Quality, Learning & Teaching Committee (QLTC) 2
Friday, 25 January 2019

Minutes – Public [Confirmed]

PRESENT:	E Burchfield (Deputy Chair, RVC), M Flynn (City), Dr M Gillies (Goldsmiths), Dr D Koufopoulos (UoLW), Dr J Milner (LSHTM), J Morgan (**Chair**), A Pettigrew (External Member), Dr J Rothe (LSE), K Schmelzer (Student Member), Dr S Sindi (Student Member), Dr F Steinberger (Birkbeck), R Sutton (UoLW), T Wade (UoLW), Dr S Wagner (Royal Holloway), E Walters (SAS)
IN ATTENDANCE:	A Dulson (Secretary, UoLW), E Voight (Assistant Secretary, UoLW)
OBSERVERS:	N Josephidou (UoLW)
APOLOGIES:	Dr L Amrane-Cooper (UoLW), L Barker (King's College London), S Brenton (UoLW), Prof F Cunningham (RVC), P McKellar (UoLW), Dr J S Rofe (SOAS), Prof G Wisker (External Member), Prof H Xanthanki (UCL)

PART I: PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Welcome

79.   The Chair opened the second meeting of the QLTC by welcoming members, in particular new member from City, University of London, M. Flynn, and those in attendance. All members were asked to introduce themselves.

Announcements by the Chair

80.   The Chair reported that Academic Committee had reviewed the newly drafted Terms of Reference for QLTC and requested that it be made more explicit that QLTC would be considering issues surrounding the quality of assessment, particularly given significant reduction in satisfaction in assessment identified through the most recent Student Experience Survey (AC 26 minutes 2573 to 2578 refer).

Agreed:

81.   ***That the Chair and Deputy Chair review and amend the Terms of Reference as required by Academic Committee.***

Minutes

Received:

82.   **(QLTC 2/1)**, the minutes of the first meeting of the QLTC held on 28 September 2018.

Resolved:

83.   ***That the minutes of the first meeting of the QLTC be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.***

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 1864 (LTAS 32): Stepped Marking

      Noted:

84.   LTAS had previously discussed the introduction of stepped marking. Members had agreed that any relevant findings relating to the stepped marking scheme of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education be submitted to the presiding Committee. This would now fall within the Terms of Reference of QLTC.

85.   Stepped marking has since been introduced into the Undergraduate Laws programme, and the International Foundation Programme (IFP) plans to introduce this from 2019-20 onwards.

      Agreed:

86.   ***That a report on the introduction of stepped marking in both the PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and the Undergraduate Laws programme be submitted to and considered by QLTC in the autumn.***

Minute 11 (QLTC 2): Periodic Programme Reviews

      Noted:

87.   That the Quality Team had been asked to ensure that time was set aside on the agenda for University of London distance and flexible learning programmes at any departmental review within member institutions as appropriate. Initial improvements had since been observed.

      Agreed:

88.   ***That the inclusion of UoLW programmes into departmental reviews continue to be monitored by the Quality Team and any further issues be reported to QLTC.***

Minute 51 (QLTC 2): Petroleum Geoscience APPR
That the issues surrounding the absence of module level learning outcomes and examiner commentaries be followed up at the next APPR meeting for Petroleum Geoscience.

      Noted:

89.   Members of QLTC had identified issues in the 2016-17 APR surrounding the absence of module level learning outcomes and examiner commentaries. It was requested that this be followed up at the subsequent APPR meeting in autumn 2018. At this APPR meeting the need to review and revise module content and programme materials was identified. As part of these updates, module-level learning outcomes specific to the programme were to be created. Further information would be provided to QLTC in the Annual Programme Report at the spring 2019 meeting.

Chair's Action

MSc In Data Science specialisms

    Received:

90.   **(QLTC 2/2)**, the programme approval report for the MSc Data Science specialisms.

    Noted:

91.   That Chair's Action had been taken on behalf of QLTC to endorse the approval panel's recommendation to approve the proposal for a new MSc and PGDip in Data Science and Financial Technologies, and MSc and PGDip in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence under academic direction of Goldsmiths, University of London. The Chair of QLTC found that the programme team had thoroughly addressed the conditions of the approval report in their response, and that the recommendations were to be addressed at the appropriate times in the future.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Assessment Quality Panel

    Received:

92.   **(QLTC 2/3)**, the minutes for the meeting of the Assessment Quality Panel (AQP) held on 1st October 2018.

