A meeting was held on 18 January 2005 in the Senate Chamber at the University.

Present:
From the University: Malcolm Dixon, Assistant Registrar, Quality Assurance and Validation (Chair)
Margaret Anderson, Humanities Faculty Office
Georgina Barretta, Partnership Development Office
Dave Coombe, Social Sciences Faculty Officer
Dave Cummings, Academic Support Co-ordinator, UELT
Ian Davidson, Partnership Development Office
Gary Edwards, Student Records Office
Amy Gostling, Student Records Office
Jayne Hornsby, Head of Student Records Office
Dr Andrew MacGregor, STMS Faculty Officer
Vanessa Nedderman, Partnership Development Office
Janet Reynolds, Quality Assurance and Validation
Ann Tull, STMS Faculty Office

Liaison Officers: Richard Jones, Computing
Robert Oven, Electronics
Fred Ryder, Business

External Adviser: Prim Dufton, Early Childhood Studies
Michael Smith, Engineering

From Edexcel: Len Evans, Lead Examiner
Bernadette Katchoff, HE Regional Development Manager

External Examiners: Eric Hewitt, Construction and Civil Engineering
Bryan Hughes, Travel and Tourism
Chris Newcombe, Engineering

From Canterbury College: Danielle Banyai, Co-ordinator Public Sector
Simon Bigrigg, Media Production (Moving Image)
Karen Browne, Curriculum Development
Sarah Davies, Co-ordinator for Performing Arts
Caroline Hadlow, Assistant Principal
Paul Mathew, Faculty Leader, Creative Arts
Rachel Mann, Manager for HE
Gareth Sandell, Music Production
Anna Webber, Fine Arts

From Mid-Kent College: Ray Fielder, Building and Civil Engineering
Chris Harrison, Quality Manager
Daphne Rowlands, HE Manager
Peter Webb, Electrical & Hardware Engineering

From South Kent College: Nigel Gibson, HE Co-ordinator
Christopher Hunt
1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Tom Evershed, Janet French, Mike Fuller, Grant Gover, Gary Hargreaves, Bill Jenkins, Sally Klemen, Keith Lampard, Su Holmes, Linda Howard, Louise Naylor, Grant Pooke, John Reilly, Geoff Roberts, Frank Sowrey, Pam Stevens, Sian Stevenson, John Turton and Sheila Wood.

2. Welcome and Minutes

Malcolm Dixon explained that Dr Louise Naylor – Head of Quality Assurance and Validation – was unwell and therefore unable to attend the meeting. He welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced Len Evans, University Lead Examiner, and Bernadette Katchoff, HE Regional Development Manager from Edexcel. He also noted the attendance of some University External Advisers and, for the first time, External Examiners.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2004 were confirmed. There were no matters arising.

3. Feedback on External Examiners’ Reports

The annual report from the University Lead Examiner was tabled. Len Evans noted that all reports had been received on time. He noted the reports had identified two main issues:

1. The need for clear grading criteria especially for merit and distinction levels.
2. Ensuring that a sufficient range of learners’ work is available for the external examiners’ preview

Malcolm Dixon noted that Edexcel has provided guidance on Pass levels but not on Merit and Distinction levels. He also asked the Lead Examiner for some examples of the good practice identified. Len Evans reported that the following were examples of good practice:

1. Course handbooks
2. Assignment briefs
3. Feedback to students

4. Clarification of Continuation of Funding for Higher Nationals

Bernadette Katchoff confirmed that all programmes funded by HEFCE under the Edexcel Licence Agreement, including the University’s raft of existing legacy programmes, would be funded for the life of the Licence Agreement i.e. last funded intake will be in 2006/07, with learners completing in 2007/08.

Funding after the life of the Licence Agreement had not been confirmed.

5. Transfer of ‘Legacy’ Programmes to University Format

Malcolm Dixon noted that the University inherited approximately 75 HNC/HND programmes under the Licence Agreement. Twelve new or
revamped legacy programmes went through the approval process in 2003/04. These were approved or approved subject to conditions.

He also noted that, as the University was required to publish all programme specifications by December 2004, it had originally been agreed that all ‘legacy’ programmes should be put into the University format for programme specification by the end of November 2004. This task had met with varying degrees of success - Canterbury College had now transferred all programmes to the University format. In the meantime, the University had reconsidered this task and decided that, rather than complete was essentially a bureaucratic exercise, it was actually much more important to redevelop the curriculum and bring the programmes up to date. Learning and Teaching Board had subsequently agreed:

1. That action was required to re-develop the raft of current HN programmes, with the aim of producing up-to-date programmes that were relevant to local College needs and provided progression routes to University degree programmes;
2. That ways of supporting the development of HN curricula, though the possible ‘buy-out’ of College and University staff time, should be investigated;
3. That the Board's requirement for the translation of existing HN programmes unamended into the University's format for programme specification was a deflection of staff time and energy from the real task of curricula development and, as such, should not be insisted upon.

