



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

13 October 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Ms Mehjabin Ahmed; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Ms Halima Begum; Mr Mark Crawford; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Dilly Fung; Dr Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Angie Wade.

In attendance: Mr Kurtis Bell for item 7; Mr Simon To for item 8; Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary).

Apologies were received from: Dr Ben Clifford; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Dilly Fung; Professor Eva Sorensen; Ms Susan Ware.

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
CALT	Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching
EdCom	Education Committee
HER	Higher Education Review
NSS	National Student Survey
PGT	Taught Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panel
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SED	Self Evaluation Document
SRS	Student and Registry Services
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
StAR	Student Academic Representative
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCLU	UCL Union

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2016-17

1A.1 **Agreed** - The Education Committee TOR, constitution and membership 2016-17 at [EDCOM 1-01 \(16-17\)](#).

1A.2 EdCom welcomed the following new members:

- Ms Halima Begum, UCLU Education & Campaigns Officer

- Ms Mehj Ahmed, UCLU Welfare & International Officer
- Mr Mark Crawford, UCLU Postgraduate Students' Officer
- Dr Tracey Allen, Institute of Education
- Ms Blathnaid Mahony, Medical Sciences
- Dr Ben Clifford, new Academic Board nomination
- Professor Eva Sorensen, new Academic Board nomination
- Professor Angie Wade, new Academic Board nomination

1B **Approved** – The Academic Partnerships Review Group TOR, constitution and membership 2016-17 at [EDCOM 1-02 \(16-17\)](#).

1C **Approved** - The Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee TOR, constitution and membership 2016-17 at [EDCOM 1-03 \(16-17\)](#).

1D **Approved** - The Programme and Module Approval Panels TOR, constitution and membership 2016-17 at [EDCOM 1-04 \(16-17\)](#).

1E **Approved** - The Quality Review Sub Committee TOR, constitution and membership 2016-17 at [EDCOM 1-05 \(16-17\)](#).

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 **Approved** - The minutes of the meeting held 7 June 2016.

2.2 **Approved** - The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held 21 July 2016.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3A **Authorised Absence policy** [*Minute 79.5 refers*]

3A.1 Following feedback from students and staff, and consultation with UCLU, ARQASC agreed that, for 2016-17, the Authorised Absence regulations would only apply to those students on a Tier 4 visa to ensure that UCL complies with its responsibilities under UK Visa and Immigration laws. The committee also noted the new Authorised Absence form on the SRS website which had been drawn up to improve the process.

4 CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

4A **MA Linguistics Interim Board of Examiners**

4A.1 **Received** – the report of Chair's Action at [EDCOM 1-06 \(16-17\)](#).

4A.2 The Chair of the MA Linguistics Board of Examiners provided a report on the actions taken to mitigate against the absence of the External Examiner due to UCU strike action at its interim meeting in June 2016. EdCom Chair's Action was taken to approve the outcomes of the Board and the measures taken by the Board to satisfy itself that the standards of marking were robust.

<h2>PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION</h2>
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5 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW OF UCL

5.1 **Received** – the report of the QAA HER of UCL in May 2016 at [EDCOM 1-07 \(16-17\)](#) and the UCL Action Plan at [EDCOM 1-08 \(16-17\)](#).

5.2 The Chair emphasised the importance of the positive outcome from the review which showcased the strong partnership between UCL and its students. The committee extended its thanks to the Director of Academic Services and his team, the student lead, Wahida Samie, and everyone who had helped to compile the SED and attend interviews.

5.3 It was noted that EdCom would now assume responsibility for the approval and implementation of the Action Plan. The plan included a range of actions which were already in train, with a particular focus on enhancing UCL's student representation

scheme, improving the processes for student complaints and appeals, embedding the new Personal Tutoring Policy and generic learning outcomes for interim qualifications, and improving the student experience of assessment and feedback.

5.4 **Approved** – the UCL Action Plan in response to the QAA HER report.

6 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2016 REPORT

6.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 1-09 (16-17).

6.2 Overall Satisfaction had increased by 1%, helping UCL to move towards its target of the top quartile within the next five years. UCL also achieved an exceptionally good response rate of 79% thanks to a new branding campaign and the work of departments, faculties and NSS liaison officers in encouraging students to participate. Within the question groups, improvements had been seen in Teaching and, for the first time, Assessment and Feedback, indicating that the ASER Mandated Actions had had a positive impact on the student experience. The first round of ASER had also ensured that issues were considered with students at department, faculty and institutional level, whilst ASER Intensive had helped six departments to achieve significantly better results.

