EDEXCEL FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2007

A meeting was held on 24 January 2007 in Darwin Conference Suite at the University.

Present:

From the University: Malcolm Dixon, Quality Assurance and Validation Manager (Chair)

Jane Anderson, Partnership Development Officer
Margaret Anderson, Humanities Faculty Office
Anita Bampton, Student Records Office
Ian Davidson, Partnership Development Office
Linda Lough, Social Sciences Faculty Officer
Dr Andrew MacGregor, STMS Faculty Officer
Vanessa Nedderman, Partnership Development Officer
Mary Nolan, Quality Assurance and Validation
Jon Pink, Academic Registrar
Janet Reynolds, Quality Assurance and Validation
Ann Tull, STMS Faculty Office

Liaison Officers: Robert Oven, Electronics

From Edexcel: Ian Fleming, HE Manager
Lesley Brook, Regional Development Manager

From Canterbury College: Nick Baser, Faculty Leader HE Business and Social Sciences
Andrew Baxter, Faculty Leader Science and Technology
Karen Browne, Curriculum Development
Rachel Mann, Operational Manager for HE

From Mid-Kent College: Paul Broad, Business
Tracey Parker, Travel and Tourism

From South Kent College: Neil Newman, Quality Unit
Zeph Norrish, Engineering

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Bigrigg, Francesco Cerminara, Sarah Davies, Ray Fielder, Jez Giddings, Caroline Hadlow, Su Holmes, Jayne Hornsby, Bernadette Katchoff, Keith Lampard, Pat Lowndes, Louise Naylor, Daphne Rowlands, Maureen Shaw, Yong Yan.

2. Welcome and Minutes

Malcolm Dixon welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Ian Fleming (Edexcel HE Manager) and Lesley Brook (Regional Development Manager) and noted that Bernadette Katchoff (Edexcel Regional Development Manager) was unable to attend.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2006 were confirmed.
3. **Edexcel Report** *(Handouts attached)*

### 3.1 Overview of Higher National Provision

Ian Fleming noted that privately funded HNC/HND programmes remain an area of growth. In 2006/07 total registrations number approximately 42,000 to date, with the increase mainly due to international registrations. The UK numbers have diminished slightly but registrations were still being received as some programmes commence later in the year. There were currently 12,000 registrations under the Licence Agreement.

### 3.2 Revision of Licence Agreement

Ian Fleming made reference to the so-called “Myth of 2008”; i.e. that HEFCE funding for all HNC/HND programmes would cease in 2008 – this was a misconception. The arrangements for sub-degree funding were merely to be reviewed in 2008, with no implication that they might be terminated.

Ian reported that the EdExcel Working Group convened to update the Licence has produced a revised document which has more flexibility built-in and contains simplified guidance. A draft of the new Licence Agreement would be sent to institutions for consultation in February 2007. It was hoped that this would then be launched at the EdExcel Conference in March, with changes coming into effect from September 2007.

### 3.3 IQER

Ian reported that the new form of QAA review for HE in FE - IQER – was underway in a pilot basis in 15 centres this year, one of which was under Licence to the University of Kent. IQER will be conducted in all FE institutions regardless of the type of funding. The QAA have agreed to a full external review of the pilot. As the review process was more like the HE process than OFSTED, it entailed a steep learning curve for FE staff in most institutions. HE partners were expected to be involved in the process. Further information can be found on the QAA website.

### 3.4 Revision of Higher Nationals

Lesley Brooks noted that the process of revising the HN model has begun to ensure that these programmes are as up-to-date as possible. A questionnaire had been sent to institutions in November asking for input to the new document. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to these minutes but can also be found at:


Edexcel are considering various options

- new qualifications (i.e. half-HNC and/or half-HND) so that students can be accommodated on vocational qualifications on a more flexible basis.

- The grading structure. There is no overall grade at present but what would be most appropriate?

- Ideas on how to reduce the burden of assessment.

