

Master's Quality Committee Medicine, Life Sciences and School of Professional Development

27 January 2015

Minutes

Present

Professor Sue Gibson (Chair)
Dr Christine Franey (School of Public Health)
Dr Niki Gounaris (Department of Life Sciences)
Professor Debra Humphris (Vice Provost, Education)
Dr Martyn Kingsbury (School of Professional Development)
Mr Pascal Loose (ICU Deputy President, Education)
Professor Andrew Parry (College Consul, Faculty of Natural Sciences)
Dr Duncan Rogers (NHLI)
Professor Simon Taylor-Robinson (Department of Medicine)
Ms Rachel Vaux (Academic and Welfare Officer – Life Sciences)

In Attendance

Ms Sally Baker (Senior Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Review)
Professor Mark-Paul Clark (NHLI) – for item 5.1
Dr Ed Curry (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 6.1
Dr James Flanagan (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 6.1
Professor Uta Griesenbach (NHLI) – for item 5.1
Mr Richard Monk (Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Review – Secretary)
Professor Sarah Rankin (NHLI) – for item 5.1
Dr Emma Watson (NHLI) – for item 5.1

1. Welcome

Professor Sue Gibson welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed below, were noted.

2. Apologies for absence

Mr Mike Asavarut (Academic and Welfare Officer – Medicine)
Professor Kate Hardy (Department of Surgery and Cancer)
Dr Mick Jones (College Tutor)
Ms Nida Mahmud (GSU President)
Professor Myra McClure (College Consul (non-clinical), Faculty of Medicine)
Dr David McPhail (Graduate School Deputy Director & Deputy Chair)
Mr Dean Pateman (Academic Registrar)
Professor Denis Wright (Director of Student Support)

3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2014 were approved.

MLSPD/MQC/2014/18

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 The Committee received and noted an action list detailing matters arising from the previous meeting and containing updates on progress in completing the required action.

MLSPD/MQC/2014/19

4.1.1 Minute 8.1.4 – Appointment of External Examiners

It was noted that this action was ongoing. The Quality Assurance team within Registry was currently looking at the existing external examiner records and how best to adapt those for Departmental access. It was intended that a complete list of all external examiner appointments, arranged by Department, would be uploaded to the Quality Assurance section of the Registry website by June 2015 for Departmental staff to access as necessary.

4.1.2 Minute 9.3.3 – PTES 2014 – Departmental Action Plans

It was noted that this action was ongoing and that the action plan for the Department of Life Sciences remained outstanding. It was agreed that the Director of Postgraduate Studies should submit the completed action plan as soon as possible.

4.1.3 Minute 5.1.10 (July 2014) – New Programme Proposal – PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Surgery

It was noted that this action was ongoing and that the Programme Team had been working to address the issues raised by the Committee with a view to submitting a revised version of the proposal to Registry for consideration at the January 2015 meeting. The revised proposal was, however, currently being reviewed within the Faculty of Medicine prior to submission to the Committee and would therefore be considered at the March 2015 meeting.

4.1.4 Minute 9.1.2 (July 2014) – Summary of External Examiner Reports on Master's Level Programmes in 2012-13

It was noted that this action was ongoing. The Chair advised the Committee that the items for further consideration (common themes) outlined in the report were due to be communicated to Programme Organisers at the meeting of the Postgraduate Staff Forum on 11 March 2015 but that the meeting had been postponed and rescheduled for 22 April 2015. The themes would therefore be presented to staff at the rescheduled meeting.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5. New Programme Proposals

5.1 PG Cert / MSc in Advanced Therapeutic Strategies (NHLI)

- 5.1.1 The Committee considered a proposal from the National Heart and Lung Institute to introduce a new PG Cert / MSc in Advanced Therapeutic Strategies with effect from October 2015.

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- 5.1.2 The PG Cert programme would be offered on a full-time only basis over 4 months (October-mid January). The MSc programme would be offered on a full-time basis over one calendar year. Students would be encouraged to apply for the award with which they wished to graduate. However, there would be an option for Postgraduate Certificate students to transfer to the MSc programme around week 11, subject to satisfactory academic progress. Students who successfully complete the PG Cert programme would be able to return to the College in a later year (January start) to complete the MSc modules and research project (over 9 months).

In accordance with College regulations, these students would have to complete the MSc within 5 years of registering for the Postgraduate Certificate. The Postgraduate Certificate would also be available as an exit qualification for those students who do not successfully complete the MSc component but who have met the requirements for the lower award. The programme would be based at the Royal Brompton Campus.

