EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25 June 2013

MINUTES

Present:
Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton	Dr John Mitchell
Ms Karen Barnard	Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Mr Jason Clarke	Ms Lesley Pitman (*vice*: Ms June Hedges)
Dr Brenda Cross	Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Caroline Essex	Mr Steve Rowett (*vice*: Dr Fiona Strawbridge)
Mr Marco Federighi	Dr Ruth Siddall
Dr Arne Hofmann	Ms Olga Thomas
Dr Christine Hoffman	Professor Derek Tocher
Ms Valerie Hogg	Ms Susan Ware
Ms Bella Malins	Dr Paul Walker (*vice*: Mr Ken Marsden)
Ms Giulia Mari	Dr Andrew Wills
Dr Helen Matthews	

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Irenie Morley; Mr Gary Smith (for Minute 50); Ms Paula Speller.

Apologies for absence were received from: Prof David Bogle; Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe; Dr Julie Evans; Ms June Hedges; Mr Ken Marsden; Mr Dante Micheaux; Mr Gergely Raccuja;; Dr Fiona Strawbridge.

Key to abbreviations	
AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
ISD	Information Systems Division
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
KIS	Key Information Set
KISSG	Key Information Set Steering Group
LSE	London School of Economics
LTISG	Learning and Teaching Information Systems Group
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences (Faculty)
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SoP	School of Pharmacy
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners

57   MEMBERSHIP

Noted:

57.1   The following members of EdCom would be standing down at the end of the current academic session:

- **Mr Ken Marsden** as the nominated representative of CALT;
- **Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe** as **UCL Union Education and Campaigns Officer**;
- **Mr Dante Micheaux** as **UCL Union Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer**;
- **Mr Mehran Bhatti** as **UCL Union International Officer**.

58   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 30 APRIL 2013

Confirmed:

58.1   The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 30 April 2013 *[EdCom Mins. 48 - 56, 30.04.13*], circulated previously.

59   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see also Minutes 60, 61 & 63-65 below]*

59A   Academic Regulations 2013-14 *[EdCom Min. 51A, 12-13]*

Noted:

59A.1   The Academic Regulations for 2013-14 had been updated and circulated to Faculty Tutors for comment.

59B   Student Learning Contracts and Barring *[EdCom Min. 51B, 12-13]*

Noted:

59B.1   The revised policy had now been published in the UCL Academic Manual at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-3.

59C   New Fee Liability Policy for Interruptions and Withdrawals *[EdCom Min.34, 12-13]*

Noted:

59C.1   At EDCOM 5/41 (12-13) – a revised policy for proposed implementation in 2013-14, from the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy.

60   FIT TO STUDY *[EdCom Min.51B, 12-13]*

Received:

60.1   At EDCOM 5/42 (12-13) – a discussion paper, introduced by the Chair.

Reported:

60.2   EdCom was asked to consider whether UCL should put in place a Fitness to Study Policy for all UCL students. The paper sought permission to draw up a draft policy for further consideration at EdCom in the coming session 2013-14.

Discussion:

60.3   Members queried the appropriate process for referring students during the transitional phase between the disestablishing of the role of Dean of Students' (Welfare) and confirmation of new arrangements. It was established that during this time, referrals should be made to the Director of Student Support and Welfare, Ms Denise Long.

60.4   The Chair resolved to check with the Registrar whether a note would shortly be forthcoming with details of the role which would replace that of the Dean of Students' (Welfare) from 1 October 2013.

60.5   Members noted that any preliminary proposals for a Fit to Study policy should include explicit reference to disciplinary sanctions if a student's state of health should create behaviour which impacted on the learning of other students, particularly in group work situations.

RESOLVED:

60.6   That the Chair contact the Registrar as per Min. 60.4 above. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

60.7   That a draft Fit to Study policy should explicitly mention the impact of a student's ill health on others, as per Min. 60.5 above. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

61   SCHEDULED LEARNING HOURS – ISSUES ARISING FROM UCL PREPARATIONS FOR THE KEY INFORMATION SET *[EdCom Min.25, 12-13]*

Received:

61.1   At EDCOM 5/43 (12-13) – a paper, introduced by the Chair of the KISSG.

Reported:

61.2   The Chair of the KISSG summed up the results of research into the issues as follows:

- The definitions set by HESA (at Para. 8 of the paper) seemed to map on to 1200 hours.
- The majority of other Russell Group universities (23 out of 28) defined their scheduled learning hours per year as 1200 two institutions (Imperial and Southampton) used 1500 hours; one (LSE) used 1480 hours; while for two institutions (Oxford and Cambridge) it had not been possible to obtain any relevant information.
- If the requirements of Bologna, and the need to ensure comparability of UK awards with those of European HEIs remained a pressing issue, it was clearly not one which troubled the majority of Russell Group universities and it had, in any case, been largely overtaken by the requirements of the KIS.

