LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

26 May 2011

M I N U T E S

Present:

Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr Bob Allan
Mr David Ashton
Ms Karen Barnard
Ms Susan Bryant
Mr Michael Chessum
Dr Brenda Cross
Mr Luke Durigan
Prof Vince Emery
Dr Caroline Essex
Mr Marco Federighi
Ms Valerie Hogg
Prof Alexi Marmot
Mr Martin Reid
Dr Hilary Richards
Prof Richard Simons
Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Ms Olga Thomas

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Bella Malins [for Minute 34]; Dr Jennifer Marie [for Minute 35]; Mr Mark Pickerill [for Minute 36]; Ms Paula Speller [for Minute 39]; Ms Irenie Morley.

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Jason Clarke; Prof John Mitchell; Mr Alex Nesbitt; Dr Ruth Siddall; Ms Rachel Solnick.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Record
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
ILTS	Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
RRG	Regulation Review Group
UCLU	UCL Union
UUK	Universities UK

32 **MINUTES**

Approved

32.1 The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 14 March 2010 *[EdCom Mins. 19-31, 14.03.11]*, issued previously, were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

33 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
[See also Min.39 below]

33A **Engagement Monitoring**
[EdCom Min. 21, 10-11]

Noted

33A.1 The issue of engagement monitoring was referred to the Research Degrees Committee for further discussion at its meeting of 21 March 2011. EdCom would receive a further progress report at its meeting of 6 July 2011.

33B **Publication of Masters Dissertations**
[EdCom Min. 29, 10-11]

Noted

33B.1 At its meeting of 14 March, EdCom had agreed that MRes dissertations (allowing for exemptions for certain sponsored programmes) might be published on UCL Discovery, subject to further discussion by the Research Degrees Committee. The matter was referred to the Research Degrees Committee for a final decision.

34 **ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)**

*[**Ms Bella Malins** attended for this item]*

Noted

34.1 EdCom was invited to consider a paper which set out guidance and procedure for APL. Also, Edcom was invited to note a paper from the Chair which set out criteria for direct admission into the second year.

Received

34.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/26 (10-11) - the guidance and procedure for APL.

34.3 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/27 (10-11) - criteria for admission to the second year of a programme.

34.4 An oral report from **the Chair, Professor Mike Ewing.**

Reported

34.5 Although UCL's procedure for admission with APL was three years old, staff and students remained largely unaware of it. It was being submitted to EdCom in part to increase awareness.

Discussed

34.6 EdCom noted that Item 8 of the APL guidance should make explicit the fact that the special arrangements referred to at Item 8 applied in the case of '*UCL*' Postgraduate Certificates.

34.7 EdCom discussed the criteria for second year entry as follows:

- it was essential to apply the criteria rigorously in order to be fair to those students applying for first year entry. With total student numbers fixed, accepting a student in the second year necessarily meant that there would be one fewer place for first year entry;
- it was important that second year entry did not become a means by which to enter UCL with inferior grades. For this reason the criteria included the insistence that the student must have met the standard A-level/IB entrance requirements, had at least a 2 (i) performance in their current studies and a supportive reference, preferably from the institution at which the student was currently or most recently based.

34.8 EdCom requested that criterion of a 2 (i) performance in the applicant's current studies also be expressed as a percentage (ie 60%).

34.9 The Chair recommended that those departments unsure of how to make detailed comparisons of the degree programmes/modules taken which showed the necessary equivalences, should seek advice from Department of Mathematics or the Department of Physics and Astronomy, both of whom had demonstrated best practice in this respect.

RESOLVED

34.10 That Item 8 of the APL guidance should make explicit the fact that the special arrangements referred to at Item 8 applied in the case of '*UCL*' Postgraduate Certificates. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

34.11 That the criterion of a 2 (i) performance in the applicant's current studies also be expressed as a percentage (ie 60%). **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

35 KEY SKILLS

*[**Dr Jennifer Marie** attended for this item]*

Noted

35.1 EdCom was invited to note a paper on progress with the implementation and utilisation of the system for capturing Key Skills which was launched UCL-wide in September 2010.

