



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1 March 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Brenda Cross; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Dilly Fung; Ms Clare Goudy; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Professor John Mitchell; Ms Suguna Nair; Mr Derfel Owen; Mr Tom Robinson; Ms Wahida Samie; Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Derek Tocher; Ms Susan Ware.

In attendance: Professor Thilo Rehren, Director, UCL Qatar, for item 4; Mr David Walmsley, Head of Student Disability Services, for item 10; Mel Mullin Interim Deputy Director Academic Services (observing); Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Julie Evans; Ms Judith Hillmore; Dr Mike Rowson

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
CALT	Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching
EdCom	Education Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HER	Higher Education Review
PGT	Taught Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panels
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QRSC	Quality Review Sub Committee
SED	Self-Evaluation Document
SWS	Student Written Submission
UCLU	UCL Union

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

41 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 41.1 **Noted** - that Minute 34.2 on Personal Tutoring should read 'research-based' rather than 'research-led'.

- 41.2 **Agreed** – the minutes of the meeting of 1 December 2015 were agreed subject to the minor amendment in 41.1 above.

42 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 42.1 **Noted** - all matters arising were included in this or future agendas.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION
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43 UCL QATAR

- 43.1 **Received** – the paper on UCL Qatar at EDCOM 3-01 (15-16).
- 43.2 **Noted** – the committee was joined by Professor Thilo Rehren, Director, UCL Qatar via Skype.
- 43.3 The Director of UCL Qatar presented plans to reduce the number of Masters programmes offered, from four to two by 2017-18 and to zero in 2020. The teach-out plan outlined how this would be managed and identified risks for mitigation. EdCom noted its own responsibility for overseeing a managed exit, and for ensuring that the quality of the student experience and academic standards were maintained. The paper was marked as confidential as it anticipated some decisions which had not yet been formally taken nor communicated. The Director planned to present the proposals to staff and students in separate meeting on 3 March 2016.
- 43.4 Whilst all current commitments would be honoured, no new enrolments would be accepted onto the MSc Conservation Studies or the MA Archaeology of the Arab and Islamic World. Both programmes were only offered for full-time study so the 2015-16 cohort would be the last. The MA Museum and Gallery Practice and the MA Library and Information Studies would continue to operate until 2020. Both programmes were currently available for full-time (1-year) and part-time (2-year) study; the last part-time enrolment would be in 2018, while in 2019 only full-time students would be admitted.
- 43.5 UCL Qatar recognised the importance of ensuring that the degrees awarded by UCL retained their value in future years. Other key concerns included any students who might exceed the normal registration period due to interruptions, extenuating circumstances or module failure, and the retention of staff who may accept appointments elsewhere before the teach-out is complete. The Faculty of Engineering advised the appointment of named deputies to all key roles so that posts could be filled seamlessly should this eventuality arise, and also recommended that early communication with students was vital.
- 43.6 The Director asked EdCom for feedback on the plans which included a detailed schedule and contingencies. It was noted that the partnership was managed by the Global Engagement Office with the Joint Faculties supporting UCL Qatar in matters of quality assurance. The Faculty of Engineering had also provided constructive advice on managing the teach-out following its own experiences with UCL Australia. The committee also noted that the recent Internal Quality Review of UCL Qatar had been successful.
- 43.7 **Approved** – EdCom approved the teach-out plans.
- 43.8 **Agreed** - the Committee requested that the staff and student meetings be followed up by email and web communications to ensure that all stakeholders were fully informed. The Director of UCL Qatar was asked to provide a brief written update on the outcomes of the staff and student meetings to the next EdCom, and then to provide a termly update to the committee.

Action: Director of UCL Qatar

- 43.9 **Agreed** – that plans for the run-out of research programmes at UCL Qatar would need to be overseen by Research Degrees Committee and that a similar document should be received and discussed by that committee.

Action: Director of UCL Qatar

44 UCL AUSTRALIA ORAL UPDATE

- 44.1 The Faculty Tutor, Engineering, provided a brief update on progress. There were no concerns to report. There had been some staff losses but these had been mitigated by appointing deputies, making fixed term appointments and developing new modules. The last PGT intake had now enrolled and included 12 new MSc students and one Grad Cert student, all of whom would complete before the end of December 2017. Research Degrees Committee was overseeing the plans for the seven PGR students.