- In light of the above, EdCom was invited to recommend that UCL should define 'scheduled learning and teaching activity' for the purposes of the KIS as being 1200 hours per year.

Discussion:

61.3   EdCom agreed that no major policy change was actually being proposed in terms of the UCL learning year. The issue was purely one of agreeing how UCL should present this to an external audience in terms of the KIS.

RESOLVED:

61.4   That UCL should define 'scheduled learning and teaching activity' for the purposes of the KIS as being 1200 hours per year. **[Action: Mr Jason Clarke/Mr Gary Smith]**

62   DRAFT REPORT ON THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Received:

62.1   At <u>EDCOM 5/44 (12-13)</u> – the draft report on the GPA introduced by the Chair of EdCom, who is also the Chair of the Working Group on the GPA.

Reported:

62.2   In order to promulgate the report further and invite a wider range of opinion, EdCom was being invited to discuss the report prior to its submission to AC. The Chair of the Working Group reported the following:

- There were now real difficulties with the way in which Honours were calculated. As far back as 2006, the Burgess Report had noted that the UK Honours scheme was 'no longer fit for purpose'. Employers would typically use a 2:1 as a qualifying grade for interview, but between 60-69 was a very wide band which might alike contain an excellent or a mediocre performance. As a consequence of this lack of granularity, employers were increasingly referring back to a candidate's A level performance.
- Examination Boards, mindful of the potentially deleterious effect on a student's future career of a borderline 2:2, spent much of their allotted time discussing borderline cases, rather than more useful generic academic issues.
- A GPA system, would, by rewarding consistent student performance across a whole programme, alleviate issues arising from what was called the 'Honours cliff' and would be of benefit to students and employers.
- The GPA Working Group had created a 'straw man' GPA model for the purpose of comparison between the GPA and Honours systems. Modelling had shown that it was more difficult to map GPA to quantitative subjects such as mathematics or engineering.
- The Working Group's recommendation (to be made to AC on 4 July) was that UCL should join a HEA national pilot group on GPA, the membership of which would include Russell Group universities and a range of other UK HEIs.

Discussion:

62.3 EdCom agreed that UCL should join the HEA national pilot group, but felt that AC should be invited to approve the details of this group before UCL should agree to participate.

RESOLVED:

62.4 That any further comments from EdCom members should be sent to the Chair prior to AC's meeting on 4 July. **[Action: EdCom to note]**

63 FEEDBACK ON SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT *[EdCom Min.35, 12-13]*

Noted:

63.1 Students had requested feedback on summative assessments/examinations. This was not currently UCL policy. On 12 March *[EdCom Min.35],* EdCom had a wide-ranging discussion with differing views expressed by each Faculty. Faculty Tutors were invited to discuss the issues further with their FTCs; in particular:

(1) the viability of providing specific examination feedback for failing or underperforming students;
(2) the viability of providing more generic feedback (although it was noted that this should already be available via Annual Monitoring reports).

63.2 Faculty Tutors were invited to report on the above discussions with their FTCs and the results, some of which were received after the meeting, had now been compiled into a paper at <u>EDCOM 5/44 (12-13</u>). This would be made available on the EdCom sharepoint.

RESOLVED:

63.3 That the nature of the feedback provided should suit the particular discipline and that UCL should not impose a universal approach.

64 ISSUES WITH UCL'S ESTATE *[EdCom Min.39, 12-13]*

Noted:

64.1 At EdCom's meeting of 12 March, the Committee had noted that the interaction between students and academic staff and UCL Estates could be improved. It was suggested that EdCom invite the Director of UCL Estates to attend EdCom's meeting of 30 April in order to respond to any issues raised. However, as many of the issues had already been raised via the 2012-13 Annual Monitoring process, which fell within the remit of QMEC, the Chair instead invited the Director of UCL Estates to attend the meeting of QMEC on 18 June 2013.

64.2 All issues received from Faculties by the EdCom Secretary, in addition to those raised via Annual Monitoring, were compiled and sent to the Director of Estates in advance of the QMEC meeting, at which he was invited to respond.

Reported:

64.3   The Chair reported that at the QMEC meeting the Director of Estates had spoken of continued attempts to implement the Bloomsbury Masterplan, with many initiatives now beginning to bear fruit. Planned transformations of Wates House would, it had been reported, solve nearly all the Faculty of The Built Environment's space issues. The Student Centre was another major piece of work in the pipeline along with the early stages of planning for work across the Wilkins complex, with more space for formal and informal learning. A 'quick wins' programme had yielded good results in 2011-12 and the process would be repeated in summer 2013, along with a full upgrade of many teaching spaces.

