

**LANCASTER UNIVERSITY**

Academic Standards and Quality Committee  
Minutes of a meeting held on 7 July 2016

- Present:** Professor A Chetwynd  
Dr A Collins  
Mr N Dearman  
Mr I Denny (*for part of the meeting*)  
Professor N Hayes  
Dr R Lauder  
Dr P McKean  
Mrs A Mullan  
Professor M Shackleton  
Professor M Wright (**Chair**)
- In attendance:** Ms J Anstee (Secretary)  
Mr S Cresswell  
Mr C Cottam  
Ms C Duff  
Dr W Hollmann (*for Professor C Rogers*)
- Apologies:** Miss P Ainsworth  
Dr C Edwards  
Mr P Maggs  
Professor C Rogers  
Professor S Skogly

**SECTION A                      INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

ASQC/2016/47                      Welcome and thanks

The new LUSU VP for Education, Nick Dearman, was welcomed to his first meeting of the Committee. Willem Hollmann was also welcomed as the incoming UG ADT for FASS from 1 August (and standing in for Colin Rogers at this meeting). Thanks were extended to outgoing members, Ben Harper and Colin Rogers, for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

ASQC/2016/48                      Minutes of the last meeting

*Document: SEC/2016/3/0289*

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record.

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0311*

- 49.1 The Committee received the update on matters arising from the minutes and outstanding actions in the report; noting in particular the following items.
- 49.2 *Standing Academic Committee (Item 03):* A review of Standing Academic Committee was currently being conducted by the chair of that Committee and it was hoped to bring a proposal for operational changes to the September meeting of ASQC.
- 49.3 *Review of Part I (Item 09):* The review would now come under the remit of the Education Committee.
- 49.4 *Policy on peer observation of teaching (Item 24):* The Chair thanked ADTs for their feedback on current practice within departments, which showed there to be significant variation in practice. He would review this information to see if it were possible to produce minimum University guidance in this area.
- 49.5 *Non-credit bearing assessment (Item 37):* ADs-AG had agreed at the meeting in June that this action could be removed from the list. It was noted this had not been considered a high priority by the Students Union.
- 49.6 *Grading criteria for assessments (taught programmes) (Item 39):* ADs-AG had reviewed this action at its June meeting and agreed that departments should be reminded to provide clear information in course handbooks on the grading criteria for assessments and to cover this in introductory sessions with students.
- 49.7 *Dissemination of good practice in: (i) assessment feedback (including feedback on examinations); and (ii) prior internal vetting of assessments (Item 44):* The Chair reported he would be liaising with the Head of OED on this. It was recognised that, generally, more work on enhancement was needed within the University and that this had been discussed by the TEF Steering Group.
- 49.8 *English language admission requirements (Item 51):* It was reported that Peter Maggs had been able to feed into the Thematic Review of Student Support Implementation Group the Committee's support for additional resource for English language support and that a bid for this was in train.
- 49.9 *Destinations data for PG students (Item 53):* The Chair had reviewed the provision of destinations data to departments and faculties and he felt that departments ought to be clear about what is provided, however if they felt the data was not adequate in any way, they were asked to refer the matter back to the Committee.

- 49.10 *Learning outcomes and condonation (Item 56):* Work on this was ongoing. In relation to the work which needed to be done on existing programmes, the Head of AS&Q reported on the possibility of using the PQR process to tackle this. Whilst doing it this way would take longer than a one-off exercise, it would spread the load and would also link in with a need to strengthen the re-validation function of the PQR process.
- 49.11 *Academic Contact Policy (Item 59):* The laydown of this policy and associated amendments to MARP had been agreed at the June Senate. ADTs had no more to report on this matter and so this action was now closed.

