Present:
Professor Sue Jackson (Chair), Robert Atkinson, Katherine Bock, Nigel Buckle, Anna Gaze, Fraser Keir, Tricia King, Dr Joanne Leal, Dr Stewart Motha, Neil O’Connor, Dr Jan Rüger, Dr Martin Shipway, Harriet Smith, Jeremy Tanner, Dr Anita Walsh

Apologies for absence:
Dr Joana Barros, Dr Kate Burrel, Dr Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, Dr Christy Constantakopoulou, Zheng Chai, Dr Jennifer Fraser, Dr Elizabeth Houldt, Dr Tim Markham, Dr Jim Pitts, Dr Dick Rayne, Reubs Walsh, Professor Matthew Weait

In attendance:
Scott Miller (Assistant Academic Registrar (Operations & Quality); Mara Arts (Secretary)

1 APOLOGIES
Noted:

1.1 It was noted that Dr Tim Markham had been appointed as Deputy Pro-Vice-Master for Learning & Teaching, and would in future be attending TQEC meetings.

2 MINUTES (TQEC 33 – 2014/15)
Confirmed:

2.1 The minutes of the TQEC meeting of 30 October 2014 were confirmed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Matters arising relating to items not featured elsewhere on the agenda
Noted:

3.1 It was noted that a suspension of regulations request had been approved to allow for a collaboration between the School of BEI and the School of Economics, Moscow, as noted under point 14 of the minutes of the TQEC meeting of 30 October 2014.

(ii) The Report to Academic Board of the TQEC meeting of 30 October 2014 (TQEC 34 – 2014/15)
Noted:

3.2 All the Committee’s recommendations to the Academic Board were endorsed.

4 CHAIR’S REPORT
Noted:

(i) The appointment of the Deputy PVM for Learning & Teaching

4.1 The Chair welcomed Dr Tim Markham as the new Deputy PVM for Learning & Teaching. His appointment will enhance Learning & Teaching work and give more recognition to the importance of this portfolio. The Deputy PVM will attend the Learning & Teaching Working Group and be involved in taking forward the work on the NSS and the College’s approach to blended/technology enhanced learning.
(ii) The analysis of the 2014 NSS results

4.2 There is intensive work taking place on the understanding of last year’s NSS results. Sue Jackson is meeting with the ADs Learning & Teaching and Executive Deans in Schools to interpret the results and develop action plans.

(iii) The Learning & Teaching open exchange meeting

4.3 There will not be a Learning & Teaching annual conference this year. Instead there will be an open exchange, which will bring together staff across the College to think about Learning & Teaching.

(iv) New schedule of STQECs and TQECs

4.4 The Chair noted that this term for the first time, STQEC meetings were held in advance of the TQEC meeting. It was proposed that at the next TQEC meeting the advantages and disadvantages of this new system would be considered.

5 STRATEGY FOR LEARNING & TEACHING ENHANCEMENT

Noted:

(i) The implementation of the Strategy for Learning & Teaching Enhancement 2012-17

5.1 It was noted that Academic Board had endorsed the revised Strategy for Learning & Teaching Enhancement.

5.2 The implementation plan for SLATE needs to be developed further. A fuller version will be reported to the summer term TQEC meeting.

(ii) Report on Catalyst projects

5.3 The Catalyst projects are proceeding. The Chair reported that the sub-project of Student Achievement and Success is going well. It was noted that it should be considered how the work in these areas will continue when the Catalyst project ends.

6 LEARNING AND TEACHING WORKING GROUP

Noted:

6.1 It was reported that the ADs Learning & Teaching had had a successful away day. This had led to strategic planning and the development of a better sense of the development of the Catalyst projects.

6.2 The next two Learning & Teaching Working Group meetings will be longer than usual. The meeting of 17 February will consider the QAA Quality Code, and whether the College is meeting the standards and expectations of the relevant chapters.

6.3 The meeting in March will include the Chairs of the College Boards to consider amendments to CAS regulations for 15/16 and application of regulations by sub-boards. This annual meeting replaces the now disbanded CAS working group.
7 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW (HER) (TQEC 35 – 2014/15)
Discussion:

7.1 The College is up for Higher Education Review in 2016/17. The paper outlining HER was discussed, as well as what the College is doing to prepare for it. The College is currently considering which chapters and aspects of the Quality Code need to be scrutinised in greater detail. A HER steering group will shortly be convened, and there will be a mock review before the HER as well. It was noted that unlike previous Institutional Audits, HER gives greater weight to the Self Evaluation Document which the College needs to submit to the QAA beforehand. This SED should therefore be carefully drawn up.

8 QAA QUALITY CODES
Received:

8.1 As part of the preparations for HER review the College are in a process of mapping current College practice to the QAA Quality code chapters, in particular Part B. This is being conducted this term by an information gathering exercise, where ASQ are attending existing groups and discuss the relevant chapters. These groups include the Learning & Teaching working group, Recruitment Monitoring Group, sub-board chairs, School Managers and Research Students Sub Committee.

Details of the Quality Code Chapters are available here http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b

ACTION:
Sue Jackson, Fraser Keir, Katharine Bock and Scott Miller to set up a HER steering group.

9 COLLEGE PROGRAMMES COMMITTEE (TQEC 36 – 2014/15) and (TQEC 37 – 2014/15)
Approved and Endorsed:

9.1 The report of the College Programmes Committee of 26 November 2014 was approved.

9.2 The TQEC Chair’s Action on approving the MSc Global Criminology was endorsed. It was noted that this programme is now open for applications for 2015/6.

Considered:

10.1 The Committee considered the Annual Programme Reports and regulations for the international programmes. There were no comments.