Received

35.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/28 (10-11) - a paper from Dr Jennifer Marie of CALT.

35.3 An oral report from **Dr Jennifer Marie**.

Reported

35.4 In her oral report, Dr Marie noted that take-up had been variable across UCL, with the best take-up being in Chemistry, with some 57% of the taught students engaging in a meaningful way. However, there were also parts of UCL where there had not yet been any meaningful engagement with the system.

Discussed

35.5 The main points of EdCom's discussion were as follows:

- that the Lead Officer report on Careers and Employability submitted to AC on 12 May 2011, tied in with many of the issues raised by the Key Skills report; particularly regarding pre-entry communications to prospective students and proposed post-graduation support for graduates;
- that the take-up of the Key Skills system among students had been disappointing. The UCL Union Education and Campaigns Officer confirmed that publicity for the Key Skills system had not yet been sufficient to make students aware of the benefits;
- that some tutors saw the system as being an integral part of the Personal Tutoring system and others did not see how it fitted in;
- that students would not view the system as worthwhile until tangible benefits could accrue from it, such as academic credit;
- that although complementary to the HEAR, the current Key Skills system was not actually part of this record. However, in time, students might wish to add Key Skills information to the HEAR. The possibility of uploading Key Skills information from PORTICO (at students' request) into a web-based facility was currently under investigation.

35.6 EdCom noted the intention of the Head of the UCL Graduate School and Chair of the Key Skills Working Group to reconvene the Working Group from June 2011 to consider how uptake might be improved. However, EdCom considered that the target for Key Skills take-up expressed in APPENDIX EDCOM 3/28 (10-11) of 30% sign-on to the system and 24% meaningful use by the end of 2013/2014 could be made more ambitious.

36 STUDY ABROAD

*[**Mr Mark Pickerill** attended for this item]*

Noted

36.1 EdCom was asked to consider study abroad for students registered on UCL degree programmes with a view to (i) restating the purpose of this aspect of the programme, (ii) looking for ways in which it might be standardised across UCL, (iii) identifying good practice and (iv)considering certain aspects of this area of activity.

Received

36.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/29 (10-11) (with Annexes 1-6) - a paper from the Director of Student Services.

36.3 An oral report from **the Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton**.
Reported

36.4 In his oral report, the Director of Student Services noted that there were a number of issues which made it timely to review and reaffirm study abroad for students registered on UCL programmes. Some of the main issues were:

- the encouragement of a global and/or international experience in the Teaching and Learning Strategy;
- the possible expansion of numbers on study abroad with the introduction of programmes such as the BASc;
- the drive towards greater harmonisation;
- events affecting study abroad (eg the tsunami and the nuclear crisis in Japan, and the unrest in Syria);
- the importance of monitoring all students with the new attendance monitoring system and the fact that a number of students on study abroad had failed to re-register and, in some cases, this omission had not been noted by departments (an increasing number of UCL study abroad students were international students which is of particular relevance to the UKBA);
- issues relating to the translation of marks from the local system to that of UCL.

Discussed

36.5 EdCom noted that the lack of advance agreement and/or transparency regarding how marks achieved during study abroad would be translated upon return to UCL was a serious concern. Methods for the translation of marks awarded by overseas institutions into the UCL marking scheme were currently subject to much variation and it was proposed that more detailed information on these areas be gathered by Faculties and presented to the next meeting of the EdCom on 6 July 2011 for further discussion.

RESOLVED

36.6 That Faculty Tutors should compile information regarding their methods for the translation of marks awarded by overseas institutions and send this to the Director of Student Services for discussion at EdCom on 6 July 2011. **[Action: Faculty Tutors. Mr David Ashton to note]**

37 RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Noted

37.1 EdCom was asked to consider whether the deadlines stipulated for the submission of taught programme External Examiners' annual reports, as set out in the regulations, remained best practice or whether new deadlines should be stipulated with a view to implementation from the 2011-2012 academic session. EdCom was also invited to consider the process for dealing with reports received after the deadline had passed.

