EDUCATION COMMITTEE

6 March 2014

MINUTES

Present:
Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton	Dr Arne Hofmann
Professor David Bogle	Dr Christine Kinnon
Professor Chris Carey	Dr Helen Matthews
Mr Jason Clarke	Dr John Mitchell
Dr Brenda Cross	Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Dr Caroline Essex	Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Julie Evans	Mr Steve Rowett (*vice:* Dr Fiona Strawbridge)
Mr Marco Federighi	Ms Olga Thomas
Dr Dilly Fung	Professor Derek Tocher
Mr Keir Gallagher	Mr Ben Towse
Dr Joyce Harper	Dr Paul Walker
Ms Judith Hillmore	Ms Susan Ware

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Ms Valerie Hogg; Ms Paula Speller; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Dr Andrew Wills.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
AMOSSHE	Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EDCOM	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ISD	Information Services Division
MPP	Master of Public Policy
MPA	Master of Public Administration
PIQ	Programme Institution Questionnaire
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
PT	Personal Tutor
SIFSWG	Student Information System Funding Working Group
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UCLU	UCL Union

34   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 26 November 2013

Confirmed:

34.1   The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 26 November 2013 *[EdCom Mins. 15- 33, 26.11.13]*, circulated previously.

35   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see also Minutes 36-39 below]*

35A   Report from the Student Information System Funding Working Group (SISFWG) *[EdCom Min. 22, 13-14]*

Noted:

35A.1   The Director of ISD had attended the 26 November meeting of EdCom *vice:* Dr Fiona Strawbridge and had made a number of comments on Portico services *[recorded at Min. 22.7 13-14].* On 3 December, the Director of ISD then sent an email to the EdCom Chair and Mr Tim Perry, Registrar/Chair of the SISFWG, which set out his views in more detail. Following the publication of the Minutes of 26 November, he then sent an additional email to the EdCom Chair. These emails were circulated with the agenda and papers for the meeting of 6 March.

Received:

35A.2   At <u>EDCOM 3/22 (13-14)</u> an update on a project to improve Portico, as previously reported to the Portico Users Group, introduced by the Head of Student Experience and Global Citizenship, Ms Judith Hillmore.

Reported:

35A.3   The Vice-Provost (Education) was Academic Champion for the project, which would, it was anticipated, identify and subsequently develop what had aspirationally been called 'Portico Perfection'. External consultants to the project were currently undertaking a desk-based analysis and the next workshop (the third and final of the series) would look at a Portico 'roadmap' including issues such as project organisation and prioritisation, resourcing and the financial bidding cycle, training needs, responsibilities and communication. EdCom would be kept up to date with each stage of the project as it progressed.

35B   Proceedings of Faculty Teaching Committees: Session 2012-13 *[EdCom Min. 23, 13-14]*

Noted:

35B.1   Following its 26 November meeting, and as required by EdCom, it was confirmed that that the report on Proceedings of Faculty Teaching Committees: Session 2012-13[1] had not been circulated first to Faculty Tutors to check for factual inaccuracies before its submission to the meeting, which had been the practice in previous years. Apologies were offered to Faculty Tutors for this oversight.

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[1] see EDCOM 2/15 (13-14)

35B.2   The report was re-circulated for comments regarding (1) its factual accuracy and (2) whether the format of the report might be usefully revised in future.

35B.3   As a consequence of its re-circulation, some minor errors in relation to its summary of two sets of FTC minutes were noted and corrected. Comments received from Faculty Tutors indicated overall that there was no pressing need for changes to the format of the report.

35C   **Draft Annual Report from EdCom to AC** *[EdCom Min. 24, 13-14]*

   Noted:

35C.1   This report was approved by AC at its meeting of 10 December 2013

35D   Master of Public Policy (MPP) *[EdCom Min. 25, 13-14]*

   Noted:

35D.1   This proposal was discussed further at the meeting of PMASG on 27 November. See also <u>EDCOM 3/31 (13-14)</u> below.

