



## Education Committee

6 December 2022

### Confirmed Minutes

#### Present:

Professor Kathy Armour (Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Mr Hamza Ahmed; Professor Simon Banks; Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Nicole Brown; Dr Parama Chaudhury; Ms Sarah Cowls; Mr Ian Davis; Professor Sally Day; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Jo Fraser-Pearce; Ms June Hedges; Professor Arne Hofmann; Ms Harriet Israel; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Dr Margaret Mayston; Ms Seyi Osi; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Mary Richardson; Professor Aeli Roberts; Professor Bill Sillar; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Lizzie Vinton; Dr Nalini Vittal and Professor Nicola Walshe; Ms Julia Wojciechowska and Dr Kathryn Woods

**In attendance:** Professor Steven Vaughan (for Professor Olga Thomas), Ms Leigh Kilpert (for Mr Mike Rowson) and Mr Rob Traynor (Interim Secretary).

**Apologies:** Dr Rachel King; Ms Seyi Osi; Mr Mike Rowson; Professor Olga Thomas and Professor Stan Zochowski.

### Part I: Preliminary Business

#### 48. Welcome and Announcements

48.1. The Chair welcomed members and guests to the meeting and three new EdCom members:

- Dr Kathryn Woods, Pro-Vice-Provost (Student Engagement)
- Ms Julia Wojciechowska, Undergraduate (UG) Representative, Students' Union (SU)
- Ms Harriet Israel Postgraduate (PG) Representative, SU

#### 49. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

49.1. Approved – the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2022 [EdCom Minutes 30-47, 2022-23] at EDCOM 4-01 (22-23).

#### 50. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

##### 50A Review of Internal Quality Review (IQR) – Proposed Interim Process and Pilot

50A.1 At the last meeting EdCom approved an IQR interim process and pilot scheme (EdCom Minute 38, 15.11.2022). The Chair proposed further changes to the IQR teams' membership. **Agreed:** to add Vice-Provosts and Pro-Vice-Provosts to the list of potential chairs and a requirement that there should always be a minimum of two student representatives for each IQR team. It was also clarified that the Arena Faculty Lead would be from a different faculty to

the department or programme to be reviewed. It was further agreed that the Chair draw together proposals to improve the dissemination of good practice arising from IQRs, for discussion at a future meeting.

**Action: the Chair**

50A.2 The Chair further noted that the action to follow up on quality assurance of postgraduate research (PGR) provision with the Doctoral School was in train. Although PGR students were largely beyond EdCom's remit, there was some intersection with the Doctoral School and Research Degree Committee (RDC) regarding MRes student provision and post-graduate teaching assistants (PGTA). Discussion was taking place on the latter, as many PGTAs were involved in assessment marking at UCL and this would be discussed by EdCom next term.

**Action: the Chair and Secretary to note**

## **Part II: Matters for Discussion**

### **51. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Draft Submission**

51.1. Received - the paper at EDCOM 4-02 (22-23), the first draft of the TEF written submission, introduced by Ms Lizzie Vinton, TEF Lead. The draft document was confidential and not for circulation beyond the original recipients, though it would be publicly available following submission to the Office for Students (OfS). The draft submission will also receive feedback from the SU and the University Management Committee (UMC). The deadline for submission is 24 January 2023.

51.2. EdCom was informed that the TEF Steering Group, led by the EdCom Chair and its task groups had contributed to the evidence gathering for the draft submission. The section on educational gains was proving challenging to draft as the OfS expected institutions to define this themselves and provide evidence of excellence. A project with the SU was underway to develop the definition, with workshops and a survey of students conducted. The section would be further developed following the outcomes of the project and the SU further suggested including the new student life strategy in the submission. Support was also being provided to the SU in drafting their own independent submission to the TEF.

51.3. It was important to set the right tone for the draft and to avoid appearing overconfident, or conversely apologetic. Members broadly agreed that the draft had achieved this, though it was suggested that a clear conclusion was added to ensure a strong ending. Some caution was also urged on the sections on assessment and response to the pandemic, and a realistic and not overly optimistic tone advised. It was suggested that a statement on UCL's approach to academic integrity might also be added and agreed that EdCom further consider this area during the academic year.

**Action: Chair and Secretary to note**

51.4. It was also suggested to invite comments from colleagues who were involved in drafting Research Excellence Framework (REF) submissions to help ensure messaging was pitched at the right level. However, it was noted that setting the right tone for TEF panels was more difficult to predict than for the REF panels with their subject expert composition. TEF panels

were drawn from a widely variable sector, with many smaller or specialised institutions and therefore often very different to UCL.

51.5. Colleagues were still able to send examples of excellent practice, although there is a high threshold for inclusion in the document and not all would be able to be included. The key criteria were that examples are able to demonstrate exceptional performance or a positive impact, especially in areas of the TEF metrics where UCL underperforms. Strong evidence for the examples was also required, with those showing a high impact on large numbers of students, or improved National Student Survey (NSS) scores highly desirable. Qualitative evidence, with short insightful quotes, evidence of awards or commendations for good practice was also valued. Members noted some further examples of good practice in the meeting and were encouraged to send them to the TEF Lead.

