University of the
West of England
BRISTOL

ACADEMIC BOARD

Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2014 at 2pm in The Dartington Suite, Wallscourt Farmhouse, Frenchay Campus

Present: Jackie Chelin, John Clarke, Rachel Cowie, Jenny Dye, Megan Edmunds, Nadine Fry, Marie-Annick Gournet, Mandy Lee, James Longhurst, Julie McLeod (Chair), Margaret Needles, Peter Rawlings, Gerry Rice, Fiona Tolmie, Teresa Wood.

In Attendance: Lisa Connors (Officer), Beryl Furey-King, Tracey Horton, Jan Richardson, Martin Underwood, Darren Watson, Gail Wilson.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

AQEC14.06.01   John Deane, Liz Falconer, Marc May, Dawn Stephens, Erica Toms, Neil Willey.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

AQEC14.06.02   The minutes of the AQEC meeting held on 9th April 2014 were confirmed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

AQEC14.06.03   AQEC14.04.28 – Professional Suitability Policy – the policy was amended following discussion at AQEC and has been approved by AQEC Chair's action. The finalised policy can be found here

AQEC14.06.04   AQEC14.04.20 – To work with the Director of Academic Services to identify responsibilities for recommendations arising from the annual Complaints and Appeals report: Responsibilities have been identified and AQEC will be updated in 2014/15 on progress.

AQEC14.06.05   A proposal to reduce the length of a resit run for a Masters Dissertation module from a maximum of 12 months to a maximum of 6 months was agreed by Academic Board Chair's action.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AQEC14.06.06   **Annual AQEC Report to Academic Board** – the report set out the business undertaken by AQEC in 2013/14 and how the Committee had discharged its duties and responsibilities in line with its Terms of Reference. The Group approved the report to be submitted to Academic Board with the proviso that the Membership be updated to the current version.

                                    Action: Update the Membership details and submit the report to Academic Board.

Enhancement Activity

AQEC14.06.07 **Annual Summary of Learning & Teaching Enhancement Activities 2014** – the report drew together learning and teaching enhancement activity taking place across the University and focused on four key project areas:

AQEC14.06.08 Academic Personal Tutors – a range of staff resources were available and a research project was being undertaken to inform practice in 2014/15. There was some discussion around the data provided in the report and it was noted that they related to staff engagement by personal tutors. Members suggested that the information accompanying the data tables could be made clearer to support the information being relayed.

Action: Report to be updated with enhanced information.

AQEC14.06.09 HEAR – this was now in its second year of operation, providing both formative and summative reports, and a key development was the incorporation of College Partners. It was currently only appropriate for undergraduate students and work would be undertaken to investigate provision for post graduate students. The ability to obtain feedback from graduates on the use of the HEAR was questioned and it was suggested that this information the sector might wish to gather through the DLHE survey.

AQEC14.06.10 UWE Futures Award – take up of the scheme had been very good with 867 students registered for the award and in excess of 100 level three students having submitted their final portfolios.

AQEC14.06.11 Attendance and Engagement Policy – the University had adopted an inclusive approach to attendance and engagement in addition to specific monitoring required by UKVI for Tier 4 international students. The Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences had piloted attendance monitoring in response to requirements of funding bodies which had highlighted issues with the robustness of the data and this experience would be fed into a working group. The members strongly supported the emphasis on engagement over attendance.

AQEC14.06.12 **Student Experience Survey (SES) Data** – the report showed increased satisfaction across the University including increases in specific areas, such as Assessment and Feedback, and Organisation and Management. The fall in satisfaction with PAL was being explored.
The response rate had dropped and work was already being undertaken with the Students' Union to increase engagement for 2014/15. It was noted that engagement was variable across the University with some programmes registering too few scores to be counted or entirely nil response rates.

AQEC14.06.13 The Faculty of Environment and Technology, through its Associate Dean: Learning, Teaching and the Student Experience, suggested that the response rates were too low to be meaningful and requested that the University consider alternative means of capturing students' feedback. The Faculty proposed focus groups at programme, Department and Faculty level as an alternative to the SES.

AQEC14.06.14   The Committee was advised that there were already a number of different ways of gathering feedback which would be collated to provide a holistic view including the SES and NSS results, SRSF comments, External Examiners' feedback and commentary from programme reports. As had happened last year, this information would inform action plans and University priority areas.

AQEC14.06.15   The consensus of the members was that the SES should be retained but efforts undertaken to increase engagement as the University now had a KPI relating to the SES. Some institutions had actively used the SES to demonstrate their response to the student voice and continuous improvement resulting in enhanced NSS scores.

