

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
QUALITY AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday 8 June 2006

MINUTES

Members: Professor Ian Brown (Chair)
Dr Monik Charette
Ms Jo Halliday
Mr Terry Harvey
Dr Elizabeth Moore
Dr William Radice
Dr Graham Smith
Dr Charles Tripp

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hearn (Secretary)

18 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2006 were **APPROVED**.

19 Matters Arising

19.1 Blind double marking (minute 14)

The Committee noted that the Academic Registrar had issued new guidance for staff following the discussion of blind double marking by the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee [Appendix A].

19.2 Departmental and Programme Review of the Near and Middle East Department (minute 9.3)

The Chair and Secretary would establish whether there had been a response from the Pro-Director to the point about research strategy.

20 Interim Departmental and Programme Reviews

20.1 Interim Departmental and Programme Review of the Language Centre

The Committee received a further self-evaluation statement from the Language Centre [Appendix B]. It was noted that, while the statement was factually full and informative, it was difficult for the Committee to ascertain the validity of the claims made without reading the appendices. It was agreed that the officers would read the appendices and the Chair would take action on whether or not they were sufficient to enable him to be able to conclude on behalf of the Committee that the report as a whole met the IDPR

guidelines. There were also some points on which the Language Centre had sought the Committee's advice and these would be considered. It was agreed that the Academic Registrar would take up directly with the Language Centre and with the Faculty points regarding the need to clarify the location of record keeping and the administrative responsibilities of the two, and would report back his action to the Secretary. It was agreed that the Dean of Languages and Cultures would first be asked to comment on the Language Centre's submission, as required by the IDPR guidelines. Once these actions were complete, a response would be made to the Language Centre.

20.2 *Interim Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Financial and Management Studies*

The Committee received a further self-evaluation statement from the Department of Financial and Management Studies [Appendix C]. It was noted that claims were made in the text which were not fully supported by evidence, and that in addition references were made to documents not attached. The Department would be asked to provide this evidence and attachments, together with a commentary from the Dean of Law and Social Sciences. The Committee approved its Chair to take action in approving or otherwise the IDPR in light of that additional material, and that action would be reported to the next meeting.

21 **Departmental and Programme Reviews**

21.1 *Departmental and Programme Review of Department of the Languages and Cultures of Japan and Korea*

The Committee received a report from the Head of the Department of the Languages and Cultures of Japan and Korea on action taken one year after Departmental and Programme Review [Appendix D]. The Committee commented as follows on the Head of Department's responses to the recommendations (numbered as in the original report):

- 1.3.1 Direct intake to Year 2. The Committee asked the Secretary to request clarification from Head of Department: was it the case that first year students on joint degrees took four units of Japanese in the first year, or three? If the latter, did students joining in the second year take an extra unit of their partner subject to compensate?
- 1.3.2 Timing of Year Abroad. The Head of Department's response was noted. The Committee will expect to see evidence at the next review that this situation has been annually monitored.
- 1.3.3 Differentiation between students in different years. This recommendation refers solely to undergraduate students, where final year students might take a first year course as a floater: the Committee asked the Secretary to ask the Head of Department to confirm that the situation identified in the report would occur only in the case of language acquisition courses.
- 1.3.4 This recommendation refers to closing feedback loops by reporting on action taken following student course evaluations. The Committee – and

the QAA – considers that such reporting enhances quality, and its value is not significantly diminished where the timing of examination boards requires that it is made to a subsequent cohort of students. The Committee recommends that the Head of Department reports back on action taken in response to points made in student course evaluations at the first possible Departmental meeting of the autumn term, and that this report is recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

1.3.5 Student attrition. The Committee asked the Secretary to ask the Dean to update the Committee on monitoring undertaken within the Faculty and measures in place to minimise attrition.

1.3.6-1.3.10 Advisable action. The Committee noted the Head of Department's comments on the report's advisable action points and was satisfied that due consideration had been given to its recommendations.

21.2 Departmental and Programme Review of Department of Linguistics

The Committee **APPROVED** the report of the Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Linguistics [Appendix E]. It noted that recommendation 1.3.4 to the Department would require support from the Faculty and the School. It was agreed that the report would stand, and that to draw attention to this shared responsibility, this minute would be attached on circulation. It was noted that the Secretary would follow up all actions.

21.3 Departmental and Programme Review of Department of Development Studies

The Committee **APPROVED** the report of the Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Development Studies [Appendix F]. It was noted that the Secretary would follow up all actions.

21.4 Departmental and Programme Review of Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia

The Committee received the report of the Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia [Appendix G]. Deadlines had been attached to recommendations and officers were asked to review these and bring them forward where feasible. Subject to this review and to any factual corrections by the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty, which would then be checked by the Chair, the report was **APPROVED**. It was noted that the Secretary would follow up all actions.

21.5 Programme Specifications

The Committee noted the Chair's letter to the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee regarding the urgent need for the School to address the requirement for comprehensive and up to date programme specifications [Appendix H]. The Committee noted the minute [Appendix I] from the Learning and Teaching Policy

Committee addressing the issues raised, and the Secretary of QAAC would ensure item B was referred to the Institutional Audit Steering Group.

