



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

26 April 2018

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair);
 Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Sarah Al-Aride; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Arne Hofmann; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Tim McHugh; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Aeli Roberts; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Eva Sorensen; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Angie Wade.

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Mr Rob Traynor for item 43, Ms Anniina Wikman for item 44, Professor David Waters for item 45, Mr Tom Flynn for item 47.

Apologies were received from: Dr Ben Clifford; Mr Ian Davis; Dr Clare Goudy; Ms June Hedges; Dr Christine Hoffman; Ms Aiysha Qureshi; Dr Fiona Strawbridge.

Key to abbreviations

ARQASC	Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee
CMA	Competitions and Markets Authority
EdCom	Education Committee
EE	External Examiner
LSA	Late Summer Assessment
MAPS	Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
PMAP	Programme and Module Approval Panel
SoR	Suspension of Regulations
SRS	Student and Registry Services
SU	Students' Union
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework

PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

40 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (*EdCom Minutes 27-39*)

40.1 **Approved** - the minutes of the meeting held 28 February 2018 were agreed.

41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

41.1 *Minute 30 Academic Partnership Agreements* – The committee noted that an update would be received at a future meeting.

PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

42 REPORT FROM STRIKE MITIGATION TASK GROUP

[Minute 32, EdCom 28.02.2018]

- 42.1 **Received** – the report at EDCOM 4-01 (17-18).
- 42.2 The Chair thanked the Task Group and Faculty Tutors for their work in ensuring that students were not adversely affected by the recent industrial action.
- 42.3 EdCom had agreed that the Material Irregularities Procedure should be used as it provided a range of mitigation options for groups of students or individuals. The Task Group was able to provide further advice and guidance on individual cases, particularly where the action could have had an adverse impact on student progression or the award of degrees. A large proportion of cases had been resolved by rewriting examination papers or by extending coursework deadlines. In only a handful of cases was it necessary to exclude an affected component or module from progression, award or classification decisions. Where modules had been affected, departments had been asked to ensure that this was communicated to students. EdCom members were also asked to help disseminate information to students about submitting complaints or appeals within the required timeframes. It was suggested that Boards of Examiners be advised to look at year-on-year cohort data to act as a further check on achievement rates.
- 42.4 EdCom noted that there may be a longer-term impact on some students. Departments would need to remain alert to the impact of missed teaching on exam papers and assessment tasks for a number of years, particularly in those disciplines with a linear approach to knowledge acquisition. EdCom agreed that staff should be encouraged to contact Academic Services for advice and guidance about this.
- Action: Task Group**
- 42.5 The Students' Union highlighted the national campaign for a refund of fees which was being supported by many UCL students. The committee noted that fees were not within the remit of the EdCom Task Group but were being discussed by the institutional steering group. From the outset, the steering group had agreed that any withheld salaries would be put into the student hardship fund, and that UCL would not benefit in any way. Arrangements were also being made for students who were out of pocket due to pre-booked travel, accommodation etc. The steering group welcomed suggestions from students about other ways in which withheld salaries could be used to support students.

43 INITIAL PROPOSALS ON CORE PROGRAMME INFORMATION

- 43.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 4-02 (17-18).
- 43.2 In 2016, Education Committee commissioned a working group to look at the provision of information to students via student handbooks, Moodle sites etc. The working group compiled a list of 'Core Programme Information' and a student intern was recruited to write sections of text about key UCL policies and procedures to be inserted into handbooks etc.
- 43.3 A small group was set up to review the information for the 2018-19 academic session. The group had been asked to assess whether the Core Programme Information should be retained. From 2018-19 the new Programme Summaries would provide a lot of core information to students and, for the first time, UCL would also have a single set of centrally-published academic regulations. However the working group felt that student handbooks and Moodle sites were still a vital source of information for students, and that the Core Programme Information should be retained, at least until the Programme Summaries and new regulations were more embedded, and the Students' webpages could be made more comprehensive.
- A perennial difficulty had been the timing of the Core Programme Information – departments wanted to start writing their student handbooks in May, but regulations and policies were not approved until June and websites could not be updated until the end of the academic session

without causing a lot of confusion for students and staff in the middle of exams and exam boards. It was suggested that a version of the information without web links be circulated earlier in the year so that departments could start work. A linked version could then be circulated once websites were published. It was also suggested that web links be provided in the form of hyperlinks, print URLs and search terms to make it easier for Departments to use.

Action: Core Programme Information Working Group

43.4 EdCom members were asked to note that they would be contacted in the next few weeks to check, and if necessary amend, any sections of the information which related to their area. Content owners were asked to respond promptly so that the information could be published at the end of May.

