

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
ACADEMIC BOARD

TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING 2/07

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15pm on Thursday 8 March 2007 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne, Parkville.

MINUTES

PRESENT

Committee Members

Professor A Moffat (Acting Chair), Professor H Jackson, Associate Professor M Guillemin, Professor T Goodwin, Professor P Pattison, Professor G Stevens, Associate Professor P Tregloan, Professor R James, Professor R Huggins, Professor L Sonenberg, Professor M Considine, Associate Professor S Holloway, Ms S Daroesman, Ms S Beattie, Ms B Ahrens, Ms L Buckingham, Mr H Fong and Mr P Fijn.

Observers

Ms D Harrison

In Attendance

Ms T Wilding attended for item 6.5 and Ms K Menezes (Committee Secretary).

BUSINESS

1. Formal Matters

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members attending their first TALQAC meeting; Associate Professor R Misson, Professor M Considine and Associate Professor M Guillemin.

1.2 Apologies

The Committee received apologies from Professor L Hawthorne, Associate Professor M Crosby, Professor P Bhalla and Professor J Borland.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the TALQAC meeting held on Thursday 8 February 2007 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Action Sheet

Item 1 and 3: Melbourne/Monash Report on Academic Honesty and TaLMET Evaluation Report

Associate Professor Tregloan reported that TaLMET will be meeting on Tuesday, 13 March and once the relevant reports are finalised they will be presented to TALQAC.

Item 2: 2006 Course Review of ABP

Ms Daroesman reported that this has been delayed due to the heavy Faculty workload in relation to business planning; in addition ABP has experienced a change of Dean and FGM. Ms Sleep (UPO) has had several preliminary discussions with the Faculty and it is envisaged that the review should be substantially complete by approximately the end of June.

Item 4: TALQAC responsibilities for 2007

Ms Daroesman suggested that since the QA responsibility of the new degrees sits with BUGS and in light of the current discussions being undertaken over progression to fourth year Honours and Masters Programs, it might be more appropriate for TALQAC to develop a clearer structure/framework on how it will approach and manage QA, prior to undertaking this activity in 2007. Mr Fijn expressed concern that in view of TALQAC's scoping of QA activities, the review of the Honours programs may get overlooked. Professor Moffat suggested that a timeline be set up for a review of the process, QA and administration of Honours programs as part of a list of priorities for TALQAC. Professor Patterson recommended that this be prefaced by a Discussion Paper on TALQAC's QA role in the new environment prepared by herself, Professor Hawthorne, Ms Daroesman and Professor Skene.

4 Other Committees

4.1 MM08 Taskforce Update

Professor Pattison reported that the MM08 Taskforce is involved in important implementation decisions prior to the launch of the new Melbourne Model in April 2007 for which a significant marketing campaign is being undertaken. There is currently considerable discussion on the quality of the student experience and the services that will deliver this. Course Standing Committees are working through the fine detail of course structures to enable a consistent description of the new degrees to be made to prospective students.

4.2 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)

With a number of members having to attend a UGPC meeting scheduled concurrently, there was no discussion under this item.

4.3 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)

As Associate Professor Misson had to attend the UGPC meeting there was no discussion under this item.

4.4 Teaching and Learning (Multimedia and Educational Technologies) Committee (TaLMET)

Associate Professor Tregloan reported that TaLMET's first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 13 April 2007, and requested a TALQAC representative on TaLMET. Interested members are invited to contact Associate Professor Tregloan as soon as possible.

The cap of 30,000 students in LMS active subjects has been reached, so no further subjects for Semester I 2007 will be loaded. Professor Moffat queried if there was any data indicating the number of logins/level of student interaction with LMS active subjects. Associate Professor Tregloan agreed that some measure of the level of student engagement with LMS active subjects is worth further investigation.

4.5 Melbourne Experience Committee (MEC)

Professor Sonenberg reported that the Melbourne Experience Committee meets monthly and is involved in a range of discussions between various groups across the University on the Melbourne Experience of current and perspective students under the new Melbourne Model.

4.6 School of Enterprise Committee

There was no report under this item.

4.7 Student Reports

Ms Buckingham (Education Officer-UMSU) reported the concerns of students in the Mathematics and Statistics Department. Students have complained that there is overcrowding in tutorials resulting in both learning and EH&S issues. Members recommended that the most appropriate course of action for the students was to formally approach the Head of Department, and if they are dissatisfied with the response to then escalate the issue further to the Associate Dean (Academic) and then the Dean.

5 Evaluation Cycle and Quality Measures

5.1 Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching Report on Semester 2 2006 and Trend Data

Ms Daroesman outlined the format of the report and invited members to contact her with any feedback on the layout.

