

CONFIRMED

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING 7/03

Minutes of a meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee held at 2.15pm Thursday 7 August 2003 in the Jim Potter Room, Conference Centre, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne.

Present

Professor Brian Galligan in the Chair, Professor Margaret Britz, Professor Andrew Christie, Dr Mark A Elgar, Dr Mary R. Emison, Dr Richard James, Associate Professor Carol Johnston, Professor Peter McPhee, Mr Nick Melchior, Dr Ann Roberts, Ms Jenny Stephens, Professor Leon Sterling, Associate Professor Peter Tregloan, Mr Lachlan Williams, Professor Doris Young.

Apologies

Professor Kwong Lee Dow, Mr Alexander Lew, Professor Craig McInnis, Professor Alistair Moffat, Professor Johanna Wynn.

Observer

Associate Professor Su Baker.

By Invitation

Dr Jennifer George, Dr Michelle Livett, Emeritus Professor Ian Reid, Professor Jon Robinson.

In Attendance

Ms Karen Roe (Committee Secretary).

BUSINESS

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 10 July 2003 were an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

2.1 Action Sheet

The Committee received the action sheet from the previous meeting, and noted that most items had been completed or would be covered later in the meeting.

3. Review of Academic Programs

3.1 Correspondence with Faculties

3.1.1 Dean of Science

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 17 July 2003 from the Chair to the Dean of Science, with further details of the review of the Bachelor of Science, a request for the faculty to self-evaluate the course and organise focus groups for the faculty visit, and an assurance that the final TALQAC report will be made available for feedback prior to being forwarded to the Academic Board.

3.1.2 Dean of Music

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 17 July 2003 from the Chair to the

Dean of Music, with further details of the review of the Bachelor of Music, a request for the faculty to self-evaluate the course and organise focus groups for the faculty visit, and an assurance that the final TALQAC report will be made available for feedback prior to being forwarded to the Academic Board.

3.1.3 Dean of Law

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 17 July 2003 from the Chair to the Dean of Law, with further details of the review of law postgraduate coursework programs, a request for the faculty to self-evaluate the course and organise focus groups for the faculty visit, and an assurance that the final TALQAC report will be made available for feedback prior to being forwarded to the Academic Board.

3.2 Course Profiles

3.2.1 Bachelor of Science

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 24 July 2003 from the University Planning Office to the Dean of Science, with a course profile of the Bachelor of Science including indicators of student enrolments, ENTER scores, pass rates, EFTSU, fee types, and data from the Course Experience Questionnaire and Graduate Destination Survey.

3.2.2 Bachelor of Music

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 24 July 2003 from the University Planning Office to the Dean of Music, with a course profile of the Bachelor of Music including indicators of student enrolments, ENTER scores, pass rates, EFTSU, fee types, and data from the Course Experience Questionnaire and Graduate Destination Survey.

3.2.3 Law Postgraduate Coursework Programs

The Committee received a memorandum, dated 24 July 2003 from the University Planning Office to the Dean of Law, with a course profile of law postgraduate coursework programs including indicators of student enrolments, completion rates, EFTSU, fee types, and data from the Quality of Teaching Survey, Course Experience Questionnaire and Graduate Destination Survey.

3.3 Faculty Briefings

3.3.1 Faculty of Science

The Committee received from Professor Leon Sterling a verbal report about a briefing session that took place between himself as Chair of the TALQAC review panel (Science), the Dean and General Manager of the Faculty of Science, and Ms Carol Smith of the University Planning Office at 10.30am Tuesday 29 July 2003 to clarify the nature, purpose, limits and priorities of the review of the Bachelor of Science, and discuss the self-evaluation process by the faculty. The review was viewed by the faculty as an opportunity to review the course structure.

3.3.2 Faculty of Music

The Committee received from Dr Mark Elgar a verbal report about a briefing session that took place between the TALQAC review panel (Music), the Dean of Music, and Ms Sue Sleep of the University Planning Office at 11.00am Monday 4 August 2003 to clarify the nature, purpose, limits and priorities of the review of the Bachelor of Music, and discuss the self-evaluation process by the faculty. The review panel emphasized that overall quality assurance would be the focus, rather

than comprehensiveness of detail.

3.3.3 Law School

The Committee received from the Chair a verbal report about a briefing session that took place between the TALQAC review panel (Law), the Dean of Law, and Ms Carol Smith of the University Planning Office at 8.00am Tuesday 5 August 2003 to clarify the nature, purpose, limits and priorities of the review of law postgraduate coursework programs, and discuss the self-evaluation process by the faculty. The Law School advised that it continuously monitors the quality of its programs, and underwent an external review recently.

