



## Education Committee

26 April 2022

### Confirmed Minutes

Present:

Professor Kathy Armour (Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Ms Arifa Aminy; Professor Simon Banks; Mr Ayman Benmati; Dr Nicole Brown, Ms Sarah Cowls; Mr Ian Davis; Professor Sally Day; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Julie Evans; Ms Megan Gerrie; Ms Megan Gerrie; Professor Alistair Greig; Professor Jane Holder; Professor Arne Hofmann; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Dr Rachel King; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Ms Viktoria Makai; Professor Chloe Marshall; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Aeli Roberts; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Sam Smidt; Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Professor Olga Thomas; Ms Lizzie Vinton and Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Dr Dionne Spencer, Ms Sarah West and Ms Hannah Swallow, Ms Sian Minett; Ms Leigh Kilpert (for Mike Rowson), Ms Alison Edridge (Secretary) and Mr Rob Traynor (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies: Mr Mike Rowson, Ms June Hedges and Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva.

Observing the meeting: Ms Afroditi Tampakopoulou and Ms Sandra Hinton

### Part I: Preliminary Business

#### 59. Welcome and Announcements

59.1. The Chair welcomed Sarah Cowls, the new Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar, as a new member of EdCom.

#### 60. Minutes of Previous Meetings

60.1. Approved – the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2022 [EdCom Minutes 32-47, 2021-22] at EDCOM 4-01 (21-22).

60.2. Approved – the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 8 March 2022 [EdCom Minutes 48-50, 2021-22] at EDCOM 4-02 (21-22).

60.3. Approved – the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 7 April 2022 [EdCom Minutes 51-58, 2021-22] at EDCOM 4-03 (21-22) subject to the following additions:

- Minute 54.4 – clarification that a decision has not yet been taken on whether the academic year should be semesterised.

- Minute 56 – the actions that Academic Board required EdCom to take for the Education Programmes and Priorities paper of the Strategic Plan as set out in Minute 52.1 should be reiterated in Minute 56, along with the agreement by EdCom in Minute 52.2 that a parallel consultation would not be undertaken, but that EdCom would instead consider the feedback from the existing consultation.

## **61. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- 61.1. Minute 38.6: the Chair noted that potential separation of the Departmental Graduate Tutor roles for postgraduate research and postgraduate taught provision had also been raised at Research Degrees Committee. A meeting had been arranged between the Chair and the Director of the Doctoral School to discuss this.

## **62. Chair's Action taken since the Last Meeting**

- 62.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 4-04 (21-22). This contained the agreed Teaching and Assessment Operating Model for 2022-23 which had been approved by Chair's action taking account of feedback received from EdCom by circulation. The Chair noted that UCL had received a legal class action for refunds of tuition fees due to non-provision of in-person teaching during the pandemic and to a lesser extent during strike action, which was an OfS reportable event. It was possible that further cases would be received.

- 62.2. A member raised that Academic Board (AB) had been due to review the UCL guidance on recording of lectures which was linked to Section 3iii of the Operating Model. It had agreed that further consideration needed to be given to who owned recordings created by UCL staff. The guidance currently stated that 'UCL commits not to use recordings created during academic years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 without the originator's consent.' and this needed to be updated. It was agreed that specific year references in the guidance should be replaced with a statement that recordings would not be used without consent beyond the current academic year. It was noted that review of the position on ownership of recordings was by the AB Intellectual Property Policy Group.

**Action – Director of Arena Centre to arrange for UCL guidance on recording of lecturers to be updated.**

- 62.3. Received – the paper at EDCOM 4-05 (21-22) setting out mitigation arrangements for Year Abroad students returning from Russia early. It was noted that this aligned with the approach taken for students returning early due to Covid-19 approved in March 2020.

