LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

3 March 2015

MINUTES

Present:
Professor Anthony Smith (*Chair*)

Abdulrahman Alahmari	Mr Derfel Owen
Ms Wendy Appleby	Professor Norbert Pachler
Mr David Ashton	Professor Don Pennington
Dr Simon Banks	Dr Peter Raven
Dr Brenda Cross	Mr Mike Rowson
Dr Caroline Essex	Professor Anthony Smith
Dr Julie Evans	Dr Hazel Smith
Dr Marco Federighi	Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Dr Dilly Fung	Ms Olga Thomas
Ms June Hedges	Professor Derek Tocher
Dr Arne Hofmann	Mr Lukmaan Kolia
Dr Helen Matthews	Ms Mariana Ceccotti
Professor Tim McHugh	Ms Leah Francis
Dr John Mitchell	Ms Susan Ware

In attendance: Ms Cat Edera; Ms Sandra Hinton; Ms Fiona McClement; Mr Andy Saffery; Ms Lizzie Vinton (*Secretary*).

Key to abbreviations:	
AC	Academic Committee
APL	Accredited Prior Learning
AugAM	Augmented Annual Monitoring
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
ECs	Extenuating Circumstances
ECWG	Extenuating Circumstances Working Group
EdCom	Education Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IoE	Institute of Education
IQR	Internal Quality Review
MAPS	Faculty of Maths and Physical Sciences
NSS	National Student Survey
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PGT	Postgraduate taught
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
StAR	Student Academic Representative
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
WP	Widening Participation

31   CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Noted:

31.1   The following new members had joined EdCom:

- **Dr Simon Banks**, Faculty Tutor for Engineering Sciences
- **Professor Norbert Pachler**, Pro-Director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation
- **Professor Don Pennington**, Head of Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement
- **Abdulrahman Alahmari**, PGT Education & Welfare Officer
- **Mike Rowson**, Faculty Tutor for Population Health Sciences
- **Andrea Nahum**, MAPS Faculty StAR (UG)

Noted:

31.2   The committee thanked Dr Marco Federighi for his invaluable contributions to EdCom over the years.

32   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 2 DECEMBER 2014

Approved:

32.1   The minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 2 December 2014 *[16-30, 02.12.14]*.

33   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see also items 34, 36 & 43 below]*

33A   UCL Institute of Education programmes
[EdCom Min.17B.1, 14-15]

Received:

33A.1   At <u>EDCOM 3-01 (14-15)</u>, the final list of UCL Institute of Education Higher Education qualifications and programmes approved by AC in December 2014.

33B   BME attainment working group
[EdCom Min.17C.3, 14-15]

Noted:

33B.1   The BME Attainment Working Group met on 16 January 2015 and agreed that the ongoing monitoring of BME attainment data would be a named component of the revised annual monitoring process (*see item 34.1.2 below*).

33C   Final annual report of EdCom to AC 2013-14
[EdCom Min.22.1, 14-15]

Noted:

33C.1   The final annual report was approved by AC on 18 December 2014.

33D   Grade Point Average working group
[EdCom Min.26C.5, 14-15]

> *Noted:*

33D.1   Publication of the national report had been delayed until April/ May 2015. The group hoped to meet once the report was published with a view to making recommendations to EdCom in June 2015.

34   REVIEW OF UCL'S ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES
[EdCom Mins.19.4 & 24.3, 14-15]

OVERARCHING STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

> *Received:*

34.1   At <u>EDCOM 3-02A (14-15</u>), proposals for the overarching structure and organisation of the new UCL academic manual.

> *Noted:*

34.1.1   An ambitious programme of work had been initiated to review and revise UCL's quality processes and academic regulations. The paper proposed the creation of a new 'UCL Academic Manual' which would act as a single point of reference for staff and students on all matters relating to academic standards on taught and research degree programmes.

> *Discussed:*

34.1.2   EdCom was in support of the outline proposals and advocated the consolidation of the many different regulations and documents currently available in various locations across the UCL website. The committee noted that regular newsletters and summaries of changes would help departments to ensure that materials were up-to-date, and highlighted the need for clear processes for staff to raise regulatory queries or seek clarifications, suggesting that each chapter include a named owner/ contact.

