



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

26 April 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Dilly Fung; Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Judith Hillmore; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Professor John Mitchell; Ms Suguna Nair; Mr Derfel Owen; Mr Tom Robinson; Dr Mike Rowson; Ms Wahida Samie; Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Professor Derek Tocher; Ms Susan Ware.

In attendance: Mr Rob Traynor, Quality Assurance Co-ordinator, for item 6; Mr Razz Razzaq, Quality Assurance, Academic Services (observing); Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Simon Banks; Dr Brenda Cross; Dr Arne Hofmann; Ms Olga Thomas.

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BoE	Board of Examiners
EC	Extenuating Circumstances
EdCom	Education Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HER	Higher Education Review
PGT	Taught Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panels
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QRSC	Quality Review Sub Committee
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultative Committee
StAR	Student Academic Representative
StEC	Student Experience Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCLU	UCL Union

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

58 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

58.1 Members requested the following minor amendments:

- a) To add the following clarification to Minute 41.1 - “There had been some staff losses but these had been mitigated by appointing deputies, making fixed term appointments and developing new modules.”
- b) To add the following clarification to minute 52.3: that PMAP papers were made available to all members, not circulated.

58.2 **Agreed** – the minutes of the meeting held 1 March 2016 subject to the amendments in 58.1 above.

59 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

59A UCL Qatar Update *[Minute 43 (15-16) refers]*

59A.1 **Received** – the update and the revised draft of the teach-out plan at EDCOM 4-01 (15-16).

59A.2 Following receipt of the draft teach-out plan at the last EdCom, UCL Qatar Board of Governors had met on 3 March 2016 to formalise the proposed reduction in the number of Masters programmes. UCL Qatar had also invited all students to a formal announcement on 6 March 2016, where they explained how the changes might affect students, and how UCL would protect their interests and the quality of their education. Several questions were raised and answered at the meeting, and no concerns were noted.

59A.3 **Agreed** – EdCom welcomed the update and confirmed that UCL was satisfied with the arrangements that had been put in place for the teach-out. Updates would be received at future EdCom meetings to monitor progress.

59B QAA Higher Education Review Oral Update *[Minute 45 (15-16) refers]*

59B.1 The Director of Academic Services provided an update on preparations for the four-day visit taking place from 9 to 12 May 2016. QAA had submitted two requests for further evidence, and provided a list of interviewees. There would be 10 meetings, including sessions for UG, PGT, and PGR students, the Provost, the senior team responsible for quality across UCL, a meeting with faculty-level staff and one with departmental-level staff, and two meetings with central services staff. A mock review had been conducted, providing staff with the opportunity to practice answering questions. Written and verbal briefings would also be provided as well as drop-in sessions to help prepare interviewees.

59C Education Strategy Update *[Minute 46 (15-16) refers]*

59C.1 The Strategy had been formally approved by AC and Council and was now available on the UCL website. Hard copies were also available. EdCom thanked the Director of Education Planning for the work that had gone into preparing this important document for UCL’s future direction.

60 CHAIR’S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

60A UCL ECTS Conversion

60A.1 **Received** – the report of Chair’s Action at EDCOM 4-02 (15-16).

60.A.2 In 2015, EdCom agreed to change the UCL-ECTS conversion system as part of the new Qualifications and Credit Framework. Chair’s Action had been taken to approve a paragraph to be added to transcripts to explain the change.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION
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61 BOARDS OF EXAMINERS' TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 61.1 **Received** – the proposed terms of reference for Programme Boards of Examiners and Faculty Boards of Examiners at EDCOM 4-03 (15-16).
- 61.2 Whilst the UCL Academic Manual included extensive regulations around the role and responsibilities of Boards of Examiners, currently there were no institutionally agreed Terms of Reference for either Programme or Faculty Boards of Examiners. The proposed ToRs were drawn up with reference to UCL's existing BoE regulations and examples from other HEIs. They were intended to reflect what Boards already do, and not to create any new requirements. The current regulations already included constitution, membership and quoracy for both types of board. It was therefore suggested that the ToRs were added to those sections of the Academic Manual.
- 61.3 EdCom welcomed the ToRs and suggested the following amendments:
- a) That, although ultimate responsibility lay with EdCom, it would be clearer if the Faculty ToRs stated that the Boards reported to QRSC.
 - b) That the locus of authority to confer a UCL qualification could be made more explicit i.e. that the Programme BoE makes recommendations to EdCom and that Assessment and Student Records check and verify degrees under authority delegated from EdCom. The Chair of the Faculty BoE acts as a further checkpoint before the recommendations are received by EdCom, but does not formally approve results.
 - c) That there was no benefit to the current imperative to have separate UG and PGT Faculty BoEs, and that the decision to operate separate or combined Faculty BoEs could be up to the discretion of the Faculty.
 - d) The ToRs should allow Programme BoEs to include more than one programme within its remit as this would help to reduce the number of separate boards. Each board would still need at least one internal and one external examiner for every programme or part of programme being considered.
 - e) That FBoEs no longer approved applications for the postponement of the award of Honours, and that this should therefore be removed.
 - f) That the ToRs should clearly define the Board's capacity to delegate authority to the chair or to a sub group of itself in order to make decisions on its behalf with regards to, for example, resits and deferrals.
- 61.4 **Approved** - the Programme and Faculty BoE ToRs, subject to the amendments described above.
- 61.5 **Agreed** – Academic Services would amend and circulate the ToRs for the 2015-16 exam period. Boards would be invited to receive the ToRs and feedback to EdCom with any issues or suggestions.

