



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

28 February 2018

### MINUTES

*Present:*

Professor Dilly Fung (acting Chair);  
 Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Derfel Owen;  
 Dr Aeli Roberts; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Dr Fiona Strawbridge.

*In attendance:* Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary); Mr Simon To for item 5.

*Apologies were received from:* Professor Anthony Smith (Chair); Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Mr Ian Davis; Dr Clare Goudy; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Angie Wade.

*Key to abbreviations*

APRG	Academic Partnerships Review Group
EdCom	Education Committee
IOE	Institute of Education
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
SRS	Student and Registry Services
SU	Students' Union
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCU	Universities and Colleges Union

#### PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

#### 27 ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Agreed** - A number of members were unable to attend due to UCU strike action and severe weather conditions. EdCom noted that the quorum “should normally be not less than half of the total membership of the committee”. It was agreed that these were not normal circumstances and that the meeting would proceed to ensure that important and urgent business was addressed.

#### 28 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (*EdCom Minutes 15-26*)

**Approved** - the minutes of the meeting held 13 December 2017 were agreed.

**29 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES****A Oral Update on Subject-Level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Minute 18, 17-18)**

- 29A.1 EdCom noted that meetings were being arranged with Arena, the Careers team and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) to give departments personalised feedback on their ASER/ Connected Curriculum reports, and discuss the forthcoming Subject-level TEF. Data would be forwarded to Deans shortly, and a number of developmental initiatives were in place to prepare UCL for the exercise.

**PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION****30 ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS**

- 30.1 **Received** – The paper at EDCOM 3-01 (17-18).
- 30.2 The paper set out APRG's proposal for a defined cut-off point for renewed Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) to be signed by UCL and the partner institution. It was suggested that, in order to meet a wide range of regulatory requirements, recruitment should be suspended for any programme which did not have an up-to-date MOA in place by 1 September 2018. It was felt that some partnerships were taking a long time to renew, and that steps were therefore needed to ensure that UCL did not renege on its legal obligations. The Academic Partnerships team would work closely with programmes to ensure that the deadline was met.
- 30.3 EdCom members extended their thanks to the Academic Partnerships team for their support and expertise in negotiating MOAs. Some concerns were raised that the paper might not accurately reflect the current position for some partnerships - many were involved in active and effective negotiations, which could be very complex, particularly if they involved multiple parties. EdCom members were concerned about issuing what might be seen as an ultimatum which might have an adverse effect on long-standing relationships.
- 30.4 EdCom requested that a revised proposal be submitted to the next meeting, taking the following points into account:
- a) Whilst EdCom agreed that an annual deadline of 1 September was appropriate for future years, for 2018 this did not give partners and faculties adequate notice. A different deadline should be considered for the first year. Faculties should be consulted on what this deadline should be, or deadlines should be determined on a case-by-case basis for 2018.
  - b) The paper might distinguish between partnerships with an expired MOA, and those with an active but sub-optimal MOA. It was felt that different approaches were needed for the two groups.
  - c) The paper should also distinguish between partnerships involved in active and productive negotiations, and those where negotiations have stalled and require some sort of institutional intervention.
  - d) The paper might emphasise the other options open to faculties e.g. escalating stalled negotiations to more senior officers at the partner institution.
  - e) The paper should more clearly define the impact of the rapidly-changing regulatory landscape and the risks involved offering programmes with out-of-date and expired MOAs.
  - f) The process should include the opportunity for faculties to apply for an extension to the deadline, if there are good reasons.

g) The process should explain the roles and expectations of departments, faculties, UCL and the partner in the negotiations.

- 30.5 **Agreed** – That there should be an annual cut-off date for MOAs to be renewed, but that revised, more detailed proposals should be submitted to the next meeting.

**Action: Chair of APRG**

## **31 STUDENT ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES MID-TERM TRENDS REPORT**

- 31.1 **Received** – The paper at EDCOM 3-02 (17-18).
- 31.2 The SU presented an interim report covering issues raised by Student Representatives in term one, with a view to helping UCL resolve problems in-session, thus benefiting current students. Positive feedback was received around the learning community and the delivery/ content of teaching. Particular concerns were raised around module allocations (see Minute 33 below for discussion) and teaching rooms and facilities. The report raised concerns that the latter had been raised at EdCom a year ago and yet students felt that they had not seen any improvements.
- 31.3 EdCom noted that there was an extensive programme of improvements to teaching spaces underway under the Transforming UCL programme including the recently-completed redevelopment of Torrington Place and a new building at 22 Gordon Street, and many more close to completion, such as the relocation of the Anna Freud Centre to specialist facilities in Kings Cross. However it was acknowledged that not all students would have experienced an immediate benefit and that this could give the impression that UCL was not responding to student feedback in this area. The use of external spaces was particularly problematic, and substantial efforts had been made to ensure that these were equipped appropriately, including writing surfaces for students and Lecturecast connectivity. EdCom noted that the current separate timetabling and room booking systems led to a substantial amount of under-used space. It was hoped that the new Academic Model, with much more reliable data, would help UCL to move towards a combined approach. SRS were also investigating the potential for changes to the pattern of the academic year, and the length of the teaching day.
- 31.4 EdCom noted that the paper would also be received at the next Student Experience Committee which included representatives from Estates, who would be best placed to take these issues forward.

