



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday 11 October 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Prof Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton
Ms Karen Barnard
Mr Mehran Bhatti
Professor David Bogle
Dr Brenda Cross
Dr Caroline Essex
Dr Julie Evans
Mr Marco Federighi
Ms June Hedges
Dr Arne Hofmann
Dr Christine Hoffmann
Ms Valerie Hogg

Ms Katherine Majid (*vice Ms Paula Speller*)
Ms Bella Malins
Ms Helen Matthews
Mr Dante Micheaux
Dr John Mitchell
Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Ruth Siddall
Ms Olga Thomas
Ms Susan Ware
Dr Andrew Wills

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Jason Clarke; Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe; Mr Ken Marsden.

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
EDCOM	Education Committee
FES	Faculty of Engineering Sciences
FLS	Faculty of Life Sciences
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Record
MAPS	Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
PaLS	Division of Psychology and Language Sciences
PG	Postgraduate
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
RAS	Registry and Academic Services
RGC	Research Governance Committee
SLC	Student Loans Company
SoP	School of Pharmacy
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UG	Undergraduate
UPC	University Preparatory Certificate

1 CONSTITUTION AND 2012-13 MEMBERSHIP; TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted:

- 1.1 At EDCOM 1/01 (12-13) - the Terms of Reference, Constitution and 2012-13 Membership.

Approved:

- 1.2 The above. New members were welcomed by the Chair.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 29 JUNE 2012

Confirmed:

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 29 June 2012 [*EdCom Mins. 67-85, 29.06.12*]

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES [*see also Minute 8 below*]

3A Academic Regulations for 2012-13 [*EdCom Min. 70, 11-12*]

Noted:

- 3A.1 The Academic Regulations for 2012-13 had been signed off and were now available on the Registry website. A summary of the main changes could be found at EDCOM 1/02 (12-13).

Discussed:

- 3A.2 Dr Arne Hofmann and others raised a number of queries regarding the Regulations which he agreed to send to the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners.
- 3A.3 In the coming session, meetings of the Regulation Review Group (of EdCom) had been set in advance, with the third meeting taking place sufficiently early in the Spring Term (18 April 2013) to ensure that the final version of the regulations could be approved by EdCom in time for publication in student handbooks etc.

RESOLVED:

- 3A.4 That all queries/amendments/suggestions concerning the regulations etc. should be sent to the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners and copied to the EdCom Secretary. [**Action: Dr Arne Hofmann**]

3B Schedule of Duties of Departmental Tutors [*EdCom Min. 74, 11-12*]

Noted:

- 3B.1 The Schedule has now been revised, taking into account EdCom's suggestions at its meeting of 29 June 2012 and this version will be published in the UCL Academic Manual at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-5>.

- 3B.2 The Chair noted that this version was still capable of amendment in the future and might, if it proved helpful, give rise to a corresponding Schedule of Duties for Departmental Graduate Tutors.

3C Undergraduate Admissions: Revising UCAS applications following submission
[EdCom Min. 77, 11-12]

Noted:

- 3C.1 A policy in respect of the above has now been published in the UCL Academic Manual at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-4>.

3D Retention of UCL University Preparatory Certificate (UPC) students on UCL undergraduate degree programmes [EdCom Min. 78, 11-12]

Noted:

- 3D.1 Proposals that (i) UPC students be guaranteed an admissions decision on their UCAS application to UCL one month after the final UCAS submission date (i.e. by 15 February each year), and (ii) UPC students applying to MAPS, FLS and FES and predicted to achieve an overall grade A/A* should receive automatic conditional offers were approved by AC on 5 July 2012.

4 NEW FEE LIABILITY POLICY FOR INTERRUPTIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

Noted:

- 4.1 The Policy at EDCOM 1/03 (12-13).

Reported:

- 4.2 The Director of Financial Planning and Strategy, Ms Valerie Hogg, reported that the UCL policy on fee liability in the case of interruption or withdrawal followed the dates dictated by the Student Loans Company for UG students.

Discussed:

- 4.3 The official interruption or withdrawal date was 9 October 2012 and not 12 October, as per the official enrolment deadline. This was causing confusion and should be changed. The Fees Office had agreed that any proposed fee policy changes would, in future, be submitted to EdCom for information, which would improve co-ordination.
- 4.4 PGR and other 'calendar year' students did not get a two-week 'grace' period in which to consider whether to withdraw or interrupt. Furthermore, these students were charged on a daily basis. It seemed to EdCom to be inequitable that PG and UG students should be treated differently and the Committee suggested that all non SLC-funded students should be treated in the same way (ie. charged on a pro-rata basis if not funded by the SLC). No student should be in a position whereby a pastorally advisable interruption might not be taken because of financial considerations.

- 4.5 EdCom also resolved that the Fees Office should be asked to remove the references to academic and calendar years as this terminology was not used elsewhere and caused confusion.
- 4.6 The Director of Student Services reported that a Portico project was underway to put the withdrawal and interruption processes online. This would be fully automated in the 2012-13 academic session.

