LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

6 October 2015

M I N U T E S

PRESENT:
Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)
Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Dilly Fung; Ms Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Ms Judith Hillmore; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Ms Suguna Nair; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Mr Mike Rowson; Ms Wahida Samie, Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Derek Tocher; Ms Susan Ware.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Ms Rebecca Allen, Student Experience Data Manager, for item 5; Dr Rosalind Duhs, Principal Teaching Fellow and Associate Director (CALT), for item 7; Ms Cat Edera, Quality Assurance Manager, for item 8; Ms Teresa Johns, Student and Registry Services (observing).

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Brenda Cross; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Ms Valerie Hogg; Professor John Mitchell; Mr Tom Robinson.

Key to abbreviations	
AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Committee
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
DT/ DGT	Departmental Tutor/ Departmental Graduate Tutor
DTC	Departmental Teaching Committee
EDCOM	Education Committee
FT/ FGT	Faculty Tutor/ Faculty Graduate Tutor
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
NUS	National Union of Students
OfIA	Office of International Affairs
PGT	Taught Postgraduate
PGTA	Postgraduate Teaching Assistant
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
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRS	Student and Registry Services
StARs	Student Academic Representatives
UCLU	UCL Union
UKVI	UK Visa and Immigration authority

Preliminary business

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1 CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2015-16 *[Minute 63A (14-15) refers]*

1.1 **Received** - The Terms of Reference for EdCom and its Sub Committees for 2015-16 at <u>EDCOM 1-01 (15-16)</u>.

1.2 **Approved** – the EdCom, QRSC and ARQASC Constitutions and Memberships for 2015-16.

1.3 EdCom welcomed the new Sabbatical Officers to their first meeting and noted that the student reps were still to be nominated.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The committee noted that minutes 66.1.1 and 66.1.6 should refer to 'Echo 360' and not 'Echo 365'.

2.2 **Agreed** – the minutes of the meeting of EdCom held 27 May 2015 *[EdCom Minutes 62-80 2014-15]*, subject to the amendments in 2.1 above.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3A Student support during interruptions *[Minute 67 (14-15) refers]*

3A.1 **Received** – an update on student support during interruptions at <u>EDCOM 1-02 (15-16)</u>.

3A.2 A group of Faculty Tutors, Sabbatical Officers and SRS representatives had considered how to better support students returning from interruption. The group developed a series of prompts and suggestions for students before they interrupted and before they returned, and information for staff in supporting students. Information would be published on the UCL website and plans were also underway to develop an online interruption process.

3B Engagement Monitoring *[Minute 72 (14-15) refers]*

3B.1 **Received** – an update on Engagement Monitoring requirements at <u>EDCOM 1-03 (15-16)</u>.

3B.2 At its May 2015 meeting EdCom received proposals for new Engagement Monitoring regulations which aimed to ensure that UCL was compliant with revised UKVI Tier 4 requirements. EdCom had raised some concerns about the feasibility of implementing the new requirements and so SMT had established a Task and Finish Group to look at the issues. The group submitted recommendations to the Chair of EdCom and these were approved by Chair's Action over the summer as the new arrangements needed to be implemented as soon as possible. Portico had also been redesigned to improve usability and this had been well-received in initial tests. Better reporting facilities had also been developed and these would assist the Visa Compliance team in ensuring that UCL was compliant.

RESOLVED:

3B.3 Members of EdCom still had some reservations about the practical implications of the

new requirements and it was agreed that ARQASC would discuss these at its next meeting.

Action: Chair of ARQASC

3C   **Resourcing of Portico** *[Minute 78 (14-15) refers]*

3C.1   **Received** - an oral update from the Chair on discussions regarding the resourcing of Portico.

3C.2   The issue had been escalated to the Provost and the Vice-Provost (Operations) and discussions were ongoing. The Provost had asked for a personal demonstration of Portico in order to better understand the student and staff experience of using it.

4   CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

4.1   **New UCL Academic Manual** *[Minutes 68, 69, 70, 71 & 72 (14-15) refer]*

4.1.1   **Received** – a paper summarising the restructuring and publication of the new UCL Academic Manual for 2015-16 and the regulatory changes made by Chair's Action over the summer at EDCOM 1-04 (15-16).

4.1.2   The committee thanked the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager for the work that had gone into developing and improving the new UCL Academic Manual and noted that the coming year would include a full review of the assessment regulations for taught programmes.

4.2   **New Programme and Module Approval process (and External Scrutineer Report Form)** *[Minute 35 (14-15) refers]*

4.2.1   **Received** – a paper summarising the new programme approval process approved by EdCom Chair's Action over the summer at EDCOM 1-05 (15-16).

