HE in FE FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2009
Darwin Conference Suite at the University of Kent

Present:

University of Kent (Chair): Malcolm Dixon, Quality Assurance & Validation Manager
   Anita Bampton, Office Supervisor, Student Records Office
   Dr Keith Lampard, Humanities Faculty Officer
   Dr Andrew MacGregor, STMS Faculty Officer
   Andrea McDonnell, Quality Assurance and Validation
   Vanessa Nedderman, Partnership Development Officer
   Ann Tull, STMS Faculty Office

Liaison Officers: Richard Jones, Deputy Director, Computing Laboratory

Edexcel: Dr Keith Brooker, BTEC Quality, Standards & Regulations Manager

Canterbury College: Danielle Banyai, Co-ordinator Social Sciences
   Karen Browne, Curriculum Development
   Rachel Mann, Director of HE Provision
   Paul Mathew, Faculty Leader Creative Arts
   Carole Mulcare, Co-ordinator

Mid-Kent College: Nicky Crawford-Smith, Lecturer
   Pat Lowdnes, Head of School
   Liz Mitchell, Head of School
   Diane Payne, Lecturer

South Kent College: Nick Holbrook-Sutcliffe, Director of Curriculum
   Jackie Watt, Deputy Principal

West Kent College: Wendy Smith, HE Quality & Student Officer

1. Apologies for Absence
   Apologies for absence were received from Margaret Anderson, Kay Foster, Don Gray, Linda Lough, Jon Pink, Paul Sales, Paul Sinclair, Mike Went (University of Kent); Francesco Cerminara and Chip Harris (Programme Advisors); and Daphne Rowland and Ian Rule (Mid-Kent College).

2. Welcome
   Malcolm Dixon welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Dr Keith Brooker (BTEC Quality, Standards & Regulations Manager) and Andrea McDonnell who has replaced Janet Reynolds (Administration Co-ordinator, Quality Assurance & Validation Office).
3. **Minutes of HE in FE Forum 30 January 2008**

Malcolm Dixon highlighted the fact that some progress had been made with regard to the appointment of external examiners on NQF Higher Nationals at the University (3.4).

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

4 **Edexcel Report**

4.1 **Quality Update**

Dr Brooker gave an overview of the re-organisation that had recently taken place at Edexcel. There has been a move away from generic programme managers towards a broader base of management. It is anticipated that the new structure will improve levels of service.

BTEC Assessment (Operations) has two main responsibilities:

- the delivery of programmes including external examiners and modifiers (registration, reports and certificates)
- quality standards and regulation.

In order to improve quality Regional Quality Managers have been appointed to advise on teaching practice and regulations. There will be a Regional Quality Manager assigned to the HE in FE Forum participants. Dr Brooker will also be available for guidance.

Dr Brooker reported that Edexcel has no concerns with the quality of provision currently provided by Kent and its partner colleges. The AMR and external examiner reports are good and robust. Student numbers are good too.

4.2 **Future of BTEC Higher Nationals**

Edexcel’s Quality and Accreditation Division is looking at the BTEC Higher Nationals. The perception is that there is a clear future for BTEC Higher Nationals in the UK and abroad. The format may change over the next five years or so.

Edexcel plan to re-accredit the NQF higher qualification. The licence agreements at the University of Kent run until 2013. Again it is anticipated that when the time comes the licence agreement will be renewed.

It was also noted that Ian Fleming had reported at last year’s meeting that there was a move to reduce the number of credits for a HNC award from 150 to 120 credits. Dr Brooker remarked that this is likely to happen in the near future. It is also possible that a HNA award of 60 credits will be created.

Rachael Mann queried whether the funding for BTEC Higher Nationals is secure. Dr Brooker confirmed that he expected the funding to continue for the foreseeable future.

5. **Edexcel Programme Validation**

The University of Kent has experienced some difficulty in getting guidance from Edexcel on courses that have been approved. The NQF protocol has now been approved.
In addition there has been a problem with the fact that although West Kent College is an established centre for Edexcel it is not one for the University of Kent. Dr Brooker will ask his colleagues to address these two issues.

6. Collaborative Audit 2010

The University of Kent had a mainstream audit in November 2008 and the results were good with only one advisory recommendation for action from QAA.

Malcolm Dixon advised on dates for the collaborative audit. There will be a briefing visit on 5 October 2010 and then the actual audit will take place week commencing 8 November 2010.

Malcolm also advised that the focus would be similar to the mainstream audit. The effectiveness of the quality assurance of the awarding systems would be looked at together with the completeness and accuracy of awards.

It is expected that there will be some partner visits up to a maximum of six institutions. Malcolm advised that they are expecting 2-3 institutions to be visited. At least one of the partner colleges and a validated partner.

In order to plan for the audit an implementation group will be set up.

Further information can be found on QAA’s web site http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/collaborative-supplement/default.asp

7. Boards of Examiners

7.1 Update on 2009 arrangements

Vanessa Nedderman advised that University of Kent arrangements would apply. There is a need for everyone to confirm to the Partnership and Development Office the membership and date of board of examiners’ meetings. The Faculty of Humanities will be in touch directly with partner colleges.