   Received:

35D.2   An oral update from the PMASG Chair, Professor Chris Carey.

   Reported:

35D.3   PMASG had not approved the new degree title of MPP and the degree proposer had subsequently withdrawn the proposal and had instead opted for the pre-existing title of MSc. PMASG Chair's action was taken to approve this. It was noted however that UCL currently has two departments running MPAs which operate differently.

   RESOLVED:

35D.4   EdCom resolved that a discussion should take place at PMASG regarding UCL's overall approach to the issuing of new degree awards. **[Action: Professor Chris Carey. Ms Irenie Morley to note]**

35E   Continuing Professional Development and Short Courses *[EdCom Min.19, 13-14]*

   Noted:

35E.1   On 26 November EdCom had resolved that the Academic Workstream (a sub-committee of the CPD and Short Course Facilitation Group) should be asked by the EdCom Secretary to prepare proposals for consideration by EdCom regarding (1) the Award of Credits for CPD and Short Courses and (2) the approval process for new credit-bearing and non-credit bearing CPD and Short Courses. A further proposal would be submitted to EdCom on 1 May 2014. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

36   PERSONAL TUTORING – MONITORING AND OVERVIEW *[EdCom Min.17, 13-14]*

Noted:

36.1   At its meeting of 26 November, EdCom had resolved that EdCom's CALT representative would submit a written report on Personal Tutoring to the meeting of EdCom on 6 March 2014.

Received:

36.2   At <u>EDCOM 3/23 (13-14)</u> a paper, introduced by the Senior Teaching Fellow, CALT, Dr Paul Walker.

Reported:

36.3   Broadly, Departments were reporting compliance with the PT Scheme but there remained considerable variation in practice. There had been some improvement in the extent to which Departments were assigning PTs on Portico and in related follow-up activity. The Provost had expressed enthusiasm for an increasingly research-embedded taught curriculum and both this and more imaginative approaches to teaching and learning would be encompassed by a new initiative, UCL Arena, which was currently in development and which would provide a flexible suite of events and programmes for staff, including (among other things) a Teaching Associate Programme for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants and Academic Practice Pathway for Lecturers and Teaching Fellows on probation, leading to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. UCL Arena would be officially launched at the Teaching and Learning Conference on 3 April 2014.

Discussion:

36.4   EdCom received the report, noting that increased training in mental health issues for PTs would be of benefit and that UCL might usefully have a discussion about whether to make these compulsory for PTs.

RESOLVED:

36.5   That CALT continue to monitor the UCL-wide implementation of PT and any impact on the Scheme of the UCL Arena initiative. It was also suggested that it would be helpful if CALT were also to identify examples of notable good practice in personal tutoring and to disseminate these more widely. **[Action: Dr Paul Walker]**

37   REFERRALS *[EdCom Min.18, 13-14]*

Received:

37.1   An oral report from the Chair, Professor Mike Ewing.

Reported:

37.2   Responses had been received from all relevant faculties, namely: Arts and Humanities/Social and Historical Sciences, Built Environment (Bartlett), Brain Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Life Sciences, and Mathematical and Physical Sciences. The remaining 3 faculties (Medical Sciences, Laws and

Population Health Sciences) either had a system of September resits where all modules were retaken, or no undergraduates.

37.3   Broad cases had been made for the *abolition* of referrals by the following five faculties (with 2267 graduates in 2012-13):

- Arts and Humanities/Social and Historical Sciences (with one department suggesting that these be retained as a discretionary mitigation tool;
- Brain Sciences (with a suggestion that 38 and 39 should be promoted and the process overseen by an External;
- Engineering Sciences (with the exception of Biochemical Engineering and Medical Physics who wish to retain them and support from other departments for a condoned pass/fail as per the Masters);
- Life Sciences (with a suggestion that 38 and 39 should be raised to 40 for a limit of one course unit in Years 1 and 2).

