

QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDING GROUP
Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2011

Present: J Taylor (Chair), M Barnard, R Chater, A Diaz, B Dyer, J Edwards, A Ireland, K Leech, C Symonds, N Silvennoinen (Secretary), A Young

Apologies: A Main, G Willcocks

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Andrew Main and Geoff Willcocks.

2 Accuracy and matters arising from minutes of 7th February 2011

2.1 The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 AY confirmed that the meeting to discuss mitigating circumstances had not yet taken place. ...

3 School Quality Reports – institutional action plan (for note)

3.1 The Quality Assurance Standing Group's (QASG) remit included identification of cross-institutional issues/good practice arising from School Quality Reports and proposing appropriate actions to Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Due to the timing of the two committees, Educational Development and Quality (EDQ) had prepared the circulated paper and actions for ASC. In future years, the task of identifying any necessary actions would be undertaken by QASG. The institutional action plan was brought to QASG for oversight of the actions underway.

4 Review of Assessment Regulations and Academic Procedure D6

4.1 The Group discussed feedback received from Schools and Professional Services since the implementation of the current set of assessment regulations in March 2010. Following a detailed discussion on the regulations and their relationship with the related Academic Procedure D6, a number of changes were proposed for implementation from September 2011. In addition, enhanced guidance on the interpretation of the current regulations would be circulated to Schools to inform the forthcoming spring and summer Boards. The Group would also reconvene in April to discuss Board approaches to discretion further, including the consideration of mitigating circumstances and the use of external examiners before the below recommendations and actions are finalised.

RECOMMENDATION TO ASC: that the following proposed changes to the assessment regulations are recommended for Senate approval (see attached regulations for the proposed wording):

- i) **Section 4 - Compensation:** change the current wording in section 4.1 to indicate that compensation can only be applied to the first attempt (including any subsequent attempt taken as a first attempt due to mitigating circumstances) and hence cannot be applied at resit boards.
- ii) **Section 7 - Awards:** remove the sentence in section 7.4 of the undergraduate regulations which states that by accepting a non-honours degree the student waives his/her right to be assessed or reassessed in the remaining credits. This will allow the student to re-apply to return to complete their degree at a later date subject to academic judgement of the receiving Programme Coordinator.
- iii) **Section 9 – Provision for failed candidates (reassessment):** add a line to section 9.3 the assessment regulations to state that where a student who has passed a unit is granted an opportunity 'as for the first time' to improve his/her performance due to mitigation, the second mark will stand if the student takes up the Board's offer.
- iv) **Section 10 – Provision for candidates with valid reasons for poor performance:** clarify section 10.3 to make it explicit that the Board may only recommend a student for an award on

the basis of insufficient credit but sufficient evidence of their performance to determine the classification when the student's ability to complete the award has been affected by serious circumstances (e.g. terminal illness of the student) and where further study or future use of the qualification is not considered likely or possible. Also clarify this in relation to Aegrotat awards in section 10.4.

ACTIONS:

- i) If the above changes are supported by ASC and approved by Senate, EDQ to update Academic Procedures D6 and C2 accordingly. C2 amendments to include a change to explain that returning students who have failed and left the University without a terminal award may be re-admitted onto their original programme as long as they have not exhausted all their reassessment/repeat attempts and understand that when re-enrolled, they will carry forward their full assessment profile to-date.
- ii) Linked to action i) above, EDQ to circulate enhanced guidance on the interpretation of the current regulations to Schools to inform the forthcoming spring Boards.
- iii) EDQ to scrutinise a sample of Exam Board minutes to ascertain how discretion is used by Boards in relation to the 0.5-1% band below the classification boundary; Board approach to mitigating circumstances; and the role of external examiners at the Board in applying discretion. EDQ's report to inform discussion at the next QASG meeting.

5 Annual Monitoring – proposed amendments

- 5.1 CS presented a paper outlining the findings from the EDQ review of the 2009-10 annual monitoring process and the production of Annual Reports on Framework Monitoring (ARFMs), including proposed changes to Academic Procedures B9 and B10. Overall the process had worked well, but a number of areas had been identified for further improvement. These included the auditor role and a proposed template for the auditor's report and a single report for partner frameworks/programmes which would better facilitate School and partner scrutiny of the provision.
- 5.2 With a clear emphasis on ongoing monitoring, support was sought for a single annual submission date for all ARFMs irrespective of the cycle. Some Schools had adopted this approach and it was reported to work very well. Having discussed the pros and cons of a universal reporting date, views were expressed that it would not facilitate the best possible monitoring outcomes for all programmes. Members therefore agreed that whilst a single submission date should continue to be encouraged, Schools should be allowed to retain flexibility in this respect.
- 5.3 Members agreed that where Unit Monitoring Reports had been made available at the Board, this had been useful and pre-Board submission should continue to be encouraged.

Action: CS to incorporate the amendments accepted by Members to Academic Procedure B9.

Action: Members to send any further comments on the proposed changes to B10 to CS for discussion at the next QASG meeting.

6 Any other business

- 6.1 None.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting would be scheduled for late April, date to be confirmed.

Action: NS to set up the next meeting.