LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

19 July 2018

M I N U T E S

Present:
Professor Anthony Smith (Chair);
Ms Rothna Akhtar; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Mr Farooq Dean; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Aeli Roberts; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Sam Smidt; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Eva Sorensen; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Angie Wade.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Mr Kurtis Bell; Ms Anniina Wikman; Ms Paulette Williams.

Apologies were received from: Dr Ben Clifford; Mr Ian Davis; Dr Christine Hoffman; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Professor Tim McHugh.

Key to abbreviations	
APRG	Academic Partnerships Review Group
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
EC	Extenuating Circumstances
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
IOE	Institute of Education
ISD	Information Services Division
LSA	Late Summer Assessment
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
NSS	National Student Survey
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
OVPESA	Office of the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs)
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PGR	Postgraduate Research
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SoR	Suspension of Regulations
SU	Students' Union
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UG	Undergraduate
UKVI	UK Visa and Immigration

72   WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EdCom welcomed the new Students' Union Sabbatical Officers to their first meeting and noted that it would be the last meeting for Dr Ben Clifford and Professor Angie Wade. The new Academic Board nominees for next year were Dr Mike Porter (MAPS) and Dr Sandra Leaton Gray (IOE), whilst Professor Eva Sorensen would be continuing in the role.

73   MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Approved – the Minutes of the meeting held 19 June 2018 *(EdCom Minutes 56-71, 19 June 2018).*

74   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Faculties were reminded to circulate the SSCC Trends Report 2017-18 (*EdCom Minute 58, 17-18*) to FTCs and departments to discuss the recommendations.

Action: Faculty Tutors

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

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75   EDCOM RESPONSE TO SSCC TRENDS REPORT 2017-18
EdCom Minute 58, 19 June 2018

75.1   **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 6-01 (17-18)</u> presented by the Director of Academic Services.

75.2   The paper responded to some of the key issues raised in the Students' Union's annual report of trends arising from Staff-Student Consultative Committees, which was received at the June 2018 meeting of EdCom.

75.3   The Students' Union recommended that UCL investigate systems or processes which would deliver an examination timetable at a faster pace. Work was underway to procure a replacement to the existing software, but an initial analysis indicated that a faster pace was not going to be achievable due to the size and complexity of UCL's exam timetable. Academic Services would continue to pursue this recommendation.

75.4   The Students' Union also recommended that UCL develop guidance for students and staff on term two module selections. This was in train, and would be published to students at the start of term, describing the process for selection at the start of term one, the process for changing term two selections in December and the process for making late change requests.

75.5   EdCom had already established a working group in response to the recommendation to set out and ensure compliance with a baseline set of information about every UCL module (see also *Minute 79* below). The working group would also look at ways to offer sample online lectures from previous years as part of this project. EdCom would be reviewing data on programme diets, collected via the Academic Model Programme Summaries exercise in 2017/18, to inform discussions on the extent and nature of choice available to students.

75.6   **Agreed** – EdCom agreed that improving student module choices would be a priority for the committee in the 2018-19 academic session, and requested regular updates.

76   STUDENTS' UNION PRIORITIES - RECOMMENDATIONS
EdCom Minute 60, 19 June 2018

76.1   **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 6-02 (17-18)</u> presented by the Senior Tutor for the Faculty of the Built Environment and the Head of Strategic Programme Management, OVPESA.

76.2   Following the discussion at the previous meeting, the paper presented some initial recommendations to help minimise additional costs for students – such as application fees,

textbooks, materials, equipment, external activities and compliance checks – as well as recommendations to improve the experiences of student parents and carers.

76.3   The recommendations included adopting the following general principle, recognising that it would take several academic sessions to enact: "No student should pay additional costs for mandatory elements of their taught programme of study, over and above tuition fees." The paper then provided a series of specific recommendations to help UCL to achieve that goal, such as expanding the definition of students in circumstances that are exempted from application fees, training for Student Representatives on the Readinglists@UCL tool, exploring textbook sharing and buy-back schemes, offering UK-based alternatives for field trips, placing caps on the amount that could be spent by students on materials and equipment, developing improved guidance for departments on Personal Protective Equipment, and ensuring that all additional costs were clearly indicated on the relevant prospectus webpages.

