Education Committee

15 November 2022

Confirmed Minutes

Present:

Professor Kathy Armour (Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Mr Hamza Ahmed; Professor Simon Banks; Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Parama Chaudhury; Ms Sarah Cowls; Professor Sally Day; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Jo Fraser-Pearce; Ms June Hedges; Professor Arne Hofmann; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Margaret Mayston; Ms Seyi Osi; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Mary Richardson; Professor Aeli Roberts; Mr Mike Rowson; Professor Bill Sillar; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Lizzie Vinton; Dr Nalini Vittal and Professor Nicola Walshe

In attendance: Ms Sarah Campling (for Professor Olga Thomas); Mr Steve Rowett (for Dr Fiona Strawbridge); Ms Sally Mackenzie (for Minute 36); Mr John Dubber and Mr Carl Salton-Brooks (for Minute 40); Ms Clare Foyle (for Minute 41); Mr Darren Payne (for Minute 42) and Mr Rob Traynor (Interim Secretary).

Apologies: Dr Nicole Brown; Mr Ian Davis; Dr Rachel King; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Professor Olga Thomas, and Professor Stan Zochowski.

Part I: Preliminary Business

30. Welcome and Announcements

30.1. The Chair welcomed the members and guests to the meeting and made the following announcement:

- Industrial Action – the University and College Union (UCU) had announced three days of strike action (24, 25 and 30 November) in a dispute with employers on pay and pensions. EdCom noted that it was important for departments to record any local adjustments provided to students, as well as any missed teaching. This would help deal with any later student claims. The Examinations and Assessment Contingency Panel (EACP) will be reconvened if necessary to safe-guard academic standards and consider any issues arising, reporting to EdCom.

31. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

31.1. Approved – the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 October 2022 [EdCom Minutes 14-29, 2022-23] at EDCOM 3-01 (22-23).

32. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

32.1. All matters were covered in the meeting's agenda items.

33. Chair's Action Taken Since the Last Meeting: EdCom Annual Report

33.1. The Chair took action to approve EdCom's Annual Report 2021-22 (EDCOM 2-12 (22-23)) following further amendments from members' feedback (EdCom Minute 23, 18.10.22). The report was submitted to Academic Committee for its meeting on 17 November and will also be submitted to Academic Board. The Chair thanked members for their input and the report is available on the EdCom Teams site and SharePoint.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

34. Teaching Excellence Framework Update

34.1. Ms Lizzie Vinton, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Lead provided an update on the progress of the TEF written submission.

34.2. The TEF submission was taking shape, with rich information received from staff and students. It would highlight the good employability outcomes achieved at UCL and note that half of undergraduate (UG) programmes were professionally accredited. However, further work was required on the student experience narrative as UCL had some low feedback data, though the overall trajectory showed improvement. Engagement was taking place with faculties and departments with subject areas which the TEF Panel might seek to focus on.

34.3. Further evidence was required on external examiners comments and on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). This needed to demonstrate excellence and outstanding examples from across UCL were sought for these areas. All evidence used in the submission needed to be verifiable as fact-checking would take place in post-TEF auditing. TEF Panels were also no longer accepting weblinks to additional information in the submissions and all evidence used, quotations or statistics, needed to be self-contained.

34.4. The Chair thanked members for their support and contributions so far and reminded EdCom that the deadline for the TEF submission is 24 January 2023. EdCom will receive the first draft of the submission for consideration at its 6 December meeting. A further meeting will be convened in January if necessary.

35. National Student Survey (NSS): Questions For 2023

35.1. Received - the paper at EDCOM 3-02 (22-23) introduced by the Chair, who informed EdCom of the changed questions in the NSS recently announced by the Office for Students (OfS).

35.2. Changes included (England only) the removal of the Overall Satisfaction question which would make comparability more difficult for institutions. It was possible to include the Overall Satisfaction question in the free text questions, though it was unlikely that enough other institutions would do the same to retain the previous comparability. However. it was important to note that all universities in England would face the same questions.

