



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

8 December 2011

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Vince Emery (*Acting Chair*)

Mr David Ashton
Prof David Bogle
Mr Neil Chowdhury
Mr Jason Clarke
Dr Brenda Cross
Dr Caroline Essex
Prof Mike Ewing
Ms Valerie Hogg
Mr Alex Jones
Mr Keith O'Brian

Prof Alexi Marmot
Dr John Mitchell
Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Mr Martin Reid
Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Ruth Siddall
Prof Richard Simons
Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Ms Olga Thomas

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Paula Speller; Ms Irenie Morley.

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Sue Bryant; Mr Marco Federighi.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
ASSP	Admissions Structures and Selection Processes Steering Group
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HR	Human Resources
ISD	Information Systems Division
ILTS	Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LTSS	Learning and Teaching Support Service
NUS	National Union of Students
PIQ	Programme Institution Questionnaire
PGT	Postgraduate taught (student)
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
TA	Teaching Assistant
RAS	Registry and Academic Services
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners

17 **MINUTES**

Approved

- 17.1 The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 14 October 2011 [*EdCom Mins. 1-31, 14.10.11*], issued previously, were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

18 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

[*See also Minutes 19 & 20 below*]

18A **QAA Consultation on External Examining 'Expectations' and Guidance – UCL Response**

[*EdCom Min. 9.5, 11-12*]

Noted

- 18A.1 EdCom had resolved that the Acting Chair would investigate the feasibility of recording UCL staff External Examiner activity on *MyView* with UCL Human Resources.
- 18A.2 Neither *MyView* nor *IRIS* were capable of recording this information. The issue would be investigated further by the Acting Chair and Richard Warren of ISD.

19 **INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

[*EdCom Min. 11, 11-12*]

Noted

- 19.1 The ILTS Implementation Plan (item 52) required EdCom to 'monitor the range of assessment types in use across disciplines with a view to informing UCL strategies for encouraging greater diversity in this area'. EdCom resolved that a report on key assessment types be submitted to its December meeting.

Received

- 19.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/12 (11-12) - the report and appendices A-D.

- 19.3 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton**.

Reported

- 19.4 In order to facilitate discussion, an analysis of the assessment data stored on Portico at module level was undertaken and EdCom was provided with data showing overarching module assessment components (eg. written examination, oral examination, coursework etc.). The data was high-level and was intended to give a flavour of the range of assessment types in use at UCL to serve as a starting point for discussion. However, the data did not show where the assessment was undertaken as e-assessment and EdCom was invited to consider whether it would be useful to gather this data.

Discussed

19.5 The main points were as follows:

- Portico should be the definitive store for data on assessment once captured but this would have resource implications. The module approval process was currently being automated and this would help with the capture of both the high-level assessment data and its sub-components.
- As more detail on the assessment methods would be required to form both part of the Higher Education Achievement Report and the Key Information Set, a single, unified approach to data gathering to meet the requirements of both would be sensible.
- The descriptor 'coursework' was a broad one, often masking a variety of approaches. The wording of the PIQ perpetuated the traditional approach to assessment by asking whether assessment was to be by examination or coursework and then requesting word length. It would be helpful if the proposed monitoring of the range of assessment types also stimulated thinking about introducing an increased variety of assessment, which, in accordance with the ILTS, had been the driver for the above preliminary analysis.
- It would be useful if the data, grouped by faculty, were sent to Faculty Tutors for discussion by FTCs. FTCs should consider whether it would be useful to gather data on e-assessments and whether there should be a change to the overarching module assessment components terminology.

RESOLVED

19.6 That the data, grouped by faculty, should be sent to Faculty Tutors for discussion by FTCs. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

20 **REVIEW OF THE HARMONISED SCHEME OF AWARD**

[EdCom Min.23, 10-11]

Noted

20.1 Departments/Divisions had been provided with programme level data, via the Faculty Offices, so that the Harmonised Scheme of Award could be reviewed together with the Faculty variations on the Harmonised Scheme. However, one Faculty (Mathematical and Physical Sciences) had responded, noting that it had found difficulty in analysing the data sent and no other faculties had made any comment. Additionally, since the data had been circulated, two new faculties had been created.

Received

20.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton.**

Reported

- 20.3 EdCom members were invited to discuss whether the variations were still needed; in particular where related to progression requirements and weighting of years towards the classification. Faculty Tutors were invited to comment on whether any of the variations to the Harmonised Scheme were still required and, where this was the case, to justify the variations.

