



ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 25 June 2015

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) (Acting Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Simon Banks; Professor David Bogle; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Nick Brook; Ms Mariana Ceccotti; Dr Brenda Cross; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Dilly Fung; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Chris Husbands; Mr Lukmaan Kolia; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Michael Pitt; Professor David Price; Professor Geraint Rees; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Ms Susan Ware; Professor Nicholas Wood.

In attendance: Ms Clare Goudy; Dr Alastair McClelland (Item 42); Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary); Ms Chandan Shah; Professor Gabriella Vigliocco (Deputy for Alan Thompson)

Apologies for absence: Professor Michael Arthur; Professor Robert Brown; Ms Anna Douglas; Professor Anthony Finklestein; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Ms Helen Matthews; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Jonathan Wolff.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
EdCom	Education Committee
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HER	Higher Education Review
LSE	London School of Economics
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QMEC	Quality Monitoring Experience Committee
QTS	Qualified Teaching Status
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SED	Self-Evaluation Document
SMT	Senior Management Team
StRAFC	Student, Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
VP	Vice-Provost

34 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12 MARCH 2015

Confirmed:

- 34.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 12 March 2015 [AC Mins. 22-33, 12.03.15].

35 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

- 35.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

36 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Received:

- 36.1 An oral report from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs). In addition to items already on the Agenda, the following issue was reported.

Reported:

37A Teaching Excellence Framework

- 37A.1 Following the General Election, the new Government has confirmed its determination to develop a 'Teaching Excellence Framework' for Higher Education. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will be consulting informally with the sector over the Summer before publishing a Green Paper in the Autumn.

38 EDUCATION STRATEGY

Received:

- 38.1 An oral update on the consultation process for the UCL Education Strategy from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith.

Reported:

- 38.2 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) highlighted the progress of the consultation process with the link to the education theme of the UCL 2034 Strategy. By the beginning of July, consultation with all faculties and student facing professional services would have been completed.
- 38.3 Proposed ideas of the strategy have been discussed in consultations with a view to draft a strategy to be presented to Education Committee and AC in Autumn 2015. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes would be the focus of this strategy.

39 DOCTORAL EDUCATION AT UCL

Received:

- 39.1 At AC 4 - 01 (14-15) a paper outlining UCL's Draft Strategy for Doctoral Education presented by the Pro Vice-Provost (Doctoral School), Professor David Bogle.

Reported:

- 39.2 The Pro Vice-Provost (Doctoral School) reported that the draft paper for both internal and external audiences incorporated relevant themes from various strategies, such as UCL 2034, Research and Enterprise Strategies and would incorporate the Education Strategy as well as elements from the Connected Curriculum.
- 39.3 The draft strategy had been substantially informed by the Doctoral Plans developed by the Faculties, these had been reviewed, key themes, ideas and challenges extracted and discussed at RDC. Deans and Faculty Graduate Tutors had also been consulted.
- 39.4 Further consultation would take place over the Summer and a proposed strategy will be submitted to RDC and AC in Autumn 2015 for approval. SMT and Council will also receive the final version for discussion.

Discussion:

- 39.5 A number of comments were made about the focus on research impact at the thesis stage. Members were in agreement that encouraging students to think about the impact and potential impact of their research should be an essential part of doctoral training and development, although this should be flexible to accommodate for different discipline requirements and practices. The Vice-Provost (Research) reminded colleagues of UCL's definition of impact and that this encompassed different aspects ranging from scholarly impact to public policy impact.
- 39.6 It was noted that the market for doctoral students is changing rapidly, with increased professionalisation and demand for structured professional doctorates delivered in flexible ways. The strategy would need to reflect these changes and help to ensure that UCL's support systems, supervision, regulation and training catered for a more diverse range of doctoral programme and diverse student body.

40 REVIEW OF UCL'S ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES

Received:

- 40.1 At AC 4 - 02 (14-15), a paper outlining a comprehensive programme of changes to UCL's Regulations, approved by EdCOM and RDC, introduced by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) and the Director of Academic Services, Mr Derfel Owen.

Reported:

- 40.2 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) commented that the paper presented was to inform AC of the scale of change that was taking place and highlighted this major restructuring of UCL's academic regulations was important and necessary.
- 40.3 The Director of Academic Services gave a short presentation to AC providing an update on key changes to the academic regulations. These included a commitment to consolidate all key regulations in a single Academic Manual. During the current academic year a new Credit and Qualifications Framework, Academic Partnerships Framework and Quality Review framework have been consulted upon and completed. These will be in force from September 2015. Regulations that would be revised during 2015-16 academic year included Admission and Enrolment, Programme Approval & Assessment, Progression and Awarding for Taught and Research Programmes.

