**Executive Secretary**

Chris Harper, Learning and Quality Unit

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**ACADEMIC COLLABORATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Fifty-ninth meeting (fourth of 2011-12) of the Academic Collaboration Committee, held on Friday 18 May 2012 at 2.30pm in Room QA75, Maritime Greenwich Campus.**

**11/12.4.1 PRESENT:**  Wendy Cealey Harrison (LQU)

Fiona Conlan (International Partnerships Manager)

Corine Delage (ADC)

Gavin Farmer (Education)

Mamood Gousy (HSC)

Alasdair Grant (ENG)

Andrew Haggart (SCI)

Nick Hand (BUS)

Geoff Hallam (Partnership Division)

Chris Harper (LQU) *(Secretary)*

Henry Hill (OSA)

Maggie Leharne (ILS)

Mark Pawlowski (HSS)

Simon Jarvis (DVC – Academic Development) *(Chair)*

Mayur Patel (CMS)

Emma Price (LQU)

**APOLOGIES:** Stuart Allen (ADC); Allessandro Benati (HSS); Richard Blackburn (SCI); Peter Bryant (EDU); Will Calver (Partnership Division); Samer El-Daher (Science); Zoe Pettit (HSS); Simon Walker (EDU)

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

**11/12.4.2** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2012 were confirmed as a true and accurate record **subject** to one addition under Any Other Business:

***Affiliate Accounts***

Margaret Leharne (ILS) drew the committee’s attention to an email from Paul Butler (Head of Information Systems). The purpose of the email was to remind authorizers of Affiliate Accounts to periodically review the list of those partner staff whose institutional responsibilities warranted such access to University systems.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**11/12.4.3** The following matters were raised:

(a) ***11/12.2.4 (f) on-line registration for international partners***

ACC received a presentation from Ashley Sargeant (Student Records Systems) regarding on-line registration for international partners and an update on its implementation. The Electronic Admissions System for overseas partner institutions had been introduced to deal with previously identified problems such as: physical transfer of application forms to the United Kingdom; delays in processing and unclear data. Overall objectives of the system were to aid applicants and academic staff when applying to, and registering with, the University.

The system had been made live in December 2011 with 1151 on-line applications submitted from 14 overseas partners. The average time to process applications was 5.7 days. However, a lesser figure of 655 students had completed their on-line registration to date. Some feedback had been obtained from Schools with issues, such as students applying to the wrong cohort entry date, being dealt with. Whilst commending the design and implementation of the system, ACC identified a number of developmental issues to be addressed:

* ensure that applicants fully understand the 2 stage process of application and registration.
* following the admissions process, greater emphasis needs to be placed on alerting students to the registration process. Re-generation of an appropriate email would help in avoiding potential delays.
* ensure that all appropriate collaborative partner staff have ARMS accounts and are able to view/download lists of applicants

- alert partners to those students who have delayed their registration. Partner staff to help address any problems such as students wavering or unable to complete OLR due to difficulties with course choices, entry dates and mode/stage.

**ACTION: Henry Hill and Student Records Systems to address above issues in refining the design and implementation of the system.**

(b) ***11/12.2.6 CMS Full-cost centres: Production of degree certificates***

Henry Hill reported that an audit had been carried out (involving a number of Schools) concerning the production of degree certificates. Some delays had occurred due to the Conferments Office not being made aware of the production timetable for some student cohorts. Delays had also occurred as a result of changes being made to certificates in order to accurately capture the full name of the student. A new system to generate certificates, more closely integrated with Banner, was being tested and would be available at the end of May 2012. A greater number of staff in the Conferments Office would be able to access the new system simultaneously and therefore accelerate production times.

(c) ***11/12.1.4 (c) East London College Progression Statistics***

Following previous scrutiny of student progression and attainment statistics, ACC had requested the School of CMS to provide cohort analysis for all East London College students registered for 2010/2011 session. The analysis illustrated that, with one cohort exception, the progression and attainment of students had been satisfactory. The cohort of students recruited in September 2009 had exhibited a high failure rate. As a result ELC had amended its admissions processes, to ensure a wider selection of students was recruited. The improved performance of subsequent cohorts reflected the success of these measures.

(d) ***11/12.2.15* *National Student Survey Results 2011***

The January 2012 meeting of ACC, had noted that a number of satisfaction scores for Guildford College and Greenwich Community College fell below 50%. Partnership Division had been requested to investigate the nature of such low scores. The detailed responses from both Colleges were received:

**Guildford College**

The College recognized that some student dissatisfaction had occurred due to major re-organisation during 2010/2011. Retirement of staff and other staffing changes had led to a lack of continuity amongst the teaching team.