> *Noted:*

34.1.3   The committee clarified that only EdCom or RDC would be able to approve derogations to the regulations but it was also hoped that derogations could be kept to a minimum by incorporating acceptable variations into the main regulations wherever possible.

> *Approved:*

34.1.4   The proposal to develop a consolidated Academic Manual and associated timeline.

34.1.5   The proposed contents list for a consolidated Academic Manual.

34.1.6   The proposed style for drafting the consolidated Academic Manual.

QUALITY REVIEW

Received:

34.2   At <u>EDCOM 3-02B (14-15)</u>, proposals for Quality Review.

Noted:

34.2.1 The paper outlined plans to draw annual monitoring, augmented annual monitoring, internal quality review and external examining into a single quality review framework for taught degrees and research masters degrees. The revised system would adopt a more risk-based approach, foster stronger links with Connected Curriculum, include more detailed data analysis by Academic Services and maintain appropriate levels of external scrutiny. The new framework would come into effect from Autumn 2015.

Discussed:

34.2.2 The committee warmly welcomed the proposals and, in particular, the move to create stronger links between quality assurance and quality enhancement through the Annual Student Experience Reviews and Connected Curriculum. The committee suggested that the diagram illustrating the main features of the new framework might also include the UCL Arena Scheme of staff development and accreditation, and the student initiative, UCL Change Makers. Members also suggested that there could be greater clarity on the role of Connected Curriculum in the documentation.

34.2.3 The proposals included replacing AugAM with an amended version of IQR which would incorporate a greater focus on programme review. This change would come into effect from 2016-17 as departments undergoing IQR in 2015-16 would have already undertaken AugAM during 2014-15.

34.2.4 EdCom noted that the proposed Annual Student Experience Reviews would provide an increased level of central data analysis which would flag up statistically significant issues and highlight particularly strong or weak qualitative data from external examiner comments, student surveys and student feedback. Each department would then respond directly to the issues identified in its own data. EdCom agreed that the level of accountability should be the department as this would allow for the collation and comparison of meaningful data. The central analysis would also help to identify cross-institutional trends and variances, particularly in key areas such as WP and BME attainment, and faculties and departments could be asked to respond to specific themes. EdCom endorsed the concept of single annual reporting points for UG, PGT and PGR programmes and welcomed the suggestion that a single action plan covering NSS, BME attainment, WP etc. could be drafted by each department annually, negating the need for multiple (and often duplicated) documents.

Approved:

34.2.5 The proposals and timeframe for a revised Quality Review framework.

EXTERNAL EXAMINING

Received:

34.3   At <u>EDCOM 3-02C (14-15)</u>, proposals for External Examining.

Noted:

34.3.1   At its December 2014 meeting, EdCom noted three areas where UCL's procedures required further work to be fully compliant with the UK Quality Code on External Examining *[EdCom Mins.19.4 & 24.3, 14-15]*. The paper put forward proposals to share routinely external examiner reports and responses with students through Moodle, to name the external examiner and their institution in student programme materials, and to ensure that externals were aware of the routes through which they might raise concerns.

Discussed:

34.3.2   EdCom welcomed the introduction of tiered recommendations, where responses to 'essential' recommendations would be referred from the department to the Dean of Students (Academic) for approval before communication back to the external. However, the committee requested that the procedures acknowledge a department's prerogative to disagree with a recommendation and to put in place its own solution where this was felt more appropriate.

34.3.3   The proposals suggested a revised report template for implementation from Summer 2015. This would need to be integrated with either Portico or an alternative system. It was suggested that the template include a question about evidence of research-based learning and a link to Connected Curriculum. Some concerns were raised about the timeframe proposed as externals often delayed submission of their reports – the committee clarified that actions would be dated from receipt of the report rather than the Board of Examiners meeting, and that exam board minutes could be employed to address recommendations until the report was received.

