1. Welcome and Introductions from the Chair

1.1 Malcolm Dixon introduced the forum and order of the day. Attendees were thanked for their attendance given the difficult weather conditions that had disrupted travel over the previous few days.

1.2 Apologies for absence were noted.

2. Implications of UKBA for Higher Education Institutions – Jon Pink, Academic Registrar, University of Kent

The Academic Registrar presented a summary of the impacts of UKBA requirements on all Higher Education Providers.
The principles of UKBA visa sponsorship requirements were outlined, with it being noted that these were driven by Government policy, and aimed at ensuring genuine employees or students come to work or study in the UK.

Attendees were provided with an overview of the different tiers of sponsorship and it was highlighted that Tier 4 sponsorship is used to bring students into the country, and that Tier 2 sponsorship normally required to bringing academic staff into the country.

Sponsor licences can be applied for by any organisation, and there are currently over 25,000 sponsors listed on the UKBA register. Of these it is believed that approximately 250 are Higher Education Institutions. When applying for a licence organisations agree to a range of duties – if those duties are not met, then sanctions can be imposed on the institution. Due to this and the need to have effective oversight of how the duties associated with licences are discharged, it was noted that the University had taken the view that it would not sponsor students in partner institutions.

Detail was provided on the range of UKBA visits that can occur to ensure HEIs are meeting the requirements of their licence. These visits include compliance visits, and compliance audits, as well as unannounced intelligence led visits which take place where specific intelligence has been received, for example where it has been discovered students are working illegally. During such visits information is requested such as admissions records, attendance records, evidence of students meeting language and entry requirements, and copies of passports and visa documentation.

The importance to HEIs of carrying out attendance monitoring was underscored. The UKBA have not set a standard monitoring system, but have provided HEIs with examples of where they believe institutions are monitoring student attendance effectively.

Future developments with regard to UKBA monitoring were reported. These included a commitment from UKBA to a co-regulation group with Higher Education Institutions, a move to risk based compliance visits, and changes to PhD requirements where a student can be sponsored to remain in the UK for a further year following completion of their PhD.

3. **Minutes of the Partnership Forum 15th March 2012**

3.1 To **confirm** the minutes of the last Partnership Forum meeting and to consider any matters arising from the minutes.

- The minutes of the last Partnership Forum were **confirmed** as an accurate record.
4. **Collaborative Provision Register**

4.1 To note the register of the University’s current partnerships.

- The register was **confirmed** as an accurate record.

5. **Developments and updates from partner institutions since the last Forum**

5.1 To receive oral updates from each partner institution representative on any good practice identified in the past year.

- **K College** – It was reported that the HE offer across the five campuses of K College was being streamlined. Changes were also anticipated from the outcomes of a re-structure.

- **Mid Kent College** – It had been a significant year for the College as it was the first year of direct funding by HEFCE, and a QAA review had also taken place.

  Substantial work had also been carried out on engagement with students regarding quality assurance and the learner’s voice.

- **Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD)** – NSCD reported that they now have a new Principal in post – Janet Smith. This has resulted in changes to structures at NSCD and also in proposed programme changes to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including the addition of an MA component to the Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance.

  NSCD also reported that they had been through their periodic review in November 2012, which had been a constructive and positive experience, and that the School were now working on the recommendations made by the review.

  It was also noted that applications to the School had increased by 30% this year.

- **Edexcel/Pearson** – It was reported that work was underway for the delivery of Pearson College developed top-up degrees, which would be validated by partner Universities.

- **ifs School of Finance** – The **ifs** highlighted important work they were carrying out in implementing a student mentor scheme, whereby **ifs** distance learning students working in the finance sector, will mentor full-time **ifs** degree students.

- **Canterbury College** – It was noted that this had also been Canterbury College’s first year of direct funding from HEFCE.
In addition it was reported that three new top-up degrees had been validated through the University and that a new building was due to open in September 2013, which would be dedicated to the College’s Higher Education provision.

- **Kent Sussex and Surrey Dental Deanery (KSSD)** – It was confirmed that the Faculty of General Dental Practice Validation arrangement had now come to an end.