## **32 EDUCATION COMMITTEE TASK GROUP: ASSESSMENT MITIGATION ISSUES**

- 32.1 **Received** – The paper at EDCOM 3-03 (17-18), outlining proposals for a Task Group to address assessment mitigation issues during the Summer 2018 examination period.
- 32.2 SRS submitted proposals to address the potential impact of the UCU industrial action on teaching, examinations and assessments. EdCom agreed that the Material Irregularity (MI) procedure was the most appropriate and effective way of mitigating the impact of the strike because it would allow UCL to be proactive and to address issues expediently and on a large scale, ensuring fairness for all students on different programmes and modules.
- 32.3 The MI procedure gives Faculty Boards of Examiners the ability to apply a range of mitigation options to an individual student or a group of students. Mitigation options are very similar to those allowed under the Extenuating Circumstances procedure, including the ability to exclude a module of up to 30 credits from progression, award and classification calculations. The regulations state that decisions need to be made in consultation with UCL Academic Policy and Quality Assurance; it was proposed that a Task Group be set up to perform this

function, advise faculties, promote parity and fairness for students across different modules and programmes, and ensure that academic standards were maintained.

32.4 EdCom welcomed the proposals and the opportunity to provide reassurance to students and staff. The committee acknowledged the widespread impact of the action, and that this would lead to additional work for staff, but that it was vital that UCL ensured that students' degrees and future employment prospects were not adversely affected.

32.5 **Agreed:**

- a) That the Material Irregularity Procedure was the most appropriate and effective way of providing mitigation.
- b) That the Task Group was authorised to make decisions about the application of the MI procedure.
- c) That the Registrar would issue a message to students and staff via UCL Week and My UCL as soon as possible.

**Action: Registrar**

- d) That the Task Group would meet as soon as possible with a view to drawing up detailed guidance for staff and students.

**Action: Director of Academic Services**

### 33 PUBLICATION OF THE EXAMINATION TIMETABLE

33.1 **Received** – an oral report from the Director of Academic Services.

33.2 For the first time in many years, the Examination Timetable for 2018 had been published on schedule, in direct response to long-term student dissatisfaction with the publication date. EdCom thanked the Head of Examinations and the Director of Academic Services for the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken to achieve this. This had included a full week for Departments to review the timetable, concurrent allocation of timetables and seats, and responses to all Departmental queries by the published deadline.

33.3 EdCom members raised concerns about the changes to module selection deadlines which had been made to facilitate the earlier timetable. Staff and students felt that exam timetabling was a simple process, and therefore felt that students should be allowed to change their modules whenever they wanted. However it was noted that exam timetabling was a task which could only be carried out by one person, as it involved over 100,000 candidatures and thousands of different student assessment patterns, all of which had to be scheduled without clashes and without giving students more than two exams in one day. UCL was using some of the best timetabling software available to universities, and there were no better options available on the market; all systems ultimately relied on a single person. The member of staff had undertaken 150 hours of overtime in order to meet the deadline, and staff wellbeing had to be taken into consideration. The problem was further exacerbated by the amount of work currently needed to clean up the data before timetabling could begin, one of the major reasons for the current Academic Model Project. SRS had analysed all of the dependencies, and the largest was knowing which students were enrolled on which module.

33.4 SRS had received around 650 late module requests, spread fairly evenly across faculties. This was below the contingency level built in by SRS, which had predicted around 1000 late changes, plus late module choices by affiliates. A number of changes were due to students saying they were misinformed about the module content, although in some cases it may have been due to misinterpretation of the information given rather than misinformation. EdCom discussed ways in which this could be addressed, including guest enrolments on Moodle sites, making Lecturecasts from previous years available, allowing students to sample modules and compiling a single UCL catalogue of module choices. It was suggested that the Moodle Baseline might also be utilised to improve module information.

- 33.5 **Agreed** - EdCom supported an institutional investment in improving module information so that students could make informed choices.

#### 34 FACULTY HONOURS CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES

- 34.1 **Received** - a memo from the Faculty Tutor, IOE at EDCOM 3-04 (17-18).
- 34.2 **Approved** – that the IOE would adopt Scheme A for the majority of programmes, and that a decision would follow on programmes with professional accreditation by the British Psychological Society, who may need to use Scheme B.
- 34.3 **Agreed** – that the Faculty of MAPS should submit a formal proposal on the chosen honours classification scheme to the April meeting of EdCom.

**Action: MAPS EdCom Member**

<b>PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION</b>
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#### 35 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE: TERM 2

**Received** – the update at EDCOM 3-06 (17-18).

#### 36 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AT UCL

**Approved** – the programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at EDCOM 3-08 (17-18).

#### 37 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- A **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group held 30 November 2017 at EDCOM 3-09 (17-18).
- B **Approved** – the minutes of the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee held 28 November 2017 and 30 January 2018 at EDCOM 3-10 (17-18) and EDCOM 3-11 (17-18).
- C **Approved** – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 16 November 2017 and 14 December 2017 at EDCOM 3-12 (17-18) and EDCOM 3-13 (17-18).
- D **Approved** – the minutes of the Student Academic Representatives Steering Group held 22 November 2017 at EDCOM 3-14 (17-18).

#### 38 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS

**Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations at EDCOM 3-15 (17-18).

**39 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2017-18**

- 26 April 2018 10.00-12.30, Room 1.20, Malet Place Engineering Building
- 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

Assessment Regulations and Governance Manager | Academic Services | Student and Registry Services

Email: [l.vinton@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.vinton@ucl.ac.uk)

2 March 2018