34.3.4   The committee queried whether the report covered sufficiently the requirements of programmes with practical components or observations, such as the PGCE. It was agreed that the template should try to incorporate all programmes and that Academic Services would consult with the relevant faculties to ensure that practical elements were adequately catered for.

Action: Mr Derfel Owen

Approved:

34.3.5   The proposals for ensuring that UCL's External Examining procedures comply with Chapter B7 of the QAA UK Quality Code on External Examining.

34.3.6   The amendments to the External Examiners' reporting template, and the amendments to the procedure for reporting back to the University, subject to the clarification in 34.3.4 above.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT

Received:

34.4   At EDCOM 3-02D (14-15), proposals for Qualifications and Credit.

Noted:

34.4.1   The paper outlined proposals to consolidate all UCL taught and research programmes into a single credit framework, an initial draft of which was presented for information. Academic Services planned to consult with each of the faculties and, in particular, any departments who operated derogations, in order to shape and finalise the draft.

Discussed:

34.4.2   The committee noted the need for further consultation around the definitions of Modes of Study and suggested that the opportunity be taken to review and develop guidance around the definition of a 'course unit' as there was considerable variation across disciplines in terms of contact hours, assessment load, appropriate outputs etc.

34.4.3   Members raised concerns about the existing UCL policy not to allow external credits as APL to a PGT programme as this was essential to some disciplines such as Education and Pharmacy. The committee agreed that this regulation should be reviewed as part of the project strand.

Agreed:

34.4.4   Concerns were raised about UCL's use of a 1500-hour academic year which left the institution out of line with UK and EU sector norms. There was strong support to move UCL programmes to the standard 1200 hour/ 120 credit/ 60 ECTS academic year and it was agreed that a full proposal outlining the arguments should be received at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Derfel Owen

Approved:

34.4.5   The project proposal and timeframe for the development of the Qualifications and Credit Chapter.

ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION AND AWARDING: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Received:

34.5   At EDCOM 3-02E (14-15), the proposals for Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes.

Approved:

34.5.1   The proposals to develop the chapter during 2015-16.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Received:

34.6   At EDCOM 3-02F (14-15), proposals for Academic Partnerships.

Noted:

34.6.1   The proposals outlined how UCL could assure academic standards when developing new academic collaborations and partnerships. The policy put forward definitions for different types of academic partnerships, and the level of quality assurance needed for each.

Approved:

34.6.2   The Academic Partnerships policy and the definitions of types of partnerships.

35   ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

Received:

35.1   At <u>EDCOM 3-03 (14-15)</u>, proposals for revised academic committee structures, introduced by the Director of Academic Services.

Noted:

35.1.1   Academic Services put forward proposals to restructure those committees with oversight of taught programmes. EdCom would remain the primary authority, with two sub committees established to undertake more detailed work. The Quality Review Sub Committee would oversee annual monitoring, IQR, external examining and issues raised at Boards of Examiners, whilst the Academic Policy and Quality Assurance Sub Committee would oversee the drafting and maintenance of the UCL Academic Manual and its constituent parts. The roles of QMEC and UCLBE in monitoring quality would be subsumed primarily in the former, whilst much of the developmental work of EdCom and its working groups would be taken on by the latter. PMASG would be replaced by smaller programme approval panels that would meet at least twice per term, allowing UCL to be more responsive in its offer and reducing the number of staffing hours deployed to programme approval.

Agreed:

35.1.2   EdCom endorsed the direction of travel and requested that more comprehensive proposals and terms of reference be received at the next meeting. The proposals should incorporate the Aegrotat and Special Provisions panel and the Special Examination Arrangements panel, and should clearly identify where academic partnership proposals would be approved.

Action: Mr Derfel Owen

36   AUTUMN RESITS
[EdCom Min. 20.6, 14-15]

Received:

36.1   At <u>EDCOM 3-04 (14-15)</u>, recommendations on Autumn resits from ECWG, introduced by the Director of Student Administration.