Action: Academic Services**62 PROGRAMME AND COURSE INFORMATION** [*Minute 51 (15-16) refers*]

- 62.1 **Received** – the proposals for core programme and course information requirements at EDCOM 4-04 (15-16).
- 62.2 The Programme and Course Information Working Group had met twice and agreed a set of core information that should be provided by all programmes, based on existing practice across faculties and departments. The core information should be located in a single place, but individual departments could decide whether this was a handbook, Moodle page, departmental

website etc., as long as this location was readily accessible and publicised to students both at enrolment and throughout their studies. UCL would provide standard text and links for sections relating to central policy, and some sections could be drafted and agreed at Faculty or Departmental level.

- 62.3 EdCom welcomed the development, and UCLU were pleased to see progress in this area. It was felt that the document could better define where both central and local information might be needed – for example in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. It was noted that programmes and departments would be expected to comply with the requirements from September 2016, and that the list and any central information would therefore need to be disseminated promptly. It was also felt that the implementation should include some means of monitoring uptake across UCL.
- 62.4 EdCom discussed the relationship between the core information and the programme specification, which UCL had traditionally used as a programme-approval tool and not as a source of student information. Programme specifications were available on the UCL website, and departments were required to include clear links for students to the relevant year of study. However it might be preferable for the Programme Specification to be drafted in student-friendly language, ready to be replicated in other literature as and when needed. SRS had initiated a project to review the format and availability of programme specifications during Summer 2016, and the findings of the working group could be fed into this.
- 62.5 **Approved** – the list of core programme and course information, subject to amendments to make clear whether and how both central and local information might be provided in tandem.

Action: Academic Services

- 62.6 **Agreed** – in order to ensure compliance, the requirements would be a mandated action in the ASER process for the coming round.

Action: Academic Services

63 SSCC/ SEQ ANNUAL REPORT AND STUDENT FEEDBACK DATA OVERVIEW

- 63.1 **Received** – the annual report at EDCOM 4-05 (15-16).
- 63.2 The report had been received and discussed at the Student Experience Committee (StEC), which had highlighted some key points for EdCom to consider. Although most SSCCs were operating very effectively, the report identified significant variability in the quality of minutes, and in the extent to which SSCCs covered all the required items such as ASER reports, External Examiner reports etc. Not all SSCCs had met at least twice, as per the requirements, and it was not always clear from the minutes whether StARs were present at all meetings.
- 63.3 EdCom discussed how to improve compliance with the requirements so that all students had access to a fully consultative committee. This could be done through the ASER process, or through the network of StARs and their development plans. Programmes might also appoint lead student representatives who could be responsible for ensuring that SSCCs met the needs of students. EdCom could also provide chairs with guidance about the sorts of agenda items that might be covered, and advice on ways to make meetings more student-focussed.
- 63.4 **Agreed** – that the current SSCC requirements should stand and that ways to ensure compliance would be investigated further by StEC.

Action: Chair of StEC

64 LATE SUMMER RESITS *[Minute 48 (15-16) refers]*

64.1 **Received** – the update at EDCOM 4-06 (15-16).

64.2 A Working Group had been established to oversee the pilot in August/September 2016, and had met twice. The group had confirmed the period for the examinations and timelines for preparation. Formal communications were being drafted for relevant students and academic/administrative staff. The following programmes would be taking part in pilot:

- BSc Psychology and Language Sciences (Faculty of Brain Sciences)
- LLB Law (Faculty of Laws)
- LLM Law (Faculty of Laws)
- BSc Architecture (Bartlett School of Architecture)
- BSc Project and Construction Management
- BSc Project and Construction Management (Sandwich)
- MArch Architecture (Bartlett School of Architecture)

64.3 The Working Group requested that EdCom consider the timeline for full implementation across UCL, suggesting a phased rollout to take into account the lessons learnt from the pilot, which would not be fully known until the start of the 2016/17 session, and to allow departments time to put sufficient resources in place. It was suggested that a phased roll out might include late summer resits for only PGT students, or only new students, or only deferred students for 2016-17.

64.4 EdCom raised concerns about delaying the implementation as it was unacceptable to expect students to wait a full year to resit, particularly if they had ECs. However it was noted that the new EC regulations already permitted late assessments for all students, including finalists, and so the issue of deferrals could still be addressed more quickly. It was also noted that many of the proposals being put forward as part of the review of the assessment regulations were dependent on the operation of late summer resits – without these, many of the new regulations would be delayed, and students and staff would have to wait longer to see the benefits. A great deal of consultation had been undertaken with staff and students across UCL, and there were concerns that much of the good will generated by this process would be lost if the proposals were delayed. However, EdCom recognised that Late Summer Resits would need to be properly planned and resourced, and that a further year would allow departments to fully prepare for the new system, including setting and approving additional papers, and resourcing marking over the summer period.

64.5 **Agreed** – ARQASC would discuss the timeline for the implementation of late summer resits and the proposals for changes to the regulations and report back to EdCom.

Action: Chair of ARQASC

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

65 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

65.1 **Approved** – the programmes recommended by PMAP at EDCOM 4-07 (15-16).

66 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES**66A Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee**

66A.1 **Approved** – the minutes of the meetings held 2 February 2016 and 10 March 2016 at EDCOM 4-08 (15-16) and EDCOM 4-09 (15-16).

66B Programme and Module Approval Panel

66B.1 **Approved** – the minutes of the meeting held 3 February 2016 at EDCOM 4-10 (15-16).

66C Quality Review Sub Committee

66C.1 **Approved** – the minutes of the meeting held 11 February 2016 at EDCOM 4-11 (15-16).

67 ANONYMISED SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS REPORT

67.1 **Approved** – the suspensions of regulations at EDCOM 4-12 (15-16).

68 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

68.1 No further business was raised.

69 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:

- Tuesday 7 June 2016, 2.00 – 4.30, Council Room

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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3 May 2016