

SCONUL/UCISA WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Minutes of Meeting held on 23 October 2002 at the SCONUL Secretariat

Present: Jeremy Atkinson - University of Glamorgan (Chair)
Michael L. Breaks - Heriot-Watt University (Secretary)
Scott Robertson - University College Chichester
Ann Mathie – University of Gloucestershire
Alison Allden - University of Warwick
Biddy Fisher – Sheffield Hallam University

Apologies: Keith Webster - School of Oriental & African Studies
Julie Howell – London Metropolitan University

1. **Membership**

Biddy Fisher was welcomed to her first meeting.

2. **Previous Minutes of Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 24 June 2002 were approved.

3. **Actions from Previous Meeting**

- i. These discussions were still to take place.
- ii. This was ongoing.
- iii. To be discussed at this meeting.
- iv. Waiting for situation to be clarified.
- v. Achieved.
- vi. The consultation period had expired.

4. **QAA Developments**

The Chair alerted the meeting to four new documents, which are available from the QAA web site (www.qaa.ac.uk/public/latest.htm):

- Users guide to academic review of subjects during the transitional period (September 2002)
- Developmental engagements: guidance notes - arrangements during the transitional period (September 2002)
- Appointment of institutional auditors, audit secretaries and subject specialists - information and application forms (August 2002)
- Institutional audit: England - handbook and related documents (July 2002)

5. **Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee (TQEC)**

The TQEC was established by the Funding Councils to report on the roles and relationships of HESDA, LTSN and ILT and their contribution to the enhancement of learning and teaching quality in higher education. The interim report is available at:

www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tqec/report.htm

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6. Best Practice for External Evaluation of Library and Information Services

The aim of the initiative is to obtain and make available to the membership Best Practice examples of institutional and subject self-evaluation documents. It was agreed that Bidy Fisher and Michael Breaks would specify to the membership what was required and receive any documents provided by libraries. These would be made available on the Quality Working Group Web Site, using password protection.

Action: Bidy Fisher & Michael Breaks

7. English Quality Matters

The new process of Institutional Audit will begin in February 2003. University College Chichester will be one of the first institutions to go through this process and Scott Robertson reported that an Institutional Self-Evaluation document had been sent to the QAA. The QAA will then decide whom they want to meet and what they wish to see and will select the appropriate subject specialists. The institution will then be given two weeks to provide the required Disciplinary Self-Evaluation documents. Scott Robertson agreed to update the Group as the process develops.

Action: Scott Robertson

It was agreed that it would be helpful to discover from the QAA which other institutions were being audited in this phase and to obtain information on their processes and experiences.

Action: Jeremy Atkinson

[The QAA are unwilling to provide this information in order to ensure that institutions get a fair run at the audit without outside questioning. It was agreed therefore to see if other means could be used to discover this information.]

8. Scottish Quality Matters

SHEFC had issued a document summarising responses to the new processes - 'An Enhancement Led Approach to Quality Assurance'.

The responses indicated broad support and included a response from SCURL. 2002/03 will be used by institutions to review their own internal quality processes and Institutional Audits will begin in 2003/04 alongside the operation of Enhancement Themes to encourage quality across the sector as a whole.

9. Welsh Quality Matters

A Quality Assurance Working Group had been established and this group were consulting within Wales. The likely outcome will focus on institutional processes rather than subject audits.

10. Quality Working Group Web Site

It would be helpful to increase the range of professional institutions e.g. BPS linked to from the web site. However, it was recognised that there were a very large number of such institutions that had an input into institutional accreditation.

Action: Michael Breaks

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11. **2002 Action Plan**

There had been progress on all actions listed apart from developing links with ILT.

12. **2003 Action Plan**

- Monitor and respond to developments related to the implementation of new QAA quality procedures.
- Liaise with a QAA representative to update her on the Group's activities and to receive information on QAA plans/developments.
- Obtain examples of best practice for external evaluation of library and ICT services and, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Performance Improvement, develop case studies of the new processes to support the membership.
- Disseminate to SCONUL and UCISA representatives' information on quality assurance developments and examples of best practice.
- Further develop the Group's web pages.

13. **Date of Next Meeting**

This could be in May/June 2003.