



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1 May 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton
Ms Karen Barnard
Professor David Bogle
Ms Annabel Brown
Mr Jason Clarke
Dr Brenda Cross
Dr Caroline Essex
Dr Julie Evans
Mr Marco Federighi
Dr Dilly Fung
Mr Keir Gallagher
Ms Judith Hillmore

Dr Arne Hofmann
Dr Helen Matthews
Dr John Mitchell
Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Peter Raven
Mr Matt Jenner (*vice: Dr Fiona Strawbridge*)
Ms Olga Thomas
Professor Derek Tocher
Mr Ben Towse
Dr Andrew Wills
Dr Paul Walker

In attendance: Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Irenie Morley; Dr Hazel Smith.

Apologies for absence were received from: Professor Chris Carey; Dr Joyce Harper; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Ms Valerie Hogg; Dr Christine Kinnon; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Susan Ware.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
CoP	Code of Practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EDCOM	Education Committee
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Education Institution
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UCLU	UCL Union
WYM	Weighted Year Modules

51 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 6 MARCH 2014

Confirmed:

- 51.1 The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 6 March 2014 [EdCom Mins. 34-50, 6.3.14], circulated previously.

52 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES [see also Minutes 53-57 below]

52A Lecturecast Policy [EdCom Min.43, 13-14]

Noted:

- 52A.1 The policy had now been enshrined in the Academic Manual at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-3/lecturecast>

52B Study Abroad Resits [EdCom Min.48A, 13-14]

Noted:

- 52B.1 This would be discussed more fully at EdCom's meeting of 19 June 2014.

53 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SHORT COURSES

[EdCom Min.2E, 13-14]

Received:

- 53.1 At EDCOM 4/33 (13-14) a proposal, introduced by the EdCom Chair, Professor Mike Ewing.

Reported:

- 53.2 The Chair reported that there was no academic impediment to the proposals and that the Vice-Provost (Education) and the Vice-Provost (Enterprise) had both given them their full backing. However, funding remained uncertain for the additional resources implied by the development of Short Courses.

Discussion:

- 53.3 The UCL Careers Director noted that all students registered on UCL courses would be theoretically eligible for careers support and that with plans to grow numbers of students on short courses by up to 25,000, resourcing issues would need to be very carefully thought through in advance, particularly if after-hours provision were required.
- 53.4 The Director of Student Administration noted that there would be a potential impact on many other areas, such as Student Finance, Student Psychological Services and Student Registry Services and that these resources would need to be protected for 'mainstream' UCL students.
- 53.5 Further iterations of the proposals would return to EdCom as the various issues were discussed and resolved.

54 REFERRALS [EdCom Min.37, 13-14]

Received:

- 54.1 At EDCOM 4/34 (13-14) a proposal for derogation from the Faculty of MAPS, introduced by the Faculty Tutor, Dr Caroline Essex.

Reported:

- 54.2 Following the meeting of 6 March and on the understanding that other faculties (with the exception of two departments in the Faculty of Engineering Sciences) did not wish to retain the system of referrals, MAPS had augmented its original paper proposing a retention of referrals with some statistical information, with a view to applying for a derogation for MAPS on academic grounds. EdCom was told that the existing system of referrals worked well (principally for the Departments of Mathematics and Physics and Astronomy), ensuring that students in the referral band might make good any deficiencies over the summer and be tested once more in September, and that the MAPS system was beneficial to students and staff.

Discussion:

- 54.3 There was a wide-ranging discussion during which the following points were noted:
- that students on inter-faculty degree programmes such as the BSc/MSci Natural Sciences would be confused by having different rules on referrals according to which module they were taking
 - that the system was not sufficient to maintain academic standards because the same paper would be used in May and September and a referred student could memorise the solutions to the supposedly unseen problem content of the paper. Far from arguing the case for the retention of referrals, the MAPS proposal inadvertently made a strong argument for the institution of in-session re-sits, although it was agreed that this could not be managed within existing resources (see also Minute 57.3 below);
 - that the abolition of referrals for remaining faculties would once more raise the issue of September re-sits and that would need to be thoroughly discussed and considered by EdCom at a future meeting. It was also resolved that a preliminary discussion should take place in respect of condonation and that the Chair should bring a paper to the 19 June meeting, rehearsing/outlining the main issues.
 - that the possibility should be investigated that the requirement for referrals in Mathematics was being driven by the way in which it conducted its formative assessments. The continuous formative assessments which were the norm in Mathematics might be creating a different cycle of learning/feedback/assessment than was the case in other subjects. Advice should be sought from CALT colleagues.
 - there was also the possibility that students might be trying less hard precisely because referrals existed.