11 FLEXIBLE AND ONLINE PROVISION
Received:

11.1 The Committee received a verbal report on developments on Flexible and Online Provision for learning and teaching. It was noted that Tim Markham was going to work on further developing this. Dr Deborah Grange had already worked with programme teams and individuals to develop online provisions. A project on how to bridge the transition between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees will also be largely online. It was noted that
currently, there is no overview on which online provisions staff are using, or on what they want to use. Therefore a short survey for staff will be launched at the end of March, to determine this more clearly.

12 COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE (TQEC 43 – 2014/15)

Received and noted:

12.1 The Committee received and noted a report on complaints, appeals and student discipline over the 2013/14 academic year.

12.2 It was noted that the number of assessment offences and academic appeals had not markedly increased compared to previous years. The number of complaints had doubled in two years.

12.3 It was noted that 12 complaints related to providing documentation for financial support. This is a new requirement, and therefore this type of complaint is relatively new. Nonetheless, it was noted that the total number of complaints is rising, which is in line with what is taking place at other institutions. Compared to other HEIs, the number of complaints received at Birkbeck is average.

12.4 It was remarked that increased tuition fees led to higher levels of service expectation from students. It was noted that a large number of complaints were on financial or service issues. It is expected that if the fee regime and bursary schemes stay the same, students will get used to them and be less inclined to complain about them. The College is also working on clearer financial regulations, which should introduce consistent practice across the College regarding refund of fees after withdrawal from a programme, and the application of fee waivers.

12.5 It was noted that the complaints on service issues should be considered in relation to the College’s NSS results.

12.6 It was noted that the College’s Dignity at Work and Study Policy protects students, but does not make clear which behaviour from students is acceptable and expected towards members of staff. It was suggested that this Policy requires revisiting, as it would be helpful for staff to have clear guidance on acceptable behaviour. It was noted that administrative and professional service staff especially had to deal with challenging student behaviour. It was recognised that any revision of this Policy should be done in agreement with HR

ACTION:

Scott Miller to scrutinise the complaints on service issues to determine what they refer to, and to report this to the next TQEC meeting.

Fraser Keir to take forward the revision of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy with Registry and HR, and to report back progress to TQEC.

13 POLICY REVIEW

Noted:

13.1 The Committee noted a verbal report on the progress of policy review. It was noted that ASQ is instigating a five-yearly policy review cycle, to ensure that the College’s policies reflect external benchmarks as set by the QAA and OIA. The complaints and appeals
policies will be the first to be review. The ADs L&T will be asked to take these policies to their STQECs for discussion and comments. More in-depth discussion of these policies and procedures will take place at a convened working group.

13.2 It was noted that the BEI STQEC had already considered these policies. It was suggested that the Student Dispute Resolution should be renamed the Complaints Procedure for clarity.

**ACTION:**
ASQ to contact ADs for STQEC feedback on appeals and complaints policies.

14 **SURVEYS (TQEC 44 – 2014/15)**

*Received:*

14.1 The Committee received an update on the progress of the four student satisfaction surveys.

14.2 It was noted that it is crucial that Birkbeck achieved at least a 50% response rate for the NSS, as that was the minimum required in order to be considered in league tables. This also has an effect on Birkbeck’s promotional campaign.

14.3 It was noted that current response rates for the NSS are low, and are much lower than this time in 2014. Suggestions were made to improve response rates, such as class tutors contacting their students directly, and course representatives contacting their course peers. Further, a ‘You Said, We Did’ campaign can improve response rates.

14.4 It was also noted that alternative incentive schemes could be more successful, for example by donating to charity, or the Birkbeck bursary scheme, for each student who completes the survey.

**ACTION:**
Fraser Keir to convene a small group to work on raising response rates. This group will consist of Kate Burrell, Tim Markham, Monica Law and Anna Gaze, and will use the ADs L&T as a sounding board.


*Noted:*

15.1 The Committee noted the internal review reports and departmental responses, and the list of outstanding review reports.

16 **QAA UPDATES (TQEC 50 – 2014/15) and (TQEC 51 – 2014/15)**

*Noted:*

16.1 The Committee noted the consultation on four qualification characteristics statements, and on seven revised subject benchmark statements.

17 **ANNUAL MONITORING**

*Noted:*

17.1 A verbal update on the progress of the Joint Portfolio Review and Annual Programme Monitoring process was given.
17.2 It was noted that at the next TQEC a summary report on the Annual Reports will be given.

17.3 It was noted that the proposed timeline for this new reporting process had not been communicated clearly to departments. It was also noted that not all the provided Tableau reports had been useful. In particular because they only showed students who passed all their modules as 'completed', when in reality students can be allowed to continue on to a next year without completing all modules.

ACTION:
The ADs Learning & Teaching to provide summary reports as soon as possible, so that they can be considered by ASQ before the next TQEC meeting.

18 PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS (TQEC 52 – 2014/15)
Noted:

18.1 The Committee noted an updated report on the status of Postgraduate and Certificate programme specifications for 2014/15, and strongly recommended that all departments supply all their programme specifications to ASQ.

19 ADMISSIONS POLICY AMENDMENT (TQEC 53 – 2014/15)
Noted:

19.1 An amendment to the college admissions policy was noted.

20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Noted:

20.1 It was noted that the next TQEC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 20 May 2015.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Noted:

20.1 The following changes to membership were noted: Dr Tim Markham to join TQEC as Deputy PVM Learning & Teaching; Fraser Keir to replace Bob Westaway as Academic Registrar; Anna Gaze to replace Jill Entwistle as School Manager representative.