ASQC/2016/50 Chair's Action

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0323*

- 50.1 The Committee noted that Chair's Action had been taken on three items since the last meeting of the Committee, as summarised in the paper. Further detail on these was available to Committee members on request.
- 50.2 *Amendment to the Medical Degree Regulations:* This had been an in-year amendment which required institutional approval following student representation to the School.
- 50.3 *Amendment to the UG Integrated Masters assessment regulations:* An in-year amendment had been made to the progression regulations for second year students on these programmes. With effect from 2015-16, the exam board decision on downgrading students from the Masters to the Bachelors would be taken at the end of the third year rather than the second year. The Chair provided members with the background to this decision. Affected departments and faculties had been consulted and departments understood the requirement to provide students with clear guidance. The Head of Student Registry noted in particular the need for departments to provide advice to those students where it was clear their second year results were unlikely to lead to them progressing to the Masters year at the end of their third year.
- 50.4 *Addendum to Proposal 3 of the June Senate paper on UG and Regional Teaching Partnership (RTP) Assessment Regulations:* The Chair reported action had been taken to correct an oversight in this proposal affecting the RTPs.

ASQC/2016/51 Schedule of business: 2015-16

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0305*

The Committee noted the final version of the schedule of business for 2015-16, which had been updated since the last meeting. A new schedule would be prepared for the first meeting of the 2016-17 session.

## SECTION B

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

ASQC/2016/52

Annual Teaching Review 2014-15: Reports on 'special issues'

52.1 Academic Tutor system

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0232*

52.1.1 The Committee noted the conclusions and suggested actions in the report on departments' use and experience of the Academic Tutor (AT) system. There was variation in how departments operated this and in the level of student take-up, although it was noted some departments did not consider low take-up to indicate that students were not supported since they were able to obtain guidance from a variety of sources (in such cases it was felt the AT system operated as an effective 'emergency service').

52.1.2 *Action 1: Departments to ensure they provide clear information to students on how their AT system dovetails with other sources of support, both within and outwith the department.* The Director of QA&E emphasised the responsibility of the department Academic Tutor Co-ordinator (ATC) in making the AT system work. The Provost reported she was intending to convene a briefing session in September for ATCs, College administrators and relevant central services staff, and the Committee **agreed** this would be useful in order to reprise the role of the ATC and enhance communications. In this context, it was noted that the AT system was not intended to deal with students' well-being and that departments should refer students in difficulties on to the relevant central service; this was particularly the case in relation to mental health issues.

**Action: Provost (meeting in September)**

52.1.3 *Action 2: Departments to consider how they may make one-to-one sessions more purposeful; for example by incorporating some focus on the provision of guidance/advice in specific areas (e.g. provision of exam feedback).* The Committee noted the variation in the way departments operated their AT sessions with students, and that purposeful sessions which focussed on specific aspects of academic support and development (e.g. module choices, use of assessment feedback) could improve attendance where this was low. Examples of this were highlighted in the report. Asking students to undertake some preparation in advance of a session with their AT could also help. It was noted that students' use of the AT system was a facet of student engagement generally, and that there was an increasing national emphasis on surveying students' engagement with their studies. (In the UK Engagement Survey trial Lancaster had not scored well on students' interaction with academic tutors outside of formal classes.) Members noted the importance of ensuring there was clarity around staff and student expectations of the AT system. The Director of QA&E asked ADTs to encourage discussions within departments as to how they might use the AT system to enhance student engagement.

**Action: Provost (meeting in September)**

- 52.1.4 *Action 3: Where not already the case, departments to put in place administrative systems for monitoring and reviewing attendance in order to encourage take-up. This may usefully be undertaken by administrative staff. The Committee noted that take-up of AT sessions could be improved by using administrative staff to monitor and encourage attendance. The Director of QA&E suggested that ATCs and administrators in departments review ways in which administrative staff could support the AT system.*

**Action: Provost (meeting in September)**

52.2 Academic malpractice

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0328*

- 52.2.1 The Committee received a report on the incidences of academic malpractice and the usefulness of the new Plagiarism Framework (PF) which had come into operation in 2014-15. Three areas for action had been identified.

