



Education Committee

27 June 2023

Minutes (Confirmed)

Present:

Professor Parama Chaudhury (Acting Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Professor Simon Banks; Ms Karen Barnard; Dr Nicole Brown; Mr Ian Davis; Professor Sally Day; Dr Julie Evans; Mr Daniel Farrell; Dr Jo Fraser-Pearce; Mr Matteo Fumagalli; Ms June Hedges; Professor Arne Hofmann; Professor Katherine Holt; Ms Harriet Israel; Mr Zak Liddell; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Ms Mary McHarg; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Mary Richardson; Professor Aeli Roberts; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Olga Thomas; Ms Lizzie Vinton; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Nicola Walshe, Dr Kathryn Woods and Professor Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Ms Sally Mackenzie (Item 4) Mr Simon To (Item 6) Mr Ashley Doolan (Secretary) and Mr Rob Traynor (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies: Professor Kathy Armour, Mr Hamza Ahmed, Dr Nicole Brown, Dr Rachel King, Dr Margaret Mayston and Dr Fiona Strawbridge

Part I: Preliminary Business

96. Welcome and Announcements

96.1. The Acting Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted that she was standing in for Prof Armour, who was on annual leave. She welcomed Mr Daniel Farrell, Director of Student Operations, and Mr Matteo Fumagalli, Head of Education and Student Experience for Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences to their first meetings.

97. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

97.1. **Approved** – the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 June 2023 [EdCom Minutes 89-95, 2022-23] at EDCOM 8-01 (22-23), without corrections.

98. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

98.1. The Secretary gave an update on the matter raised under minute 94, Any Other Business. He confirmed that the appointment criteria for Academic Board representative on EdCom was set by the Academic Board and could not be amended by EdCom. He reported that the Chair had agreed to note a recommendation to review these criteria in the annual report from EdCom to Academic Board, and that in the interim, the Chair had agreed to co-opt Dr Rachel King for an additional year.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

99. Education strategy project one – education framework for the future

- 99.1. Received - a paper at EDCOM 8-02 (22-23) presented by Ms Sally Mackenzie, Associate Director, Education & Student Experience, on the outcomes of Phase 2 of consultation on the Education Framework for the future.
- 99.2. EdCom noted that there had been broad agreement with the headline principles underpinning the framework in the feedback received so far, which had been collected through written responses to the conversation paper and roundtable discussions, and represented the views of a range of faculty, professional services, and student stakeholders. There was an interest how these principles would be translated into action, and a challenge around their distinctiveness to UCL.
- 99.3. Some of the challenges in the response centred on the need to clarify the shape and size of the work flowing from the agreement of the framework, with concerns raised about the resourcing and timing of any subsequent work. It was also felt that more work was needed to re-emphasise the importance of crafting a joyful teaching and learning experience for staff and students. Finally, several responders asked to see more detail on how the framework could help to harness and draw links between the diverse communities of staff and students present within UCL.
- 99.4. The paper asked EdCom to consider the specific challenge of unpacking or defining three concepts that were key to the principles: research intensive; impactful; values led. The subsequent discussion surfaced the following points on each:
- i. While important not to lose the research focus, due to the nature of UCL and the attraction of its reputation as a leading research institution, it was clear that some parts of the community perceived “research-intensive” as a restrictive term, and it was considered whether it should be expanded to incorporate wider academic values, for example, the defence of free speech, the creation of new knowledge, the observance of ethical practice, and the breaking of boundaries through the challenge of received wisdom. Linked to this, it could help to set student and employer expectations that our graduates should be independent learners who are not afraid to take risks.
 - ii. That it was important to clarify what it is that we are trying to impact through our impactful education. It was agreed that it was probably a balance between the individual student, and the wider world beyond their individual experience. It was also noted that not all impacts are direct – a student completing a research project may not directly impact the world with the conclusions of their project, but the skills they gain will impact them directly, and could indirectly benefit wider communities in the future as they go on to apply those skills in their future careers.
 - iii. “Values-led” presented a specific challenge given that not all members of the community would share the same values. With that in mind, it would be important to balance a commitment to core values, embodied in UCL’s own heritage, such as the commitment to providing education to all, and championing the education of women, with the need to create a culture that enabled students and colleagues to respect the right to hold different views and to disagree well.
- 99.5. Confirmed – that feedback from the discussion would be incorporated into a paper detailing the actions flowing from the consultation, to be submitted to EdCom in July.