Further information can be found in the BTEC November Newsletter which was distributed before Christmas.

http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/76193/HN_Newsletter_November_2006.pdf

This Newsletter also asks for unit writers with HE experience.
**3.5 NQF Higher Nationals and the Licence Agreement**

Ian Fleming reported that a special and, to date, unique arrangement has been agreed with the University of Kent which allows the University to run standard NQF HNs under the Licence Agreement. Ian Fleming noted that NQF qualifications are accredited by QCA. Students taking NQF qualifications must be registered with Edexcel outside of the Licence Agreement and Edexcel will certificate these students. However, the University will appoint External Examiners for these programmes, and examiners’ reports will be sent by the University to Edexcel. Ann Tull asked about reporting intermissions or withdrawals. Lesley Brook confirmed that Edexcel should be informed.

Tracey Parker queried whether students would be able to proceed from an NQF HND to the final year of a degree programme. Andrew Baxter suggested that, as an NQF programme still carries 240 credits, it would be unreasonable if this was not permitted. Malcolm Dixon pointed out that all decisions to admit students to the final stage of a programme on the basis of prior learning would be made by the appropriate academic department, which would take into account not just the volume of credit but the relevance of the prior learning to the programme of study.

Rachel Mann asked for an update of the position with Foundation Degrees. Lesley Brook noted that validation of FD curriculum must be approved by the NVC and that three frameworks have been agreed to date – Business, Engineering and Computing. There is also the Centre validation process i.e. to validate the Centre as an appropriate body to run the FD programme.

**4. Boards of Examiners 2007**

Vanessa Nedderman thanked the University’s partner colleges for all their hard work during the 2006 process. She reported that, while last year’s Boards had not run perfectly in every respect, improvements were in hand for 2007. Partnership Development Officers would be asking for dates of Examination Boards by the end of February and Faculty Officers were arranging the appointment of internal members of Boards of Examiners. The Guidance for Boards of Examiners in Associate Colleges document had been updated. It was anticipated that Associate College staff would be given access to the University’s student records system, so as to enable marks to be inputted directly by College staff, but it was agreed that there were still some issues to be resolved. A training session for staff on Running Effective Boards of Examiners will be held on 21 March 2007 at the Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching:

[http://www.kent.ac.uk/uel/staff_development/events/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/uel/staff_development/events/index.html)

It was hoped that Associate College staff who attended this session would then be able to train other staff within their college. It was planned that full module data would be on the student record system for this year’s Boards of Examiners’ meetings.

**5. Amendments to the Code of Practice for Quality Assurance**

Malcolm Dixon drew attention to the fact that Annex O had been updated to accommodate running NQF programmes and to bring it in line with the QAA’s Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision, which holds awarding institutions responsible for ensuring that partner institutions have suitably qualified staff and resources adequate to staging new programmes. A copy of the revised Annex had been circulated with the agenda, but can also be found at:
http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/code2001/annexo.html

6. **Appointment of External Examiners/Liaison/Student Numbers**
A spreadsheet had been circulated showing franchised programmes where students are registered for this academic year. Malcolm asked those present to let Janet Reynolds (J.A.Reynolds@kent.ac.uk) of any discrepancies on the spreadsheet. An updated spreadsheet is attached to these minutes.

7. **Annual Reports**
Faculties reported the following outstanding annual reports:

**STMS** – HNC/HND Computing and programmes in Information Technology at Mid-Kent College – however it was possible that these may have been sent direct to the Department.

No reports have been received from South Kent College.

Ann Tull highlighted the requirement that Annex E (Annual Monitoring) for responses to External Examiners’ reports to be checked by the relevant Faculty Officer before they were sent.

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

8. **Staff Development**
The Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching publishes a full programme of staff development on its web site:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/staff_development/events/index.html

These sessions are open to all Associate College staff.

9. **Any Other Business**
There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.

JAR – 24/01/2007