

## SCONUL WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Minutes of Meeting held on 23 October 2001 at the SCONUL Secretariat

### Present:

Jeremy Atkinson - University of Glamorgan (Chair)  
Michael L. Breaks - Heriot-Watt University (Secretary)  
Julie Howell - University of North London  
Ann Mathie – University of Gloucester  
Scott Robertson - University College Chichester  
Keith Webster - School of Oriental & African Studies  
Elizabeth Heaps - University of York  
Alison Allden - University of Warwick  
Bill Simpson – Trinity College Dublin

### 1. Previous Minutes of Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2001 were approved.

### 2. Actions

1. Michael Breaks had written to Howard Nicholson, Ian Winkworth and Nik Pollard to thank them for their contribution to the Working Group.
2. Jeremy Atkinson had finalised the text of the Aide Memoire and it was available on both the SCONUL and UCISA web sites.
3. Scott Robertson had finalised the Aide Memoire for the evaluation of learning resources support for Initial Teaching Training and this was available on the SCONUL web site.
4. Michael Breaks had not yet discussed the publication of the QA Aide Memoire as a SCONUL publication given the current uncertainties on quality strategy.
5. A mailing list had been established for the group - (lis-sconul-quality@jiscmail.ac.uk).
6. The amount of information on the web site had been increased.
7. Jeremy Atkinson had emailed the SCONUL mailing list in August with an update on Quality Matters.
8. Bill Simpson, TCD, had been invited to attend this meeting.

### 3. Chairman's Update

John Randall, Director of the QAA, had resigned and a consultation exercise among English HEI's on the future of the quality regime was underway with a completion date of 26 October 2001. A second benchmarking exercise for additional 26 subjects was also out to consultation, with a completion date of 19 November 2001. Two more Codes of Practice – Placement Learning and Recruitment and Admissions – had been issued.

### 4. Remit of the Quality Group

It was apparent that there might be some overlap between this Group and SCONUL's Performance Improvement Committee (ACPI) and there was a need for mutual cross-referencing in the Terms of Reference of both bodies. Jeremy Atkinson was liaising with ACPI and there may be a need to change the Terms of Reference of both groups.

At the summer Banbury SCONUL Strategic Planning meeting it had been agreed that each SCONUL Committee would produce a set of abridged minutes for the Executive Board and would issue two communications per annum to the SCONUL Membership.

**Action: Jeremy Atkinson & Michael Breaks**

## SCONUL WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

### 5. HEFCE Quality Assurance in Higher Education

A joint SCONUL/UCISA response had been submitted to HEFCE.

### 6. Aide Memoire

It was agreed that both the old and the new Aide Memoire should be on the SCONUL web site.

**Action: Michael Breaks**

### 7. English Quality Matters

The subject reviews were still continuing but there was lack of clarity about the shape of the new quality regime. The current round will finish at the end of 2001, with Further Education starting in February 2002. It has become clear that there will be no inspections between January and July 2002 for English HEIs.

### 8. Scottish Quality Matters

Scottish Universities are pressing for the suspension of inspections for the 2002-03 academic year. The Scottish regime remains that of 100% subject-level reviews, and Scottish Universities are keen to preserve the current UK-wide quality regime.

### 9. Welsh Quality Matters

Wales is to continue to apply the model of 100% subject level reviews and the Welsh Assembly supports a UK-wide quality regime.

### 10. Irish Quality Matters

There is no QAA-like body in Ireland at present but the Irish equivalent of Universities UK has a Quality Group of Registrars, but this has so far had little impact on libraries. There is a regime of internal subject reviews, which do look at the role of the institution's library, but there is no national pattern. There is a strong culture of institutional autonomy within broad national guidelines.

### 11. Annual Report 2001

Jeremy Atkinson and Michael Breaks would produce a draft report for circulation to members of the Group.

**Action: Jeremy Atkinson & Michael Breaks**

### 12. Action Plan 2002

This would be updated with suggested changes to the Terms of Reference.

**Action: Jeremy Atkinson & Michael Breaks**

### 13. Web Site

The following suggestions were made for improving the web site.

## SCONUL WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

- add COLRIC, which deals with quality issues for Further Education.
- add direct links to relevant parts of the QAA web site.
- investigate adding direct links to the relevant parts of web sites of the major professional associations.

**Action: Michael Breaks**

### 14. Institute for Learning and Teaching

Elizabeth Heaps reported on discussions with the ILT. Librarians have until July 2002 to apply for membership by the initial entry route, but no guidance is given by ILT for those in learning resources, as they do not want a "check-list" approach from applicants. There are presently Learning Resources Accreditors and ILT will be encouraged to advertise for replacement via lis-sconul.

### 15. E-University

This initiative has established a Committee on Academic Quality (CAQ).

### 16. Date of Next Meeting

This will be in May 2002 and the Membership will be trawled for suitable dates.

**Action: Michael Breaks**

### Actions Agreed at this Meeting

- i. Jeremy Atkinson to continue to liaise with QAA.
- ii. Michael Breaks to update web site.
- iii. Jeremy Atkinson and Michael Breaks to complete Annual Report and Action Plan.
- iv. Jeremy Atkinson and Michael Breaks to revise Terms of Reference.
- v. Jeremy Atkinson to provide six monthly reports to SCONUL members.
- vi. Michael Breaks to produce short report to SCONUL Executive Board.