- 52.2.2 *Action 1: Review those aspects of the PF which it was considered needed clarifying or amplifying: One of these was the difficulty of identifying plagiarism in a foreign language, although it was reported that Turnitin could do this. It was agreed the report on language difficulties needed further investigation prior to undertaking a review of identified areas for improvement.*

**Action: Assistant Registrar/Director of QA&E**

- 52.2.3 *Action 2: Address the gap in guidance on PGR academic malpractice: It was acknowledged that the new PF did not address PGR academic malpractice and that work needed to be done on this. This could be referred to the PGR Review Group.*

**Action: Assistant Registrar**

- 52.2.4 *Action 3: Departments to provide clear information to students on academic conventions: The Committee noted that the Library had been tasked at a previous meeting with producing guidance for departments on this and that it would be helpful to have this as soon as possible to assist departments in the production of their 2016-17 student information. The Chair agreed to liaise with the Library about this.*

**Action: Director of QA&E**

ASQC/2016/53

Annual Teaching Review 2015-16: Report proformas

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0420*

- 53.1 Follow the circulation of draft proformas for ATR 2015-16 and discussion of these at faculty teaching committees the Committee received these for final approval. The postgraduate report had now been split into separate reports for PGT and PGR. The faculty proformas would be amended accordingly.

53.2 Members made a number of suggestions for further improvement, which were **agreed** (Head of AS&Q to action):

- (i) *Inclusion of metrics:* actual figures (at programme level) should be included in the reports (retention, completion and achievement, LUMES scores, submission rates for PGR, employability data) as these provided the context for evaluation and a quick way of identifying any problems. In this context it was also noted that the TEF would require commentary on data at subject level. Members were reminded that the relevant data (Student Demographics) was available in a variety of reports and this did enable departments to drill down to individual programmes.
- (ii) *Evaluation of external examiner reports:* given the importance of external examiner reports it would be helpful to position the evaluation of these towards the start of the form and reposition the departmental context element towards the end.
- (iii) *Title of PGR ATR form:* it was agreed this should be renamed to reflect the fact that the focus for PGRs was on training, rather than teaching (e.g. to “Annual Review”).

**Action: Head of AS&Q**

53.3 *Action planning:* Members discussed the ATR action plan which it was proposed should contribute to a rolling departmental action plan on teaching and learning, incorporating actions emanating from a variety of sources including NSS feedback. The plan could become a standing item on departmental committees for monitoring and review at each meeting. Departmental action plans could feed into a similar faculty action plan on teaching and learning, with ADTs and the centre given access to departmental plans. It was **agreed:** (i) that departments should institute a teaching and learning action plan with effect from 2015-16, using the 2015-16 ATR to initiate this; and (ii) that ASQC should further consider how these plans could be incorporated into institutional action planning on teaching and learning.

**Action: Director QA&E/Head AS&Q**

53.4 *Employability:* Following on from the Thematic Review on Employability. Niall Hayes reported on the intention to ask departments to report in detail on employability-related activities as part of their annual review for 2015-16. A proposal on this would be submitted to UMAG in August.

53.5 *Timing of ASQC PGR ATR discussion:* Members noted the desirability of considering the PGR ATRs at a meeting separate from the discussion of the PGT ATRs, although it was not immediately apparent how this could be done within the current meeting schedule as the May meeting would be too late. It was agreed the scheduling of the PGR ATR discussion should be looked at outside of the meeting.

**Action: Director QA&E/Assistant Registrar**

53.6 *'Special issues'*: Members **agreed** the 'special issue' to be included in the UG ATR, which asked departments for a report on their development activities for Part I students. No 'special issues' were proposed for PGT and PGR ATRs.

53.7 *Year 2 survey 2015-16 results*: The Director of QA&E reported he would undertake an institutional analysis of this survey and bring this to the meeting of the Committee in September.

**Action: Director QA&E**

ASQC/2016/54 Amendments to the regulations (MARP 2016-17)

54.1 Medical Degree regulations

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0324*

54.1.1 The Committee received a proposal to make amendments to the Medical Degree regulations. These fell into three categories: (i) amendments relating to the introduction of year 5 of the Lancaster programme in 2016-17; (ii) the introduction of two exit awards and their associated classification rules; and (iii) amendments to the procedures for academic appeals.

54.1.2 *Introduction of the Lancaster year 5*: The Committee **approved** the amendments relating to the introduction of year 5 of the Lancaster programme in 2016-17.

