

**Education Committee**

17 October 2023

**Confirmed Minutes****Present:**

Professor Kathleen Armour (Chair)

Ms Beatrice Addo, Professor Simon Banks; Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Nicole Brown; Mr Shaban Chaudhary; Mr Ian Davis; Professor Sally Day; Dr Julie Evans; Mr Daniel Farrell; Mr Matteo Fumagalli; Ms Marie Gallagher; Professor Ann Griffin; Ms June Hedges; Professor Arne Hofmann; Mr Ahmad Ismail; Dr Rachel King; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Margaret Mayston; Dr Jennifer McGowan; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Aeli Roberts; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Francesca Scott; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Issy Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Professor Olga Thomas; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Nicola Walshe and Dr Kathryn Woods.

**In attendance:** Ms Sally Mackenzie and Professor Katherine Holt (Item 6); Ms Hannah Swallow and Ms Marie Gallagher (Item 8); Mr Ashley Doolan (Secretary); Mr Rob Traynor (Assistant Secretary) and Ms Megan Gerrie (Observer).

**Apologies:** Professor Mary Richardson and Professor Stan Zochowski.

**Part I: Preliminary Business****14. Welcome, Apologies and Announcements**

The Chair welcomed all colleagues to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Beatrice Addo, Director of Implementation and Strategy Delivery in the Office of the Vice President: Strategy, to her first meeting. It was noted that she was joining EdCom to ensure there is clearer alignment across the areas of the Strategic Plan.

**15. Minutes**

- 15.1. Approved – the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2023 [EdCom Minutes 1-13, 2023-24] at EDCOM 2-01 (23-24).
- 15.2. Approved – the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 24 July 2023 [EdCom Minutes 103-107, 2022-23] at EDCOM 2-02 (23-24).
- 15.3. Noted – EdCom's thanks to the Assistant Secretary for collating and returning previous years' minutes following a request from the UCL Records Office.

## **16. Matters Arising**

- 16.1. Arising from minute 7, it was noted that UCL's TEF award, which was Silver overall (Gold for Student Outcomes and Silver for Student Experience), had now been published. The Chair commented that the report from the TEF panel was fair and had given a clear steer on areas that would need to be improved to enable UCL to achieve an overall Gold award in the next exercise.

## **17. Education Committee Sub-Committees Terms of Reference 2023-24**

- 17.1. Approved – the Terms of Reference for the Quality and Standards Committee at EDCOM 2-03 (23-24).
- 17.2. Approved – the Terms of Reference for the Student Access and Success Committee at EDCOM 2-04 (23-24), noting the addition of Mr Zak Liddell, Director of Education Services, and Ms Penny Longman, Senior Careers Consultant, to the membership.
- 17.3. Approved – the Terms of Reference for the Student Staff Partnership Committee at EDCOM 2-05 (23-24).
- 17.4. Approved – the Terms of Reference for the Student Life Committee at EDCOM 2-06 (23-24), with a note to add membership from the HEDS Institute.
- 17.5. Approved – the Terms of Reference for the Internal Quality Review Panel at EDCOM 2-07 (23-24).

## **Part II: Matters for Discussion**

### **18. Student Experience Outcomes: Progress Update**

- 18.1. Received – an invitation from the Chair for members to share updates on work being undertaken to address the poor student experience in assessment and feedback in some faculties and departments. The following points were noted:
- a) The Institute of Archaeology had turned its poor data around by dedicating resource to actively managing the process of ensuring colleagues met the four-week feedback turnaround standard. While resource intensive, this had greatly improved compliance with the standard, which seemed to be reflected in student feedback.
  - b) That through this work, it was clear that there was a specific risk around managing the timely provision of feedback to students who were submitting to extended deadlines due to extenuating circumstances or reasonable adjustments, as they fell outside the normal window.
  - c) Through discussion, it became apparent that there might be a lack of clarity about how and when to release cohort level feedback in instances where individual students had extended deadlines. EdCom agreed that the potential academic advantage to those individuals was likely to be minimal, and that releasing the feedback should be prioritised. It was agreed that this issue would be picked up through the assessment regulations review being conducted by the Education Policy Scrutiny Panel.

18.2. The Chair invited members to continue to reflect on the challenging performance in the NSS in those questions relating to quality of teaching. It was not clear why UCL's performance had dipped more than other comparable institutions, who had all experienced a similarly challenging year. This issue will be revisited at the next EdCom.