64.4   The Director of Estates had reported further that the Vice-Provost (Operations) had commissioned an external report on space usage at UCL which had, in turn, led to the establishment of a Timetabling Review Group, chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education). The Group had submitted a report to the Provost's SMT on 19 June and its findings would be promulgated more widely.

Discussion:

64.5   The Faculty Tutor of the Faculty of the Built Environment reported that plans to alleviate the Faculty's space issues, far from being solving them, had, in fact, created a great deal of distress and uncertainty. This was currently being discussed and resolved in number of other more appropriate fora.

64.6   Members were keen to see the report of the Timetabling Review Group (see 64.4) and it was resolved that the Chair should ascertain, on behalf of the Committee, any outcomes of SMT's discussion of the report on 19 June and any proposals for the promulgation of its findings to the wider UCL community.

RESOLVED:

64.7   That the Chair should report back to EdCom in the autumn on the outcomes of the Timetabling Review Group's report to SMT. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

65   SCHOOL OF PHARMACY – EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MERGER *[EdCom Min. 52, 12-13]*

Reported:

65.1   The Faculty Tutor of the Faculty of Life Sciences reported that the new MPharm was out of step with UCL norms in a number of areas. It had been agreed that the SoP would operate within UCL term times but progression and classification rules remained different. All derogations from the UCL norm would come to EdCom with appropriate justifications. Finally, it had been agreed that the SoP would make its offers of admission earlier.

66   APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

66.1   The PMASG Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, had approved the following programmes of study since the meeting of EdCom on 30 April 2013:

MRes Physics of Cancer Therapy
Postgraduate Clinical Professional Development Short Course Programme
MSc in Specialised Translation
MSc in Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation with Translation Technology
MSc Smart Cities and Urban Analytics
MRes Smart Cities
MSc International Relations of the Americas

67   MINUTES FROM STEERING GROUPS ETC.

67A   Programme and Module Approval Steering Group

Noted:

67A.1   At <u>EDCOM 5/45 (12-13)</u> – the minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2013.

67B   Regulation Review Group

Noted:

67B.1   At <u>EDCOM 5/46 (12-13)</u> – the minutes of the meeting of 18 April 2013.

68   CHAIR'S BUSINESS

68A   Examinations Cycle 2012/13

Reported:

68A.1   The Head of Examinations, Student and Registry Services, reported that data issues had delayed the publication of a final examinations timetable. Some departments were not, during the annual Academic Review process, checking with sufficient care all aspects of the modules for which they were responsible, nor adjusting the assessment weightings as necessary. This had in turn led to last-minute adjustments and queries which had delayed publication.

68A.2   Some examination paper substitutions had been received very late, necessitating, in some cases, the publication of last-minute errata slips, which were disruptive to students sitting the examination and placed pressure on the Examinations department where late adjustments needed to be communicated across multiple, disparate sites. It was hoped that these issues, which arose year after year, could be addressed at an earlier stage next session.

68A.3   Some disruption had been experienced as a result of building works, particularly near the special facility for dyslexic students and two examinations had been evacuated for

half an hour each, due to a fire alarm. The arrangement of a separate room for the collection of scripts had, however, worked well and would be continued.

68B   Faculty issues with Portico functionality 2012-13

Noted:

68B.1   At EDCOM 5/47 (12-13) – the issues, as reported by faculties, arising from a discussion at the UCLBE on 6 March 2013.

Discussion:

68B.2   Representatives from each faculty had now met separately with Portico Services and had fed in their observations. Domain governance groups would decide how money was to be spent but ISD also received a lump sum which it divided up as it thought appropriate.

68B.3   The most recent meeting of the LTISG, Chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education), had recommended moving to a three year budgeting period.

68B.4   It was noted that EdCom should be more mindful, when approving proposals with implications for Portico functionality, of the time needed to secure funding and begin work. For example, the proposals for a GPA would require a great deal of system change and a lead-in time of at least 12-18 months would need to be factored in. Often proposals were approved and only once this had happened, were the Portico implications considered.

68B.5   EdCom requested a review of staff with access to SITS; and suggested giving departments 'read-only' access. Only faculty-level staff had originally been given this access in 2004. However, there was a considerable training requirement and currently no resource to train extra staff to use SITS. It was resolved that the Chair would take the matter up with the Registrar.

RESOLVED:

68B.6   That the Chair discuss with the Registrar, Mr Tim Perry, the possibility of access to SITS for departmental staff. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

69   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

69.1   There would be no further meetings of EdCom in 2012-13.