36. **UCL Strategic Plan (Education Priorities and Programmes): Phase One, Project One Update**

36.1.   Ms Sally Mackenzie, Associate Director, Education & Student Experience, informed EdCom of the progress of Phase One, Project One of the UCL Strategic Plan (Education Priorities and Programmes). The purpose of Project One is to design a UCL Teaching and Assessment Framework for the Future, through engagement with the UCL Community. This built on previous work including the development of principles discussed earlier by EdCom.

36.2.   A peer change group had been set up to scope the project, with membership drawn from all faculties and central services. Stakeholder workshops were also being held considering topics such as student belonging and the standing of education and research, lessons learned through the COVID pandemic and any good practice drawn out through the TEF submission work. The project would attempt to capture UCL's ambitions for the future of education, particularly taking into account the future workplaces/demands of work for which our graduates will need to be prepared. It would also pose the question as to what would be distinctive about a UCL education.

36.3.   The outcome of the scoping work would be completed soon and presented to EdCom's meeting in February for consideration.

37. **Review of Education-Related Committees Update**

37.1.   Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-03 (22-23) introduced by the Chair, following discussion at EdCom's September meeting. The paper proposed a revised committee structure, including a revised committee diagram, suggested Chairs for the committees and proposed core Terms of Reference. EdCom was asked to comment and consider further suggestions to cover any missing provision.

37.2.   It was suggested that Learning Resources (LR) should come under the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) rather than the Student Life Committee (SLC) which would focus on the non-academic student experience. LR is fundamental to the academic experience, for example, listed among the OfS risks identified in their review of blended learning (see paper EDCOM 3-10 (22-23), Minute 44 below). EdCom noted that the committee structure was intended to reflect the current higher education landscape, including the OfS Regulatory Framework (particularly the B conditions on academic provision) and the TEF. This would enable more effective assessment of risk and navigation of national requirements, though it was acknowledged that provision such as LR and Careers (and many other areas) would fall under more than one committee's remit.

37.3.   EdCom members expressed broad satisfaction with the committee proposals though some concerns were expressed regarding the combination of the Quality Review Sub-Committee (QRSC) with the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee (ARQASC) into the new QSC. It would be important to retain the sub-committees' ability to translate scrutiny and review into operational implementation. It was noted that QSC was intended to provide more in depth consideration of quality and standards before proposals came to EdCom to help enable informed decisions on strategic matters. This would include

modernising the Academic Manual with the aim to make it more legible for staff and students to promote greater adherence to academic regulations across UCL.

37.4. It was also suggested that the strong chairing that ARQASC and QRSC benefited from should continue. This would be helped by the use of the education leads as chairs, including professional services input from the new Director of Education Services role. It would be important to spread the load for these chairs and some committees might also be co-chaired with student educational leads. It was also suggested that greater utilisation was made of professional services' roles, such as Faulty Director of Operations, to enhance scrutiny of new proposals, provide input on feasibility and improve their implementation.

37.5. EdCom endorsed the direction of travel of the proposals and the suggestion that the chairs would have input into refining the committee terms of reference. A final draft of the paper would be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

38. Review of Internal Quality Review (IQR) – Proposed Interim Process and Pilot

38.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-04 (22-23) introduced by Professor Norbert Pachler, Pro-Vice-Provost (Digital Education) and Chair of QRSC. The paper proposed that the IQR process be more closely aligned with the OfS Framework and other requirements, with risk-based and proportionate reviews, to supplement the Faculty Education Plans (FEP) and Departmental Education Plans (DEP).

38.2. IQRs would no longer be held quinquennially for departments, but they would rather be selected according to metrics and quality indicators, with around six to eight departments chosen each year rather than the current fifteen. External expertise, commented on favourably in the feedback, would be strengthened and retained, though postgraduate research (PGR) provision would be excluded as the focus was on taught provision. This year would be a pilot with four departments chosen from those already expecting an IQR, selected according to where the current metrics indicated a review would be of most benefit, both to the departments concerned and institutionally.