37.4   Broad cases had been made for the *retention* of referrals by the following two faculties (with 717 graduates in 2012-13):

- Built Environment (who wish to retain their current system);
- Mathematical and Physical Sciences who had suggested a 7 point plan.

Discussion:

37.5   Members considered that in the absence of clear, written data from all relevant faculties, making a case for the abolition or retention of referrals, it was difficult to reach a conclusion. As it was to be expected that EdCom would only make or revise institutional policy on the basis of solid statistical evidence, it was resolved that faculties (with the exception of Mathematical and Physical Sciences who had already done so) would submit a case to the Chair, stating its preferred position in the matter of referrals as evidenced and supported by relevant data. The Chair would then produce a paper for discussion by the Committee at its 1 May meeting. EdCom would need to make a firm decision on referrals well before the start of the 2014-15 session.

RESOLVED:

37.6   That each Faculty (with the exception of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Medical Sciences, Laws and Population Health Sciences) should submit a case to the Chair, stating its preferred position in the matter of referrals and setting out the evidence for this. **[Action: Faculty Tutors of Faculties of Arts and Humanities/Social and Historical Sciences, Built Environment, Brain Sciences, Engineering Sciences and Life Sciences]**

37.7   That, informed by the above, the Chair produce a proposal for discussion by the Committee at its meeting of 1 May 2014. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

38   AWARD OF MERIT *[EdCom Min.11, 13-14]*

Received:

38.1   An oral report from the Chair, Professor Mike Ewing. See also <u>EDCOM 3/32 (13-14)</u> below.

Reported:

38.2   The criteria for the Award of Merit had been reviewed 3 years after introduction of the award and the discussion was informed by data provided by the Information and Data Services Section of Student and Registry Services. Full details of the UCLBE's discussion could be found in the Minutes of its meeting of 28 January 2014 at <u>EDCOM 3/32 (13-14)</u>. The key question in this discussion had been whether the requirement of an average of at least 60 over 180 credits (and at least 65 in the Dissertation) should be retained. The UCLBE had been in complete agreement that the requirement should be based on a mark of 60 but had differed over the way in which that 60 should be obtained, as follows:

(i)   an average over 180 credits with only a pass required in the Dissertation;
(ii)   an average over 180 credits of at least 60 plus at least 60 in the Dissertation;
(iii)   an average over the taught elements of at least 60 plus at least 60 in the Dissertation.

38.3   There had been a small majority for (i) but no data had been available to allow investigation of the other possibilities. Subsequent modelling by the Arts and Humanities/Social and Historical Sciences Deputy Faculty Tutor, Dr Helen Matthews, using data from the Economics and Comparative Literature programmes had suggested that an average over 180 credits with only a pass required in the Dissertation, as per (i) might produce 'too many' Merits.

RESOLVED:

38.4   That, supplied with the appropriate data, the UCLBE should investigate further the options (i) to (iii) and, in addition, the consequences of applying the same criteria to both Merit and Distinction. It should then submit a further report to EdCom. **[Action: Professor Chris Carey]**

38.5   That in the meantime, EdCom endorse the UCLBE's other recommendations to EdCom as follows:

- to reduce the Merit award dissertation mark threshold from 65 to 60;
- that the existing requirement should be retained that a Merit should only be awarded provided that there are no marks below 50%, no condoned marks, no resit marks and all marks are first attempts;
- that the revised Merit award scheme once agreed should be applied to the Distinction Award Scheme but with 60 in the Merit scheme replaced by 70 in the Distinction Scheme;
- that the revised Merit award criteria once agreed by EdCom should be implemented for the 2014-15 session, if possible. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley to note]**

39   SUPPORT TO STUDY POLICY AND FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE *[EdCom Min.20, 13-14]*

Noted:

39.1   On 26 November, EdCom had resolved that a further iteration of the draft policy be revised taking into consideration the points noted and submitted to EdCom's meeting of 6 March 2014.

Received:

39.2   At <u>EDCOM 3/24 (13-14)</u> the draft policy, introduced by the Director of Student Administration, Mr David Ashton.