54.1.3 *Exit awards*: Separate exit awards were proposed for the end of year 3 and year 4 of the programme. It was noted there would be distinct learning outcomes for these two awards which students would be required to fulfil to be eligible for an award. The Committee **approved** the exit awards and their classification rules, for introduction in 2016-17 (programme proposals to be approved separately via the programme approval procedure):

- BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences (year 3 exit award);
- BSc (Hons) Advanced Medical Sciences (year 4 exit award).

54.1.4 *Academic appeals procedures*: this had now been aligned with the new University academic appeals procedures, incorporating the previously agreed variations around the make-up of the Appeal Panel and timings. The Committee **approved** these amendments, with effect from 2016-17.

54.1.5 The Committee discussed the rubric at the start of the regulations which specified the conditions under which changes could be made to the regulations over the course of a student's registration. The Head of AS&Q noted the distinction between the changes referred to here, due to GMC requirements, and other changes. Changes originating from accreditation requirements were non-negotiable, whilst changes originating from the department would need student input and agreement according to the University's guidance on this. It was agreed that the wording of this paragraph could be made clearer and that Chair's Action should be taken on an amendment.

**Action: Head of AS&Q/Director of QA&E**

- 54.1.6 *Mitigating circumstances procedures:* The Head of AS&Q queried the statement in 14.7.5 which appeared to indicate that students should submit cases for mitigating circumstances in advance of the assessments taking place. It was agreed this should be checked against the University's procedures and amended by Chair's Action if necessary.

**Action: Assistant Registrar**

54.2 Assessment regulations for accredited UG programmes in Engineering

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0410*

- 54.2.1 The Committee **approved** amendments to the assessment regulations for accredited UG programmes in Engineering (Appendix 6 of the UG Assessment Regulations) as detailed in the paper, to take effect from 2016-17.

54.3 Condonation of modules in UG degree classification (FST disciplines)

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0415*

- 54.3.1 The Committee noted that the proposal was being brought forward by FST in light of the new condonation threshold coming in for Part II in 2016-17. At the previous meeting the Committee had agreed there was a need to review the new regulation in relation to certain disciplines where student performance could span a wide range of marks. Alan Collins had consulted with the affected departments, Mathematics and Statistics and Physics and two options were proposed to the Committee, as detailed in the paper.

- 54.3.2 The Committee **approved option A** which utilised an existing regulation (11.7.2) on the combination of small modules for the purposes of condonation. It was **agreed:**

- (i) That regulation 11.7.2 should be amended to allow, for specified undergraduate programmes, the combination of modules with a credit value of 15 or less to create an assessment unit to a maximum value of 30 credits for consideration of condonation; with effect from 2016-17.
- (ii) That the 'specified undergraduate programmes' and the combined modules should be approved by faculty teaching committees and ASQC informed (for the purposes of amending MARP). Programmes and modules would be listed in an additional appendix to the UG Assessment Regulations.
- (iii) For Mathematics and Statistics and Physics, the programmes and combined modules should be approved by the faculty teaching committee in September, with the regulation to take effect from 2016-17 and applying to all students graduating from this point. The details of the programmes and modules must be notified to the September meeting of ASQC and students informed.

**Action: UG ADT FST**

54.3.3 The Committee noted that module combinations for the purposes of condonation would need to be checked to ensure that programme learning outcomes could continue to be met irrespective of condonation.

54.4 Appeal procedures: membership and chairing of Appeal Panels

*Document: SEC/2015/3/0316*

The Committee **agreed** the wording of the amendment to the academic appeal procedures in MARP in relation to the widening of the pool for membership and chairing of the Appeal Panels. (This amendment was consequent upon a change in practice agreed earlier in the year by the PVC Education and Provost.)

ASQC/2016/55 Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) partnership programmes: Establishment of joint faculty teaching committee

*Document: SEC/2016/3/0421*

55.1 The Committee discussed proposed arrangements for the approval of programmes for delivery by BJTU. Whilst these programmes would commence in 2017-18, approval was required by mid-August 2016 as the foundation programme students who would progress onto these programmes in 17-18 would be starting then. A joint faculty teaching committee to review the degree proposals (limited to FASS and FST in the first instance) would need to be convened to approve these initial programmes and agree the operating principles for the approval of future ones.