    Noted:

93.   That the Assessment Working Group were undertaking a big piece of work to look at the quality of multi-faceted assessment that would be trialled as part of the new BSc Computer Science programme launching in April 2019.

94.   The work of the AQP was mainly focussed on looking at the details of assessment administration, such as standardising agendas, minutes and terms of reference for boards of examiners. The Director of Student and Academic Services expressed his thanks for the diligence of the Chair in facilitating these improvements.

95.   There seemed to be a misunderstanding by the AQP regarding the function of the External Examiners' Summary Report. It was noted in the minutes that it would be useful for this summary to be produced twice a year in order to allow for a timely response to examiners. However, programme teams provide responses to examiners not on the basis of this summary, but on the basis of the individual reports.

96.   The Director of Student and Academic Services acknowledged that a different mechanism would be needed for system-wide issues to be picked up systematically and acted upon before the next academic session.

    Agreed:

97.   ***That the question of appropriate mechanisms to monitor any system-wide issues highlighted by External Examiners be discussed internally, led by the Director of Student and Academic Services, and an update be reported back to QLTC.***

Programme Approvals

Status of the Academic Programme Approvals

> **Received:**

98.   **(QLTC 2/4)**, Status of Academic Programme Approvals.

> **Noted:**

99.   That there were no programme approvals due to be considered at the meeting but going forward members of QLTC would be asked to act as panel members for programme approvals.

100.   The approval event for the MSc in Healthcare in Humanitarian Crises had been postponed from 12 Feb 2019. The new date was yet to be confirmed.

101.   The Chair also brought to the committee's attention the changes to the academic approval process which were introduced in the Summer of 2017. The revisions allow for member institutions to make use of their own approval mechanisms with adequate representation from University of London Worldwide. This reduces duplication of processes, and provides for member institution led approvals to be directly considered by Academic Committee.

102.   QLTC would be kept informed on progress of any of the academic programme approvals through this standing item on the agenda.

Annual Programme Reports

Status of the 2017-18 Annual Programme Reports

> **Received:**

103.   **(QLTC 2/5)**, Status of Academic Programme Reports.

> **Noted:**

104.   That Annual Programme Reports would no longer be made public on the University of London website as part of the committee papers. In order to comply with the QAA Quality Code, however, External Examiner reports and the associated responses would be made available to students via the Student Portal.

105.   The Chair reminded the committee of the changes to the format of the Annual Programme Reports which would now focus predominantly on the action plan, to which the papers submitted for consideration will be appended. Members of QLTC were asked to consider and review specific points relating to the action plan under discussion. These points had been circulated to allocated readers.

106.   It was brought to the attention of the committee that the 2017-18 International Foundation Programme (IFP) report had been significantly delayed.

> **Agreed:**

107.   ***That a date for submission of the outstanding APR is to be agreed with the IFP programme team within the few weeks following the meeting in order to prevent it falling further behind.***

Applied Educational Leadership and Management

Received:

108. **(QLTC 2/6)**, the Annual Programme Report and action plan for the MA in Applied Leadership and Management (AELM)

Noted:

109. That the action plan for this programme was very thorough.

110. Members of the committee highlighted the reputational risk posed by the untimely response by the University to online enquiries as highlighted via the Student Experience Survey results.

111. It was agreed that with small programmes such as this, where students can get a very timely response directly from the programme team, it was a case of managing student expectations. The same turnaround time cannot be guaranteed by operational teams dealing with up to 50,000 UoL students. Despite this, it was important to monitor and improve response times to all students.

Agreed:

112. *That a report documenting how the issue surrounding enquiry response times is being taken forward within the University of London Worldwide be submitted to QLTC for discussion.*

Further Noted:

113. That the report made reference to the scanning of exam scripts in order to allow for electronic transmission to examiners across the world. Members of the committee highlighted the security risks associated with emailing electronic copies of scripts and noted the use of preferable alternatives such as cloud storage.

114. One member highlighted that the wording of action seven was such that it signalled the ambiguity in the regulations applicable to current students and that the Academic Services Manager might wish to reword this.

115. The committee's attention was drawn to the fact that 43% of students responding to the Student Experience Survey for this programme said that the online library provision was not adequate. It was suggested that this response could be attributed to the loss of access to the UCL Institute of Education's library.

Agreed:

116. *That the Academic Services Manager investigate access permissions to the UCL IoE library for students on the MA in AELM.*

Resolved:

117. *That the report be accepted.*

History

Received:

118. **(QLTC 2/7)**, the Annual Programme Report and action plan for the BA in History.

