



**MEETING OF THE JOINT FACULTY BOARDS OF EXAMINERS  
(UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)**

**Tuesday, 8 October 2013**

**MINUTES**

**Chair:** Dr Arne Hofmann, Joint Faculty Tutor

**Present:**

Prof Susan Collins	Slade School of Fine Art
Miss Marlene Cox	History
Prof Pamela Davidson	SSEES
Dr Jason Davies	CALT
Mr Andy Dawson	DIS
Prof John Dickie	SELCS
Mr Charles Ford	History of Art
Dr Nick Gonis	Greek and Latin
Dr Dafydd Griffiths	Archaeology
Dr Mary Hilson	ESPS
Prof Jonathan Holmes	Geography
Dr Lily Kahn	Hebrew and Jewish Studies
Dr Rory Madden	Philosophy
Dr Helen Matthews	Deputy Faculty Tutor
Dr Tony McCulloch	Institute of the Americas
Prof Ian Preston	Economics
Dr Meg Russell	Political Science
Prof René Weis	English
Prof Jonathan Wolff	Dean, Arts and Humanities

Apologies for absence were received from Prof Vanda Broughton (DIS), Dr Sahra Gibbon (Anthropology), Prof Stephen Price (BASc) and Dr Antonio Sennis (History).

**1. MINUTES**

***Approved***

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

**2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Minute 20: Portico Reports**

***Reported***

2.1 It was reported that a Student Information System Funding Working Group had been convened at the request of the Vice Provost Education. The working group had met twice to review funding and governance issues, with a view to making recommendations to Vice-Provost (Education).

2.2 The Board was advised that the Joint Faculty Academic Administration Handbook contained a guide to the most useful Portico reports.

### **Minute 21: Grade Point Average (GPA) Conversion**

#### ***Reported***

2.3 It was reported that the GPA conversion forms had been reviewed and considered by the Chair of the GPA Working Group. The range of marks across departments in the joint Faculties was close together.

2.4 The Board was advised of the challenges of introducing the GPA would differ between Arts and Humanities and Sciences.

2.5 It was further reported that there was strong support for the GPA in Education Committee and Academic Committee; however the future would depend on the national pilot and subsequent developments in the sector.

### **Minute 22: Abolition of the requirement to 'complete' all modules**

#### ***Reported***

2.6 It was reported that there was a possibility that Incompletes might be abolished.

2.7 It was further reported that where issues arose with incompletes, applications had been made to the Dean of Students (Academic) for a suspension of regulations to allow qualified degree classifications. It was hoped that this could be codified in future.

### **Minute 23: 'Best of Two Attempts' Regulation**

#### ***Reported***

2.8 Departments were asked for feedback on their experience of implementing the 'best of two attempts' regulation. Although departments did not report any specific difficulties, it was noted that there had been some discussion at UCL level as to whether the best of two attempts mark should be applied at the module level or the individual component level. Chairs of Masters Boards were advised that the regulation should apply to overall module marks rather than components.

### **Minute 24C: Online assessment submission for students with learning difficulties**

#### ***Reported***

2.9 It was reported that Dr Hofmann had contacted the Disability Office to discuss the possibility of producing certificates for students with learning difficulties. The outcome of this discussion was a suggestion that the Disability Office notify Home Departments of students with learning difficulties, and this information be filtered down from the Home Departments to the Teaching Departments. The Faculty view was that this was not feasible in practice.

2.10 The Board's attention was drawn to the Disability Office's policy on assessment of dyslexic/dyspraxic students' work; in particular, the excerpt on marking coursework, which stated that if spelling, punctuation and grammar were assessment criteria it should be explicitly mentioned in the marking scheme, otherwise students should not be penalised for errors. [www.ucl.ac.uk/disability/information-for-staff/dyslexiamarkingguidelines](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/disability/information-for-staff/dyslexiamarkingguidelines).