55.2 Members noted the tight timetable for approval, although it was reported that faculty Associate Deans International were already working actively with the relevant departmental staff on programme development. Department teaching committees would need to agree proposals prior to submission to the joint teaching committee, and given the tight timings departmental agreement may need reached by virtual meeting/email correspondence.

55.3 The Committee **agreed** the proposal for the establishment of a joint faculty teaching committee. ADTs confirmed that Programme Directors were the key personnel to include in the membership of this committee.

55.4 The Committee **agreed** that approval of future tranches of programmes for this partnership could be given by the Director of QA&E using the principles agreed by the joint faculty teaching committee.

55.5 It was agreed it would be helpful to know what key information was required for loading the programmes into LUSI in order to meet the registration deadline for the foundation students.

**Action: Head of AS&Q**

- ASQC/2016/56      Course design, development and approval (CDDA): Review proposal  
*Document: SEC/2016/3/0416*
- 56.1      The Committee considered a proposal to review CDDA guidelines, policies, processes, procedures and systems. A preliminary meeting had been held between ASQ and the TQSOs to identify priorities. Stages, stakeholders and a suggested timescale were proposed in the paper, although it was acknowledged that the timing for completion of stages 1-3 would probably need to be revised to the end of the Michaelmas term.
- 56.2      The Committee **approved** the CDDA review proposal, noting that student representation would need to be incorporated. RTP and ITP representation should also be included where relevant.
- ASQC/2016/57      HEFCE revised operating model for quality assessment and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)  
*Document: SEC/2016/3/0413*
- The Committee received for information the paper on future QA arrangements and the TEF (previously submitted to UMAG).
- ASQC/2016/58      Report on Joint Degrees in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
*Document: SEC/2016/3/0412*
- 58.1      The Committee received for information an interim report from FASS on the effective design and delivery of joint degree programmes within the faculty. The work will continue into 2016-17.
- 58.2      The Faculty reported that it had already instituted arrangements for the provision of a Joint Degree Tutor in each department in order to better support students registered on joint degrees.
- SECTION C                      ITEMS TO NOTE**
- ASQC/2016/59      External examiner reports 2014-15: Update on institutional actions  
*Document: SEC/2016/3/0411*
- The Committee noted the update on institutional actions arising from external examiners' reports for 2015-16, as detailed in the paper.
- ASQC/2016/60      Faculty teaching committee minutes  
*Document: SEC/2016/3/0325*
- The Committee noted the faculty teaching committee minutes (confirmed) of meetings as listed and attached.

ASQC/2016/61

Any other business

61.1 Report on pilot exam board and mitigating circumstances committee in LUMS

Niall Hayes reported on a pilot of new arrangements within LUMS for the operation of exam boards and mitigating circumstances committees, which had centralised at faculty level the consideration of results and mitigating circumstances. This had worked well and could provide a model to roll out to the rest of the University. A full report on the pilot would be provided to ASQC in September. Niall Hayes reported he would be happy to discuss the detail with other ADTs prior to this.

61.2 The Head of AS&Q noted that a University-level mitigating circumstances committee would only work if there was an institutional 'fit to sit' and 'fit to submit' policy. The Director of QA&E noted the need generally to ensure there was more consistency in the application of mitigating circumstances procedures.

61.3 New Associate Dean appointments in LUMS

Mark Shackleton reported the following new Associate Dean appointments had been made in LUMS:

- Associate Dean for Engagement – Professor Nigel Lockett
- Associate Dean for International – Dr David Simm
- Associate Dean for Research – Professor Konstantinos Zografos
- Associate Dean for Staffing - Professor Sarah Jack

61.4 Re-location of Chinese teaching

FASS reported that the teaching of Chinese was being re-located to the Department of European Languages and Culture (renamed as the Department of Languages and Culture).

ASQC/2016/62

Dates of meetings 2015-16

The Committee **noted** the dates of meetings for the academic year 2016-17; to be held on Mondays at 2.00-4.00 pm in the John Welch Room.

- 26 September 2016
- 31 October 2016
- 30 January 2017
- 20 March 2017
- 8 May 2017
- 17 July 2017