**Executive Secretary**

Chris Harper, Learning and Quality Unit

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**ACADEMIC COLLABORATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth meeting (first of 2011-12) of the Academic Collaboration Committee, held on Thursday 13 October 2011 at 2.30pm in Room QA75, Maritime Greenwich Campus.**

**11/12.1.1 PRESENT:** Alessandro Benati (H&SS)

Richard Blackburn (Science)

Corine Delage (A&C)

Gavin Farmer (EDU)

Alasdair Grant (ENG)

Chris Harper (LQU) *(Secretary)*

Geoff Hallam (Partnership Division)

Nick Hand (BUS)

Veronica Habgood (H&SC)

Henry Hill (OSA)

Maggie Leharne (ILS)

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

Mayur Patel (CMS)

 Emma Price (LQU)

 Simon Walker (EDU)

**APOLOGIES:** Peter Bryant (EDU); Wendy Cealey Harrison (Head of LQU);

Will Calver (Partnership Division); Fiona Conlan (International Partnerships Manager); Samer El-Daher (Science); Mamood Gousy (H&SC)Debi Hayes (Partnership Division); Zoe Pettit (H&SS)

The Chair welcomed Mayur Patel (CMS) and Simon Walker (EDU) to their first meeting.

 **MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**11/12.1.2** It was agreed that the Committee Terms of Reference did not require revision and that the date of document be amended to October 2011. The Committee Membership list was agreed, subject to the following change: Will Calver to replace Debi Hayes as the Partnership Division representative. It was further noted that Arun Thakral (President SUUG) would be the student representative on the committee.

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

**11/12.1.3** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 May 2011 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**11/12.1.4** (a) ***Minute 10/11.4.3(a:) MSc Information Systems at ZCAS***

ACC had requested further information following the approval of the MSc Information Systems (ZCAS), where the Panel had explored staff development issues. The report had referred to ‘there did not seem to be a clear policy for staff development.’

At its May 2011 meeting ACC received the ZCAS staff development policy. Whilst ACC welcomed the policy statement, the emphasis of the initial request lay with actual staff development activities that had taken place, or were planned. ACC therefore requested an update of these activities and also clarification of the comment within the policy statement that in order to qualify for staff development an employee should have been employed for three years or more.

The latest paper provided for the October 2011 meeting of ACC detailed arrangements for the supervision of MSc projects. ACC agreed that the volume and spectrum of staff development activities available at ZCAS still remained unclear.

 **ACTION: Mayur Patel to provide the next meeting of ACC with a list of staff development activities (i) made available to ZCAS MSc Information Systems staff last academic session and (ii) planned for 2011/2012 session.**

1. ***Minute 10/11.4.3(d):******Partner College Annual Monitoring – ALRA and Greenwich Community College***

1. It was reported that a meeting between senior staff of the University and ALRA had taken place to discuss the overall partnership. It was noted that the BA in Acting and FdA in Stage Management had been successfully reviewed in January 2011 (though the latter had only been given continuing approval for one year). The conditions of such largely related to achieving an appropriate balance in the use of permanent staff and external staff brought in to reinforce WBL and industry standards. In terms of learner opportunities, ALRA had agreed to increase the academic resources available in its Resources Centre and to alert students more fully to the access they had to Greenwich facilities.

**ACTION: Further meetings would take place between OSCAR, Link Tutor and key ALRA staff to monitor the provision of/access to learner resources.**

**Secretary’s note: Link Tutor has confirmed the purchase of additional book-stock at both ALRA sites in London and Wigan.**

1. It was reported that meetings had taken place between representatives of GCC, Partnership Division and Business School with regard to the FD in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management. Actions had been identified in order to improve the student experience and to assure the University that delivery of the programme should remain at GCC. Further meetings were planned between senior managers of the University and GCC with regard to overall provision and staffing at GCC.