Noted:

36.1.1   ECWG had expanded its remit to consider the viability of Autumn resits and reported its findings in this area. Resourcing represented one of the greatest challenges, with significant implications for the administration of exams and the amount of academic staff time needed to write papers, mark work and attend resit boards.

36.1.2   EdCom was asked to consider whether Autumn resit marks should be capped – at present the year-long wait to progress acted as a deterrent to strategic learning but if the two sittings were closer together, allowing students to progress on time, the system might encourage students to deliberately 'chunk' exams. Benchmarking of other HEIs had been undertaken, finding that the majority capped Autumn resits – although most did not offer resits to finalists. Within UCL, some faculties already offered Autumn resits and had reported no perceptible increase in strategic learning – although it was also acknowledged that many faculties had alternative deterrents in place, such as failure to achieve professional accreditation, or ineligibility for condonement.

Agreed:

36.1.3   EdCom agreed that further work should be undertaken to assess the extent of the population that might be eligible for Autumn resits.

Action: Mr David Ashton

Agreed:

36.1.4   EdCom agreed in principle to the introduction of Autumn resits but also suggested that, given the resource implications, Autumn resits be piloted with two faculties during 2015-16 with a view to full implementation in 2016-17. This would allow time to establish adequate resources, allow for the revision of all related regulations as part of the academic manual review and provide data on the impact of not capping marks. The Bartlett representative requested that the faculty be included in the pilot as it already held a derogation to operate Autumn resits.

Action: Mr David Ashton

Agreed:

36.1.5   EdCom recommended that the investigations into Autumn resits be uncoupled from those on ECs to facilitate full consideration of each issue. Discussions around ECs would be taken forward as part of the review of the academic regulations.

Action: Mr David Ashton, Mr Derfel Owen

Received:

36.2   At EDCOM 3-05 (14-15), the minutes of the ECWG meeting held 27 November 2014.

36.3   At EDCOM 3-06 (14-15), the minutes of the ECWG meeting held 16 February 2015.

37   RACE EQUALITY CHARTER MARK

Received:

37.1   At EDCOM 3-07 (14-15), the draft UCL Race Equality Charter Mark Action Plan, introduced by the Equalities and Diversity Adviser.

Noted:

37.1.1   UCL was participating in the Race Equality Charter Mark, a new initiative being piloted across 30 UK HEIs this year. The Provost was keen to promote the pilot and UCL's involvement. An action plan reflecting the range of activity taking place across UCL would be submitted on 10 April 2015. Faculties, departments and services were invited to submit any examples of exciting and dynamic activities which might help to strengthen UCL's submission.

Discussed:

37.1.2   The report and action plan had drawn on data from the NSS and from a small-scale survey of 300 students. Student focus groups had also been arranged but had limited take-up so the team were working to make future sessions more appealing. The committee also noted that the BMEntor pilot was in progress and an evaluation of the

project was currently underway. Targeted funding was also available this year for BME applicants to PGT programmes.

Agreed:

37.1.3   EdCom endorsed the three-year action plan. Members agreed to contact the Equalities and Diversity Adviser with details of faculty or departmental initiatives which might be included in the action plan.

Action: All members

38   STUDENT COMPLAINTS

STUDENT COMPLAINT REPORT 2014

Received:

38.1   At EDCOM 3-08 (14-15), the Student Complaint Report 2014, introduced by the Deputy Registrar (Operations and Planning).

Discussed:

38.1.1   The majority of complaints took the form of appeals against exam board decisions, often where students were on classification borderlines or where students felt that their ECs had not been taken into account. Many such cases might be avoided by the provision of more detailed information for students about how final classifications were arrived at, or the options open to UCL in the event of an EC claim.

38.1.2   A number of students had complained about deficiencies in teaching/supervision arrangements. Many formal complaints in this area could be avoided by making better use of the processes for informal resolution and mediation and by the provision of better guidance for students on what they could expect from their supervisor. Whilst there was extensive information for PGR students, there was less published for UG and PGT students, although CALT were working on guidance in this area.