The QoT results indicate that overall students are largely satisfied with most but not all aspects of their subjects. Semester II 2006 outcomes are slightly improved over Semester I 2006, which had dipped from the previous semester. The undergraduate percent agree or strongly agree is at its highest level or equal highest level on all questions. Postgraduate students continue to express a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of their course.

Areas with low outcomes include students' perceptions of:

- Feedback on their progress (Question 4)
- Their learning community (Question 6) and

- The use of ICT in their subjects (Questions 7 and 8)

It is to be noted however that outcomes in each of these areas are improving. In relation to student feedback on Questions 7 and 8, Ms Daroesman noted that due to differences in uptake and appropriateness of Information and Communication Technologies across Faculties, evaluation of Question 7 (computer based) and Question 8 (web based) is difficult. For the benefit of TaLMET, UPO will consider providing further analysis of the data for these questions.

Other areas of concern include:

- Subjects which are frequently rated low. Nearly half of the subjects with a mean rating of less than 3.2 on Question 2 (well taught) this semester were previously rated low, including 15 on two or more occasions
- Outcomes in three Faculties are persistently below the University average: Architecture, Building and Planning, Economics and Commerce and Engineering.
- The undergraduate response rate is low, or decreasing in five Faculties: Architecture, Building and Planning, Arts, Economics and Commerce, Engineering and Law. It was noted that this may get worse as more subjects go online.

The Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching, Report on Semester 2 2006 and Trend Data will be sent as part of the TALQAC Report to Academic Board.

6 Working Groups

6.1 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

The Working Group will nominate a Chair and schedule meetings for 2007 prior to the April meeting of TALQAC.

6.2 Faculty Assessment Practices

Members received and noted the 2006 Report presented by the Faculty Assessment Practices Working Group. It was noted that there currently exists a diversity of assessment practices and interpretation of University policy in relation to assessment across the institution.

The Working Group made the following recommendations:

- Policy:** The Working Group recommended the development of a University website that is accessible to staff and students for consistent information as well as one mechanism to inform relevant stakeholders of any changes. (It has since been ascertained that a new website does exist but not all students are aware of this.)
- Communication:** Review communication guidelines for informing all staff of changes in policy as well as development of clear policy on training requirements. Ensure all lecturers in charge provide clear marking guidelines so marking is undertaken at a similar standard. It was noted that this is a significant issue, especially in Faculties with large numbers of sessional staff.
- Plagiarism:** Turnitin is best utilised as an educational rather than a punitive tool.

Associate Professor Tregloan observed that the University licence currently has a ceiling of 10,000 students which will be reached soon, so this limits any dramatic increase in the use of the software.

- d) **Hurdle Requirements and Particular Requirements:** Diversity in requirements needs to be made clear and a review would be beneficial as to whether hurdle and particular subject requirements should be handled the same way.
- e) **Special Consideration:** The diversity in the administration of Special Consideration raises issues of equity and fairness. The Special Considerations Working Group is working on a model which takes these issues into consideration and this will be made available to the University community in 2007.
- f) **Alternative Exam Arrangements:** The University policy for alternative examination arrangements needs to be more explicit and communicated to both staff and students. Members agreed that work is necessary in this area.
- g) **Late submission of Assignments:** A consistent approach to the late submission of assignments is required and this needs to be clearly communicated to students. There was agreement on the need for consistency in handling this issue.
- h) **On-line Assessment:** The use of formal online assessment needs to be reviewed in line with current LMS policy to see if there is conflict.
- i) **Scaling:** There should be a consistent set of principles and the process should be transparent. Members recommended that this point needs to be elaborated on further and rather than 'scaling' should be referred to as monitoring and QA of grade distribution/moderation. It was noted that this has the potential of becoming a bigger issue with the New Generation Degrees.

A revised version of this Report will be forwarded to UGPC and PCPC for consideration.

6.3 Peer Review of Teaching

Professor James reported that a generic model of the Peer Review of Teaching has been developed with a set of guidelines for academic staff. The Department of Zoology, School of Philosophy, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the School of Physiotherapy have been invited to trial this model in Semester I 2007. MBS has volunteered to participate in the trial as well. The Working Group will evaluate the outcomes and report later in 2007.

6.4 Acquisition of Generic Skills

There was no report under this item.

6.5 Student Advice Working Group

Professor Pattison thanked all staff involved, in particular Professor Hawthorne and Ms Wilding. The Working Group paper aimed to define the principles and guidelines for the Melbourne Student Advice Model and highlight issues that need further consideration. The paper recommends a triage model whereby quick queries are addressed by Tier 1 staff, and more complex issues addressed by Tier 2 and 3 staff; and that this arrangement is to be available to all continuing and New Generation degree students.