## **19. Research Intensive Education**

19.1. Received – an oral update from the Chair and Ms Sally MacKenzie, Associate Director (Student Engagement & Experience) on the work that has now been initiated to develop a clear narrative and associated actions around “research intensive” education. EdCom noted that the need for this work was surfaced during the consultation on developing UCL's Statement of Excellence in Education, which formed part of the first project in the education strategic plan.

19.2. EdCom was asked to reflect on how UCL could frame the strong commitment to delivering a research-intensive education, and a specific UCL approach to it, that was expressed so clearly by colleagues during the consultation. In particular, we need to ensure that a range of opportunities are available to *all* students, such that we are confident that are graduating with appropriate skills and competencies. The following was noted during discussion:

- a) Student feedback made it clear that many students chose to attend UCL because they wanted to be taught by leading researchers and be exposed to and actively involved in their work.
- b) Many existing opportunities are not equitable, being handled via connections with individual members of staff, rather than open and fair application processes.
- c) Good practice examples already exist, for example the research internship programme in the Mathematics and Physical Science Faculty, which delivered opportunities for 40 individuals in 2022-23, with a proportion ringfenced for students identified as WP or BAME. Lessons from these programmes should be built upon.

19.3. Agreed – that the work in this area should be conducted in line with the successful iterative model that was used to define and agree the Statement of Excellence in Education. EdCom would take the lead in this work.

## **20. Internal Quality Review Regulations**

20.1. Received – the QSC endorsed Internal Quality Review (IQR) regulations for 2023-24 at EDCOM 2-08 (23-24). The Chair noted that the changes to the regulations would align IQR with the risk-based approach already introduced for the Department and Faculty Education Plans. This would ensure that the considerable resource in terms of colleagues' time and expert scrutiny provided through this process was focused on those departments facing the greatest challenges, thereby making a real difference to those areas to the benefit of students and staff.

20.2. EdCom noted that the IQR process was not designed primarily to focus on assurance of baseline quality assurance. Instead, key educational risk indicators,

mostly linked to student outcomes and student experience data, would be used to identify areas that were likely to be failing to meet the baseline in one or more areas of their provision, thus qualifying the department for the IQR. The process itself would then focus on supporting the department to return to, and ideally exceed, the baseline.

- 20.3. Approved – the IQR regulations for 2023-24, at EDCOM 2-08 (23-24), for inclusion in the Academic Manual.

## **21. Competition and Markets Authority Briefing**

- 21.1. Received – a report on updated guidance for Higher Education providers published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) at EDCOM 2-09 (23-24) presented by Ms Hannah Swallow, Compliance Manager. The report also included an update on the work of the CMA Steering Group, which was tasked with understanding the impact of the updated guidance, and recommending appropriate, risk-based responses to it.
- 21.2. EdCom noted that the CMA Steering Group was prioritising work in the following areas during 2023-24:
- a) Nuancing the length of consultation with applicants and offer holders on changes to previously advertised information to ensure that it is appropriate to the level of change being proposed.
  - b) Reviewing the level of detail provided at the point of application to ensure that UCL is meeting its obligations under consumer protection legislation, while retaining the ability to make reasonable changes to the advantage of students.
  - c) Understanding what is meant by “express agreement” to changes to previously advertised information.
- 21.3. Noted – EdCom’s warm endorsement for this crucial work, and thanks for the clarity of the report. It was noted that work was already underway to help strengthen UCL’s compliance, through, for example, the procurement of a curriculum management system that would enable the recording and storing of cohort level information in a more easily retrievable format.

## **Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

### **22. Annual Report to Academic Committee**

- 22.1. Received – the Annual Report from EdCom to Academic Committee and Academic Board at EDCOM 2-10 (23-24). The Chair noted her thanks to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary for their work in compiling the report, and her congratulations and thanks to the wider membership for the considerable amount of good work that was detailed within the report.
- 22.2. Approved – the Annual Report from EdCom to Academic Committee and Academic Board at EDCOM 2-10 (23-24).

**23. Approval of new programmes of study**

- 23.1. Approved – the new programmes of study recommended by the Programme and Module Approval Panel at EDCOM 2-11 (23-24).

**24. Any other business**

- 24.1. The Chair noted that no other business had been tabled for discussion.

**25. Date of the next meeting**

- 25.1. EdCom's remaining meetings for the 2023-24 academic year are scheduled for:

- Thursday 16 November 2023, 14.00 - 16:30
- Wednesday, 6 December 2023, 14:00 - 16:30
- Thursday, 1 February 2024, 14.00 - 16:30
- Thursday, 25 April 2024, 14:00 - 16:30
- Thursday, 27 June 2024, 14.00 - 16:30
- Thursday 25 July 2024, 14:00 - 16:30

Ashley Doolan  
October 2023