38.1.3   A number of complaints concerned the accuracy and clarity of published information, particularly with regards to departmental versions of regulations and policies which were not updated regularly, or not removed from the website once obsolete. Better processes were needed to minimise the opportunities for inaccuracies or discrepancies.

38.1.4   The sector had witnessed an increase in cases being upheld by the OIA from disabled students - and particularly those with mental health conditions - who felt that their ECs had not been taken into account. There was also an increase in the number of students notifying HEIs of their condition after the event, making it very difficult to mitigate the circumstances. Clearer guidance on extensions and the appropriateness of alternative assessments for students with mental health conditions would be beneficial, and the fitness to study policy might also be employed at earlier stages. However the committee noted the challenges for non-expert staff in making medical or psychological judgements about EC claims, and advocated the establishment of a central EC panel to which medical cases could be referred.

Agreed:

38.1.5   The regulatory review (*see item 34 above*) should incorporate minimum expectations around supervision and include steps to minimise the amount of separate regulatory documentation published by departments.

Action: Mr Derfel Owen, Ms Lizzie Vinton

38.1.6   In light of the Equality Act 2010, UCL should review its extenuating circumstances policy for students declaring a disability.

Action: Mr David Ashton

Noted:

38.1.7   The complaints team would be running a roadshow for staff to raise awareness of common grounds for complaint and the use of informal resolution mechanisms.

UK QUALITY CODE, CHAPTER B9: ACADEMIC APPEALS AND STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Received:

38.2   At <u>EDCOM 3-09 (14-15)</u>, a report on UCL practice in relation to the UK Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints.

Approved:

38.2.1   EdCom approved the report and noted that the analysis also assisted in confirming UCL's compliance with the OIA's good practice framework.

39   QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Received:

39.1   At <u>EDCOM 3-10 (14-15)</u>, a paper on preparations for the forthcoming QAA Higher Education Review of UCL in 2016, introduced by the Academic Standards and Quality Manager.

Noted:

39.1.1   EdCom noted the briefing and endorsed the approach to planning and preparation for the Review scheduled for May 2016. The Self Evaluation Document would be submitted in February 2016, and the reviewers were likely to start accessing the UCL website and other public data as soon as they were appointed in Autumn 2015.

Agreed:

39.1.2   Members were asked to ensure that websites were up to date as a matter of urgency. In particular, departments were asked to ensure that local regulations, policies, procedures and student handbooks were current and in line with the main UCL regulations.

Action: All members

40 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

40.1 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 2 December 2014:

- PGCE/ PgCE Early Years Initial Teacher Training
- MRes Neuromuscular Disease [this programme would subsequently be considered by the Research Degrees Committee]
- BA Ancient Language with a Year Abroad.

41 APPROVAL OF NEW QUALIFICATION

Received:

41.1 At EDCOM 3-11 (14-15), proposals for a new HE qualification of Doctor in Public Administration (DPA).

Approved:

41.1.1 EdCom endorsed the proposals for the Doctor in Public Administration and made a recommendation to AC to formally approve the new UCL qualification.

42 MINUTES ETC. FROM STEERING GROUPS OF EDCOM

42A UCL Board of Examiners

Noted:

42A.1 UCLBE had recently approved and published new regulations and guidance for the operation of Virtual Boards of Examiners which could be used with immediate effect.

43 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS
[EdCom Min.28A.2]

Received:

43.1 At EDCOM 3-12 (14-15), the anonymised report for UG and PGT Students, introduced by the Director of Student Administration.

Noted:

43.1.1 Following discussions at the last meeting, the report had been anonymised and included in the main committee business. It was noted that the regulations review (*item 34 above*) would seek to investigate many of the recurring suspensions with a view to incorporating acceptable variations within the regulations wherever possible.

44   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

44.1   No further business was raised.

45   CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Noted:

45.1   The Chair raised no further items.

46   DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Noted:

46.1   Future meetings of EdCom as follows:

- Monday 27 April 2015   10-12am   Darwin B05

Noted:

46.2   The June meeting of EdCom had been rescheduled:

- Wednesday 27 May 2015   3.30-5.30pm   Darwin B40 LT

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