RESOLVED:

- 54.4 That the Faculty of MAPS should be granted a derogation for one year to allow them to continue with their system of referrals on condition that they sought the advice of colleagues in CALT regarding their assessment load. **[Action: Dr Caroline Essex. Dr Dilly Fung to note]**
- 54.5 That the MAPS Faculty Tutor return to the 19 June meeting of EdCom with more detailed proposals for engaging with colleagues in CALT over the coming session. **[Action: Dr Caroline Essex. Dr Dilly Fung to note]**
- 54.6 That the EdCom Chair should bring a preliminary paper to the 19 June meeting, rehearsing/outlining the main issues in respect of condonation. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

55 AWARD OF MERIT [EdCom Min.38, 13-14]

Received:

- 55.1 At EDCOM 4/41 (13-14) a paper, introduced by the EdCom Chair, Professor Mike Ewing.

Reported:

- 55.2 At its meeting on 6 March 2014 EdCom received recommendations from the UCLBE that the existing requirement of 65 in the Dissertation for the award of Merit should be set aside and the critical mark should be 60. EdCom asked UCLBE to consider further how the average mark for the programme should be calculated and resolved that, however that average was established, the same procedure should apply to the award of Distinction with 70 replacing 60 as the critical mark. UCLBE met again on Monday 28 April to consider the results of modelling and comments from faculties.
- 55.3 UCLBE now recommended to EdCom that the requirements for the award of Distinction and Merit for PGT Awards should include the following:
- (a) That all results must be first attempts and there could be no condoned fails/passes.
 - (b) The lower bound for a Distinction is 70.
 - (c) The lower bound for a Merit is 60.
 - (d) A Masters should be based on 180 credits including a Dissertation of 60 credits or greater.
 - (e) A PGDip should be based on 120 taught credits.
 - (f) A PGCert should be based on 60 taught credits.
 - (g) Pass/fail courses should be allowed only if they have zero credit weighting.

In particular:

For a Masters:

- (a) a Distinction requires an average over 180 credits of 70 or higher and a mark of 70 or higher in the Dissertation.
- (b) a Merit requires an average over 180 credits of 60 or higher and a mark of 60 or higher in the Dissertation.

For a PGDip:

- (a) a Distinction the requires an average over 120 credits of 70 or higher.

(b) a Merit requires as average over 120 credits of 60 or higher.

For a PGCert

(a) a Distinction requires an average over 60 credits of 70 or higher.

(b) a Merit requires as average over 60 credits of 60 or higher.

- 55.4 The recommendations of UCLBE were based on modelling, detailed in the paper, and on the written and oral submissions of faculties. Three methods of averaging were considered as below, with option (ii) garnering the most votes:
- (i) a straight average over 180 credits,
 - (ii) a straight average over 180 credits PLUS the Dissertation, and
 - (iii) an average over the taught credits (typically 120 or 90 credits) PLUS the Dissertation (typically 60 or 90 credits).

Discussion:

- 55.5 EdCom approved the UCLBE's recommendations, although it resolved that the Faculty of Laws should maintain its derogation in respect of averaging and continue with option (i) - a straight average over 180 credits. This derogation would only be valid for five years however, or until the implementation of a GPA. EdCom also agreed that there be a 'cooling off period' until its next meeting on 19 June during which relevant colleagues would consider the implications of EdCom's decision for institutional resources such as Portico.
- 55.6 A full list of pass/fail modules, such as those in CALT and elsewhere would be notified to relevant colleagues by the Regulations and Academic Programmes' Manager as these may need a derogation initially, and to be phased out as soon as practicable.