Mr Hughes asked whether the University planned to rationalise provision so that the same programme in a discipline is offered at all three Associate Colleges. Malcolm Dixon agreed that this was desirable but that it may be necessary to offer different pathways in a single programme according to local needs. The core of the programme could be common, however.

Bernadette Katchoff suggested that use of the standard Qualification Requirements designed by Edexcel could provide assistance with local programme development. This did not mean lifting modules or units written by Edexcel but drawing upon the areas of the curriculum highlighted in the QR. It was noted that the Qualification Requirement is similar type of document to the Subject Benchmark.

6. Procedures under Licence Agreement

Malcolm Dixon noted that, as this was the first year of the Licence Agreement, some procedural changes were required. Annexes N and O of the Code of Practice had been revised:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/code2001/index.html

The following Procedure Notes had been circulated:

1. Appointment of External Examiners
2. Liaison Officers/External Advisers
3. Boards of Examiners
4. Approval route for new Franchised Programmes
Malcolm Dixon noted that the procedure notes had been derived from the Code of Practice for Quality Assurance. He said that the notes were designed to be flexible and that the Office for Quality Assurance and Validation would welcome feedback. Updated notes would be posted on the QA web site at:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/collaboration/franchise/index.htm

He was aware that there had been some tension and difficulty in the appointment of external examiners and external advisers and that closer liaison between the Faculties, Liaison Officers and Colleges was required. Faculties were used to having Departments nominate suitable people.

Richard Jones noted that the Appendix to Annex O (paragraph 2) contained a note stating that the requirement for an External Examiner to be a Senior Lecturer or above at an ‘old’ university or a Principal Lecturer or above at a ‘new’ university may not be appropriate for External Examiners of HNC/HND programmes and suggested that Annex K should be amended to reflect this. This was noted and would be taken forward.

Malcolm Dixon noted that it was crucial that Colleges and Departments/Faculties complete the process of the appointment of Boards of Examiners. Colleges would be required to appoint a Deputy Chair and Secretary for each Board and the Chair would be a University member. The Deputy Chair must ensure that draft examination papers and other assignments that contribute 20% or more to the final module grade are signed off by the External Examiner, as per the long-standing requirements of the Code of Practice. It was noted that none of the Colleges presently do this, not even for their degree level provision. The representatives of all three Colleges expressed strong concern that this was a procedure they were unused to, and that it would introduce alarming delays and difficulties into their current procedures, particularly as it would represent so large scale a change from current practice. The concerns of the Colleges were noted and it was agreed that a way should be found to propose the implementation of this procedure according to a sensible timescale. It was agreed that a meeting of the Working Group on the Licence Agreement (although not purely an Exexcel matter) should be arranged to discuss the process of sending assignments to External Examiners in detail and to agree a way forward.

**Action: QA&V**

Malcolm Dixon suggested that the approval route for all new programmes should be standardised so that all new programmes are considered by a Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee. This was generally agreed.

It was suggested that a Procedure Note be produced on External Examiners’ Reports.

**Action: QA&V**

7. **Clarification of Arrangements for 2004/05**

Gary Edwards asked for clarification of notification of results, withdrawals and late registrations. Bernadette Katchoff and Gary agreed to discuss these matters outside of the meeting.
Bernadette asked about progress on the design of the HNC/HND certificates. Janet Reynolds said that the University’s Communication and Development Office had this in hand. It was noted that these would be required for academic year 2005/06.

8. **Appointment of External Examiners/External Advisers and Liaison Officers**

http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/collaboration/franchise/index.htm

A paper was circulated showing appointments made to date. It was agreed that the Faculties would liaise with Departments and Colleges to try to fill the gaps and that an updated paper would be circulated when available.

9. **Staff Development**

Malcolm Dixon noted that training on the complexities of the Credit Framework and procedures for Boards of Examiners was crucial.

UELТ had held staff development days at Canterbury College and South Kent College and some feedback had been received. A module had been devised as part of the PGCHE programme but College staff had been reluctant to take this up.

Dave Cummings noted that a 0.5 appointment had been in UELТ for staff development of staff in FE Colleges. He asked for more direction about what training is required. Caroline Hadlow said the Colleges needed to know what the University needed them to know.

It had been suggested that a Handbook be produced as an extract of the Code of Practice. It was agreed that this would be welcomed by the Colleges.

It was agreed that the Working Group would meet to decide in detail what areas of training still needed to be covered.

Len Evans said that a training day for External Examiners had been arranged by Edexcel for the 16 March 2005 at Loughborough University. The programme would shortly be sent to universities for them to notify their external examiners.

10. **Annual Monitoring Reports**

Faculty Offices had tabled reports showing which Annual Monitoring Reports from Colleges were still outstanding.

11. **Any Other Business**

A paper with proposals for revising QA procedures with Licensed Centres had been circulated. The University had already responded to Edexcel suggesting that method 3.2 be adopted.

Bob Oven asked whether more funding would be available to Departments now that three members of a Department were required to become members of Boards of Examiners. Malcolm Dixon agreed to take this forward.
Action: QA&V

He also asked who the three members would be when there is no cognate Department. It was agreed that this needed to be resolved.

Action: QA&V

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.