



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

12 June 2018

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair);

Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Dr Ben Clifford; Mr Mark Crawford; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Clare Goudy; Dr Arne Hofmann; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Aeli Roberts; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Sam Smidt; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Eva Sorensen; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Angie Wade.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Mr Kurtis Bell; Mr Tom Flynn; Mr David Lloyd.

Apologies were received from: Ms Sarah Al-Aride; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Mr Ian Davis; Ms June Hedges; Dr Christine Hoffman; Professor Tim McHugh; Ms Aiysha Qureshi.

Key to abbreviations

ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
IOE	Institute of Education
ISD	Information Services Division
LLM	Master of Laws
LSA	Late Summer Assessment
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SoR	Suspension of Regulations
SU	Students' Union
UG	Undergraduate

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

56 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

(EdCom Minutes 40-55, 26 April 2018)

- 56.1 **Minute 44: Academic Partnerships Framework** – The Senior Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships) had requested some minor amendments to the unconfirmed minutes after they had been circulated. An edited version was circulated with the EdCom papers.

56.2 **Approved** – the edited minutes of the meeting held 26 April 2018.

57 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

57A **Minute 33.5: Module Information Working Group**

57A.1 At its February 2018 meeting, EdCom endorsed an institutional investment in improving module information so that students could make informed choices. The Director of Academic Services reported that ISD had now committed to funding a web-based catalogue of UCL modules. This would be a substantial improvement for students and would also help to improve a range of processes from module selection to exam timetabling and Academic Review. ISD would build the front end with content being provided by departments and held in the Module Descriptor field in Portico. It was anticipated that the majority of the data would already exist. It was proposed that a working group be set up to determine what core information should be captured about each module.

57A.2 **Approved** – the establishment of a Module Information Working Group. The group would meet in the next few weeks and report back to the July meeting of EdCom.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

58 **SSCC TRENDS REPORT 2017-18**

58.1 **Received** – the annual report at EDCOM 5-01 (17-18) drafted by the Students' Union's Education Officer, and presented by the SU Academic Change Manager.

58.2 The report summarised an analysis of around 2800 extracts from SSCC minutes. Extracts were categorised into themes and labelled as positive, negative or neutral. The data were accompanied by a commentary on significant trends, and recommendations for further action.

58.3 A key area for improvement was the quality and quantity of teaching spaces, and the ways in which space was used. UCL had carried out a substantial amount of work to improve facilities, with an additional 2800 seats being added via projects at Bentham House, Torrington Place and the IOE. Further developments were also in train including increased capacity in Senate House. Whilst the number of external venues had been reduced, EdCom recognised that this was still a significant concern for students and a priority for action. The Chair was working closely with the Estates Management Committee to improve the student experience in this key area.

58.4 Module Registration had also been a significant concern for students. The SU was grateful for the changes which had been implemented this year, but raised concerns about the change of module selection deadlines in term two, which meant that some students felt 'trapped' in a module. The report also noted that many concerns could be addressed by the provision of better module information, and endorsed the project at Minute 57A above to implement an institutional module catalogue. The report also called for an institutional consultation with students about the breadth of module choices on offer, and suggested that many students would be open to a more curated menu.

58.5 Marking Criteria were also highlighted as an area for improvement. Students were looking for a clearer explanation of the examiners' expectations and felt that assessment criteria could be tied more closely to the learning outcomes for individual modules and components. The Director of Arena noted that this issue could be explored further with students as part of the ASER process.

58.6 EdCom thanked the SU for an insightful and timely report, and welcomed the detailed and positive recommendations for action which would help to guide EdCom's policy developments. The committee asked faculties to circulate the report to FTCs and departments to discuss the recommendations and feed back to EdCom.

Action: Faculty Tutors

59 **STUDENT COMPLAINTS REPORT 2018**

59.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 5-02 (17-18), presented by the Casework Manager, Academic Services.

