EDUCATION COMMITTEE

14 March 2011

M I N U T E S

Present:

Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr Bob Allan	Prof Alexi Marmot
Mr David Ashton	Prof John Mitchell
Ms Karen Barnard	Mr Martin Reid
Prof David Bogle	Dr Ruth Siddall
Ms Susan Bryant	Prof Richard Simons
Mr Michael Chessum	Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Mr Jason Clarke	Ms Olga Thomas
Mr Luke Durigan	Dr Dave Tovee (*vice*
Prof Vince Emery	Dr Caroline Essex)
Mr Marco Federighi	

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Irenie Morley; Ms Kathleen Nicholls [for Minute 21]; Ms Paula Speller.

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Brenda Cross; Ms Valerie Hogg; Mr Alex Nesbitt; Dr Hilary Richards; Ms Rachel Solnick.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILTS	Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy
ISD	Information Systems Division
LTSS	Learning Technology Support Service
OSCEs	Objective Structured Clinical Examinations
PIQ	Programme Institution Questionnaire
PDMSMG	Programme Diet and Module Selection Management Group
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
RRG	Regulation Review Group
SMT	(Provost's) Senior Management Team
SSEES	School of Slavonic and East European Studies
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UCLU	UCL Union
UKBA	UK Border Agency

19   **MINUTES**

   Approved

   19.1   The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 14 December 2010 *[EdCom Mins. 1-18, 14.12.10]*, issued previously, were confirmed by the Committee, subject to a number of minor amendments, and signed by the Chair.

20   **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

20A   **Terms of Reference of the UCL Board of Examiners**
       [EdCom Min. 2, 10-11]

   Noted

   20A.1   Following discussion at the meeting of 1 December, it was resolved that the Terms of Reference of the UCLBE should be revised and approved by EdCom Chair's Action.

20B   **PMASG Constitution and Membership**
       [EdCom Min. 4A.6, 10-11]

   Noted

   20B.1   EdCom had resolved that the UCL Union should nominate an appropriate candidate for PMASG and inform the Chairs of PMASG and EdCom, copied to the Secretaries of these committees. This had now been done and the nominee was Mr Michael Chessum, UCL Union's Education and Campaigns Officer.

20C   **Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy**
       [EdCom Min. 13, 10-11]

   Noted

   20C.1   The Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) had now confirmed that the ILTS would need to be amended in light of the Provost's forthcoming Green Paper and it was intended that the Assessment Strategy would be incorporated into this revised ILTS. In the meantime, the Assessment Strategy would be included as an appendix to the ILTS.

20D   **UCL Religious Equality Policy for Students**
       [EdCom Min. 6.7, 10-11]

   Noted

   20D.1   EdCom had previously resolved that the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator, with the assistance and advice of the Chair and Vice-Chair of EdCom, the Dean of Students (Welfare) and the Director of Student Services, should re-draft the Religious Equality Policy, taking into consideration the views

expressed by EdCom and making UCL's position clearer before referring it back to the Vice-Provost (Academic and International). This had now been done. Comments on the draft had also been received from FTCs and UCL Chaplains.

20E **Four Course Unit Modules**
[EdCom Min. 9.8, 10-11]

Noted

20E.1 EdCom had previously resolved that the four course unit structure should be retained within Civil Engineering subject to further discussion of the issues. A meeting between the Programme Director and the Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes was held on 1 February 2011.

Received

20E.2 An oral report from the **Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes, Ms Paula Speller.**

Reported

20E.3 The Civil Engineering modules had been retained with a number of conditions which had been discussed with the Programme Director. These were currently being drafted and would be circulated to EdCom members when this had been done. **[Action: Ms Paula Speller]**

21 **ENGAGEMENT MONITORING**

Received

21.1 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/17 (10-11)</u> – a paper from the Director of Student Services.

21.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton and the Director of Registry Information and Data Services, Ms Kathleen Nicholls.**

Reported

21.3 UCL undertook engagement monitoring of all its students. In order to ensure that UCL complied with the requirements of engagement monitoring, six points of engagement had been set. The first point of contact was enrolment or re-enrolment. The remaining five points of engagement were set to cover students' period of registration. The methods for monitoring students were determined by departments/divisions. Departments were required to keep an audit trail of their engagement monitoring activities. An online engagement monitoring system had been developed in PORTICO to assist with the reporting of engagement. The Directors of Student Services and Registry Information and Data Services had been monitoring the participation of departments/divisions and faculties in their use of the online facility in PORTICO in order to ensure that engagement monitoring had taken place. Meetings had been held with Faculty representatives before Christmas to

discuss the process and further meetings had been arranged to discuss potential problem areas.

