



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1 December 2015

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Brenda Cross; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Dilly Fung; Ms Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Ms Judith Hillmore; Dr Arne Hofmann; Ms Valerie Hogg; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Professor John Mitchell; Ms Suguna Nair; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Mr Tom Robinson; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Derek Tocher; Ms Susan Ware.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Ms Cat Edera, Quality Assurance Manager, for item 10; Mr Rob Traynor, Quality Assurance Coordinator, for item 7; Ms Edel Mahony, Deputy Registrar, for item 9; Dr Teresa McConlogue, Senior Teaching Fellow (CALT), for item 12; Dr Mina Sotiriou from the Life Learning Team for item 11.

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Wahida Samie; Dr Fiona Strawbridge

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CALT	Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DLHE	Destination of Leavers of Higher Education survey
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HER	Higher Education Strategy
IOE	UCL Institute of Education
NSS	National Student Survey
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
PGT	Taught Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panels
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QRSC	Quality Review Sub Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRS	Student and Registry Services
StARs	Student Academic Representatives
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCLU	UCL Union

Preliminary Business

20 CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

20A Academic Partnerships Review Group Terms of Reference and Membership 2015-16

20A.1 **Received** – the Terms of Reference at EDCOM 2-01 (15-16) approved by EdCom Chair's Action on 15 October 2015.

20B Annual report from EdCom to Academic Committee 2014-15

20B.2 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 2-02 (15-16) which was received at AC in October 2015.

21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

21.1 **Correction to Minute 6.2** - EdCom noted that the SED would be received at the HER Strategy Group in December and not EdCom.

21.2 **Agreed** – The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held 27 May 2015 [*EdCom Minutes 1-19, 2015-16*].

22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

23A Engagement Monitoring [*Minute 3B (15-16) refers*]

23A.1 The Director of Student Administration reported on ARQASC's discussions, the redesigned Portico tool to support engagement monitoring and plans to set up automatic reminders for key monitoring points.

23B Terms of Reference for Faculty Teaching Committees [*Minute 12 (15-16) refers*]

23B.1 EdCom noted that the TOR had been updated to reflect that FTCs now reported to EdCom and not AC.

23C Programme Leader Role Descriptor [*Minute 18 (15-16) refers*]

23C.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-03 (15-16).

23C.2 The Director of Academic Services thanked the committee for their contributions towards the document since the last meeting. There were some continuing queries about over-lap with the Departmental Tutor's role, especially with regards to pastoral care and student engagement in programme design, review etc. EdCom reiterated that Departmental Tutors had overall responsibility for these aspects at departmental level, and the Programme Leader was responsible at programme level. The key goal was to ensure that there was a named person responsible for each programme both academically and in respect of students.

24 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW ORAL UPDATE [*Minute 6 (15-16) refers*]

24.1 The Chair provided a brief progress report about the upcoming visit in May 2016. The panel and QAA team had now been confirmed. The Self-Evaluation Document was in the final stages of completion and would shortly be submitted to SMT for feedback, and EdCom members would also have opportunity to comment on the draft. An extraordinary AC meeting in January 2016 would be convened to sign off the final document.

25 QRSC UPDATE ON ANNUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE REVIEW *[Minute 8 (15-16) refers]*

25.1 The Chair of QRSC updated EdCom on recent developments in regards to the new ASER process. A summary of the key themes emerging from the undergraduate round had been compiled and provided strong evidence of departments engaging in the full data set and identifying key issues, particularly with regards to attainment. There was good evidence of Moodle being used as a repository for marking criteria, and good engagement with feedback requirements. However QRSC felt that issues around the volume of assessment could be addressed in more depth, and that student reps could also be more involved in drawing up the action plans. EdCom noted that each department would receive individual feedback on their report, and that a number of departments would benefit from targeted support from the Provost and Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) via the ASER Intensive initiative. The PGT data had now been received and would be circulated to departments during December.

26 ARQASC UPDATE ON REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

26.1 The Chair of ARQASC reported that the sub-committee had been working on a set of overarching principles of assessment in collaboration with the Connected Curriculum Assessment and Feedback Group, and had identified five key priorities for cross-UCL discussion and development: UG progression and award requirements, UG classification algorithms, the consequences of failure at UG and PGT level (including Late Summer Resits), minimising derogations from the main UCL regulations and a review of the recently-published Extenuating Circumstances regulations. The sub-committee were in the process of drawing up a discussion paper around these areas, and were aiming to circulate this across UCL in late January 2016. There would be a range of opportunities for staff to feedback on the discussion paper, including town hall meetings, round table discussions and an online survey, and UCLU would be working with the sub-committee to set up opportunities for students to take part in the consultation via focus groups etc. Feedback would inform the re-drafting of the Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes, an initial draft of which would again be circulated for further consultation and feedback from staff and students around Easter 2016. The final draft chapter would be submitted to EdCom in June 2016 for formal approval.

