



Confirmed

Education Committee

8 June 2020

Minutes

Present:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Professor Nora Colton; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Julie Evans; Ms Megan Gerrie; Professor Deborah Gill; Ms June Hedges; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Ms Aatikah Malik; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Ms Emer O'Driscoll; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Jo Pearce; Professor Mike Porter; Professor Aeli Roberts; Mr Mike Rowson; Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies; Dr Sam Smidt; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Eva Sorensen; Dr Fiona Strawbridge and Professor Olga Thomas.

In attendance: Mr Rosul Gazi; Ms Clare Herbert; Ms Lina Kamenova; Ms Karen Roberts; Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary) and Mr Rob Traynor (assisting the Secretary).

Apologies for absence: None

Part I: Preliminary Business

68. Minutes of the last meeting

68.1. Approved – the minutes of the previous meeting at EDCOM 5-01 (19-20) held on 30 April 2020 (EdCom Minutes 54-67, 2019-20).

69. Matters arising from the minutes

Proposed Revision to the UCL E-Learning Baseline

(EdCom Minute 61, 30 April 2020)

69.1. The Head of Digital Education reported that the changes to the E-Learning Baseline had been made following the EdCom discussion at the last meeting. It was now available on the

UCL Teaching and Learning pages, under its re-branded name the [Connected Learning Baseline](#).

69.2. All other matters were covered in this meeting's agenda items.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

70. Draft Student Attendance Policy

- 70.1. Received - the paper at EDCOM 5-02 (19-20) introduced by Ms Karen Roberts and Mr Rosul Gazi, the Here to Succeed Policy Managers.
- 70.2. Here to Succeed was aiming to implement a UCL-wide digital attendance monitoring solution. Implementation had been pushed back to January 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19. It was noted that the team were still working on section 7 of the policy to incorporate the need for blended and/ or remote learning in Autumn 2020.
- 70.3. The policy aimed to provide detailed information and guidance for taught programmes on the new student attendance recording system, 'RegisterUCL'. The project was focussed on supporting student wellbeing and success by providing up-to-date, accurate data about students' attendance at scheduled classes, and supporting students to achieve their full potential by checking in with them if they missed classes. Students would have tools to enable them to check and take responsibility for their own attendance, and the system would give departments more time to focus on the individual student, rather than data entry. Staff in SRS Student Immigration and Compliance would be able to run reports to ensure UCL was meeting its obligations as a sponsor of student visas, and anonymised attendance data would provide key learner analytics that could be fed into the business intelligence capability.
- 70.4. EdCom welcomed the policy and thanked the Here to Succeed Policy Managers for their hard work.
- 70.5. The Students' Union had been closely involved at all stages of the project, and welcomed the replacement of the '70% attendance' requirement in response to student feedback. The SU raised some concerns about implementing the policy during Covid-19, as UCL was still unsure of how much face-to-face teaching would be possible next year. However they welcomed the planned postponement to January 2021. The SU also welcomed the supportive nature of the new system, and the fact that faculties would be able to choose bespoke solutions.
- 70.6. It was noted that UCL had not yet received guidance from UK Visas and Immigration on the arrangements for 2020-21 in light of Covid-19.
- 70.7. It was noted that the Open University had a blended learning tool which looked at engagement holistically: "OU Analyse" (See Herodotou et al, "Empowering online teachers through predictive learning analytics" in *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 50 (6) 3064-79
- 70.8. The project team was currently consulting faculties on the mechanisms for flagging students with low attendance, and would return to EdCom in the Autumn term with the final policy for

approval. EdCom noted that the planned timeline would necessitate in-session changes to the Academic Manual, and arrangements were being made to flag this up for students and staff both on the website and in the Core Programme Information.

- 70.9. Agreed – EdCom agreed that the 70% attendance requirement would continue to be suspended for the start of the 2020-21 session due to Covid-19. The situation would remain under review until the new Here to Succeed policy could be implemented.

71. Study Abroad 2020-21

- 71.1. Received - the paper at EDCOM 5-03 (19-20) introduced by the Director of Academic Services.
- 71.2. The paper outlined the issues affecting study abroad in 2020/21 as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic which would have an impact on around 600 UCL students. A number of options were presented for EdCom to consider, informed by the QAA guidance 'Contingency Planning for International Placements (mobilities)', advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UCL Legal Services, and discussions with a range of study abroad institutions.
- 71.3. The changing situation resulting from the pandemic meant that there would be considerable disruption to mobility in 2020/21. UCL's priority was student safety and, at the present time, UCL was unable to guarantee a safe, enriching and uninterrupted year abroad for all students, given the current global context. The paper set out four options, including:
- Option 1: Cancel all forms of exchange in Term 1 and review Term 2 in due course
 - Option 2: Cancel physical travel for all students in Term 1. Where possible, encourage students to engage with virtual exchange only in Term 1 and review Term 2 in due course
 - Option 3: Cancel study abroad in 2020-21 entirely
 - Option 4: Ensure a 'faculty-based' approach to 2020-21 mobility
- 71.4. Arrangements would need to ensure that threshold academic standards were maintained. It was noted that there were a number of different study abroad programme structures across faculties which would require different approaches e.g. extra-mural versus integrated study abroad (whether the study abroad is part of the baseline qualification credits), and mandatory versus optional study abroad (whether immersion in a foreign language and culture is fundamental to the award of a degree in a particular subject).
- 71.5. EdCom discussed the four options put forward, noting the following points:
- Some partner institutions had cancelled Term 1 mobility altogether and some had agreed to offer Term 1 online. Others had yet to decide.
 - Withdrawal of study abroad options would require consultation with students to comply with the Competitions and Markets Authority. However the options open to UCL were very limited in the current circumstances.

