

HSS FLTQC

Wednesday, 29th January 2025 1:15 pm

1 West 3.17 | HSS Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Attendees

Attended

Julian Chaudhuri

Lucy Allen

Mattia Cacciatori

Jo Charles

Samantha Curle

Tu Anh Do

Rhiannon Edwards

James Fern

Gail Forey

MariCarmen Gil Ortega

Dan Ile

Richard Joiner

Ed Mason

Richard Mason

Lucy Noble

Nikolaos Sakkas

Christel Schneider

Emma Scrase

Oliver Walton

Sophia Ward

Apologies

Annika Theilgaard

Matteo De Tina

Helen Lofkin

Rachel Acres

Florin Bisset

Aurelie Charles

Maria Clutterbuck

Ella Gibbs

Chris Goff

Arshiya Sachdeva

Elise Whittleton

951.0 Agenda and Notice of Meeting

952.0 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members and attendees who were attending their first committee meeting.

953.0 Declarations of Interest

No member declared any conflict of interest.

951.0 Exceptional Agenda Item: PGT Curriculum Transformation (PVC Education)

The PVC Education and Global provided members with context on the Curriculum Transformation (CT) initiative, first conceived in 2016-17, and emphasised that the focus of this discussion and future initiatives is not on redesigning programmes but on ensuring alignment with CT principles. A PGT review is planned for 2025-26 to determine the types of courses that should be offered at the PGT level while maintaining CT structures and principles.

The Director of Teaching in PoLIS highlighted tensions between CT principles and student feedback, particularly regarding assessment as Some students prefer fewer assessments

through larger units, which could reduce optional modules. However, from a market perspective, students also value optionality and diversity in course choices.

The PVC Education and Global explained that some programmes did not transition to larger units, which has caused challenges. PTES feedback suggests that this approach has been problematic and therefore there are advantages and disadvantages in the use of larger credit units.

The committee discussed the impact of bigger credit units and option choice. The PVC Education and Global recognised that some faculties offer greater flexibility in module choices but emphasised:

- + From a cost and viability perspective, low-enrolment modules cannot be sustained indefinitely.
- + A policy should be in place stating that courses with very low enrolment (e.g., under 10 students) may not be offered.
- + Faculties should have clear guidance on streamlining optional modules where necessary.

The Student Representative raised logistical concerns about exams, particularly whether they should be conducted in-person or online. Some students experienced difficulties printing exam materials and disruptions in the library while taking online exams.

The Director of Teaching in SPS confirmed that the department had recently relaunched PGT programmes before CT was introduced, resulting in only minor adjustments.

The FAR noted that PGT Assessment Regulations (PGTAR) introduce significant changes, particularly in reassessment so further feedback can be provided once a full academic year cycle has ran.

The committee considered the teaching and learning material provided to students in the transformed courses. The Chair highlighted efforts to standardise Moodle page structures and grade transfer processes for greater consistency. The PVC Education and Global emphasised the importance of maintaining a baseline level of consistency across faculties while allowing departmental autonomy where appropriate.

The Director of Teaching in Education shared positive feedback on CT and specifically the Faculty work on the assessment criteria and its flexibility , particularly for diverse assessment formats in distance learning.

- + The alignment between student and staff perspectives on assessment criteria has been encouraging.
- + Global citizenship and sustainability have been integrated into MA Education, with students engaging in mapping learning outcomes to sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- + Still in early stages, but initial feedback has been positive.
- + Introduction of lower and higher distinction categories has been beneficial, addressing previous concerns from external examiners.

The Chair highlighted discussions on alternative dissertation models across faculties, including consultancy projects and placement-based assessments, particularly in Economics, SPS, Education, and Health. These initiatives aim to enhance employability for PGT students.

The A&F Lead emphasised that the PGT criteria has positively influenced assessment design, prompting reflection on:

- + Learning outcomes alignment with assessment methods.
- + Revised assessment strategies in Health and other faculties.

There was a greater discussion on formative assessments focusing on:

- + Early introduction of assessment criteria to students.
- + Adaptation of criteria for placement-based units.

The Chair concluded discussion thanking colleagues and re-emphasizing the role of Directors of Teaching, Faculty A&F Leads, and PVC Education and Global in driving necessary changes, ensuring alignment with CT principles, and supporting implementation at the faculty level.

955.0 Assessment and Feedback Business

The A&F Leads reminded members of the importance of including Assessment & Feedback (A&F) as a standing agenda item in DLTQC and SSLC meetings. A&F representatives are available to attend DLTQC meetings to answer questions and provide updates.

The February DLTQC meeting will provide an update on:

- Progress on the PGT review of generic criteria.
- Developments in UG assessment criteria.

