

**QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDING GROUP**  
**Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

**Present:** J Taylor (Chair), B Dyer, A Guttridge, B James, A Main, C Merrett, N Silvennoinen (Secretary)

**In attendance:** Jane De Vekey (SUBU)

**Apologies:** M Barnard, J Edwards, K Jones, K Randall, C Symonds

**1 Minutes of the meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

1.1 The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record. The following were noted under matters arising.

**17<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

1.1.1 Minute 1.2.1: An update to follow in May 2012.

1.1.2 Minute 2.2.1: Action to be discussed under agenda item 2.

1.1.3 Minutes 2.2.2 and 2.2.3: The Chair reported that Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and Senate had now approved the new *External Examining: Policy and Procedure* subject to minor amendments.

1.1.4 Minute 3.2: Action to be discussed under agenda item 2.

1.1.5 Minutes 4.3.1 and 4.3.3: In February, ASC had endorsed the Quality Assurance Standing Group's (QASG) recommendation to remove the self-certified sickness declaration form which had not been formalised in the current Code of Practice. However, the Chair reported that since then some Schools had asked the University to reconsider this decision in light of the recent announcement by the Medical Centre that it would no longer be able to issue medical certificates for minor ailments. Members considered the implications of self-certification and expressed concern that the University could potentially be inundated with such requests. After some discussion, members agreed that students could be asked to write a letter to the relevant Framework Leader/Circumstance Board outlining the reasons for their extension/Board consideration request. It was also agreed that guidance be drawn up regarding the scale and nature of acceptable short-term conditions to help ensure consistency and fairness to all students. The process for the submission of such requests would be included in the new policy and procedure.

**RECOMMENDATION TO ASC:** that the proposed change regarding self-certification of short-term illnesses which are not supported by independent medical evidence be formalised in the new *Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure for assignment extensions, exam postponement, and board consideration applications*.

1.1.6 Minute 4.3.2: It was noted that the consideration of partner institution students' circumstances would move from Academic Partnerships back to Schools.

1.1.7 Minutes 5.1.i) and iv): these updates would be included in the relevant procedures for 2012-13.

1.1.8 Minute 5.1 v): Educational Development and Quality (EDQ) had been alerted to the workload implications of the recommendation to move to a system whereby formal elements of assessment are presented with one decimal fraction on the Board Report. In the absence of the Student Administration representative, this item would be discussed further at the May meeting.

**ACTION:** EDQ to include the item for further discussion at the May meeting of QASG.

**30 March 2012**

1.1.9 Minutes 2.2.4, 2.3.3 and 2.4.3: The recommendations would be considered at the May meeting of ASC.

- 1.1.10 Minute 2.3.2: In March, members had considered the varied approaches to mid-level Boards on existing postgraduate and part-time undergraduate programmes where reassessment decisions could potentially result in different outcomes for students. It was now emphasised that awareness of these issues should be raised through framework/programme evaluation. It was also noted that the Common Academic Structure (CAS) may have further implications for postgraduate mid-level Boards (and part-time undergraduate programmes if these are aligned with CAS) and it was agreed that the issue be brought to the attention of the Chair of the CAS Working Group.

**ACTION:** EDQ to forward the relevant notes to the Chair of the CAS Working Group and include the above in the next revision of the B-series of the Academic Procedures.

- 1.1.11 Minute 2.4.4: EDQ would follow the queries up and report back to the May meeting of QASG.

## 2 **Review of the Independent Marking Policy: draft Policy and Procedure: Marking, Independent Marking and Moderation**

- 2.1 The Chair outlined the background to the draft Policy and Procedure on Marking, Independent Marking and Moderation which had been prepared by EDQ. Comments from Schools and a number of outstanding actions from previous University-level meetings were incorporated into the proposed amendments which were discussed by members. QASG recommended the following key changes for ASC approval:

- i) Role of the second marker: that the purpose of second marking be clarified in the procedure. To include the role of the second marker to both form a view on individual marks within a sample and to act as an internal 'moderator' to review the consistency of marking and to confirm the proper application of the assessment processes by the first marker(s). Where significant differences in academic judgement are identified (normally a discrepancy of more than five marks or a class difference) the role of the second marker is not to change the mark awarded by the first marker but to reach an agreed mark in discussion with the first marker.
- ii) Nomination and role of third markers: that Deputy Dean (Education) (DDE) (or equivalent) appoint a third marker where two markers cannot agree and that the role of the third marker be clarified. To include clarification that the third marker may mark with or without reference to the earlier marks but would normally be expected to stay within the bounds of the other two markers unless there is a good reason to award a mark outside the boundaries already set. Where the three markers cannot reach an agreed mark, the DDE will decide on the final mark prior to the Assessment Board.
- iii) Process for the independent marking and external examiner moderation of group marking (i.e. where more than one first marker mark the same assessment task): that the implications of group marking for independent marking and moderation be clarified. To include a requirement for the sample size for independent marking and moderation to include work marked by all first markers to determine that they have approached the task consistently. Where one first marker is found to be consistently low, or high, compared to the other markers, the first marker in question and the second marker may agree to change the marks in the sample whilst the other first markers' marks do not need to be changed. The revised procedure also to clarify that the sample chosen for independent marking or moderation should clearly identify where group marking has taken place, including annotation of markers.
- iv) Use of mark sheets: that the principles regarding the use of mark sheets (paper ones or as part of an integrated online marking approach) be standardised across Schools. To include recording of the agreed mark only on the student's work. As a principle, all students should receive the same level of feedback regardless of whether their work has been independently marked. Therefore, the markers would not normally record their individual comments on the student's work, only the agreed comments.

