

These minutes are for information only and are not a formal record of the meeting. A copy of the official record is held by the Secretary to this Committee.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
QUALITY AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday 25 January 2007

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

* Professor Brown was unable to attend the meeting, which was chaired in his absence by Dr Graham Smith.

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hearn (Secretary)

12 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2006 were **APPROVED**.

13 Matters Arising

13.1 Programme Specifications (minute 2.1)

The Committee noted that good progress had been made on completing programme specifications. With a few exceptions, which were being pursued by Faculty offices, specifications were now available via the LTU website for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

13.2 Communications (minute 4.3)

The Committee noted a minute from Academic Board [Appendix A] recording that QAAC's concerns about the School's website had been noted at the Board's meeting on 22 November 2006, and an update on developments had been requested.

14 Interim Departmental and Programme Reviews

14.1 Interim Departmental and Programme Review of the Language Centre

The Committee noted that officers had met with staff of the Language Centre to discuss ways in which the Departmental and Programme Review process could be tailored to their needs. The Language Centre would revisit issues raised in the IDPR in their forthcoming DPR.

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

The Committee noted that the required documentation had been received from DeFiMS and **APPROVED** the recommendation of officers that this review be considered complete. The Department would be subject to full DPR in 2009/10.

15 Departmental and Programme Reviews

15.1 *Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Languages and Cultures of South East Asia*

The Committee received and **APPROVED** the report of the DPR of South East Asia [Appendix B]. Officers would follow up recommendations.

15.2 *Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of South Asia*

The Committee received and **APPROVED** responses to the DPR report of South Asia from the Department [Appendix C] and Faculty [Appendix J, tabled]. Officers would follow-up recommendations to the School.

15.3 *Departmental and Programme Review of the Department of Development Studies*

The Committee received a one-year on report in response to the DPR of Development Studies carried out in 2005/06, from the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences [Appendix D]. The Committee noted that there had been further developments in the creation of the Centre for Development Policy Research and requested a further update.

15.4 *Departmental and Programme Reviews carried out in 2005/06*

The Committee received a minute [Appendix E] from the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee, relating to recommendations made by QAAC in its reports of DPRs on the Departments of Linguistics, Development Studies and South Asia. The Committee noted that LTPC had followed QAAC's recommendation to take urgent action in the matter of the Year Abroad at UCLA programme, which had now been discontinued, and had asked Faculties to consider the implications of its recommendation on final-year language courses.

The Committee continued to have concerns about the format and use of student course evaluation forms, as raised in these and subsequent reviews. It was noted that Academic Board had also discussed this matter, on which the Head of Learning and Teaching Strategy would be making a report to LTPC. The new forms make it more difficult to provide helpful feedback to staff and would benefit from open ended questions with space for free-flow comments within some sections. Forms should be received in departments in June so that feedback can be provided immediately following the meeting of the School Board of Examiners. Further consideration needs to be given to the analysis and presentation of the results bearing in mind the principal purpose of providing feedback to staff on their teaching.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Acting Chair would forward their comments on this matter to the Head of Learning and Teaching Strategy for consideration.

16 Non-Departmental Programme Reviews

The Committee noted that the Non-Departmental Programme Review for 2006/07 would be on Thursday 7 June 2007, and would cover the following programmes, under the heading Literatures and Gender: MA Comparative Literature (Africa/Asia); MA East Asian Literature; MA Gender Studies.

17 QAA Institutional Audit

17.1 *Institutional Briefing Paper*

The Committee received the final version of the School's Institutional Briefing Paper, as submitted to the QAA in December 2006 [Appendix F].

17.2 *Preparations for audit*

The Committee noted that officers were continuing to work on logistical and other preparations for the QAA's Briefing Visit (14-16 February 2007) and Audit Visit (19-23 March 2007). The two Departments chosen for close scrutiny during the audit would be known by the end of the Briefing Visit, and officers would then work closely with the relevant Departmental and Faculty staff to collate the materials required.

An email had just been sent to all members of the School to remind them of the dates of the QAA's visits. More detailed information would be provided in the period following the Briefing Visit for those who would be involved in meetings with auditors during the Audit Visit.

18 Code of Practice

The Committee received a paper [Appendix G] from the Deputy Secretary on the QAA's Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Officers had reviewed the School's compliance with the Code and would forward their findings to the Committees responsible for each area (the LTPC and Equality Committee).

19 Framework for Internal Quality Assurance

The Committee **APPROVED** the action of the Chair in approving amendments to the Framework document [Appendix H].

20 TQI

The Committee received a paper from the Quality Assurance Officer on the findings of HEFCE's review of the Teaching Quality Information website [Appendix I]. It was **AGREED** that the recommendation that external examiners' reports be shared with student representatives should be implemented. The following recommendations would be forwarded to LTPC for consideration:

- i) that the School make use of existing systems: visiting examiner reports are already discussed at departmental meetings, so it would simply be a case of ensuring that student representatives were present;
- ii) that the names of examiners be removed from reports before they are shared;
- iii) that QAAC be responsible, through its Departmental and Programme Review process, for auditing Departments' implementation of this system.

20 Any other business

There was no other business.

21 Date of next meeting

The next business meeting would be held on 14 June 2007.