Action: EdCom members

43.5 EdCom thanked the group for their work. It was suggested that a wider project could be established in the coming months to talk to students about their communication needs and preferences, and to adapt the Core Programme Information accordingly – for example it might be better provided as a series of Frequently Asked Questions, and some staff felt that the language could be made more student-friendly (although it was originally written by a student). EdCom noted that it would be helpful to have a section on Learning Agreements, and that it would be useful to run the information past the CMA working group to check it for compliance. For future years, it would also be useful to agree some common information about placements and the advice available from the Careers service. The working group also recommended that examples of good practice be made available to help staff draft their student handbooks. ARQASC might also look at whether the regulatory approval cycle could be brought forward for future years.

44 ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK 2018-19

44.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 4-03 (17-18).

44.2 The Senior Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships) introduced proposals for the Academic Manual for 2018-19 which had been drawn up in consultation with Legal Services, the Global Engagement Office and faculties who had recent experience of setting up new partnerships. Key changes included improved forms, a reduction in the number of documents needed and more step-by-step guidance. Staff were also guided to talk to the Senior Policy Advisor for advice in setting up a new partnership and completing the paperwork.

44.3 The papers also included proposals for a new partnership category of ‘Joint Delivery’ for programmes which are designed and delivered jointly, but which only lead to one award. This type of partnership would be far less complex to set up than a Joint Award which required regulatory alignment. It was noted that Teaching/Programme Contribution was still a separate partnership category for programmes that included a smaller contribution or contribution not involving teaching from a partner institution (such as the proposed partnership with 2U). It was noted that UCL would continue to have final say on admissions decisions for all types of partnerships.

44.4 EdCom requested that more partner-facing materials be developed to help with their understanding of UCL regulations and processes.

44.5 **Approved** – the Academic Partnerships Framework 2018-19. The proposals would also be submitted to Research Degrees Committee for approval.

45 MAPS CLASSIFICATION PROPOSALS

[Minute 34, EdCom 28.02.2018]

45.1 **Received** – the paper at EDCOM 4-04 (17-18).

45.2 EdCom welcomed the Vice-Dean of MAPS who introduced proposals for the Faculty to adopt Honours Degree Classification Scheme B. In July 2017, EdCom had agreed that Classification Scheme A would be the default, and that Schemes B and C would only be used where professional bodies imposed restrictions. It was also agreed that decisions should be made on a faculty-wide basis. In October 2017, EdCom approved in principle the associated regulations.

45.3 MAPS had had a great deal of debate about which scheme to use, as some programmes were subject to professional restrictions and others were not. Some members of the faculty had also

expressed concerns about student engagement if modules could be dropped from the classification – MAPS' current scheme differed from the main harmonised scheme of award by counting all marks. MAPS also currently had very high achievement rates when compared to the rest of UCL, and it was felt that Scheme A would exacerbate this further. The Faculty was keen to have a single approach across its programmes to ensure fairness for students and so was proposing to use Scheme B.

- 45.4 **Agreed** - EdCom thanked the Faculty for the care and consideration which had gone into reaching a conclusion. It was agreed that the decision was principally based on professional accreditation requirements, and so there was no need for revisions to the regulations or other faculties' decisions.

46 SRS UPDATE ON LATE SUMMER ASSESSMENTS

- 46.1 **Received** – the paper at [EDCOM 4-05 \(17-18\)](#).

46.2 EdCom received an update on progress since the publication of the LSA Planning Pack in January. A number of key issues had been resolved including student access to libraries and facilities over the summer and the automatic capping of marks in Portico. Further guidance would be published shortly and staff training sessions would be run during the summer term.

46.3 The paper included a number of requests for alternative methods of assessment for the LSAs for those assessments which were very difficult to replicate out of term time, such as presentations or group work. All requests had to be approved by the External Examiner and by Education Committee. The committee noted that the 'special arrangement' referred to for the Department of English was simply an alternative method of assessment that had been discussed with Academic Services a number of months ago. Members also noted that alternative assessment methods applied to all students sitting one assessment; it was not a mechanism for individual students to request an alternative format.

46.4 The paper also included some requests for Suspensions of Regulations to allow some reassessments to take place after the LSA period, for example where teaching continued to the end of term three and/ or into the summer vacation. ARQASC had recommended that all such arrangements take place within three months of the original assessment so that student progression, award and graduation were not delayed unduly, and that any written examinations would have to be run in the department. It was also noted that, whilst the regulations allowed departments to run reassessments earlier, they should be aiming for the LSA period so that students had full access to libraries, Student Disability Services and Student Support and Wellbeing. ARQASC was planning to review the regulations for next year to build in more flexibility. It was also suggested that PMAP should add a specific question to the Programme Initiation Questionnaire for departments to request alternative assessment methods.

