



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

30 October 2017

### MINUTES

*Present:*

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair);

Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Sarah Al-Aride; Ms Stefanie Anyadi; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Ben Clifford; Mr Ian Davis; Dr Julie Evans; Ms June Hedges; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Tim McHugh; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Derfel Owen; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Aeli Roberts; Dr Mike Rowson; Dr Hazel Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Angie Wade.

*In attendance:* Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary).

*Apologies were received from:* Mr Mark Crawford; Professor Dilly Fung; Dr Clare Goudy; Dr Christine Hoffman; Ms Aiysha Qureshi; Professor Eva Sorensen.

*Key to abbreviations*

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|--------|--|
| ARQASC | Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee |
| EdCom  | Education Committee                                      |
| FTC    | Faculty Teaching Committee                               |
| IOE    | Institute of Education                                   |
| LSA    | Late Summer Assessment                                   |
| NSS    | National Student Survey                                  |
| PGT    | Postgraduate Taught                                      |
| PTES   | Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey                    |
| PMAP   | Programme and Module Approval Panel                      |
| SSCC   | Staff Student Consultative Committee                     |
| UG     | Undergraduate  |

#### PART I: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

#### 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2017-18

- 1.1 Noted - There were no major changes to the Terms of Reference for EdCom or its sub-committees. The Chair welcomed the new members to the Committee.
- 1.2 **Approved** – the Education Committee Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership 2017-18 at EDCOM 1-01 (17-18).
- 1.3 **Approved** – the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership 2017-18 for the Academic Partnerships Review Group, the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub Committee, the Programme and Module Approval Panels and the Quality Review Sub Committee at EDCOM 1-02 (17-18) to EDCOM 1-05 (17-18).

## 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 2.1 **Approved** – the minutes of the meeting held 25 July 2017, with the following amendment to minute 80.3:
- b) Six different models were therefore proposed - three each for 3 year and 4 year degree programmes – matched in three pairs as Models 1 and 4, 2 and 5 and 3 and 6. Models 1 and 4 reflected better where condonement was possible, whereas Models 2 and 3 and 5 and 6 would not allow condonement.

## 3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 3A **Anonymous Marking** (*EdCom Minute 78A, 25 July 2017*)
- 3A.1 Noted - The Director of Academic Services had been talking to Faculties about overcoming potential barriers to implementing UCL's Anonymous Marking policy. Consultation was still ongoing and the Director hoped to bring some proposals back to EdCom later in the year.

## 4 CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

- 4.1 Noted – The Chair had approved changes to the regulations in order to meet the deadline for the annual publication of the Academic Manual. This included the Modern Foreign Language Requirement (addition of British Sign Language,) extending the sample in second-marking (in response to concerns from External Examiners) and new Module Selection deadlines.

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| <b>PART II: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION</b> |
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## 5 UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL, CHAPTER 2: QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK 2018-19

- 5.1 **Received** – the proposals at EDCOM 1-07 (17-18).
- 5.2 Noted - As part of preparations for the Academic Model and Programme Summaries, ARQASC had proposed some changes to the UCL Qualifications and Credit Framework. The majority of the changes were designed to ensure that terminology was clearly defined and standardised across the regulations and systems, rather than to change current practice. EdCom was being asked, at this stage, to approve the proposed changes in principle, in case any additional points arose during the forthcoming Programme Summary data collection. Should additions be needed, proposals would be discussed by ARQASC and a final version of the Chapter would be brought to EdCom for formal approval later in the academic year.
- 5.3 Discussion - EdCom welcomed the opportunity to clarify definitions and terminology. The committee noted the new Taught Masters Dissertation/ Substantive Project requirements which had been revised in response to feedback from a range of Departments during the consultation on the assessment regulations, and particularly those in more professionally-focused disciplines. The course unit system would also be fully replaced from 2018-19 onwards, with all UCL programmes operating under the UK-standard modules, credits and academic levels. There was also greater clarity on the use of modules at multiple academic levels, which had been particularly problematic at levels 6 and 7. It was noted that the Programme Summaries exercise would give programmes the opportunity to find solutions to this issue. The distinction between Graduate and Taught Postgraduate, and between Honours Degree, Bachelors Degree and Integrated Masters Degree had also been emphasised.
- 5.4 Noted - A minor amendment was requested to simplify the syntax for the Masters Dissertation requirement from “an in-depth research or scholarly activity of at least 30 credits or a Dissertation/ Substantive Project of at least 60 credits” to “an in-depth research or scholarly activity of at least 30 credits in the form of a Dissertation or other Substantive Project”.
- 5.5 Noted - that the facility to include a PG Cert and/ or PG Dip interim qualification should be added to the threshold standards for the Masters in Fine Art qualification.

