

Quality Network Meeting 19 October 2010 Summary Notes (and developments following the June 2010 Network meeting)

Network membership

During the summer 2010, line management responsibility for Faculty/Campus Quality Administrators passed from the Learning & Teaching Support Group Managers to the Management Services Group Managers. Management Services Group Managers will now be invited to attend Network meetings and were represented at the 19 October meeting.

Committee business planning

Following the presentation on committee business planning at the June 2010 meeting, a copy of an agenda schedule used for Academic Board and Academic Development Committee meetings had been circulated electronically to Network members. Further consultation to feed into the Committee Review had been carried out during the summer 2010 and Kate Brown (Governance and Secretariat Division) had issued guidance (approved by the University Registrar and circulated to Network members during early October) that the formal Business Plan and Evaluation Document did not have to be completed if a Chair and Secretary felt that it was not appropriate for their committee. Committees should prepare a plan of work for the year, but this may take the form of a simple agenda schedule rather than a full plan.

Network members were invited to contact Kate if they had any queries relating to the guidance.

EQAL

Following the Academic Board approval of the EQAL initiative in June 2010, there had been a significant number of developments relating to aspects of work within Strand 4 (which includes undergraduate programme modification to align with the revised undergraduate credit structure; updated and streamlined PARM procedures; updated and streamlined AME procedures; assessment board re-structure; and Academic Calendar) Nicola advised that the meeting would focus on an update on EQAL and PARM programme modifications, and introduction of a streamlined Partner Approval process. Developments relating to the assessment board structure are ongoing and further advice will be issued in due course. There were no further developments to report on AME and Academic Calendar since the June Network meeting.

Update on EQAL developments

A number of documents and guidance notes with respect to procedures and timelines to be followed in the quality processes for programme modification had been issued to faculty staff during the summer, and many Network members had attended the Quality Enhancement conference "Flexible Learning in a Changing World: the EQAL initiative".

Peggy Cooke advised that the precise scheduling of activity for approval of individual programme modifications will start to take shape once the programme specifications and unit specifications have been drafted and put forward for approval. EQAL Standing Panel meetings to process the modifications have been scheduled for regular slots throughout January and February and these dates had previously been issued to faculties for information. To ensure an even spread of work across the Panel meetings, CASQE will take responsibility for allocation of specific dates to programme teams.

To facilitate timetabling and room booking for 2011/2012, it is essential that all MMU-based programmes adhere to this schedule of dates for their modification process.

With respect to collaborative provision, Peggy is to meet with link tutors and CPO staff on 20 October 2010 to discuss issues relating to EQAL and programme modification. If partners offering externally validated programmes wish to undergo modification to the revised credit structure, these events will be scheduled for the summer term.

Discontinuation of programmes as a result of modifications and reviews should go through the formal process (ie Strategic Approval via SAF) at an early point as there are implications for Recruitment and Admissions in any decisions taken to discontinue routes.

PARM processes

A number of revised and streamlined PARM processes had been put forward to Academic Board and had received approval on 13 October 2010. The various sections of the Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook (ARPH) have been updated and the newly approved versions are now available on the CASQE website. Marian Kelly provided an update on the status of the various CASQE website sets of documentation, and a paper detailing this was tabled for information and will be circulated electronically to Network members following the meeting.

A second document (PARM/EQAL headlines) prepared by Marian gave Network members useful information on a variety of matters relating to approvals, reviews and modifications to take place during 2010/2011. This document, which will also be circulated to members following the meeting, provides information on the dates for the PARM Standing Panel meetings (as distinct from the EQAL Standing Panel meetings referred to above). These dates were confirmed as follows:

- Tuesday 7 December 2010
- Tuesday 8 March 2010
- Tuesday 22 March 2010
- Tuesday 15 April 2010
- (Tuesday 17 May 2010 – NB for collaborative provision ONLY)

Programmes in good standing should be strongly encouraged to opt for the Standing Panel review/modification option, although a final decision on whether this is the appropriate forum for review/modification will be made by Peggy Cooke.

Most approvals will be required to be processed by a faculty-based event, but some market-led initiatives might exceptionally be permitted to be processed by the Standing Panel – Peggy Cooke should be consulted in these cases for a decision.

Training and update for PARM Chairs – for both faculty and Standing Panel events – will take place on 23 November 2010. Once this training has taken place a list of Chairs will be confirmed and circulated to Faculty/Campus Quality Administrators for information.

Peggy highlighted the need to ensure that for all review (and certain modification) activity, meetings with students take place and are recorded – either as part of the event report (for faculty-based full events), or as a separate meeting and report to be presented to the Standing Panel (for events considered for approval in this forum).

Peggy also highlighted the need to ensure that for programmes with collaborative provision, collaborative partners and students at those establishments are encouraged to be fully involved in PARM processes, and advised that scrutiny should normally be undertaken via a faculty-based PARM event.

Partner Approval Process (formerly ILPAR)

Julie Watson advised that the Institutional Level Partner Approval and Review (ILPAR) process had been evaluated following operation during 2009/2010, and a streamlined Partner Approval process, with greater faculty involvement, had been approved by Academic Board on 13 October 2010. A number of Network members had attended a training session on the process led by Julie and Helen Richardson (CPO). An email with a link to the revised ARPH section on the Partner Approval process had been sent to Network members on 18 October 2010.

The revised process will involve partner approvals being considered by a Standing Panel, and the first meeting of the Partner Approval Standing Panel is scheduled for 22 November 2010.

Julie advised that a flowchart detailing the sequencing of activity for partner approval appears as ARPH appendix PA1. Staff are strongly advised to acquaint themselves with and follow this sequence, whereby partners must be approved before specific programmes are developed and offered, to avoid any subsequent embarrassment should the partner not be approved.

Unit Specification database

The “theme” for the meeting was a presentation and discussion concerning the imminent roll out of the Unit Specification database. This database will be used to record all undergraduate (home) units to be approved as part of the EQAL modification process. Guidance notes on its use have been issued to key faculty staff and also appear as a link on the system home page. The system is currently being tested at faculty and central level. Further detail on its operation will be issued on roll out.

Dates of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 14 December 2010. This is a reserve date and will be confirmed if there is a need to hold an additional autumn term meeting.