The Committee welcomed Professor Uta Griesenbach (proposed Programme Organiser), Dr Mark Paul-Clark (proposed Stream Lead – Drug Discovery and Development), Professor Sarah Rankin (proposed Stream Lead – Regenerative Medicine) and Dr Emma Watson (Education Manager) who had been invited to present the proposal.

- 5.1.3 Professor Griesenbach explained that the proposed PG Cert / MSc in Advanced Therapeutic Strategies was a unique combination of emerging areas within the field of human health and disease. The programme would comprise three streams: Gene and Nucleic Acid Based Therapies; Regenerative Medicine and Drug Discovery and Disease. The programme would make use of the extensive and unique expertise available in these areas within the NHLI and the wider College. The main purpose of the programme was to highlight and teach key advances in these rapidly developing areas of science and medicine and to facilitate state-of-the-art education for the next generation of scientists and clinicians, who would be equipped to pursue successful careers in these areas. The stream based programme structure and a combination of stream-specific core modules as well as compulsory modules covering content from all three streams was designed to give students maximum flexibility to gain in-depth knowledge within a specific interest area, whilst also providing key foundation knowledge in each specialty to all students.
- 5.1.4 The Committee noted that the MSc programme would consist of four compulsory modules (a general core module and three stream specific core modules – one for each stream). Students would then specialise in one of the three streams and participate in a further stream specific module and conduct a stream specific 6 month research project, which would include the preparation of a written report. The Postgraduate Certificate would consist of the four compulsory modules (a Science and Research Skills module and three stream specific modules covering key concepts in the respective areas – one for each stream) as above. The taught modules would be assessed by a combination of coursework and/or written examination. The research project would be assessed by a written report and an oral presentation.
- 5.1.5 The Committee was interested to learn about the target market for the programme. The Programme Team explained that there had been initial expressions of interest in the programme from undergraduates of disciplines such as biology, biochemistry, chemistry and biomedical sciences. In addition it was envisaged that the programme would also be attractive to professionals from the pharmaceutical industry or small biotechnology companies as an opportunity for career development. Applicants would also include scientists interested in furthering their career and those wishing to specialise in one of the three streams prior to undertaking a PhD. It was anticipated that the principal target market would initially be undergraduate students who had achieved an upper second class degree in a relevant biological subject.
- 5.1.6 The Committee discussed the programme and module intended learning outcomes with the Programme Team. The Committee expressed the view that the link between the intended learning outcomes and the assessment tasks was not always clearly defined and that this could potentially lead to a lack of clarity for students. The Committee further expressed the view that learning ‘objectives’ and learning ‘outcomes’ were used and described interchangeably in certain module outlines, leading in some instances to modules with an apparent preponderance of learning ‘outcomes’. Whilst the Committee was satisfied that the content and structure of the programme was coherent it determined that it would be beneficial for the Programme Team to further enhance the programme and module intended learning outcomes so that the alignment of outcomes, teaching and assessment was clearly demonstrated. The Committee considered it important that the module learning outcomes were mapped against the assessment tasks so that it was clear to students which learning outcomes were being tested by each assessment task.

5.1.7 After detailed discussion with the Programme Team, the Committee was reassured on a number of matters which had been raised for discussion. The Committee did however agree one further requirement which, in its view, would enhance the quality of the programme, as follows:

- (i). That the Programme Team shall, in discussion with the Educational Development Unit, seek to further enhance the programme and module intended learning outcomes so that the alignment of outcomes, teaching and assessment is clearly demonstrated.

ACTION: Programme Team

5.1.8 The Committee was nevertheless content to recommend approval of the programme for onward submission to Senate at its next meeting in February 2015. The Committee agreed that the Programme Team should respond to the requirement detailed in 5.1.7(i) above by Easter 2015 and submit revised programme documentation accordingly. The Committee further agreed that the response and any revised documentation could be considered by relevant members of the Master's Quality Committee outside the meeting and that, if appropriate, Chair's action could be taken to approve the response to the above requirement.

6. Programme Modifications

6.1 MRes in Cancer Biology [Cancer Informatics] (Department of Surgery and Cancer)

6.1.1 The Committee received a request from the Department of Surgery and Cancer to introduce a new stream [Cancer Informatics] within the MRes in Cancer Biology programme, with effect from October 2015. The new stream would be offered on a full-time (1 calendar year) basis.

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The Committee welcomed Dr James Flanagan (Proposed Stream Director) and Dr Ed Curry (proposed Stream Co-Organiser) who had been invited to present the proposal for the new stream.