Discussion

21.4   The following points were made:

- The Faculty of Laws (100%) and the Faculty of MAPS (with very few exceptions) had performed excellently in their monitoring.
- Failure to monitor appropriately might jeopardise UCL's 'Highly Trusted Sponsor' status which could result in a downgrading of status and an increase in the number of points of engagement to ten.
- Some 'pockets' within the Faculties of Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences (particularly within SSEES) seemed to have experienced difficulty in meeting all the points of engagement and the Faculty Tutor had written to all staff to remind them of the importance of this.
- EdCom noted that it was not currently possible to integrate the online use of systems, such as logging into the Library or using ID cards to enter buildings, into the engagement monitoring system on PORTICO.   The ISD representative indicated that a bid for funds to use Moodle to assist with this could be submitted, but it was noted that further discussion was needed with those supporting PORTICO before this could be taken forward.
- Some issues were raised concerning the timings of engagement points (eg. one clashed with Reading Week) but it was noted that this was a reporting period not an engagement period. Future communications from Registry on the subject would make this clearer.
- As a number of the issues with non-engagement concerned PGR students, it was resolved that the issue should also be referred to the Research Degrees Committee for its consideration.
- EdCom resolved to receive a further progress report at its meeting of 6 July 2011.

RESOLVED

21.5   That the issue of engagement monitoring should be referred to the Research Degrees Committee for further discussion. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton. Professor David Bogle and Ms Karen Wishart to note]**

21.6   That EdCom should receive a further progress report at its meeting of 6 July 2011. **[Action: Mr David Ashton and Ms Kathleen Nicholls]**

22   **REPORT ON GRIEVANCES**

Noted

22.1   UCL had a Student Grievance Procedure which allowed students to submit cases under a set number of categories. EdCom was asked to note the statistics on the cases considered under UCL's Grievance Procedure in the 2009-10 session and to consider the observations arising from these cases.

Received

22.2   At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/18 (10-11)</u> – a report on cases considered under UCL's Grievance Procedure in 2009-10.

22.3   At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/18.1 (10-11)</u> – statistics on cases considered under UCL's Grievance Procedure in 2009-10.

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

Reported

22.5   In the 2009-10 academic session, UCL had received 42 grievance cases. For some of these cases, the students had cited more than one set of grounds, with the total being 90. For most of the grievances submitted, the cases were investigated as per Paragraph 15 and 16 of the Grievance Procedure at <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/18 (10-11)</u> Appendix A. Only three of the cases had been submitted to a full Panel meeting and of these, all had been undergraduate student cases.

22.6   The highest number of cases seemed to be linked to one of the following: (i) the consideration of extenuating circumstances (normally where a student had not submitted evidence in advance of the meeting of the Board of Examiners as per the Regulations) (ii) the fact that the student considered him/herself to be close to the borderline (iii) the supervision linked to the taught masters dissertation or (iv) the conduct of the OSCEs in the MBBS degree.

Discussion

22.7   The following points were made:

- UCL ensured that a full investigation was undertaken when there appeared to be a case at the outset. However it did not sign off a decision unless it was sure that the decision could be justified in such a way that the OIA would be likely to uphold it, should they be appealed to.
- Numbers of students writing to the OIA had increased to the point where it was experiencing a backlog of cases.
- Many students discussed their statements with the Dean of Students (Welfare) who offered candid and realistic advice as to whether a formal representation, if submitted, was likely to be upheld.
- The Committee's attention was drawn to Paragraph 3 of the Regulations, which emphasised the importance of attempting to resolve grievances via informal discussion and noting that informal resolution remained an option at all stages of the Grievance Procedure.
- It was noted that, for an institution of UCL's size, the number of formal representations made was relatively low.

23   **REVIEW OF THE HARMONISED SCHEME OF AWARD**

Noted

23.1   In 2005, UCL had introduced a Harmonised Scheme of Award for most of its undergraduate programmes. It had been resolved that the Scheme would be

reviewed when there was sufficient data available for comparison purposes. EdCom was initially invited to consider this data and to identify any trends that might affect UCL's standards.

Received

23.2 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/19 (10-11)</u> – a note on the *Review of the Harmonised Scheme of Award*. The Faculty variations were attached as Appendices 3-10.

Discussion

23.3 The following points were made:

- UCL now averaged 81% first and upper second class honours, with even better results in the 'traditional' subjects, since the raising of the pass to 40% and the requirement to pass 12 units. It was noted that results would also have been impacted by the more widespread use, urged upon programmes by the UCLBE and by successive External Examiners, of the full range of marks.
- EdCom welcomed the proposed circulation of a breakdown of the marks by department/division and programme (see 23.4 below).
- The Harmonised Scheme appeared largely to have achieved what was required of it. However, the very large number of variations to the Scheme (more than 100) posed several questions for EdCom; namely:

  (i)   Whether alterations to the Scheme itself were now required.
  (ii)   Whether those still outside the Scheme should be brought into it or remain outside.
  (iii) Whether the variations to the Scheme should be reviewed to ascertain whether the reasons for those variations remained valid.