- 5.6 **Approved in Principle** – The UCL Qualifications and Credit Framework 2018-19, subject to the amendment in 5.4 above, and subject to potential minor amendments raised through the forthcoming Programme Summaries data collection.

## 6 **CONDONEMENT REGULATIONS 2017-18**

- 6.1 Noted - At its meeting on 13 June 2017, EdCom approved a recommendation from ARQASC that, from 2017-18, students who met the condonement criteria at the first attempt would not be offered the opportunity to resit. Following considerable lobbying from a small number of representatives within the academic community, ARQASC reconsidered the original recommendation at its October 2017 meeting. ARQASC agreed that an in-session amendment to the regulations be put forward to Education Committee for approval.

- 6.2 **Approved** – Following a detailed discussion of the options presented in the paper, EdCom agreed the following amendment to the main UCL Undergraduate Progression and Award regulations for 2017-18:

- a) For programmes within the UG Harmonised Scheme of Award: If a UG non-finalist fails at the first attempt, they will be offered the opportunity to resit.

- 6.3 Noted - The following regulations remained:

- a) For programmes within the UG Harmonised Scheme of Award:
- i. If a UG finalist fails at the first attempt, but is nevertheless eligible for the award of a degree (e.g. they have completed 12 course units and passed 11 course units) they will not be offered a resit.
  - ii. If a UG finalist fails at the first attempt, and is not eligible for the award of a degree, they will be offered the opportunity to resit.
- b) Taught Postgraduate students will be condoned automatically if they meet the criteria at the first attempt (accompanied by the removal of the cap on PGT classifications for students with resit or condoned marks in their profile).
- c) In all cases, certain exceptions apply e.g. a student may not be eligible for reassessment if they have been excluded for academic insufficiency, academic misconduct or disciplinary issues.
- d) The new *Consequences of Failure* regulations apply to all taught programmes. However derogations from the main UCL *Progression and Award* regulations (e.g. Laws, IOE, Fine Art, English, MBBS) remain for 2017-18 (see minute 7 below for regulatory changes for 2018-19).

- 6.4 Noted – ARQASC had also clarified the position for 2016-17 students who had been asked to resit in the summer of 2018:

- a) The new regulations apply to all UG and PGT students who are fully enrolled on the 2017-18 academic session. Students who were enrolled on the 2016-17 academic session, and who have been asked to resit in the summer of 2018 either with or without tuition (including those who opted out of the LSA Pilot), will still be 'enrolled' on the 2016-17 academic session for those modules and therefore subject to the 2016-17 regulations i.e. module marks will not be capped but PGT classifications will be capped.

## 7 **UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL, CHAPTER 4: ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES 2018-19**

- 7.1 Noted - Over the last two years, ARQASC had conducted a full review of UCL's assessment regulations. This included an extensive consultation process with staff and students from across UCL, with the aim of drawing up a single set of regulations for all UCL taught programmes, balancing the maintenance of academic standards with ensuring that all students are treated equally. The consultation process had included many conversations with individual Faculties and Departments currently holding Derogations and Variations, as well as detailed discussions about local practices. ARQASC had carefully considered all of the feedback received during the consultation process and endeavoured to capture everyone's needs within the new regulations, allowing variation above a UCL baseline where appropriate. It was noted that it was not possible to achieve consistency whilst also retaining every single local variation currently in place, and so

some practices had, after careful consideration, not been included.

- 7.2 Noted - At this stage, EdCom was being asked to give **approval in principle** for two reasons:
- a) To allow Faculties and Departments to consider the final set of proposed changes, ask questions and seek clarifications and, if necessary, submit requests for further consideration. Whilst ARQASC would want to avoid fundamental changes to underlying principles, some points may benefit from clarification or further detail.
  - b) To inform the Programme Summaries data collection over the coming months. This exercise will also allow programmes time to ask questions, consider the changes in detail and request permitted variations which will be formalised in the Programme Summaries.
- 7.3 Noted - Any additional issues raised during the Programme Summaries exercise would be discussed by ARQASC and, where appropriate, incorporated into a final version of the regulations for formal approval at EdCom later in the year.