Received

37.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/30 (10-11) - a paper from the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners.

Discussed

37.3 EdCom conceded that External Examiners were not always timely in their submission of reports but considered that although the stipulated deadlines remained appropriate, the language of the proposals was a little inflexible. In order to mitigate this, Edcom suggested that in each instance where a deadline was stipulated, this might be followed up with the explanation that this was in order that the External Examiners' comments might be taken into account for the coming session.

RESOLVED

37.4 That the regulations should be amended as per para. 37.3 above. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

38 HEFCE (ETC) REVIEW OF EXTERNAL EXAMINING ARRANGEMENTS

Noted

38.1 In October 2010, UUK and GuildHE, in collaboration with the QAA and other organisations, conducted a review of external examining arrangements in the UK. A discussion paper incorporating the initial views of the QAA on the development of "minimum expectations" for the role of external examiners was issued in October 2010 and HEIs were invited to respond[1].

38.2 The final report was now available and contained a number of recommendations. The Review found that, on the whole, external examining arrangements in the UK were working well, but the degree of consistency should be improved and the transparency for students should be increased.

Received

38.3 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/31 (10-11) - the report and recommendations.

38.4 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/32 (10-11) – a paper from the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners.

Discussed

38.5 The paper from the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners, set out current UCL practice in respect of the recommendations and EdCom was invited to consider these. It was resolved that a small working group should be convened to discuss in more detail UCL's implementation of the recommendations. Membership would be as below and the working group would aim to report to EdCom's next meeting.

[1] UCL's response was co-ordinated by QMEC Officers, was submitted to QMEC for information on 4 November 2010 this can be found at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/academic-services/qme/qmea-z/consultation-responses

- Mr David Ashton
- Mr Michael Chessum
- Professor Vince Emery (Chair)
- Professor Mike Ewing
- Ms Irenie Morley (Secretary)
- Dr Hilary Richards
- Ms Susan Ware

38.6 The Director of Student Services noted that UCL was about to implement online reporting for External Examiners, including prompt dates to chase late reports. The online reporting would be implemented during academic session 2010-11 but a mixed economy was expected to operate for the first year while Externals got used to the new system.

RESOLVED

38.7 That the Working Group meet during June and aim to report back to EdCom's meeting of 6 July 2011. **[Action: Professor Vince Emery and Ms Irenie Morley]**

39 **FOUR COURSE UNIT MODULES**
[EdCom Min. 20E, 10-11]

*[**Ms Paula Speller** attended for this item]*

Noted

39.1 A number of difficulties had arisen from the use of four course unit modules in the Faculty of Engineering Sciences. This was discussed by EdCom at its meeting of 14 December 2010 and it was resolved that the four course unit structure should be retained within Civil Engineering (subject to further discussion of the issues between the Programme Director and the Head of Examinations and Academic Programmes) but that the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering should either return to a normal structure or split into combinations of multiples of half units. Dr Alvin Blackie, Undergraduate Tutor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, has since written to the Chair to propose the retention, on academic grounds, of the four course units in the Department.

Received

39.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/33 (10-11) - a paper from Dr Alvin Blackie, Undergraduate Tutor, Department of Mechanical Engineering.

39.3 An oral report from **the Faculty Tutor, Engineering Sciences, Mr Marco Federighi**.

Reported

39.4 In his oral report, the Faculty Tutor Engineering Sciences noted that the substantial increase in failure rates resulting from the change to 7 units, with a pass required in all units, had been the original reason for the adoption of the four course unit structure by the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Data produced by the Department (shown in Table 1 APPENDIX EDCOM 3/33 (10-11)) indicated that the percentage of failing students at the end of the second year had begun to fall slightly since the 4.0 unit modules were introduced. However, new progression criteria as well as an

increase in the pass mark in course-units from 35 to 40% (introduced in 2005-06) had resulted in unacceptably high failure rates once more, particularly in 2006-07 where the percentage failure at the end of the second year had been 34%.

