



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

29 June 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton
Ms Karen Barnard
Professor David Bogle
Dr Sue Bryant
Ms Maheema Chanrai
Mr Neil Chowdhury
Dr Brenda Cross
Professor Vince Emery
Dr Caroline Essex
Mr Marco Federighi
Dr Arne Hofmann

Dr Christine Hoffmann
Ms Katherine Majid
Prof Alexi Marmot
Ms Helen Matthews
Dr John Mitchell
Ms Kathleen Nicholls
Dr Hilary Richards
Prof Richard Simons
Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Ms Olga Thomas
Ms Susan Ware

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Professor Carmel McNaught (observing); Ms Irenie Morley.

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Jason Clarke; Ms June Hedges; Ms Valerie Hogg.

Key to abbreviations used in this Agenda:

AC	Academic Committee
EdCom	Education Committee
ISD	Information Systems Division
KIS	Key Information Set
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences (Faculty)
PDMSMG	Programme Diet and Module Selection Management Group
PGR	Postgraduate research
PGT	Postgraduate taught
PIQ	Programme Institution Questionnaire
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
RAS	Registry and Academic Services
RRG	Regulation Review Group
SRN	Student Record Number
TDD	The Digital Department
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UPC	University Preparatory Certificate

67 **TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP**

Noted

- 67.1 On 22 March 2012, AC resolved that the terms of reference of EdCom should be amended to encompass taught (undergraduate and postgraduate) student admissions and this change had now been made. In respect of this change, the **Head of Outreach and Admissions, Ms Bella Malins**, had been invited to join EdCom with immediate effect.
- 67.2 The Chair of QMEC thanked the following members of the Committee, who would be stepping down from EdCom at the end of session 2011-12,
- **Mr Luke Durigan**, Education and Campaigns Officer, UCL Union *[in absentia]*. He would be replaced by Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe.
 - **Mr Neil Chowdhury**, UCL Union Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer. He would be replaced by **Mr Dante Micheaux**.
 - **Mr Milo Bem**, UCL Union International Students' Officer *[in absentia]*. He would be replaced by **Mr Mehran Bhatti**.
 - **Professor Vince Emery**. See also Minute 83C below.
 - **Professor Sue Bryant**.
- 67.3 The Chair thanked the staff and student representatives for their contribution to the work of the Committee. The Chair noted however, that the UCL Union International Students' Officer, Mr Milo Bem, had not attended any meetings of EdCom during the session.

68 **MINUTES**

Approved

- 68.1 The Minutes of the meeting of EdCom held on 4 May 2012 *[EdCom Mins. 54-66, 04.05.12]*, issued previously, were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

69 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

[See also Minutes 73, 74 and 79 below]

- 69A **Recording of external examiner activity undertaken by UCL staff**
[EdCom Min. 39A, 11-12]

Noted

- 69A.1 On 4 May 2012 the Vice-Chair reported that he had revisited, with Mr Richard Warren of UCL Management Systems Division, the possibility of recording UCL staff external examiner activity via existing functionality and had been informed that this was unlikely to be feasible. This activity would therefore need to be captured on spreadsheets, maintained in and by faculties. The Vice-Chair would update EdCom on this and on the related issue of the institutional recognition and reward of external examiner activity undertaken by UCL staff in due course.

70 **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR 2012-13**

Noted

70.1 The RRG met on 22 May and 13 June 2012 to discuss a number of updates to the Academic Regulations.

Received

70.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/37 (11-12) – a paper from the Director of Student Services.

70.3 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/38 (11-12) – the Minutes of the meeting of the RRG held on 22 May and 13 June 2012.¹

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

Reported

70.5 The RRG had concentrated on the assessment aspects of the academic regulations with a view to confirming the regulations for the 2012-13 academic session.

70.6 The RRG had made minor amendments to the assessment regulations to ensure that they reflected decisions made by EdCom over the last two sessions and to make the wording clearer. This included minor amendments which had been made to the penalties for late submission and overlong coursework as a result of input from RRG members.

70.7 The RRG had recommended that the minor amendments to regulations be implemented by relevant staff in RAS, to be signed off by EdCom Chair's Action.