3.4 Progress Against the 2003 Review Schedule

The Committee reviewed the schedule for the review of academic programs, and noted the faculty visit by the TALQAC review panel (Law) will not take place in late August, because this will be a peak period for launching new programs and enrolling students in the Law School. The visit will take place on 12 September 2003, and the report to TALQAC will be deferred until the October meeting.

3.5 Auditing Higher Education to Improve Quality

The Committee received an article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by William F. Massy, 'Auditing Higher Education to Improve Quality', and noted that it articulates the reasons for conducting the review of academic programs.

3.6 Focus Groups During Faculty Visits

The Committee discussed the types of focus groups required during the three faculty visits. It was agreed that student focus groups should comprise a cross section of year levels and subjects within the course under review. Staff focus groups should comprise course advisors and academic staff from the departments within the respective faculties. In view of the revision and improvement of the Bachelor of Music for 2003, music students within the new and old degree structures will be placed in separate focus groups, and sessional music teachers will be included in the staff focus groups.

4. Evaluation Cycle

4.1 Commencing Students who Discontinue their Courses After Year 1

The Committee received from Dr Mary Emison an 'Analysis of Commencing Students (Bachelor Level) who Discontinue their Courses after Year 1'. The students in the report were those enrolled at 31 March; those outside the census date and those who transferred to other universities were more difficult to analyse. The overall rate of discontinuation at the University was low. Programs that were more selective at intake had the highest retention rate.

4.2 Quality of Teaching Survey – On-Line Surveys

The Committee received a report from the University Planning Office prepared in response to a request from Professor Miles Lewis to conduct the Quality of Teaching surveys 'online' in all subjects offered by the Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning in an effort to improve the response rate. Dr Emison reported that online surveys, even in subjects that are offered online, tend to have lower response rates than the paper surveys. In addition, current processing of the online surveys requires a significant element to be completed manually which would be impossible if there were a substantial increase in the number of subjects using the online surveys. Several members of the Committee also expressed a view that, in the first instance, there were steps the Faculty might take in explaining to students the importance of the survey and providing them with feedback to encourage completion of the paper survey, noting the response rate in some of the Faculty's subjects was quite high.

The Committee approved the recommendation by Dr Emison that the Faculty's request

not be granted at this time given the complications of conducting surveys online. However, the Faculty is encouraged to improve its own internal processes for conduct of the paper survey ensuring that all staff provide advice to students consistent with the Quality of Teaching policy and procedural guidelines. In addition, the University Planning Office will continue to liaise with the Student Administration Office in relation to further automating the processing of online survey outcomes in the short term in anticipation that the new student system will make provision for online surveying on a large scale.

5. Working Groups and Discussion Groups

5.1 Working Group on Minor Thesis

Nil.

5.2 Working Group on Field Placements

The Committee received from the Chair a verbal report on the progress of the Working Group on Field Placements. The recently appointed Vice-Principal and General Counsel, Mr Chris Penman, will assume responsibility for compliance at the University. He will give direction on the issue of field placements before the end of the year. The Working Group will then resume its liaison with the Compliance Office for completion of policy for field placements.

5.3 Working Group on Assessment

The Committee received from Professor Leon Sterling a verbal report on the progress of the Working Group on Assessment. He is Acting Chair of the Working Group while Professor Craig McInnis is on leave from the University during August-September 2003. The Working Group continues to compile documents, assess the uniformity of entries in the undergraduate handbook, and examine assessment practices at the University.

5.4 Working Group on Plagiarism

The Committee received from Professor Sterling the final report from the Working Group on Plagiarism. It was agreed the name should be changed to the Working Group on Academic Honesty. The trial of the ASSESS and COPICAT plagiarism detection system has been completed. It revealed a small amount of plagiarism among student submissions. Awareness of the system among students has been found to have a deterring effect.

The Committee **endorsed for recommendation to the Academic Board** the following recommendations within the report from the Working Group:

- a. The University expands the trial of ASSESS+COPICAT in 2004 to gain a better understanding of the workflow and integration issues surrounding a successful solution on a larger scale.
- b. The University should seriously consider using plagiarism detection software that can act as an effective deterrent.
- c. Any such software that the university chooses to implement should seamlessly integrate with university systems and existing workflow in order to minimise, and not increase, the workload of staff and students. This integration should be flexible enough to accommodate any future changes to university systems.
- d. Any such software should be integrated with university plagiarism policy, and require students to declare that submissions are not plagiarised.
- e. The submission system and plagiarism detection engine should be configurable via options rather than programming. This will provide subject coordinators with the flexibility to choose the submission and plagiarism detection parameters appropriate for their subject.