The Partner College Handbook has been re-issued and needs to be circulated to the appropriate staff. http://www.kent.ac.uk/associate/staff_handbook/2008/index.html

It was noted that all boards of examiners’ meetings will have a University of Kent Chair.

7.2 Guidance for Examiners 2008/09

The Working Group on Regulations and Conventions (WGRC) has made some recommendations to LTB for 2008/9. LTB is due to meet on 4 February 2009. Once these recommendations have been approved the Guidance for Examiners 2008/9 will be circulated to staff at the partner colleges.

7.3 Anonymous Consideration of Candidates at Board of Examiners

From June 2009 LTB has agreed that all Boards of Examiners’ meetings should consider candidates by student number and not by name. Only the Chair and Secretary to the boards will have a list of student numbers and names. The examiners will only be shown the student numbers. Examination scripts and mark sheets should only show the student number. The Partnership Development Officers will advise the colleges and deal with any queries.
8. Non-cognate PPRs update

All University of Kent departments are subject to a periodic programme review every six years. All areas of provision must be covered by the PPR procedures. However, in the past there has been an issue that the college provision is not always included as non-cognate programmes are not attached to a University of Kent department and sometimes PPRs do not include the cognate provision when looking at a whole department.

For each PPR two externals and two internal representatives are appointed to the panel. Malcolm Dixon advised that reviews are planned for this current academic year for:

- Construction and engineering at South Kent and Mid-Kent Colleges
- Business at Canterbury and Mid-College Kent College
- Art at South Kent College

Subject related PPRs will be done together if at all possible.

Keith Lampard raised the issue that there is sometimes a problem finding appropriate panel members as the University of Kent has a strict criteria that members must hold an appointment of Principal Lecturer or higher.

Rachel Mann enquired whether Canterbury College had been previously reviewed. Vanessa Neddermann was able to inform Rachel that Public Services, Animal Science and Health Science had all been previously reviewed but as PPR is largely a paper-based exercise Canterbury College may not have been aware of this. Normally Malcolm Dixon’s office would only contact a partner college if the review had highlighted any problems with the delivery of programmes. Malcolm acknowledged that partner colleges might like to hear about positive feedback as well, and agreed to ensure all Colleges were made aware of the timetable for PPRs at Kent.

Malcolm Dixon also reminded the partner colleges that annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports are looked at as part of the Quality Assurance process.

9. Appointment of External Examiners/Liaison/Student Numbers

A spreadsheet had been circulated showing franchised programmes where students are registered for the current academic year with the appointment of Liaison Officers/Programme Advisers and External Examiners. Malcolm Dixon drew attention to a number of blanks on the spreadsheet. He stressed the importance of appointing external examiners to these programmes at the earliest opportunity and pointed out that students could not be certificated without the involvement of an external examiner.

An updated spreadsheet is attached to these minutes.

10. Annual Reports 2007/2008

A spreadsheet had been circulated showing receipt of annual reports from Liaison Officers/Programme Advisers and External Examiners for academic year 2007/2008.
Malcolm Dixon reported that reports submitted for the franchised programme had contained more details than in 2006/2007.

An updated spreadsheet is attached to these minutes.

11. Roles and Responsibilities of the Department Liaison Officers and Programme Advisors

A paper on proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities of the Department Liaison Officers and Programme Advisors was circulated prior to the meeting. Any recommendations from the HE in FE Forum meeting will be presented to LTB on 4 February 2009 for consideration.

Keith Lampard expressed his desire to strengthen the Faculty of Humanities liaison with non-cognate programmes by assigning programmes to a department where possible and to clarify the department liaison officer’s role.

Richard Jones made a number of points which he agreed to email to Malcolm Dixon at the end of the meeting. Points Richard raised at the meeting included the fact that the role of Departmental Liaison Officers should be different to that of an external examiner to avoid duplication of duties. He also added that he believed that Departmental Liaison Officers play an important role in giving departments an oversight of programmes and that they should be made aware of all correspondence between departments and partner colleges. For example, when there are changes to modules or new courses proposed the Departmental Liaison Officer should obtain or be formally be given copies of the paperwork so LTB knows what is going on. The same route should be followed as the mainstream provision.

UELT will be arranging some training for Departmental Liaison Officers possibly in June 2009. Programme leaders at the partner colleges will be invited to give their input. Concerns were raised about the date as college staff are still teaching until the end of June.

UELT has arranged a course on Running effective Boards of Examiners: Purposes and Procedures, which will take place on 24 March 2009.

Vanessa Neddermann confirmed that PDOs will be doing boards of examiner training at the colleges. Mid-Kent College requested that some of training should be offered at the University of Kent’s Medway campus to make it easier for their staff to attend.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 IQER

Canterbury College expressed thanks to the University of Kent for the IQER developmental work undertaken by Partnership Development Office Senior PDO.

12.2 Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the HE in FE Forum meeting should be held on the last Wednesday of January. Therefore the date of the next meeting will be **Wednesday 27 January 2010** at the University of Kent.