#### **Taught Postgraduate and Graduate condonement**

- 7.4 Noted - The proposed change of decision around Taught Postgraduate and Graduate condonement. At the July 2017 meeting of EdCom, the committee had considered changes to the amount of condonable credit permitted on Graduate and Taught Postgraduate programmes. After careful consideration of feedback, ARQASC had agreed that the amount of permitted condonement would remain largely the same, but that, for absolute clarity, it should be expressed in terms of credits rather than percentages of taught modules. This would represent no change for standard programmes, however programmes with more than the standard number of credits and/ or very large dissertations could see a change in the volume of permissible condonement, so provision had also been added for programmes to set higher thresholds via the Programme Summaries data collection if desired.

#### **Borderline zone**

- 7.5 Noted - After careful analysis, ARQASC had agreed on a 1% Borderline zone for all qualifications (e.g. A First is awarded for a Final Weighted Mark of 69.50%, or a Final Weighted Mark of 68.50% with 50% of final year credits in the higher class).

#### **Honours classification schemes for each Faculty**

- 7.6 Noted – At its meeting in July 2017, EdCom had agreed three Honours classification models, and asked Faculties to take the schemes back to their FTCs for discussion and agreement on which model would be used. It was suggested that Scheme A should be the default as it was designed to align with the changes to the regulations on condonement and capped resits, but that Faculties could use Schemes B or C if professional bodies placed heavy restrictions on the use of condonement on a programme. EdCom stated a preference for faculty-wide decisions to give as much consistency as possible.
- 7.7 **Approved** - the Honours Classification Schemes for each Faculty were agreed as follows (outstanding decisions would be confirmed as soon as possible):

##### **Arts & Humanities**

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| English:              | Non-modular regulations |
| Fine Art:             | Non-modular regulations |
| All other programmes: | Scheme A                |

##### **The Bartlett**

Scheme A

##### **Brain Sciences**

Scheme A

##### **Engineering Sciences**

*tbc*

##### **Institute of Education**

*tbc*

##### **Laws**

Scheme C

##### **Life Sciences**

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| School of Pharmacy:   | Scheme B |
| All other programmes: | Scheme A |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Mathematical and Physical Sciences</b> | <i>tbc</i>                              |
| <b>Medical Sciences</b>                   |   |
| MBBS:                                     | Not classified/ Non-modular regulations |
| iBSc:                                     | Scheme A                                |
| Other Honours Degrees:                    | Scheme A                                |
| <b>Population Health Sciences</b>         | Scheme A                                |
| <b>Social and Historical Sciences</b>     | Scheme A                                |

- 7.8 Of the outstanding Faculties, some Departments wanted to use Scheme B or C for reasons other than professional accreditation (e.g. Scheme B for ‘academic rigour’ or Scheme C for pedagogical reasons). Faculties were however asked to note that these schemes had been specifically designed for professionally-accredited programmes which do not permit condonement. If used, students could be unfairly disadvantaged in comparison to other UCL students, because they would not be able to drop condoned or capped resit marks from the calculation.

### **Institutional position on condonement for 2018-19**

- 7.9 Noted – in light of the discussions in minute 6 above, EdCom agreed to review the proposals for condonement for 2018-19. ARQASC had explored practices at comparable institutions, debated a wide range of different options, modelled the impact of different schemes on real and hypothetical student results, and consulted extensively with Faculties over the last two years before putting forward the proposals. This included condoning automatically any student who met the condonement criteria at the first attempt.
- 7.10 EdCom had a lengthy and detailed discussion on the issues involved. The following arguments were put forward:
- The consultation with staff and students had revealed a diverse range of views, and it was clear that there was a depth and strength of feeling on both sides. Each option was supported by sound academic arguments but also had its disadvantages. EdCom agreed that a collective decision was needed to ensure that all students across UCL were treated equally, but also acknowledged that some people would be disappointed by the decision.
  - Condonement after the first attempt had been in place for UG finalists for many years. For 2017-18 it was introduced for Taught Postgraduate students to balance out the removal of the cap on Classifications for students with a resit or condoned mark in their profile. The area of contention had been around UG non-finalists, who were currently offered a resit if they failed at the first attempt – this decision had now been reversed for 2017-18 (see minute 6 above), but a decision was also needed for 2018-19.
  - The proposed regulations included provisions for programmes to make one or modules ‘Non-condonable’ if certain learning outcomes were essential to the award of a qualification with a particular field of study. To qualify, a module would have to be essential to professional accreditation and/or a Compulsory module and/ or a Dissertation. Additionally, within a non-condonable module, one or more components could also be made non-condonable. On non-condonable modules and components, students would automatically be offered a resit if they failed at the first attempt.
  - Where a module was not essential to achieving the programme learning outcomes, condonement after the first attempt helped to reduce the assessment burden on students, who could progress or be awarded a degree without having to resit non-essential material. This also encouraged students to experiment with their module choices and widen their education without impacting on their overall achievement.
  - Condonement after the first attempt would reduce the burden on departmental academic and professional staff in terms of writing and marking LSA papers and processing LSA results. There would be a negligible impact on UCL Examinations in terms of exam timetabling and managing exam halls, as these processes would have to be undertaken regardless.
  - The Late Summer Assessments pilot had an approximate 70% attendance rate. Whilst it was not possible to disaggregate individual reasons for non-attendance, many students will