RESOLVED:

- 4.7 That the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy take EdCom's suggestions that (i) references to academic and calendar years be removed and (ii) all students, PG and UG, should be charged on a pro-rata basis if not funded by the SLC, calculated in accordance with UCL term times, back to the Fees Office for further discussion and report back to the meeting of EdCom on 6 December 2012. **[Action: Ms Valerie Hogg]**

5 UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS – IMPROVING CONVERSION ACTIVITY

Noted:

- 5.1 A report at EDCOM 1/04 (12-13) including Annexes 1 and 2, introduced by the Head of Outreach and Admissions, Ms Bella Malins.

Reported:

- 5.2 Following recommendations made in the audit of UG admissions undertaken by KPMG in 2011, Outreach and Admissions (RAS) had sought to make improvements to the collection and collation of applicant feedback on the admissions process by introducing a UCL-wide UG offer holder survey. The KPMG audit also highlighted possible deficiencies in conversion and “keep warm” activities. In response, RAS had undertaken a review of departmental applicant-conversion activity, specifically the applicant/offer holder open day. The outcomes of both exercises (submitted to EdCom at EDCOM 1/04 (12-13), Annexes 1 and 2) as well as other surveys undertaken as part of the admissions structures and selection processes project demonstrated that in the area of conversion activity, UCL could do much to improve the current applicant experience.
- 5.3 EdCom was invited to discuss and endorse a number of recommendations including the production a suite of three or four informal “keep warm” communications (Ezines) to be sent from the main student system at key points in the admissions cycle and, in addition to the activities provided by departments on open days, a pilot of cross-faculty open day mornings.

Discussed:

- 5.4 The Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer noted, in respect of the proposed 'Ezines' that prospective students were often automatically referred to an institution's website when what they really wanted was more written communication, including details of clubs, societies and social events and more targeted information from their prospective department or faculty.
- 5.5 The Faculty of Brain Sciences' Faculty Tutor noted that PaLS was piloting a Saturday open day and, as the Head of Outreach and Admissions had always felt that it would

be desirable to move towards having fewer open days and holding these on Saturdays, it was resolved that UCL should move further in this direction.

- 5.6 Outreach and Admissions also proposed to work with Student Residences and UCL Libraries to ascertain whether access might be gained to a student room in a residence and the main library during campus tours. The Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer noted that this had been a common service provided to prospective students in American universities for a number of years. Also in development was enhanced training for student ambassadors and the introduction of a template feedback form for students to comment on their experience of the open day. EdCom noted that the introduction of the Key Information Set in September 2012 would highlight the importance of finding out from prospective students what their primary information source had been.

RESOLVED:

- 5.7 That the Brain Sciences' Faculty Tutor and the Head of Outreach and Admissions should discuss the planning of the PaLS pilot and submit a report to the meeting of EdCom on 6 December 2012. [**Action: Ms Bella Malins and Dr Julie Evans**]

6 ADMISSIONS – DEFERRAL POLICY

Discussed:

- 6.1 A report at EDCOM 1/05 (12-13) introduced by the Head of Admissions, Ms Bella Malins.

Reported:

- 6.2 In both UG and PG study, UCL's Regulations did not allow for any more than one year of deferral before a new application had to be submitted. This was implicit in the UG Regulations and explicit in the guidance that accompanied the PG Regulations. However, in some UG subject areas, requests for two year deferrals had been received. Without explicit Regulations in place, it had been difficult to provide appropriate guidance and this had led to inconsistencies across the faculties. This issue largely arose in cases of applicants from countries such as Singapore or Cyprus where two years of military service was required. Some competitor universities did permit two year deferrals in these circumstances.
- 6.3 EdCom was invited to discuss and endorse revised Regulations for deferred entry for both UG and PG students which would make explicit the condition that a new application should be submitted after one year of deferral.

Discussion:

- 6.4 The Faculty of Laws' Faculty Tutor confirmed that the one year deferrals which were the norm in that Faculty had never deterred the considerable numbers of applicants from Singapore. However, the Faculty Tutor of the Faculties of Social and Historical Sciences and Arts and Humanities was concerned that the proposed revisions would deter prospective applicants from those countries with compulsory military service, and that these numbers were fairly significant in his faculties. The Faculty Tutors were

invited by the Chair to discuss the issues offline with their Admissions Tutors and to report back to the Chair¹.

RESOLVED:

- 6.5 That the revised regulations be approved on condition that those students seeking a two year deferral on the grounds of military service should be made an offer before the commencement of military service, but be required to reconfirm their interest in UCL after one year. **[Action: Ms Bella Malins]**
- 6.6 That the revised regulation be published in the relevant section of the UCL Academic Regulations. **[Action: Ms Bella Malins]**

7 RESEARCH-RELATED INCIDENT REFERRED TO EDCOM FROM RESEARCH GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Noted:

- 7.1 A report at EDCOM 1/06 (12-13) by the Head of Risk and Regulation, Dr Susan Kerrison.