76.4   The paper also made a number of recommendations to help UCL support student parents and carers such as developing a business case for sessional childcare provision, opening UCL's existing Parents and Carers Together network to students as well as staff, auditing all breastfeeding spaces on campus, ensuring that breastfeeding spaces were planned for in future new builds and refurbishment projects, reviewing how information for students is communicated, and establishing a single point of contact for advice.

76.5   EdCom welcomed the paper and discussed the recommendations in detail. With regards to application fees, the committee agreed that there should be a fair and comparable system across UCL, but that this warranted further investigation, with advice from the Global Engagement Office on exempted countries, and advice from the Registrar about CMA compliance. The Library representative noted that the recommendations aligned with their own objectives to resource more reading lists and to encourage greater use of online resources. The committee also discussed the significant costs of compliance checks on some programmes – it was recognised that these were unavoidable but it was also felt that these could be standardised and more transparent.

76.6   **Resolved** - The committee endorsed the overarching principles of minimising additional costs, taking affordability into consideration in programme and module design, and ensuring parity across UCL for any unavoidable costs. However it was felt that some additional work was needed before the full set of recommendations could be endorsed. Concerns were raised that some of the more specific recommendations might have a negative impact on the student experience e.g. UK-based field trips might be viewed as sub-standard. Care was also needed to ensure that Departments were not expected to take on significant additional costs.

76.7   **Agreed** - Whilst initiatives to reduce and standardise additional costs were being investigated, steps should be taken to provide greater transparency. The Academic Model Project had collected data for every UCL programme. The data needed cleansing but it was hoped that this could be made available for the next admissions cycles.

76.8   **Agreed** - EdCom requested a revised iteration of the paper outlining general principles and direction of travel for the committee to endorse. It was agreed that there would be an immediate commitment to transparency, with further phases of minimising and then, wherever possible, eliminating additional costs. It was suggested that wider institutional discussions could also help to disaggregate some of the issues raised.

Action: Head of Strategic Programme Management, OVPESA

77   DRAFT PRINCIPAL THEME 2 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL (2017-18)

77.1   **Received** – the draft annual report for Council on the progress made towards implementing Principal Theme 2 of UCL 2034 at EDCOM 6-03 (17-18) presented by the Head of Strategic Programme Management, OVPESA.

77.2   A first draft of the report was presented for feedback prior to submission to Council in October 2018. It was noted that the NSS results would be published in the next few days and that this and other KPIs would also inform the paper.

77.3   Members welcomed the report. There was a discussions about the Connected Curriculum and how its success might be measured. It was clear that there had been widespread engagement

with the concept, but it would be beneficial to identify data which might demonstrate its impact on the curriculum, such as correlations with NSS or TEF outcomes.

78   ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS
EdCom Minute 30, 28 February 2018

78.1   **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 6-04 (17-18)</u> presented by the Senior Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships).

78.2   In February 2018, EdCom received proposals for a defined cut-off point for renewed Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) to be signed by UCL and the partner institution. It was suggested that, in order to meet a wide range of regulatory requirements, recruitment should be suspended for any programme which did not have an up-to-date MOA in place by 1 September 2018. As some partnerships were taking a long time to renew, it was felt that that steps were needed to ensure that UCL continued to meet its legal obligations. The revised paper responded to the points raised by EdCom at the February meeting, and in particular the recommendation for a year's grace period before an annual deadline was enforced.

78.3   EdCom welcomed the amendments. One recommendation had not been taken up – that of differentiating between programmes with no agreement and those with out-of-date agreements. There were essential issues which needed to be addressed in the out-of-date agreements with regards to CMA, QAA, OIA and UKVI, and it would not be appropriate to suggest that these were less important. EdCom acknowledged that it could be much more difficult and time-consuming to re-negotiate an existing contract, making it harder to meet the annual deadline. In particular it was noted that the negotiation with the University of Columbia was active and ongoing, but was taking longer than expected because of the complex nature of the renegotiations. However EdCom agreed that it was important that UCL did not run programmes without agreements in place.