Professor McPhee advised the University expects to introduce a plagiarism detection system in 2004, whether it be ASSESS with COPICAT or another system. A plagiarism

detection system would support the University policy of academic honesty by deterring plagiarism with sample trials across the faculties, rather than policing all submissions with comprehensive monitoring of all subjects. The Working Group will prepare a proposal for a larger trial in 2004 for the Academic Board. Funding for scoping the larger trial has been allocated.

The Committee received from Ms Celia Thompson, Language and Learning Skills Unit, a draft amendment to the University policy on plagiarism. The Secretary was requested to circulate the website address of the University policy to the members, and Dr Richard James undertook to circulate a report by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education on minimising plagiarism.

5.5 Working Group on Transition

The Committee received the revised report from the Working Group on Transition. Associate Professor Carol Johnston verbally reported that transition programs that are integrated with teaching practices have the largest impact. Professor McPhee requested the report be forwarded to the Orientation Committee for comment, and that Associate Professor Johnston speak at the October meeting of the Academic Board about the findings.

5.6 Meeting on Postgraduate Coursework

The Committee received from the Chair a verbal report on the progress of the meetings to discuss quality in postgraduate coursework programs. A forum on postgraduate coursework will be organised by Professor McPhee.

6. 2002 Universitas 21 Teaching Fellowship Travel

The Chair welcomed Dr Michelle Livett and Dr Jennifer George as guest speakers for this item.

The Committee received a presentation from Dr Livett on her visits to the University of British Columbia, University of Michigan, University of Virginia and the University of Nottingham in August-September 2003 as a Universitas 21 Fellow. She reported on the different approaches to transition and orientation at the four universities. The Committee noted her recommendations that the University of Melbourne:

1. develop a strategy to more effectively articulate the Orientation Week program with the Transition Program and faculty-specific transition strategies;
2. Transition Program considers further ways of incorporating parents into the transition strategies of the university;
3. continue to foster the development of students' skills for the transition to the workplace via undergraduate work experience and research experience programs.

The Committee received a presentation from Dr George on her visits to the National University of Singapore, University of New South Wales, University of Southern California and the University of California in 2003 as a Universitas 21 Fellow. She reported that part-time students face the following problems:

1. tiredness,
2. lack of time to prepare for class,
3. difficulty in getting to class on time, or at all,
4. a perception they are given less resources and services than full-time students,
5. lack of a feeling of cohort and difficulty in building relationships,
6. lack of time to participate in extra curricular activities,
7. time to complete the program.

She reported that part-time students have the following advantages:

1. support from employers, financial and job stability,
2. the chance to implement what they learn in the workplace,

3. the chance to bring workplace issues to bear in the classroom.

The Chair thanked Dr Livett and Dr George for their presentations and complemented them on their work.

7. Best Practice in Professional Postgraduate Coursework

The Chair welcomed Emeritus Professor Ian Reid as a guest speaker and Professor Jon Robinson as an observer for this item.

The Committee received a presentation on 'Best Practice in Professional Postgraduate Coursework' by Professor Reid. He surveyed and interviewed staff in schools/faculties of business, health and education project in a project sponsored by the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC). The Committee noted his recommendation of the following criteria for best practice in postgraduate coursework programs:

1. Prospective students can easily obtain detailed, clear, and up-to-date information about the course.
2. Entry standards and procedures appropriately combine rigour, equity and flexibility.
3. The course is regularly benchmarked against comparable courses elsewhere, to validate claims made about its quality, distinctiveness, etc.
4. Information about learning outcomes is routinely obtained, compared with graduate attribute profiles and professional competency standards, and used to improve course quality.
5. The structure of the course matches its objectives.
6. The curriculum content has enough intellectual depth, scholarly currency and wide practical applicability to justify its being offered at a postgraduate level.
7. The course strikes a suitable balance between vocational training and generalist education (e.g. by developing high order cognitive skills).
8. Relevant industry/ professional activities are integrated into the course.
9. The teaching/learning interaction engages the students as adult learners whose experience is valued.
10. The mode of delivery ensures suitable access and flexible study options for the target group.
11. Feedback to students on their progress is provided frequently, informatively and constructively.
12. Feedback is obtained systematically from students about their perceptions of the quality of the course, including how well it is taught.
13. Assessment is fair and transparent (e.g. it accurately reflects individual effort and performance, gives the student opportunities to learn from mistakes, and involves rigorously monitored exam standards).
14. There is consistency of standards between units and teachers.
15. Assessment requirements are aligned with course objectives, and flexible enough to link theory with professional practice.
16. Teachers recognise individual student circumstances and are personally supportive.
17. The needs of students with different cultural backgrounds are met.
18. Assistance is readily available for special needs, e.g. linguistic support for NESB students.
19. There are adequate resources (e.g. library, IT, clinical) to support the course.
20. The course is responsive to input and evaluation from the relevant professional/industry bodies.
21. Information is provided about post-course employment.
22. Networking opportunities in the relevant field are promoted.
23. Graduates from the course have a high employment rate and high workplace approval.
24. Those who teach in the course have excellent credentials, both in academic terms (including research knowledge) and in professional terms (including relevant industry experience).