Discussed:

- 7.2 EdCom was unable to discuss the paper because it remained unclear what exactly the Committee was being invited to do. Members noted that the (very few) UCL taught programmes which contained research projects involving ethical considerations were already subject to a number of rigorous and appropriate procedures. The Chair considered the agenda too full to allow the Committee time to attempt to decipher the paper and requested that, rather than inviting 'all teaching programmes within UCL to review their practices for training in best practice in the areas of research integrity and conduct' the paper be revised to clarify those programmes within UCL which were thought to pose a potential problem and to propose a specific course of action for these.

RESOLVED:

- 7.3 That the paper be returned to the RGC for revision and resubmission as detailed above. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**

¹ Immediately after the meeting, the Faculty Tutor for Social and Historical Sciences and Arts and Humanities reported to the Chair the number of applicants affected but agreed that a system where UCL could make an offer before the two-year break of military service, but ask the students to reconfirm their interest in UCL at the one-year point, struck a reasonable balance between the risk of unnecessarily losing a student to a competitor and the inverse risk of wasting a reserved place should the student fail to take up a deferred place. The practice in the Faculty of Laws however, had been not to allow two year deferrals arguing that core academic skills might fade when the applicant was removed from an academic environment and any academic stimulus for this length of time. A compromise was suggested whereby no faculties and/or departments should be forced to offer two-year deferrals, but those who did wish to should make use of the procedure detailed at 6.5 above; ie. applicants were made an offer before the commencement of military service, but required to reconfirm their interest in UCL after one year..

8 ENGAGEMENT MONITORING [EdCom Min. 4, 11-12]

Noted:

- 8.1 The most recent advice on Engagement Monitoring at EDCOM 1/07 (12-13). Discussion introduced by the Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton.

Reported:

- 8.2 EdCom was invited to note details of the 2012-13 advice regarding Engagement Monitoring and the dates for the ten points of engagement. The advice reminded Faculty Tutors and Faculty Graduate Tutors that it was essential that UCL maintained its robust records of engagement activity.

9 SCHOOL OF PHARMACY – EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MERGER [EdCom Min. 58, 11-12]

Reported:

- 9.1 In an oral report, the Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton, informed EdCom that much work had been, and was continuing to be, done behind the scenes. A working group set up by EdCom Chair's Action, to look at programmes, regulations and student support in respect of the merger had already met once and would continue to meet every four to six weeks throughout the session. It was hoped to determine key differences in working practice by Christmas 2012, and to be clear about how SoP students might fit into UCL patterns and ways of working by the end of Term 2. A post-merger group was already looking at integration in respect of finance, estates etc. and key RAS and SoP staff were working together closely to assist in the integration of the various systems.

10 SPECIAL PROVISIONS AEGROTAT MEETING REPORT

Reported:

- 10.1 The Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton, introduced the report at EDCOM 1/08 (12-13), noting that all cases had been fairly significant.

Discussed:

- 10.2 The Faculty Tutor of the Faculties of Social and Historical Sciences and Arts and Humanities expressed surprise when EdCom was informed that the Special Provisions/Aegrotat Subcommittee did not consider Masters students, as the relevant Regulations for Masters students stated that their extenuating circumstances could be considered under the Special Provisions Procedures².

² Immediately after the meeting, in an email correspondence between the Chair, the Faculty Tutor and the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners, it was discovered that this item had been copied over in error from the UG version and had hitherto gone unnoticed. However, it formed part of the guidance rather than the Regulations proper so might be removed from the PG version for the current academic session and the provisions considered for PG students in the relevant forum with a view to a suitable version being published in session 2013-14.

11 REPORT ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT RECORD (HEAR)

Noted:

- 11.1 A report at EDCOM 1/09 (12-13) introduced by the Manager of Curricular Development and Examiners, Ms Irenie Morley.

Discussed:

- 11.2 The Chair expressed the thanks of the Committee to all those who had worked hard towards the implementation of the HEAR project, in particular the UCL Union.

12 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

- 12.1 The former EdCom Vice-Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, has approved the following programmes of study since the meeting of EdCom on 29 June 2012:

- *MSc Transport and City Planning*
- *PG Cert Advanced Architectural Research*
- *MRes Advanced Architectural Studies*
- *MRes Interdisciplinary Urban Design*
- *MSc Burns, Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery*
- *PG Cert Security Research*
- *MPA (Masters in Public Administration)*

13 MINUTES FROM STEERING GROUPS ETC.

13A Programme and Module Approval Steering Group

Noted:

- 13A.1 At EDCOM 1/10 (12-13) – the Minutes of the meeting of PMASG held on 27 June 2012.

13B UCL Board of Examiners

Noted:

- 13B.1 At EDCOM 1/11 (12-13) – the Minutes of the meeting of UCLBE held on 19 July 2012.

14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Noted:

14.1 Future meetings of EDCOM are scheduled as follows:

Meeting 2: Thursday 6 December 2012, 3pm - 5.30pm

Meeting 3: Tuesday 12 March 2013, 2pm - 4.30pm

Meeting 4: Tuesday 30 April 2013, 2pm - 4.30pm

Meeting 5: Tuesday 25 June 2013, 2pm - 4.30pm

SANDRA HINTON

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8 November 2012