4.2.2   The new process reflected earlier EdCom discussions on changes to the governance of taught programmes. Progress on this particular aspect had, unfortunately, been delayed due to staff absence but work had been completed over the summer. The paper included the terms of reference for the new Programme and Module Approval Panels which would replace PMASG from October 2015 and drew EdCom's attention to a new External Scrutineer's Report Form.

4.2.3   **Approved** - EdCom formally approved the External Scrutineer's Report Form.

4.2.4   EdCom noted the Library representative's request to still be included in the PMAP circulation list for each meeting.

Matters for discussion

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5   UCL AUSTRALIA *[Minute 63C (14-15) refers]*

5.1   **Received** - an update from the Faculty Tutor for Engineering Sciences on the measures being taken to ensure a high quality, managed teach-out at UCL Australia at EDCOM 1-06 (15-16).

6   QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

6.1   **Received** - an oral update from the Chair on preparations for QAA HER.

6.2   The Chair noted the significant progress made over the last year to ensure that UCL was ready for the review. The project strategy group were making regular reports to SMT to ensure that Deans were aware of progress and key issues, such as ensuring that the wider community of staff and students were aware of the review and the UK Quality Code expectations. The next major milestone would be the submission of the Self-Evaluation Document by UCL and the Student Written Submission by UCLU. A draft SED would be received at the next meeting of the HER Strategy Group in December and circulated to FTs and FGTs for comment. The final draft would be submitted to a specially-convened meeting of AC in January prior to submission to QAA in February 2016.

        RESOLVED:

6.3   Faculty Tutors were asked to assist Deans in ensuring that the wider community of staff were aware of the QAA Review and the UK Quality Code expectations.

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Action: Faculty Tutors

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7   EDUCATION STRATEGY

7.1   **Received** - the draft Education Strategy at <u>EDCOM 1-07 (15-16)</u>, introduced by the Director of Education Planning.

7.2   The strategy had been developed in line with UCL 2034, and aimed to directly address some endemic issues being faced by UCL, particularly in the areas of assessment and feedback, and the estate. The document was divided into two key sections – short term actions for the next two years, and longer term objectives to provide direction. Longer-term objectives were still to be developed for two key areas - assessment and taught postgraduate.

7.3   The Chair explained that the new Quality Review Framework provided a key set of tools to support implementation of key strategic initiatives and monitoring of progress. The ASER process, already underway for 2015/16 would be providing a strategic focus on key data drawn from external examiners, NSS and student success to help drive improvement in the student experience.

7.4   The draft was the result of cross-institutional consultation members were thanked for their contributions. Feedback had particularly helped to develop the sections on graduate attributes, synoptic modules and online modules. Focus was now turning to student consultation opportunities, whilst staff were still encouraged to submit feedback via the VP Education email address. The final strategy would be received at AB, AC and Council before final publication.

7.5   EdCom welcomed the opportunities for consultation and the project team's responsiveness to the issues raised. The committee agreed that the strategy now struck a successful balance between current and future objectives through its tone and content. The committee contributed the following suggestions:

a)   Greater detail about the enablers (systems, structures, communications etc.) - the committee expressed a desire to accelerate these improvements if at all possible.
b)   Greater detail about the resourcing of teaching and meaningfully-defined staff-student ratios, particularly in relation to PGTAs.
c)   A greater steer on UCL's PGT strategy – for example whether faculties should be focusing on larger numbers of smaller programmes, executive education etc.

d) Whilst issues of internationalisation would be covered by the Global Engagement Strategy, more cross-referencing might be useful as the documents would typically be read in isolation. In particular there could be more on UCL's plans to increase study abroad provisions.

e) Whilst the strategy acknowledged current sector discussions around the Teaching Excellence Framework, HEFCE's pending green paper on the governance of HE would also need to be taken into consideration – although it was felt that the strategy ought to extend beyond short-term political ambitions and instead focus on long-term planning.

7.6 **Endorsed** - the draft Education Strategy.

8 ANNUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE REVIEW: NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL HEADLINES AND RESPONSE

8.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 1-08 (15-16) and a presentation from the Student Experience Data Manager on the institutional messages arising from the NSS results 2015.