100. Examinations and Assessment Contingency Panel update

- 100.1. Received – an oral update on the work of the EACP from its chair, Professor Norbert Pachler, accompanied by the latest version of the guidance produced for Boards of Examiners on measures available to them to mitigate for the impacts of the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott at EDCOM 8-03 (22-23).
- 100.2. The Chair of EACP reported that, since the last meeting of EdCom, the Academic Board had met on 9 June to vote on a range of measures that were included in previous iterations of the guidance and that subsequent to that vote, changes were made to reinforce the normal quoracy requirements for Boards of Examiners, and to remove the provision within the guidance for other bodies to make decisions on behalf of a Board of Examiners.
- 100.3. EdCom noted that the EACP continued to meet regularly to consider applications for exceptional mitigation from individual departments. It was also meeting to keep the impacts of the MAB under review, and to take actions to mitigate the impacts on smaller cohorts of students, such as our affiliate cohort. It remained difficult to assess the impact, since Boards were still meeting, but specific thanks to Kirsten Hamilton and the Student Records team was noted in their work to support departments and gather information on the emerging picture.
- 100.4. Noted – EdCom’s continued thanks to the EACP for the work it is undertaking under its delegated authority.

101. Report on student priorities in education.

- 101.1. Received - a paper at EDCOM 8-04 (22-23) presented by Mr Simon To, Director of Policy, Governance & Advocacy for Students’ Union, UCL, on the themes raised in student feedback to Student Staff Consultative Committees and other student engagement fora during the 202. It included a series of recommendations that were co-developed with students through thematic focus groups.
- 101.2. Noted – that several of the issues raised in the report had featured in previous iterations, but that the hope was that the recommendations given would be adopted and would help to improve the experience of students within the affected areas. Some of the recommendations included:
 - i. To address some of the issues that students were reporting within their assessment experience, it was recommended that module leaders build more time into their modules to provide guidance and preparation for the summative assessments, particularly where the module was assessed by something other than an essay or exam. It was also recommended that more work could be done to align the marking criteria with the learning outcomes for the module.
 - ii. Where students were reporting a lack of a local learning community, it was recommended that departments could explore better integrating students into departmental decision making, beyond just asking them for their feedback. It was also suggested that more work could be done on integrating departmental societies, through for example affiliating them with the Students’ Union, which would open new avenues for funding.

- iii. Students continued to report problems with timely access to learning resources, and it was recommended that module leaders should be reminded to follow the requirement to share learning materials in advance of teaching sessions. The report also endorsed any work that could be done to reopen conversations on making lecture capture standard for all modules.

101.3. EdCom members welcomed the report, both for its clarity of presentation, and for the directness of its recommendations, it was widely acknowledged to be an excellent example of how the student voice could lead to change. It was noted that the Student Staff Partnership Committee would be picking up the priorities and recommendations, and identifying where action would be taken, and in what order.

101.4. EdCom noted some of the work that was already being taken to address some of these recommendations. For example, work was being done to create a publicly available accountability framework to clearly outline the responsibilities of module and programme leaders, including for matters such as clarity of assessment information, and accessibility of learning resources. It was also noted that the lecture capture policy would be reviewed during the 2023-24 academic year.

101.5. EdCom noted the importance of ensuring the recommendations of this report helped to shape the actions that departments and faculties would be committing to in their Education Plans. The Acting Chair confirmed that this report would be provided as part of the data for this process, with an explicit instruction to review how its recommendations could be incorporated locally.