- 40.4 The Director of Academic Services draw particular attention to the changes to External Examiners reporting processes contained in the Quality Review Framework, this included a more structured report form and stricter timelines for responding to essential recommendation, also the Academic Partnership Framework had introduced clearer lines of decision making and enhanced support for colleagues to help develop new partnership agreements.

Discussion:

- 40.5 Members of AC welcomed the proposals and noted the significant progress towards a 'single source of truth' for UCL academic regulations.
- 40.6 It was noted that the enhanced use of data for the new Annual Student Experience Review would be helpful for departments and faculties to identify trends and anomalies in student achievement, progression and feedback. Members did however emphasise the need to make sure that individual and diverse student needs and experiences were not forgotten or lost in a sea of numbers.

41 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Received:

- 41.1 An oral report from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith.

Reported:

- 41.2 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) re-emphasised the fact that the QAA HER is an opportunity for UCL to reflect on the quality and standards of education, to showcase the best that we have to offer and to have a frank discussion about where and how we might improve.
- 41.3 It was also reported that an HER Strategy Group had been established to oversee the process and UCL's active engagement with QAA, this group is chaired by the VP. An HER Operations Group has also been established, chaired by the Registrar, to draw on operation expertise to inform the drafting of the self-evaluation document. On-going conversations and discussions with students and Sabbatical Officers were occurring to support them when compiling the student submission.

42 THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE SYSTEM

Received:

- 42.1 At AC 4 - 03 (14-15), a report from the Working Group established by AC presented by the Chair of the Working Group, Dr Alastair McClelland.

Reported:

- 42.2 The VP introduced the paper and highlighted that UCL amongst some other Russell Group Institutions had met to review the honours degree classification system in 2011-12. Subsequently UCL had been part of a pilot group that had contributed to the National GPA Advisory Group that had recently published the report in May.

- 42.3 The Chair of the Working Group reported on the recommendations proposed to UCL based on the recommendation by the National GPA Advisory Group for the sector to adopt the GPA system with dual running of the Honours Degree Classification system.

Discussion:

- 42.4 A number of members raised comments relating to UCL's marking practices and the lack of comparability of approaches to assessment and marking between disciplines.
- 42.5 Some members highlighted the increased number of requests for transcripts that provide detail of general and individual module marks in addition to their classification, these request come in particular from students wishing to continue their studies overseas.
- 42.6 In response to members' questions on sector interest and the direction of peer Institutions, it was reported that a number of institutions are now considering their response to the report of the National GPA Advisory Group, some comparator universities had already made clear that they would not be changing to the GPA system.

Resolved:

- 42.7 Members agreed it was necessary for UCL to review internal processes first as significant changes to our systems would be required before moving towards the GPA system. These would be considered as part of implementation of the new Education Strategy. AC members agreed with recommendation 1.5 as proposed by the GPA working group, to monitor the take-up and progress of the GPA in the sector. The GPA working group should remain and continue to advise AC on developments in the sector.

43 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Noted:

- 43.1 Since the last meeting, action has been taken by the Chair of AC, on behalf of AC, to approve the following:
- Intellectual Property Rights Policy

44 DEPOSITS ON PGT OFFERS

Approved:

- 44.1 At AC 4 - 04 (14-15) an update from StRAFC on UCL's position to request deposits on PGT offers.

45 ANNUAL MONITORING – REPORT FROM THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Noted:

- 45.1 At AC 4 - 05 (14-15), a report from QMEC on the outcomes of the latest Annual Monitoring cycle.

46 ANNUAL REPORT FROM EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY APPROVED IN 2013-14

Noted:

- 46.1 At AC 4 - 06 (14-15), a copy of the above report which will be received by Council at its meeting on 9 July 2015.

47 REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Noted:

- 47.1 Since the last meeting of AC, the AC officers have received on behalf of AC the Minutes of the following:

- Education Committee – 3 March 2015
- Equality and Diversity Committee – 12 November 2014, 3 March 2015
- Joint Staff Student Committee - 5 March 2015, 5 May 2015
- Library Committee – 11 December 2014, 18 March 2015
- Research Degrees Committee – 15 October 2014, 11 March 2015
- Research Governance Committee – 19 November 2014
- Student Experience Forum – 30 April 2015
- Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee – 23 March 2015

48 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 48.1 The Vice-Provost thanked the outgoing Sabbatical Officers for their work on the committee and wished them well for the future. Members were also thanked for their work and contributions during this academic year.

49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted

- 49.1 There were no further meetings of AC scheduled for the current session.

- 49.2 Dates of meetings of AC in session 2015-16 have been scheduled as follows:

Autumn 2015 **Tuesday 10 November 2015**

Spring 2016 **Thursday 17 March 2016**

Summer 2016 **Thursday 16 June 2016**

The above meetings will commence at 10.00am; venues will be confirmed in due course.

DERFEL OWEN

Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee

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7 July 2015