AQEC14.06.16   Members agreed that it was vital to help students to understand that completion of the SES and NSS was in their own interests, not only in improving the student experience. Engagement in quality assurance processes was also a useful preparation for graduate employment.

AQEC14.06.17   Communication and the visibility of results were deemed to be key in engaging students and the importance of feedback and engagement was being emphasised particularly to new first year students. It was hoped that the increased visibility of Student Reps through the use of MyUWE as a communication channel and the new Students' Union building at Frenchay would help to improve student engagement. However, it was noted that the new building might prove to have a negative effect on students at other campuses who felt disassociated from the Students' Union. The Student Voice Working Group was actively working on a student feedback campaign which would demonstrate to students that their views are listened to and, where possible, action taken.

AQEC14.06.18   The SES results would be considered by Academic Board in June, with the September meeting of the Board considering both the SES and NSS results alongside other relevant feedback. The surveys would be an agenda item at the first AQEC of the new academic year and would also be discussed at SRSFs in September to get student feedback into action plans.

AQEC14.06.19   **Moderation Task & Finish Group: Update and Implementation Plan** – following discussion at AQEC, the wording around remarking of cohorts in the event of inconsistency had been amended to indicate that the cohort should be reconsidered and this would be expanded upon in the guidance. There was some discussion around the requirements of the sample to be sent to the External Examiner for element and component moderation and clarification was sought.

            Action: Wording to be clarified around sample requirements.

AQEC14.06.20   A set of definitions and guidance for the use of the Assessment Cycle would be developed and the Group noted that this should include some context to enable staff to understand the rationale underlying the moderation requirements. It was also important that the role of the External Examiner was clearly defined in the guidance.

AQEC14.06.21   The implementation plan and timescale were discussed and there was some concern at the suggestion that the Assessment Cycle should be implemented University-wide without a small pilot being undertaken beforehand. It was agreed that the moderation principles should be rolled out during 2014/15 to enable staff development needs to be identified, with a full implementation of the Assessment Cycle in 2015/16. This would also provide the opportunity for resources required for the online marking tool to be identified. It was, however, noted that for the most part staff were not being asked to change practice but that the cycle was an articulation and clarification of current practice.

AQEC14.06.22   Members noted the need for a comprehensive communication plan to be developed to accompany the implementation plan. In the meantime, it was agreed that the principles of the Assessment Cycle and any necessary regulatory changes would be recommended to Academic Board for approval.

External Examining:

AQEC14.06.23   **Proposed Changes to the Future Structure of External Examining** – an Academic Board workshop had suggested the reorganisation of Award Boards to focus on programmes, a suggestion that corresponded with External Examiners' (EE) desire to be involved in reflection at a programme level. It was proposed that the introduction of programmatic EEs would enhance discussions at Award Boards and also support appropriate EE engagement with collaborative provision.

AQEC14.06.24   Programme EEs may be selected from the pool of Field EEs and this would strengthen the links between Field and Award Boards. Clarity around the different roles and relationship between Field and Programme EEs would be necessary.

AQEC14.06.25   The Group broadly welcomed the proposal for programme focused Award Boards and endorsed the introduction of Programme EEs for 2014/15.

AQEC14.06.26   **Student Engagement with External Examiner Reporting** – the proposals for facilitating student access to EE reports had been discussed extensively with, and were supported by, Faculty ASQCs. The Group broadly supported the concept of sharing EE comments with SRSFs but had some concerns around sharing the full reports with the entire student body as the reports were not designed for such an audience. Consideration would also need to be given to EE reports related to Post Graduate Research which might be confidential.

AQEC14.06.27   It was suggested that a move to responding to EEs in an action plan format could duplicate Annual Programme Reports but members agreed that one should inform the other, rather than duplicating activity.

AQEC14.06.28   The Group discussed EEs meeting with students and noted that this could be resource intensive for both the EEs and the University and there was also a need for parity of opportunity for collaborative provision EEs and students. Whilst it was considered neither feasible nor desirable to make this a

requirement, the Group supported the proposal to facilitate the opportunity for EEs to meet with students where appropriate. In line with this, members requested that Appendix 3 be reconsidered so as not to create unreasonable expectations.

AQEC14.06.29 **Clarification of the Terminology around Field Leaders in the External Examining Report** – it was confirmed that this term referred to academic staff with responsibility for Fields within their remit and this usually resided within an Associate Head of Department role. The term 'Field Leader' was now not commonly used and future reference would note HoD/AHoD with responsibilities for a Field. The paper was available from the Committee SharePoint site.