6.3 EdCom noted that the NSS questions were being revised for the 2017 survey, with particular changes to the questions for Teaching, Assessment and Feedback, and Academic Support, each of which would provide core metrics for the upcoming Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). UCL had already met the level required for TEF 1 through its successful QAA HER outcome. TEF 2 was now underway with the outcomes expected in May 2017. Institutions would be ranked as Bronze, Silver or Gold based on their performance against benchmarks covering NSS outcomes, progression and completion rates, and the rate of continuation into graduate level employment or further study. The relative weighting of each metric was still to be announced. In January 2017, each institution would also be asked to submit a 15-page document providing contextual information and reference to other metrics. Future rounds were expected to look at the data at subject level and at PGT level. UCL was also part of a consortium with Cambridge tasked with investigating whether learning gain could be measured meaningfully, particularly in a research-intensive university.

6.4 As the TEF would increase the relative importance of the NSS outcomes for Teaching, Academic Support, and Assessment and Feedback, this year's ASER Mandated Actions would encourage departments to discuss the individual NSS questions, rather than the scores for Overall Satisfaction or the question groupings, in order to identify more specific, targeted actions. NSS outcomes and open comments would continue to be discussed with students at department level via SSCCs, focus groups and other fora, and ASER Intensive would continue to work with departments with lower scores in particular areas of the survey.

6.5 Committee members noted that the ASER data set was much improved but requested that further discussion take place to ensure a clear link between the data and the questions in the ASER template – it was, for example, difficult to analyse demographic variations in achievement using the current data. It was suggested that these issues be discussed and resolved at the Faculty Tutor Forum.

7 LATE SUMMER ASSESSMENT PILOT REPORT

7.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 1-10 (16-17).

7.2 UCL had committed to introducing late summer resits and deferrals for all students. The new Extenuating Circumstances policy, introduced in 2015-16, now meant that all UCL students, including finalists, were able to undertake deferrals in the late summer period instead of having to wait a year to be reassessed. For resitting students (those without ECs) a small pilot was undertaken during 2015-16 and a much wider pilot was planned for 2016-17, with full implementation scheduled for 2017-18. The first pilot included 529 candidatures, 322 students and 103 exam papers and had helped UCL to identify and begin to address the challenges involved for departments and SRS.

7.3 EdCom thanked the pilot programmes for the hard work which had gone into the project, recognising the significant workload for academic and professional staff. One pilot faculty reported a wide-spread recognition of the substantial benefits for students, who did not have to wait a year to resit, but highlighted the difficulties for staff, particularly when the summer was often the only opportunity for many to take leave. The introduction of the new Extenuating Circumstances policy had also been of great benefit to students but had again increased staff workloads. The faculty reported very positive feedback from UG students, but noted that uptake had been lower for PGT programmes, perhaps because students wanted to complete their dissertations before resitting taught modules. Other faculties had raised concerns about increasing the workload of students who might already be struggling, however it was also noted that late summer resits would be particularly beneficial for students wishing to progress to further study, work or professional accreditation without a year's delay, and for Tier 4 students, who would be able to resit within their visa period.

7.4 For 2016-17, faculties had been asked for pilot volunteers and 80 programmes were taking part thus far. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- a) The project team would shortly be circulating a message with further details for staff and there would be two town hall meetings for Exam Board Chairs and Examination Liaison Officers to learn more about the 2016-17 pilot. A comprehensive communications plan was also in place to ensure that messages to pilot staff and students were as clear as possible.
- b) Where the first pilot had been conducted with largely self-contained programmes, the second pilot would be more complex as it would involve multi-disciplinary programmes. It was however confirmed that, in order to be eligible for a late summer resit in the second pilot, students must be enrolled on a programme taking part in the pilot *and* resitting a module taking part in the pilot.
- c) All PGT programmes would also be asked to enter taught module marks into Portico so that the project team could understand the potential number of candidatures for 2017-18. It was noted that this would not require a full Board of Examiners meeting – marks could be confirmed by a virtual sub board with authority delegated from the main Board of Examiners.
- d) Work was also underway to revise the progression and award regulations following the cross-UCL consultation on assessment which took place in 2015-16. The resulting proposals would be circulated for further consultation in the next few weeks, giving departments and faculties as much time as possible to prepare for the changes.
- e) UCLU expressed some reservations about the delay in full implementation across UCL but nonetheless welcomed the wider pilot which would help to ensure that UCL was ready to face the challenges of late summer resits. The project team confirmed that a comprehensive project plan and risk register were in place to identify and mitigate against any issues experienced and that full implementation would take place in 2017-18.

8 StARS ANNUAL REPORT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-16

8.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 1-11 (16-17).

8.2 UCLU and the Director of Academic Services presented the annual report on the Student Academic Representatives (StARs) scheme. The authors extended particular thanks to Wahida Samie, who had led the initiative during 2015-16, to the StARS Steering Group, and to the Faculty Tutors who had helped to support and promote the scheme.

