

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
QUALITY AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday 26 January 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)

* those marked with an asterisk were not present.

8 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2005 were **APPROVED**.

9 Matters Arising

9.1 Interim Departmental and Programme Review of the Language Centre (minute 3.1)

The Committee noted that officers would be meeting with Professor Itesh Sachdev, Head of the School of Languages, and with the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures, to discuss how to ensure that the Language Centre was fully integrated into the School's quality assurance systems.

9.2 Interim Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Financial and Management Studies (minute 3.1)

The Committee noted that officers would be meeting with Professor Laurence Harris, Head of the Department of Financial and Management Studies, shortly to complete the interim review.

9.3 Departmental and Programme Review of the Near & Middle East Department (minute 19.1, 09.06.05)

The Committee confirmed that the email received from the Head of Department [Appendix A] addressed the last outstanding issue on this review, and that the table of actions following from the review would be updated by the secretary accordingly.

In the course of the discussion of the Head of Department's response, the Committee discussed briefly the role of Associate Deans Research and the perceived lack of direction and co-ordination on research strategy between the School's central

management and the Faculties. The Chair agreed to convey this point to the Pro-Director.

9.4 *QAAC Annual Report to Academic Board (minute 5)*

The Committee noted that the report had been approved by Academic Board on 23 November 2005.

10 Departmental and Programme Reviews

10.1 *Departmental and Programme Reviews 2005/06*

Members noted the DPR dates for 2005/06 as follows:

- Thursday 23 February 2006 –DPR of the Department of Linguistics (the review had been postponed from December 2005 owing to personal events affecting the Head of Department)
- Thursday 9 March 2006 –DPR of the Department of Development Studies
- Thursday 4 May 2006 – DPR of the Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia

10.2 *External panel members*

The Committee confirmed Professor Moira Yip and Professor Jamal Ouhalla as external panel members for the DPR of the Department of Linguistics, and noted that the names of external panel members for reviews later in the year would be circulated when available.

10.3 *Course materials for closer scrutiny*

The Committee confirmed the Chair's action in selecting the following courses for closer scrutiny at the Linguistics review:

Introduction to Grammatical Structure
Issues in Semantics
Phonology and Morphology

The Committee noted that two out of the three courses proposed on the agenda for the Development Studies review were not suitable to be reviewed as they were taught outside the Department. The Committee therefore agreed to delegate to the Chair the authority to select the courses to be scrutinised.

(Secretary's note: the following were selected by the Chair:

Development Conditions and Experience
Issues in Gender and Development
Political Economy of Violence, Conflict and Development)

10.4 Departmental and Programme Review of Japan and Korea

The Committee received and confirmed the response of the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures to its report on the Departmental and Programme Review carried out in December 2004, and noted that the Secretary would follow up other responses and update the grid.

10.5 Departmental and Programme Review of Politics

The Committee received and confirmed the response of the Dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences to its report on the Departmental and Programme Review carried out in March 2005, and noted that the Secretary would follow up other responses and update the grid.

10.6 Departmental and Programme Review of China and Inner Asia

The Committee received and confirmed the response of the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures to its report on the Departmental and Programme Review carried out in April 2005, and noted that the Secretary would follow up other responses and update the grid.

11 Non-Departmental Programme Reviews

The Committee received a paper [Appendix E] from the Deputy Secretary containing proposals for a method to review programmes which are Faculty, rather than Department, based. It was noted that these programmes fell into two categories: those consisting of courses which would have been reviewed during Departmental and Programme Reviews, and those consisting of courses which are not 'owned' by any Department, and would thus need closer scrutiny during the Non-Departmental Programme Review. The Secretary agreed to ascertain precisely which programmes fell into which category.

The Committee supported the proposals and suggested some minor amendments and clarifications, which would be made before the paper was circulated to the Committee for approval and to the Chair for confirmation prior to its presentation to Academic Board on 31 May 2006. Reviews would start in the academic year 2006/07, and it was agreed that a schedule for reviews over a six-year cycle be drawn up by officers to be presented to Academic Board along with the paper.

12 QAA Special review of research degrees

The Committee received a paper [Appendix F] on the special review currently being undertaken by the QAA on research degree provision in England. The Committee made minor amendments to the draft, and agreed that the Chair would approve the final draft on Chair's action, prior to the Pro-Director who would confirm the final draft as the School's response to be forwarded to the QAA.

13 QAA Institutional Audit

The Committee received a paper [Appendix G] on the QAA's revised process for institutional audit and the likelihood of the School being audited in the academic year 2006/07. The Committee noted the paper carefully and agreed to inform the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee of the schedule for institutional audit.

It was further noted that although the School had made significant progress in recent years in the development and management of its quality assurance mechanisms, there remained room for improvement, especially in ensuring that the Committee received more timely responses to the recommendations made in its Departmental and Programme Review reports.

14 Blind double marking

The Committee received a response [Appendix H] from the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee to its letter on double-blind marking and the proposed destruction of examiners' comments. It noted that the Data Management Officer had advised against the destruction of comments and that the LTPC was devising guidelines for examiners in the light of this.

15 Assessment

Committee received a request [Appendix I] from the Pro-Director for advice on an issue raised at a History Department syllabus meeting. The Committee agreed that the Chair should draft a response to the Pro-Director, proposing that there should be a wider discussion on ensuring that assessment based on oral presentations need not necessarily be exempt from the standard requirement of double marking.

16 Any other business

There was no other business.

17 Date of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting was the DPR of the Department of Linguistics on Thursday 23 February 2006, and the secretary would confirm details of a pre-meeting in the week prior to those concerned. The next business meeting would be held on 15 June 2006.