

Education, Quality & Standards Committee

Tuesday, 14th March 2023 2:15 pm

Council Chamber | Education, Quality & Standards Committee

Attendees

Attended

Sascha Athey

Ian Blenkharn

Christopher Bonfield

Julian Chaudhuri

Georgina Eggleston

Nathalia Gjersoe

Marion Harney

Rachel Sheer

Timothy Wakeley

Jane White

267.0 Welcome and Quorum

Purpose – For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that a quorum was present. It was noted that there were several new people in attendance so a round of introductions were held.

268.0 Declarations of Interest

Purpose - For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

No members had any conflicts of interest to declare in any items of business being discussed on the agenda.

269.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The minutes of the previous meeting of EQSC held on 9th February 2023 were approved subject to the following amendments:

- A note being added that the paperwork for the physics department was circulated to committee members after the meeting.
- More detail being added in relation to the verbal report given on the department of Chemistry.
- An action being added to the end of the meeting for the Chair, a member of Academic Registry and the Secretary to meet to start planning for next year's Education Annual Review and Enhancement.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A8

Action Description - Make amendments to previous minutes

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Gregory Noakes

270.0 Actions and Matters Arising

Purpose - For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

It was noted that members were unsure how to access the actions log on Decision Time and the Secretary agreed to ensure that the guidance document on how to do this was included in future paperwork.

271.0 Standing items of Business

Purpose - For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Chair noted that work was currently underway on reviewing the membership of EQSC and that a report would be submitted on this to the next meeting. In the absence of anyone from The SU they noted a new set of SU Officers had recently been elected.

272.0 Degree Apprenticeship

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Degree Apprenticeships Compliance Manager presented their report to the Committee and gave a summary of the plans for providing assurance on degree apprenticeship.

The Chair noted that one area that had been discussed at Senate had been the Degree Apprenticeships Quality and Standards Group membership as concerns had been expressed about it. They were confident that proposed changes to EQSC own membership would address this concern as the sub-group would ultimately report to and be held accountable by EQSC.

It was questioned whether any training would be provided to the Degree Apprenticeships

Quality and Standards Group members to ensure they fully understood the compliance requirements. The Degree Apprenticeships Compliance Manager noted that none had been planned but agreed that this would be a good idea to implement.

A question was asked around what the long-term strategy was for this area as it was noted that the number of apprenticeships on offer currently didn't seem to justify these regulatory costs. The Chair explained that this question was currently being considered by a working group. They noted that to do apprenticeships successfully you needed to do it on a large scale which often required partnering up with some big employers. If the decision was taken to expand apprenticeships this would likely be done organically and would require further changes to be made to this assurance framework.

The Director of Education & Student Services advised that it was important to remember that employers will often only support apprenticeships for as long as government support is there for it. As a result, this area can be more susceptible to changes in government as a new government may have different priorities with regards to apprenticeships.

The Committee agreed to approve the Degree Apprenticeships Quality and Standards Group terms of references subject to it being made clearer that only heads of departments who had apprenticeships in their areas would be invited.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC 10

Action Description - Degree Apprenticeships Quality and Standards Group terms of references to be amended to make clearer that only heads of departments who have apprenticeships in their areas would be invited.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Gregory Noakes

273.0 PGT Outcomes Report

Purpose – For Approval

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) presented the report and clarified the scope of the courses covered by this, noting that currently it didn't cover part time courses. It was noted that the key highlight was that the number of distinctions awarded had fallen which was likely a result of mitigation measures being removed following the pandemic. A health warning was also issued in relation to drawing conclusions from the disability data as traditionally it was known that international students tend not to disclose that they have a disability.

It was questioned how the University knew that international students were under declaring when it came to disability. The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) explained there was no evidence as such for this but that it was considered established wisdom following years of observations.

It was confirmed in response to a question that this report and the data contained within is not currently shared with FTLQCs.

A question was asked if there was any possibility of benchmarking this data with other Universities and the Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) noted this may be possible.

The Chair noted that this report should potentially not be published further as due to the low numbers in a few tables there was a potential risk that some individual students might be able to be identified. It was suggested and agreed that the report should be amended before being submitted to Senate to make it more high-level in its content and to remove the risk of individuals being potentially identified.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A11

Action Description - PGT Outcomes report to be amended before being submitted to Senate to make it more high-level in its content and to remove the risk of individuals being potentially identified.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 5 Apr 2023 | Assigned to - Georgina Eggleston

274.0 Bath Blend Baseline

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Director of CLT presented the report and explained that this was a follow up paper to one previously submitted to Senate. They summarised the core elements of the proposal and reassured the Committee that this aligned with sector guidance.

It was questioned why the report hadn't included anything under financial consideration given that the proposal might impact on staff which could have a financial cost in terms of time. The Director of CLT agreed that there might be a financial cost but that they wouldn't know this until the University finalised its accessibility policy.