- 59.2 The report summarised trends from the 2017 calendar year. Recognising that the relatively small numbers made it difficult to infer trends, EdCom noted that there had been a 14% increase in formal student complaints, which was in line with trends at other institutions. There appeared to have been an increase in the number of PGT complaints and the number of non-academic complaints. Common areas of concern were programme organisation and delivery, and deficient teaching and supervision. The number of cases justified or partly justified by the OIA had increased. Although this was partly due to the Casework Team having resolved a large number of legacy cases, it was also partly due to the lack of a formal appeal or review stage in UCL's own procedures. Additionally, the team had observed that, where the OIA had found in a student's favour, the levels of compensation had increased, particularly in relation to complaints about the student experience. The paper also included a report from the Student Mediator highlighting key issues.
- 59.3 The Casework Team were in the process of redeveloping the Complaints procedures and, in so doing, were planning to separate non-academic complaints from academic appeals, and to make a clearer distinction between appeals on the basis of Extenuating Circumstances and those on the basis of Material Irregularity. The revised procedures would also include a formal appeal/ review stage, which would help to reduce the volume of cases going to the OIA.
- 59.4 EdCom welcomed the increased staffing levels and expertise in the Casework Team, which was helping to resolve long-term cases and ensure that procedural deadlines were met, improving the student experience of the process.

60 ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME COSTS

- 60.1 Dr Aeli Roberts gave an oral report on a project to investigate programme costs incurred by students over and above their tuition fees. Examples included application fees, text books, materials, Personal Protective Equipment (lab coats, goggles etc.), compulsory field trips and compliance fees (e.g. DBS checks). A group had recently met to discuss data collected by the SU. Detailed information had also been collected through the Programme Summary collection process which would provide both a rich seam of data for analysis and a much clearer picture for students applying to UCL programmes. The group was particularly interested in areas of disparity across UCL (e.g. application fees and Occupational Health checks varied by Department) and in the impact on students from disadvantaged backgrounds, those living in conflict zones and those affected by displacement.
- 60.2 EdCom warmly welcomed the project and looked forward to receiving the group's recommendations at a future meeting.

Action: Dr Aeli Roberts

61 UCL ONLINE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP WITH 2U

Minute 54A, 26 April 2018

- 61.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 5-03 (17-18) presented by the Pro-Director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation.
- 61.2 In October 2017, SMT endorsed proposals for UCL to adopt a hybrid non-exclusive model of online learning, where UCL enters a partnership with commercial and/or institutional partners as appropriate. The paper updated the committee on the progression of a non-exclusive partnership with 2U, an education technology company. The committee noted that the project board had now been established and due diligence was currently in progress. The new programme was scheduled for a September 2019 start.

62 ACADEMIC MANUAL PROJECT REPORT

- 62.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 5-04 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.
- 62.2 The paper provided a high-level summary of the outcomes of EdCom's long-term project to review UCL's taught regulations. The project was one strand of UCL's Education Strategy 2016-21, aiming to transform the student experience at UCL. The review had included an

extensive consultation process with staff and students from across UCL, whose feedback has been essential in implementing wide-reaching reforms. The resulting Academic Manual included a broad suite of regulations, policies and guidance designed to uphold UCL's high academic standards and ensure that students across different programmes, departments and faculties were treated fairly and equally. EdCom's sub-committee, ARQASC, had taken the lead in researching, developing and scrutinising each chapter of the new Academic Manual. The 2018-19 iterations were being submitted to EdCom for final approval at the June and July 2018 meetings.

63 UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 2: QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK 2018-19

- 63.1 **Received** – the revised regulations and summary of changes at EDCOM 5-05 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.
- 63.2 At its meeting on 30 October 2017, UCL Education Committee approved Chapter 2 in principle so that it could inform the Programme Summaries data collection and the build of the new Academic Model, and so that any issues raised during those processes could be incorporated into the Chapter. The paper included ARQASC's recommendations for a small number of relatively minor changes which had arisen through that process. In particular the chapter now included much more detailed information on the use of placements and study abroad within programmes.
- 63.3 **Approved** – UCL Academic Manual Chapter 2: Qualifications And Credit Framework 2018-19.