78.4   **Approved** – EdCom agreed that recruitment to a programme or delivery of a module would be suspended if an appropriate partnership agreement was not fully signed by 1 September of the effective year. The deadline would be enforced from 1 September 2019 onwards; for 2018-19, the deadline would be set on a case-by-case basis.

79   MODULE INFORMATION WORKING GROUP REPORT
EdCom Minute 57A, 19 June 2018

79.1   **Received** – the paper at <u>EDCOM 6-05 (17-18)</u> presented by the Director of Academic Services.

79.2   The working group had taken forward EdCom's recommendation to secure funding for an institutional module information catalogue which would help to inform student choices and ensure that students had key information about their curriculum in advance. Structural data had been collected through the Academic Model Project. The group had looked at a range of data and conducted focus groups with students in order to draw up a recommended list of core content, and Departments would be asked to help populate the text fields from existing materials currently available in a range of locations. Work was also needed to check and verify some data before it could be published, and there would be further discussions about the look and feel of the catalogue.

79.3   EdCom discussed naming teachers for modules. There was some concern about misuse of data, as well as unforeseeable changes which might then lead to CMA non-compliance. It was agreed that the core information should include the module convenor as a contact point for questions about the module, and that the working group would provide more guidance on the naming of other teaching staff.

79.4   The Library offered to help with the compilation of reading lists, which would also help in their objectives to resource more texts. Digital Education also advised that Moodle sites could easily be made available for students to explore what a module would be like, and that this could perhaps be based on an opt-out process, rather like Lecturecast. Lecturecast itself could also be made available in advance of a module, where room facilities allowed.

79.5   **Approved** - EdCom welcomed the initiative to provide a single source of truth as well as clear and consistent information for students. The list of core content was approved, and it was agreed

that the working group would take forward the suggestions from the Library and Digital Education.

79.6 **Agreed** - Members were asked to start cascading information about the project to Departments, whose help was needed to collate the data. It was recognised that there would be additional work involved in the set-up, but that this would provide an invaluable resource for staff as well as students, and would replace the work currently being carried out on bespoke, local systems.

Action: All members

80 STRIKE MITIGATION TASK GROUP REPORT
EdCom Minute 42, 26 April 2018

80.1 **Received** – the papers at EDCOM 6-06 (17-18) presented by the Director of Academic Services.

80.2 EdCom thanked the members of the Strike Mitigation Task Group for their dedication in ensuring that the industrial action did not have an adverse impact on student outcomes. The work of the group had been drawn up into a new Academic Manual annex so that it could inform any such future events. There was also a proposal to update the Material Irregularities Procedure to include the option of adjusting an existing method of assessment, such as an exam paper.

80.3 **Approved** - changes to the Material Irregularities Procedure (UCL Academic Manual Chapter 6, Section 6).

80.4 **Approved** – the new Academic Manual annex 'Managing the impact of the industrial action on assessment' (UCL Academic Manual Chapter 6).

81 BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC WORKING GROUP VERBAL REPORT

81.1 **Received** – an oral report from the Faculty Tutor for Brain Sciences and the Head of Student Success Projects, OVPESA.

81.2 A working group had been established to oversee a range of projects relating to BME attainment and the student experience, such as the Race Equality Steering Group and UCL's Race Equality Charter Mark application process. The ASER process had been used to follow up on actions, and the group's chair had also had detailed conversations with the Deans and attended Faculty Teaching Committees. There were plans to establish unconscious bias training and a curriculum consultant project was being piloted, based on sector best practice. BME Faculty Leads were being recruited and trained, and would lead on a number of objectives such as inclusive curriculum health checks as part of the ASER process and enhancement plans for 2018. Statistical data were also being analysed to investigate when the attainment gap begins, helping UCL to target interventions more effectively. EdCom also suggested that data on progression rates from UG to PGT and then on to PGR could also provide useful insights into when the gap emerges.

81.3 EdCom welcomed the wide range of initiatives and asked the working group to provide regular updates on progress.

Action: Chair of the BME Working Group

82 PROGRAMME AND MODULE APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT FRAMEWORK - UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 7

82.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 6-07 (17-18) presented by the Secretary.