Discussed

- 20.4 EdCom agreed that all Faculty variations should be reviewed. The Faculty of Engineering had already proposed amendments to the requirements for progression from Year 1 to Year 2 and to the requirement for graduation with a BEng. Additionally, Schemes of Award for students in Engineering making the transition from Year 3 to Year 4 needed urgently to be addressed.
- 20.5 The Faculties of Social and Historical Sciences and Arts and Humanities had recently initiated a joint working group on the Harmonised Scheme which would be reporting back to their joint Examination Board.

RESOLVED

- 20.6 That the acting Chair of EdCom should liaise with Faculty Tutors and the Dean of Students (Academic) regarding dates for a meeting to discuss the Harmonised Scheme. **[Action: Professor Vince Emery]**

21 **REPORT ON MOODLE**

Received

- 21.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/13 (11-12) - the report.
- 21.2 An oral report from the **Manager, LTSS, Dr Fiona Strawbridge.**

Reported

- 21.3 Most departments had met the 'baseline' expectations of Moodle use but the take-up beyond this minimum requirement had been disappointing. Moodle was being used as an electronic 'drop-box' for work and students had expressed themselves happy with it (apart from those who continued to complain that lecturers would not publish their notes ahead of scheduled lectures) but many still failed to use it interactively as a tool with which to engage more deeply with their learning. The report listed a number of possible reasons for this, including the possibility that the 'minimum requirements' approach had actually been counterproductive, promoting a 'lowest common denominator' approach.
- 21.4 A number of proposals for supporting and enhancing the use of Moodle were suggested, including the creation of a special e-learning award as a category within the Provost's Teaching Awards and the provision of a bespoke departmental template which would ensure that departments met Moodle requirements. CALT could provide further ideas and should liaise with LTSS over this. It was agreed that tutors needed specific targeted support and that Teaching Assistants should not be relied upon to support the more interactive activities.

RESOLVED

- 21.5 That CALT should liaise with LTSS regarding proposals to support and enhance the use of Moodle across UCL. **[Action: Dr Fiona Strawbridge and Dr Sue Bryant]**
- 21.6 That HoDs should be provided with data on Moodle usage across all the modules within their departments. **[Action: Dr Fiona Strawbridge]**
- 21.7 That any further comments and suggestions should be sent to Dr Fiona Strawbridge. **[Action: EdCom members to note]**

22 **OVERHEAD PROJECTORS IN LECTURE THEATRES**

Received

- 22.1 An oral report from **Dr Hilary Richards, Faculty Tutor, Faculty of Life Sciences and Faculty of Brain Sciences.**

Reported

- 22.2 Lack of consultation with faculty staff over refurbishment of teaching space, particularly lecture theatres, had resulted in some overhead projectors being removed with no substitute device provided for staff (i) to display information in a lecture and (ii) to be able to do this while using Powerpoint.

RESOLVED

- 22.3 That the acting Chair, on behalf of EdCom, raise the issue with the Director of UCL Estates. **[Action: Professor Vince Emery]**

23 **DISSERTATIONS: SERVICES STANDARDS FOR FEEDBACK APPROACHING SUBMISSION**

Received

- 23.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/14 (11-12) – the (draft) service standards.
- 23.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton.**

Reported

- 23.3 EdCom was invited to approve additional service standards for feedback on research projects. Current service standards for the provision of feedback to students on assessed work stated that supervisors were required to provide feedback to students on the draft report on a minimum of one occasion and taking account of subject specific requirements. Departments should specify what form of feedback students should expect. However, there had been grievance and examination irregularity cases which suggested that this requirement would need to be more highly specified and should be extended to Year Abroad projects.

Discussed

23.4 Discussion followed of which the main points were as follows:

- The situation for postgraduate students was more complex than that set out in the proposed service standards in faculties such as the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, where topics for dissertations were not 'set' in advance but were developed over a longer period. These topics were neither decided nor confirmed until January or February, making the proposed deadline of two weeks after the beginning of term impossible to meet.
- The quality of feedback often varied from tutor to tutor who was, in any case, often a postdoctoral student or research assistant rather than the primary supervisor. Students often worked on their dissertations during the summer, when staff were away. However, it was noted that students should be able to expect feedback during the summer. Assessment and feedback were areas where UCL often achieved lower scores in student surveys such as the National Student Survey and the International Student Barometer. It was possible that the National Student Survey would be extended to encompass PGT students and it would be useful if clear service standards for feedback to these students were in place before this happened.
- Student grievance cases at postgraduate level invariably cited lack of written feedback. A standard proforma should be considered for written feedback on projects undertaken during a Year Abroad. This would also serve to manage student expectation concerning the feedback they could expect to receive.