38.3. It was queried how PGR provision would fit into new quality assurance structures without its inclusion in the IQR process and noted that this would need further discussion with the Doctoral School. It was noted that Research Degrees Committee (RDC) also discussed IQRs and PGR provision and its Chair was a regular Team Leader on the IQR Teams. **Agreed:** that the Chair follow up the discussions on PGR provision quality assurance and the Doctoral School.
Action: the Chair

38.4. It was also queried how the new process would disseminate examples of innovative and best practice, an important feature of IQR. It was noted that it had always been difficult to migrate and embed best practice elsewhere in UCL from IQRs. The new DEPs might provide a more effective vehicle for this, as they will take a more holistic view of departments and would then feed into the wider FEPs. Dissemination across faculties might be easier to do using the FEPs, though further thought was required.

Agreed: that EdCom members contact the Chair with further suggestions for disseminating good practice in UCL.
Action: EdCom Members to note

38.5. Further suggestions from the discussion included synchronising IQRs with departments accreditation reviews where possible, to re-use documentation and to provide opportunities for staff and students to feedback anonymously on their departments.
Action: Professor Norbert Pachler in scheduling IQRs

38.6. Approved - the proposed IQR interim process and pilot at EDCOM 3-04 (22-23).

39.   Department Education Plan Draft Template
39.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-05 (22-23) introduced by Professor Parama Chaudhury, Pro-Vice-Provost (Student Academic Experience). The paper proposed a template to be used for the DEPs, which would feed into the FEP.

39.2. EdCom noted that the DEPs would be completed by departments with one or two priorities identified by the Faculty Education Teams to focus on. Faculties would receive relevant data to enable them to identify the priorities for each department, although it was intended that they concentrate on those departments most at risk. The paper suggested two templates would need to be completed for each department due to key student feedback data being released at different times of the year for UG and PGT.

39.3. It was suggested that a strong feature of Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) process was providing oversight of both UG and PGT provision, as issues raised were often inter-connected. Producing two DEPs could increase the administrative burden and lose the ability of departments and faculties to easily oversee both aspects of provision. It was suggested that separate rows were simply added to the template, for UG and PGT, enabling the same form to cover both. This would enable departmental and faculty educational teams to identify and address issues and also help with oversight in reviewing overall progress.

39.4. Approved – the DEP template, subject to the addition of rows to enable one form to cover UG and PGT provision.
Action: Professor Parama Chaudhury to note

40.   Student Life Strategy
40.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-06 (22-23) and presentation by Mr John Dubber, Chief Executive Officer and Mr Carl Salton-Brooks, Director of Student Experience, of the Students' Union (SU). The paper, developed in consultation with colleagues across UCL, set out a strategy for the extra and co-curricular experience of students at UCL for the next five years. It aligned with the future focused approach adopted by the UCL draft strategic plan and was intended to be delivered in partnership between the SU ad UCL.

40.2. The strategy would focus on six key areas: sport and physical activity, performing and creative arts, community volunteering, intercultural engagement, the creation of

departmental student life hubs and vibrant student life to enliven campus and make best use of the London location. The strategy also aimed to increase engagement with alumni, a key wish of the Provost. The strategy was important to not only improve the overall student experience, but also to ensure UCL caught up and exceeded its competitors' provision. There would also be a need to make up for the loss of facilities formerly provided by the University of London.

40.3. It was queried how the departmental hubs would be provided give the constraints on space at UCL, but noted that the hubs would not necessarily be in physical space. There were plans to expand on the available sports and other facilities both in Bloomsbury as well as at UCL East. It was also suggested that the strategy bear in mind that student life was not separate to education.

40.4. It was also asked how postgraduate students would benefit from the strategy as PGT students were not at UCL very long and often on intensive programmes with little time for other activities. This could be more acute for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who might need to work as well as study. The strategy aimed to introduce a wide range of activities, including low commitment, high impact sports and volunteering that would allow for easier participation. The strategy also intended to create a participation fund to help students less able to afford activities, as well as creating part-time work opportunities.