64 UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 4: ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES 2018-19

- 64.1 **Received** – the revised regulations and summary of changes at EDCOM 5-06 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.
- 64.2 New taught programme regulations for Module Assessment, Progression and Award, and Classification had also been approved in principle by EdCom on 30 October 2017. The paper included ARQASC's recommendations for changes in response to points raised in the Programme Summary data collection, as well as recommendations for improvements to other sections of Chapter 4 in response to student and staff feedback, and the first year of Late Summer Assessments in particular.
- 64.3 Substantive changes to the Module Assessment, Progression and Award, and Classification sections since approval in principle included:
 - a) New Section 15 'Classification for Undergraduate Students first enrolling in 2017-18 or earlier' summarising the regulations being phased out
 - b) New Provisional Progression Status
 - c) Clarification of the revised Taught Masters borderline criteria
 - d) Clarification of the Part time UG Progression, Award and Condonement arrangements
 - e) Addition of 0-weighted extra-mural/ additional placement modules within the Graduate and PGT Classification regulations
 - f) Addition of Pass/Fail Components to cover some professional requirements
- 64.4 Changes to other sections of Chapter 4 included:
 - a) Exceptionally, allowing Resits and Repeats to be trailed into the next year in a maximum of 30 credits, subject to approval by the Faculty Tutor e.g. if it was impossible to offer Resits in the Late Summer (such as for some lab work) or if a student was barred in one module.
 - b) Clarification of the timing of Resits and Deferrals for programmes teaching to the end of term 3 and in the summer vacation.
 - c) Additional option for boards to refuse reassessment on fitness to practice grounds.
 - d) Clarification of UG Interim Qualifications - credits are allowed above the specified level and credits cannot be below a certain level.

- e) Improvements to the regulations on the Quorum of Sub Boards, Virtual Programme Boards of Examiners and Delegation of Authority to a Sub Board
 - f) Minor amendments to the External Examiner regulations
 - g) Relocation of the procedures for Examination Irregularities and Plagiarism, Material Irregularities and Suspensions of Regulations to a new Student Casework Chapter.
- 64.5 EdCom noted in particular the change to the regulations on students arriving late for an exam. At present students were permitted to enter the hall up to 30 minutes late, forfeiting the time missed. Beyond that timeframe, the regulations allowed departments to run the exam locally, but this had proven to be very problematic in practice. EdCom noted that the Excel centre had greatly helped to reduce the number of late arrivals as the venue was much more accessible, and UCL was able to provide clear information to all students in advance. ARQASC had recommended an update to the regulations to ensure parity of experience for all students, permitting late arrivals of up to 45 minutes, but removing the option for the exam to be run locally after that window.
- 64.6 EdCom noted that a review of the Extenuating Circumstances process was scheduled for 18 June and that this might lead to further proposals for changes to that section. If changes were deemed necessary, revisions would be submitted to the July ARQASC and EdCom meetings for approval.
- 64.7 **Approved** – UCL Academic Manual Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes 2018-19, subject to potential further revisions to Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances.
- 65 IMPLEMENTATION POLICY FOR CHAPTER 4 OF THE UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL**
- 65.1 **Received** – the policy proposals at EDCOM 5-07 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.
- 65.2 At its meeting in October 2017, EdCom agreed that the 2018-19 Academic Manual would apply to all students who were fully enrolled on the 2018-19 academic session, with the exception of the UG Classification regulations which would be phased in. In April 2018, ARQASC also approved a proposal from the Faculty of Laws to phase out the current PGT Classification derogation for LLM students. ARQASC was asked to draw up more detailed guidance on which regulations would apply to which students, to assist in the transition. The policy was designed as a reference document for Boards of Examiners and Departments to promote parity of decision-making for students across UCL.
- 65.3 **Approved** - the Implementation Policy for Chapter 4 of the UCL Academic Manual 2018-19.
- 66 CONDONEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER**
- 66.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 5-08 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.
- 66.2 In October 2017, EdCom agreed that the 2018-19 assessment regulations would apply to all taught students who are fully enrolled on the 2018-19 academic session, with the exception of the regulations on UG Classification which would be phased in. This decision was taken so that students could benefit from a wide range of regulatory improvements straight away, and so that the current high level of regulatory divergence - and therefore risk - could be minimised as quickly as possible. ARQASC conducted a risk analysis to assess whether this approach might have any negative consequences. In response the Sub Committee developed an Implementation Policy (see Minute 65 above) to help ensure that the new regulations were applied consistently for students across all faculties. ARQASC identified one area for further discussion, and requested that EdCom consider the arguments and agree a solution. ARQASC concluded that transitional policies should not be considered for any other regulations.
- 66.3 Modelling had been undertaken to assess the impact of the new regulations. This indicated that slightly more students would be able to progress through their programmes and be awarded a UCL degree, albeit with a 2.2 or third classification. However the changes also meant that some students would 'carry' low, condoned marks forward into their classification calculation. The