21.6 *Amendments to the guidelines for Departmental and Programme Review*

The Committee considered an amended version of the guidelines for Departmental and Programme Review [Appendix J], to be implemented for reviews in 2006/07 and following. The Committee agreed the proposed amendments and required the following further amendments to be made:

- para 2 amend ‘the Panel’ to ‘the Quality Audit and Assurance Committee’

 insert after ‘HEFCE’, ‘2003/51’
- para 7 amend ‘an additional member’ to ‘additional members’
- para 11 bring forward the phrase ‘by the Faculty Office’ to before ‘with copies’
- para 14 insert ‘all’ before ‘members of the Department’
- para 18 reinstate deleted text, changing ‘all’ to ‘any’

 insert after first sentence, ‘The report will contain the findings of the panel based on all evidence available to it, including all submissions received prior to the review, and its discussions, whether in private or in plenary sessions, prior to and during the review day.’
- para 19 reinstate deleted text ‘no more than three months after the review’.
- para 20 insert at end of paragraph, ‘and the latter’s minute circulated to the Head of Department, Dean and relevant School officers.’
- Annex 1, 4(e) insert at end of paragraph, ‘including electronic and online resources’
- Annex 1, 4(j) add Learning and Teaching Unit to list of sections
- Annex 1, 6(b) delete ‘by either’
- Annex 2 use ‘programme’ consistently throughout; amend final paragraph to reflect this
- throughout all materials, statistics, etc, to be requested ‘since date of last review’.

The Committee asked Officers to make these amendments and to proofread the guidelines, and agreed that the Chair would approve the amended guidelines before they were issued. At that point they would be circulated to Committee members and other relevant parties, and published on the School’s website.

21.7 *Departmental and Programme Reviews 2006/07*

The Committee noted the dates for Departmental and Programme Reviews 2006/07, as follows:

- Thursday 7 December 2006
Department of the Languages and Cultures of South East Asia
- Thursday 8 March 2007 (not 2006 as per agenda)
Department of History
- Thursday 3 May 2007 (not 2006 as per agenda)
Language Centre

These dates were provisional until publication of the Calendar.

A concern was raised that the review process did not always allow panels to review programme content in sufficient detail. Officers were asked to consider how this might be better addressed in 2006/07 and following.

It was agreed that in order to alleviate the heavy burden of Committee work in the coming session on members (given the first of the new cycle of Non-Departmental Programme Reviews, together with the QAA's Institutional Audit), the Committee would consider inviting a non-Committee member to join the panel for each DPR in 2006/07. The Chair would circulate suggested names, together with allocations of regular members to reviews, and would report back to the next meeting.

The Secretary would contact Heads of Departments due for review with the revised guidelines, to ensure that they and the relevant Faculty Officers are aware of the requirements of the process.

22 Non-Departmental Programme Reviews

22.1 Non-Departmental Programme Review

The Committee noted the paper received by Academic Board on the introduction of Non-Departmental Programme Reviews [Appendix K]. The Chair reported that Academic Board had raised no concerns regarding the proposed procedure.

22.2 Guidelines for Non-Departmental Programme Review

The Committee received guidelines for Non-Departmental Programme Review [Appendix L] and noted that, as they were based on guidelines for Departmental and Programme Review, amendments requested under minute 21.6 would be incorporated. It was noted that NDPR would potentially be an onerous task for programme convenors, and that some of the supporting materials requested in the guidelines would not be relevant or available for all programmes. It was suggested that a paragraph be inserted asking convenors to provide such documentation as readily available for their programme, and to seek clarification from the Faculty Office or Secretary to QAAC if necessary. Subject to these amendments, the guidelines were **APPROVED**.

22.3 *Non-Departmental Programme Reviews 2006/07*

The Committee noted that the first NDPR would be of Group A: Literatures and Gender, and would be held in the third term of 2006/07. It was suggested that a date immediately following the end of the examination period would ensure that the greatest possible number of students were able to participate. The Secretary would find a date for the review day in the first week of June.

23 **QAA Special review of Research Degree Programmes**

23.1 *QAA draft report*

The Committee noted the QAA's draft report on its special review of research degree programmes [Appendix M].

23.2 *School's response to draft report*

The Committee noted the School's response forwarded by the Secretary to the QAA describing factual errors and ambiguities in the report [Appendix N].

24 **QAA Institutional Audit**

The Committee noted that dates for the Institutional Audit visit had been confirmed as the week beginning 19 March 2007, and received a paper outlining the measures underway to prepare for audit. The Committee **CONFIRMED** Chair's action in determining the membership of a Steering Group to co-ordinate preparations. The Committee would receive regular reports from the Steering Group and could expect to see an early draft of the School's Institutional Briefing Paper at its next meeting.

26 **Any other business**

There was no other business.

27 **Date of next meeting**

The next business meeting was provisionally scheduled to be held on 5 October 2006, which would be confirmed on publication of the Calendar.