



Faculty Board of Examiners Meeting Minutes of Meeting held on 28th January 2013 at 2pm

Present:

Dr Jackie Nicholls (*Co-Chair: FBoE, Faculty Tutor – Taught, Deputy Chair: Health Informatics; Health & Medical Sciences*)
Professor Christine Kinnon (*Co-Chair: FBoE, Vice-Dean Education, Deputy Chair: Cell and Gene Therapy, Chair: iBSc Paediatrics*)
Dr Brenda Cross (*Faculty Tutor*)
Dr Richard Gilson (*Chair: Sexually Transmitted Infections & HIV*)
Dr Joyce Harper (*Chair: Prenatal Genetics & Fetal Medicine; Reproductive Science & Women's Health*)
Professor Therese Hesketh (*Chair: International Child Health; Global Health & Development*)
Dr Lion Shahab (*Deputy Chair: Health Psychology*)
Dr Maryam Shahmanesh (*Chair: Sexually Transmitted Infections & HIV*)
Dr Surinder Singh (*Programme Lead: iBSc Primary Health Care – for Dr Meakin*)
Dr David Skuse (*Chair: Child & Adolescent Mental Health*)
Professor Philippa Talmud (*Programme Lead: Cardiovascular Science*)
Dr Angie Wade (*Chair: Paediatrics & Child Health*)
Dr Richard Watt (*Chair: Dental Public Health*)

In attendance:

Rachel Hall (*Secretary, Faculty Education Officer*)
Ruth Harper (*Faculty Education Administrative Lead*)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr Hynek Pikhart, Dr Eric Brunner (Chair and Deputy Chair respectively: Health & Society: Social Epidemiology), Dr Andrew Steptoe (Chair: Health Psychology), Dr Andrew Meakin (Chair: iBSc Primary Health Care).

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND 2012-13 MEMBERSHIP [Appendix 1].

This was the first meeting of the FPHS Board of Examiners and the draft Membership and Terms of Reference were formally adopted.

It was noted that membership of the committee would comprise the Chairs of the Institute and Programme Boards of Examiners.

It was noted that the committee now also includes the Faculty of Population Health Sciences undergraduate iBScs.

3. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING. [Appendix 2].

The Minutes of the last meeting, which was a joint meeting of FMS/FPHS, held on 18th January 2012 were received and confirmed by the committee members.

4. ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE JOINT FBS/FPHS MINUTES

Training session on the preparation and running of BoE meetings

It was agreed that the members of the committee did not feel that a session on this is needed at this stage.

Vivas and ownership of projects

It was reported that there has been no further action on this point.

Borderline case regulations

The Chair confirmed the regulations for borderline cases are available as [Appendix 47](#) of the Regulations for Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes. It was noted that there is a lack of clarity in general about the location of up to date UCL regulations.

Release of results

The Chair highlighted the importance that students understand that the marks given by Institutes are provisional pending formal UCL ratification. It was reported that there is guidance available in [Appendix 27](#) of the Regulations for Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes on this point.

Student prize

The Chair mentioned that this had been discussed previously and FMS have introduced a prize, and enquired if there was an interest across the Faculty. It was agreed that this is not needed for the moment as many departments have their own prize-awarding arrangements.

5. MATTERS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL

The Chair confirmed that the Committee had received Final Board of Examiners Minutes, Chairs Annual Reports and some External Examiners Reports from each active taught programme within the Faculty.

5.2 Minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings

The Committee received 17 out of 17 sets of Minutes.

5.3 External Examiners' Reports

The Committee received at least one External Examiner's report for each BoE.

5.4 Chairs' Annual Reports

The Committee received 17 out of 17 Chair's Annual Reports.

The Chair reviewed the above submitted reports¹ on behalf of the Committee members and reported the following points of generic interest or concern; and of good or bad practice:

External & Internal Examiners

It was noted that the College requests notification of nominees for approval in advance of the academic session for which they are to be appointed and therefore there is a need to plan ahead for the appointment of External Examiners, particularly

¹ Full spread sheet of submitted documents attached.

when a replacement is needed. The current Faculty records will be circulated for updates, so that succession planning could be supported.

