



Academic Committee

Thursday 6th July 2023 at 10:00am

Video-conferencing meeting via MS Teams

Minutes

Present Members:

President and Provost (Chair); Professor Kathy Armour; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor David Bogle; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Marie Gallagher; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Professor Arne Hofmann; Professor Jennifer Hudson; Zak Liddell; Professor Allison Littlejohn; Blathnaid Mahony; Umair Mehmood; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Aeli Roberts; Dr Suzanne Ruddy; Professor Stephanie Schorge; Professor Eloise Scotford; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Olga Thomas; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Kirsty Walker; Dr Zachary Walker; Professor Nicola Walshe; Professor Li Wei

Apologies:

Professor Ibrahim Abubakar; Professor Simon Banks; Karen Barnard; Professor Clare Brooks; Sarah Cowls; Ashley Doolan; Professor Mark Emberton; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Christoph Lindner; Angharad Milenkovic; Professor Ivan Parkin; Mike Rowson; Dr Michael Short; Dr Kathryn Walsh

In attendance:

For Minutes 15-29: Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff, President and Provost's Office
For Minutes 15-29: Natasha Lewis, General Counsel
For Minutes 15-29: David Pacey, University Secretary
For Minutes 15-29: Professor Norbert Pachler, Pro-Vice-Provost (Quality and Standards)
For Minutes 15-18: Professor Parama Chaudhury, Pro-Vice-Provost (Education – Student Academic Experience)
For Minute 19: Beatrice Addo, Director of Implementation and Strategy Delivery
For Minute 19: Paul Clark, Vice-President (Strategy)
For Minute 19: Laura Mackenzie, Project Manager (Academic Development)
For Minute 20: Claire Hartill, Head of Regulations and Casework
For Minute 20: Zoe Harrison, Casework Manager
For Minute 21: Bella Malins, Director of Access and Admissions

Officer:

Rachel Port, Governance Manager: Research Integrity

Part I: Preliminary Business

15. Declaration of Interests

- 15.1. At the start of the meeting, in light of the confidential item for discussion on the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), the Chair invited members to declare if they were participating in the boycott. No declarations were made.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022

- 16.1. AC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 [Minutes 1-14, 2022-23].

17. Matters arising from the Minutes

- 17.1. There were no matters arising.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

18. Confidential: Marking and Assessment Boycott Update (2-14)

- 18.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 18.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 18.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

19. Confidential: UCL Strategic Plan 2022-27: Progress Report (2-13)

- 19.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 19.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 19.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

20. UCL Student Complaints Annual Report 2022 (2-15)

- 20.1. Claire Hartill, Head of Regulations and Casework, and Zoe Harrison, Casework Manager, introduced the UCL Student Complaints Annual Report 2022. The key points made were:
- a. The number of formal complaints (803) submitted had increased substantially by some 300% during the calendar year 2022 compared to 2021. The significant increase could be attributed to industrial action and technical failure cases.

- b. In recognition of the significant increase in workload, the Casework Team would have increased staffing with 10 additional team members from September 2023 to deal with complaints.
- c. Only a few complaints progressed to consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and only a further few of those were upheld.
- d. The Casework Team would move to an improved case management system to allow for enhanced data in next year's annual report.

20.2. During discussion, the following points were made:

- a. In relation to instances where complaints were not upheld, or where no outcome would satisfy the student complainant, students had to be offered the option to take their complaint to the OIA for consideration.
- b. In respect of what further assistance could be offered by UCL, it was intended that the new members of Casework Team would help to build stronger relationships with departments and faculties and be available to provide advice to them about informal resolutions to resolve complaints at an earlier stage.
- c. It was intended that the tone and format of the communications prepared by the Casework Team to students would be addressed. The Office for the Vice-President (External Engagement) could provide assistance in this area as necessary.
- d. In terms of complaints per faculty, it was noted that within the Built Environment the increase was attributed to PGT students who had achieved an interim award. In some countries such an award was not recognised so students had nothing to lose by making a complaint. This area did raise the issue of the support for students at exit where they did not achieve the award they expected.

20.3. AC received the UCL Student Complaints Annual Report 2022.

21. Prevent Annual Update (2-16)

21.1. Bella Malins, Director of Access and Admissions and UCL Prevent Lead, introduced the annual update on the implementation of Prevent at UCL. The key points made were:

- a. UCL remained compliant with the duty. Since the last report to AC, no reportable events regarding Prevent or external speakers had been discussed with the Office for Students (OfS), and no Prevent related student referrals to external agencies had been made.
- b. Key staff had received a refresher Prevent training session whilst some 4k staff had completed the online Prevent induction course last session.
- c. All external speaker events had gone ahead, with three events in the last reporting period being subject to mitigations or conditions in order to go ahead.

- d. In light of the Prevent duty review and the new Freedom of Speech Act, UCL's Code of Practice, the associated Procedure for Management of Events with External Speakers and the code of conduct for visitors were under review. The revised versions should be available next session.

21.2. AC received the Prevent Annual Update.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

22. Proposal to disestablish Student Experience Committee (2-17)

- 22.1. AC approved the proposal to disestablish Student Experience Committee (StEC) with immediate effect.
- 22.2. Under the revised Education Governance structure, three new sub-committees focussed on students had been established with a direct reporting line to Education Committee. Given two of these new sub-committees now covered StEC's remit and membership, there was no longer a requirement for StEC to continue.

23. Annual Report for Session 2021-22 – Student Experience Committee (2-18)

- 23.1. AC approved the Student Experience Committee Annual Report 2021-22.

24. Annual Report for session 2021-22 – Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee (2-19)

- 24.1. AC approved the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee Annual Report 2021-22.

25. UCL Careers Annual Report 2021-22 (2-20)

- 25.1. AC received the UCL Careers Annual Report 2021-22. The Chair considered that the Annual Report was very impressive and noted that the Careers Service was regularly commended by both staff and students for their work.

26. Annual Accountability Return 2021-22: Quality Assurance (2-21)

- 26.1. AC received the Annual Accountability Return 2021-22: Quality Assurance.

27. Annual Report on New Programmes of Study at UCL approved in 2022-23 session (2-22)

27.1. AC received the annual report on new programmes of study at UCL approved in 2022-23 session.

28. Reports of sub-committees, working groups etc of AC

28.1. AC received the following sets of minutes:

- a. The minutes of Education Committee, 18 October 2022; 15 November 2022; 6 December 2022; 7 February 2023; 25 April 2023.
- b. The minutes of Research Degrees Committee, 31 October 2022; 7 March 2023.
- c. The minutes of Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee, 8 December 2022; 9 March 2023.

29. Dates of meetings in 2023-24 session

29.1. Dates for meetings of Academic Committee in 2023-24 session were confirmed as follows:

Thursday 16th November 2023, 10:00am – 12 noon
Thursday 14th March 2024, 10:00am – 12 noon
Thursday 4th July 2024, 10:00am – 12 noon.

Rachel Port
Secretary to Academic Committee
August 2023