AQEC14.06.30 **Annual Reports from Faculty ASQCs** – the Chair welcomed the reports which were informative and demonstrated the discharge of the Committees' duties. Highlights from the Faculty reports included:

AQEC14.06.31 Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries & Education:
- Good student engagement and a strong student focus within the committee;
- Difficulty in finding balance between focus on process and formal business and student experience;
- Clarity needed in the relationship between ASQC and Department Committees;
- Detailed scrutiny of CAP business, highlighting a development need for student representatives;
- A correction was noted in that the Education Department Report was actually received on 5th March

AQEC14.06.32 Faculty of Business & Law:
- Difficulty in ensuring that collaborative provision M&E reports are incorporated into the reporting process in an efficient manner;
- A focus on student experience issues in discussing CAP papers due to the scrutiny of the Faculty Programme Design Team;
- Excellent student engagement with reps initiating discussions;
- Emphasis upon good practice with strong engagement from the members.

AQEC14.06.33 Faculty of Environment & Technology:
- Approval of the report by both the ASQC and the Faculty Executive;
- High levels of student engagement;
- Student issues prioritised at each meeting;
- Rigorous and focused approach to CAP business that sought to enhance each proposal.

AQEC14.06.34 Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences:
- The volume of CAP business necessitated by the ongoing curriculum review and "refresh" had created a heavy burden on the committee;
- This, and absence whilst on placement, had impacted upon student engagement;

- Strong efforts by the Students' Union to mitigate against student rep absences.

AQEC14.06.35   The reports from Hartpury College and the Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences would follow.

AQEC14.06.36   **Position Statement on the Widening Participation Strategy** – a paper had been presented to the Widening Participation Group in April setting out the current position and this would now be circulated to AQEC.

Action: Circulate Widening Participation Strategy paper.

AQEC14.06.37   **Review and Re-focus of the TEL Strategy** – the Group welcomed the thorough report but noted that, following a meeting of the TEL Steering Group, the Plan was to undergo revision with the action plan forming the basis of key principles. The revised Plan would be presented to AQEC at a later date.

AQEC14.06.38   **Monitoring of Online Assessment Implementation** – the responsibility for this monitoring had recently come within the remit of AQEC following the completion of the project. The data provided highlighted a gradual increase in online submissions and an improvement in the timely release of marks. Further data would be required for effective monitoring and this would be presented to subsequent meetings of AQEC.

AQEC14.06.39   **Update of Preparation for the QAA HE Review** – there had been a revision to the governance structure and the HE Planning Group would now report to an HE Review Board which would, in turn, report to AQEC. There was no confirmed date for the review as yet but it was expected to take place in Autumn 2015. Much work had been done on communications and this would continue through channels such as The Voice and presence at Faculty/Department meetings.

AQEC14.06.40   An external consultant had recently been engaged to review progress with the preparations and her report would be considered by the HE Board in June. The focus was now on preparation of the Self Evaluation Document and a draft structure would be submitted to the Board in July.

AQEC14.06.41   **Proposal to Introduce Extensions for Coursework Submission** – the current Extenuating Circumstances (EC) system did not allow for flexibility when a student had short term circumstances. It was proposed that, in appropriate circumstances, students could be granted an extension that would allow them to submit within five working days of the original deadline.

AQEC14.06.42   The system would be administered by InfoPoints and be based on similar criteria to that of the current EC system. It would require timely communication with relevant academics and Professional Services and a process had been extensively mapped and was being reviewed by a working group. Consultation was taking place with IT Services around the use of online submission with extensions.

AQEC14.06.43 It was noted that the introduction of extensions could impact upon administrative staff, although it was hoped that this would be balanced by the decrease in ECs. The Group noted that training and support for InfoPoint staff was vital, as were clear communications of the scheme to all staff and an alignment of extensions with reasonable adjustments.

AQEC14.06.44 Students welcomed the scheme as it would enable students to remain with their cohorts. There was some concern that the requirement to request an extension 24 hours before a submission could be problematic if the deadline was on a Monday and such submission dates should be avoided. The Group agreed to recommend the proposal to Academic Board.

AQEC14.06.45 **Student Pregnancy Policy** – the Group received an update on the operation of the policy and a request for minor amendments to the policy to be approved in light of the first year's experience of its implementation. Members suggested that a statement of positive support for public breast feeding should be considered for inclusion. Clarity was also sought around the reference to provision of teaching and learning materials during pregnancy and Partner/Second Parent leave, noting that the NHS considers a "time-out" to be equivalent of withdrawal. The requested amendments to the policy were approved by the Group.