82.2 The Chapter had been revised in response to requests from faculties. Changes included:
   a) More guidance for departments and faculties on the information that should be provided and guidance that should be sought at the programme development stage
   b) Clarification of the steps that should be taken at the outline and final approval stages and the different remits of the reviewers at each stage
   c) Clearer guidance on when programme leads and departments are required to consult with students on programme and module amendments
   d) A reduction in the amount of business coming to PMAP that could be handled at Faculty level, whilst still maintaining appropriate levels of oversight.

82.3 EdCom noted that the changes particularly sought to address the number of approvals which were rejected in the final stages due to technical errors. It was recognised that a lot of work was involved in developing programmes, and that rejection at this stage could be frustrating. Conversely, the Chair of PMAP noted that a high number of proposals were being received at the last minute, leaving little time to address technical errors and placing pressure on PMAP to approve programmes which were not up to standard. The revised chapter gave more guidance on how to avoid technical errors which might stall the process.

82.4 **Approved** – Chapter 7: Programme and Module Approval and Amendment Framework 2018-19.

83 REGISTRATION FRAMEWORK FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES - UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 3
EdCom Minute 20, 2017-18

83.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 6-08 (17-18) presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.

83.2 ARQASC had undertaken a review of the Taught Registration regulations, with a view to ensuring that the regulations reflected current practice, and to clarifying incomplete or ambiguous regulations. A number of processes had been improved and streamlined, including those for programme transfers and interruptions of study, withdrawing from a programme and changing mode of study. Following the discussion at EdCom in December 2017, the revised chapter also sought to minimise the numbers of Suspensions of Regulations and, wherever possible, delegate approvals from the Director of Academic Services on behalf of the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) to the Faculty Tutors. The proposals had been discussed on a number of occasions at ARQASC and had also been received by the Faculty Tutors Forum. Faculty Tutors and colleagues in Student Records, Visas and Immigration, and Student Fees and Funding were asked to provide feedback on a number of drafts, and a final draft was approved by ARQASC at its meeting in June 2018.

83.3 One particular change was flagged for the committee's attention – the regulations now closed the loophole allowing Masters students to change mode of attendance before their dissertation.

83.4 **Approved** – Chapter 3: Registration Framework for Taught Programmes 2018-19.

84 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES - UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 4 SECTION 6

84.1 **Received** – the papers at EDCOM 6-09 (17-18) presented by the Faculty Tutor for Brain Sciences and the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.

84.2 EdCom received a report from the meeting which had been convened to review the current Extenuating Circumstances process, share good practice and identify areas for improvement. The group, which included representatives from a range of faculties and services, had made a number of recommendations including clarifications to the regulations and a revised form. The group also recommended that further guidance be drawn up for students and staff to help improve understanding of the process.

84.3 The Students' Union Sabbatical Officer highlighted some student concerns about disparity across different departments. Whilst there was detailed guidance on the types of circumstances which were likely to be considered as extenuating, there had been a case where an EC had been accepted by one department and not another. EdCom noted the need to keep a watching brief on these procedures to ensure that UCL was being thoughtful and consistent, upholding standards and being fair to all students. The issue of parity would be included in the forthcoming guidance notes for EC Panels and for students. The group also planned to meet on an annual basis to oversee the procedure.

84.4 The committee requested that application form be made available online. The Director of Academic Services confirmed that this was in train as part of the Academic Model Project.

84.5 **Approved** - the changes to the Extenuating Circumstances regulations (UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4, Section 6) detailed at EDCOM 6-09 (17-18).

84.6 **Approved** - The revised Extenuating Circumstances Form (UCL Academic Manual Chapter 4 annexes) detailed at EDCOM 6-09 (17-18).

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

85   UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL 2018-19

85.1   **Received** – the papers at <u>EDCOM 6-10 (17-18)</u> presented by the Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager.

85.2   The papers summarised the changes which were being proposed for the UCL Academic Manual for 2018-19, in addition to the discussion items at minutes 80, 82, 83 and 84 above, and further to the approvals granted at the previous meeting of EdCom on 19 June 2018.

85.3   **Noted** – The Academic Manual structural changes for 2018-19.

