

LTC09D069

Title: Partnerships – Joint Quality Assurance Framework for INTO London Courses : UEA and City University
Author: Laurence Daly – Partnerships Office and Liam Morton – Vice Chancellor's Office
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1. QA Monitoring Committees

Given that for the time being INTO City University is adopting and validating the INTO UEA Foundation programmes, discussions have been held about the extent to which the relevant HEI/INTO QA committees (i.e. UEA Joint Board of Study (JBoS) and City University's Course Board) could reasonably be harmonised at this stage, bearing in mind the following **precepts**:

- (a) the respective responsibilities of each HEI for assuring the quality of its own awards;
- (b) the fact that UEA JBoS covers not just INTO UEA London but also all INTO UEA provision in Norwich - including programmes not currently offered by INTO City (i.e. Diploma and Graduate Diploma);
- (c) the desire to avoid undue bureaucracy and duplication of effort (particularly in terms of impact on INTO UEA/INTO UEA London staff who are delivering programmes for INTO City as well);
- (d) the desire to avert complications where separate consideration of issues might lead to radically different conclusions.

Against that background several possible models have been considered, eg:

- (1) a proposal from City of a combined UEA/City Joint Board of Study for INTO UEA Norwich, INTO UEA London and INTO City provision, with joint chairing by a senior member of academic staff from UEA and City and the appointment of a Secretary from each HEI;
- (2) UEA's proposal of a combined Board as above with a UEA Chair and Secretary;
- (3) completely independent committees with little temporal co-ordination (though with possible attempts to produce shared papers, etc);
- (4) separate committees but meeting one immediately after the other and with exploration of shared/common agenda items - the 'sequential' model;
- (5) separate committees but meeting at same time as each other and with shared/common agenda items - the 'concurrent' model.

Various of these have been rejected as follows:

- (1) was considered inappropriate by UEA given the balance of business and possible operational complications. The Director of Partnerships confirmed that this would not be acceptable;
- (2) was unacceptable to City since it does not appear to give that HEI sufficient 'control' of the QA process for its own awards;
- (3) is undesirable and does not accord with precepts (c) and (d) above.

That left exploration of models recognising the constitutional separateness of the committees, while adopting as pragmatic approach as possible to the conduct of common business and

allowing for overlapping membership. The resulting **draft principles** have subsequently emerged:

- (i) Each institution will operate its own Board (INTO City Course Board and INTO UEA Joint Board of Study). Each Board will be chaired and managed by colleagues from the respective institution.
- (ii) Meetings will be held on the same day and time (subject to the operation of clause (x) below)* to enable common issues relating to the Foundation Programme in London to be considered.
- (iii) Each institution will provide the other with the membership and terms of reference of their Board and any changes will be noted by each.
- (iv) Each Board will maintain its respective approach to quoracy in accordance with regulations.
- (v) The INTO City Course Board will include at least one external member (to be agreed also with UEA, given the Course Board's access to INTO UEA London/Norwich and UEA material).
- (vi) Prior liaison and agreement will occur between City and UEA on identifying:
 - (a) common items of business (which will be placed on the agenda of each Board); and
 - (b) which Board (and Chair) will lead the joint discussion of such items (taking into account the nature of the items concerned and the principle of an equitable division of the business).
- (vii) Business identified as being in common will be normally be discussed once only, with members of both Boards participating.
- (viii) Chairing of items in common between the two agendas will be by UEA or City in accordance with (vi) above (i.e. this will be dependent on which of the two Boards has been allocated to lead the joint discussion).
- (ix) The respective quality and standards frameworks of each institution will apply and will be the primary basis on which decisions will be made. Where it is not possible to reach agreement on any common items, the matter(s) will be referred back to each institution with a view to an appropriate resolution being found in accordance with respective frameworks.
- (x) Non-common items for each Board will be discussed before or after the common section, with the order rotating between institutions.
- (xi) Meetings will alternate between Norwich and London.

Note:

- * The intention to meet at the same time, as stated in clause (ii), is governed by (x), which makes clear that technically one Board or the other needs to go first, before the common section (given that some role holders are members of each Board). In practice, and in view of the likely extent of shared membership, most people will assemble all at once, though some members (eg INTO UEA student members) will need more precise timings.

We have stressed that these expressions of ideas and principles may themselves be subject to refinement and development in the light of further reflection. They do not constitute a final and formal agreement in principle between UEA and City, but are a statement of proposals made in good faith as a basis for the operation of respective QA frameworks. This understanding of their status is shared by City.

As a next step a meeting is being arranged with officers and respective Directors to work through a set of 'dummy' scenarios, so as to ensure that all are clear on implications and interpretations - this exercise may well flush out several issues needing further thought. Similarly, once under way, there may have to be variations based on experience.

2. Assessment Boards and External Examiners

The principles established during discussions regarding QA monitoring committees will apply to Assessment Boards, which will be separate Boards but will also have largely common membership and will run sequentially to enable discussion of the performance of students of both INTO UEA London and INTO City (who will be taught together) to take place in the same forum.

A single Board will be responsible for INTO UEA Norwich and London students. It is anticipated that meetings will be held in Norwich.

Assessment results will be stored so that those of INTO UEA Norwich, INTO UEA London and INTO City students can be disaggregated for the respective boards, but combined to enable comparison of results by location.

The existing External Examiners are being approached to request that they expand their current remit to include INTO UEA London students, and to ask if they would agree for their CVs to be forwarded to City for consideration for the INTO City programme. It is felt that the sharing of External Examiners across all INTO London provision would be the most effective approach and would facilitate consistency of assessment across all students.

3. Regulations, Policies and Procedures

Detailed mapping of the Regulations and Instructions to Examiners for the INTO UEA programmes to City's Regulations revealed a limited number of conflicts, and these have been resolved by:

- a) City agreeing to adopt the UEA version;
- b) both Universities agreeing that the difference can remain; or
- c) UEA agreeing to a change (which applied in a single instance, when minor amendments to the headings of generic grading criteria were made)

Each University also has differing policies and procedures (Academic Appeals, etc.) and these will remain as they are.

Where differences exist, careful attention will need to be paid to these during Assessment Boards, and staff will need to make clear to students that the regulations, policies and procedures of their own University apply to them.

Laurence Daly
Assistant Registrar
Partnerships Office

Liam Morton
UEA London Project Manager
Vice Chancellor's Office