8.2 The key area for improvement was assessment and feedback, and the clarity and availability of marking criteria. QRSC was co-ordinating departmental responses through the ASER process, and faculties had been given three key tasks: Reviewing and improving the criteria for assessment to ensure that they were clear and available in advance; ensuring that teaching staff met the four-week assessment feedback turnaround targets and ensuring that each programme benchmarked practice against the NUS best practice in assessment tool. CALT had provided further guidance for staff about the benchmarking tool, and had circulated a pack about developing assessment criteria. Work had also been undertaken to develop a common descriptor for the duties and responsibilities of Programme Leaders (see minute 18 below). Arena sessions on responding to student feedback, and on best practice in assessment, had also been arranged, as well as workshops for Departmental Tutors. Furthermore, the CALT Teaching Fellow attached to each Faculty had been briefed to provide further advice and support in this area, whilst CALT was recruiting student experts on Assessment and Feedback who would be available to help faculties in their work with students.

8.3 As part of ASER Intensive engagement activities were being arranged for those programmes in the bottom quartile of NSS results, with regular visits from the Provost and Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) to help departments understand and address problems. The relevant Deans were required to submit quarterly reports on progress to SMT. Meanwhile, programmes in the top quartile would benefit from a lighter-touch ASER process, focusing on ways to share good practice.

8.4 EdCom noted that it was critical for departments to engage StARs in discussion of the NSS data, and that upcoming StARs training sessions would focus on how they could contribute to discussions. Faculties were encouraged to initiate conversations with StARs immediately, and not to wait for Staff-Student Consultative Committees later in the term, so that improvements could be implemented as soon as possible. Faculties should also focus on how to communicate to students their actions in response to feedback.

9 PEER DIALOGUE ON TEACHING

9.1 **Received** – the final draft of the Peer Dialogue on Teaching policy at EDCOM 1-09 (15-16), presented by the Principal Teaching Fellow and Associate Director (CALT).

9.2 The policy had been developed in consultation with staff and focused on developing strategies to enhance teaching and, in particular, assessment and feedback. The policy would form a constituent part of the Quality Review Framework in the new UCL Academic Manual. Small groups or pairs would report to DTCs, who would distil key issues and report on to QRSC as part of the ASER process. The next step would be to communicate the new method to staff and to explain the different approaches available.

9.3 EdCom noted that DTCs would be responsible for ensuring that peer dialogue was taking place as part of the ASER process, and suggested that the opportunity should be taken to review the role of the Departmental (Graduate) Tutor in light of recent ASER developments.

9.4 **Approved** – the Peer Dialogue on Teaching policy.

10 PROGRESS REPORT ON AUTUMN RESITS *[Minute 63B (14-15) refers]*

10.1 **Received** – the progress report on autumn resits at <u>EDCOM 1-10 (15-16)</u>, presented by the Director of Student Administration.

10.2 SRS was progressing on the basis that autumn resits would be implemented on all taught programmes from 2016-17. Three areas had been identified to pilot autumn resits during 2015-16: Laws, Brain Sciences and the Bartlett. At least one of these would include PGT provision, and both course work and written examinations would be covered. It was acknowledged that the pilot would represent increased work for the programmes concerned but that, in turn, these faculties would have the opportunity to shape proposals and processes.

10.3 EdCom noted that any policy decisions had to be resourced in terms of Portico and staffing. There would also be significant additional costs in venue hire. SRS would be flagging these issues in funding discussions. The review of the assessment regulations would also assume that autumn resits would be in place from 2016-17.

RESOLVED:

10.4 EdCom agreed to disband the Extenuating Circumstances Working Group and establish a new Autumn Resits Working Group to progress the pilot and arrangements for full adoption.

Action: Director of Student Administration

11 ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT TEMPLATES FOR STUDENT EXCHANGE/STUDY ABROAD/AFFILIATE PROGRAMMES

11.1 **Received** – The Memorandum of Agreement templates for student exchange/study abroad/affiliate programmes at <u>EDCOM 1-11 (15-16)</u>, presented by the Quality Assurance Manager.

11.2 The templates had been developed as an off-the-shelf solution for the establishment of academic partnerships in relation to study abroad and student exchanges, removing the need to draft a new Memorandum of Agreement for each new partnership. The templates would help the International Office and OfIA to approve a high volume of programmes each year, with only the name of the partner and the specifics of the department needing to be added. If a programme wished to propose any other amendments, approval would be needed from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) via Academic Services.

11.3 The templates were designed for non-European partners as the majority of European student exchanges fall under the Erasmus+ programme. However, should UCL need to develop a partnership with a European partner outside of the Erasmus+ programme, or to develop PGT exchanges, the same template could be used.

11.4 **Approved** – EdCom approved the templates and thanked the Quality Assurance Manager for the hard work that had gone into developing the Academic Partnerships Framework.