RESOLVED

23.5 That the Director of Student Services should refine the document to incorporate the points noted above and circulate this to Faculty Tutors for comment. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

24 APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE AWARD

Noted

24.1 In accordance with the procedure for the approval of new degree awards at UCL, EdCom was invited to recommend for approval by AC a proposal that UCL establish the following new degree:

- Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)

RESOLVED

24.2 That the proposal be recommended to AC for formal approval at its meeting on 15 December 2011.

25 PROVISION OF EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATION

Received

- 25.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/15 (11-12) - a report from the Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes.
- 25.2 An oral report from the **Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes, Ms Paula Speller**.

Reported

- 25.3 The report presented a review of current examination accommodation arrangements and provided details of an alternative accommodation for consideration. A purpose-built temporary structure had been erected in Bedford Square for the delivery of the August/September 2011 graduation ceremonies. EdCom was asked to consider whether or not a similar structure would be suitable and/or operationally viable as an examination venue.

Discussed

- 25.4 EdCom discussed the pros and cons of the temporary structure and concluded that the difficulties of ensuring adequate noise proofing, ventilation, security, cleaning and all the additional operational requirements necessary for a temporary structure would place a significant extra burden on staff resources which would not be mitigated by the number of extra examination seats gained. ECom concluded therefore that a temporary structure would not be viable.

RESOLVED

- 25.5 That the relevant RAS officers continue to explore other potential external venues. **[Action: Ms Paula Speller and Mr David Ashton]**

26 SEMESTERISATION

Received

- 26.1 An oral update report from the **Chair of AC, Professor Mike Ewing**.

Reported

- 26.2 The recent Council White Paper (2011-21) had set out an initial case for a move to a two-term structure. Following detailed discussions with senior UCL academic staff and officers and consideration of responses to a consultation document, it had been concluded that, rather than improving UCL's ability to send its staff and students abroad, a semester system could make it more difficult for UCL to collaborate with international partners. Additionally, academics, particularly those in qualitative disciplines, had expressed concerns that a semester model (with end-of-semester examinations) could impact negatively on the quality of students' learning.
- 26.3 A paper from the acting Vice-Provost (Education) to be submitted to AC on 15 December 2011 would recommend that UCL explore some minor changes to

the structure of the academic year which would help to improve the delivery of taught programmes, and allow the university to introduce a generic end-of-examinations programme for all undergraduates, focusing on global citizenship and enterprise. The paper would also recommend that a final decision on a more radical change to the term structure should be informed by the outcomes of the Programme Review.

27 INTERVIEWS: DEFINITION AND POLICY

Noted

27.1 At its meeting on 11 October 2011, the Admissions Structures and Selection Processes Steering Group had approved a revised definition and policy for interviews.

Received

27.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/16 (11-12) – the definition and policy.

Resolved

27.3 There were a number of comments on the ASSP document and the EdCom Chair requested that these be forwarded to the Secretary to the ASSP, Mr Lyndon McKeivitt. **[Action: EdCom to note]**

28 DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT

Received

28.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/17 (11-12) – the Digital Department Project Overview.

28.2 An oral report from Ms Lorraine Dardis and Ms Stefanie Anyadi from the **UCL Digital Literacy Project**.

Reported

28.3 Although TAs contributed directly to the student experience, their specific digital literacy needs rarely been recognised or addressed. The Digital Literacy Project would therefore analyse the diverse skills and abilities needed in a modern 'digital department', and explore how best to benchmark, develop, share and evaluate best teaching administration digital practice across UCL. Supported by the Association of University Administrators, the Digital Literacy Project aimed to establish a sector-wide certification framework and a certificate was currently in the pilot stage.

28.4 In parallel, the project would explore how technology could enhance the effectiveness of academic processes. There were more than forty tools routinely used by TAs but these were not always integrated. A Steering Committee had been set up including representatives from ISD and HR and working groups had been established to identify areas where practice varied and to share any good practice. The scheme was currently voluntary but this

was under discussion with HR. It was hoped that newly recruited TAs could be assessed on arrival for internal training and support.

Discussed

- 28.5 The Project representatives confirmed that JISC funding was in place and that the project would like to encompass not just TAs but also academic staff and students. EdCom expressed its support for the project.

RESOLVED

- 28.6 That further details of the project, comprising the Project Summary, a Project Poster, a Project PowerPoint presentation and the NUS Charter on Technology in Higher Education be circulated to EdCom via the Sharepoint. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**

29 **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Received

- 29.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/18 (11-12) – the (draft) glossary.
- 29.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton**.

Reported

- 29.3 EdCom was asked to consider whether a glossary of terms associated with regulations, students and programmes should be devised to assist in the use of nomenclature and to ensure clarity of understanding by all parties when communicating about regulations or the student experience.

Discussed

- 29.4 EdCom agreed that a full glossary should continue to be developed alongside the academic regulations and resolved that a small working group be set up to continue this work.

