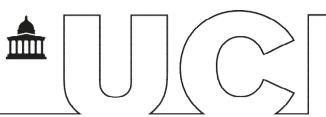**LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY**

UCL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

6 December 2018

M I N U T E S

Present:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair);

Ms Rothna Akhtar; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Mr Ian Davis; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Julie Evans; Ms June Hedges; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Mike Porter; Mr Saddiqur Rahman; Dr Aeli Roberts; Mr Mike Rowson and Dr Hazel Smith.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Dr Jenni Marie for item 20; Ms Susan Martin for item 21; Mr Simon To for item 22; Mr Rob Traynor for items 23 and 29.

Apologies were received from: Mr Farooq Dean; Dr Sam Smidt; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Professor Eva Sorensen and Ms Olga Thomas

Key to abbreviations	
AC	Academic Committee
APRG	Academic Partnerships Review Group
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
DTC	Departmental Teaching Committee
EdCom	Education Committee
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report
IQR	Internal Quality Review
LDR	Lead Department Representative
LSA	Late Summer Assessment
OVPESA	Office of the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs)
PIQ	Programme Initiation Questionnaire
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panel
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
StRAFC	Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

18   MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

18.1   **Agreed** – the minutes of the meeting held 2 October 2018 (EdCom Minutes 1-17, 2018-19).

19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

19A Teaching Excellence Framework *(Minute 4, 2018-19)*

19A.1 The Chair gave an update on progress. UCL had been selected as one of 50 institutions to pilot the Subject-Level TEF during 2018-19. The pilot would act both as a practice run and as a means for UCL to shape and influence the final format of the TEF.

19A.2 The proposed subject clusters broadly mapped onto UCL's departments, although a few were misaligned. Other institutions had also reported similar issues. UCL would be represented in 26 of the subject clusters and the Deans had been asked to nominate authors for each of the narratives. These would draw on the ASER process, which had been specifically designed to feed into the TEF. There would also be a 15-page overarching UCL narrative. Submissions would be made in February 2019. The results of the pilot would be available to UCL only and would not be made publicly available.

19A.3 The TEF would now include two more NSS question groups on learning resources and the student voice, and the Chair was particularly keen to encourage initiatives to enhance the latter. The new Vice-Provost for the Student Experience was working closely with the OVPESA and Academic Services to build on the substantial body of work already undertaken to improve student engagement at UCL, and work with departments to embed a range of initiatives.

19B Higher Education Achievement Report – Guiding Principles *(Minute 7 2018-19)*

19B.1 Following the discussion at the last meeting, UCL Careers had contacted Academic Services to request an amendment to the HEAR to permit internships pre-approved by UCL Careers in additional to those approved by the Faculty. It was felt that this was a material change from the proposals which went to EdCom, which sought to restrict the HEAR to activities which explicitly aligned with the curriculum and were pre-designed by the programme team. Whilst the proposals clearly had some benefits, it was felt that further discussion was needed at ARQASC before such an amendment could be made.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

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20 REVISIONS TO THE UCL CHANGEMAKERS PROGRAMME

20.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 2-01 (18-19) presented by the Associate Director of the Arena Centre (Quality Assurance & Enhancement).

20.2 UCL ChangeMakers had centrally supported educational partnership projects over the past four years. While this had been successful, the scheme had continued to face challenges in embedding changes within departmental practice and spreading the practice of partnership working beyond the supported projects. The paper proposed to embed projects more within departments and to run a number of faculty and institutional level projects, which could impact educational practice on a larger scale. The proposals had been discussed at a number of different fora.

20.3 EdCom welcomed the proposals and made a number of comments and suggestions. It was felt that the application deadline of the end of the Spring term made it difficult to engage students, as the SSCCs which initiated projects could not see them through to completion, and a new cohort of SSCCs then inherited projects which they might not be as invested in. It was acknowledged that this was the final deadline and applications could be submitted earlier, but a slight change in how this was communicated could encourage earlier submissions. A further suggestion was to remove the deadline and fund projects as they arose. This would require some further thought to establish if this was financially viable.

20.4 **Approved** – Members agreed that departmental approval was needed, but expressed concerns about relocating ownership to DTCs. It was agreed that the SSCC needed to retain ownership as the nucleus of student engagement. The proposals were approved, subject to this amendment.

21   UCL ONLINE PROGRAMMES

21.1   Received – the papers at <u>EDCOM 2-02 (18-19)</u> presented by the Director of Online Programmes, OVPESA.

21A   Update on the development of UCL's Online Programmes

21A.1   SMT had made an institutional commitment to expand UCL's online provision. A pilot MBA programme was being developed in the School of Management, aiming for 2019 entry. The programme would be delivered in collaboration with an external partner, 2U, who would manage admissions processes, technical support etc. All academic decisions would be made by UCL, including admissions decisions. Marketing would open in March 2019, and the programme would launch in October. There would be four start dates per year, with a rolling schedule of recruitment, admissions, registration, teaching and assessment. The project team was currently working on six major areas of activity, including aligning UCL and 2U's online systems. Potential changes to the regulations were being scrutinised by ARQASC and StRAFC. The programme itself had been approved by PMAP, subject to a number of amendments and clarifications, and the relationship with the partner had been approved by Council.