Matters for Discussion

27 ANNUAL REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS OF FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES 2014-15

27.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-04 (15-16).

27.2 The Chair thanked the Quality Assurance Coordinator and welcomed the report which demonstrated many examples of good practice. It was noted that all FTC minutes had now been received. EdCom noted that the availability of minutes had improved, and highlighted the good practice in Arts & Humanities/ Social & Historical Sciences in ensuring minutes were up-to-date on the intranet/ Moodle. All FTCs had clearly engaged thoroughly with the NSS and considered a wide range of key institutional matters, such as the Education Strategy and the review of the Academic Manual, as well as more local issues.

27.3 The report identified two key themes across the faculties – teaching accommodation and timetabling. Some committees had struggled to recruit StARs who were able to attend every meeting, particularly at PGT level. EdCom discussed the importance of hearing the student voice at all levels of UCL and noted that there was good student engagement with both departmental and UCL committees, but it was harder to recruit students at faculty level. It was suggested that faculties recruit a pool of student reps to draw on, and that

channels such as the Teaching and Learning Portal and the Vice-Provost's newsletter might be used to communicate with staff about good practice in recruiting StARs and ensuring that committees were student-friendly. UCLU was also investigating how the union could support and encourage greater student engagement at faculty level.

28 ANNUAL REPORT FROM PMASG TO EDCOM 2014-15

28.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-05 (15-16).

EdCom thanked the Chair and Secretary for the report and noted that the most significant change was the move from PMASG to PMAP, which had met for the first time in October 2015.

29 ACADEMIC REVIEW 2016

29.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-06 (15-16).

29.2 The Deputy Registrar presented plans to improve the annual process for reviewing and approving modules and programme diets. The project aimed to help students make better choices in a more timely manner, to create better processes and to support departments. A shorter but more efficient review period was being proposed for 2016, with a focus on ensuring that all modules were approved by the published deadlines and that obsolete modules were removed from the system. Plans were also underway to incorporate the assessment review and exam proforma processes into the Academic Review so that there was a single exercise each year. The project team would be conducting an initial process mapping workshop with SRS, departmental and faculty colleagues to help UCL understand exactly what happens during the process, to identify waste and to draw up new, improved, simple work flows accompanied by training materials. All departments would also be given the opportunity to meet with Academic Services to discuss the revised process and ask any questions.

29.3 EdCom thanked the Deputy Registrar and noted the importance of improving a process on which a range of key student experience issues depended, such as module selection, timetabling and the publication of examination timetables. EdCom members were keen to support the initiative and welcomed the new timeline. The Chair emphasised the committee's important role in ensuring that deadlines were adhered to and encouraging departmental colleagues to start thinking about modules at least six months in advance. In particular departments were asked to plan cover for sabbaticals, maternity leave etc. at the earliest opportunity, as this would greatly help to reduce the volume of last-minute changes. The project team acknowledged the difficulties in confirming modules for affiliate students, particularly those enrolling in January, but were looking at ways to better estimate in advance what students might take and to encourage affiliate students to engage in the process at an earlier date.

29.4 **Approved** – EdCom endorsed the proposals to improve the Academic Review process.

30 REGISTER OF ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

30.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-07 (15-16).

30.1 The register included all collaborations notified to Academic Services by UCL colleagues. EdCom noted that a separate record of student exchanges and affiliate/study abroad arrangements was being maintained by the Global Engagement Office. Work was still underway to confirm the range of arrangements at PGR level, and the Research Degrees Committee would also be asked to approve the final register. Once approved by all the relevant committees the register would be published on the Academic Services webpages.

- 30.2 EdCom thanked the Quality Assurance Manager for the work put into compiling the register, and encouraged faculties and departments to continue to contact Academic Services if they had any questions about potential new partnerships.
- 30.3 **Approved** – EdCom approved the Register of Academic Partnerships.

