

###### Link Tutor Forum

###### File note of meeting held on 27th November 2013

###### 1.

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| Present | Apologies |
| Sue Cuthbert | Alexandru Radu |
| Liz Killick | Robert Parker |
| Jennifer Marsh | Colin Wood |
| Alan Dixon | Daniel Eastough |
| Chris Hughes | David Mycock |
| Dawn Goodall | Deborah Hodson |
| Douglas Wotherspoon | Gareth Dart |
| Helen Taylor | Gwenda Marie Scriven |
| Janet Harvell | Jacqui Fernell |
| Karima Kadi-Hanifi | Jamie Wells |
| Lisa Mauro-Bracken | Jan Quallington |
| Mary Whitehouse | Jane Perry |
| Rob Herbert | Janet Harrison |
| Sean Bracken | Judith Davies |
| Sharon Lesley Smith | Matthew Jellis |
| Susan Wood-Griffiths | Nigel Walton |
| Tracey Lapworth | Peter Unwin |
| Wendy Messenger | Rosie Walker |
| Richard Woolley |  |
| Trevor Wright |  |
| Sue Dutson |  |
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Sue Cuthbert welcomed everyone to the Forum.

**2. Notes of the last meeting, 1st May 2013**

The notes were approved as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

The forum was referred to the Matters Arising paper where it was noted that all actions had been completed, including the uploading of StARs for partner courses

### 4. ‘Introducing B10’ – QAA UK Quality Code for HE: Chapter B10 – Managing higher education provision with others (Liz Killick – Deputy Head of Academic Quality (Collaborative)

Feedback from forum discussion:

* Communication was viewed as a key area for improvement – meetings that take place tend to involve management and partners, not link tutors. Suggestion made that this can lead to differences in information given to LTs
* Suggestion that it should be recognised that role of Link tutor varies with institution, and that level of involvement by link tutor also varies (e.g. where regulatory bodies are involved, for example)
* Importance of UW support for longer distance partners, positive feedback given regarding ILS visit to Devon.
* Issue of directly funded students not being able to access UW resources made them feel “disenfranchised” in comparison to indirectly funded students. SC explained that the issue was not a UW decision, and that JISC only allow access from one organisation, but assured that talks were on-going in relation to this issue.
* Information and support for students from marketing was less available for post graduate compared to undergraduate students

**5. Enhancing Communication and Supporting the Role of the Link Tutor (Internal Audit Recommendation) (Sue Cuthbert: Head of Collaborative Programmes)**

Question 1: What helps you to undertake your role effectively?

Feedback:

* Adequate amount of time
* Good relationship with partner
* Support from university departments (e.g. Registry, ILS, AQU)
* Good lines of communication between course leader, manager, link tutor and UW departments

Discussion took place regarding the amount of time allocated to link tutors. It was highlighted that travel and co-observation time spent was not factored in to the time allocated to the role.

Suggestion was made that a meeting with cognate, institute focused, group interactions may be beneficial for link tutors. A similar suggestion involved the implementation of an information and discussion forum for link tutors, such as a Blackboard site, Facebook page or newsletter. SC agreed that this could be explored further. The idea of a link tutor workshop during a staff development day was recommended.

More consistent communication between partnership, line manager and wider UW was viewed as highly important. Suggestion was raised that more link tutor involvement in course approval process may be advantageous, particularly in preliminary meetings.

Question 2: At what point do you seek guidance and where from? Where do you refer any problems on to?

Link tutor feedback suggested that more information for sources of guidance would be helpful.

**Action: SC to distribute contacts for guidance, including IQC contacts.**

Question 3: Is the Link Tutor Forum still valuable? How could this be improved?

Feedback: It was generally agreed that the Link Tutor Forum was still felt to be a valuable event, although the issue of ability to attend due to other commitments was raised and it was widely suggested that other options should be examined (those recommended in question 1).

Institute focused feedback from forums was put forward as a recommendation and that a system similar to StARs could be implemented, with institute based link tutor representatives acting as a connection between meetings, which could provide assistance for those unable to attend.

**6. Changing Partnership Landscape, Proposals for Strategic Partnership Meetings and the Academic Health Check**

Discussion relating to the current on-going partnership landscape changes, including mergers between institutions, and the possible impact on link tutors. As this could result in there being more link tutors per institution, issues pertaining to consistency of practice and link tutor role management between institutes were raised. Suggestion made that providing information of other link tutors in same institution may be beneficial.

In relation to Strategic Partnership Group meetings, link tutors highlighted the fact that minutes from the meetings are forwarded to institute representatives but not link tutors. It was widely felt that link tutors would benefit from receipt of SPG minutes.

**9. Any other business**

SC canvassed opinion on the idea of holding a Partner Conference. Feedback received from the link tutors present was highly positive.

**10. Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday 30th April 2014, 12:15-14:00, room TBC

Author: Jenny Marsh (AQU)

**Summary of Major Outcomes**

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|  | Action | Staff responsible | Milestone 1 | Milestone 2 | Milestone 3 |
| Communication viewed as a key area for improvement – meetings that take place tend to involve management and partners, not link tutors. Suggestion made that this can lead to differences in information given to LTs | Link Tutor involvement with the review and approval process to be reviewed.  Minutes of Quality and Strategic Planning meetings to be made available Link Tutors. | Deputy Head Academic Quality(Collaborative)  Head of Collaborative Provision.  AQU(Collaborative) | **February 2014**  The wider distribution of meeting minutes to the Link Tutors to be reviewed for any issues of confidentiality.  Blackboard site set up to support Link Tutor (LT) communication. Permissions for access set up  (IT & DHAQ) | **April 2014**  Appropriate committee minutes uploaded to LT blackboard site (AQU Officer)  All Link Tutors checked for access to the site (AQU Officer)  February 2014 | **November 2014**  LTs report having accessed committee minutes and whether, through the process, they achieve a greater awareness of the review and approval process for their specific course areas. |
| Suggestion was made that a meeting with cognate, institute focused, group interactions may be beneficial for link tutors. | Further opportunities for LT collaboration are to be explored. | Deputy Head Academic Quality(Collaborative) | **January 2014**  HOIs approached regarding AQU- supported Link Tutor meetings during institute staff development days. | Further actions rely on HOI response to milestone 1.  **March 2014**  LT e.mail newsletter piloted. | **July 2014**  Feedback on newsletter gathered to inform any further actions in 2015.  Responses reported to LT forum Nov 2014 |
| Link tutor feedback suggested that more sources of guidance would be helpful. | Contacts for guidance and IQC contacts to be made available to LTs | Head of Collaborative Provision. | **January 2014**  Contact lists circulated to LTs via e.mail | **April 2014**  Contact lists uploaded to LT blackboard site. |  |