### ***Action***

Departments were advised to check their publicised marking criteria, to ensure it fell in line with the policy document.

The policy document would be uploaded on the Joint Faculty Intranet.

## **3. CONDUCT OF FINAL MEETINGS OF THE UNDERGRADUATE BOARDS OF EXAMINERS IN JUNE 2013**

### ***Reported***

3.1 Dr Matthews provided a summary report on the conduct of the final meetings of the Undergraduate Boards of Examiners in June 2013.

3.2 It was acknowledged that the timing for submission of Chair's Reports was not ideal. This would be raised at the next UCLBE meeting.

3.4 Dr Matthews informed the Board of the key themes arising from the Chair's reports, which were:

- Marking range
- Moderation
- Diversity/innovation in assessment
- Portico and Reports
- Online marking
- Extenuating circumstances policies and procedures
- Borderline criteria
- Communication with Externals
- Supply of an incorrect exam paper to a student.

## **4. UCL BOARD OF EXAMINERS REGULATIONS 2013/14**

### ***Noted***

4.1 The Board noted the changes to the UCL Board of Examiners Regulations 2013/14, with particular attention to the appointment of Assistant Internal Examiners in Regulations 20-22.

### ***Received***

4.2 The Board received the Draft Joint Faculty Policy on Marking by Assistant Internal Examiners, subject to regulation 21.1 ii) of the Board of Examiners Regulations; and were asked for feedback.

### ***Discussion***

4.3 A question was raised and discussed in relation to how the training for assistant internal examiners would be organised and provided. Prof Wolff suggested that the provision of training was delegated to departments, followed by a report to the Faculty on what had been put in place.

### ***Action***

The Board was asked to provide any feedback on the draft policy to Dr Hofmann.

## 5. PLAGIARISM

### *Reported*

5.1 It was reported that 10 Undergraduate and 11 Postgraduate plagiarism cases had been dealt with by Departments, and reported to the Faculty.

5.2 Departments were reminded to report cases to the Faculty and Registry, as well as provide copies of paperwork.

## 6. REPORT FROM JOINT FACULTY TUTOR

### *Received*

6.1 The Board received an oral report from the Joint Faculty Tutor

### *Academic Regulations*

6.2 Dr Hofmann reported that the Academic Regulations 2013/14 had been published with a number of substantive errors. These errors had been noted by the Faculty, and had been raised by the Faculty; however Education Committee that the current regulations would not be amended as teaching had already started.

6.3 The Board noted that the following General Student Regulations were affected by the published Academic Regulations:

- Incomplete progression loophole
- Late submission penalties
- Lateness and over length penalty
- 40% anonymity
- Referrals
- PGT eligibility for assessment and barring
- PGT deferred assessment

The implications of these problems were explained in detail by Dr Hofmann.

### *Noted*

6.4 The Board noted guidance from the Faculty Tutor with regard to:

#### **a. Referred Assessment**

6.5 It was noted that timescales for Late Assessment must leave enough time for subsequent Referred Assessment. If Referred Assessment is deemed inappropriate, 34 could be deliberately given.

#### **b. Information for Students**

6.6 Departments were requested to ensure that programme and module information for students clearly stated:

- i. Details of overall programme assessment (including the requirement for 65 in the dissertation to achieve a Merit in a Masters programme);
- ii. Details of module assessment (including any components which must be passed in order to achieve an overall pass)

- iii. Details of any local progression hurdles (i.e. modules which must be passed to progress within a named degree programme).

#### **c. Extenuating Circumstances**

6.7 It was noted that:

- i. An Exam Board could ask the Chair for details of an extenuating circumstances case. The Chair might refuse where to do so would may breach student confidentiality/anonymity.
- ii. Where extenuating circumstances applied to some but not all years and/or to some but not all modules, Boards might find it helpful to consider how much an A, B, C rating should be worth in order to perform test calculations to indicate the exact impact of these extenuating circumstances on the overall average calculation if applied precisely for the relevant modules and the relevant years only.