31 LIFE LEARNING

- 31.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-08 (15-16).
- 31.2 In alignment with UCL's objective to enhance its Life Learning portfolio, the UCL Life Learning team had developed new processes for the approval and quality review of non-credit-bearing short courses and other activities. The proposed processes were presented to EdCom together with a report on Life Learning Activity (see Part III: Matters for Approval or Information below).
- 31.3 EdCom noted that the Life Learning team and Academic Services had been working to create a new online Course Initiation Questionnaire (CIQ) specifically for the approval of non-credit-bearing Life Learning activities. The CIQ was closely-aligned to the current Programme Initiation Questionnaire (PIQ) and covered everything from the business case to learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Meanwhile the quality review proposals provided a light-touch process for UCL to assure itself of the quality of its provision in this area. The project team were also investigating ways to define a Life Learner student status, to improve functionality in Portico, to provide transcripts and to establish visa requirements, access to resources etc.
- 31.4 EdCom welcomed the proposals but sought clarification on their scope and the potential overlap with UCL's standard provision. It was confirmed that Life Learning included CPD, executive education, summer schools and personal development, but that the proposals in hand were designed only for non-credit-bearing short course provision. The Life Learning team would use this experience to inform the development of more comprehensive procedures for credit-bearing short courses and modules, which would be closely aligned with UCL's standard programme approval and quality review requirements. Programmes such as the IOE MA in Lifelong Learning, where CPD acted as a mode of study towards achieving a full qualification, would still be treated as a standard programme and therefore required to follow UCL's standard programme approval and quality review procedures.
- 31.5 EdCom requested that the documents provide further clarification on the locus of responsibility for the quality review process – for example, whether the Departmental Tutor would be responsible for reporting to the Faculty. EdCom also requested that the Life Learning team draw up a process map to help staff distinguish between the different types of Life Learning and ensure that courses followed the appropriate approval and review requirements, much like the process map for determining types of academic partnerships.
- 31.6 **Approved** – EdCom approved the processes for the approval and quality review of new non-credit-bearing Life Learning courses and activities, subject to the amendments and clarifications in minute 31.5 above.

32 BME PROJECT REPORT

- 32.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-09 (15-16).
- 32.2 The Senior Teaching Fellow (CALT) provided a progress report on the action plan that had been agreed by EdCom as part of its discussions around BME attainment in June 2014. Since then significant progress had been made, in particular by ensuring that BME

attainment was explicitly included in the new Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) process. A number of recommendations had also been taken up by the Connected Curriculum 'Liberating the Curriculum' group which had been looking at ways to ensure a fair representation of marginalised groups in the curriculum. Meanwhile the Connected Curriculum 'Design and Development' group had been developing a curriculum review tool, which they hoped to bring to EdCom at the end of the academic year for consideration, and had been exploring how issues of equality might be further incorporated into the Internal Quality Review process. Other initiatives includes a 'Quick Guide' to guided marking and videos of BME alumni talking about their careers.

- 32.3 EdCom thanked CALT for drawing together an important group of activities. Both EdCom and UCLU commended the work of the previous BME officer who had initiated the project, noting that it had been very well received by students and UCL.
- 32.4 The committee noted that there would be UG and PGT reports on the institutional themes arising from the new ASER process, including BME attainment. The process had highlighted that UCL BME and disabled students had out-performed their competitors at other HEIs. However, although the attainment gap was smaller at UCL, there was still a gap to address. EdCom noted that the earlier project had included very useful data at the level of different ethnicities and domiciles, and requested that further consideration be given to whether this detail might be included in the ASER data in future years. Members were also keen to learn more about the range of attainment gaps on different UCL programmes and whether, for example, the gap lessened on programmes with a higher proportion of BME students, or whether issues of cultural capital might be less problematic in discovery-based curricula rather than those with traditional canons.
- 32.5 CALT requested EdCom's assistance with two key areas - raising awareness of creating diverse groups amongst teaching staff beyond the Arena programme, and monitoring anonymised marking. The committee noted that all substantive assessments were marked anonymously, except where anonymity was made impossible by the nature of the discipline or assessment method (e.g. Architecture, Fine Art, presentations, group work etc.), and that all exam board processes were conducted anonymously. However there was no facility to monitor compliance with the anonymity requirement – for example assessment methods were discussed during the Programme Approval process, but there was not a specific question about anonymity, or about the spread of anonymous assessments across a programme. However EdCom were wary of imposing complex monitoring and reporting systems and suggested that this might be explored further via the IQR process.
- 32.6 EdCom agreed that BME attainment should remain at the forefront of agendas and asked CALT to report to the committee on progress annually.

Action: Senior Teaching Fellow (CALT), Secretary (agenda)

33 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK DISCUSSION

- 33.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-10 (15-16).
- 33.2 Following the recent publication of the BIS Green Paper, EdCom welcomed the opportunity to discuss the implications for UCL, particularly around the proposed TEF, and to contribute to UCL's formal response to the consultation. The Provost had already indicated that UCL would be raising significant concerns about the proposals, and that UCL would be working with other Russell Group members on a joint response.
- 33.3 In general, EdCom felt that the paper denigrated the quality of teaching at UK HEIs in a way which failed to recognise the success of UK universities and their attractiveness to international students and researchers. Serious concerns were also raised about the principle of linking student satisfaction to student fees as this created a perverse incentive