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

### **63. Vision and Aspirations for Education at UCL – draft 'principles'**

- 63.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 4-06 (21-22). This had been prepared by the Chair following the discussion at the meeting of EdCom on 7 April 2022 and contained a first

draft set of principles on UCL's vision and aspirations for education. EdCom was invited to comment on the draft principles and whether they reflected its ambitions for the future of education at UCL. They would then be revised and circulated to Faculties and Departments for further consideration. The following points were discussed:

### **Principle 1**

- A member noted that this appeared to be a goal rather than a values-based principle due to the reference to performance in external measurements and league tables. It was suggested that the wording be reviewed to refer to the underlying values in education. The Chair noted that the current wording was intended to reflect the same level of ambition and recognition of excellence for education and the student experience (ESE) as that for research but how this was phrased could be reviewed. It was suggested that the commitment to improving ESE could be reframed as being reflected in what students say about their experience rather than the primary driver being external recognition of this.
- There was some discussion about whether issues with the National Student Survey (NSS) methodology and students not understanding the questions contributed to UCL's low results. It was noted, however, that the same methodology applied to all participating institutions and UCL still performed relatively worse than comparator institutions. There were strict rules governing how the NSS was promoted and explained to students by institutions to prevent undue influence and care needed to be taken to follow these.

### **Principle 2**

- Clarification on what was meant by 'changing student and societal expectations' would be helpful.
- With regards to staff workloads, a member suggested that the role of academic staff and their workload within the context of a research-intensive environment should be mentioned. Another member suggested that reference to workloads should be removed from the principles as they considered that this did not set an appropriate tone. It could be replaced with a broader reference to education being appropriately resourced.
- There were likely to be opposing views about whether the phrase 'bold and innovative' was appropriate as a principle when designing ESE, as being either of these things did not equate to ESE being good.

### **Principle 3**

- It was queried whether the reference to research-intensive pedagogies would mean building on the Connected Curriculum framework from the previous strategy or setting this aside. The Chair noted that it had not been adopted consistently across UCL. It was intended that the principles of the Connected Curriculum would be retained but the approach to it would need to be updated. It had featured significantly in the last TEF submission and UCL would need to demonstrate progress with its implementation in the next submission.

#### **Principle 4**

- There should be greater emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion across the principles.

#### **Principle 5**

- It was suggested that this principle should reflect an aspiration for an environmentally sustainable estate.

#### **Other feedback**

- A member noted that the principles did not currently refer to UCL's aspirations for graduates, for example for them to secure good jobs and to be recognised as being appropriately skilled by employers and suggested this could be covered in a sixth principle. However, success in employment could not be measured directly and UCL had limited control of what students did after graduation. The principles should therefore be focused on what UCL could control. The inclusion of participation in extra-curricular activities and acquisition of broader skills that enhance employability was suggested as an alternative.
- The principles could more clearly reflect that excellence in research and excellence in teaching were complementary to each other and it was not the intention to improve one at the detriment of the other.
- Other suggestions of what the principles should include or should be addressed through subsequent implementation work included:
  - reflection by students on what they had gained from assessment and how this related to their employability;
  - how the transition from secondary education to university is facilitated including through personal tutors and alumni;
  - a greater emphasis on the partnership with students and co-creation of their experience; and
  - embedding student-centredness as a thread across the principles.

63.2. The Chair thanked members for the interesting discussion and confirmed that she would reframe the draft principles as aspirations, beliefs or values and to take account of the comments received. The next iteration of the principles was not intended to be final but to generate appropriate discussions within Faculties and Departments. Feedback received from those discussions would be considered at the June meeting of EdCom.

**Action – Chair to revise draft principles and circulate to Faculty Tutors for local discussions.**

#### **64. Board of Examiners Emergency Procedures**

64.1. Approved – the paper at EDCOM 4-07 (21-22) which set out proposed amendments to the Covid-19 Board of Examiners Emergency Procedures to ensure that they would be appropriate to cover any emergency issues affecting the operation of Boards, such as industrial action.

64.2. It was queried whether the removal of references to online Board of Examiners meetings from the procedures meant that these must now take place in person. It was clarified that it had recently been agreed to retain online meetings for all Boards of Examiners unless there was an academic need to meet in person. As the default position had become to hold Boards of Examiners meetings online, there was no longer a need to refer to them in the emergency procedures.