45 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW ORAL UPDATE, SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT AND STUDENT WRITTEN SUBMISSION [Minute 24 refers]

- 45.1 **Received** – UCL's QAA HER Self-Evaluation Document EDCOM 3-02 (15-16) and UCLU's Student Written Submission at EDCOM 3-03 (15-16).
- 45.2 The Chair provided a brief update on the upcoming review. Both the SED and UCLU's Student Written Submission had now been submitted together with almost 1000 pieces of evidence. The committee thanked UCLU for sharing their submission in advance.
- 45.3 The next step would be for the review team to consider the evidence and submit any requests for further evidence. In mid-April, Academic Services would receive a list of whom the review team would like to meet and a mock review was scheduled for the 21 and 22 April to give staff the opportunity to practice answering questions and to learn more about the process. Briefings on the SED and SWS would also be prepared, highlighting the key features. A wide range of staff would be asked to keep the dates of the mock review and the visit free, in case they might be needed. A precise timetable for the full visit would not be known until much nearer the time.

46 EDUCATION STRATEGY

- 46.1 **Received** – the latest draft of the Education Strategy at EDCOM 3-04 (15-16).
- 46.2 The strategy was now entering approval stage and was presented to EdCom for endorsement prior to final sign off by AC and Council on 17 March 2016. The authors thanked the committee for engaging so thoroughly with the process.
- 46.3 **Approved** – EdCom endorsed the Education Strategy.

47 REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

- 47.1 **Received** – a briefing on the review of the assessment regulations at EDCOM 3-05 (15-16).
- 47.2 An extensive consultation process was currently underway involving a wide range of staff and students in the review of UCL's assessment regulations, led by ARQASC and Academic Services. This had included a town hall meeting which had seen almost 150 staff and student representatives in attendance, as well as round table discussions in each Faculty, discussions at Faculty Teaching Committees, two very popular student focus groups and a well-attended workshop and stall at the UCLU Education Conference. Feedback from both staff and students had been very interesting and showed a high level of engagement with the issues at hand. Staff and students could also feedback by email or by completing an online survey, which would close just before Easter. Taught External Examiners would also be invited to respond to the survey and members were asked to encourage students to feedback.

Feedback would be used to compile an initial draft of the new assessment chapter which would itself be circulated for consultation and further feedback in the Summer term.

- 47.3 The committee noted that a key driver was the minimisation of derogations and variations and to create a set of enabling regulations which allowed for flexibility over and above UCL's threshold academic standards. As such members were asked to ensure that all departments and faculties considered the proposals and their implications as early as possible and to feed into the consultation to ensure that the regulations adequately covered their needs.

48 LATE SUMMER RESITS

- 48.1 **Received** – a briefing on the latest developments at [EDCOM 3-06 \(15-16\)](#).
- 48.2 The paper included some actions for EdCom to advise upon and/ or approve. A considerable amount of work had already been carried out, including discussions with the pilot groups, Examination Liaison Officers and the Faculty Tutor Forum to help identify all the issues which might arise. The working group had also discussed the substantial increase in workload for academic and professional staff and services, and the Chair was in discussion with the Academic Registrar and the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) about these issues.
- 48.3 There would be three different categories of students in the pilots: students with deferrals, students in the referral band and students with fails below the referral band. At present, the resit marks were capped for referral students but uncapped for failures below the referral band (and deferrals). At present this was acceptable because the referral meant that students could progress quickly without having to wait a year to resit. However in moving both into one resit period, students with marginal fails would be unfairly penalised over students with more substantial failures. For the pilots, it was important to ensure that no student would be disadvantaged as a result of being in the pilot, and so it was recommended to EdCom that the cap on referral students' resit marks should be lifted.
- 48.4 **Agreed** – For the Late Summer Resit pilot programmes, students with marks in the referral band on the first attempt would not have their resit marks capped at a pass and would instead receive a full grade.
- 48.5 The pilot programmes would need to convene a resit board to consider progression and award. Academic Services would be drafting terms of reference for such boards. It had been noted that the resit board would need to include the external examiner, but that authority to make decisions could be delegated to just the chair and external. Resit boards could meet virtually to expedite the process.
- 48.6 A further concern was the difficulty in arranging late summer resits for some methods of assessment such as lab work, practicals, presentations, group work etc. due to the availability of staff, peer groups and resources over the summer. It was not thought that this would particularly affect the pilot groups, but it would need to be resolved before full implementation. The working group had considered whether alternative forms of assessment could be used, as long as the learning outcomes being tested were comparable, although some concerns had been raised about parity and standards. Some members raised concerns that, in some cases, it would not be possible to devise a comparable alternative assessment, particularly if the method of assessment was a professional requirement, such as time in labs, and that some students would still need to resit the following year.
- 48.7 **Agreed** – For the Late Summer Resit pilot programmes, the same method of assessment should be used wherever possible. Where this was not possible, an alternative method of assessment could be considered, but this would need to be academically robust and approved by the External Examiner.
- 48.8 **Agreed** - The committee asked that the working group conduct some benchmarking of competitor institutions to understand how difficult-to-repeat assessments were handled elsewhere ahead of full implementation.

