

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the third meeting of the Enhancement Steering Committee for The First Year on Wednesday, 1st February 2006, held at QAA Scotland office, Glasgow.

Present:

Professor Ron Piper, University of St Andrews (in the Chair)
Professor Terry Mayes, Glasgow Caledonian University
Dr Pete Cannell, The Open University in Scotland
Dr Andrew Eadie, Glasgow Caledonian University
Mr Bill Johnston, University of Strathclyde
Dr David McCausland, University of Aberdeen Business School
Dr Jonathan Weyers, University of Dundee
Professor Martin Wilkinson, Heriot-Watt University
Mr Tim Cobbett, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Mr Steven Findlay, Heriot-Watt University Students Association
Mr David Beards, SFC

Officers:

Dr David Bottomley, Assistant Head of QAA Scotland
Ms Thelma Barron, Assistant Director (Enhancement)
Dr Christine Macpherson, Assistant Director (Enhancement)
Mr Bill Thomson, Temporary Consultant (Enhancement)
Ms Laura White, Administration Assistant, QAA Scotland

Apologies:

Mr Duncan Cockburn, Sparqs
Dr Leona Elder, University of Abertay, Dundee
Dr Simon Guild, University of St Andrews
Ms Veronique Johnston, Napier University
Professor David Lines, The Robert Gordon University
Mr Gerard Madill, Universities Scotland
Ms Birgitta MacDonald, Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Anne McGillivray, University of Paisley
Dr Liz Thomas, Higher Education Academy
Ms Sandie Randall, Queen Margaret University College

		ACTION
1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed members and officers to the third meeting of the Enhancement Steering Committee for The First Year. Dr Christine Macpherson was welcomed to her first meeting. Dr David Bottomley explained that Dr Macpherson is taking over Ms Barron's role. Dr Macpherson briefed the group on her background.	

2.	Minutes	
2.1	The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 January were approved as a correct record.	
3.	Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda	
3.1	<p>Regional Fora</p> <p>Thelma Barron confirmed she met with Tim Cobbett and Stephen Findlay following the last Steering Committee meeting. Plans for a regional forum, supported by the distribution of a preparatory questionnaire, are being taken forward. A network of student institutional contacts is to be established. Stephen Findlay and Tim Cobbett advised that a slot has been reserved at the NUS conference for the Committee on 5 March, providing a good opportunity for the theme to engage with a student audience. The nature of the engagement has yet to be agreed. Professor Piper suggested exploring the possibility of Stephen and Tim presenting at the conference on the Steering Committee's behalf. Thelma Barron agreed to take this forward.</p>	TB
3.2	<p>Institutional Contacts</p> <p>Thelma Barron reported that there had been a delay in making contact with nominated representatives, but this is now being taken forward. It was proposed that Institutional Contacts be given a strong steer and link this to an invite to the contacts to express an interest in undertaking developmental project work on the first year theme. The group agreed that institutions should be approached to establish whether or not there are existing networks within institutions. There was general agreement not to engage the Institutional Contacts in the scoping work.</p>	TB
4.	Themes Conference	
4.1	<p>Numbers attending the First Year workshops were good, with approximately 20 people attending both the morning and afternoon sessions respectively. The workshops generally went well. The group were presented with paper QET-FY-03-02, drawn up by Thelma Barron as a summary of feedback from the workshops. Five questions were devised to identify the key issues that the group wanted feedback on, with the question of first year teaching as a specialised subject provoking the most discussion. Thelma Barron advised the group that it was pleasing to see that comments in the workshop sessions replicated discussions already held at Committee Meetings.</p> <p>There was very little comment within the conference workshops about which outputs people would like to see or projects they</p>	