Noted:

119.   That a number of changes to the programme, for example to assessments, were positive.

120.   However, it was noted that the action plan did not go into detail as to how several of the actions were being taken forward. In particular, the committee highlighted the requirement on the programme team to look at the increasing number of students withdrawing from the programme. It was felt that further detail could be provided on how actions would be taken to mitigate against withdrawals.

Agreed:

121.   *That further detail be provided in the next Annual Programme Report as to how any of the agreed actions are being taken forward.*

Resolved:

122.   *That the report be accepted.*

Philosophy

Received:

123.   **(QLTC 2/8)**, the Annual Programme Report and action plan for the BA in Philosophy

Noted:

124.   The VLE seemed to be excellent in terms of learning materials but underused in terms of student support. External examiners praised programme specification, syllabi, and subject guides. Members noted that the small size of the programme allowed the member institution to provide a relatively high degree of student support, but that there was no additional guidance, such as introduction to the online library.

125.   The programme performed below average on the Student Experience Survey. Members queried whether this was due to expectations of the support students would receive were not made clear at the beginning.

126.   It was also noted that it was unclear what the value added of this particular programme was in relation to competitor offerings.

127.   The external member, however, commended the programme team's overall approach.

Agreed:

128.   *That an action point be added to the plan for the BA in Philosophy to explore how the VLE can be better utilised to enhance student support.*

Resolved:

129.   *That the report be accepted.*

Periodic Programme Reviews

Status of Periodic Programme Reviews

    Received:

130.   Status of Periodic Programme Reviews **(QLTC 2/9)**

    Noted:

131.   That the report for the MSc in Information Security had been received since circulation of the committee papers and would be submitted to the next meeting of QLTC.

132.   The Chair commented that some member institutions seemed to be taking a long time to provide the required paperwork and delays in their reporting process had a knock on effect for the University. It was felt that the review process ceases to have value if the committee was considering and commenting on reports which, in some cases, date back more than a year as the programme in question would have likely progressed since that point.

    Agreed:

133.   ***That the Chair identify and write to appropriate colleagues at the member institutions with outstanding reports in order to encourage them to respond to the review as soon as possible.***

[Secretary's note: Two of the outstanding reports from LSHTM programmes and the report from RVC have been received since the meeting of QLTC and will be presented for consideration at the subsequent meeting.]

MSc in Clinical Trials PPR

    Received:

134.   **(QLTC 2/9a),** the report from the 2017 Clinical Trials PPR.

    Noted:

135.   That the Programme Team had responded to all comments in an appropriate and thorough way.

136.   That good practice could be identified in the pairing of new online tutors with more experienced tutors for a period of time. This mentoring practice was commendable.

137.   It was suggested that low uptake on formative assessments could be improved if expectations were more clearly communicated to students. For example, students would benefit from knowing how much was expected to have been completed by the time they engage with the formative assessment.

138.   One member noted that the programme could make use of recording webinars and making them available on the VLE, therefore offering more opportunities to engage with content to students who may have time constraints due to full-time jobs, family commitments, or location in a different time zone.

139.   Members commented positively on the use of different technologies to facilitate learning and interaction with and amongst students. However, it was noted that risks arising from sudden non-availability of these external platforms, as well as accessibility requirements, should be monitored on a regular basis.

Resolved:

140.   ***That the report be accepted.***

PART III: RESERVED BUSINESS

Question Paper Processing

Received:

141.   **(QLTC 2/10)**, the Question Paper Processing Report 2017-18.

[QLTC Minutes 142-147 are considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.]

PART IV: MATTERS FOR REPORT

Centre for Distance Education Project Call

Received:

148.   **(QLTC 2/11),** Centre for Distance Education Projects 2019

Noted:

149.   The deadline for submission of project proposals had been extended until the 25 February 2019.

Any Other Business

150.   The Chair noted that all QLTC members should now have access to the dedicated SharePoint site, via which committee papers would be circulated going forward. Any feedback on or queries with this site should be reported to A Dulson as Secretary for the committee.

151.   A copy of the CDE call for papers would be made available on the SharePoint site for members to pass on to colleagues, where appropriate.

152.   The 2019 graduation ceremony was scheduled for 5 March. On 3 and 4 March Senate House would be open for graduands and their families to visit.

Dates of Next Meetings

153.   The dates for the meetings of the QLTC for the 2018-19 academic year:

Friday, 26 April 2019
Friday, 12 July 2019