Discussed

39.5 In addition to the high failure rates, which the four course units did not seem to be addressing, EdCom noted that the Department had been told from the outset that PORTICO would not support the particular needs of four course unit modules. This had led to the considerable administrative complications currently being experienced, particularly regarding examinations and assessment. These included:

- the necessity of producing multiple copies of the same examination question papers;
- additional complexity when dealing with errors on examinations papers;
- complications when entering results via Web Mark Entry;
- complications with the recording of non-standard progression outcomes;
- manual calculation of repeat tuition and re-entry fees.

39.6 EdCom considered it unacceptable that the four course unit system was continuing to obscure failure within an overall mark and resolved that the Chair would write to the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, with a copy to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, informing them that the four course unit system should cease to operate in year one (with effect from the 2011-12 session), although year two could be left to run out. The HoD and Dean would be asked to take ownership of and address the high failure rates in a report to EdCom.

RESOLVED

39.7 That the Chair write to the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, with a copy to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, informing them that the four course unit should cease to operate in year one (with effect from the 2011-12 session). **[Action Professor Mike Ewing]**

39.8 That the Chair would write to the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, with a copy to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, to request a report to EdCom on the high failure rates in the Department. **[Action Professor Mike Ewing]**

40 APPROVAL OF A NEW DEGREE AWARD - BASc: Bachelor of Arts and Sciences

Noted

40.1 At its meeting of 7 July 2008, AC approved a procedure for the approval of new degree awards at UCL.

40.2 EdCom was invited to recommend for approval by AC, on the recommendation of, and following full scrutiny by, the Programme and Module Approval Steering Group, a proposal that UCL establish the following new degree:

- BASc: Bachelor of Arts and Sciences

With the following pathways:

- Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Sciences and Engineering
- Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Health and Environment
- Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Societies
- Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Cultures

40.3 In accordance with the procedure for the approval of new degree awards, EdCom was then invited to submit this proposal to AC for formal approval at its meeting on 7 July 2011.

Discussed

40.4 EdCom noted that a report on (i) the module choices available for years two and three of the BASc and (ii) timetabling issues raised by the implementation of the BASc would be timely and useful and resolved that the PMASG Secretary should invite Mr Carl Gombrich to submit a report to the meeting of PMASG to take place on 29 June 2011.

40.5 In addition to the above it was noted that, following the completion of the Common Timetable Project Board's remit when the timetable had gone live, there had been no formal progress reports submitted. In view of this it was agreed that Mr Alec Gray and Ms Kathleen Nicholls should be invited to make a report on the current situation regarding the implementation and progress of the Common Timetable to EdCom's meeting on 6 July 2011. This would form a substantive item on the agenda.

RESOLVED

40.6 That the PMASG Secretary should invite Mr Carl Gombrich to submit a report to the meeting of PMASG to take place on 29 June 2011. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

40.7 That Mr Alec Gray and Ms Kathleen Nicholls should be invited to make a report on the current situation regarding the implementation and progress of the Common Timetable to EdCom's meeting on 6 July 2011. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton]**

41 UCL RELIGIOUS EQUALITY POLICY FOR STUDENTS

[EdCom Min. 20D, 10-11]

Noted

41.1 EdCom was asked to note the most recent version of UCL's Religious Equality Policy for Students. The Policy was due to be signed off by the Committee for Equal Opportunities at its meeting of 8 June 2011. Members were invited to send any additional comments on the Policy to Ms Sarah Guise, UCL's Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator before this date.

Received

41.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/34 (10-11) - the Policy.