Reported:

39.3   Having previously (on 20 April 2013) approved policy and procedures for Learning Agreements, Barring Students from Assessment, and Suspensions and Termination of Studies on Grounds of Academic Insufficiency or Non-Attendance at Mandatory Faculty Interviews, EdCom had noted the need for a Fitness to Study procedure and a Support to Study Policy to sit alongside this. On 26 November, EdCom had been invited to consider a paper which set out the key areas of such a policy and the Director of Student Administration had been tasked to develop these proposals for re-submission to EdCom's 6 March meeting.

39.4   Key Student Support and Wellbeing staff had also been consulted at a meeting attended by two UCLU Sabbatical Officers. A draft Fitness to Study Policy was discussed at a meeting of Student Welfare Working Group. The Director of Student Administration and the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing had drawn on policies in place at other UK HEIs as well as a recent AMOSSHE[2] event on fitness to study. EdCom was invited to discuss the draft proposals.

Discussion:

39.5   EdCom noted that while UCL must be mindful of its duty of care and its obligations to students under the Equality Act 2010, to make 'reasonable adjustments', that this should not be taken automatically to mean that a suspension of regulations would always be made. It was also important to make the distinction between fitness to study and fitness to study *abroad*. This would include fieldwork. There would also be instances where research was to be carried out abroad and for this reason, the revised proposal should also be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for discussion.

39.6   The UCLU representatives praised the revised draft proposal but made a number of points to the Director of Student Administration to be taken into consideration in its next iteration.

RESOLVED:

39.7   That a revised draft of the proposal be submitted to EdCom on 1 May 2014.
          [Action: Mr David Ashton]

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[2] AMOSSHE is a Student Services Organisation, which informs and supports the leaders of student services in the UK, and represents, advocates for and promotes the student experience worldwide.

39.8   That the revised proposal should then be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for discussion on 4 June 2014. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**

40   EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Received:

40.1   At <u>EDCOM 3/25 (13-14)</u>, a paper, introduced by the Chair, Professor Mike Ewing. *Reported:*

40.2   The paper sought primarily to make a clear 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. Mitigation was available to ensure that chronic conditions did not affect learning. Acute conditions could affect examination performance/assessment but the current Procedure for Extenuating Circumstances was confined to mitigation for acute extenuating circumstances and its guidance on both grading and mitigation of extenuating circumstances was weak.

40.3   The current system was considered too complicated for existing circumstances and would certainly prove untenable if mitigation had to be considered, in principle, for all students at module level (which would be the case if UCL were to adopt the GPA). The paper therefore proposed one possible solution which was to abolish extenuating circumstances and if students who had passed a module felt that an acute condition, event or circumstance had affected their performance they could, with departmental and faculty approval, retake the module as a second and final attempt the following May.

Discussion:

40.4   The UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer noted that the proposal might affect students differently as follows: (1) some students were less confident than others (2) some students' examinations were loaded into a short space of time and retakes would add to the pressure of work (3) if more than one module was affected it would impact on workload planning for the following year in a way which could not be known in advance and (4) retaking modules might impact disproportionately on international students. The UCLU was also looking into issues around extenuating circumstances, as it recognised the potential impact of introducing a GPA. It was noted that the USA has a GPA system but many institutions do not have extenuating policies for circumstances at all.

40.5   EdCom approved of the proposal's emphasis on acute versus chronic conditions and on the impact on learning versus that on assessment and resolved that the Chair should bring an amplified proposal to its 1 May meeting. Any revised proposal should also include a shorter-term solution such as clarification of the current guidance to the effect that altering marks or degree classification should only be appropriate in chronic cases (eg: an asthma attack) where this had demonstrably disrupted examination assessment.