Discussion

70.8 The Chair invited comment concerning the MAPS Faculty variation which states: *if a student fails a module on re-sit the higher of the failed marks is used in the calculation of the overall degree average*. The RRG had resolved to recommend to EdCom that MAPS be allowed to retain its variation for a further academic session (2012-13) and that it should not be currently extended across the Harmonised Scheme, but that this would be kept under review. However, during EdCom's discussion, most Faculty Tutors expressed a willingness to adopt the MAPS variation in their own faculties.

RESOLVED

70.9 That the MAPS variation should be adopted UCL-wide (and thus cease to be a variation). The feasibility of this in respect of Portico processes would be investigated further. **[Action: Ms Kathleen Nicholls]**

70.10 After a brief discussion concerning Faculty Tutor opinion regarding the timing and implications of August/September/same session re-sits, EdCom resolved

¹ Due to the volume of business, this meeting was spread over two dates but captured in a single set of Minutes

to review this during the forthcoming session 2012-13. **[Action: Ms Sandra Hinton to note]**

71 ANONYMITY FOR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Received

71.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/39 (11-12) – a paper from the MAPS Faculty Tutor.

71.2 An oral report from the **MAPS Faculty Tutor, Dr Caroline Essex.**

Reported

71.3 There were a number of difficulties in using candidate identifiers from the start of the session which compromised anonymity in examination marking. These were detailed in APPENDIX EDCOM 5/39 (11-12). EdCom was invited to consider ways of resolving this.

Discussion

71.4 It was noted that the UCL regulations on anonymity explicitly contradicted the advice contained in the Assessment Strategy, which advised that feedback should be offered in person where possible.

RESOLVED

71.5 That the anonymity rule be modified by requiring anonymity to be observed only where the weighting of the summative component being assessed was above 40% in any module assessment. If a candidate identifier was required which was not the candidate number, the SRN should be used. **[Action Ms Irenie Morley]**

72 KPMG AUDIT OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

Received

72.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/40 (11-12) – a note on the issues.

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

Reported

72.3 An internal audit of undergraduate admissions by KPMG had taken place in 2011 and a number of recommendations had been made for improvements including one concerning the central UCL Admissions Team's monitoring of departmental compliance with the service standards on admissions set out in the Academic Manual. KPMG had recommended that *'the central team should perform some quality assurance work on the admissions process in departments. In so doing, it may be necessary to reconsider the resources available to perform this task'*

72.4 UCL's initial response to KPMG had indicated that there was insufficient resource within central Admissions to undertake regular oversight of

departmental admissions processes and that improved management data would be required in order to monitor departmental turnaround times. This would be part of the ongoing admissions systems development. Discussions with the faculties would be needed to ascertain whether the recommendation could be implemented, hence UCL's follow-up management response, which had been as follows: '*Within the current UCL framework for undergraduate admissions, faculties should be responsible for the quality assurance of their departments. Discussions will take place with faculties as to how this might be best achieved.*'

Discussion

- 72.5 Preliminary discussion indicated that faculties considered it to be impractical within current resourcing constraints to be fully responsible for monitoring the service standards of admissions within their constituent departments and it was resolved that the Chair should convey this view to the Director of Registry and Academic Services on behalf of EdCom for further discussion.

RESOLVED

- 72.6 That the Chair should convey EdCom's view as set out at 72.5 to the Director of Registry and Academic Services [**Action: Professor Mike Ewing**].

73 STUDY ABROAD

[EdCom Min. 42, 10-11]

Noted

- 73.1 In June 2011, EdCom resolved that a small working group comprising (*inter alia*) the Director of Student Services, the Chair of EdCom and representatives from the International Office should meet initially to discuss the issues and develop proposals for minimum standards for study abroad. On 15 March 2012, EdCom received draft proposals and it was resolved that the working group be expanded to incorporate departmental practitioners who had experience of running programmes with a substantial year abroad and at least one student representative. It was resolved that this group should submit an update report to EdCom's 29 June meeting.

Received

- 73.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton**.
- 73.3 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/50 (11-12) – a report containing the group's initial findings².

Discussion

- 73.4 The group had now met twice and had discussed the purpose of the study abroad year as well as the destination of study. The group had agreed that the Dean of Students (Welfare) and Student Disability Services should review on an individual student basis whether adequate support would be available

² This report was not received at the meeting but its contents were reported to members orally and the report will be circulated with the minutes.

during the placement abroad for students supported at UCL by the Student Disability Services. It was recommended that this was undertaken in conjunction with the students' Departmental Tutors, as they would be aware of the students' circumstances. However EdCom noted that it was not always possible to identify mental health difficulties where these were undeclared or unreported to Student Psychological Services etc.