25. The course as a whole - in its administrative arrangements, content, learning environment, its assessment procedures, support services, and relationship to the relevant professional context - gives value for money.

Professor Reid will provide the Committee with a copy of a CD rom from the recent conference in Adelaide, 'Inaugural Quality in Postgraduate Coursework Conference', where he was the keynote speaker. The Secretary will circulate the CD rom to the members and advise the AUTC website address where the results of Professor Reid's research will be posted.

8. TALQAC Website

The Committee noted that a TALQAC website is now online at <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/abp/talqac/>, and that access is restricted to the University of Melbourne. The Secretary sought feedback from the members by email.

9. Other Business

Nil.

10. Next Meeting

The Committee noted the next meeting will be held at 2.15pm Thursday 11 September 2003 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 4.20pm.

DISTRIBUTION

Members

Professor Brian Galligan, Head, Department of Political Science (Chair)
Professor Margaret Britz, Head, Gilbert Chandler Institute of Land and Food Resources
Professor Andrew Christie, Director, Intellectual Property Research Institute of Australia, Law School
Mr Scott Crawford, President, Melbourne University Student Union
Dr Mark A Elgar, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology
Dr Mary R. Emison, Director, University Planning Office
Associate Professor Ken Gelder, Director of Research, English with Cultural Studies
Dr Richard James, Associate Professor, Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Associate Professor Carol Johnston, Director, Teaching and Learning Unit, Faculty of Economics and Commerce
Professor Kwong Lee Dow, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Staff)
Mr Alexander Lew, Education Officer, Melbourne University Student Union
Professor Craig McInnis, Director, Centre for the Study of Higher Education (Deputy Chair)
Professor Peter McPhee, President of the Academic Board, Department of History
Mr Nick Melchior, Research Education Officer, University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association
Professor Alistair Moffat, Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering
Professor Terry Nolan, Head, School of Population Health, and Associate Dean (Research), School of Graduate Studies
Professor Field Rickards, Vice-President of the Academic Board, Department of Learning and Educational Development
Dr Ann Roberts, Department of Physics
Ms Jenny Stephens, Director, Academic Services (Student Programs)
Professor Leon Sterling, Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering
Associate Professor Peter Tregloan, School of Chemistry
Mr Lachlan Williams, President, University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association
Professor Johanna Wyn, Head, Department of Education Policy and Management
Professor Doris Young, Department of General Practice

Observer

Associate Professor Su Baker, Head, School of Art, Victorian College of the Arts

By Invitation

Dr Jennifer George, Associate Dean of Students, Melbourne Business School
Dr Michelle Livett, Director of First Year Studies in Physics, School of Physics

Emeritus Professor Ian Reid, Professorial Associate, Faculty of Arts, and Principal Consultant, ReidMac Consulting Services

Professor Jon Robinson, Professor of Property and Construction, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning

In Attendance

Ms Karen Roe, Committee Secretary, Central Secretariat (x47528, k.roe@unimelb.edu.au)

For Information

Complete papers

Mr Russell Hillbrich, General Manager, Student Administration

Mr Ian Marshman, Senior Vice-Principal

Central Records, University Secretary's Department

Agenda (without attached papers) and confirmed minutes

Ms Janet Beard, General Manager, Institute of Land and Food Resources

Mr Lachlan Cameron, Director, Student Administration and Systems, Academic Services

Ms Elizabeth Capp, General Manager, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning

Ms Suzanne Dixon, General Manager, Faculty of Economics and Commerce

Ms Helen Hayes, Vice-Principal (Information)

Ms Elizabeth Lightfoot, General Manager, Faculty of Veterinary Science

Ms Lin Martin, Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar

Mr Robert Northey, General Manager, Faculty of Music

Ms Maddy McMaster, General Manager, Faculty of Education

Ms Joan Reese, General Manager, Faculty of Engineering

Professor Paul Rizzo, Director, Melbourne Business School

Dr Christopher Stewardson, General Manager, Faculty of Science

Mrs Penny Swain, General Manager, Faculty of Law

Ms Lynne Wrout, General Manager, Faculty of Arts

Ms Fiona Zammit, General Manager, School of Graduate Studies