RESOLVED:

- 55.7 That the requirements for the award of Distinction and Merit for PGT Awards should be as per para 55.3 above.
- 55.8 That the requirements for the award of Distinction and Merit for PGT Awards should (with the exception of Laws as above) apply to students who first enrol on the PGT Award from September 2014.
- 55.9 That there be a 'cooling off period' until its next meeting on 19 June during which relevant colleagues would consider the implications of EdCom's decision for institutional resources and bring these to EdCom on 19 June. **[Action: Mr David Ashton and Professor Mike Ewing]**
- 55.10 That a full list of pass/fail modules, such as those in CALT and elsewhere would be notified to relevant colleagues by the Regulations and Academic Programmes' Manager. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

56 SUPPORT TO STUDY POLICY AND FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE [EdCom Min.39, 13-14]

Received:

- 56.1 At EDCOM 4/35 (13-14) a revised draft of the proposal previously submitted to EdCom on 6 March, introduced by the Director of Student Administration, Mr David Ashton.

Reported:

- 56.2 A number of requested amendments to the policy had now been made and EdCom was invited to approve both these and the policy. It was noted that the policy was a 'live' document and that additional means of support would be added to it as and when appropriate.

Discussion:

- 56.3 The UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer remained concerned that a lack of engagement, exemplified by the student's non-attendance at the Panel Hearing should not disadvantage the student or affect the decision of the Panel regarding the student's fitness to study. It was resolved that the Officer should further consider an appropriate form of words offline and communicate these to the Director of Student Administration.
- 56.4 That the Support to Study Policy and the Fitness to Study Procedure be approved and enshrined in the Academic Manual. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**
- 56.5 That the UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer should further consider an appropriate form of words offline in respect of the issue outlined at para 56.3 and communicate these to the Director of Student Administration. **[Action: Mr Keir Gallagher. Mr David Ashton to note]**

57 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES [EdCom Min.40, 13-14]

Received:

- 57.1 At EDCOM 4/36 (13-14) a revised draft of the proposal previously submitted to EdCom on 6 March, introduced by the EdCom Chair, Professor Mike Ewing.

Reported:

- 57.2 The OIA had requested clarification of and changes to UCL's policy on Extenuating Circumstances, which would in any case become unworkable if UCL were to implement a GPA. Any changes would be phased in over several years to account for students working through the degree cycle.

Discussion:

- 57.3 There was a wide-ranging discussion during which the following points were noted:
- there was an important interplay between the proposals at EDCOM 4/36 (13-14) and in-session re-sits. A full discussion and decision on re-sits was therefore of the utmost importance. As noted at Minute 54.2 above, Portico support would be vital as in-session re-sits could not be supported within existing resource;
 - any future iterations of the proposals should retain the important distinction between chronic and acute conditions and the difference between the impact of a chronic condition on learning and the impact of an acute condition on assessment;

- implementation of mitigation in the form of weighted year-modules would (i) be problematic in the case of programmes which required 100% weighting by PSRBs; (ii) provide insufficient safeguard against tactical manipulations; (iii) mean that if an illness took a student beyond their 'WYM' allowance, a decision would be required regarding which modules were officially 'affected';
- it was unclear what additional mitigation 'WYM' constituted, given that students were already permitted to discount modules in which they had underperformed;
- that a smaller working group of EdCom should be set up to look at the issues and implications in detail and re-submit proposals to EdCom. The working group might benchmark any proposals against sector practice. Proposals might also be taken to the national GPA group for discussion and comparison, as other HEIs would be facing the same issues.

RESOLVED:

- 57.4 That a smaller working group of EdCom be set up to look at the issues and implications in detail and re-submit proposals to EdCom. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**
- 57.5 That EdCom members should pass any further thoughts or suggestions on the proposals to the EdCom Chair, via the Secretary. **[Action: EdCom members, Ms Sandra Hinton to note]**

58 DRAFT MARKING POLICY

Received:

- 58.1 At EDCOM 4/37 (13-14) a draft marking policy, introduced by the Chair of the UCLBE Working Group on Marking Policy, Dr Arne Hofmann.