The Programme Leader for the Foundation Degree in Counselling had compiled a detailed response to issues raised by students in the areas of Assessment and Feedback; Academic Support; Organisation and Management and Learning Resources. The School of Health and Social Care Link Tutor confirmed that staffing had been resolved with a teaching team in place that had conscientiously addressed the issues raised by the students. The staff had also been supported through the 2011/12 session with selected staff development sessions provided by staff from host School and various offices of the University.

ACC concluded that the College/Programme team had addressed (or were addressing) with appropriate action, the issues identified through the student survey. It was hoped that improvement in student satisfaction would be further evidenced in the 2012 NSS Survey.

**Greenwich Community College**

The College recognized that in 2010-2011 changes in senior management positions had contributed to some of the student dissatisfaction, particularly from those studying on the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality. Since the 2011 survey a number of measures had been put in place:

* new senior managers, including the HE Co-ordinator and programme leader for the Foundation Degree had been appointed
* a College review of all HE provision had been conducted leading to improvements in HE facilities for students
* in October 2011 and February 2012 the University Business School had conducted a review with particular reference to the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality

ACC concluded that the College had addressed (or were addressing) with appropriate action, the issues identified through the student survey. It was hoped that improvement in student satisfaction would be further evidenced in the 2012 NSS Survey.

**(**e) ***11/12.3.16 Partner College Student Representation***

ACC received feedback from the Partnership Division following the workshop held with Partner College staff in April 2012 to discuss student representation and feedback. The notes of the workshop reflected a sharing of good practice and models of student representation that existed within the individual colleges.

ACC welcomed this exchange and reminded itself of the context that such discussions were taking place. The 2011 Collaborative Audit recommendation had been:

*The audit team concluded that although there was evidence from students that student feedback was, in the main, acted upon at a local level by the partners, the degree of variability and the lack of prominence in reporting that is given to feedback from collaborative provision students meant that it was unclear how the University assured itself that this was the case. The team therefore recommends that the University seek to achieve greater consistency in the expectations placed upon its partners in relation to student involvement in quality assurance processes and give greater prominence to feedback from students in the partner's and University's reporting processes.*

ACC was confident, as a result of successful IQER Summative Reviews, College student surveys and National/University student surveys that student feedback was collected and acted upon. It was agreed that formal student representation on programme committees was integral to issues being identified and dealt with by the College/University as appropriate. Emphasis should therefore be placed on securing student programme representatives and ensuring that programme committee minutes and an audit trail of ensuing actions are maintained by the Colleges and received/considered by University.

**ACTION: Partnership Division to liaise with Partner Colleges to ensure the effective organisation of programme committees (inclusive of student representatives) including an annual agenda/calendar of business. Reporting processes including individuals (Link Tutors/Progression and Development Officers), Schools and the wider University community to be in place by October 2012.**

**ACC ACTION CHECK-LIST FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**11/12.4.4** The list of actions arising from the October 2011, January 2012 and March 2012 meetings of ACC was received. Specific attention was drawn to the following:

1. a University Assessment Policy was being written by the Head of LQU with input from EDU and Schools
2. Partner Colleges and international partners had received feedback from the University, following its consideration of their Annual Institutional Reports (AIRs)
3. the first meeting of the Collaborative Strategy Working Group had taken place on 4 May 2012.
4. A business model for External Credit Rating activities would be submitted to the June 2012 meeting of Academic Planning Committee.
5. ILS Stakeholder responsibilities are to be incorporated within the International and Partner College Handbook. Revisions to the Quality Assurance Handbook would also be undertaken. Link Tutors to be briefed to incorporate its use within their monitoring of partner resources.

**Secretary’s note: an updated check-list incorporating actions arising from May 2012 meeting would be discussed at the next meeting of ACC.**

**CHAIR’S COMMUNICATIONS (oral update from Chair)**

**11/12.4.5** The Chair provided an oral update with regard to the following:

1. *Collaborative Strategy*

A small ‘task and finish’ group had been convened to discuss Collaborative Strategy and consideration of the Collaborative Provision Audit 2011 recommendation to ‘*Ensure that, as the University continues to develop its collaborative strategy, its processes and structures are appropriate to the scale and complexity of its collaborative provision’.*

The group had agreed that it would initially focus on the international collaborations with particular reference on quality of provision, the student experience from registration to graduation, financial matters including invoicing and collection of partner fee, staffing and support. The Group agreed that it would call for evidence from key groups across the University before it began to formulate a strategy:

