BIRKBECK  
University of London  

MINUTES OF THE TEACHING & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE  
21 May 2012

Present:  
Professor Sue Jackson (Chair),  
Dr Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, Professor Deborah Mabbett, Dr Jim Pitts,  
Dr Dick Rayne, Dr Martin Shipway,  
Dr Linda Trenberth, Dr Anita Walsh

Apologies for absence:  
Jasbir Gill, Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, Victoria Hunt, Tricia King, Dean Pateman,  
Philip Payne, Trevor Pearce, Harriet Smith, Jeremy Tanner

In attendance:  
Nigel Buckle (Information Technology Services);  
Darren David (External Relations); Angela Dierks (My Birkbeck Services);  
Nick Head (Planning and Business Systems); Steve Hirons (Centre for Learning & Professional Development); Scott Miller (Assistant Academic Registrar (Operations & Projects))  
Neil O’Connor (Learning & Organisational Development); Andreas Schmidt (School Managers’ Representative); William Scott (Minutes Secretary); Dr Vincent Tong (Chair, Technology Enhanced Learning Working Group)

49. MINUTES

Confirmed:

49.1 The minutes of the Committee of 18 January 2012, subject to alteration of the numbering to eliminate duplicates minute 44. (TQEC 60 – 2011/12).

50. MATTERS ARISING

Noted:

50.1 (i) The Pilot for Three-Term Learning would be taking place in 2012/13 with at least one programme from each School taking part in addition to the all programmes offered by the Department of Management. (TQEC 61 – 2011/12).

Noted:

50.2 (ii) The Report to the Academic Board of the Committee’s meeting of 18 January 2012. All of the recommendations had been endorsed. (TQEC 62 – 2011/12).

SECTION II  
MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION

51. KEY INFORMATION SETS

Received and Noted:

51.1 (i) a presentation by the Planning & Business Systems Manager to on the development of the College’s Key information Sets;

(ii) that a KIS ‘widget’ would reside on the front of the BBK website scrolling through information pulled from HEFCE;
(iii) that the College was currently revising Programme Specifications with a view to using the data from these to support the KIS;

(iv) that the aim was to collate and provide the necessary data to HEFCE by August 2012. HEFCE will supplement this with National Student Survey responses and Destination of Leavers data to form the KIS.

(v) Concern with HEFCE’s intention to display Programme information in a format more suited to full time study. The College would be raising this issue with the funding council.

Agreed:

51.2 Nick Head to send the KIS report to Programme Directors asking for amendments to the data where necessary with responses returned within four weeks.

52. CHAIR’S REPORT (TQEC 63 – 2011/12)
Reported by the Chair:

52.1 (i) That the Chair had been working with the Pro-Vice Master (Student Experience) to better integrate and join up areas which support learners, with the aim of enhancing students' experience of learning at Birkbeck;
(ii) that retention rates showed a marked improvement for first year undergraduates. Work would continue on the projects outlined in the Retention Strategy;
(iii) that a review of Cert (HE) provision had been undertaken to ensure that there were clear lines of progression from cert HE’s to degrees;
(iv) that work on developing and enhancing programmes across Schools and the College continued. The College continued to work towards a smooth conversion to Moodle and to develop a proposal for minimum standards for engagement with VLE;
(v) that work by the Learning and Teaching Working Group on increasing the flexibility of the programmes offered by the College was continuing. The possibility of developing the Certificate in Higher Education in Combined Studies into a degree was noted. Work to develop longer route programmes and a limited number of 6-year undergraduate degree programmes was continuing;
(vi) that a limited pilot was taking place working Schools who had programmes which were already running across all three terms. Student feedback had been positive; a larger pilot would take place in 2013/14 involving at least one programme from each School.
(vii) that the Chair had been developing ways to recognise excellence in teaching and to provide opportunities to enhance it.
(viii) that work continued on the enhancement of the profile of learning and teaching at Birkbeck. It was aimed to promote professional activities and advance the sharing of good practice in learning and teaching;
(ix) that development of a Unit for Learning and Teaching Enhancement was progressing; an academic post in Education and Psychosocial Studies was being advertised and would be seconded to the Unit on a 0.5 fte basis;
(x) that one award was currently made available annually to each School to recognise, enhance and reward teaching. One 2011 nominee Dr Carol Watts from the School of Arts, had been successful in achieving a National Teaching Fellowship;
(xi) that a new graduate certificate in teaching and supporting learning was being developed, aimed primarily at postgraduate teaching assistants.
(xii) that the Learning and Teaching Conference had taken place; attendees had been able to explore a range of ways to develop more flexible assessment, timely feedback and improve the experience for students;
(xiii) that the Chair had been working with the Learning and Teaching Working Group to develop revised student focused programme specification forms. The Group was also working to develop the concept of ‘graduateness’ - what it means to be a graduate of Birkbeck;
(xiv) that the College was now waiting for the outcome of the degree awarding powers application;

53. **RETENTION STRATEGY**

Received and Noted:


(ii) That the implementation of the Strategy would continue to be overseen by the Retention Strategy Steering Group with Steve Hirons and Dr Jennifer Fraser leading in 2012.13 on the two strands that report to TQEC.

(iii) that Dr Martin Shipway, Steve Hirons received thanks from the Chair for their work in supporting the Strategy in 2011.12.

**Agreed:**

53.2 To recommend that ABExCo and Academic Board approve the initiation of Phase 2 of the Strategy.

Received:

53.3 a final report from the Raising Awareness and Enhancing Understanding of Effective Pedagogies of first Year Undergraduate project. **(TQEC 65 – 2011/12)**

Reported by the Project Director:

53.4 (i) That the data gathered from Undergraduate surveys was of great interest especially in confirming the danger points of students leaving their course.