- Allowing the affected students to defer would create a double cohort of students next year with insufficient study abroad spaces. Similarly, if the study abroad year was cancelled, it would result in a double cohort of finalists on the UCL campus, with mixed language abilities. Social distancing at UCL would also exacerbate any increased cohort sizes.
- If students did not go abroad and were instead required to study at UCL, they could be obliged to pay full fees, risking a financial penalty for students. Furthermore, studying online or in the UK was unlikely to provide the high level of language skills and cultural knowledge expected of finalists in certain subjects, putting students at a disadvantage in their final exams.

71.6. Agreed - EdCom agreed that Study Abroad would not be cancelled for all students unless there was a legal requirement to do so, and endorsed Option 4 – a faculty-specific approach – given the different ways in which study abroad was structured in different departments. It was suggested that the Study Abroad team and Academic Services put together a template letter to students which included background information and then set out the specific options for faculties to select from. EdCom agreed that students must be kept fully informed of the options available, the uncertainties and their consequences. It was suggested that a deadline be set for faculties to make a decision and notify students.

71.7. Agreed - EdCom agreed to commit to ensuring that students did not incur additional fee liability to UCL.

71.8. Agreed - For inbound exchange students, EdCom agreed on a principle of reciprocity: UCL would aim to accept inbound students for any institution that would offer places to outbound UCL students, if permitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the time of the exchange. Under the provisions of Option 4 (above), a Faculty deciding not to permit outbound Study Abroad involving a given partner institution, could likewise choose not to admit inbound students from that institution.

72. Exams and Assessment Contingency Panel: Summary of Agreed Actions

72.1. Received - the paper at EDCOM 5-04 (19-20) presented by the Director of Academic Services.

72.2. The paper provided an update on the decisions made by EACP, and noted where work was ongoing in relation to some programme-specific arrangements. Members were asked to submit any further requests to the Academic Regulations mailbox.

72.3. EdCom asked whether affiliate students were included in the No Detriment arrangements. Academic Services confirmed that such students were subject to the progression, award and classification regulations at their own institutions, who would be making their own arrangements.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

73. Chapter 7: Programme and Module Approval and Amendment Framework 2020-21

- 73.1. Approved – the paper at 5-05 (19-20).
- 73.2. The Pro-Vice-Provost for Postgraduate Education noted that a working group had been looking at PGT programme development and was planning to submit a paper to the July meeting of EdCom which might result in some further revisions to Chapter 7.

74. Revised IQR Schedule 2019-20 to 2025-26

- 74.1. Approved – the IQR Schedule 2019-20 to 2025-26 at EDCOM 5-06 (19-20).
- 74.2. The Chair of QRSC noted the continued importance of reviewing UCL's provision, particularly given the impact of Covid 19 on the student experience. QRSC had agreed that the best solution would be to put the whole schedule back by one year.
- 74.3. Members were asked to check the list of units for review and let Academic Services know if any newly-created departments, institutions etc. should be added to the schedule.

Action: All Members

75. Suspensions of Regulations

- 75.1. Approved – the Suspensions of Regulations at EDCOM 5-07 (19-20).

76. Minutes of Sub-Committees and Working Groups

- 76.1. Approved – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 6 February 2020 at EDCOM 5-08 (19-20).
- 76.2. Approved – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held during April 2020 (online) at EDCOM 5-09 (19-20).

Any Other Business

77. Alternative Assessment Concerns

- 77.1. MAPS had found that some of the alternative assessments put in place due to Covid 19 had resulted in very high pass rates which did not sufficiently differentiate between candidates' abilities. EdCom noted that exam boards had already been empowered to take action in such cases, but agreed that further guidance would help to promote consistency. EdCom members were asked to start discussing the options with their Exam Board Chairs in preparation for the upcoming boards.

78. Dates of Next Meeting

78.1. The date of the last EdCom meeting of the 2019-20 session is:

- Thursday 30 July 2020 10.30am (Room 604 Institute of Education)

Lizzie Vinton

Secretary to EdCom

Academic Regulations Manager

Academic Services

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15 June 2020