



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

13 December 2017

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Norbert Pachler (acting Chair);

Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Sarah Al-Aride; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Ben Clifford; Mr Mark Crawford; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Dr Christine Hoffman; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Tim McHugh; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Derfel Owen; Ms Aiysha Qureshi; Dr Aeli Roberts; Professor Eva Sorensen; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Mr Simon To.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary).

Apologies were received from: Professor Anthony Smith (Chair); Mr Ian Davis; Professor Dilly Fung; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Angie Wade.

Key to abbreviations

ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee
AS	Academic Services
EdCom	Education Committee
IOE	Institute of Education
LSA	Late Summer Assessment
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
SoR	Suspension of Regulations
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
StAR	Student Academic Representative
SU	Students' Union
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

15.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the meeting held 30 October 2017, subject to the following addition:

Minute 5.5: Noted - that the facility to include a PG Cert and/ or PG Dip interim qualification should be added to the threshold standards for the Masters in Fine Art qualification.

16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

16A **UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes 2018-19** (Minute 7.7, 17-18)

16A.1 **Noted** - The Faculty of Engineering had now confirmed that it would be adopting Honours Degree Classification Scheme B. The Schemes for MAPS and the IOE would need to be confirmed by the next meeting of EdCom.

17 CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

- 17A **Received** – Chair's Action had been taken to approve the outcomes of the Boards of Examiners in the absence of the External Examiners for MA Comparative Literature and MA Education and Technology, as detailed at EDCOM 2-01 (17-18).

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

18 ORAL UPDATE ON SUBJECT-LEVEL TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (TEF)

- 18.1 **Noted** - The Director of Education Planning updated the committee on HEFCE's plans for a subject-level TEF. Some institutions were currently piloting Model A, which included 39 subject categories, whilst others were piloting Model B which included seven subject categories. Model B was being proposed as a less burdensome option, but there were concerns about whether the resulting broad categories were meaningful. The current proposal was that institutions would have to be registered for the TEF in order to be registered with the new Office for Students (OfS) and to access the student loans book – although compulsory registration was still subject to consultation and the outcomes of the pilot. UCL would be receiving its pilot metrics shortly, and further communications were planned for the new year.
- 18.2 **Agreed** – More detailed information, including the pilot subject groupings, would be circulated to the committee.

Action: Director of Education Planning

19 StARs ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

- 19.1 **Received** – the annual report at EDCOM 2-02 (17-18) presented by the SU Representation & Campaigns Manager.
- 19.2 **Noted** – In 2016-17, 1388 StARs were appointed covering 99% of SSCCs across UCL, the highest coverage in the scheme's history. Over 900 StARs (around 65%) had undertaken training, either face-to-face or via the new online modules which had been designed to encourage participation by distance learners and other students who could not attend in person. Following on from the 2020 Vision approved by EdCom in March 2017, from 2017-18 StARs would be known as 'Academic Reps' and there would also be a new layer of Lead Departmental Reps to draw common issues together. 2017-18 coverage already compared favourably with 2016-17: thus far, around 1500 academic representatives had been appointed covering around 95% of SSCCs, and about 700 had received training. Around half of the anticipated Lead Departmental Reps had been appointed. The Students' Union thanked members of EdCom for their help in achieving such extensive coverage.
- 19.3 **Discussion** – Members welcomed the overview of issues raised at SSCCs but also enquired as to whether this information could be made available at an earlier date so that support services could address issues in a more timely manner. It was suggested that all Academic Reps could be given a list of contact details for key support services so that they could raise issues as and when they arose, helping UCL to respond to their feedback as early as possible.
- Action: SU Representation & Campaigns Manager**
- 19.4 **Discussion** – One faculty noted that some staff and students had expressed concerns about having a single SSCC for each Department, which they felt was less personal than the previous arrangements. By contrast, the SU had found that the smaller meetings were often less productive because they focussed too closely on personal issues, whereas larger meetings allowed reps to discuss common issues and, crucially, to find solutions. It was noted that the new policy was designed to be student-led and that, whilst the StARs Steering Group was encouraging these larger meetings, there was some room for flexibility and ideas such as site-based SSCCs were being explored. There would also be a review of the first year of implementation to ensure that the new system was working optimally.