Other matters for approval or information

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12 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING COMMITTEES

12.1 **Received** – the revised terms of reference for FTCs and DTCs at <u>EDCOM 1-12 (15-16)</u>, presented by the Quality Assurance Manager.

12.2 Updates had been made in relation to Academic Partnerships and ASER. EdCom also requested the following amendments to the FTC terms of reference:
   a) Inclusion of the CALT Faculty Reps on the membership of each committee
   b) The ability to co-opt representatives from relevant support services such as the Library and e-Learning at the Chair's discretion
   c) Amendment of the reporting lines in line with the revised EdCom Terms of Reference (see minute 1 above) – FTCs should now report and submit minutes to EdCom and, where applicable, Research Degrees Committee, and not AC.

12.3 **Approved** - the amended Terms of Reference subject to the further amendments listed in 12.2 above.

<u>**Action: Quality Assurance Manager**</u>

13 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

13.1 **Approved** – the list of programmes recommended for approval by PMASG from its meeting of 18 June 2015 at <u>EDCOM 1-13 (15-16)</u>.

14 MINUTES OF THE UCL BOARD OF EXAMINERS

14.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the UCL Board of Examiners held 1 July 2015 at <u>EDCOM 1-14 (15-16)</u>.

15 ANONYMISED SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS REPORT

15.1 **Approved** – the suspensions of regulations listed at <u>EDCOM 1-15 (15-16)</u>.

16 SPECIAL AND AEGROTAT PROVISIONS PANEL REPORT 2014-15

16.1 **Received** – the annual report from the Special and Aegrotat Provisions Panel at <u>EDCOM 1-16 (15-16)</u>, presented by the Director of Student Administration.

16.2 The panel chair thanked staff who had taken part. The report highlighted a number of students who might have been better supported through Special Assessment Arrangements and it was hoped that the new Extenuating Circumstances regulations would help to facilitate this. EdCom also noted that there were no Special Provisions

for PGT students and that this would be considered as part of the review of the assessment regulations during 2015-16.

17 SPECIAL CASES PANEL REPORT 2014-15

17.1 EdCom noted that there were no Special Cases Panels during 2014-15.

18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 Programme Leader Role Descriptor

18.1.1 **Received** – a late paper defining a common role descriptor for Programme Leaders at <u>EDCOM 1-17 (15-16)</u>, presented by the Director of Academic Services.

18.1.2 As part of the QRSC ASER discussions, the sub-committee had concluded that the role of the Programme Leader played a pivotal role in addressing issues raised by students. It was felt that there was a lack of clarity about the role and its responsibilities, and no central record of the key contact for each programme of study. It was also felt that there should be better opportunities for networking and communication between role holders. In response, the descriptor had been developed by Academic Services and CALT with reference to existing examples from UCL and other Russell Group universities. The committee also noted broader plans to develop a clearer hierarchy of accountability from programme level to EdCom and AC.

18.1.3 EdCom warmly welcomed the development. Members noted the ongoing problem of differential role titles across UCL (e.g. Programme Leader, Programme Director, Director of Studies etc.), but it was agreed that the role title was less important than establishing which member of each programme team was responsible for governance - role titles could be adjusted as long as there was a clear indication of where the Programme Leader role resided. It was also noted that there was a degree of overlap with the duties and responsibilities of Departmental Tutors and Departmental Graduate Tutors particularly in relation to student engagement and student support, and that the document should more clearly indicate that Programme Leaders reported to, and liaised with, DTs or DGTs, who had ultimate responsibility for and oversight of the areas concerned. Greater clarity was also needed about the locus of responsibility for PGT students.

18.1.4 EdCom noted that Academic Services would be collating and maintaining the list of Programme Leaders and that a programme would be defined as the entity to which a student applied, as opposed the entity from which they graduated. The committee also noted that HR had been consulted on the paper and that this had resulted in the late circulation of the paper. HR had confirmed that the proposals did not have to be approved by the unions as they were not specifically tied to reward and remuneration.

18.1.5 **Approved** - EdCom approved the role descriptor in principle, subject to revisions to acknowledge lines of accountability, and in particular the relationship with DTs and DGTs, and responsibilities for student engagement and student support.

Action: Director of Academic Services, Director of CALT

RESOLVED:

18.1.6 Members were asked to feed back to Academic Services as soon as possible if they had views on the suggested amendments.

Action: All members

19 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

19.1
- Tuesday 1 December 2015, 2.00 – 4.30, Council Room
- 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

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