Action: Chair of LSRWG

49 DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE

- 49.1 **Received** - a briefing from Student Disability Services at EDCOM 3-07 (15-16).
- 49.2 The Head of Student Disability Services briefed EdCom on national changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), including the removal of central government funding and an increased expectation that HEIs provide an inclusive learning environment. Further changes were also anticipated in subsequent years. Student Disability Services had been considering how UCL might visibly respond to these changes.
- 49.3 **Agreed** - EdCom welcomed the paper and endorsed the direction of travel, agreeing that further work was needed to formalise the Departmental Disability Officer role. UCLU commended UCL's proactive response to the changes. The committee also reiterated the vital importance of good teaching being inclusive teaching, and asked members to remind or alert staff to the Arena sessions on offer in this area.

50 PERSONAL TUTORING *[Minute 34.5 refers]*

- 50.1 Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-08 (15-16).
- 50.2 The Director of CALT thanked EdCom members who had contributed comments and suggestions. The resulting document aimed to move away from a uniform approach based on the number of tutorials and towards a more responsive model tailored to the needs of different disciplines which included a broad scheme of student support and guidance, personal tutoring and signposting to further sources of support. A key feature was utilising assessment feedback to talk to students about their progress, and this would be supported by a 'My Feedback' page on Moodle from 2016-17.
- 50.3 EdCom agreed that it would be beneficial to monitor uptake of the scheme. It would be included in the Internal Quality Review process and it could also be used as one year's ASER theme, once there had been time to fully embed the changes. The working group would also continue as a means of sharing and promoting good practice.
- 50.4 **Approved** – EdCom welcomed the development and approved the paper's recommendations.
- 50.5 **Agreed** – The Director of CALT would devise a communication plan for the dissemination of the new scheme and the resources available to support staff in its implementation.

Action: Director of CALT

51 PROGRAMME AND COURSE INFORMATION WORKING GROUP *[Minute 39 (15-16) refers]*

- 51.1 **Received** – the proposed Terms of Reference at EDCOM 3-09 (15-16).
- 51.2 At the last EdCom, the Director of Academic Services highlighted the need for UCL to develop a policy on the provision of information to students. It was suggested that EdCom establish a working group to draft a policy which outlined UCL's minimum requirements, particularly for student handbooks and their online equivalents. The paper proposed Terms of Reference for the working group.
- 51.3 **Approved** – EdCom approved the terms of reference and asked for nominations for members to be sent to the Director of Academic Services.

Action: All members

52 EDCOM COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

- 52.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 3-10 (15-16).
- 52.2 In April 2015, EdCom approved changes to the structure of committees responsible for taught programmes. Education Committee was established as the primary decision-making body,

with ARQASC and QRSC reporting to EdCom and taking on the duties of the former UCL Board of Examiners and Quality Management and Enhancement Committee. Programme and Module Approval Panels (PMAPs) replaced the former PMASG, and a new Academic Partnerships Review Group was established. A year on, EdCom was asked to review and check the new structures.

- 52.3 EdCom agreed that the structure was working well but discussed some issues around the remit of PMAPs. The greater frequency and smaller membership worked well, but members raised concerns that, as a result, some policy decisions were not being made by the full PMAP membership. It was recognised that the Programme and Module Approval Framework needed a full review in order to properly define processes and the remit of the panels, and that Academic Services were working on proposals for improvements. It was also noted that the PMAP papers were made available to all members, and not just those attending a specific panel, and that the full membership were therefore involved in decision-making. However it was important to ensure that this process was being carried out effectively.

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

53 NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

- 53.1 **Approved** – the recommendations for new programmes of study at EDCOM 3-11 (15-16).

54 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES

- 54A **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group meetings held 8 December 2015 and 21 January 2016.
- 54B **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee meetings held 12 October 2015, 27 November 2015 and 12 January 2016.
- 54C **Approved** – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel meeting held 9 December 2015.

55 ANONYMISED SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS REPORT

- 55.1 **Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations at EDCOM 3-18 (15-16).

56 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 56.1 No further business was raised.

57 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Tuesday 26 April 2016, 2.00 – 4.30, Council Room
- Tuesday 7 June 2016, 2.00 – 4.30, Council Room

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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