One programme had identified a need to appoint additional external examiners to provide capacity to cope with vivas for increased student numbers. Chairs were reminded that standard UCL policy is to move away from vivas for MSc students

Action: Rachel Hall/Ruth Harper

Award of Merit

The Chair noted that students must be clearly informed of the criteria for the award of Merit and Distinction at the beginning of their programme. External Examiners must also be provided with a full Scheme of Award including details of merit/distinction criteria. Although many external examiners welcomed the merit/distinction awards inevitably some considered the Regulations to be overly stringent. However there are no plans for the College to revise the Regulations again. Chairs should be aware of the rules covering borderline candidates (if a candidate meets all borderline criteria the BoE must make the relevant award). The regulations on Merit awards can be found in [Appendix 47](#) of the Regulations for Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes.

Double Marking/Double Blind Marking

The Chair reminded members that the College has been moving away from blind marking to comprehensive moderation of marks (see [Appendix 39](#) of the Regulations for Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes). There was a discussion about the two forms of comprehensive moderation suggested by the College. It is up to members to choose the appropriate form of moderation but it is essential that external examiners are provided with clear information on how marking has been carried out.

The Chair noted that the exception is the dissertation component, where moderation of all scripts must be implemented (ie. random/borderline sampling is not acceptable here).

It was noted that for the dissertation, there is a huge variation in assessment practice across the Faculty and members agreed that it would be useful to have a Faculty workshop to share best practice.

Action: Rachel Hall/Ruth Harper

Change of Assessment

The Chair reminded Committee members that if they are to change assessment method or structure, that they must submit a CAF ([change of assessment form](#)) to the Faculty for approval. Similarly, if they are to change the Scheme of Award for the programme, this should be discussed by the Departmental (ie Institute-level) Teaching Committee and then needs to be submitted to the Departmental Teaching and Research Committee before it is sent to Faculty and then the UCL Academic Board for approval.

Action: Chairs of DTCs (RH to send reminder)

Plagiarism

It was noted that a number of programmes I reported cases of plagiarism.

The Chair noted the importance of repeated communication with the students over issues of plagiarism. This could be done in a variety of ways; workshops at the start of the term, reminders and signing a plagiarism form when submitting assessment.

External Examiners Reports:

It was noted that the majority of external examiners commented on the high standard of the programmes.

Advanced Physiotherapy

The Board of Examiners had discussed changing the Scheme of Award to address the issue of preventing students from submitting their Dissertation if it transpired that they had failed modules. However, timing was an issue as the results of modules would not be available before the student embarked on the dissertation. Any amendment to the Scheme of Award would need to take account of this so students were not disadvantaged and would need to be approved.

The Chair's Report refers to 'model answers' which may be a matter of wording. It was noted that this is something that the College does not encourage. There is a difference between 'model answers' and 'indicative answers'.

Cell and Gene Therapy

This was a new programme this year which had started well. It was noted that the External Examiner felt that the length of the dissertation (10,000 words) was too long even though it is consistent with practice in other universities including his own. They asked if the Programme Team had considered the option of a shorter assessment in the style of a paper for publication. Several programmes (including Health Informatics and Health Psychology amongst others) do adopt this form of assessment and would be willing to share their experience.

It was noted that there are Regulations concerning maximum word length for MSc dissertations although an alternative would be to prescribe the number of pages with font size, margins and specify the number of tables and images permitted.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health

This was the first year for this programme which has started well. It was noted that the programme was expanding its intake rapidly and the team planned to change several of the assessments including the removal of MCQs, a move supported by the External Examiner who also requested advance sighting of exam papers and clarification of some assessment criteria. The External Examiner had referred positively to 'double blind marking' (but see above) and had also commented on modules which only having a single form of assessment being punitive on students who perform poorly on one assessment.