102. Quality and Standards Committee Update

102.1. Received – an oral report on the 26 June 2023 meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee from its chair, Professor Norbert Pachler, in which he updated EdCom on business that had been discussed, and working groups that were established. This included:

- i. An update on work being undertaken to finalise the operating model, and supporting regulations, for the Department and Faculty Education Plans, with a revised version of the regulations to be submitted to Education Committee for approval in July.
- ii. Confirmation that two working groups had been established to review the operation of the 2021-22 Internal Quality Review pilot, and the use of Postgraduate Teaching Assistants in teaching and assessment respectively.
- iii. Details of ongoing discussions between the Head of APQS and the Planning team regarding the oversight and management of education KPIs and risks.

102.2. Noted – that colleagues wishing to volunteer to serve on either working group noted above should contact the Secretary.

103. Education Policy Scrutiny Panel Update

103.1. Received – an oral report on the 14 June 2023 meeting of the Education Policy Scrutiny Panel from its chair, Mr Zak Liddell, in which he updated EdCom on business that had been discussed, and working groups that were established. This included:

- i. That work was already underway to review the attendance monitoring policy, the academic misconduct procedure, and the student academic representation regulations in time for September 2023.

- ii. That from September, work would begin on reviewing the Student Support Framework, following its first full year of operation, and that discussions around lecture capture would also restart.

103.2. Noted – EdCom members’ encouragement for the work that had been identified as priorities for the EPSP.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

104. Amendments to chapter 1: student recruitment and admissions 2023-24

104.1. Noted - the amendments to Chapter 1 of the Academic Manual EDCOM 8-05 (22-23).

105. Amendments to chapter 7b: programme and module approval framework 2023-24

105.1. Received – a request to discuss the paper outlining the proposed amendments to Chapter 7B of the Academic Manual for 2023-24 EDCOM 8-06 (22-23), which was approved by the Acting Chair. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. That the text of the Chapter would be amended to clarify that an amended programme summary would continue to be required for all programme amendments. It was acknowledged that the current requirement for the submission of programme summaries continued to be a difficult ask for departments to operationalise, but it was made clear that they remained important as they formed part of the information provided to applicants at the point of the issue of an offer.
- ii. That the text of the Chapter would be reviewed to ensure that there was clarity about what exactly was meant by changes which effect a proportion of the “overall credit value of the programme”. It was noted that interdepartmental programmes already found it difficult to monitor cumulative changes such as this, and that it would continue to be a risk going forward. It was accepted that the categorisations should be understood as, applying at the point where a programme leader was asking to make an amendment, rather than a requirement for colleagues to actively seek out any changes that may potentially qualify.
- iii. That more work was needed to clarify the relationship between changes to assessment and the programme amendment process. This was particularly urgent given the recently updated guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority that reiterated that changes to assessment that cumulatively changed the assessment delivery of the programme would be considered a breach of the contract conditions.

105.2. Confirmed – that, noting the need to review some aspects of the programme amendment process during the 2023-24 academic year, EdCom approved the proposed amendments to Chapter 7B of the Academic Manual by majority vote. Professor Simon Banks asked for his dissent from this approval to be noted, while acknowledging his acceptance of the collective decision of the committee.

106. Amendments to chapter 8: academic partnerships framework 2023-24

106.1. Approved – the amendments to Chapter 8 of the Academic Manual EDCOM 8-07 (22-23).

107. Amendments to chapter 11: degree apprenticeships framework 2023-24

107.1. Approved – the amendments to Chapter 11 of the Academic Manual EDCOM 8-08 (22-23).

108. Approval of academic partnerships

108.1. Approved – the new academic partnerships recommended by APP EDCOM 8-09 (22-23)

109. Approval of new programmes of study

109.1. Approved – the new programmes of study recommended by PMAP EDCOM 8-10 (22-23).

110. Minutes of sub committees and working groups

110.1. Approved – the minutes of the Degree Apprenticeships Panel held on 17 April 2023 EDCOM 8-11 (22-23).

110.2. Approved – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held on 23 March 2023 EDCOM 8-12 (22-23).

111. Any Other Business

111.1. No other business was raised for discussion.

112. Dates of Next Meeting

112.1. The dates of the EdCom meetings for the rest of the 2022-23 session are:

- Tuesday 25 July 2023, 14:00 - 16:30

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June 2023