modelling indicated that the majority of risk would be adequately mitigated by the existing UG Borderline Criteria. However a small number of students might be more substantially affected and it was felt that a pre-emptive policy should be put in place so that students and staff were aware of the issue and the options available. The paper therefore included proposals for special consideration by the Faculty Tutor where the Borderline Criteria would not suffice.

- 66.4 It was noted that the issue would not arise until the end of the 2019-20 academic session and would not affect PGT students (including LLM students, where the classification regulations were being phased in). EdCom also noted that the professional restrictions on Condonement in some Engineering programmes had already been addressed via papers received at ARQASC and the Programme Summary data collection.
- 66.5 Some members of EdCom were against implementing such a policy as they felt it undermined the regulatory decisions which had been reached through a long and very complex process of consultation and negotiation. However others noted that, whilst there had been some differences of opinion, the majority of regulations had been reached via a general consensus across disciplines. In contrast, Condonement had proven to be the most contentious topic, and the proposed policy would help to address outstanding concerns during the transition phase. Some members pointed out that many students would not have received a degree at all under the older regulations. Others worried about the practical implications of such a policy, but noted that the new Academic Model would be able to facilitate calculations. It was also suggested that the policy might only apply to the faculties most affected, although there was concern about outliers in other faculties. It was noted that such a policy would pre-empt complaints, appeals and OIA cases.
- 66.6 The Chair of ARQASC thanked members of the sub-committee for the detailed investigation of the issue which highlighted how thorough the consultation and negotiation process had been, and how difficult it had been to reach a conclusion in some areas.
- 66.7 **Agreed** – EdCom endorsed the general policy but requested that ARQASC carry out further work to ensure that exam board reports could be created to make recalculations as quick and easy as possible. Clear advice would also need to be drawn up for students and staff.

Action: Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager

67 EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES AND PLAGIARISM PROCEDURE 2018-19

- 67.1 **Approved** – Minor amendments to the Examination Irregularities and Plagiarism Procedures detailed at EDCOM 5-09 (17-18).
- 67.2 Some minor amendments had been proposed including the inclusion of explicit definitions for 'Self-Plagiarism' and 'Contract Cheating', the addition of 'extenuating circumstances evidence' to the falsification definition, and updates to terminology. A more comprehensive review of the procedures was planned for 2019-20 implementation.
- 67.3 EdCom noted that the regulations currently permitted a Departmental Panel to decide whether a second attempt on the grounds of examination irregularity or plagiarism should be capped at the pass mark. It was agreed that ARQASC would discuss the matter and report back to EdCom.

Action: Chair of ARQASC

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

68 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Approved – the programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at EDCOM 5-10 (17-18).

69 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- A **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 27 March 2018 at EDCOM 5-11 (17-18).

- B **Approved** – the Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 15 February 2018 and 15 March 2018 at EDCOM 5-12 (17-18) and EDCOM 5-13 (17-18).
- C **Approved** – the Minutes of the Quality Review Sub-Committee held 19 April 2018 at EDCOM 5-14 (17-18).

70 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS

Approved – the Suspensions of Regulations at EDCOM 5-15 (17-18).

71 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2017-18 and 2018-19:

- 19 July 2018 10.00-12.30, Room 114 Foster Court
- Tuesday 2 October 2018 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 6 December 2018 10.30am to 1pm
- Monday 25 February 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 25 April 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Tuesday 11 June 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 18 July 2019 10.30am to 1pm

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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19 June 2018