## **65. UCL Student Support Draft Framework**

- 65.1. Received – the papers at EDCOM 4-08 (21-22), which contained a report from the Student Support Review Group, a draft Student Support Framework for 2022-23, an Academic Impact Statement and an Equality Impact Statement. This was the output of work that had commenced in 2020 and had been developed through extensive consultation with staff and students.
- 65.2. The proposed framework would consolidate current individual student support procedures within a new chapter of the Academic Manual to make them easier for students to navigate and understand the options available to them, as well as making it easier for staff to support students. Enhancements were being made to existing procedures which included removing overlaps between the current Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) and Summary of Reasonable Adjustments procedures and addressing confidentiality and data protection issues. The most significant policy change was the development of a new Support to Study procedure to replace the current Fitness to Study Procedure. This would de-medicalise fitness to study and introduce a more supportive approach which placed students at its centre.
- 65.3. Discussions were underway with relevant colleagues about how the new framework would be communicated to staff and students. It would be important to convey that students' feedback had been listened to in developing the framework and what it would mean for them in practice. Funding was required for the development of a user-friendly website and an online triage tool. This would be raised as part of the termly increment planning for IT projects taking place later in the week.
- 65.4. A new online workflow in Portico for managing ECs was under development. A member noted that as there had not previously been an institution-wide system, Faculties had developed local solutions for managing ECs. They would need to know by mid-July whether or not the Portico workflow would be ready for the start of Term 1 of 2022-23 to have time to update local systems if required. EdCom was informed that confirmation of whether or not this timescale would be met would be known after this week's termly increment planning for IT projects.
- 65.5. EdCom members were asked to send any feedback on the proposals to the Academic Regulations Manager and the Student Support Review Group Chair. The proposals would also be discussed at Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee (ARQASC) on 27 April 2022 and final proposals presented to the EdCom

meeting on 9 June 2022. The Chair expressed thanks to all colleagues who had contributed to this important project.

## **66. Student Appeals Draft Procedure and Amendments to Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures**

- 66.1. Received – the papers at EdCom 4-09 (21-22). Academic appeals were currently dealt with through the Student Complaints procedure but following recommendations from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), a separate procedure for academic appeals had been developed for implementation in 2022-23. This would align UCL with the general approach to academic appeals and student complaints within the sector. Amendments were proposed to the Student Complaints procedure to reflect the development of a separate academic appeals procedure. The Student Disciplinary procedures were also being amended to align the membership of review panels with those in the Appeals and Complaints procedures.
- 66.2. ARQASC had considered an earlier version of the draft appeals procedure in 2021-22 and this latest draft would be considered by ARQASC on 27 April 2022. Council was required to give final approval for the procedures and this would be sought at its 7 July 2022 meeting.
- 66.3. EdCom commended the work that had been undertaken to develop the revised procedures. The following feedback was provided:
- It would be important to ensure clear signposting to students about which procedure they should follow.
  - A member suggested that further information should be included in the Academic Appeals procedure on appeals against decisions of Departmental EC Panels received before an Exam Board.
  - The grounds on which a complaint could be made had disappeared during the separation of the procedure for academic appeals from the Complaints procedures.
  - It would be useful for ARQASC to discuss the mitigations available for appeals cases involving dissertation submissions.
  - Faculty Tutors would no longer consider appeals against their own decisions, which was considered a positive change.
- 66.4. Members were asked to send any further feedback on the proposals to the Head of Regulations and Casework. The short timescale available to finalise the draft procedures was noted.

## **67. Timetabling Policy 2022/23**

- 67.1. Received – the paper at EDCOM 4-10 (21-22) containing an updated Timetabling Policy for approval. The Policy was jointly owned by EdCom and Operations Committee and would be presented to Operations Committee for approval on 5 May 2022.

67.2. EdCom was informed that prior to Spring 2020, UCL's approach to timetabling was enshrined within its governance arrangements. A Timetabling Policy was developed in response to the pandemic and updates were now required to reflect the return to in-person teaching and normal management of teaching spaces.