  However KSSD Dental Deanery had received approval for a Postgraduate Diploma, and MSc qualification to complement its existing Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Dental Care for Foundation Dentists.

- **Central School of Ballet** – It was reported that the recommendations from the 2011 Periodic Programme Review continue to be implemented.

  Central School were also developing their Foundation Degree and BA programmes with artistic teams reviewing the curriculum to ensure that students are ‘work’ ready when they graduate.

- **Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance** – Rambert reported that they had completed their Periodic Programme Review in May and that this had provided an opportunity to reflect on their programmes and the recommendations made by the Panel.

  It was also noted that Rambert were developing their career development offer to further help graduates on leaving their programmes. In addition work was being carried out with the Rambert Dance Company on a performance project.

- **LAMDA** – It was noted that the MA Classical Acting was now in its first year, and that work was on-going on to develop an MA in Directing.

  LAMDA were also focussing on ensuring links with industry professionals for final year students and in addition students were being given the opportunity to have practice auditions with the RSC as part of career development and planning.

  It was reported that improved information was being made available to visiting staff to ensure they are fully aware of Higher Education processes and systems.

  It was also noted that work would begin on a new building for LAMDA in summer 2013.

- **Circus Space** – Circus Space reported that more teachers had been able to take the Kent Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education in the last year.
In addition it was noted that a new feedback system with student representatives had been implemented.

Circus Space were also involved in training over 40 disabled performers for the Olympics opening ceremony, which had led to further project opportunities.

6. **To receive an update on Kent’s changes on QA and Regulatory Matters – Malcolm Dixon**

6.1 Malcolm Dixon reported on a number of areas in relation to developments both at the University of Kent and with the QAA institutional audit processes:

- **Higher Education Review**

  It was noted that the proposed new QAA review system was the Higher Education Review. This would be launched in 2013-14 and would succeed two methods: Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in England and Northern Ireland (IRENI), and Review of College Higher Education (RCHE).

  Review would be for organisations both with and without degree awarding powers, and the focus of the review would be managed accordingly to the organisation (i.e. for providers without degree-awarding powers, Higher Education Review is concerned with the way in which these providers discharge their responsibilities within the context of their agreements with awarding bodies and organisations.)

  A provisional schedule had been published by the QAA and this had highlighted the following relevant reviews:

  - University of Kent: 2014-15
  - Canterbury College: 2013-14 (summer 2014)
  - IFS: 2014-15
  - Conservatoire for Dance and Drama: 2016-17
  - K College: 2016-17
  - Mid-Kent College: 2018-19

- **Review of Student Feedback**

  It was highlighted that after the University’s last Collaborative Provision Audit, an action was given to the University to seek access to the raw student data received by partners for Kent validated programmes. It was noted that this information would need to be supplied with Annual Monitoring information, and that a mechanism would need to be found for effectively receiving such feedback for the next round of Annual Monitoring in November 2013.
• Classification Methodology Changes

It was reported that the changes which were introduced to Kent’s classification methodology would now be rolled out to Validated Institutions.

As such the Learning and Teaching Board had agreed that for new entrants to Validated Programmes from September 2013, all alternative marking schemes and classification methodologies would be withdrawn and partners would have to follow the University’s Credit Framework in full. This was required to ensure equity across all Kent awards at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level.*

It was acknowledged that this change would have a greater impact on some partners than others, and meetings would be arranged to discuss with Partners implementation of the changes.

In addition a letter confirming and explaining the decision of the Learning and Teaching Board would be sent to the relevant contact at each partner.

*Post meeting note: It was subsequently agreed by the Learning and Teaching Board that the withdrawal of all alternative conventions would be implemented from 2014 onwards.

7. Workshops

7.1 Attendees were invited to attend workshops in the following areas for the afternoon session of the forum:

i. Running Effective Boards of Examiners.
ii. Deterring and Detecting Plagiarism.
iii. Edexcel Update.
iv. APL Process for Partners.

It was reported that where available presentations from these sessions would be made available on the Quality Assurance Office website:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/forum/index.html

8. Any Other Business

8.1 There were no items of further business tabled for consideration.

Date of the Next Meeting - Thursday 13th March 2014