RESOLVED

- 29.5 That a working group be established to develop the glossary, comprising the Director of Student Services, one Faculty Tutor (Dr Caroline Essex), one Faculty Graduate Tutor (Dr Tim McHugh) and one student (Mr Xiangyu Wu, UCL Natural Sciences). **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

30 **COMMON TIMETABLE REVIEW**

Noted

- 30.1 The acting Chair of EdCom, Professor Vince Emery, met with the Director of ISD on 6 November 2011 to discuss data and next steps for the Review.

Received

- 30.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/23 (11-12) – a paper from the **acting Chair of EdCom.** (tabled at the meeting).
- 30.3 An oral report from the **acting Chair of EdCom, Professor Vince Emery.**

Reported

- 30.4 Following meetings with various departments within UCL to discuss the Common Timetable and a meeting of a core group of UCL stakeholders including the Vice-Provost (Education), Vice-Provost (Operations), Director of ISD, Head of Portico Services, Director of Student Services (RAS) and the Head of Room Bookings, faculties were asked to consult departments on a series of questions relating to potential improvements in the Common Timetable. The results of this consultation had been assimilated and provided a strong mandate for change in key areas of operation. The proposed changes in the operation of the timetabling at departmental/divisional levels which was circulated to faculties was summarised in APPENDIX EDCOM 2/23 (11-12).

Discussed

- 30.5 The proposed changes would be incorporated into planning for 2012-13 and represented the consensus views of the departments who responded to the questionnaire and so should have departmental support if adopted . The paper would also be submitted to AC's December meeting.

RESOLVED

- 30.6 That the paper at APPENDIX EDCOM 2/23 (11-12) be submitted to AC on 15 December 2011. [**Action: Professor Vince Emery**]

31 ACTION TAKEN BY THE VICE-CHAIR

31A Approval of new programmes of study

Noted

- 31A.1 The EdCom Vice-Chair (also acting Chair), Professor Vince Emery, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, has approved the institution of the following programmes of study:
- *MSc Medical Bacteriology;*
 - *MSc Crime and Forensic Science;*
 - *MSc / PG Dip Engineering with Finance;*
 - *MSc / PG Dip Engineering with Innovation and Entrepreneurship;*
 - *MSc Rail Integrated Design Management (closed programme to Atkins staff);*
 - *MSc Drug Design by Distance Learning (this will be a route on the existing programme);*
 - *MSc Industrial, Organisational and Business Psychology;*
 - *BSc Psychology and Language Sciences.*

32 **MINUTES AND REPORTS FROM STEERING GROUPS ETC.**

32A **Programme and Module Approval Steering Group**

Received

32A.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/19 (11-12) - the Annual Report of PMASG for 2010-11.

32B **UCL Board of Examiners**

Received

32B.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/20 (11-12) - the Minutes of the meeting of UCLBE held on 19 October 2011

32B.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 2/21 (11-12) - the Annual Report of the UCLBE for 2009-10 and 2010-11.

33 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

33A **Locus for Academic Regulations**

Noted

33A.1 The Acting Chair noted that the definitive version of the academic regulations should be stored in a single site which was well advertised and accessible. It was suggested that the new Teaching and Learning Portal might be the most suitable place for these to be held. However, the Registry and Academic Services website was shortly due for revision and this might yield alternative possibilities. Whatever site was decided upon, it was essential that all staff could be confident that the regulations stored therein were the definitive version.

34 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

34A **LectureCast System**

Received

34A.1 An oral report from Dr John Mitchell, Chair of the Online Media Board.

Reported

34A.2 The Online Media Project Board viewed the LectureCast system as a useful tool that a number of lecturers liked to use to complement their teaching. It had traditionally been regarded as opt-in. However, in some areas of UCL, (most notably the Medical School) its use was being made compulsory, with opt-out only in exceptional circumstances. It was felt that the issues involved in this course of action should be considered at a level higher than that of the Project Board. EdCom was invited to consider the development of a possible policy on use of LectureCast for recommendation to Council.

RESOLVED

34A.3 That Dr Mitchell develop a position paper for submission to the next meeting of EdCom on 14 March 2012. **[Action: Dr John Mitchell]**

35 DATES OF MEETINGS 2011-12

Noted

35.1 Further meetings of EdCom in 2011 will be as follows:

Wednesday 14 March 2012, 2pm to 4pm

Friday 4 May 2012, 2pm to 4pm

Friday 29 June 2012, 2pm to 4pm

35.2 All meetings will be held in the South Wing Council Room.

SANDRA HINTON

Senior Quality Assurance Officer

Academic Support, Registry and Academic Services

10 January 2012

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