HE in FE FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2011
Darwin Conference Suite at the University of Kent

Present:

University of Kent (Chair): Malcolm Dixon, Quality Assurance & Validation Manager

Jane Anderson, Partnership Development Officer
Margaret Anderson, Assistant Registrar - Humanities
Anita Bampton, Student Records & Exams Office
Rachel Evans, Quality Assurance & Validation Office
Dr Andrew MacGregor, Faculty Officer - Sciences
Andrea McDonnell, Quality Assurance & Validation Office
Vanessa Nedderman, Senior Partnership Development Officer
Paul Sales, Student Records & Exams Office
Ann Tull, Sciences Faculty Office
Ruth Westbury, Partnership Development Officer

Edexcel: A representative was unable to attend the meeting

School Liaison Officers: Paul Sinclair, Lecturer in IR and HRM, KBS
Dr Mike Went, DOLT, SPS

Programme Advisor: None were able to attend the meeting

Kent Union: Melanie Sharman, Representation & Democracy Manager
Tim Vivian, Advice & Outreach Worker

Canterbury College: Danielle Banyai, HE Co-ordinator Social Sciences
Andrew Baxter, Faculty Leader for HE Business & Technology
Rachel Mann, Director of Higher Education & International Provision
Tim Wilshire, HE Co-ordinator

Mid-Kent College: Paul Broad, Lecturer
Julie Coleman, Kent Sciences Resource Manager
Debrah Wilson, Head of Faculty Advanced Computing & Engineering

K College: Wendy Smith, HE Co-ordinator

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Valerie Benney, John Davies and Alan Harding and from Edexcel; John Hawthorn (Programme advisor for Engineering Programmes at MKC & SKC); Derek Kirton, Angus Pryor and Kay Foster (School Liaison Officers); Keith
Welcome

Malcolm Dixon welcomed everyone to the meeting. He invited Wendy Smith to comment on the on-going restructuring at K College, which is the new brand name for the amalgamated South Kent and West Kent Colleges.

Minutes of the HE in FE Forum 28 January 2010

The minutes of last year’s HE in FE Forum were agreed with one amendment.

ACTION – Andrea McDonnell to amend the minutes to show that Wendy Smith had not attended the meeting.

Edexcel Report

As EdExcel had been unable to send a representative to the meeting Malcolm Dixon had requested that they sent a written update. Unfortunately, this presentation arrived by email after the meeting had begun. A copy of this presentation entitled BTEC Higher Nationals Autumn/Winter 2010 by John Davies, Head of HE Programme Development will be circulated with these minutes.

Edexcel Programme validation

From September 2011 Kent will be offering a 120 credit HNC which will replace the 150 credit one. Partners are currently in the process of re-writing their programme specifications and these in the first instance will need to be submitted to the Faculty Offices and then, in the event of significant changes to PASC for approval.

Vanessa Nedderman notified partners that the final PASC meeting of 2010/11 will be held on 23 June and programmes must be approved before students are registered in September 2011.

Kent will not be offering the ‘QCF’ programmes which Edexcel plans to introduce in 2011/12 to replace the existing NQF awards. Edexcel’s proposed assessment and classification regimes for the QCF programmes would entail significant amendment to the University’s Student Data System, which would be unlikely to be completed in time to accommodate their introduction.

Collaborative Provision Audit (CPA) 2010: Outcomes

Malcolm Dixon gave a presentation in which he summarised the key findings of Kent’s 2010 Collaborative Provision Audit. A copy of Malcolm Dixon’s presentation QAA Collaborative Provision Audit 2010 will be circulated with these minutes.

QAA gave Kent a Confidence rating for the current and likely future management of:

- the academic standards of its awards;
- The quality of learning opportunities available to students.
In addition the audit found that Kent took due account of the elements of the Academic Infrastructure in its management of standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students in collaborative provision.

The University’s procedures for managing collaborative provision, the HE in FE & Validation Forums, the Partnership Development Officers & School Liaison Officers, the Associate College & Validation Handbooks and the Quality Assurance and Validation Office’s electronic newsletter were all highlighted by the QAA as examples of Kent’s good practice in this area.

QAA made two advisable and six desirable recommendations to Kent; not all are relevant to the franchised programme. Kent is to ensure that:

Advisable:

- conjoint programme approval panels have a Kent Chair;
- external examiner reports should be completed in sufficient detail.

Desirable:

- specific requirements are applied to the management of the teaching and assessment of non-English programmes offered;
- possible conflicts of interest for external examiners are identified and considered during their appointment and tenure;
- greater consistency is achieved in the implementation of its requirements regarding Staff/Student Liaison Committees at partner institutions;
- the mechanism which oversees the feedback from students reported by partner institutions is reviewed;
- it considers how its strategic aim of fostering and supporting research-led teaching might apply in partner institutions;
- it reviews the process for the termination of partnership arrangements to ensure that students’ interests are protected;
- it shares external examiner reports with students;
- it adopts a more systematic approach for the checking of the accuracy and completeness of the information which partner institutions publish on their web sites.

QAA itself is undergoing a review of the way in which it conducts its audits. While the focus to date has been on the management of quality and standards, there may be a slight shift from this in the new review methodology. An operational description of the new form of Institution Review is expected from the QAA later in the academic year.

Malcolm thanked partners for their co-operation and assistance during the audit.