have chosen to be condoned instead of resitting. Non-attendance was higher amongst overseas students, suggesting that the cost and inconvenience of resits were important factors for students.

- g) Some students would prefer to resit for a capped mark rather than have a condoned mark on their transcripts. For Graduate and Taught Postgraduate students the difference between a condoned mark and a capped resit was relatively narrow, and the cap on the classification for students with condoned marks had also been removed. However the UG Condonable Range of 1.00 – 39.99% could mean that much lower marks appeared on the transcript. ARQASC had considered a narrower Condonable Range (e.g. 30.00 – 39.99%), but modelling suggested that fewer students would progress or be awarded their degree than at present. Another option might be to add an explanation of condoned marks to the transcripts.
- h) The Students' Union representative suggested that students were most concerned about their classification rather than the progression and award requirements or transcript. The papers included details of the extensive modelling which had been undertaken to assess the impact on classification. As a result, the new UG classification Scheme A had been specifically designed to mitigate the impact of condoned and resit marks, allowing students to drop their worst 30 credits in years one and two. The cap on PGT classifications had also been removed for students with resit or condoned marks in their profile.
- i) ARQASC was currently working on proposals for a transitional clause to cover the period of changeover in the regulations. For example, if a Programme Board of Examiners felt that the change in condonement had had a significant negative impact on a student's classification, steps could be taken, within defined and consistent parameters, to redress that impact.
- j) EdCom was keen to ensure that less able students were not able to progress only to struggle with later years of the programme. However it was also noted that resits could exacerbate the problem for some struggling students by adding to their workload. Conversely, a second attempt encouraged weaker students to engage in the outstanding content, whereas condonement meant that students would never complete that learning.
- k) EdCom also discussed mid-way solutions, such as automatically condoning students but then allowing them to opt out and instead resit. However, Late Summer Assessments already included very fast turnaround times for departmental staff, and such a system would exacerbate this further. Alternatively, students might be entered automatically for a resit and then be given the opportunity to opt out and be condoned. Again, this would be difficult for Departments to manage within the timeframes available, and students could anyway exercise this option by simply not attending the LSA. On the other hand, this ran the risk of Departments having to set additional papers which then were not used (although they could be re-used the following year).
- l) LSA pilot Faculties reported that much of the extra work had been due to deferrals and Extenuating Circumstances. One Faculty reported that the LSA pilot had involved writing new papers for 67 of their modules. Of these, 61 papers would have had to be written anyway due to deferrals.
- m) Some felt it was unfair to condone a slight failure and allow a second attempt for more substantive failure. However it was also noted that students who pass but with low marks are also not afforded the opportunity of a resit.
- n) The current disparity of regulations across UCL was highly problematic for a range of reasons. Above all a single, simple, transparent system was needed in order to assure UCL's academic standards and be fair to all students.

7.11 The following points were also noted:

- a) The Programme Summaries data collection would allow all programmes to consider the inclusion of non-condonable modules and components. Applications would be scrutinised and approved by a sub-committee of PMAP, and would only be considered if they met the criteria for non-condonable modules.
- b) If any minor or major programme amendments were proposed via the Programme Summaries data collection, Department and/ or Faculty approval would also be sought as

appropriate.