21A.2   EdCom thanked the team for the update. Some members expressed concerns about the level of progress in addressing the practical implications of running four entry and exit points on areas such as student records, module delivery, enrolment, exams etc. In-depth and early coordination with Student Records was needed to implement the proposed changes, which would have a considerably disruptive impact on the normal administration cycles. While the committee did not want to delay the project in any way, it was felt that these detailed issues now needed greater focus and resolution if the programme was to launch in October 2019.

21B   Proposed Regulations for Online Programmes

21B.1   The project team had identified three areas of the Registration regulations which would require amendment to accommodate the four entry points. This included enrolment dates, the ability for students to enrol online, and module selection and amendment dates. The paper included high-level proposals only; once these were agreed, Academic Services would draw up the amendments to the regulations themselves. These would be scrutinised by ARQASC before being submitted to EdCom for formal approval later in the year.

21B.2   Some concern was expressed about the impact on other students of permitting more flexible module selection and amendment deadlines. This was a complex issue, and careful communications would be needed. The project team felt that the fast turnaround of the programme would minimise the likelihood of students changing modules - the proposed regulation was primarily designed to allow students to withdraw from a module and take it at a later date if, for example, employment commitments changed. It was also noted that the programme would not be able to set its own deadlines in isolation, this would have to be done in consultation with Student Records.

21B.3   **Approved** – the proposals were approved in principle.

22   SSCC REPORT: NON-COVERAGE OF ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES

22.1   **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 2-03 (18-19)</u> from the Student Representatives Steering Committee.

22.2   In November 2018, the Student Academic Representation Steering Group expressed concern at the extent of SSCCs without confirmed Academic Representatives or Lead Department Representatives. The Steering Group agreed to escalate this to EdCom for further action.

22.3   It was noted that the data in the report was out of date and more Lead Department Reps had now been appointed; some spaces were also due to January-start programmes. Nevertheless, there were still gaps in engagement, which would mean that some SSCCs did not have a student co-chair, or a named person to work directly with the Department. The Sabbatical Officers also noted the importance of this role in escalating issues to the Students' Union, and that vacancies would limit their ability to respond to student feedback.

22.4   EdCom discussed the potential barriers to appointing LDRs. Some departments had found the deadlines difficult to meet as finding volunteers often took time. EdCom discussed whether the deadline could be put back by a week or two, although members acknowledged

that delays would cut into the time available to work with the students. It was also suggested that the roles could be shared between two students in order to reduce the time-commitment. This was already possible for the faculty-level reps, but there was some hesitation about doing this at departmental level as this was intended to be a co-chair and leadership role. A further suggestion was to fund the role via a bursary which might act as an incentive and also demonstrate the importance of the role.

22.5 It was suggested that Transition Mentors might be more involved in recruiting reps, or that students could be contacted prior to the start of term to let them know about the opportunities available. Personal Tutors might also be in a position to promote the role. The case study from the Department of Geography could also be re-circulated to raise awareness and demonstrate the palpable changes which the role could effect.

22.6 **Agreed** – the Steering Group would bring some worked-up proposals back to a future meeting of EdCom. **ACTION: Director of Academic Services; Sabbatical Officers**.

23 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS ANNUAL REPORT

23.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 2-04 (18-19), presented by the Policy Advisor (Education Governance).

23.2 The second annual report demonstrated a small reduction in the number of cases compared to the previous year. The report now illustrated the number of cases in relationship to the size of each faculty, providing a more accurate picture. This showed that most faculties had a case rate of around 1-1.5% of the student body.

23.3 Further reductions in case load were anticipated for 2018-19. Following last year's report, a number of changes to the regulations had been discussed and agreed by ARQASC and EdCom, with the specific aim of reducing the number of decisions requiring central approval. Faculty Tutors had now been empowered to make a range of decisions within the regulations, particularly around interruptions of study. It was thought that these changes would reduce the number of centrally-approved cases by as much as 60%, making the decision-making process quicker and smoother, and giving students responses in a much reduced timeframe. Work was also underway to implement an online workflow to further expedite decision-making and facilitate reporting.

23.4 **Agreed** - The committee agreed that, where powers had been devolved to faculties, there should still be a reporting framework in place so that EdCom could maintain an oversight, monitor trends and address common issues. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the Faculty Tutors' Forum. **ACTION: Policy Advisor (Education Governance)**.

24 PROGRAMME AND MODULE APPROVAL AUDIT OUTCOMES

24.1 **Received** – the proposals at EDCOM 2-05 (18-19), presented by the Head of Academic Policy and Quality Assurance.

24.2 A recent KPMG audit of the process for creating and launching new programmes had found processes very robust in terms of quality assurance, but had also recommended that UCL place a greater focus on strategic alignment, market sensitivity, and the impact that student numbers planning had on the estate. The report included an affirmation around the importance of enforcing approval deadlines to ensure that there was enough time to market programmes and enough teaching space to accommodate the students.