73.5 The group would continue to meet and would submit another report to EdCom in the autumn. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

74 **SCHEDULE OF DUTIES OF DEPARTMENTAL TUTORS**

[EdCom Min. 60, 11-12]

Noted

74.1 On 4 May, EdCom had received a draft revised Schedule of Duties on which EdCom made a number of comments and suggestions. EdCom resolved that the draft be circulated by Faculty Tutors to Departmental Tutors (etc.) and that any further comments and suggestions should be submitted to the Dean of Students (Academic). The Dean of Students (Academic) had now revised the draft to take into consideration all further comments and suggestions made and this could be found below.

Received

74.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/41 (11-12) – the revised Schedule of Duties.

74.3 An oral report from the **Dean of Students (Academic), Professor Mike Ewing**.

Reported

74.4 Most suggestions had been factored in to the revised schedule, with the exception of a suggested 'person specification' for the role, which, it was felt, would be more appropriate as a separate document. Similarly, it was felt that information about training and career progression did not belong within the Schedule of Duties.

Discussion

74.5 The following points were made:

- The Duties must make clear that the Departmental Tutor should be responsible for pastoral care.
- Most (although not all) departments have a Graduate Tutor who has a different reporting line to that of the Departmental Tutor and who tends to focus on PGR students (as do Faculty Graduate Tutors). The Departmental Tutor focuses on undergraduate students. As a consequence, PGT students can slip through the net.
- Fulfilment of the duties of Departmental Tutors can be very time-consuming and this should be acknowledged and flagged at the outset.
- The Schedule of Duties should include a reference to maintaining the importance of communication within interdisciplinary programmes.

- Sections 5 and 4 (Admissions) contradicted one another and should be amended.
- Section 21 (Communication), points (c) and (d), were usually dealt with by Admissions Tutors.
- Section 16 (Pastoral), point (e) should be amended to the effect that The Departmental Tutor should be responsible for appointing a Careers Liaison Officer and then delegating to them the responsibility for careers guidance to students working with the UCL Careers Service.
- The Schedule might in future be adapted to produce a version which encompassed the duties of Departmental Graduate Tutors, particularly in respect of PGT students.

RESOLVED

- 74.6 That the Schedule be revised, taking into account the above suggestions and the final version published in the UCL Academic Manual. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing. Ms Sandra Hinton to note]**

75 **E-LEARNING STRATEGY**

Noted

- 75.1 The Learning and Teaching Information Services Group had been working on an updated e-learning strategy for UCL. This was being submitted to EdCom, with its associated implementation plan, prior to its circulation to the wider UCL community for consultation.

Received

- 75.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/42 (11-12) – the draft e-learning strategy.
- 75.3 An oral report from the **Head of E-learning Environments, Dr Fiona Strawbridge**.

Reported

- 75.4 The draft strategy had, in addition to being informed by input from UCL students and staff, been discussed by the ISD Governance Group and had been through a number of iterations. Action points in its associated implementation plan would depend on two key enablers, namely: departmental engagement and local champions and a new central support and governance structure for e-learning. EdCom was invited to discuss the draft strategy and to offer suggestions for its wider circulation and discussion.

Discussion

- 75.5 EdCom suggested the following:
- That the draft strategy might usefully be submitted to AC.
 - That it should be published on the Teaching and Learning Portal.

- That it should be alluded to in the first Provost's Newsletter of the 2012-13 session.
- That it should be put on Moodle.
- That students could be alerted to its presence on Moodle and the Teaching and Learning Portal by means of an all-student email.

75.6 EdCom noted that the resourcing challenges posed by the strategy had been insufficiently addressed and that UCL would need to commit a significant investment of resources to the strategy if its aspirations were to be realised fully. The strategy, if implemented, had potentially large implications for the way UCL taught and assessed its students.

RESOLVED

75.7 That the Strategy and its associated implementation plan be further circulated and discussed as suggested at 75.5. **[Action: Dr Fiona Strawbridge]**

76 **KIS REQUIREMENTS AND THE TIMING OF MODULE APPROVAL**

Noted

76.1 The Chair of PMASG, Professor Vince Emery, attended the KIS Working Group on 15 May where it was noted that new modules for new programmes may not have been agreed and created when a programme was approved. He suggested that PMASG should see new modules at the programme approval stage and this was then discussed by PMASG at its meeting of 16 May 2012.