It was noted that Multiple feedback mechanisms are in place:

- Staff and student surveys.
- 12 student focus groups across departments.
- Staff focus groups, with more planned.

A Task & Finish Group is being formed to co-create the new UG assessment criteria:

- Representatives from all departments, Academic Skills, and students from diverse backgrounds (home, international, DAP, widening participation).
- Scheduled meetings: Two in February, two in March, one in April.
- A draft of the assessment criteria is expected by April 16th, before the Easter break.

It was confirmed that FLTQC and DLTQC will be used for ongoing feedback loops, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of developments and have opportunities to provide input.

Semester 2 will see the return of some unit convenors from sabbatical, who may have missed the implementation of PGT criteria in Semester 1. A&F Lead encouraged departments to signpost these convenors for additional support, either individually or in group sessions (online or in person). There are efforts should be made to ensure full engagement in Semester 2.

A&F team will provide discussion points for DLTQC agendas in advance. Departments are encouraged to:

- Facilitate discussions on assessment criteria.
- Engage teaching teams and provide feedback to the A&F team.
- Request in-depth focus groups if needed.

Ongoing support is available to ensure smooth implementation of both PGT and UG assessment criteria.

956.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Original: AOB - Midterm feedback - The Education Manager confirmed that midterm feedback will not take place in Semester 1 this year and has been deferred to Semester 1 next year. For Semester 2 this year, students will participate in the course-level survey.

Amended: Item: AOB - Midterm feedback -this was that a guidance sheet for ways to get feedback from students at midterm was being produced and would be circulated for S2.

957.0 Actions and Matters Arising

The following updates were noted:

- CLT is currently running workshops for those unfamiliar with the grade transfer process.
- The final meeting of the Task & Finish Group on the Education Equality Act is scheduled for February. After this meeting, finalised paperwork will be shared, outlining implementation details. Workstreams will be established, similar to the PGT review, covering including IMCs, DAPs, other aspects of the Education Equality Act

958.0 Chair's Business

1. Teaching & Learning Best Practices

- A Word file has been shared to collect and archive best practices in UG and PGT teaching and learning.
- The working lunch next week will focus on uploading and discussing good practices.

2. PGT Review & Education Action Plan

- PGT review has been extensively discussed in previous agenda items.
- NSS & PTES Interventions:
 - o The university is implementing targeted interventions for areas that do not meet benchmarks in

NSS & PTES results.

- o Action plans are being recorded and shared university-wide to highlight best practices for improvement.

3. Student Voice in Education Task & Finish Group

- This group will replace online unit evaluation reports and focus on enhancing student engagement throughout their studies. The group will:

- o Assess student feedback mechanisms beyond surveys.

- o Develop platforms for meaningful student engagement.

- o Work on a short-term basis during this semester.

- Staff and departments are encouraged to participate or nominate colleagues who may be interested.

4. Widening Participation Mapping

- A faculty-wide mapping exercise is underway to document widening participation initiatives across the university.

- Andrew Ross is leading the effort to identify:

- o Current faculty engagement in widening participation.

- o Gaps in engagement, admissions, and student support.

- Departments will be asked to contribute additional insights to ensure a comprehensive understanding of initiatives.

5. Education Awards Submission Deadline

- Deadline: February 14th

- A chance to showcase leadership, student engagement, and educational innovation.

- Departments are encouraged to submit nominations

959.0 Student Business

The Student Representative present provided some updates at the meeting but noted that they had not yet met with all course reps. Updates included:

There is positive engagement with employability-focused modules and Students appreciate career events, workshops, and company interactions tailored to their modules.

- There are some teething issues with exams and some students had to print online exams, which raised concerns about accessibility and logistics.

- Students find the new marking scheme and grade boundaries helpful, as they improve clarity on exams and feedback processes.

960.0 Assurances on assessment period and Semester 2 preparation

The Directors of Teaching in Economics and SPS reported concerns about low engagement and performance in their respective departments. It was noted that this would be discussed confidentially outside of the meeting with the FAR.

The committee discussed how student engagement issues are managed and how they could be improved:

- Identify disengaged students by Week 5 in Semester 1.
- Individually reach out to students who missed assessments or performed poorly.
- Consider mental health, cultural adjustment, and academic stress, particularly for international students.
- Departments should consider introducing 20% mid-semester assessments to identify struggling students earlier.

It was noted that any assessment changes for PGT programmes can still be submitted via DLTQC (February) and FLTQC (March).

- Explore International Student Support roles at a department level
- The benefits of early engagement or flagging of concerns to Student Immigration Services

961.0 MSc Applied Psychology (Conversion)

Prof. Richard Joiner provided an update on the development of the new Applied Psychology Master's course, which is a conversion programme designed for graduates from non-psychology backgrounds.