6.1.2 The Committee noted that the new stream would be called "Cancer Informatics" and would provide world-class training in research at the interface between computational and clinical translational science. The aim of the new stream was to equip the next generation of biomedical researchers in bioinformatics with the necessary research skills and professional awareness required to deliver the goal of improved human health by personalising therapy. This would be achieved by teaching students the theoretical foundations of statistical analysis of a range of data types that were increasingly common in biological and clinical research.

6.1.3 The Committee noted that the proposed stream in Cancer Informatics would be equivalent to the existing MRes programme in terms of structure, timetabling, organisation, contact hours, scheme of assessment and ECTS assignment. The two streams would share joint lectures on cancer biology, and the new stream would then have specific lectures and workshops on bioinformatics methods, followed by a research assignment and a research project fully integrated into research laboratories. Students who successfully completed the stream would nevertheless be awarded the degree title of MRes Cancer Biology.

6.1.4 The Committee received reassurances from the Department of Life Sciences that, following discussions with the Department of Surgery and Cancer, there was no perceived conflict between the Cancer Informatics stream and the existing MSc in Bioinformatics and Theoretical Systems Biology.

6.1.5 The Committee noted that the proposal contained a list of learning objectives for the stream (programme) and the individual modules. The learning objectives were, in the Committee's view, a list of theoretical elements and tasks that students would be required to complete rather than intended learning outcomes. The Committee expressed the view that the link

between the learning outcomes and assessment tasks, in particular, should be more clearly described in the programme documentation (e.g. programme specification and module outlines). The Committee therefore agreed that the Programme Team should, in discussion with the Educational Development Unit, further enhance the programme and module intended learning outcomes so that the alignment of outcomes, teaching and assessment was clearly demonstrated. It was agreed that this should be completed by Easter 2015, via submission of appropriately revised programme documentation.

ACTION: Programme Team

- 6.1.6 The Committee further agreed that the Programme Team's response and any revised documentation could be approved by the Chair on behalf of the Committee.
- 6.1.7 The Committee agreed to recommend that the proposed new stream **MRes in Cancer Biology [Cancer Informatics]** be approved by the Senate, with effect from October 2015. The Committee was content for the new stream to proceed to Senate for approval without delay and for the action described in 6.1.5 above to be completed separately.
- 6.1.8 In discussion the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for staff developing new programmes to have access to some further guidance on writing learning outcomes and curriculum design principles such as constructive alignment between outcomes, teaching and assessment. The Head of the Educational Development Unit agreed to develop some further guidance on learning outcomes and key principles of curriculum design. The guidance document would be submitted to a future meeting for information and comment.

ACTION: Head of the Educational Development Unit

6.2 MSc in Medical Ultrasound (NHLI)

- 6.2.1 The Committee considered a proposal from the NHLI to modify the MSc in Medical Ultrasound, with effect from October 2015.

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- 6.2.2 The Committee noted that the proposed modification involved the addition of intravascular coronary imaging to the existing curriculum. The addition of this relatively new technique in the range of medical ultrasound methodologies was designed to enhance the quality of the programme. All students would receive an additional five dedicated lectures on the topic and would also be able to elect to receive clinical and practical exposure to coronary intravascular ultrasound and optical coherence tomography. These aspects were reflected in two additional intended learning outcomes within the programme specification.
- 6.2.3 A discussion took place regarding the proposed amendment and whether the addition of a new technique required the addition of specific intended learning outcomes at programme level. Having viewed the existing intended learning outcomes for the programme the Committee suggested that the new technique could potentially be incorporated into the programme without the need for additional learning outcomes. One of the existing learning outcomes required students to demonstrate 'knowledge and understanding of advanced Doppler techniques and their applications to the diagnosis of vascular disease'. The Committee suggested that the new technique could potentially be incorporated as one of a range of advanced Doppler techniques taught to students. This would also potentially enable the programme to offer students a wider range of options to choose from in the future as further new techniques emerged.
- 6.2.4 It was agreed that the programme team should consider the Committee's suggestions and determine whether the additional learning outcomes were required. It was noted that if the additional technique was to be incorporated within the existing curriculum without any change to the programme learning outcomes then the amendment could be approved at Department level.

ACTION: Director of Postgraduate Studies (NHLI)

7. Appointment of External Examiners for 2014-15

- 7.1 The Committee received the nomination of one external examiner to be considered for the Board of Examiners for the MRes Clinical Research Design and Management programme in the 2014-15 session.

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- 7.1.3 The Committee approved the appointment of the new external examiner as presented in paper 23 [see appendix 1]. The Committee was satisfied that the new external examiner thus approved had sufficient postgraduate teaching experience. Although the nominee did not have external examining experience at Master's level the Committee was satisfied that the Department had proposed suitable mentoring and training arrangements to support the examiner concerned.