46.5 EdCom also asked about the process for submitting PGT taught module marks in June. It was reiterated that this could be done by Chair's Action and that the External Examiner did not need to be involved. The EE would then look at samples from both the first and second sitting at their normal visit in the autumn. Whilst there was a very small chance that the EE might change a student's mark from a pass to a fail or vice versa, this was a very rare occurrence and would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. EdCom requested that the wording in the LSA Planning Pack be changed from marks being 'confirmed' in June, to marks being 'entered' to help address any confusion on this point.

- 46.6 **Approved** – the requests for alternative methods of assessment and Suspensions of Regulations as detailed at [EDCOM 4-05 \(17-18\)](#).

47 FACULTY STUDENT REPRESENTATION REVIEW

- 47.1 **Received** – the paper at [EDCOM 4-06 \(17-18\)](#).

Colleagues from the Students' Union presented proposals for each faculty to establish a Faculty Representative Forum. Following discussions about the role, it was felt that a slightly more structured space was needed to start conversations, gather feedback from departmental reps and SSCs, and help Faculty Reps to initiate change. The proposals gave faculties considerable freedom in determining the best structure and format for such sessions.

- 47.2 **Endorsed** - EdCom welcomed the proposals and the opportunity to bring together reps within faculties to work at a more strategic level. The paper suggested that there be a minimum

requirement of three meetings a year, however EdCom expressed concerns about the feasibility of meeting in the summer term during exams, and requested that the minimum requirement be reduced to two meetings per year (they could of course meet more frequently if desired).

PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

48 UPDATE FROM UCL QATAR

48.1 **Received** – the paper at [EDCOM 4-07 \(17-18\)](#).

48.2 In October 2016, EdCom received a report from the Director of UCL Qatar detailing plans to reduce the number of Masters programmes from four to two by 2017-18, and to zero in 2020. This paper provided an update on progress.

48.3 EdCom thanked UCL Qatar for the report and noted the importance of maintaining oversight during the run-out in order to ensure that academic standards were being maintained, that there was adequate resourcing in place and that students were supported appropriately. It was particularly important to mitigate any risks for students who might be unable to complete their studies before the end of UCL's contract. The Chair would also be visiting the campus soon to attend graduation and would take the opportunity to discuss progress with the team there.

48.4 **Approved** – the progress report from UCL Qatar.

49 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE: TERM 3

49.1 **Received** – the update at [EDCOM 4-08 \(17-18\)](#).

50 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

50.1 **Approved** – the programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at [EDCOM 4-09 \(17-18\)](#).

51 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

51.1 **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held *1 February 2018* at [EDCOM 4-10 \(17-18\)](#).

51.2 **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held *27 February 2018* at [EDCOM 4-11 \(17-18\)](#).

51.3 **Approved** – the minutes of the Quality Review Sub-Committee held *14 September 2017, 23 November 2017 and 30 January 2018* at [EDCOM 4-12 \(17-18\)](#), [EDCOM 4-13 \(17-18\)](#) and [EDCOM 4-14 \(17-18\)](#).

51.4 **Approved** – the minutes of the Student Academic Representatives Steering Group held *6 February 2018* at [EDCOM 4-15 \(17-18\)](#).

52 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS

52.1 **Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations at [EDCOM 4-16 \(17-18\)](#).

53 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

53A New Online Programme

53A.1 The Chair reported on a proposed new partnership with 2U to deliver UCL's first major online programme, an MBA through the School of Management. Further details would be brought to a future meeting of EdCom.

Action: Pro-Director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation

53B Subject-level TEF

53B.1 The Chair gave an update on the pilots of the two proposed models. Across the sector, it was currently felt that Model A was too granular and therefore unworkable. Model B assigned subject areas to six or seven clusters, although there were concerns that the clusters were

wrongly-configured, making it very difficult for institutions to create coherent narrative, and for assessors to reach a judgement. It was felt that the final model would be something akin to Model B, with the groupings restructured. A report would be submitted to a future meeting so that EdCom could explore the issues.

Action: Director of Education Planning

54 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2017-18:

- 12 June 2018 2.30-5.00pm, Room G08, Chadwick Building
- 19 July 2018 10.00-12.30, Room 114 Foster Court

LIZZIE VINTON

Secretary to Education Committee

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