**QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDING GROUP**

**CONFIRMED minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2014**

**Present:** C Symonds (Chair) B Dyer, R Chater, J De Vekey, J Freeman, K Fisher, E Mayo-Ward, K Phalp, R Rogers (Clerk), G Roushan, N Silvennoinen (Secretary)

**In attendance:** A Morrison (Agenda item 4 – Management of assessment outcomes for incoming mobility students)

**Apologies:** A Main, C Merrett, P Ryland, R Stafford

**1 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th may 2014**

1.1 The previous minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**2 Matters arising**

2.1 Minutes 2.10 (28.01.14) - Aligning the new Student Records System with the standard assessment regulations: **Ongoing**

A number of changes to the assessment regulations would not come into effect until September 2015, but would need to be approved earlier by Senate to allow ease of implementation of the new Student Records System (SRS). Student Administration advised that these may need to be approved by the first Senate during 2014-15. Senate was scheduled to meet again in February 2015 prior to the SRS implementation which would better align with the annual review of standard assessment regulations undertaken by QASG in January.

(Update 06.05.14) The timing of this would be dependent on the volume of changes made for September 2015.

2.2 Minute 3.6.1 (14.03.14) – Streamlined approach to documenting Study Abroad:

**Completed**

EDQ would develop this once approval (or otherwise) has been given from ASC (May 2014) to include the Study Aboard option within the 40 week placement.

2.3 Minute 4.4.5 (14.03.14) – Developing a more streamlined approach for managing UK Credit transfer as part of the SRS implementation plan: **Ongoing**

Policy and Procedural changes relating to this were still going through the deliberative committee structure for approval. EDQ and Student Administration would meet following committee approval.

(Update 11.07.14) A meeting had been held to discuss this and it would be incorporated if possible. Timescales have not yet been set for this.

2.4 Minute 4.4 (06.05.14) – Management of mid-level assessment outcomes for incoming mobility students

 **Ongoing**

Academic Partnerships / Educational Development and Quality (EDQ) to develop a process for managing mid-level assessment outcomes for incoming mobility students.

This would be discussed at this meeting of QASG under section 5 of these minutes.

2.5 Minute 6.1.3 (06.05.14) - 6J - Mitigating Circumstances including extensions: Policy and Procedure

 **Ongoing**

EDQ to obtain feedback on the short-term sickness notification process from Schools/Faculties prior to republication of *ARPP* 6J.

2.6 Minute 6.1.4 (06.05.14) - 6J - Mitigating Circumstances including extensions: Policy and Procedure

**Ongoing**

EDQ to update *ARPP 6J* to advise the designated person receiving the call (for short-term sickness notification) does not approve (or otherwise) the request for mitigating circumstances

2.7 Minute 6.1.5 (06.05.14) - 6J - Mitigating Circumstances including extensions: Policy and Procedure

 **Ongoing**

EDQ and the PA Representative to consider the structure of existing information within Appendix 3 of *ARPP* *6J*.

**3 UPDATES ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY QASG TO ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND SENATE**

3.1 QASG noted the paper outlining progress on the recommendations made by QASG to Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and Senate.

3.2 With particular reference to ‘Mapping of BU Practice against QAA Quality Code – Part A’ pertaining to the alignment with Levels 4 – 8, QASG heard that a meeting had been arranged between EDQ and Student Administration with reference to implementing this within the new Student Records System. This would also require a transitional approach to be taken to documentation for evaluation events during 2014-15. The management of continuation students still needed to be confirmed.

3.3 With particular reference to ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’ (RPL), QASG heard that a meeting had taken place between EDQ and Library and Learning Support to enhance access to student-facing guidance for RPL. The assessment of student’s RPL applications would also need to be enhanced by Schools/Faculties and this had been discussed at ASC (May 2014).

3.4 With particular reference to ‘Internal Moderation’, QASG heard that whilst ASC supported the changes, Senate had requested further work be undertaken on the revised principles. QASG would consider the proposed changes at its next meeting.

**4 QASG MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

4.1 QASG welcomed Ellie Mayo-Ward who would now attend QASG as the SU VP Education Officer.

4.2 In the absence of an AAM (Academic Administration Manager) representative, it had been agreed at the Academic Administration Team (AAT) meeting that existing QASG member Katy Fisher, who was currently on secondment as the acting Partnerships AAM, would also represent the AAMs on this committee for the remainder of the academic year. An AAM representative would be required for future meetings and this would be discussed at AAT.