20 REPORT ON SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS 2016-17

- 20.1 **Received** – the annual report at EDCOM 2-03 (17-18) by the Policy Advisor (Education Governance).
- 20.2 **Noted** - The report summarised the requests for suspensions of regulations (SoR), interruptions of study and other cases requiring approval by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) during the 2016-17 academic session. The analysis broke down the data by type of request, level of study and faculty in order to illustrate trends. EdCom warmly welcomed the report which gave a much clearer overview and allowed the committee to interrogate the data more usefully.
- 20.3 **Discussion** - The report showed that the majority of requests were not ‘suspensions’ but standard procedures requiring a higher level of approval. EdCom felt that higher approval should only be required in truly exceptional cases (e.g. repeat interruptions beyond two years) and that, for example, the Faculty Tutor might be able to approve some of the more common requests (e.g. retrospective interruptions, first requests for a repeat interruption, programme transfers). This would greatly help to speed up the process and ensure that students receive a response more quickly. This could be accompanied by a different approach to central oversight, such as sampling of cases or annual parity/ benchmarking meetings. EdCom also noted that a number of regulations were suspended regularly, and that these would benefit from review. Both of these actions would be taken forward by the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee.

Action: Chair of ARQASC

21 UPDATE ON LATE SUMMER ASSESSMENTS

- 21.1 **Received** - The update at EDCOM 2-04 (17-18).
- 21.2 **Noted** – Following two years of pilots, EdCom was working towards the introduction of late summer assessments across UCL in 2017-18 in order to improve the student experience and better align UCL with the rest of the UK Higher Education Sector. The paper provided an update on actions taken by Academic Services including the publication of student and staff websites and a staff planning pack including information about Boards of Examiners, External Examiners, exam papers etc. AS was working with the Students’ Union and the office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) on a range of communications for students covering LSAs, the use of the Excel centre for the main exam season and the revised module selection deadlines. AS officers had also attended Faculty Teaching Committees and other meetings for some initial discussions on the LSAs, and were planning a range of staff development sessions for the Spring term.
- 21.3 The paper also highlighted areas for further work including communications with External Examiners, guidance on the implications for visas, arrangements for access to the library and buildings for LSA students, and the capping of reassessment marks in Portico.

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

22 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE

- 22.1 **Received** – A brief update on projects to implement UCL’s Education Strategy (2016- 2021) at EDCOM 2-05 (17-18) from the Senior Programme Manager (Education).

23 APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

- 23.1 **Approved** - The programmes recommended for approval by APRG at EDCOM 2-06 (17-18).

24 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- A **Approved** - The Minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held 27 June 2017 and 26 October 2017 at EDCOM 2-07 (17-18) and EDCOM 2-08 (17-18).

- B **Approved** - The Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 21 September 2017 and 24 October 2017 at EDCOM 2-09 (17-18) and EDCOM 2-10 (17-18).
- C **Approved** - The Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 5 July 2017 and 12 October 2017 at EDCOM 2-11 (17-18) and EDCOM 2-12 (17-18).
- D **Approved** - The Minutes of the StARs Steering Group held 11 July 2017 at EDCOM 2-13 (17-18).

25 **SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS**

- 25.1 **Approved** - The Suspensions of Regulations at EDCOM 2-14 (17-18).

26 **DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2017-18:**

- 28 February 2018, 2.00-4.30pm, Room 433, 16 Taviton Street
- 26 April 2018, 10.00am-12.30pm, Room 1.20, Malet Place Engineering Building
- 12 June 2018, 2.30-5.00pm, Room G08, Chadwick Building
- 19 July 2018, 10.00am-12.30pm, Room 114 Foster Court

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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20 December 2017