67.3. The following points were discussed:

- It would be helpful to include further clarification in some sections, as these may be misread and cause confusion. Examples included the reference to departments and their staff being able to choose to teach outside core teaching hours in Section 5.3 and the reference to auto-rooming of events of more than 5 weeks duration in Section 5.9.2.
- The reference to students not being able to audit classes face-to-face did not align with practice in some departments. The Director of Estates Portfolio and Business Services confirmed control over the numbers of students in rooms was required for scheduling purposes and students registered on modules had to be the priority. The system was not currently set up to accommodate timetabling of spaces for students auditing modules but it would be useful to explore the possibility of this in the future. The possibility for students to audit modules would therefore need to be managed locally subject to spaces being available in rooms.
- It would be helpful to reflect UCL's travel guidelines, which state that students should not be required to travel between campuses on the same day, in the policy. It was confirmed the policy would operate based on this intent but for students with a loosely-defined programme diet, it would be difficult to guarantee this.
- It was confirmed that specialist facilities at UCL East were defined in the same ways as at the Bloomsbury campus.
- It was suggested that the policy should make clear who had the authority to provide exceptional permission for teaching on a Wednesday afternoon and how it would be monitored and recorded.

67.4. It was agreed that any further comments on the policy should be sent to the Director of Estates Portfolio and Business Services by 29 April 2022. Subject to the feedback above being addressed and no significant issues being raised in any further feedback, the paper at EDCOM 4-10 (21-22) was approved.

## **68. Office for Students Conditions of Registration and Reportable Events – Education Committee Responsibilities**

68.1. Received and approved – the paper at EDCOM 4-11 (21-22) containing a mapping of the OfS ongoing conditions of registration and example reportable events to relevant UCL committees. A number of conditions of registration and reportable events had been determined as the responsibility of EdCom.

## **69. Department for Education (DfE) Consultations on Higher Education Reform and Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE)**

- 69.1. The papers at EDCOM 4-12 (21-22) summarising two consultation papers from the DfE and seeking feedback on UCL's proposed responses to the consultation questions. It was noted that a number of the specific proposals would not apply to UCL and the focus had been on preparing responses to the questions that were relevant.
- 69.2. The following comments were made:
- Engineering offered a Foundation Year but this had not been referred to in the draft responses. It was suggested that it would be useful to align the response with that of the Engineering Council.
  - Greater emphasis could be placed in UCL's response on the focus on undergraduate study in the LLE consultation being misplaced when demand was likely to be at Level 7.
  - The proposals for transfer of credit between institutions may be hindered by differences in institutions' entry criteria and it would be helpful to highlight this.
  - The Students' Union (SU) strongly opposed the proposals on minimum entry requirements for student funding eligibility purposes. It was agreed to emphasise the SU's support for UCL's response.
- 69.3. It was noted that the proposed responses would be considered by University Management Committee (UMC) prior to submission to the DfE by the deadline of 6 May 2022.

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

#### **70. Academic Manual: Proposed Amendments to MBBS**

- 70.1. Approved – the paper at EDCOM 4-13 (21-22) to amend the Academic Manual and the MBBS mark scheme to incorporate in-year resits.

#### **71. Approval of New Programmes of Study**

- 71.1. Approved – the programmes of study recommended by PMAP at EDCOM 4-14 (21-22).

#### **72. Minutes of Sub-Committees and Working Groups**

- 72.1. Approved – the minutes of ARQASC held on 16 November 2021 at EDCOM 4-15 (21-22).
- 72.2. Approved – the minutes of PMAP held on 9 December 2021 and 27 January 2022 at EDCOM 4-16 (21-22).
- 72.3. Approved – the minutes of QRSC held on 10 December 2021 at EDCOM 4-17 (21-22).

#### **73. Any other business**

- 73.1. None.



#### **74. Dates of Future Meetings**

74.1. The dates of the EdCom meetings for the rest of the 2021-22 session were:

- Thursday, 9 June 2022, 10:00 - 14:00 to be held in person (room TBC).
- Reserved Meeting: Tuesday 19 July 2022, 14:00 - 16:30\* on MS Teams

Alison Edridge (Secretary) and Rob Traynor (Assistant Secretary)

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17 May 2022