The course aims to:

- + Obtain accreditation to provide students with a Graduate Basis for Certification for further psychology training.
- + Enhance the student experience by ensuring a high level of engagement.
- + Develop employability skills to improve students' job prospects.
- + Integrate UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum.

Two reviewers are currently assessing the course and will provide feedback.

The Director of Teaching in PoLIS raised a concern about the terminology used for the Applied Psychology dissertation because the term "Applied Dissertation" might be misleading, as it could be interpreted as an internship or convenorship rather than a research-based dissertation. It was recommended to consult employers on whether the dissertation should be formally referred to as a dissertation, thesis, or portfolio to align with industry and academic expectations.

The FAR inquired about whether applicants with an undergraduate Psychology degree could apply for the course. The Director of Teaching in Psychology clarified that students with an undergraduate BPS-accredited Psychology degree would not need this conversion course, as it would not provide them with additional qualifications.

The FAR raised concerns regarding the "No Additional Costs" statement in the course documentation. It was suggested to include generic wording to account for potential costs related to placements, travel, or consultancy projects. Director of Teaching (PoLIS) recommended also considering costs related to bus passes and visas for international students.

The committee approved the proposal for the MSc Applied Psychology course and noted it would be recommended for approval at the next CPAC meeting

962.0 Approval of Intermediate Changes to UG courses for AY 25/26

The committee discussed proposed changes to undergraduate provision for next academic year. Specific feedback was noted in the spreadsheet tracker available to members.

Action

To report back about shared units across the faculty (restrictions)

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 3 Mar 2025 | Assigned to - Gail Forey

963.0 Assessment Offences Report AY 23/24

Assessment Offences Data: The FAR noted that the paper provided an overview on the data related to assessment offences last academic year. Members noted that there was a working group currently reviewing QA53.

During discussion the committee noted that the numbers had decreased compared to previous academic years. It was considered whether this is linked to the complexity of the investigation or the due to the rise in AI.

It was flagged by the Director of Teaching in Health that current data does not clearly distinguish between traditional plagiarism and AI misuse, making it difficult to track offenses accurately. There is uncertainty among staff on how to handle cases where:

- Students fail to acknowledge AI use but use it appropriately.
- Students deliberately misuse AI to gain an advantage.

It was suggested that in the future data is broken down by:

- Type of assessment (e.g., coursework vs. exams).
- Nature of the offense (e.g., plagiarism vs. impersonation).
- Department (to track variations across disciplines).
- The average number of offences per student, informed by specific department student numbers, to account for varying sizes
- How many cases of misconduct were suspected and investigated but no case found

964.0 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

The Education Manager highlighted current risks within the faculty regarding MCQs which are largely digital exams currently:

- There has been no structural investment in on-site digital exams.
- A large-scale effort is needed to map the curriculum and ensure fair and high-quality MCQs
- There are concerns about distributed marking, workload burden on staff, and assessment validity.
- Issues arise particularly in class tests, where staff are responsible for both administration and delivery, despite the test resembling an exam in format and impact.

The Director of Teaching in PoLIS raised concerns about the increasing use of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs). Some staff perceive MCQs to be easier to prepare and mark. MCQs are being promoted as a way to mitigate AI-related assessment issues. However, well-designed MCQs require significant effort in preparation and administration.

The Chair emphasised that formal training on MCQ design and implementation is needed:

- Proper MCQ question (item) design.
- Best practices in balancing MCQs with open-ended questions to accommodate students with timing difficulties.
- Guidelines on visibility issues and break accommodations for DAP students.
- Clear guidance on digital vs. hand-marked MCQs, as hand-marking increases the risk of errors.

Action

To check if any training on MCQ design and development is available and report back at the next FLTQC meeting.

965.0 EQSC Request: Sharing of Unit Marks

To follow up on this agenda item outside of the meeting if any concerns raised regarding EQSC

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 3 Mar 2025 | Assigned to - Sophia Ward

966.0 Chair's Action

967.0 Notable Papers from Chair

Chair noted that students have reported issues with whiteboard visibility in Panopto recordings. When lecturers write on the whiteboard, the content is often not captured clearly, making it difficult for students to follow.

Staff should consider using visualisers instead of whiteboards, as they are more effective for recording.

If using a whiteboard:

- Use clear, bold pens (staff may bring their own for better visibility).
- Take a photo of the board and upload it to the Moodle page for student reference.

Staff should ensure proper use of names in recordings and materials to improve clarity and student engagement.

968.0 Faculty Committee Minutes

969.0 University Committee Minutes

970.0 Any Other Business