51.6. The Chair thanked the TEF lead, the SU and colleagues for their support and contributions. **Agreed:** that EdCom members forward any comments or suggestions on the draft submission, as well as any further examples of outstanding practice, to the TEF Lead ([l.vinton@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.vinton@ucl.ac.uk)) no later than 22 December.

**Action: EdCom members**

## 52. Review of Education-Related Committees Update

Received - the paper at EDCOM 4-03 (22-23) introduced by the Chair, who informed EdCom of changes to the education-related committees and the structure following previous discussions of the draft paper (15 November and 20 September 2022 and the last session). The revised committee structure would better reflect current higher education priorities such as the OfS Regulatory Framework and its B conditions on academic provision. Academic Committee (AC) had also had sight of the paper and raised no concerns (17 November).

52.1. A meeting of committee and panel chairs was planned to take place in late December or early January and the secretariat would be confirmed soon (overseen by the Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar). Committees and panels would be able to suggest additional terms of reference (ToR) at their first meetings, for EdCom approval.

**Action: the Chair and Ms Sarah Cowsls to note**

52.2. A number of comments and suggestions were raised:

- a) Some areas of provision might require coverage by more than one committee or panel, for instance it was suggested that careers provision should be considered by the Student Life Committee (SLC) as well as by the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC). It would be important to establish an appropriate flow of information between committees for these shared areas of focus.
- b) It was queried which committee should cover students with disabilities and noted that the Student Access and Success Committee would be appropriate, although clear ToRs would be necessary to ensure that the area was considered in terms of success and broader access issues. This area should also be covered by the SLC.

- c) It was important to ensure that part-time students and PG students were adequately covered and noted that in many institutions separate committees or panels were focussed on PGT students to ensure they had a stronger voice.
- d) There were also concerns that short courses should receive adequate coverage, particularly for credit-bearing short courses (though non-credit bearing courses should be covered by UCL Innovation and Enterprise).

52.3. Approved: the changes to the committee structure and ToRs as outlined in Paper EDCOM 4-03 (22-23), the ToRs to be further developed by the chairs, committees and panels for later EdCom approval. The changes would be implemented from January 2023, for a trial period until July 2023, followed by a review of effectiveness and agreement on the next steps.

### **Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

#### **53. Office for Students Risk Register: B Conditions**

53.1. Noted– the paper at EDCOM 4-04 (22-23).

53.2. The Compliance Team (Student and Registry Services) had worked with professional services colleagues to create a risk register for the OfS conditions of registration. The paper outlined the risk assessment for each of the OfS “B conditions” related to education provision (including assessment, student engagement and the TEF) and any recent controls put in place. Members were asked to familiarise themselves with the risk register, the levels of risk for the B conditions and the mitigations proposed.

#### **54. Approval of New Programmes of Study**

54.1. Approved - the programmes of study recommended by PMAP at EDCOM 4-05 (22-23).

#### **55. Minutes of Sub-Committees and Working Groups**

55.1. Approved the minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee (ARQASC) held on 27 September 2022 at EDCOM 4-06 (22-23).

55.2. Approved the minutes of the Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group (DASG) held on 17 October 2022 at EDCOM 4-07 (22-23).

#### **56. Any Other Business**

56.1. **OfS Blended Learning Review and Compliance Concerns** – EdCom had noted the review, to which UCL had contributed, at its previous meeting (EdCom Minute 44, 15.11.2022). The OfS had since written to the Provost outlining three areas where it was possible that compliance concerns were likely to be raised. These were:

- i. the decision to retain recorded versions of online lectures as part of multiple course delivery and related to campus overcrowding;
- ii. student access to study space; and
- iii. the high volume of recorded lectures that students had to engage with.

As the review was conducted with institutions on a voluntary basis, the OfS as the regulator, had “deprioritised” the areas of concerns until November 2023, though it was clear UCL was expected to address them.

56.2. Concerns were expressed that retention of some online learning methods from dealing with the pandemic, often at students' request, could be misinterpreted as being in breach of the OfS B conditions. There were also challenges in meeting divergent student demands on teaching, with some students in favour of keeping some of it online, but others requesting in-person learning only. EdCom noted that online teaching could be offered as long as there was a clear pedagogical case for it, though students should receive the same amount of in-person teaching as was implicit in the programme that was advertised to them.

56.3. **Portico SITS Outage** – the Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar reminded members that work was underway migrating the student records platform to the Cloud and Portico would be unavailable from 8 December until 12 December. This would help to enable modernisation of the platform and address some long-standing technical issues. Extensive communications had been sent across UCL and EdCom members were asked to remind colleagues where possible.

**Note:** the move to the Cloud was successful and Portico SITS was re-opened on 12 Decembers as planned.

## 57. Dates of Next Meeting

57.1. The dates of the EdCom meetings for the rest of the 2022-23 session are:

- Tuesday, 7 February 2023, 14.00 - 16:30
- Tuesday, 25 April 2023, 14:00 - 16:30
- Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 14.00 - 16:30
- Tuesday 25 July 2023, 14:00 - 16:30

Rob Traynor (Interim EdCom Secretary)

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Academic Services

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December 2022