

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Enhancement Steering Committee for The First Year on Wednesday, 29 March 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 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 David Beards, SFC
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
Dr Liz Thomas, Higher Education Academy
Ms Sandie Randall, Queen Margaret University College
Ms Erica Hensens, Sparqs

Officers:

Dr David Bottomley, Assistant Head of QAA Scotland
Dr Christine Macpherson, Assistant Director (Enhancement)
Ms Marjorie Craib, Administrator, QAA Scotland

Apologies:

Mr Tim Cobbett, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Mr Steven Findlay, Heriot-Watt University Students Association
Dr Pete Cannell, The Open University in Scotland
Mr Gerard Madill, Universities Scotland
Ms Birgitta MacDonald, Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Anne McGillivray, University of Paisley

Ms Erica Hensens, Sparqs will now replace Mr Duncan Cockburn, Sparqs at future meetings.

		ACTION
1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed members and officers to the fourth meeting of the Enhancement Steering Committee for The First Year. Dr Liz Thomas, HEA was welcomed to her first meeting.	
2.	Minutes The Minutes of the meeting (QET-FY-04-01) held on 1 February 2006 were approved as a correct record. However it was noted that Veronique Johnston, Anne McGillivray and Leona Elder were present and their apologies had been recorded in error.	

3.	Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda	
3.1	<p>Institutional Contacts Dr Macpherson provided an update on nominated institutional contacts received to date. Nominations from two institutions remained outstanding but these were expected by 31 March. These contacts will be invited to express an interest in undertaking developmental project work on the first year theme.</p>	
3.2	<p>NUS Conference: 5 March 2006 Terry Mayes, Tim Cobbett and Stephen Findlay attended and co-ordinated a one hour workshop at the above conference providing a good opportunity for the theme to engage with a student audience. Workshop participants were invited to discuss and contribute on the issues of empowerment and engagement of first year students within the context of the nature of the first year curriculum.</p> <p>It was noted that an assessment driven curriculum can encourage students to disengage and ‘coast’ through first year facilitating a culture of minimal achievement. Lack of affordable housing, financial hardship and the need to obtain paid employment is a key factor in influencing student behaviour. The Committee agreed individual case studies could be of value in relation to this theme – perhaps in the form of a CD/DVD or downloadable video which may reach a wider audience.</p> <p>Overall students were enthusiastic and the scoping paper was well received and endorsed by the students.</p>	
3.3	<p>Other Matters arising <u>HE Academy Subject Centre’s Event 7 March 2006</u> The Chair confirmed he attended the HEA subject centres event on 7 March which explored how best the subject centres can interact and engage with the themes for mutual benefit. The event provided delegates with informative workshops incorporating very diverse subjects.</p>	
3.4.	<p>SHEEC update by David Bottomley Dr Bottomley confirmed the Committee’s own theme of supporting quality enhancement was discussed and the scoping paper endorsed. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to have an analysis of all the topic outcomes of the themes and their respective impact on each other. This analysis could then be fed into the next Enhancement Themes conference in Spring 2007. The Committee confirmed they are very keen to receive full reports and feedback on issues and timetables.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed to run a theme on Research-Teaching linkages which is expected to begin soon. The exact</p>	

	<p>area of research is yet to be identified, examples of which may be; scholarly activity, professional practice; involvement of staff and development of staff. Possible options and activities highlighted to progress the theme included workshops, guest international speakers and the commissioning of research.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the workload involved in the above theme will impact on the anticipated timetable for the Effective Learner Enhancement Theme.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Development of Implementation Strategy</p> <p>The Chair referred to paper QET FY-04-02 and specifically to the suggested proposals in Point 10, and asked the Committee for feedback. It is important that the Committee utilise the resources available in terms of budget and the extended network of interested individuals who have volunteered their support and involvement. It is essential that the outcomes are usable, valuable and accessible to the sector and institutions and provide practical outcomes in respect to curriculum etc.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed it is essential that the Committee gain views from different groups including Vice-Principals and Heads of Department as well as those who have direct engagement with students. Focus groups and workshops could be utilised at each institution to expose senior managers/policy makers to the real issues and help break down unseen barriers. It was agreed a joint event to highlight the findings would be useful at the end of the project. . The Committee agreed to take this on as a project and progress as soon as possible.</p> <p>It was highlighted that some institutions may already have an audit process in place to identify trends and issues within the first year experience. The Chair confirmed Mantze Yorke and Bernard Long are already engaged in research and Glasgow Caledonian is also funding its own student experience project which could prove a useful starting point.</p> <p>It was noted that the HE Academy is carrying out a literature review due to be reported on in April/May and that the Integrative Assessment Steering Committee is carrying out case studies research to identify core principles which will include first year examples. A joint First Year/Integrative Assessment workshop is being held in May at University of Edinburgh which will provide an opportunity for members of both steering committees to exchange and develop ideas for the benefit of both themes.</p> <p>The Committee agreed SPARQS would be a useful resource and would greatly assist the Committee's work.</p>	

	<p>The Committee stressed the importance of highlighting 'engagement and empowerment' of the student within the first year experience and as such suggested the points should be relabelled to cover the following topics.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature and purpose of the First Year. 2. Title to be confirmed: to cover the following points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modularisation and its challenges • formative/integrative assessment • peer support • transition into higher education • PDP • Constraints on curriculum design/structure • Reflective/independent learning • IS skills • Status of first year teaching 3. What it means to be a First Year Student <p>The Committee agreed to consider the above topics with a view to obtaining the best possible terminology and then circulate to the Steering Committee, allowing flexibility for other topics to be added as required.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Launch Event: Wednesday, 26 April 2006</u></p> <p><u>First Year 'Launch' Event</u> The Chair confirmed this would be held on 26 April 2006, venue to be confirmed. Dr Betsy Barefoot, a Co-director at the Policy Center on the First Year of College, North Carolina, was confirmed as keynote speaker. The Committee suggested the event be tailored as a consultative event as opposed to a 'launch' event. The event would provide an overall description of how we envisage the theme progressing over the coming year. 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>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Schedule of future meetings The Chair confirmed 19 June and 29 August as dates for the next meetings.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any Other Business There was no other business.</p>	