As a general point, the Chair reminded the Committee about the importance of each assessment having clear assessment instructions and marking guidelines.

The possibility of a Faculty workshop on assessment was discussed and this will be reconsidered once the Dissertation workshop has taken place.

Action: Rachel Hall/Ruth Harper

Clinical and Applied Paediatric Neuropsychology

The Programme Team had been commended on its balance of assessment methods. They discussed supervision issues relating to the dissertation component of the programme.

Prenatal Genetics and Fetal Medicine/ Reproductive Science and Women's Health

Both programmes ran very smoothly and successfully. The External Examiner had raised the issue that where Skype is used, a quiet, dedicated space should be available. In future oral assessments will not be used so the situation will not recur on these programmes but should be considered by others who use Skype,

Haemaglobinopathy

The Chair reminded members of the Committee that this programme is being reviewed by UCL.

Dental Public Health

The Chair noted that the External Examiner had praised the overall quality of the programme and specifically the assessment processes and methods. It was noted that this good practice should be shared between programmes.

Health Informatics

The BoE had discussed the use of Specified Minor Amendments (SPAM) for appropriate students. Although it had not applied this year, the guidance to students and marking criteria will be revised to explain this provision.

As a general point relating to SPAM, the Chair reminded members that students must know what they need to do in order to secure the mark which is subject to SPAM.

Health Psychology

The External Examiner had noted that it is important to make clear to the students the link between the learning outcomes and assessments, and that students must be made aware of the Scheme of Award, including criteria for merit and distinction, at the beginning of their programme.

iBSc Paediatrics/ Global Health/ Primary Health Care

The Chair reported that there were no burgeoning issues except that there is some variation about how projects are assessed. It was reported that the iBSc programmes may move to one overarching Medical School run BoE.

An issue raised concerned students taking these programmes who have a parent or close relation teaching a module on the programme. It was noted that a policy is currently in development to address these sorts of circumstances. It was commented that it would be useful to have a College policy, as this issue could affect all taught and research programmes.

Action: All Chairs to feed back to Departments on relevant issues

5.5 Awards

There was a discussion on the number of Distinctions awarded in relation to Merits and Passes. Inevitably, there is considerable variability across programmes but the numbers are too small to allow any meaningful comparison.

The awards were recommended for approval to the UCL Board of Examiners.

6 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR(S) ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

No action to be taken by the Chair on behalf of the Committee.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In relation to the iBScs the Committee were informed that the College is looking at revising the Regulations of Extenuating Circumstances and moving towards a 'fit to sit' policy.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

January 2014 - to be confirmed.

MINUTES APPROVED

Sign:
Name:
Date:

Minutes and appendices are available either on request from the Secretary by emailing FPHS.Education@ucl.ac.uk or via the Committee's website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/populationhealth-sciences/fphs-internal/Faculty-Governance-and-Committee

Copy of Minutes to:
Ms Irenie Morley for UCL Board of Examiners

RH/January 2013

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Status:

(C=Complete, P= Pending, O=Ongoing, U=Unknown, to be followed up)

Comm Date:	Agenda Item:	Action:	Action By:	Status:
28/01/12	5.4 Chairs Annual Reports Double Marking/Double Blind Marking and Assessment Best Practice	Set up a best practice workshop(s)	REH/RIH	P
	Change of Assessment	DTC Chairs to ensure that CAFs were completed within the required timeframe for any changes in assessment – reminder to be sent to all chairs.	REH/RIH Chairs of DTC	P
	External and Internal Examiners	The Faculty list of examiners to be circulated and updated.	REH/RIH All	P
	Feedback	Faculty BoE feedback to be communicated to DTCs and programme BoEs	Chairs of BoEs	P

Please note that all links to Regulations and Regulation Appendices are correct as at February 2013, however to ensure that the correct version is in use please always check the links:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ras/examiners/>
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ras/examiners/regulations_appendices