24.3 The proposals would now require departments to discuss such issues before initial proposals were submitted. The opportunity had also been taken to add some sections on the Inclusive Curriculum, in line with the objectives of that project.

24.4 EdCom welcomed the proposals but expressed some concerns about enforcing decisions. Some members felt that Estates should be brought in at an earlier stage in the approval process to ensure programmes were viable. The committee also discussed how there might be better alignment with institutional strategies and developments, and a more centralised planning of academic developments.

24.5 **Approved** – the proposed revisions to the Outline Approval Form.

25 EXAM BOARD REPORTS

25.1 **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 2-06 (18-19)</u>, presented by the Head of Academic Policy and Quality Assurance.

25.2 The paper included an update on progress in the Academic Model Project Phase 3, which was focused on building UCL's progression, award and classification rules into the system so that departments could generate useful exam board reports, the new regulations could be applied automatically, student outcomes could be reported accurately and consistently, and human errors could be minimised. Work was underway to check and cleanse the data submitted via the Programme Summaries data collection, and to design a single suite of exam board reports. The project team would be consulting on the format in the Spring term, giving departmental and faculty staff the opportunity to shape the reports.

25.3 EdCom welcomed the developments and thanked departments for the additional work to set up and test the system. This was a crucial step in assuring standards and reducing the amount of staff time spent on administrative tasks. The Programme Summaries had so far uncovered around 90 different ways to award and classify an undergraduate degree, giving an idea of the extent of divergence in the former regulations. The new regulations greatly minimised variation across UCL, and the new system would ensure that these regulations were implemented consistently.

25.4 **Agreed** - Education Committee endorsed the approach to exam board reporting outlined in the paper.

26 LATE SUMMER ASSESSMENTS REVIEW

26.1 **Received** – the report at <u>EDCOM 2-07 (18-19)</u>, presented by the Director of Academic Services.

26.2 A group of stakeholders from faculties and central services had met to review the first full year of Late Summer Assessments across UCL programmes. The delivery of the exam period had run exceptionally well, and EdCom thanked departments for helping to ensure that students had positive experiences. The main issue had been the short turnaround time between the end of the LSA period and enrolment for the next academic year, and Academic Services were working on plans to improve this for the next session. The Chair thanked Academic Services, EdCom members and colleagues across UCL for an immense achievement, which represented a major step in supporting students and improving their experiences of assessment.

27 CONDONEMENT MITIGATION POLICY

27.1 **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 2-08 (18-19)</u>, presented by the Academic Regulations Manager.

27.2 The paper provided an update on the item received at EdCom in June 2018 regarding any potential impact on students' Classifications during the transition period from one set of regulations to another. While the majority of regulatory changes applied to all students as soon as they enrolled on the 2018-19 academic session, EdCom had agreed that the new UG Classification regulations would be phased in to ensure that UCL met CMA requirements. As a result, there would be a number of years in which the new Condonement regulations and the old Classification regulations were applied together, and analysis had shown that this could potentially affect students' Classifications. After further discussions, ARQASC had drawn up a policy to ensure that students were not adversely affected by the changes whilst also ensuring that UCL's academic standards were upheld.

27.3 EdCom noted that the policy would not be required until the 2019-20 graduating cohort. At the end of 2018-19, it would be possible to identify which students might be affected, giving a further year for Academic Services and Faculties to work together to agree any mitigating actions.

27.4 **Approved** – the Condonement Mitigation Policy.

28 INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW PROCEDURES

28.1 In October 2018, EdCom approved proposals for a refocused IQR process and was informed that detailed operational guidance would follow for its approval.

28.2 **Approved** - the Internal Quality Review operational guidance and annexes for Chapter 9 of the UCL Academic Manual, as detailed at EDCOM 2-09 (18-19).

29 EDCOM ANNUAL REPORT TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

29.1 **Approved** – the annual report to AC at EDCOM 2-10 (18-19).

30 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

30.1 **Approved** – The programmes of study recommended by PMAP at EDCOM 2-11 (18-19).

31 APROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

31.1 Approved - The academic partnerships recommended by APRG at EDCOM 2-12 (18-19).

32 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

A **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held 16 October 2018 at EDCOM 2-13 (18-19).

B **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 17 September 2018 at EDCOM 2-14 (18-19).

C **Approved** – the Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 4 October 2018 at EDCOM 2-15 (18-19).

D **Approved** – the Minutes of the Quality Review Sub Committee held 20 September 2018 at EDCOM 2-16 (18-19).

E **Approved** – the Minutes of the Student Academic Representation Steering Group held 10 July 2018 at EDCOM 2-17 (18-19).

33 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS

33.1 **Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations detailed at EDCOM 2-18 (18-19).

34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

34.1 None notified.

35 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2018-19:
- Monday 25 February 2019 10.30am to 1pm – Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- Thursday 25 April 2019 10.30am to 1pm - Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- Tuesday 11 June 2019 10.30am to 1pm - Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- Thursday 18 July 2019 10.30am to 1pm - Haldane Room, Wilkins Building

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13 December 2018