8. QAA Consultations

8.1 Qualifications Awarded by Two or More Degree Awarding Bodies

- 8.1.1 The Committee received a response, approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, to the QAA consultation on the new document.

MLSPD/MQC/2014/24

- 8.1.2 The Committee was content to endorse the response as presented.

8.2 Master's Degree Characteristics

- 8.2.1 The Committee received a response, approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, to the QAA consultation on an updated and revised version of the Master's degree qualification statement.

MLSPD/MQC/2014/25

- 8.2.2 The Committee was content to endorse the response as presented.

9 HEFCE Consultation

9.1 Consultation on the Future of Quality Assessment Arrangements

- 9.1.1 The Committee received and considered a discussion document from the Quality Assessment Review Steering Group convened by HEFCE as part of its consultation on the future of quality assessment arrangements in Higher Education.

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- 9.1.1 Committee members were advised that HEFCE was consulting the sector to seek views on how a future quality assurance framework might look. The discussion document contained a number of high level principles and issues on which HEFCE was seeking feedback. It was intended that any new framework for quality assurance and associated quality assessment arrangements would be implemented from the 2016-17 academic year. The Committee noted the importance of the consultation and staff input to the College's response to the discussion document. Members were encouraged to forward any comments to the Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) so that they could be incorporated into the College response.

10. Reports from Departmental Representatives

- 10.1 The Committee did not receive any further reports from Departmental Representatives not otherwise appearing on the agenda.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR DISSEMINATION

11. Action taken on behalf of the Committee

11.1 The Committee noted action taken by the Chair to approve the appointment of new external examiners for the following programmes [2014-15 academic year]:

- MSc Immunology (Department of Medicine)
- MSc Ecological Applications (Department of Life Sciences)
- MSc Human Molecular Genetics (School of Public Health)
- MRes Clinical Research [Diabetes and Obesity] (Department of Medicine)

12. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates

12.1 Publication of UK Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies

12.1.1 The Committee noted that the QAA had now published an updated and revised version of the UK Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications. These were the principal national reference points for academic standards in higher education and were formal components of Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The document brings together the two frameworks:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications of degree-awarding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*
- *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland (FHEQIS)*

into a single document, [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#).

The frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies provide important reference points for higher education providers, assisting them in setting and maintaining academic standards. They are central to the Expectation in *Chapter A1: The National Level* of the Quality Code that degree-awarding bodies use external UK and European reference points to secure threshold academic standards across the higher education sector.

The framework document will become a reference point for the purpose of reviews carried out by QAA from **August 2015**.

12.2 Higher Education Review: Themes for 2015-16 announced

12.2.1 The Committee noted that the QAA had announced its themes for the HER as: Student Employability, and Digital Literacy.

The document is also available online at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859>

12.2.2 The Committee also noted that the QAA have published “Emerging Practice on Employability Findings from QAA Reviews 2010-14”

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/emerging-practice-on-employability>

12.3 Student Engagement Partnership

- 12.3.1 The Committee noted that the Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) had been set up to support, develop and promote student engagement activity in the higher education sector in England. The unit is a central resource for practitioners and institutions and coordinates the sharing of knowledge relating to student engagement at a national level. TSEP is housed and managed by the National Union of Students, with funding from HEFCE, the QAA, GuildHE and the association of Colleges.

See: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2014/news96466.html>

13. Reports from key College Committees

- 13.1 **Senate:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the Senate were available [here](#).
- 13.2 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the QAEC were available [here](#).

14. Postgraduate Professional Development Committee

- 14.1 The Committee received and noted the minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee meeting held on 2 July 2014.

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15. Any Other Business

- 15.1 No other items of business were noted.

16. Dates of meetings in 2014 – 2015

Meeting Date	Deadline for submission of papers
Tuesday 17 th March 2015 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 3rd March 2015</i>
Tuesday 9 th June 2015 – 10am – 1pm	<i>Tuesday 26th May 2015</i>
Tuesday 14 th July 2015 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 30th June 2015</i>
All meetings will take place in the Ballroom at 58 Prince's Gate , South Kensington Campus	

Committee members were advised that the 9 June 2015 meeting would be the last meeting of the year at which any proposals requiring Senate approval for the 2015-16 year could be considered.

17. Reserved Business (not circulated to student members)

17.1 Special Cases Reports

- 17.1.1 The Committee received reports on special cases considered by the special cases panel for Master's Level students.

Special Cases for Admissions – MLSPD/MQC/2014/27