RESOLVED:

40.6   That the Chair should bring a revised proposal to EdCom's 1 May meeting. **[Action Professor Mike Ewing]**

41   EXAMINATIONS ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP

Received:

41.1   At <u>EDCOM 3/26 (13-14)</u> a report, introduced by the Chair of the Working Group, Professor Chris Carey.

Reported:

41.2   The Working Group had made a number of recommendations for the short, medium and long-term and invited EdCom to endorse these and to exert continued upward pressure to maintain strategic planning for examination accommodation. The Provost had recently endorsed the hire of a small number of larger venues and UCL was about to rent a 500 seat examination venue in South London.

Discussion:

41.3   EdCom endorsed the Working Group's recommendations, noting that while some of these involved radical cultural shifts, such as holding examinations at weekends, the potential impact of which would have to be carefully considered, it was important to approach the issues with an open mind. The Group would continue to explore the issues and would keep EdCom up to date with its progress. **[Action: Professor Chris Carey to note]**

42   ANONYMITY AND TURNITIN

Received:

42.1   An oral report by the Chair of the UCLBE, Professor Chris Carey.

Reported:

42.2   Dr Mira Vogel had presented an interesting paper for discussion to the UCLBE and would be re-submitting an amplified paper on this subject to its next meeting. EdCom would be kept informed of progress on the issues involved.

43   LECTURECAST POLICY

Noted:

43.1   EdCom was invited to approve a policy on the use of Lecturecast.

Received:

43.2   At <u>EDCOM 3/27 (13-14)</u> the draft policy, introduced by Dr John Mitchell.

RESOLVED:

43.3   That the policy be approved. It would be publicised via the Week@UCL and enshrined in the Academic Manual. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**

44   APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

44.1   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 26 November 2013:

- *MRes Translational Neurology*
- *MSc Audiological Science with Clinical Practice*
- *MSc Visual Science*
- *MSc Translational Immunobiology*
- *MSc Translational & Regenerative Neuroscience*
- *MRes Vision Research*
- *PGCert Clinical Ophthalmic Practice*
- *MSc Medical Otology and Audiology*
- *MSc Mental Health Sciences*
- *PG Cert Applied Research in Human Communication Disorders*
- *MRes Applied Research in Human Communication Disorders*
- *BSc In Philosophy, Politics And Economics*
- *BA History, Politics And Economics*
- *MSc Paediatric Dentistry*
- *MSc Eating Disorders and Clinical Nutrition*
- *MSc Clinical Cell and Tissue Engineering*
- *MSc Glass Science*
- *MSc Technology Management*
- *MRes Quantum Technology*
- *MSc Business Analytics*
- *MSc Perioperative Medicine*

45   TIMELY SUBMISSION OF PIQS TO PMASG FOR APPROVAL

Received:

45.1   At <u>EDCOM 3/28 (13-14)</u> a report from the PMASG Secretary for information, which reiterated the need for timely submission of PIQs and clarified the timelines involved.

46   STUDENT GRIEVANCES REPORT 2013

Received:

46.1   At <u>EDCOM 3/29 (13-14)</u> the report from Student and Registry Services for information.

47   MINUTES FROM STEERING GROUPS ETC.

47A   Programme and Module Approval Steering Group

Received:

47A.1 At <u>EDCOM 3/30 (13-14)</u> the Minutes of the meeting of PMASG on 27 November 2013.

47B   UCL Board of Examiners

Received:

47B.1   At EDCOM 3/31 (13-14) the Minutes of the meeting of the UCLBE on 28 January 2014.

48   CHAIR'S BUSINESS

48A   Study Abroad Resits

Reported:

48A.1   The Chair proposed that students on Study Abroad should take resits with late assessment at the end of the summer when they returned from Study Abroad which would be 15 months after the original assessment.

RESOLVED:

48A.2   That the above proposal be approved and the regulations amended accordingly.
[Action: Ms Irenie Morley. Faculty Tutors to note]

49   DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Noted:

49.1   EdCom will meet as follows:

1 May 2014 - 2pm - 4.30pm in Darwin B15
19 June 2014 - 2pm - 4.30pm in the Haldane Room

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