

## SCONUL/UCISA WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Minutes of Meeting held on 22 June 2004 at the SCONUL Secretariat

**Present:** Jeremy Atkinson - University of Glamorgan (Chair)  
Michael Breaks - Heriot-Watt University (Secretary)  
Scott Robertson - University College Chichester  
Brian Clifford - University of Leeds  
Cathryn Gallacher – University of Bristol  
Bidly Fisher – Sheffield Hallam University  
Helen Fletcher - Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (UCISA)  
Tricia Ellis - SW Peninsula Strategic Health Authority

**Apologies:** Ann Mathie – University of Gloucestershire

**Copies:** Wayne Morris - University of Glamorgan

1. **Apologies**

Ann Mathie, University of Gloucestershire.

2. **Membership**

Helen Fletcher, the new UCISA member, was welcomed to her first meeting.  
Tricia Ellis, attending for item 7, was also welcomed to the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 24 November 2004 were approved as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

11. Annual Report and Action Plan.

This had been approved by the SCONUL Executive Board and is now available on the Group's website.

5. **SCONUL Guidelines for QAA Institutional Audit**

As part of the Working Group's Strategy of creating a resource to support the membership, Scott Robertson had prepared the Guidelines for QAA Institutional Audit. The document had been reviewed by Nicola Channon, QAA and her suggested amendments were accepted. The revised document will be placed on the SCONUL web site.

**Action: Michael Breaks**

6. **Members' Responses**

The Working Group was still keen to receive both internal library/information systems contributions to institutional self-assessment documents and reflective post-audit views.

**Action: Michael Breaks/  
Jeremy Atkinson**

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### 7. Audit Process

Helen Fletcher, herself a QAA auditor, outlined the process of audit:

As Institutional Audit is a 'light touch' approach to QA there is less opportunity to investigate deeply every aspect of university operation. Based on reading the SED, the SWS (Student Written Submission) and previous QA reports, the audit team decides at the Briefing Visit which particular aspects appear to need more attention than others. Support for students is a critical area to ensure broad confidence, but this includes academic and personal support as well as library and computing provision. The quality of personal tutoring and the development of academic staff usually has a greater impact on students than the exact number of books on shelves, etc. Hence, it would be expected that the director of the service would be asked general questions at a staff meeting to support reports from students and academic staff, and some documentation such as Information Strategy, related policies and minutes of the appropriate committee. Most of our services (library and computing) appear to be OK. Having said this, if there was an obvious problem with the library or computer provision, it would be followed up. This is not an invitation to complacency.

### 8. QAA Developments

Jeremy Atkinson reported on his recent meeting with Nicola Channon, QAA. She is keen to obtain SCONUL/UCISA experiences on the new processes and the Working Group will respond formally to her following the next meeting. There is also likely to be a formal consultation by QAA early in 2005 as part of the evaluation of the new processes in England. The Working Group may be able to input into the form of this consultation.

**Action: Jeremy Atkinson**

### 9. Quality Assurance of NHS-funded HE Programmes

Tricia Ellis reported that the aim of her presentation on NHS funded programmes was to raise awareness of how NHS Trust Health Libraries would like to be more closely linked with the quality assurance processes of higher education. The streamlining activities of the Cabinet Office and Healthcare Commission are major drivers in the NHS. The Ongoing Quality Monitoring and Enhancement and the monitoring of the quality of the learning environment and the Integrated Assessment Process are more widespread now within NHS settings. Details of NHS Trust Libraries statistics gathering and the self-assessment tools and learner questionnaires which are included within the integrated assessment process in the South West were distributed to the Group, as well as the Helicon accreditation scheme for library and information services monitoring. The NHS Library and Knowledge Development Network's Quality Group is attempting to make the Helicon scheme more robust and fit for purpose with transparent and rigorous standards, and aims to have the scheme managed by an authoritative body in order to link it more effectively with OQME. One way of supporting this is to standardise the feedback from students and link this more effectively with HEIs feedback from users.

Whilst all members of the SCONUL Working Group on Quality Assurance knew of the Helicon scheme and included it within their quality assurance processes, and acknowledged the need for alignment in quality assurance and the need for robust systems, concern was expressed of the students' perception of the quality of the learning environment in NHS placement settings and of their access to NHS resources. Students on placement in NHS settings were not always given access to NHS resources or to NHS IT networks because of firewall problems or password difficulties.

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### 10. English Quality Matters

Following their institutions' audits, Brian Clifford and Cathryn Gallacher indicated that they would provide a reflective view of the audit experiences of Leeds and Bristol, respectively.

**Action: Brian Clifford/  
Cathryn Gallacher**

### 11. Scottish Quality Matters

Michael Breaks reported on the Scottish quality processes which involved a programme of institutional audit of internal quality processes supported by sector-wide Quality Enhancement activities, which are currently focussed on Assessment and the Student Experience.

### 12. Welsh Quality Matters

Jeremy Atkinson reported on the planned Welsh approach of a six-year institutional review cycle, with mid-term reviews, and a concentration on collaborative approaches.

### 13. SCONUL Web-site

There was a need to increase the range of links within the SCONUL Web site to QAA pages, to the new HE Academy, and to the quality pages of relevant professional accreditation web sites.

**Action: Michael Breaks**

### 14. HE Quality Assurance Overseas

Biddy Fisher reported that she will be attending a conference in Australia and will use the opportunity to discover HE quality review structures there.

**Action: Biddy Fisher**

### 15. Date of Next Meeting

November 2004 - exact date to be confirmed.

**Action: Michael Breaks**