for under-scoring. EdCom noted that the TEF aimed to link the evaluation of teaching quality with fee-setting through the comparison of data on, for example, student employment outcomes, student satisfaction ratings and retention data. However EdCom felt that it was difficult to respond to the over-arching principle behind the TEF without knowing any of the detail about how these metrics would be used. The proposals also effectively cut Higher Education funding, as only outstanding institutions would be able to raise fees in line with inflation, leaving all other HEIs with a fall in income in real terms. Such an approach would also penalise institutions that might be struggling, and deny them the resources needed to improve standards and therefore their TEF rating, expanding the gap between the top and bottom institutions. Concerns were also raised about the volume of bureaucracy created by a three-year cycle of rolling reviews to determine the TEF level of every HEI, and about adopting any system which might be as bureaucratic as the REF. The Green Paper also included proposals to merge QAA, HEFCE and OFFA into an Office for Students, and it was therefore unclear how funding for research would be distributed.

- 33.4 EdCom also recognised that the consultation was an opportunity to shape the proposals and make positive suggestions on how the criteria for progression, completion, NSS, DLHE etc. might be determined. For example, UCL has a very strong record in narrowing attainment gaps for WP, BME and disabled students, and UCL might suggest ways in which this could be recognised in the metrics. There was also an opportunity to highlight and support the discourses around the re-introduction of teaching grants, and to suggest ways in which to recognise the impact of high-quality research on teaching.
- 33.5 EdCom noted that UCL would need to respond to the consultation in January 2016. Staff, students and UCLU members were invited to send any further comments by email to the Director of Education Planning.

34 PERSONAL TUTORING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 34.1 **Received** – the paper at [EDCOM 2-11 \(15-16\)](#).
- 34.2 A working group had been set up to explore how the personal tutorial system could be used to support the Connected Curriculum, and enhance a research-based approach to teaching. The group had focused on how the role might be used to improve student experiences of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as ensuring that there was a named person overseeing the welfare of each student. The paper included some outline recommendations from the working group.
- 34.3 EdCom welcomed the recommendations and discussed how to turn these into full proposals. In particular EdCom was keen to move away from a process-driven policy, that focused on how many tutorials a student was entitled to, and towards a more outcome-led policy, where students felt reassured that there was a member of staff to turn to when they wanted to discuss progress, career goals, or any academic or personal difficulties that they might be having. The committee felt that the policy should clearly define UCL's desired outcomes of personal tutoring, and then give staff the flexibility to determine how those outcomes might be best achieved in their disciplinary context. The working group were also keen to draw on the good practice seen across UCL – for example in Archaeology, personal tutorials were framed around a student's assessment feedback, using recent examples as the starting point for each tutorial and helping to facilitate meaningful conversations about a student's progress via something specific and concrete.
- 34.4 EdCom noted the importance of supporting staff in delivering effective tutorials, and of encouraging all researchers to take part in the personal tutorial system in order to promote research-based education. Further consideration was also needed around tutoring for PGT students, who were with UCL for a very short time and often wanted a more careers-led discussion. It was hoped that the upcoming PTES results would help UCL to better understand the needs of PGT students and inform the policy.

RESOLVED:

- 34.5 EdCom recommended that the requirement to give all students a personal tutorial five or three times a year be replaced by an outcome-led policy. Faculty Tutors were asked to take the idea to Faculties and Departments for discussion and to feed back to CALT, who would draw up some more detailed proposals for EdCom to consider in March 2016, with a view for cross-UCL implementation in 2016-17.

Action: Faculty Tutors, Director of CALT

<p style="text-align: center;">Other Matters for Approval or Information</p>

35 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

- 35.1 **Approved** – the programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at its meeting of 14 October 2015 and detailed at EDCOM 2-12 (15-16).

36 REPORT ON DEVELOPING A LIFE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

- 36.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-13 (15-16).

37 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES

- 37A **Approved** – The Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 14 September 2015 at EDCOM 2-14 (15-16).
- 37B **Approved** – The Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 12 October 2015 at EDCOM 2-15 (15-16).
- 37C **Approved** – The Minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held 21 October 2015 at EDCOM 2-16 (15-16).
- 37D **Approved** – The Minutes of the Quality Review Sub Committee held 8 September 2015 at EDCOM 2-17 (15-16).
- 37E **Approved** – The Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 14 October 2015 at EDCOM 2-18 (15-16).

38 ANONYMISED SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS REPORT

- 38.1 **Approved** - the suspensions of regulations at EDCOM 2-19 (15-16).

39 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 39A **Policy/regulations on the provision of course information to students**
- 39A.1 The Director of Academic Services highlighted the need for UCL to develop a policy on the provision of information to students. This had arisen as part of the ASER process and in other fora. It was suggested that EdCom draft a policy which outlined UCL's minimum requirements, particularly for student handbooks and their online equivalents.

40 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 40.1
- Tuesday 1 March 2016, 2.00 – 4.30, Council Room
 - 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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8 December 2015