

FLTQC 24 April 2024

Wednesday, 24th April 2024 2:15 pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Attendees

Attended

Sascha Athey (SA) (for minute 3301)

Miranda Blofeld (MB) (for minute 3307)

Zoe Burke

Andrew Burrows (Chair)

Susan Crennell

Paula Gabriel

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Liz Haynes

Zack Lyons (ZL)

Sarah Paine (SP)

Philip Rogers

Tony Shardlow

Gan Shermer

Paul Snow (PS)

Did Not Attend

Florin Bisset

Sarah Upendra Chandratreya

Ffion Gould

Momna Hejmadi

Charareh Pourzand

Miranda Yafi

1.0 FLTQC's 'top 10' quality priorities for EQSC for 2024/25 (3301)

SA, Head of Academic Quality and Standards, commented that education, governance and decision making at the University at present is sometimes unclear, e.g. there exists an EQSC, Education Advisory Board and Education Board Oversight Committee; a new course proposal is required to go through UEB, Board of Studies, APC, FLTQC, CPAC and then Senate. Registry has resumed servicing EQSC, APC and CPAC, so is able to advise on current processes, i.e. the required routes for decision making. EQSC recently changed its terms of reference to make

it clear that it is an assurance and compliance committee, focused on compliance with the Office for Students' conditions of registration and on the University's standards.

Pre-Covid there was a more formalised process in place to ensure that when new quality-related policies were being adopted, or changes were being made to procedures, FLTQCs were involved in deciding what should be prioritised and in associated working groups, and were then consulted before final approval. Due likely to the agility required during Covid and then MAB, the consultative process has diminished somewhat. EQSC wishes to return to a more consultative process. As a first step, at the start of each year, EQSC and FLTQCs will co-agree which policies and processes should be prioritised for review, with a workplan drawn up on that basis. EQSC will identify any problems with compliance and risks to quality and will seek the views of FLTQCs on priorities for quality-related policies and processes that should be included in the workplan for the upcoming academic year.

The Committee made the following suggestions for review:

- How QA reporting fits into wider University planning requirements, and associated workload and timing.

SA reported that current reporting requirements, both at Faculty and institutional level, will be reviewed by EQSC at its next meeting, in terms of purpose and integration with other processes, including planning.

- QA documentation to identify and review, in terms of necessity, feasibility and workload, all the tasks / responsibilities explicitly assigned to the DoS, DoT and HoD, the timing of these, and whether any can be reassigned to other roles.

- QA35 and requirements / expectations regarding scaling.

SA highlighted that the shift to being regulated by the Office of Students presents an opportunity to review our QA policies and procedures in terms of their necessity and presentation. In addition, the University is decommissioning the wiki in favour of using SharePoint as the platform for sharing information with staff, which provides an opportunity to make guidance more concise / simplify documentation.

SA asked the Committee to provide any further feedback in time for the EQSC meeting on 2 July.

2.0 Welcome and Quorum (3302)

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate.

3.0 Declaration of Interest (3303)

There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (3304)

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2024 (Paper 92).

5.0 Matters Arising (3305)

The Chair reported that the action points relating to the Mathematical Sciences programmes had been addressed. ZL confirmed that the action points relating to the new and CT Computer Science programmes had been addressed in readiness for CPAC next week.

6.0 Chair's Business (3306)

- The Chair requested that DoTs complete the departmental spreadsheets on the Teams site for the categorisation of assessments according to permitted GenAI use for next academic year by 28 May (despite the central deadline set of 7 June), in time for FLTQC to note the categorisations at its next, and last meeting of the year, on 5 June 2024.
- The Chair reported that the Faculty is about to appoint 2 Bath Insights interns to help departments over the summer prepare CT unit Moodle pages for next academic year, including moving them onto the new templates, and copying across content from Year 1 units this year to next year. If there is time and resource available, non-CT unit Moodle pages may be reviewed too. The aim is to ensure some consistency in how content is presented to students by using one of the two TEL templates (one based on weeks and one based on topics), and providing some of the content centrally, e.g. linking to reading lists, inputting basic assessment information, and contact details. This will also free up academic staff time, e.g. for making resources more accessible and/or working on content for the coming academic year. Disparity in Year 1 CT units in how templates are being applied, e.g. whether some of the template headers are being used, and provision of basic information, will be addressed. For Year 2 CT units, any relevant content from pre-CT versions will be copied across. SP will provide DoTs with a summary of the workplan.
- The Chair asked members to report any AV issues with lecture rooms to him, so that a case can be built for improved AV support. Currently staff experiencing AV issues, e.g. with data projectors, are being advised to put in a ticket, meaning that lectures have had to be cancelled. Previously, when a call was made to the AV emergency system, someone from the support team would attend the lecture room in good time, but such support is no longer being provided. It was noted that rescheduling cancelled lectures is unlikely to be possible given the current situation with timetabling.
- The Chair reminded members of the in-person Edufest day being held on 14 May, and encouraged them to attend along with staff from their departments.
- The Chair gave a final plug for NSS and PTES, which finishes next week, and encouraged, in particular, departments at the lower end of the reported response rates to ask students to complete the surveys.