Received

76.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/43 (11-12) – a background note on the issues.

76.3 An oral report from the **Chair of PMASG, Professor Vince Emery**.

Reported

76.4 PMASG had agreed that module information should be included in the time-frame for the submission of a PIQ and that by so doing, the programme approval process would be expedited. The PMASG Chair confirmed that, with effect from the 2012-13 academic session, new PIQs would be required to include modules. However, 2012-13 would be considered a 'transitional' year, as it might take time for the message to filter through. EdCom approved this course of action.

RESOLVED

76.5 That the above course of action be approved. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley to note]**

77 **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS: REVISING UCAS APPLICATIONS FOLLOWING SUBMISSION**

Received

- 77.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/44 (11-12) – a paper from the Head of Outreach and Admissions.
- 77.2 An oral report from the **Chair, Professor Mike Ewing**.

Reported

- 77.3 During the course of the 2012-13 admissions cycle there had been an increase in the number of instances where schools and colleges had submitted revised predicted grades. It was evident that schools were coming under increasing pressure from parents to change the predictions, often after a decision had been made by the university.
- 77.4 UCL had also been asked by schools to have a policy statement on the acceptability of additional information provided after the submission of an application. A single policy might encompass revisions to an application and/or predicted grades as well unsolicited additional information and EdCom was invited to consider the draft policy APPENDIX EDCOM 5/44 (11-12) for implementation in the 2013 entry admissions cycle.

Discussed

- 77.5 The proposed policy was approved with one amendment - it was requested that point 4 of the proposed policy should read (revisions in italics) 'Applicants who wish to be considered as a consequence of revised predicted grades *have the option of re-applying* the following year, *when they will be considered* in competition with all other applicants'.

RESOLVED

- 77.6 That the policy be amended to this effect and enshrined in the UCL Academic Manual. [**Action: Ms Bella Malins. Ms Sandra Hinton to note**]

78 **UCL LANGUAGE CENTRE UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATORY CERTIFICATE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Received

- 78.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/45 (11-12) – a paper from the Language Centre.
- 78.2 An oral report from the **Chair, Professor Mike Ewing**.

Reported

- 78.3 Some very high quality students were not receiving offers of admission from UCL and the Language Centre was increasingly encouraging UPC students to accept offers of admissions from other universities. 33% of UPC students had confirmed places at other Russell Group institutions for 2012 entry.

- 78.4 In addition, fewer students were now applying for UPC for fear of not being able to continue their studies at UCL once they had completed the foundation year. Students would increasingly compare UPC with competitors' foundation years and might opt for an alternative provider when the foundation year would guarantee their admission at another leading university whilst retaining the option of being considered for a UCL degree with the same qualification.
- 78.5 For the UPC to continue to provide a large number of high-quality students for admission to UCL degree programmes, the service provided to the UPC students needed to improve. It was therefore recommended to EdCom that (i) UPC students should be guaranteed an admissions decision on their UCAS application to UCL one month after the final UCAS submission date (i.e. by 15 February each year) and (ii) UPC students applying to MAPS, Life and Engineering Sciences and predicted to achieve an overall grade A/A* should receive automatic conditional offers.

Discussion

- 78.6 EdCom resolved to endorse the proposals for recommendation to AC in principle but noted that Recommendation (i) - that UPC students be guaranteed an admissions decision on their UCAS application to UCL one month after the final UCAS submission date - might pose a challenge for the Admissions Team in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, particularly where applications were received late. The delaying factors were (i) the time taken to receive the applications (which could take 2 weeks) and (ii) the need to identify and pull out the relevant applications and then to chase up missing information. EdCom therefore resolved that the Faculty Tutor, Dr Arne Hofmann, should speak to the Faculty Admissions Team to find out how much more time they might require and/or the best way of mitigating the effects of the delay.