8.3 1253 StARs were recorded for 2015-16, a significant increase of 41% from the 887 recorded in 2014-15. This was largely due to an increase in the proportion of SSCCs from which StARs were returned – coverage was now at 84%, up from 72% in 2014-15 and 69% in 2013-14. The Institute of Education had also joined the scheme in 2015-16, recording 102 StARs. There would be a particular focus on increasing the number of Faculty StARs to 100% coverage in the next two years.

- 8.4 The StARs Teaching Awards had been very successful. Students had valued being part of the Internal Quality Review process, and the UCLU Education Conference, which had focussed on the new Education Strategy, had been well attended. A revised training scheme, which included induction sessions and six optional training modules, had also seen increased participation and 98% of attendees had found the training useful or very useful. It was noted that StARs recruited in or before October were more likely to attend training and so this year would include an increased focus on returning StARs earlier in the academic year.
- 8.5 The report also highlighted the issues raised by StARs at Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs), grouped into seven overarching themes. Including both positive and negative comments, the most frequently discussed topics included Teaching, and Organisation and Administration.
- 8.6 The StARs Steering Group was working on the next iteration of the Development Plan. A scoping exercise had asked key stakeholders to reflect on the scheme and their priorities for future years, together with an analysis of existing feedback about the scheme from students, StARs and staff. The Steering Group particularly wanted to increase the level of proactive ownership of the scheme by UCL and, to this end, it had been agreed that the StARs Steering Group would now report to EdCom and RDC, whilst the Director of Academic Services would co-chair the group with the UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer. There would also be a review of the SSCC terms of reference and training opportunities for staff involved in the process, as well as a shift in focus from monitoring coverage to ensuring that the issues raised by StARS were dealt with in an appropriate and timely way at department, faculty and institutional level.
- 8.7 The Development Plan was due to be finalised in November 2016 and EdCom members were invited to provide feedback and comments to feed into the new plan.

9 UCL AUSTRALIA UPDATE

- 9.1 **Received** – an oral report from the Faculty Tutor for Engineering Sciences on the upcoming closure of UCL’s stand-alone presence in Australia.
- 9.2 There were currently 41 PGT and six PGR students registered. A small number of PGT students’ registration would extend officially beyond 2017 but each now had an agreement in place to ensure that they would complete their studies in time. The last intake had been in February 2016 so many modules were no longer being taught and timetables were being adjusted to allow all students to undertake the necessary modules before the closure. The campus was fully resourced to the end of 2017. Overall the closure was reported in to be in a secure position.

10 UCL QATAR UPDATE

- 10.1 **Received** – the CONFIDENTIAL paper at EDCOM 1-12 (16-17).
- 10.2 At the March 2016 meeting of EdCom UCL Qatar presented a plan outlining a reduction in the number of Masters programmes offered. The Chair presented an update on progress from the Director of UCL Qatar, Dr Sam Evans, which focussed on the management of the teach-out, the mitigation of identified risks, and support for students and staff.

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION
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11 REPORT FROM QRSC ON ASER MANDATED ACTIONS

- 11.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 1-13 (16-17).
- 11.2 QRSC had agreed a number of actions for departments around Personal Tutoring, Assessment and Feedback, and the Connected Curriculum. EdCom clarified that the new Connected Curriculum benchmarking tool should be used to inform departmental

discussions over the next 12 months with a view to reporting back in the next ASER cycle.

12 EDCOM ANNUAL REPORT TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

- 12.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 1-14 (16-17).
- 12.2 The Chair noted the substantial amount of work which EdCom had achieved during 2015-16. The report would be received at AC on 8 November.

13 SPECIAL AND AEGROTAT PROVISIONS PANEL REPORT 2015-16

- 13.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 1-15 (16-17).

14 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

- 14.1 **Approved** – the programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at EDCOM 1-16 (16-17).

15 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 15A **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held *19 July 2016* at EDCOM 1-17 (16-17).
- 15B **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held *13 May 2016, 31 May 2016 and 5 July 2016* at EDCOM 1-18 (16-17), EDCOM 1-19 (16-17) and EDCOM 1-20 (16-17).
- 15C **Approved** – the Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held *29 June 2016* at EDCOM 1-21 (16-17).
- 15D **Approved** – the Minutes of the Quality Review Sub Committee held *19 May 2016 and 5 August 2016* at EDCOM 1-22 (16-17) and EDCOM 1-23 (16-17).

16 ANONYMISED SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS REPORT

- 16.1 **Approved** – The suspensions of regulations at EDCOM 1-24 (16-17).

17 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:

- 6 December 2016, 11.00 – 1.30, Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- 2 March 2017, 2.00 – 4.30, Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- 25 April 2017, 2.00 – 4.30, Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- 13 June 2017, 2.00 – 4.30, Haldane Room, Wilkins Building
- 25 July 2017, 2.00 – 4.30, Haldane Room, Wilkins Building

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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20 October 2016