	<p>would like to see pursued, although it was recognised that this may have been due to time constraints within the workshops themselves.</p> <p>Professor Mayes felt that publications from previous themes had not been widely read, and that there is a need to recognise that output methods may need to be revised. The Committee agreed that practical outputs, such as case studies, would be useful, while the benefit of commissioning developmental work was also recognised. There was also general agreement that written publications of some sort are needed. It was recognised that one of the key outputs from Flexible Delivery was the contact network, a group of individuals interested in the subject, who will continue to raise the profile of Flexible Delivery issues beyond the lifetime of the theme.</p> <p>The Committee discussed holding workshops within institutions. Each event would be tailored to suit the needs of the institution, and would be aimed at drawing out examples of good practice, case studies and encouraging debate within institutions. The Committee agreed that it was important that objectives from these workshops are made clear in advance, and it was suggested that a model of questions for use at workshops be created, to be adapted by each institution. It was agreed that institutions should be advised as soon as possible that such workshops are planned, to allow institutions to schedule time for them.</p> <p>It was noted that the HE Academy are carrying out a literature review in April/May, which may save the steering committee some work, and that the Integrative Assessment committee are carrying out a trawl of case studies to identify key core principles, and will include first year examples.</p>	
<p>5. 5.1</p>	<p><u>Revised Version of the Scoping Paper on the First Year</u> Paper QET-FY-03-03, a revised version of Terry Mayes' scoping paper, was tabled on the day. Professor Mayes advised the group that he had attempted to produce a first paragraph which took account of the Steering Committee's comments from the last meeting, setting the theme in a wider context and more appropriately for the theme. Professor Mayes advised the group that the scope of the paper may still be too broad and that provided the Committee agree with the suggested scope, the focus of the paper should be narrowed. The Committee agreed that there should be a clear rationale for selecting some issues over others.</p> <p>Steering Committee members were asked to go through the three sections of the paper and identify focal topics to enable the</p>	

	<p>committee to identify topics for study. Members were asked to submit responses to either Terry Mayes or Thelma Barron by 17 February 2006.</p> <p>There then followed a general discussion on the merits of improving IT awareness amongst students, with the proviso that academics may need to brush up on their skills as well.</p>	ALL
6.	<p><u>Development of Implementation Strategy</u> Paper QET-FY- 03-04 was tabled on the day.</p>	
6.1	<p><u>Launch Event</u> This will be held on 26 April 2006, with Dr Betsy Bearfoot, a co-Director at the Policy Centre on the First Year of College, North Carolina, as keynote speaker. Mantz Yorke and Bernard Longden will also be invited to the event. It was noted that the HE Academy are holding a First Year Conference on 11 May 2006 at University of Edinburgh, therefore there may be a need to re-think the shape of the launch event in light of this.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>NUS Conference, 5 March 2006</u> The committee were reminded that a slot has been reserved at the NUS Conference, Perth, for the afternoon of 5 March 2006. This presents the committee with a good opportunity to engage with a large student audience.</p>	
6.3	<p><u>Engagement with Professional Bodies</u> The subject of engagement with Professional Bodies was again raised. It was suggested that the way in which institutions engage with Professional Bodies be investigated by contacting the institutions themselves, thereby eliminating the need for contact with Professional Bodies. Dr Bottomley reminded the group of the need to retain focus on their aim – to enhance students’ first year experience and advised that this must be kept in mind when consulting with Professional Bodies, i.e. how will this benefit students, especially since Professional Bodies are, in the main, UK wide. Dr Bottomley advised that more thought might be needed on this topic as the impact may be limited. It was suggested that there needs to be recognition of the fact that there is an extra year of study in Scotland, and what the value/benefit of this is.</p>	
6.4	<p><u>HE Academy Subject Centre’s Event 7 March 2006</u> The HE Academy subject centres are holding an event on 7 March. Representatives of the Quality Enhancement Themes have been invited to talk at the event about how the subject centres can interact with the themes.</p>	

Quality Enhancement Themes- Steering Committee for The First Year QET FY-04-01

7.	Any Other Business There was no other business.	