**ACTION: Partnership Division to convene further meetings with GCC staff, including the newly appointed Vice Principal (Curriculum), and to report to next meeting of ACC.**

1. ***Minute 10/11.4.8: East London College Progression Statistics 2009/2010***

Following poor student progression and achievement at East London College in 2009/2010, ACC received the following feedback from CMS and the College. This was provided in the form of a Link Tutor Visit Report to ELC on 26/10/11 and College analysis and commentary on student performance for 2010/2011 session.

Poor student progression and achievement for 2009/2010 session had been identified within the Link Tutors Visit Report (October 2010) and as a result of ACC overview of partnership progression statistics. The problem has been identified as largely due to a cohort of students recruited from a single college. This caused poor performance figures in 2009/2010 with a long ‘tail’ of failure which was also reflected in the 2010/2011 statistics. East London College has now:

1. changed the sequence of delivery of courses to aid reflection and learner development
2. introduced an academic writing course to improve skills
3. adjusted its strategy in order to ‘spread’ recruitment
4. provided greater learner resources/project classes/workshops

ACC noted that the progression rate for 2010/2011 of 34.4% was below the University KPI. The next cohort of students was due to complete in December 2011.

**ACTION: CMS to provide cohort analysis for this group of students to the next meeting of ACC.**

 (d) ***Minute 10/11.4.4: Partner College AIRs– RAPU Overview***

Geoff Hallam reported that he was in the process of compiling a list of staff development activities organised within Partner Colleges. ACC agreed that the University required a better overview of staff development activities that were available to Partner College staff, whether this be provided by the College itself, RAPU, University Human Resources or host Schools. It was recognised that several Colleges had well established policies and annual calendars for HE staff development activities.

**ACTION: RAPU to complete the register of planned activities for the 2011/2012 session and to promote co-ordination and attendance at such.**

1. ***Minute 10/11.4.13:******Partner Colleges and Student Representation***

The DVC Academic Development reported that future funding had been made available to the Students’ Union to support further developments.

(f) ***Minute 10/11/4.22:******Collaborative Programme Approval/Review Reports***

It was noted that the minutes could be misleading to the reader, who may assume programme approval had been granted, despite responses to conditions still having to be submitted. It was agreed that further consideration be given to the process of ‘signing-off’ of Panel outcomes and the *institutional* ratification of programme approvals.

**ACTION: LQU to revisit Quality Assurance Handbook processes and guidance and to submit amendments to Learning and Quality Committee**

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

**11/12.1.5** The DVC (Academic Development) reported as follows:

1. **Partner College Network** was being reviewed in response to external developments in the HE sector (core and margin student numbers), together with changes in funding and institutional requirements to deliver a sustainable and efficient partnership model for the future. The review could lead to alterations in the oversight of some of the collaborative provision, with the creation of Account Managers to oversee issues being addressed comprehensively. External factors may also lead to changes in the Network, with both Colleges and University reconsidering the most appropriate partner arrangements to achieve their corporate and collaborative strategies. Further discussion would take place at the Principals Strategic Planning Meeting on 9 November 2011.
2. **International Collaborations:** it was anticipated that both China and India would provide opportunities for further expansion. Several possibilities were being pursued by the University, aided by locally based consultants. Emphasis would be placed on informed decision making, with particular reference to viable business plans and associated costs.
3. **On-line registration:** was being introduced for international partners. A pilot was being run at SEGi on 22 November 2011 with programme administrators, Schools and Banner technicians being present. A successful pilot would enable on-line registration to be cascaded/introduced to all international partners from January 2012.

**ACTION: DVC (Academic Development) to provided further updates to ACC as appropriate.**

**ACC ANNUAL REPORT TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**11/12.1.6** It was noted that Academic Council had endorsed the ACC Annual Report at its June 2011 meeting.

 **COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AUDIT 2011**

**11/12.1.7** The summary of the QAA Audit findings was received, together with a University Action Plan which addressed not only the key recommendations but also related issues identified in the narrative of the full report. ACC endorsed the action plan and highlighted several refinements/priorities:

1. Recommendation 4: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (together with Student Charter) to confirm time period allowed for staff to provide feedback to students following submission of assessment. LTAS to also include guidance on what constitutes feedback and the best ways to provide it.