Received and Noted:

53.5 (iii) a final report from the Embedding and Enhancing the Development of Learning Support project. **(TQEC 66 – 2011/12)**

54 **DEGREE AWARDING POWERS**

Received and Noted:

54.1 (i) A report from the assessors to the Quality Assurance Agency on the College’s application for degree awarding powers. **(TQEC 67 – 2011/12)**

(ii) that the report was positive towards Birkbeck’s application. The College would hear in the Summer 2012 whether its application had been successful.

55 **REGULATIONS AND POLICIES**

Received and Recommended for Approval:

55.1 (i) a proposal to amend the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study relating to concurrent registration. **(TQEC 68 – 2011/12)**

(ii) a Fitness to Study Policy. **(TQEC 69 – 2011/12)**

55.2 Received:

a draft Peer Review Policy. **(TQEC 70 – 2011/12)**

55.3 Noted:

(i) that paragraph 7. should be made less absolute stating instead that ‘...Schools may normally wish to review staff teaching modules…’

(ii) that paragraph 12. should be re-worded to identify who any issues would be reported to and clarification on the feedback loop.

**Agreed:**
55.4 That the Policy should be referred back to the Learning & Teaching Working Group with a view to incorporating further flexibility and to provide further detail on the “feedback loop” following individual reviews.

Received and recommended for approval:

55.5 (iv) a draft Personal Tutoring Policy (TQEC 71 – 2011/12) with the following amendments:

- Paragraph 6: the reference to the College’s My Birkbeck website should be removed.
- Paragraph 13: the subsequent numbering should be corrected.
- Paragraph 14: the first two bullet points should be amended to ‘Be acquainted with’ and ‘Be familiar with’.
- Paragraph 14: the reference to outside services should be removed.
- Paragraph 15: the fifth bullet point should be reworded to indicate that assistance for student reflection on feedback given would be provided.
- Paragraph 17: the reference to the College’s My Birkbeck website should be removed and replaced with a statement to the effect that the allocation of personal tutors would be published.
- Paragraph 17: the second bullet point should be reworded to allow for the information to be explained wherever most appropriate rather than only the course handbook.

55.6 Received and recommended for approval:

(i) a Policy and Procedure for Intercollegiate Study (TQEC 72 – 2011/12)

(ii) a amended Student Dispute and Resolution Policy and Procedure (TQEC 73 – 2011/12)

(iii) a Policy on the Recording of Lectures and Other Teaching Sessions (TQEC 74 – 2011/12)

56 EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP

Noted:

56.1 Concern that the Committee would be restrained in its discussions in the presence of an external person.

Agreed:

56.2 To seek further guidance from other institutions on the role of the external member and their experience before considering any formal proposal.

57 PROGRAMME REPORTING 2010/11

Received and Noted:

57.1 A brief outline of Biennial Programme Reporting 2011/12 (TQEC 75 – 2011/12)

(ii) that response rates had improved from 40% in 2008/9 to 70% in 2011/12.

(iii) that only three Scrutiny Panels had taken place; consideration would be given to involving STQECs in the scrutiny process.

(iii) that no cluster reports had been submitted from the School of Law.

Agreed:

57.2 That the report returns to the Learning and Teaching Working Group to consider how to ensure a greater submission and scrutiny of reports.

58 EXTERNAL EXAMINER ISSUES

Received and Noted:
A report on issues raised by External Examiners in their 2010/11 reports. *(TQEC 76 – 2011/12)*

**STUDENT EVALUATIONS**
Received and Recommended for approval:

59.1 A proposal to rationalise student surveys. *(TQEC 77 – 2011/12)*

Received and Noted:

59.2 A Progress Report on National Student Survey responses 2010/11 *(TQEC 78 – 2011/12)*

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**
Received and Noted:

60.1 The draft chapter B5 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education on Student Engagement *(TQEC 79 – 2011/12)*

**COLLEGE PROGRAMMES COMMITTEE**
Received and Noted:

61.1 The report from the College Programmes Committee *(TQEC 80 – 2011/12)*

Agreed:

61.2 to recommend the approval of the major programme amendment to the MA Archaeology as well as the programme suspensions and withdrawals outlined in the report.

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**
Received:

62.1 The report on the Academic Progress and Development Review *(TQEC 81 – 2011/12)*

Noted:

62.2 That there was a need to continue to support the PDR process and improve engagement.

---

**SECTION III**

**MATTERS FOR REPORT**

**GRADUATION CEREMONIES**
Received and Noted:

63.1 The revised format of Graduation Ceremonies *(TQEC 82 – 2011/12)*

**NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOWS**
Noted:

64.1 The committee joined the chair in congratulating Dr Calè and Dr Derakshan on their nominations for National Teaching Fellowships.

**QAA PUBLICATIONS**
Received and Noted:

65.1 (i) QAA Guidance for Higher Education Providers on International Students Studying in the UK *(TQEC 83 – 2011/12)*

(ii) QAA Guidance for Higher Education Providers on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education *(TQEC 84 – 2011/12)*

(iii) revised Part C of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Information on Higher Education Provision *(TQEC 85 – 2011/12)*

**INTERNAL REVIEWS 2010/11**
66.1 The review and response of the Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication (TQEC 86 – 2011/12)

67 TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING WORKING GROUP
Noted:
67.1 The report from the TEL Working Group (TQEC 87 – 2011/12)

68 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS
Noted:
68.1 That the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 9 October 2012

69 OTHER BUSINESS
Noted:
69.1 The School of Science had requested that the College consider offering 45 credit modules. This would be considered by the Common Awards Scheme Steering Group.

Meeting concluded

Signed………………………………..

Date…………………………………..