The following points were discussed:

- a) It was noted that the paper predominately addressed an undergraduate rather than a Graduate model and this needs to be made clear. While postgraduate students are welcome to use the Student Centres, their main course advice will be via their Faculties or Graduate Schools where students are more comfortable within their academic community.
- b) There was concern that in an era where research in the public sector indicated that a decentralised rather than a centralised version of service delivery is more effective, the University is embarking on a relatively contracted/centralised model in comparison to the current distributed model where student advice is available in Schools, Departments and Faculties. It was recommended that the model include the dot point that some level of the student advice services will be delivered via existing facilities in Schools, Departments and Faculties rather than purely in a small number of concentrated geographic locations.
- c) In relation to the query on the informal advice given by academic staff in their day to day interactions with students, it was noted that while this was not to be discouraged, staff will need to be informed of the limits of the advice to be provided in this mode. It was agreed that expert advice should only be delivered by trained, clearly delineated professional and academic staff with accurate information on University policies, procedures, programs and services.
- d) The importance of informed, objective and pedagogically sound breadth advice was crucial to the success of the Melbourne Model and the provision of this by trained Student Advisors was thus critical.
- e) In response to the issue of co-ordination between Tier 1, 2 and 3 staff to ensure consistency, it was noted that all student interactions with Student Advice staff will be documented and retrievable within the constraints of Privacy Legislation.
- f) The aspirational ratio in the model is of 1 student advisor to approximately 150-200 EFT students. It is difficult to accurately gauge the current student staff ratio as, in addition to advising approximately 250-300 students current Student Advice staff also have other responsibilities.
- g) The paper recommended two mandatory points of academic contact with students in undergraduate degrees; for all commencing students during Orientation; and half way through the degree, at which point discussion of potential majors and pathway options of employment or progression to Honours or Masters Programs can occur.
- h) In terms of implementation, the Working Group recommended that partial implementation in 2008 with the establishment of two proposed Student Centres and full implementation of the Tier 1-3 Melbourne Student Advice Model be undertaken in 2009.

The paper will form part of the TALQAC Report to the 22nd March meeting of Academic Board. It will also be presented at the March meeting of the Melbourne Experience Committee and will finally be sent to PBC for information.

6.6 Assessment Implementation Working Group

There was no report under this item.

6.7 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

Associate Professor M Guillemain volunteered to be the TALQAC representative on the Examinations Working Group and will provide a report to TALQAC after each EWG meeting.

6.8 TALQAC/TaLMET Working Group on Support Technology for Academic Honesty and other QA/IT Activities

There was no report under this item.

7 For Information

Members noted the updated TALQAC 2007 Membership document with the full name of each member and the School/Department/Faculty they belonged to.

8 Other Business

There was no discussion under this item.

9 Next Meeting

The next TALQAC meeting will be held from 2:15-4:15 pm on Thursday 12 April 2007 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, University of Melbourne. Most members indicated that they would attend this meeting which is scheduled in the University non-teaching week.

The meeting closed at 4:05 pm.

Chair: *Simon* Date: 12/4/07

DISTRIBUTION

Committee Members

Professor Leslyanne Hawthorne - CHAIR
Professor Prem Bhalla
Professor Jeff Borland
Associate Professor Ray Misson
Ms Suzanne Daroesman
Professor Peter McPhee
Professor Liz Sonenberg
Associate Professor Sue Elliott
Mr Paul Fijn
Ms Bree Ahrens
Professor Tony Goodwin
Professor Henry Jackson
Professor Richard James
Professor Alistair Moffat
Professor Pip Pattison
Ms Libby Buckingham
Professor Geoff Stevens
Professor Richard Huggins
Associate Professor Steven Holloway
Professor Mark Considine
Associate Professor Marilyns Guillemin
Ms Sally Beattie
Mr. Hubert Fong
Associate Professor Mark Crosby
Associate Professor Peter Tregloan

Observers

Associate Professor Su Baker
Ms Diana Harrison

In Attendance

Ms Kathy Menezes (Committee Secretary)

For Information

Mr Russell Hillbrich,
Mr Ian Marshman
Minutes Office, University Secretary's Department

Agenda (without attached papers) and confirmed minutes – electronic distribution

Ms Janet Beard
Mr Lachlan Cameron
Ms Suzanne Dixon
Mr Richard Frampton
Ms Linda O'Brien
Ms Elizabeth Capp
Mr Robert Northey
Ms Suzanne Parker

Mrs Joan Reese
Mr Neil Robinson
Dr Christopher Stewardson
Ms Lynne Wrout
Ms Fiona Zammit