40.5. EdCom warmly endorsed the SU Student Life Strategy and noted that it would also be considered by the University Management Committee (UMC). The presentation slides were available on EdCom's Teams site and SharePoint.

41.   Strategic Risk Register and Escalated Risks

41.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-07 (22-23) introduced by Ms Clare Foyle, Planning Manager and UCL Risk Coordinator. EdCom was asked to consider the UCL Strategic Risk Register and those areas of risk relating to its remit, as well as to consider the template risk approach outlined in the paper.

41.2. EdCom was informed that Audit Committee was responsible for UCL risk management policy and oversight of the Strategic Risk Register. Some areas in EdCom's remit were already on the register, including student dissatisfaction, which risked reputational damage to UCL and potential impact on student recruitment. It was suggested that should UCL only achieve a TEF Bronze rating and there were simultaneous perturbations in the global market, there could be serve consequences for UCL. A further potential risk suggested was ensuring consistent support throughout the life-cycle for students from widening participation backgrounds, important to ensure an optimized experience and meet OfS expectations.

41.3. The paper also proposed the creation of risk templates to enable assessment of risk at faculty level, including areas such as student satisfaction and the student experience. Each Faculty would score the risk individually and hold their own set of mitigating actions for each risk. The templates would provide EdCom with greater insight into how education-related risks are being managed at a local level. It was noted that they could also be areas which

the new EdCom sub-committees might focus on. The risk templates would be submitted to a future meeting for further consideration.

41.4. **Agreed** – that EdCom endorses the proposals outlined in the paper at EDCOM 3-07 (22-23) and the use of templates to evaluate risk.
Action – Clare Foyle and EdCom members to note.

42. Student Academic Misconduct Report

42.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 3-08 (22-23) introduced by Mr Darren Payne, Policy Advisor (Regulations & Quality Assurance) and Secretary to UCL's Academic Misconduct Panel. The paper provided EdCom with the annual report on student academic misconduct and proposed recommendations to further tackle it.

42.2. EdCom was informed of a large rise in collusion, increased to 120 cases in 2021-22 from 55 the previous year. Collusion now constituted half of all cases. Contract Cheating cases had declined during the session, which was attributed to largescale investigations into the use of 'homework help' sites. A number of falsification cases were also noted, including falsification of Extenuating Circumstances evidence.

42.3. The report proposed a number of actions to address these problems including additional staff guidance on conducting investigatory vivas, making the Student Academic Integrity course mandatory for all students and providing improved systems support, possibly through Portico, to help departmental administration of casework.

42.4. It was suggested that wider discussion was required around assessment and on the use of in-person exams or large essays, which might be less appropriate for modern students in the digital age. Concerns were expressed around Artificial Intelligence (AI) which use was enabling greater opportunities for misconduct which would be harder to detect. One member noted that the Student Academic Integrity course had been successfully incorporated into a module's assessment process, which all students had completed. It was suggested that this approach might be rolled out further across UCL.
Agreed: EdCom to return to this issue in the spring
Action: Chair and Secretary to note

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

43. Office for Students Business Plan 2022-23 – SRS Compliance Summary

43.1. Noted– the paper at EDCOM 3-09 (22-23).

44. Office for Students Blended Learning Review – SRS Compliance Summary

44.1. Noted– the paper at EDCOM 3-10 (22-23).

45. Minutes of Sub-Committees and Working Groups

45.1. Approved the minutes of ARQASC held on 22 July 2022 at EDCOM 3-11 (22-23).

45.2. Approved the minutes of the Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group held on 26 September 2022 at EDCOM 3-12 (22-23).

46.   Any Other Business

46.1. None received.

47.   Dates of Next Meeting

47.1. The dates of the EdCom meetings for the rest of the 2022-23 session are:

- Tuesday, 6 December 2022, 14:00 - 16:30
- Tuesday, 7 February 2023, 14.00 - 16:30
- Tuesday, 25 April 2023, 14:00 - 16:30
- Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 14.00 - 16:30
- Tuesday 25 July 2023, 14:00 - 16:30

Note: an additional meeting may be called during January to consider the TEF submission.

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