**Action**: Jo Freeman/Katy Fisher to confirm the Academic Administration Manager representative for QASG via AAT.

4.3 Rick Stafford and Andrew Main originally attended QASG as the Academic representatives for the Schools of Applied Sciences and Design, Engineering and Computing (DEC). Following the merger of the two Schools into the Faculty of Science and Technology (SciTech), both members continued to attend. SciTech would confirm whether both representatives would continue to attend QASG covering both disciplines or whether just one SciTech representative would be required.

**Action**: Faculty of Science and Technology to confirm the Academic representation for QASG.

**5 MANAGEMENT OF MID-LEVEL ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES FOR INCOMING MOBILITY STUDENTS**

5.1 The 6th May meeting of QASG had discussed the management of mid-level outcomes for incoming mobility students, where it was identified that Schools/Faculties had adopted different approaches to managing this process. It was agreed that a shared approach across the University be adopted within the new Student Records System from September 2015, but in the interim period Academic Partnerships / EDQ were tasked to develop a process for implementation during the 2014-15 academic year.

5.2 A standardised letter containing provisional marks from Semester 1 was deemed the most pragmatic approach to managing this. A template letter was presented to QASG and it was advised that this letter would be issued to all relevant mobility students as standard. QASG was reminded that this would not need to be issued for mobility students during Semester 2 as these provisional marks would be taken straight to the main Assessment Board.

5.3 QASG supported the proposal and, subject to some changes, was happy to approve the process. The changes were as follows:

* When a full unit is completed, ensure the BU and ECTS credit values are included,
* Include the pass mark and FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications) level;
* Advise that marks and credits are provisional only at this stage.

5.4 QASG was mindful that discussions between Academic Partnerships and the new Student Records System implementation team should be ongoing to ensure this approach is included.

5.5 Following these changes, the proposal would also be considered at AAT to obtain their feedback before implementation.

**6 PROPOSED NON-STANDARD STRUCTURE: FdSc COMPUTING (Yeovil College)**

6.1 Yeovil College currently runs a three-year, part-time FdSc Computing programme which is linked to the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University. Students who join the programme (September intake) will undertake 80 Level C credits during their first year, followed by 40 Level C credits and then 40 Level I credits during their second year, concluding their third and final year with a further 80 Level I units. This equates to a total of 240 credits required for the award of Foundation degree. This particular model of delivery does not raise any concerns.

6.2 To improve the marketability of the provision, the College has proposed a non-standard, blended-learning structure for a January intake. The programme would still be delivered part time over three years but the College has proposed that the January intake would undertake 40 Level I units before the final 40 Level C credits during their second year.

6.3 This proposal had been received by the DEC Academic Standards Committee, but permitting units to be taken at a higher level when the credits for a previous Level have not yet been achieved is currently not an approved delivery pattern within the University’s Quality Assurance Framework. Students are required to successfully complete all units from each level before being permitted to commence the next level of study. This proposal would, therefore, require a change to fundamental University principles. New proposed structures, such as this, need to be considered and approved via the deliberative committee structure. QASG has been tasked by its governing committees to consider these in the first instance.

6.4 QASG discussed the proposal and was particularly concerned that students on the January intake could accrue credits from both Levels but not actually achieve any named award. Issues relating to reassessments were also raised and QASG was not convinced that these students would have the same, consistent learning experience as students on the September intake. Level C learning also provides the relevant underpinning learning for Level I and this model would not allow student’s the benefit of taking all Level C learning before commencing to Level I. In equivalence to this, only Level I counts towards the Foundation degree classification and students undertaking Level I units in this way during their second year would not have benefitted from all of the Level C learning required. It was also noted that there was an expectation for an end of Level assessment board, which this proposal had not addressed.

6.5 In light of the issues raised, QASG did not support the proposal. The QASG Chair will liaise with the Faculty on how this is communicated back to Yeovil College.

 **Action**: QASG Chair to liaise with the Faculty on how this is communicated back to Yeovil College.

**7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 Jo Freeman provided an update to QASG from the CAS (Common Academic Structure) Project Group who supported the move to a 4 week assessment turnaround service standard for mid-year examinations, which QASG members had been asked to provide feedback on. The need for this change was due to bunching of exams, the need to moderate across units/programmes and the absence of non-teaching time to carry out the marking. SUBU had also been involved with the discussion and supported the proposal; providing student’s expectations are carefully managed. The CAS Steering Group would be updated at their next meeting.

7.2 Geli Roushan raised feedback she had received on the assessment board process. It was advised that timescales were quite tight between marking and the boards, which meant there was not always time to reflect on the overall marks for units. Sometimes a mark of 0.5 could impact upon classification and these concerns were not always transparent until the prep board. It was noted that wherever the University sets the pass mark or classification boundaries there would always be issues raised. It was reinforced that no changes should be made to marks between the prep board and the main assessment board.

**8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11th September.