Reported:

- 58.2 Representatives of the Faculties of the Built Environment, Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences had approached the UCLBE with a request for clarification of UCL's arrangements to ensure the consistency of marking. The draft at EDCOM 4/37 (13-14) replaced the current Appendix 16 to the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes and, without removing any of the existing material, now clarified arrangements and terminology and added some further information concerning minimum standards. Faculties had been consulted over the draft and there had been no substantive objections. EdCom was now being invited to

- (1) Approve the draft in principle, any suggested minor amendments notwithstanding.
- (2) Comment on the requirement for insisting on comments from the second marker.

Discussion:

- 58.3 There was a wide-ranging discussion during which the following points were noted:
- insisting on comments from the second marker, even if this were only one or two lines, changed the psychology of marking and prevented a 'rubber stamp' mentality among second markers;

- colleagues were asked to be aware of the increasing use of electronic marking and the fact that Turnitin did not support double marking. EdCom was reminded that Dr Mira Vogel had presented to the UCLBE on this issue (which, given that double marking is a British standard, was a sector-wide problem) and that the UCLBE had taken the view that the deficiencies of third party commercial software should not be allowed to dictate UCL marking policy;
- the policy's statement that 'all mark differences of 10 or more marks on the marking scale must be subject to discussion and reconciliation'¹ was queried and it was explained that this was in order to prevent markers from averaging marks without discussion. Clarification was sought as to whether this meant 10 marks or 10% and 10 marks was confirmed.

58.4 EdCom welcomed the policy as clear and helpful and suggested the addition of a statement to the effect that grade descriptors should be congruent with national benchmarking and supplemented by a link to the FHEQ².

RESOLVED:

58.5 That the policy should be re-submitted to EdCom on 19 June with agreed minor amendments. **[Action: Dr Arne Hofmann]**

59 CODE OF PRACTICE FOR GRADUATE TAUGHT DEGREES 2013-14

Received:

59.1 At EDCOM 4/38 (13-14) the Graduate Taught Degrees: Code of Practice 2013-14, introduced by the Director of Student Administration, Mr David Ashton.

Reported:

59.2 Responsibility for graduate taught degrees was now part of EdCom's remit. As such, EdCom had not had an opportunity to consider the Code of Practice for Graduate Taught Degrees. As work on maintaining and publishing the Code of Practice was transferring to Student and Registry Services, and in the wake of the large rise in PGT student numbers, it was now timely to review any inconsistencies in the information given to them, including the fit between the CoP, the Academic Regulations for Students and the UCL-Student Relationship Statement.

Discussion:

59.3 It was noted that the quality of inductions for PGT students, since devolved to faculties, could be patchy and inconsistent and guidance was needed.

59.4 EdCom discussed the re-conceiving of the student handbook into a single information source in modular format, with a template for faculty and institutional level information and agreed that this might be further pursued offline. In the meantime, EdCom would confine itself to deciding whether the information in the existing CoP was correct for

¹ EDCOM 4/37 (13-14) paragraph 17

² See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

the purposes of printing. In particular, it was noted that there might be issues with parity between the information on Personal Tutoring in the PGT CoP and that published for UG students. Colleagues were invited to send suggestions and corrections to the EdCom Secretary.

RESOLVED:

- 59.5 That EdCom members send suggestions and corrections in respect of the Graduate Taught Degrees Code of Practice 2013-14 to the EdCom Secretary. **[Action: EdCom, Ms Sandra Hinton to note]**

60 ASSESSMENT STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Received:

- 60.1 At EDCOM 4/39 (13-14) a report on progress, introduced by the Director of Education Planning, Ms Clare Goudy.

Reported:

- 60.2 The Director of Education Planning reported that more information would be submitted to EdCom on 19 June 2014.

61 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

- 61.1 The PMASG Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, had approved the following programmes of study since the meeting of EdCom on 6 March 2014:

- *MSc Logic, Semantics and Verification of Programs*

62 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

- 62.1 The final meeting of EdCom in 2013-14 would be:

- 19 June 2014 - 2pm - 4.30pm in the Haldane Room.

SANDRA HINTON

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