**ACTION:** QASG members to send examples of mark sheets to the secretary. Examples of good practice to be included as an appendix in the revised policy and procedure.

- v) Marking and staffing arrangements: members noted that the use of PhD students as markers and second markers had been problematic in some cases. It was noted that all staff new to higher education required training before they could undertake marking and should not normally be used as second markers until they had sufficient marking experience. PhD students would not normally act as second markers but where this was the case, Schools should ensure an appropriate balance of expertise amongst the marking team.
- vi) Sample size for moderation: that no minimum sample size for moderation is stipulated as this may depend on the cohort size and the nature of the assessment.
- vii) School overview of moderation: School Academic Standard Committees are currently required to maintain oversight of independent marking arrangements but not of moderation arrangements. Members suggested that EDQ contact DDEs for their views regarding whether School oversight of moderation arrangements is required early on in the academic cycle or whether it would be sufficient to confirm this at the end of the cycle through Assessment Boards and/or external examiner reports.  
  
**ACTION:** EDQ to email DDEs for their views regarding School oversight of moderation arrangements. Confirmation of moderation arrangements to be added to the standard Assessment Board agenda and the external examiner report template. Other amendments to be considered for academic year 2012-13 in light of DDE feedback.
- viii) Moderation by link tutors: that this section be clarified in line with the role of second markers.
- ix) Assessment criteria: that a paragraph be added to the procedures on assessment design and generic assessment criteria to clarify that any expectations of the quality required regarding grammar, punctuation and so on must be included in the assessment criteria issued to student.
- x) Peer review of coursework assignments and examination papers: the revised policy and procedure to include a requirement for all coursework assignments and examination papers to be peer reviewed. The revised independent marking plan template to include a column to confirm that peer review has been carried out.
- xi) Sample size for group work: the independent marking procedure to include reference to the sample size for group work being potentially smaller than the standard sample size depending on the nature of the group assessment.
- xii) Sample size for dissertations and projects: the independent marking procedure to clarify that teams should record the rationale for second marking (but not double marking) of dissertations and projects.
- xiii) Peer review, independent marking and moderation requirements for multiple choice question (MCQ) tests and other online assessments: the revised procedure to clarify that all MCQ tests would need to be quality assured through peer review. Second marking would be required to check for anomalies and trends but moderation would not be necessary unless MCQs were the only form of assessment on a unit. All other online assessments would be subject to the normal independent marking and moderation requirements.
- xiv) Independent marking plan template: to be enhanced in line with good practice. All Schools to use the template or to include the information on the standard template, as a minimum, on local versions of the independent marking plan.

2.3 **RECOMMENDATION TO ASC:** that the above changes be approved (see separate paper).

2.4 **ACTION:** EDQ to take forward the actions identified above and finalise the new policy and procedure following ASC consideration in May 2012.

### 3 Standard Assessment Regulations for Higher Nationals

- 3.1 The Chair outlined the background to the proposed changes to introduce an overall award classification for the University's BTEC customised Higher National (HN) awards. It was proposed that the changes be implemented for all Boards of Examiners/Assessment Boards held in the 2011-12 academic year, including one cohort of students considered at a Board of Examiners in February 2012. In addition, approval was also sought retrospectively for one student from the previous academic cycle. Members supported the proposed changes unanimously.
- 3.2 Members also discussed whether the classification for Higher National Certificates (HNCs) should be calculated either on the credit-weighted aggregate mark or the mark profile as would be the case with Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or only on the credit-weighted aggregate mark. Due to the nature of the HN awards, members agreed that the profile rule should be applied to both HNCs and HNDs.
- 3.3 **RECOMMENDATION TO ASC:** that the proposed changes to the HN assessment regulations outlined above are recommended for Senate approval (see separate paper).

#### **4 Continued Professional Development (CPD): Admissions and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**

- 4.1 A number of Schools had asked QASG to consider two specific issues in relation to the principles the University applies to its CPD provision. The first one was the requirement for applicants to provide evidence of sufficient underpinning credits for entry to Level I or Level H CPD units. EDQ had carried out sector research which indicated that some institutions maintain similar requirements to Bournemouth. However, others admit students to short accredited CPD courses without the full underpinning credits as long as applicants are able to demonstrate ability to study at the required level. Members discussed the benefits of the proposed approach and agreed that whilst it would not result in a named academic award, it could be deemed beneficial for professional purposes. Whilst members supported the proposed change to the CPD admission requirements, it was emphasised that it would be important to develop robust processes for entry and to manage applicant expectations regarding their future eligibility for a named award.
- 4.2 **RECOMMENDATION TO ASC:** that the proposed changes to the CPD entry requirements outlined above are recommended for Senate approval (see separate paper).
- 4.3 **ACTION:** EDQ and Student Administration to agree a process for entry to Level I and H CPD frameworks subject to ASC endorsement and Senate approval of the proposed changes and relevant policies and procedures to be updated for 2012-13.
- 4.4 The second issue Schools had raised was the principle that APL exemptions may only be confirmed against named awards. This means that APL does not apply to CPD frameworks/ unit(s) unless the student accumulates sufficient credits for a transfer to a named award. Schools had argued that APL on entry would give learners confidence in their own academic ability and that allowing students to begin to accumulate credits towards a named award as soon as they enter a CPD credit framework would encourage applications. QASG regarded the principle to allow exemptions towards named awards a sound one and did not support this proposal.

#### **5 Date of next meeting:**

- 5.1 The next meeting would take place on the 22nd May.

#### **6 AOB**

- 6.1 None.