42 NEW FEE REGIME 2012 – INTERRUPTING STUDENTS

Noted

42.1 The Dean of Students (Academic) had received a number of requests for student interruptions where the student would (re)commence after September 2012 when UCL's new fee regime would be implemented. Having consulted with the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy and the Vice-Provost (Operations), EdCom was asked to note a paper from the Dean of Students (Academic) which set out those categories of request which should be charged the new fee and those which should be charged under the fee arrangements for session 2011-12.

Received

42.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/35 (10-11) – a paper from the Dean of Students (Academic).

Discussed

42.3 EdCom agreed that the principle for application of the new fee regime should be determined by circumstances which had prevailed at the students' first point of entry to UCL. Therefore, the new fee regime should apply to students who had accepted a place for September 2011 but then sought to postpone initial enrolment until September 2012. For all other scenarios listed at APPENDIX EDCOM 3/35 (10-11), EdCom agreed that the new fee should not be charged.

42.4 The Director of Student Services noted that there were a number of alternative possible scenarios not listed at APPENDIX EDCOM 3/35 (10-11). These would be discussed offline. The Director of Financial Planning and Strategy noted that the fee payable should be linked to the Government Support available to the student.

RESOLVED

42.5 That, following consultation with the Vice Provost (Operations) and the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy, EdCom approve for application of the new fee regime those categories of student listed at APPENDIX EDCOM 3/35 (10-11) and any others to be agreed subsequently between the Chair of EdCom and the Director of Student Services. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing and Mr David Ashton]**

43 CONSIDERATION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Noted

43.1 The Education Committee was invited to approve a number of proposals relating to extenuating circumstances, including the proposal that full minutes be taken of deliberations and recommendations of Boards of Examiners in relation to extenuating circumstances.

Received

43.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 3/36 (10-11) - a paper from the Director of Student Services.

43.3 An oral report from the Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton.

Reported

43.4 In his oral report, the Director of Student Services noted that an agreed level of recording of information across UCL was vital in order to demonstrate the necessary robustness of process to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. In a grievance case, the OIA relied upon an audit trail to determine what events had taken place and what procedures had been followed. In a case recently considered by the OIA, it had found it difficult to determine how far extenuating circumstances had been taken into account by a Board of Examiners.

43.5 While some of the timings suggested in APPENDIX EDCOM 3/36 (10-11) seemed a little over-ambitious (eg that minutes of the pre-meeting of Boards of Examiners should be made available to the Board and to the Faculty within 5 days of the meeting) the principle remained that UCL must be more consistent in this important area and was working towards increased uniformity. There had been a recent bid for a new PORTICO project which would allow medical notes to be uploaded to the student record. EdCom agreed that in relation to extenuating circumstances, Boards of Examiners must record what the circumstances and categories had been and that these must be collated at faculty level in order to allow faculties to take an overview. It therefore approved the proposals subject to slightly modified deadlines, to be agreed by the Director of Student Services.

RESOLVED

43.6 That the proposals at APPENDIX EDCOM 3/36 (10-11) be approved as per 43.5 above.

44 ACTION TAKEN BY THE VICE-CHAIR

44A Approval of new programmes of study

Noted

44A.1 The Vice-Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, has approved the institution of the following programmes of study:

- **MSc Healthcare Infection Control**
- **PGCert/PGDip/MSc in Performing Arts Medicine**
- **PG Diploma Clinical Neurology by Distance Learning**
- **Dual BA European Social and Political Studies**
- **MRes Linguistics**[2]
- **MArch Architecture (ARB/RIBA Part 2)**

45 DATES OF MEETINGS 2010-11

Noted

45.1 One further meeting of EdCom in 2011 would be held as follows:

- 6 July 2011 at 10.00 am in the Council Room.

[2] Research component approved by RDC on 21 March 2011.

SANDRA HINTON
Senior Quality Assurance Officer
Academic Services
21June 2011
[telephone: 020 7679 8590; internal extension 28590; fax 020 7679 8595; e-mail s.hinton@ucl.ac.uk