**ACTION: Minutes of Collaborative Strategy Working Group (CSWG) to be received at next meeting of ACC.**

1. *University Committee Structure*

The May 2012 meeting of Academic Council had discussed a paper addressing a review of its membership and committee operations. This had partly arisen from the findings of Collaborative Audit and the identification of a University Action plan. Amongst several proposals was that an Academic Development Committee be formed from the merger of Learning and Quality Committee, Academic Collaboration Committee and Partnership Board. Whilst the need for streamlining of committees and effective discharge of duties was recognised, ACC members made the following comments:

1. Academic Council needed to have confidence that its committees had effective oversight. Some members felt that the Academic Development Committee could become somewhat unwieldy, with the possibility of a large spectrum of business (the terms of reference as yet unidentified). It was however noted that with the proposal for the Student Experience Committee, some of the current business of ACC and LQC would move into the new Student Experience Committee.
2. The loss of Academic Collaboration Committee might be considered to be at odds with the Collaborative Audit 2011 recommendation to ‘*Ensure that, as the University continues to develop its collaborative strategy, its processes and structures are appropriate to the scale and complexity of its collaborative provision’.*
3. Some members felt that the continuation of a designated committee regarding collaborations was the best approach to ensuring institutional oversight.
4. Learning and Quality Committee and Academic Collaboration Committee on the whole did not duplicate membership or calendar of business/agenda items.

**ACTION: ACC Secretary to provide Academic Council with the above feedback.**

**COLLABORATIVE** **PARTNER PROGRESSION STATISTICS**

**11/12.4.6** ACC received an updated analysis of partner progression statistics from the Office of Planning and Statistics. The analysis illustrated the number of registrations and the level of unsuccessful students at each partner for the period 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. Across this period the number of student registrations in overseas collaborations and UK private colleges had shown a marked increase. In some cases, such as SEGi KL, an increase in the student population represented a maturing of cohorts not an expansion of the programme portfolio. The inverse of this was that the student populations at Partner and LLS Colleges were contracting.

**11/12.4.7** In monitoring standards, a key indicator was student progression and achievement. ACC considered such analysis on an annual basis in order to identify partners which had not met University KPIs. In some instances where this had occurred it was noted that the collaboration was being discontinued. In reviewing the statistics the following partners were identified as requiring further investigation:

Daffodil Institute of IT, Bangladesh

FPT University, Vietnam

NACIT Blantyre, Malawi

Pioneer Institute of Business and Technology, Sri Lanka

SEGi College KD, Malaysia

SPACE, Hong Kong University

City of London College

**ACTION: Committee Secretary to write to SDLQs to liaise with Link Tutors and collaborative partner to identify reasons for such high percentages of unsuccessful students. Commentary to be included within SMRD, inclusive of measures being introduced to improve student progression and attainment.**

**INTERNATIONAL PARTNER MONITORING**

**11/12.4.8** ACC received an update of actions and developments that had taken place since the initial scrutiny of Annual Institutional Reports in January 2012. The update reflected the actions undertaken by partners following dialogue with the Learning and Quality Unit, the International Partnerships Manager and host Schools.

**ACTION: LQU to ensure that any actions involving ongoing discussion are concluded.**

**COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AUDIT 2011**

**11/12.4.9** ACC noted that the University Action Plan was incorporated into the mid-cycle QAA review document and had been sent to the QAA in April 2012.

**COLLABORATIVE PROVISION UPDATE**

**11/12.4.10** ACC received feedback from:

1. *Partnership Division*

Geoff Hallam reported that:

* a dedicated website had been created for partner college staff.
* induction days for partner college students had been organized at each University campus
* further training in Business Objects was available for partner college staff
* Link Tutor forum meetings were being scheduled as part of the University calendar of meetings for 2012/2013 session.

1. *LLS Network*

Gavin Farmer reported that the School of Education was continuing to review Colleges in cluster meetings to satisfy the requirements of the partner renewal process.Despite the uncertain future with regard to funding and numbers of students Colleges had expressed a wish to remain within the Network.

1. *Partner Scrutiny Panel*

ACC noted that Academic Council had ratified the approval of the University of Transport, Vietnam as a partner of the University. The discontinuation of 4 partners had also been noted: AEA Mauritius; Belfast College; Stargate Institute for English & Computer Studies, Saudi Arabia and TEI Kavala, Greece.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**11/12.4.11** Members recorded their thanks to Gavin Farmer for his contribution to the committee over many years and in a number of roles. Gavin was attending his last meeting of ACC before retiring at the end of the session.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 25 October 2012 at 2.30pm, Room QA75 Maritime Greenwich (to be confirmed)