#### **d. Fields of Study**

6.8 Chairs were reminded that a different field of studies should be specified if local pass requirements for a course were missed.

#### **e. Condoned Passes**

6.9 Chairs of Masters Boards were reminded that whilst they had discretion regarding condoned passes, this should be exercised consistently using rules (e.g. specifying which modules can/cannot be condoned) rather than on a case by case basis.

#### **f. External Examiners**

6.10 Chairs of Boards were reminded that nominated External Examiners were normally expected to be of Russell Group calibre and at the level of Senior Lecturer or above, and to comply with the requirements set out in the Regulations for Boards of Examiners.

### ***Items for Information***

## **7. UCL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXAMINATION PERIOD 2013/14**

### ***Noted***

7.1. Dates for the 2013/14 examinations were noted as follows:

- i. Undergraduate examinations: 1 May – 30 May;
- ii. Postgraduate examinations: 1 May – 13 June;
- iii. Deadline for exchange of undergraduate marks: 6 June;
- iv. Dates for undergraduate Exam Boards: 9 – 19 June.

## **8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

### ***Noted***

8.1. Dates of the remaining Joint Faculty Board of Examiners meetings for 2013/14 were noted as follows:

- Tuesday 21 January 2014 at 4:00pm in Rockefeller 337 (David Sacks)
- Tuesday 29 April 2014 at 4:00pm in Gordon House 106.

## **9. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

### **9A Referred Assessment**

#### ***Reported***

9.1 Dr Hofmann reported on the problems associated with referrals. Three key issues were highlighted:

- i. The performance level indicated by a 35 in the Humanities and Social Sciences and how it related to Pass fail criteria;
- ii. The fact that referrals could effectively create additional attempts so that it was possible for a student to have a total of four attempts including referrals on the first and second attempts.
- iii. There was a lack of consistency in the way in which referred assessment was implemented.

9.2 The Board was asked for their views to feed into a forthcoming review by Education Committee.

#### ***Discussion***

9.3 Members of the Board agreed that a mark of 35 was very poor and that referred assessment was problematic.

### **9B In-session resits**

#### ***Reported***

9.4 It was reported that in-session re-sits would be on the agenda for discussion at the next Education Committee meeting.

9.5 It was noted that UCL did not currently have summer resits, and that students needing to resit therefore had to wait until the following summer. It was further noted that setting special resit papers presented particular problems for the sciences. There was some support for the introduction of summer resits. It was however noted that in the MRes, where in-session resits were available, they did not always work well.

### **9C Masters Merit Award**

#### ***Reported***

9.6 Dr Hofmann reported that a Joint Faculty application for derogation from the requirement for a minimum mark of 65 in the dissertation in order to qualify for an award with Merit had been rejected on contested technical grounds, despite a majority vote in favour of the Faculty's application in the UCL Board of Examiners.

9.7 However, there was support for a review of operation of the award across UCL and this would be considered by UCL Board of Examiners and Education Committee with a view to making changes to the regulation for 2014/15.

9.8 If Boards encountered any particularly severe cases of students missing out on a merit despite a very high overall average mark in the meantime, they could make a case for a suspension of regulations.

## **9C Masters Exam Board Dates and Membership Lists**

### ***Received***

9.9 The Board received the schedule of the Masters Exam Boards.

### ***Noted***

9.10 It was noted that the outstanding exam board information and membership lists needed to be submitted to Christina Edwards as soon as possible.

## **9D Faculty observers for Masters Boards**

### ***Noted***

9.11 It was noted that observers were still needed for the Exam Boards. Exam Board Chairs were therefore reminded to indicate their availability to observe using the Doodle Poll circulated on 1 October or by emailing Christina Edwards as soon as possible.

Distribution: Joint Faculty Board of Examiners; Secretary, UCL Board of Examiners

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