85.4   **Noted** – References to the Vice-Provost Operations – for example in the Public Complaints and Research Misconduct regulations - would be updated in-session when the present incumbent retired.

85.5   **Noted** – The revised Chapter 1: Student Recruitment and Admissions Framework 2018-19, as approved by the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee (StRAFC).

85.6   **Approved** – A minor amendment to Chapter 2: Qualifications and Credit Framework 2018-19 to more accurately reflect the credits undertaken as part of the MBBS.

85.7   **Approved** – Two minor amendments to Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes 2018-19, including some clarifications for BA English, and clarification that students should *only* resit failed components.

85.8   **Approved** – An amendment to Chapter 6, Section 10: Student Complaints Procedure 2018-19, subject to final approval by Council. The amendment added an additional appeal route where a decision is taken by the Chair of the Complaints Panel and the Registrar, and not referred to a hearing of the Complaints Panel.

85.9   **Received** – Proposals for minor amendments to Chapter 9: Quality Review Framework 2018-19.

85.10   The Chair requested some additional changes to the regulations on Internal Quality Review (IQR). The process had been reviewed two years earlier, but the HE landscape had changed considerably since then with the arrival of the TEF and the Office for Students. The Chair wanted to ensure that the process helped UCL to scrutinise and address issues which were affecting student education, and made some outline recommendations. These included the Chair of EdCom acting as Chair to the IQR Panel, giving the IQR process more visibility, and escalating issues to EdCom or even Academic Committee for detailed discussion and action. The Chair also felt that the structure of the process could be streamlined, with Heads of Departments being interviewed with the rest of the departmental team, greater involvement from senior administrators, and a greater emphasis on student feedback and responses to that feedback. It was suggested that the Self Evaluative Statement could be shortened, focusing on key issues rather than a wider review, and that the follow-up could be tied to ASER to reduce the burden on Departments.

85.11   It was noted that Departments had already been contacted about the forthcoming IQR round, and so changes would need to be drawn up quickly. EdCom requested that, if the process were to be more TEF-oriented, more information about the TEF be provided to both panels and Departments so that they could understand how IQR fitted into the wider, national context, and understand the criteria against which Departments were being assessed.

85.12   **Agreed** - Academic Services was asked to draw up some revised procedures and circulate these to EdCom members for feedback.

Action: Academic Services

85.13   **Approved** – Chapter 9: Quality Review Framework 2018-19, with the exception of Section 2: Internal Quality Review which would be subject to further revisions.

86   APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

86.1   **Approved** – the Programmes of Study recommended for approval by PMAP at <u>EDCOM 6-11 (17-18)</u>.

87   APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

87.1   **Approved** – the Academic Partnerships recommended for approval by APRG at <u>EDCOM 6-12 (17-18)</u>.

88   MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

88A   **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held *23 April 2018, 22 May 2018* and *19 June 2018* at <u>EDCOM 6-13 (17-18)</u>, <u>EDCOM 6-14 (17-18)</u> and <u>EDCOM 6-15 (17-18)</u>.

88B   **Approved** – the Minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held *17 May 2018* at <u>EDCOM 6-16 (17-18)</u>.

88C   **Approved** – the Minutes of the Quality Review Sub-Committee held *24 May 2018* at <u>EDCOM 6-17 (17-18)</u>.

89   LATE SUMMER ASSESSMENT – ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS

89.1   **Approved** – the alternative late summer assessment methods at <u>EDCOM 6-18 (17-18)</u>.

90   SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS

90.1   **Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations at <u>EDCOM 6-19 (17-18)</u>.

91   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

91A   Office for Students

91A.1   The Registrar noted that UCL was now formally registered with the Office for Students.

91B   Times Higher Europe Teaching Rankings

91B.1   EdCom warmly welcomed the news that UCL had been ranked fifth in the recent Times Higher Europe Teaching Rankings, the highest of any London university.

92   DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2018-19:

- Tuesday 2 October 2018 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 6 December 2018 10.30am to 1pm
- Monday 25 February 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 25 April 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Tuesday 11 June 2019 10.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 18 July 2019 10.30am to 1pm

LIZZIE VINTON
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26 July 2018