start in 2013-2014. All current first years had also elected to transfer their registration from Liverpool to Lancaster, hence there would be two years of Lancaster registered medical students in 2013-2014. Curriculum development and work on assessment had gone on throughout 2012-13 to integrate the degree into Lancaster's standard regulations and processes, and this would continue systematically as students moved through the programme. Proposals from LMS had been scrutinised and approved through the faculty teaching committee, in the usual way. It was noted that the GMC had visited the School in early June and would continue to make regular visits during the transition period.

The Committee welcomed the update from LMS and endorsed the approach and actions taken by the School and the Faculty.

19.2 Regulations for the Lancaster medical degree

Document: SEC/2013/3/0363

19.2.1 It was noted that as from the academic year 2013-14 students registered on the Lancaster medical degree would be subject to Lancaster University assessment regulations. The current assessment regulations for the Medical degree differed from the University's regulations in a number of fundamental respects. It was therefore proposed to

introduce a separate set of assessment regulations for the Medical degree, to be produced over the summer in consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and approved by Chair's action. The Committee received a paper setting out the main differences from the University's standard regulations.

The Committee:

- (i) **noted** the main differences in assessment regulations applying to the degree of MBChB;
- (ii) **agreed** that Chair's action could be taken on a separate set of regulations for the award;
- (iii) **noted** the outstanding item with regard to internal examiners (to be reviewed by the Secretariat).

19.2.2 The following points were made in discussion.

- (i) The Committee was satisfied that differences from the University's standard regulations were necessary to meet the requirements of the GMC and to align with practice in the sector.
- (ii) In particular, the Committee noted differences in relation to:
 - Year 1 (which was contributory rather than qualificatory);
 - minimum and maximum registration period;
 - condonation (which was not permitted);
 - the pass mark for special study modules, which was set at 50%;
 - the 'standard-setting' processes that were specific to the medical degree.

Action: LMS/Secretariat/Dean of Undergraduate Studies

ASQC/2013/20 Amendments to Regulations

20.1 Undergraduate Programmes: 'Exit' awards

Document: SEC/2013/3/0371

20.1.1 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that when the University's undergraduate regulations were reviewed, it was felt that it would be desirable to introduce the awards of Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) as 'exit' awards from

undergraduate programmes. The attached draft proposal, which was presented for discussion at this point, set out the basis on which such awards might be made. The proposal also included draft regulations to make provision for the award of Bachelor's degrees to students registered for Integrated Master's degrees.

20.1.2 The Committee noted that the DipHE and CertHE were widely available across the sector to students who elected to withdraw from study before completion of the degree, or who failed to meet the requirements for award of the degree. Typically, students were required to achieve 120 credits for the award of CertHE and 240 credits for the award of DipHE. Provision for such awards was already included in the regulations approved by the University for its regional teaching partners. At Lancaster, however, students who left without a degree received a transcript only.

20.1.3 The following points were made in discussion.

- The Committee supported in principle the introduction of the awards of DipHE and CertHE, though a concern was voiced that the existence of such awards might encourage some struggling students to leave early who might otherwise have persevered and succeeded later in their studies. Members also asked about potential impact on drop-out rates.
- Further work on condonation limits would be needed, particularly in relation to Year 1, to take into account differences in module credit values.
- Application of the awards to four-year programmes and modern language programmes needed to be clarified.
- The Committee recommended that, if introduced, the awards should be generic and not be made in a particular subject name, and that awards should be made automatically through the regulations, rather than at the discretion of boards of examiners.
- With respect to the University's international partners, account should be taken of how these awards would be understood in the local context, particularly if awards with similar titles were already in use.

- Further discussion was needed to ensure that the regulations proposed for the award of Bachelor's degrees to students registered for integrated Master's degrees were suitable for all integrated Master's programmes.

20.1.4 It was agreed to do further work on the proposal, for discussion with faculties in September, with a view to submitting a proposal to the November meeting of the Committee. It was noted that since the proposal would potentially benefit students, there would be no barrier to approving introduction mid-year.

20.2 Classification of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate

The Committee noted that the revised postgraduate taught assessment regulations approved by Senate in June 2012 made provision for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma where:

- (a) such an award had been defined in the programme regulations;
- (b) and the student had been awarded sufficient credit for the lower award.

It had since come to light that there was a lack of clarity regarding the classification of these awards. The Academic Standards and Quality Committee was asked to confirm that the awards could be classified in the same way as Master's programmes, and be awarded with merit and distinction, following the rules agreed for Master's programmes. It was reported that LUSI already provided for automated classification of the Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma on this basis.

In discussion, there was support for awarding merit and distinction in the case of 'stand alone' Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes where such awards were the target awards of the programme; the Committee **agreed** that in these programmes the Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma should be classified following the same rules as set out for Master's degrees. Concerns were expressed however, about making awards with merit and distinction in cases where the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma were awarded following withdrawal from or failure in a Master's degree; the Committee therefore **agreed** that in these cases the award of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma should be unclassified.

ASQC/2013/21 Thematic Review Report on Student Engagement: Regional Partners

Document: SEC/2013/3/0124

The Committee **noted** the above report on student engagement at Blackburn College and Blackpool and The Fylde College, which was considered in detail by the Collaborative Provision Teaching Committee at its April meeting. The review had been conducted with reference to the expectations set out in the QAA Quality Code, Chapter B5 *Student Engagement*

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-B5.pdf>

The Committee heard that there was increased emphasis across the sector on the importance of student engagement, both in terms of student engagement with their studies and student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement processes. Chapter B5 of the QAA Quality Code was mainly concerned with the latter, but both aspects were important. Within this context, members noted that LUSU had identified student representation as an issue they wished to work on with the University during the coming year. It was agreed that a good starting point would be to map the University's current practices against Chapter B5 of the *Code*.

ASQC/2013/22 Annual Teaching Reviews

22.1 Summary of Institutional Issues arising from Annual Teaching Reviews

Document: SEC/2013/3/0368

Following discussion of Faculty Undergraduate and Postgraduate Annual Teaching Reviews at its February and May meetings, the Committee **received** a summary of institutional level issues identified in the faculty reports.

Members suggested that it would be a useful exercise to prioritise the issues raised and select the most significant to form the basis of an action plan for the Committee to take forward. It was recognised that not all issues could be dealt with at the same time but it would be helpful for departments and faculties to receive a response to the points they had raised. The Deans of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies agreed to discuss this further and a report would be made to the next meeting.

Action: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Dean of Graduate Studies

22.2 Quality Overview Report: Regional Partners 2011/2012

Document: SEC/2013/3/0183

The Committee received the above report on key issues arising from 2011/12 review processes in the University's regional partner colleges. The Committee **noted** that the report had been considered in detail by the Collaborative Provision Teaching Committee (CPTC) and actions identified would continue to be monitored through CPTC.

The Committee noted the progress against the actions identified by the CPTC. There were no issues that the Committee wished to refer back to the CPTC for further attention.

Section C

Items to note

ASQC/2013/22

Date of Next Meeting

The schedule of meetings for academic year 2013-2014 is as follows:

- 5 September 2013 at 2.00 p.m.
- 7 November 2013 at 2.00 p.m.
- 28 January 2014 at 10.00 a.m. (Faculty UG ATR reports)
- 6 May 2014 at 10.00 a.m. (Faculty PG ATR reports)
- 9 July 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

All meetings will take place in the **John Welch Room**.