7.0 Level 7 Degree Apprenticeship standards (3307)

The Committee considered the Level 7 Degree Apprenticeship standards for potential development by the University (Paper 93).

MB explained that the Degree Apprenticeship Strategy Group (DASG) had identified, from the Institute for Apprenticeships website, potential Level 7 standards that faculties across the institution might be interested in for developing degree apprenticeship provision. The University currently delivers the Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist Level 7 standard. Within that standard, there are various different pathways, e.g. Cybersecurity Technical / Professional and Data Scientist. Currently, the Department of Computer Science is delivering the Software Engineering pathway. In terms of other Level 7 standards, there is the Artificial Intelligence Data Specialist which has been under consideration as a potential option. The Department of Life Sciences (Pharmacy) is currently exploring developing an Advanced Clinical Practitioner Degree Apprenticeship. The Chair enquired as to the Research Scientist standard. MB explained that it is a step up from the Level 6 Laboratory Scientist standard. The Level 7 standard could be aimed at people with a chemistry, physics or biology background wanting to develop research specialisms. The Chair questioned how this could be made into a coherent course given the diversity of research likely to be undertaken. MB recommended reviewing the specific occupational standard to which a new course would need to be mapped, taking into account expertise within a department and its network of employers, for inputting into course design and recruiting viable apprentice cohorts onto the programme.

MB flagged that there are other options at Level 6 that have not been included in the list. A Level 6 standard is being considered in one Faculty because it provides an appropriate step to Level 7. MB offered to compile a list of potential Level 6 standards, e.g. around the Digital and Technology Solutions standard, if this would be of interest to the Faculty.

The University is also looking at which standards could be delivered against as an employer provider. The University has a levy pot that is not being used; if it is not used within 2 years it will be lost. This could provide an opportunity to upskill current members of staff, rather than sending them externally and paying levy funds to another institution.

MB reported that she is currently compiling a manual to provide guidance/information on what an apprenticeship is, how it is different and how it works, e.g. the apprenticeship life cycle, as well as resources required to support business development and delivery. There is now a separate quality assurance Code of Practice for apprenticeship courses due to the specific external regulatory requirements that need to be met.

The Chair encouraged members to review the list to see whether there are any standards that may be of interest and to contact MB for a discussion about the practicalities of how to take initiatives forward. The Chair commented that the University is keen to broaden Degree Apprenticeship provision across the University having done well in the recent Ofsted inspection and because it is potentially a good source of income. MB requested that members provide her with any feedback regarding potential appetite in time for the next DASG meeting on 26 June.

8.0 Feedback from Committees (3308)

Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC):

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 (Paper 95), in particular approval of BCS reaccreditation submission (virtual approval).

Education Advisory Board (EAB):

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 (Paper 96).

Student Experience Advisory Board (SEAB):

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024 (Paper 97).

Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC):

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on:

a) 20 February 2024 (Paper 98A), in particular approval of:

Exemption from UGAR for Maths courses with a Study Year Abroad (SYA) to permit a higher Overall Stage Average (OSA) for Year 1 progression of 60% (normally 40%) for BSc and 65% (normally 50%) for MMath.

b) 20 March 2024 (Paper 98B), in particular approval of:

Exemption from UGAR for MPharm (Hons) Pharmacy to permit implementation of the 50% pass mark 2 years ahead of schedule.

9.0 Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (DLTQC) Minutes (3309)

The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on:

Department of Chemistry: 6 March (Paper 99A) and 10 April (Paper 99B) 2024.

Department of Life Sciences: 20 March 2024 (Paper 100).

10.0 Any Other Business (3310)

PS reported that the Department of Physics is struggling to secure sufficient academic staff to act as Chief Invigilators. The Department's Semester 2 examinations have increased from 37 to 41 exam sessions, partly because the Year 1 assessment is now towards the end of the year but also because some large classes are being examined over multiple venues. University Rule 2 states that "Chief Invigilators will be members of academic staff. Where necessary they will be staff in the Management, Specialist & Administrative job family in grades 6 and above who have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil the role. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the Education, Quality & Standards Committee". The default expectation therefore is that Chief Invigilators should be academic members of staff, with the next port of call possibly being senior technical staff. PS questioned the need for Chief Invigilators to be academic staff given that it is not permitted to advise students on questions during examinations. No other departments reported experiencing particular problems with finding invigilators this session.