- c) Once the data had been collated, it would be possible to produce reports from the new Academic Model, for example lists of non-condonable modules.
- d) Condonement has to be determined at programme level. This means that a module might be non-condonable on one programme but not another.

7.13 Noted - Whilst the discussion did not lead to a full consensus amongst all members of EdCom, the committee did agree on the importance of upholding UCL's academic standards and of establishing a consistent approach for all students across UCL. Members were also keen to ensure that the proposed transitional clause was developed and included to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the changeover in regulations. The new regulations would also need to be monitored for a number of years to evaluate the actual impact on student outcomes.

7.14 **Agreed** - From 2018-19, students at all levels of study who meet the condonement criteria at the first attempt will be condoned and will not be required or permitted to resit.

#### **Implementation plan for each level of study**

7.15 ARQASC had consulted with the Registrar and Legal Services about the possible consequences of changing regulations for existing students. Whilst there were risks involved, there were also many benefits to implementing the new regulations for all students at the same time, and these were felt to outweigh the risks. It had, however, been agreed that UG Classification regulations could not be changed mid-registration, and so this would be the one exception. ARQASC was in the process of collating all of the current UG classification schemes into one document to aid the transition process.

7.16 ARQASC had carefully designed the new regulations to avoid adverse impact on students wherever possible but recognised that there would be cases where an existing student might be advantaged or disadvantaged by the changes. As a result, ARQASC would be using its next few meetings to compare the new and old regulations, variations and derogations to identify possible areas of discord, as well as working on a transition policy.

7.17 **Agreed** - the new Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes would apply to all taught students fully enrolled on the 2018-19 academic session, with the exception of Undergraduate Classification which would be phased in.

#### **Further work**

7.18 The committee's discussion highlighted the following points for further discussion by ARQASC:

- a) Clarification on the requirements for Pre-requisite modules – for example, whether a student can take a subsequent module if they have a condoned mark.
- b) Clarification on the application of condonement where resits take place earlier than the late summer.
- c) Further guidance on the conversion of marks on programmes with an integrated study abroad year or module.

#### **Action: Chair of ARQASC**

7.19 Noted - The papers also highlighted a few areas which ARQASC had not yet been able to resolve, including the implementation of a limited marking scale, a further review of the late submission penalties and a review of the Examination Irregularities and Plagiarism procedures. There was also an ongoing project to review UCL's attendance requirement.

7.20 **Approved in principle** - the proposed new Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes for 2018-19, subject to potential minor amendments raised through the forthcoming Programme Summaries data collection.

## PART III: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

### **8 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE: ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

- 8.1 Noted - The report on progress against UCL's Education Strategy (2016-2021) set out how UCL was delivering Principal Theme 2 of UCL 2034: "A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience". The report had been submitted to recent meetings of Academic Board and Council who had noted progress against the primary objective: supporting students to succeed in their studies, to enjoy their experience at UCL and to secure a great start to their careers. The report also highlighted areas of continuing difficulty. Council had been particularly keen to see less variability in NSS and PTES results across programmes, to understand how the Connected Curriculum was being embedded and to see evidence of deliberate steps to transform institutional cultures. It was noted that one of the defining features of programmes with top NSS results was that students were placed at the centre of the programme's thinking. The strategy included measures to share this good practice across a wider range of Departments. The Students' Union was also leading a number of initiatives, championing issues such as assessment and feedback via SSCCs.

### **9 EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

- 9.1 **Received** – the report at [EDCOM 1-11 \(17-18\)](#).

### **10 FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

- 10.1 **Received** – the report at [EDCOM 1-12 \(17-18\)](#).

### **11 APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

- 11.1 **Approved** – the Programmes recommended for approval by PMAP at [EDCOM 1-13 \(17-18\)](#).

### **12 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

- 12.1 **Received** – the minutes of the Programme and Module Approval Panel held 5 July 2017 at [EDCOM 1-14 \(17-18\)](#).
- 12.2 **Received** – minutes of the Quality Review Sub-Committee held 14 September 2017 at [EDCOM 1-15 \(17-18\)](#).

### **13 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS**

- 13.1 **Approved** – the Suspensions of Regulations at [EDCOM 1-16 \(17-18\)](#).

### **14 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2017-18**

- 13 December 2017 2.00-4.30, Room 728, IOE
- 28 February 2018 2.00-4.30pm, Room 433, 16 Taviton Street
- 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

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6 November 2017