Action: Provide clarity on the expectation to provide teaching and learning materials during absence.

AQEC14.06.46 **Professional Learning & Teaching Practice** – members received the paper setting out a proposal that would:
Ensure all eligible staff without a HESA returnable qualification would be recognised by the HEA UKPSF by 2018;
Develop and maintain a mentor network;
Identify and provide sufficient resources to support the proposal.

AQEC14.06.47 The proposal would provide the additional benefit of engaging staff in valuable self-reflection and would be benchmarked against other institutions. The Group agreed to approve the principles set out in the policy.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

AQEC14.06.48 **Update from the Academic Literacy Forum** – the update was welcomed by the Group and it was noted that a half day workshop would take place on 24th June with the aim of sharing and further developing the vision of the Forum.

AQEC14.06.49 **Executive Summary from Faculty ASQCs** – were noted by the Group.

AQEC14.06.50 **Lean Review of Award Board Processes** – the review was tasked with examining the operation of Award Boards and unifying and streamlining processes. It had focused upon a range of areas including composition of Boards, provision of paperless Boards and the use of discretion.

AQEC14.06.51   **Lean Review of Module & Programme Information** – the review had considered the consistency of the University's published information and had focused strongly on the programme approval process and the resulting information.

AQEC SUB-GROUPS

AQEC14.06.52   **Employability and Enterprise Management Group** – the Group noted the dates of the 2013/14 meetings.

AQEC14.06.53   **Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Steering Group –** the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April were received.

AQEC14.06.54   **Learning 4 All Hub Group** – **d**ates for the 2013/14 meetings were noted.

AQEC14.06.55   **Institutional Review Board** – the minutes of the meeting held on 7th May were received.

AQEC14.06.56   **Widening Participation (Schools and Colleges) Partnership Group and Widening Participation Operations Group** – the minutes of the meeting held on 30th April were received.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AQEC14.06.57   A paper briefly outlining proposed Inclusive Learning and Teaching activities had been prepared and would be circulated to the Group for comment. The paper was also available from the [Committee SharePoint site](#).

AQEC14.06.58   The QAA had recently published its Education for sustainable development: Guidance for UK higher education providers.

AQEC14.06.59   The Members thanked Julie McLeod, PVC Teaching & Learning and Student Experience, for her chairing of and contribution to the Committee and wished her well in her new role.

AQEC14.06.60   The Group thanked Beryl Furey-King, who was soon to retire, for her long and valuable contribution to the University most recently as Head of the Quality Management Team.

AQEC14.06.61   The Group also expressed its gratitude to Megan Edmunds and the Student Representatives and their input to the Committee.

AQEC Minutes: L Connors
Unconfirmed: 23rd June 2014
Confirmed: 26th November 2014

**ACADEMIC QUALITY AND ENHANCEMENT GROUP – ACTION SHEET FROM
THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JUNE 2014**

Minute	Substance	Actioning Officer	Reporting\other deadline
AQEC14.06.07	Update the Membership details and submit the annual report to Academic Board	**Officer**	**Next Academic Board meeting**
AQEC14.06.09	Report to be updated with enhanced information to support the data tables	**Chair**	**Next annual report to AQEC**
AQEC14.06.20	Wording to be clarified around sample requirements for External Examiners and implementation plan revised to contain a communication strategy	**Curriculum Enhancement Manager**	**Next AQEC**
AQEC14.06.37	Circulate Widening Participation Strategy paper	**Director of Student Engagement & Success**	**For next AQEC**
AQEC14.06.46	Provide clarity on the expectation in the Student Pregnancy Policy to provide teaching and learning materials during absence	**Director of Student Engagement & Success**	**Next AQEC**

ACADEMIC QUALITY AND ENHANCEMENT GROUP – OUTSTANDING / ONGOING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minute	Substance	Actioning Officer	Reporting\other deadline
AQEC14.04.20	To circulate case studies from the annual Complaints and Appeals report to ASQCs.	**Complaints and Appeals Manager**	**Next available ASQC meeting**
AQEC13.06.22	The comments made by AQEC would be fed into the final versions of the programme and module handbook templates.	**Head of Quality Management**	**Complete but templates to be reviewed for 2014/15**
AQEC13.06.23	To develop an implementation plan for the new Student Attendance and Engagement Policy.	**PVC / Working Practices group**	**Complete**
AQEC13.06.28	Fitness to Study - Further work to be undertaken to confirm when different policies should be used.	**Student Services**	**Ongoing – guidance & training in development**