RESOLVED

- 78.7 That the Arts and Humanities Faculty Tutor should speak to the Faculty Admissions Team and report his findings to the EdCom Chair prior to AC's meeting of 5 July 2012 [**Action: Dr Arne Hofmann**]
- 78.8 That EdCom endorse the proposals to go forward (with a covering note setting out the caveat at 78.6 above) for approval by AC on 5 July 2012. [**Action Ms Sandra Hinton**]

79 TIMING OF MODULE SELECTION [EdCom Min. 63C, 11-12]

Noted

- 79.1 On 4 May, EdCom was invited to note that the PDMSMG had made a number of recommendations regarding the timing of module selection and these were approved by EdCom after full discussion. EdCom members wishing to raise any additional matters before final approval were invited to do so via the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Received

79.2 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/46 (11-12) – the Minutes of the PDMSMG 8 March 2012.

RESOLVED

79.3 That the recommendations of the PDMSMG be approved. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

80 THE DIGITAL DEPARTMENT PROJECT: UPDATE TO EDCOM

Received

80.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/47 (11-12) – an update from the TDD Project Coordinator. A further report would be made to EdCom in the autumn.

81 ACTION TAKEN BY THE VICE-CHAIR

81A Approval of new programmes of study

Noted

81A.1 The EdCom Vice-Chair, Professor Vince Emery, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, had approved the following programmes of study:

- MSc Economics and Policy of Energy and the Environment;
- MSc Housing Development;
- MA Mediterranean Archaeology;
- MA Archaeology and Heritage of Asia;
- MRes/PG Cert Medical Technology Entrepreneurship;
- BSc Architectural and Interdisciplinary Studies;
- BSc Architectural and Interdisciplinary Studies with a Year Abroad.

82 MINUTES FROM STEERING GROUPS ETC.

82A Programme and Module Approval Steering Group

Received

82A.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 5/48 (11-12) – the Minutes of the meeting of PMASG held on 16 May 2012.

82A.2 An oral report from the **PMASG Chair, Professor Vince Emery.**

Reported

82A.3 PMASG had recently received a number of submissions for programmes commencing in 2012-13. This was extremely late and programmes which did not show evidence of being very well prepared were unlikely to be approved.

83 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

83A Special/Aegrotat Provisions

Reported

83A.1 A meeting was held on 25 June 2012 to consider cases brought forward from Departments/Faculties under the Special and Aegrotat Provisions. A summary paper would be circulated once it had been prepared. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

83B Examination Irregularity Panels

Reported

83B.1 Three half-day sessions had been held to consider cases under the examination irregularity procedures. The Chair reported the following:

- The process of senior invigilation staff issuing “on the spot” informal warnings and the option to consider cases with the Director of Student Services and issue up to a formal warning (with the right for the student to attend a panel) had been working well.
- The number of plagiarism cases had reduced significantly and this was thought to be due to the more widespread use of Turn-it-in as a learning tool for students.
- The lack of attendance at plagiarism panels of departmental representatives to assist the panel had been disappointing and in some cases where a representative had been sent, they had not been well-briefed.
- There was some concern about the departmental panels in terms of the consistency of penalties given. The Dean of Students (Academic) wished to review whether these were still needed and whether it might be better to bring the cases to the UCL panel in future (given the lack of attendance noted above).

Discussion

83B.2 It was noted that academics arriving in examinations often arrived late, which was disruptive to students. They were also required to be contactable. However this was not possible when they were travelling between examination sites, especially those remote from UCL. It would be preferable if they remained somewhere where they could be contacted in case a difficulty arose (such as an issue with the examination paper). A consistent policy was needed and it was suggested that the UCLBE should be invited to consider the matter further.

RESOLVED

83B.3 That the Dean of Students (Academic) review whether departmental plagiarism panels were still needed and whether these cases should

be brought to the UCL panel in future. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing]**

83B.4 That the UCLBE be invited to consider the issue of academic attendance at examinations. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

83C Thanks to Professor Vince Emery

Noted

83C.3 On behalf of EdCom, the Chair wished Professor Emery well and thanked him for his considerable contribution to the work of the Committee and to PMASG during his years of service.

84 DATES OF MEETINGS 2012-13

Noted

84.1 There would be no further meetings of EdCom in 2011-12. Dates for 2012-13 are as follows:

Meeting 1: Thursday 11 October 2012, 2 - 4.30pm
Meeting 2: Thursday 6 December 2012, 2 - 4.30pm
Meeting 3: Tuesday 12 March 2013, 2 - 4.30pm
Meeting 4: Tuesday 30 April 2013, 2 - 4.30pm
Meeting 5: Tuesday 25 June 2013, 2 - 4.30pm

SANDRA HINTON

Senior Quality Assurance Officer

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10 August 2012

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