**ACTION: EDU**

1. Recommendation 7: programme specifications to be published/referenced on the internet (not intranet) pages of University website and made available to prospective students/stakeholders. Published information sets to be informed by Key Information Sets.

**ACTION: LQU/Marketing**

1. Recommendation 8: to ensure that Link Tutors met with, and captured student feedback, when visiting a partner.

**ACTION: Link Tutors/Schools**

1. Para 37: to review regulations for dual awards

**ACTION: LQU**

1. Outcomes/findings of Secretariat Project to also be embedded at School level.

**ACTION: Christopher Hallas**

 **INTEGRATED QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND REVIEW (IQER)**

**11/12.1.8** ACC received a timeline for the IQER Summative Reviews and Developmental Engagements. Bromley (including Orpington) College, K College and Uxbridge College would be undertaking Summative Reviews in 2012.

**11/12/.1.9** ACC received a table showing outcomes of the 2011 IQER Developmental Engagements and Summative Reviews held at Bexley College (SR); Bromley College (DE), Greenwich Community College (SR) and Orpington College (DE). The table detailed the good practice, advisable and desirable recommendations identified by the IQER review teams. A number of recurring themes or issues that had also been raised in the Collaborative Audit findings were identified.

1. Good practice – Bexley College HE Handbook; good quality feedback on FDs in Education, Health and Social Care and BSc Biomedical Science. How was good practice to be disseminated?

**ACTION: LQU to evaluate progress made in relation to the College Action Plans arising from Developmental Engagements and Summative Review. To implement (where appropriate) measures that emulate and spread good practice.**

1. Actions necessary by the University in addressing **advisable** recommendations – timely and consistent feedback to students. University Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy to draw upon good assessment practices identified through IQER (sometimes but not always emanating from University host schools). See (i) above for illustrations of commended subject areas.

**ACTION: EDU to draw upon IQER outcomes to inform the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.**

1. Consistency of information provided in student handbooks – published information to be University driven via Essential Information for students.

**ACTION: LQU to review Essential Information provided to students, including enhancements/coverage offered by Moodle.**

1. Ways in which University should monitor action in relation to **desirable** recommendations: to continue to improve the identification of and response to issues arising from external examiner reports which are centre/college specific.

**ACTION: to be monitored by LQU**

(v) Continue with the progress made by Centre for WBL in meeting the requirements of QAA Code of Practice Section 9 – placement handbooks, employer meetings/involvement.

 **ACTION: Host Schools and Approval/Review Panels for programmes involving work placement/WBL.**

 **UNIVERSITY STUDENT SURVEY 2011**

**11/12.1.10** ACC received a Summary Report produced by PAS. It was noted that the response rate was lower than that of the NSS and also showed variation between students on-campus and those off-campus. Nevertheless, the total number of students responding from the partners had increased compared to 2009. Whilst recognizing that the USS had a much lighter promotion than the externally driven NSS, it was agreed that more work was required in getting a response from students studying at international partners.

 **ACTION: PAS to look at ways in improving overseas response rate – possibly through the ‘window’ created by on-line registration and the nature of survey questions.**

**11/12/.1.11** The survey of students based in the colleges showed a high level of satisfaction in some areas, such as teaching, learning and work-placements. Apart from social opportunities,two main areas of weakness were illustrated by the student responses:

1. Feedback to students regarding their assessment was not always prompt or informative

**ACTION: the timeliness and nature of student feedback to be addressed through the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy and Schools during their link tutor visits.**

1. the level of satisfaction amongst overseas students with regard to learner resources was low and contrasted with the satisfaction level of UK based students

**ACTION: LQU to revisit approval and monitoring requirements relating to learner resources. This would be consistent with University response to Recommendation 9 of the Collaborative Audit for the University ‘to improve the effectiveness of its procedures for ongoing monitoring of its partners to ensure the continued provision of an appropriate higher education learning environment’. Monitoring was particularly important given the need for resource provision to expand in line with student numbers and maturing programme cohorts.**

 **COLLABORATIVE PROVISION UPDATE**

**11/12.1.12** The report from the Partnership Division concerning partner college activities was noted. Gavin Farmer reported that the LLS Colleges had done well in their Ofsted Reviews. The University review of colleges may need to be deferred as a result of new developments being introduced by LLUK and changes in funding.