RESOLVED

23.4 That departments/divisions should be provided with the programme level data, via the Faculty Tutors, so that the Harmonised Scheme of Award could be reviewed together with Faculty variations on the Harmonised Scheme. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

23.5 That EdCom should request submission by each Faculty of a collated report on the outcome of its departmental/divisional review to be submitted to the meeting of EdCom to be held on 6 July 2011. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley & Ms Sandra Hinton]**

24   **EXAMINATION TIMETABLING**

Noted

24.1 A number of issues had arisen this year during the production of the examination timetable. EdCom was also made aware of issues which might arise in session 2011-12.

Received

24.2   An oral report from the **Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes, Ms Paula Speller.**

Reported

24.3   Issues reported in 2010-11 had included:

- Technical problems with Tribal in the form of a bug.
- One serious system failure over a weekend.
- Poor quality information from departments/divisions who had failed to complete the examination proforma exercise accurately by the required deadline of 23 January 2011 and who continued to notify the Examinations and Academic Programmes Section of significant changes throughout February and March.
- Failure by departments/divisions to indicate the need to schedule together those examinations with a common content.
- A very low number of students (32%) who had participated in the module confirmation exercise.
- The fact that programme diets were still not ideally structured (although these issues were now being reviewed by EdCom's PDMSMG).

Possible future concerns included:

- The limited period within which undergraduate examinations could be scheduled (20 dates) combined with the increasing number of students.
- The fact that many external venues limited afternoon examinations to a maximum of two hours.
- Increasing numbers of requests from departments/divisions for issues to be taken into account when scheduling examinations. Some 150 requests for special arrangements had been received by the Examinations and Academic Programmes Section this year, ranging from the acceptable (field trips, clinical placements) to the frivolous (the unavailability of the examiner). Many requests had been made which had provided no justification at all, obliging Registry staff to follow these up.

Discussion

24.4   The following points were made:

- The UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer noted that it was unacceptable for UCL to expand its student numbers and then not allow students the necessary space and time to take their examinations and UCL was urged to move urgently to resolve these issues and not to rely upon the Estates Masterplan, with its uncertain timescales, to solve them. The Vice-Chair of EdCom reassured the Committee that discussions had already taken place with the Vice-Provost (Operations) to make this point.
- External venues required booking 18 months in advance. These had therefore been booked already, as failure to book them for one year often resulted in losing them for good.
- Given that the main issues (apart from the technical difficulties) seemed to have been the volume of requests from departments/divisions for special arrangements, EdCom resolved that, from the beginning of next session 2011-

12, requests should be limited, with any requests not concerning clinical placements/field trips etc, being disallowed. The proforma should be modified to reflect this.

- That EdCom should review, at a future meeting, the number of available weeks in the examination period.
- The annual Academic Review process which ended in March was designed to detect issues such as changes to assessment. However, this was, in some areas, being undertaken much less thoroughly than envisaged.

RESOLVED

24.5   That, from the beginning of next session 2011-12, departmental requests for special examination arrangements should be limited, with any requests not explicitly stating clinical placements/field trips etc, being disallowed. The proforma should be modified to reflect this. **[Action: Ms Paula Speller]**

25   **PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC WRITING – A NEW MOODLE COURSE**

Noted

25.1   UCL recognised the importance of ensuring that students were aware of plagiarism and how to avoid it, and that they were equipped with the tools to do this. The LTSS had now prepared a Moodle course on the subject.

Received

25.2   At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/20 (10-11)</u> – a paper from Dr Steve Rowett and Dr Fiona Strawbridge of the LTSS.

25.3   An oral report from the **Manager of the LTSS, Dr Fiona Strawbridge.**

Reported

25.4   The LTSS was reviewing the Moodle course with a focus group of students to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement. It also intended to review the resource with the Library and CALT in order to ensure there was no overlap of provision and to find the most effective home for and ownership of these resources.

25.5   Once the review was completed the course would be launched in late March via all-staff and all-student emails from both UCL and UCLU. This would allow it to be used by students in their later assignments in the 2010-11 academic session and for staff to incorporate references to it into 2011-12 guides and handbooks for a more comprehensive rollout.

Discussion

25.6   The following points were made:

- That the course provided a useful tool and a consistent set of guidance for those students who might be less used to UK conventions for the attribution of source material and who might therefore be vulnerable to unintentional plagiarism.

- That it would be useful if the course were linked to the Key Skills website.
- The UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer noted that students would welcome the course as the message had certainly been absorbed within the student community that plagiarism was wrong and would not be tolerated.