The Director of CLT was asked what was holding up the accessibility policy and if the University had the resources to carry out a check of its moodle pages. They explained that they did not know what the hold-up was but that they had been reassured that this was all in hand. The University currently had two tools which could check the moodle pages.

The Chair agreed to follow-up with the Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) on the status of the accessibility policy.

A question was asked on how the University would assure itself that staff were adhering to the course expectations and meeting legal requirements in this area. The Director of CLT explained that there were several ways this could be done such as via audits or through unit evaluations.

In response to a question the Director of CLT confirmed that the tool for checking moodle pages could potentially be used to give assurances to the Committee on compliance with the expectations.

The Committee agreed the course expectations for blended teaching delivery in principle but requested more detail on how the University would assure itself that these were being met and respond to instances of non-compliance.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A12

Action Description - Chair to follow-up with the Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) on the status of the accessibility policy.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Julian Chaudhuri

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A13

Action Description - Director of CLT to provide more detail to EQSC on how the University would assure itself that course expectations for blended teaching delivery were being met and respond to instances of non-compliance.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Christopher Bonfield

275.0 Quality Assurance Assessments

Purpose - For Discussion

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) presented the reports.

The Committee discussed the Quality Assurance in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Assessments report. It was suggested and agreed that it would be useful for %s to be provided within the tables if possible. There was some confusion as to whether this report was going to Senate or not and it was agreed that this would be checked.

It was confirmed in response to a question that observations had been carried out on a risk-based approach. The Committee noted that based on the data it appeared that science should therefore have been observed but it was not. The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) agreed to investigate this and report back to EQSC.

More detail was requested about the ongoing exam review referred to in the paper. The Director of Academic Registry explained that this was an operational review being carried out of year 1 exams that was looking to identify recommendations for improvements. In response to a follow-up question the Director of Academic Registry confirmed that the outcome could be reported to Ed Board and/or EQSC. The Committee agreed that they would want to see this.

A question was asked about whether this report covered INSPERA exams, and the Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) agreed to go away and check this.

The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) highlighted that the key takeaway for External Examiner Reports was that there was inconsistency in terms of induction with some examiners not receiving one. This was something that Academic Registry were looking into with the intention of potentially creating a centrally provided online induction. The Committee agreed that they would want to be kept informed of progress made on this.

It was questioned why there appeared to be a notable number of reports (14%) not yet received from external examiners. The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) reassured the Committee that these were being followed up on and that external examiners would not be paid until they had submitted their reports. It was noted that one potential reason for delay may be the impact of strike action.

The Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) highlighted that the key takeaway for the Assessment Offences report was that there had been an increase in number of offences

reported (54%).

It was questioned why there had been an increase and how was the University responding to this. The Director of Academic Registry explained that one possible reason was that many students were international and had come from countries where exams were still being held online due to Covid. There was a possibility that this was contributing to this as students had not yet re-adjusted back to in-person exams. It was hoped that after a year of re-adjustment these numbers would go down.

The Committee discussed how best to give assurance to Senate and agreed that a single report covering these three papers, adding the Committee's thoughts, and including the relevant data as appendices should be provided.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A14

Action Description - Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) to investigate and report back to EQSC on why science exams had not been observed.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Georgina Eggleston

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A15

Action Description - EQSC to receive a report on the outcome of the operational review being carried out of year 1 exams.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Georgina Eggleston

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A16

Action Description - Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality & Standards) to check if the Quality Assurance in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Assessments report covers INSPERA exams.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Georgina Eggleston

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A17

Action Description - Secretary to draft a single report for providing assurance to Senate on Academic Standards and Quality.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Gregory Noakes

276.0 Exemption Request

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Chair noted that there was currently an ongoing piece of work being carried out in relation to QA16 principles which would have implications for these exemption requests. They informed the Committee that this was an area they received complaints about with the common argument

being put forth that it was an unfair assessment practice as it didn't distinguish individual student contributions. Any proposal to move away from the QA16 principles needed to be thoroughly thought through.

The Committee discussed the requests and noted that with some tweaks to enable individual student contributions to be better assessed these could be made to comply with QA16. Several different ways of doing this were proposed.

It was questioned when a decision on this would need to be made to enable it to be implemented in time and it was confirmed that such a decision would need to be made by May. The Committee agreed that a decision on approving these exemptions should be postponed which would allow the QA16 working group to complete its work. A recommendation from the working group along with these exemptions should be brought back to the next meeting of EQSC.

Action by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A18

Action Description - QA16 exemption requests to be brought back to the next meeting of EQSC along with report from QA16 working group.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 16 May 2023 | Assigned to - Gregory Noakes

277.0 Sector Update

Purpose -

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Sector update report was noted.

278.0 Minutes of Committees - EQSC 2223

Purpose – For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The Committee noted the S/FLTQC minutes that could be found in the resource library

279.0 Programme of Meetings for EQSC

Purpose - For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

The dates of meetings for the rest of the year were noted.

280.0 Any Other Business

Purpose - For Noting

Minute by Gregory Noakes

No other business was identified for discussion.