 **ACTION: School of Education to seek approval of DVC (Academic Development) for deferral of LLS College review.**

**11/12.1.13** A report was received from Partner Scrutiny Panel which listed a number of Partnership Approvals: Himgiri Zee University (India); Cyber Academy (Zambia); MCC Yatanarpon (Myanmar) and FPT Da Nang (Vietnam). It was reported that all of these approvals had been ratified by Academic Council. Partnerships with Absolute Kinetics (Singapore) and Impact International College (UK) had been discontinued.

**TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION (TNE) –CHINA**

**11/12.1.14** It was reported that the QAA were carrying out a desk-based study which would include all UK institutions with significant TNE in China. Information sets had been requested of the individual Universities with documentation being required **by 25 November 2011.**

 **ACTION: LQU to assemble documentation.**

 **COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME APPROVAL/REVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP**

**11/12.1.15** ACC received the Scrutiny Group report. The following had been received:

**International**

Approval **report** of BA Business Management (stage 3), with Finance; Tourism; & Hospitality (stage 3) at ERC Institute Vietnam

Review **report** of MSc Suite: Project Management; Real Estate; Facilities Management; Safety Health & Environment; Occupational Hygiene at Hong Kong University School for Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE)

Approval **report** of BA Hons Business Purchasing and Supply Chain; BA Hons Marketing at Zambian Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS).

Approval **report** of DipHE Accounting and Finance at the Research Institute of Tsinghua University in Shenzhen (RITS)

Review **report** of BA Business Studies (stage 3) at LearnIT, Tanzania

**Partner Colleges**

Review **report** of FdA Stage Management and Technical Theatre at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA)

Review **report** of BA Hons Acting at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA)

**11/12.1.16** Following discussion of the Scrutiny Group report a number of issues were identified that required additional follow up:

**(a) Period of Approval**

2 reports (ERCI Vietnam and RITS) resulted in a 5 year period of approval. The respective reports also referred to light-touch interim/mid cycle reviews being conducted. ACC was unclear as to the status of such mid-cycle reviews and the process that would be used. Further guidance needs to given if such interim reviews are to be adopted.

 **(b) Policies and Practice**

QAH Appendix D8 **‘**Essential Information for Students’ requests reference to University policies in relation to extenuating circumstances; academic conduct; utilisation of Turnitin as a learning (not just a detection) tool. Several references in the reports stress the need for partners to follow University practices suggesting that Schools need to do further work with partners in embedding University policies.

**(c) Resources**

Several reports have conditions/requirements relating to human and physical resources. Panels have imposed conditions that require resources being in place and confirmed by the University, prior to programme commencement. This is consistent with QAH Appendix C3 ‘Pre-requisites for Collaborative Programmes’. ACC felt that these pre-requisites should be highlighted more in discussions with partner at the approval planning stage and the compilation of programme submission documentation and if not adequately addressed consideration should be given to delaying the approval event.

**11/12.1.17** ACCnoted that some of the issues raised by the scrutiny group were consistent with some of the themes identified in the discussion of earlier agenda items. It was agreed that these issues and those above (11/12.1.16) would be best addressed as part of a wider agenda.

**ACTION: LQU to address these points as part of the review of quality processes relating to approval/review, the role of Panels and Chairs and monitoring/evaluation reports.**

 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**11/12.1.18** Veronica Habgood reported that the Nursing Studies collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University at the Medway campus would be coming to an end. CCCU had indicated that it would not wish to renew the Memorandum of Agreement, expiring in August 2012. It was the intention of the School of Health and Social Care to continue to deliver this provision as sole provider.

 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**11/12/.1.19 Thursday 12 January 2012, commencing at 2.30 p.m. in QA75 Maritime Greenwich.**

 **Secretary’s note: the date and venue of this meeting MAY change as a result of a request to hold University committee’s at least once on the Medway campus.**