RESOLVED

25.7 That EdCom should endorse the Moodle course and that the LTSS should begin to advertise it more widely among the UCL staff and student community. **[Action: Dr Fiona Strawbridge]**

25.8 That the course should link to the Key Skills website. **[Action: Dr Fiona Strawbridge]**

26 TEACHING AND LEARNING GATEWAY

Noted

26.1 A new Gateway was being developed at UCL for the dissemination of teaching and learning information. This would take the form of a website which encompassed, in a much more accessible way, CPD materials, videos and other material currently available on the existing Teaching and Learning website.

Received

26.2 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/21(10-11)</u> – a report on the new Gateway from the Executive Officer (Academic and International).

Reported

26.3 It was envisaged that the Gateway would be available from the beginning of September 2011.

27 ACTION TAKEN BY THE VICE-CHAIR

27A Approval of new programmes of study

Noted

27A.1 The Vice-Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, had approved the institution of the following programmes of study:

- *PGCert/PGDip/MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*
- *PGCert/PGDip/MSc in Cell and Gene Therapy*
- *Doctorate in Orthopaedics (Doc. Orth) (subject to approval by the Research Degrees Committee)*
- *PGCert/PGDip/MSc Planning, Design and Development*
- *MRes Linguistics (subject to approval by the Research Degrees Committee)*
- *MSc in Developmental Psychopathology*
- *BSc Bioprocessing of New Medicines (Science and Engineering)*

- *MRes in Medical Physics and Bioengineering (subject to approval by the Research Degrees Committee)*
- *PGDip/MSc Physics and Engineering in Medicine (Distance Learning)*

28 MINUTES FROM STEERING/WORKING GROUPS ETC

28A Programme and Module Approval Steering Group

Noted

28A.1 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/22 (10-11)</u> - the Minutes of the meeting of PMASG held on 25 January 2011.

28B Programme Diet and Module Selection Management Group

Noted

28B.1 The PDMSMG was established to '*discuss issues and make recommendations to EdCom on the structure of programme diets and on the policies and procedures relating to programmes and modules'.* These Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for this working group were approved by EdCom Chair's Action on 27 January 2011.The group met on 10 February 2011.

Received

28B.2 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/23 (10-11)</u> - the Minutes of the meeting of the PDMSMG held on 10 February 2011.

28C Regulation Review Group

Noted

28C.1 The Regulation Review Group was established to '*discuss issues and make recommendations to EdCom on the regulatory matters related to the academic regulations for taught students and on associated policies and procedures.*' These Terms of Reference, and the Constitution and Membership for this working group were approved by EdCom Chair's Action on 27 January 2011. The group met on 16 February 2011.

Received

28C.2 At <u>APPENDIX EDCOM 2/24 (10-11)</u> - the Minutes of the meeting of the RRG held on 16 February 2011.

Reported

28C.3 EdCom was invited to note that, as previously discussed by EdCom on 14 December 2010[1], the RRG had considered whether there was a requirement

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[1] See EdCom, 14 December 2010, Minute 15B.

to set an examination paper for resit students based on the syllabus the student had originally followed or on the current syllabus. The RRG had recommended to EdCom that, in future, students must be examined on the syllabus which they had studied. However, where students had already been informed that they would be examined on the current syllabus, this would be honoured.

28C.4   The question of whether to incorporate questions for resit students on examination papers as an 'either/or' option, or to provide a separate paper should be a matter for departments/divisions to decide.

29   **CHAIR'S BUSINESS – PUBLICATION OF MASTERS DISSERTATIONS**

Reported

29.1   The Director of UCL Library Services, Dr Paul Ayris, had invited consideration of whether Masters' dissertations should be published on UCL Discovery.

Discussion

29.2   The following points were made:

- There would be approximately 7000 dissertations. This number and the variability in the quality of dissertations made the suggestion impractical.
- Published dissertations would not be of use for citation purposes.
- Some Masters programmes ran a similar programme year on year.
- Some industrially-sponsored Masters programmes might not be able to publish their dissertations.
- Dissertations at Masters level (with the exception of the MRes) were not expected to be publishable. However, given that it *was* a criterion of the MRes research project that it should be publishable, these could be published on UCL Discovery, subject to further discussion by the Research Degrees Committee.

RESOLVED

29.3   That MRes dissertations (allowing for exemptions for certain sponsored programmes) might be published, subject to further discussion by the Research Degrees Committee.

29.4   That the matter should be referred to the Research Degrees Committee for a final decision. **[Action: Sandra Hinton. Ms Karen Wishart to note]**

30   **DATES OF MEETINGS 2010-11**

Noted

30.1   Further meetings of EdCom in 2011 would be as follows:

- 26 May 2011 at 10.00am in the Council Room;
- 6 July 2011 at 10.00am in the Council Room.

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12 April 2011
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