**ACTION** – partners to send requests for copies the Quality Assurance and Validation Office’s electronic newsletter to qa@kent.ac.uk.
7. Revised QAA Code on Collaborative Provision (Section 2)

Malcolm Dixon talked through a recent presentation given by Wendy Stubbs, Assistant Director - QAA, entitled *Amplification of Section 2 of the Code of Practice*. He gave an overview of precepts A8, A9, A10, A12, A14 and A19.

QAA have moved from producing ten Code of Practice booklets to making documents downloadable from their web site.

Further information is available from:

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp

The new code also has recognised that more HEIs are working with non-academic providers, for example, employers. This results in modules or elements of programmes being developed in response to employers’ requirements. QAA have asked that the involvement of employers in assessment of students is considered and carefully managed, as appropriate.

Malcolm highlighted the fact that the amplified code has focussed on dual-award programmes. In the past it had been assumed that in a partnership both partners were autonomous and might delegate oversight of quality & standards of elements of such programmes to the each other. However, the amplified code makes clear that this is not acceptable and that a UK-based HEI holds sole responsibility for the quality and standards of all elements of its academic awards, even those delivered by a partner with its own degree-awarding powers.

Rachel Mann commented that the revised code had not given Canterbury College any cause for concern as they were already doing most of what was recommended.

QAA is consulting on proposed changes to the Academic Infrastructure. The new version, a single UK Code of Practice for standards, quality and enhancement in higher education, will distinguish between those elements that are obligatory for the assurance of academic standards and those that are guidance for maintaining the quality of the student learning experience.

8. Board of Examiners 2011

8.1 Update on arrangements

Boards of examiners meetings will be held during June and July 2011. It is important that the Partnership Development Office and Faculties Support Office are informed about all staff members who will attend the boards of examiners meetings including internal members of staff, external examiners and school liaison officers.

A half-day training day for HE in FE examiners will be held on 6 April 2011 (venue to be confirmed). In addition, UELT will be holding their annual *Running Effective Boards of Examiners seminar* from 12.15-14.00 on Thursday 31 March 2011. For further information please visit:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/whats-on-month/details/2010-2011/310311dixon.html

To book a place please email cpdbookings@kent.ac.uk

**ACTION – Partners** to inform both the Faculties Support Office and the Partnership Development Office of dates of the boards of examiners meetings and who is due to
attend. Curriculum Vitae of proposed internal members of the board should be supplied to facilitate their appointment by the Deans of Faculty.

8.2 Guidance for examiners 2010/11

A paper was circulated at the meeting to show the amended concessionary table at section 14. Other the key changes are the additions of section 1 - Duties of Boards of Examiners and section 2 – Membership.

Guidance for examiners for 2010/11 has been published on the University of Kent’s web site at:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/quality/credit/guide-examiners.pdf

9. Appointment of External Examiners/School Liaison Officers/Student 2010/11 Enrolments

A spreadsheet was circulated which showed the current enrolments for the franchised programme together with all the acting External Examiners and School Liaison Officers.

Replacement external examiners are required for the HND in Public Services, HND in Applied Animal Science and HND in Retail Management at Canterbury College.

10. Annual Reports 2009/10

A spreadsheet was circulated showing receipt of annual reports from External Examiners, School Liaison Officers and Programme Advisors for the academic year 2009/10.

There is one outstanding programme advisors report which is due to be submitted in February/March 2011.

11. Summary of Liaison Officers and Programme Advisors’ 2009/10 Reports

Malcolm Dixon clarified the role of Programme Advisors compared with that of External Examiners and set out the historical reasons as to why Kent uses both. In the past Edexcel had appointed the external examiners for their franchised programmes and, where the subject area was non-cognate, Kent had appointed a programme advisor. However, now that, in the post-Licence era, the University itself appoints external examiners to these programmes, it may appear that there is a degree of overlap between the two roles. Attempts have been made to distinguish the two more clearly. External examiners are employed to provide the University with assurance as to the standards of programme and the quality of the student learning experience. Programme advisors supplement this assurance by carrying out the role of ‘critical friend’, providing the University with additional advice on curriculum areas where such expertise was otherwise not available at Kent.

Comments and recommendations from both external examiners and programme advisors are taken into consideration when Kent completes and submits an annual report to Edexcel. The report is not shared with the partner colleges as it comments explicitly on matters raised with respect to particular programmes at each provider. Malcolm queried whether partners wished the contents of the report to be shared with them all, but it was felt that the present arrangement should be maintained.
A number of items of good practice arising from the annual reports of each partner were shared with the forum.

12. **Any other business**

It was noted that Paul Sinclair requested that Moodle should be made available to Mid-Kent College’s business students. However, there are complications in extending Moodle to the partner colleges.

There has also been a mixed take up of Turnitin, the plagiarism detection software as the fees are prohibitive. Further information is available on UELT’s Academic Integrity web site: [http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ai/staff/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ai/staff/index.html)

13. **Date of the next meeting**

It is proposed that the University of Kent will hold a joint HE in FE and Validation Forum in March 2012 in order to take into consideration the recommendation by QAA that these events should be held after the annual monitoring reports for 2010/11 have been submitted and considered.

The date of the next meeting will be **Thursday 15 March 2012** to be held at the Darwin Conference Suite at the University of Kent at Canterbury.