

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

14 December 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Mike Ewing (*Chair*)

Mr Bob Allan	Mr Marco Federighi
Mr David Ashton	Ms Valerie Hogg
Ms Karen Barnard	Mr Martin Reid
Ms Susan Bryant	Dr Hilary Richards
Prof Robert Chambers (<i>vice Ms Olga Thomas</i>)	Dr Ruth Siddall
Mr Michael Chessum	Prof Richard Simons
Mr Jason Clarke	Ms Rachel Solnick
Dr Brenda Cross	Dr Fiona Strawbridge
Prof Vince Emery	Ms Susan Ware
Dr Caroline Essex	

In attendance: Ms Sandra Hinton (Secretary); Ms Paula Speller; Ms Sarah Guise [for Minute 6].

Apologies for absence were received from: Prof David Bogle; Mr Alex Nesbitt.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILTS	Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy
LTSS	Learning Technology Support Service
PIQ	Programme Institution Questionnaire
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
SMT	(Provost's) Senior Management Team
UCLBE	UCL Board of Examiners
UCLU	UCL Union
UKBA	UK Border Agency

1 **TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2010-11 MEMBERSHIP**

Received

- 1.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 1/01 (10-11) - the Terms of Reference, Constitution and 2010-11 Membership.
- 1.2 An oral report from the **Chair, Professor Mike Ewing**.

Reported

- 1.3 The Chair reported that EdCom had been established as a result of the 2010 review of AC and its sub-structure, in order to define, monitor and review UCL strategy, policy and procedure in respect of UCL's taught programmes (both undergraduate and postgraduate-taught).

2 **TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2010-11 MEMBERSHIP OF THE UCL BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

Received

- 2.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 1/02 (10-11) - the draft revised Terms of Reference, Constitution and 2010-11 Membership of the UCLBE.

Reported

- 2.2 The Chair reported that he would function as acting Chair of the UCLBE until the candidate whom he wished to nominate became available for this role. It was envisaged that this would be later in the 2010-11 session.

Discussion

- 2.3 It was noted that the essential role of the UCLBE would be to monitor the implementation of UCL strategy, policy and procedure as defined by EdCom in respect of all matters relating to the examination and assessment of taught students (both undergraduate and postgraduate-taught). It was noted that the draft Terms of Reference did not completely capture the role of UCLBE and its relationship to EdCom. It was therefore resolved that the appropriate revisions should be made and the revised Terms of Reference approved by Chair's Action.

RESOLVED

- 2.4 That the draft Terms of Reference of the UCLBE be revised as per 2.3 above and approved by EdCom Chair's Action. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing and Ms Sandra Hinton]**

3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2010-11 MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROGRAMME AND MODULE APPROVAL STEERING GROUP**

Received

- 3.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 1/03 (10-11) - the Terms of Reference, Constitution and 2010-11 Membership of the PMASG.

Noted

- 3.2 PMASG was charged on behalf of EdCom to consider and make recommendations to EdCom regarding proposals for the institution, amendment and withdrawal of new programmes of study and the constituent modules of such programmes.

RESOLVED

- 3.3 That EdCom approve Terms of Reference, Constitution and 2010-11 Membership of the PMASG were approved, subject to some minor updates to nomenclature in the Constitution to be made by the PMASG Secretary.
[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]

LTSS and other relevant bodies had first seen and commented on the proposals.

- the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy noted that the setting of fees was the responsibility of Finance Committee, on the advice of School Finance Directors. However, dialogue between EdCom and Finance Committee would be necessary in light of changes to the cap on tuition fees. The Director of Financial Planning and Strategy confirmed that discussion of this had already begun at SMT.
- that PMASG's membership should contain a student representative and that the UCL Union should nominate an appropriate candidate.
- that the 2010-11 session of EdCom should be regarded as a transitional year as the changes to AC and its sub-structure were implemented. In 'steady state' it was envisaged that the Committee would produce and circulate a comprehensive schedule of its proposed business for the forthcoming session. During this transitional year however, any specific upcoming business of which members were aware but were unsure of the appropriate locus or timing for committee discussion or resolution, should be raised with the Director of Student Services or the Deputy Director of Academic Services (and AC Secretary) who would advise them as necessary.

RESOLVED

4A.5 That the proposal at Minute 4A.3 be approved.

4A.6 That the UCL Union should nominate an appropriate candidate for PMASG and inform the Chairs of PMASG and EdCom, copied to the Secretaries of these committees. **[Action: Mr Michael Chessum, Professor Vince Emery, Professor Mike Ewing, Ms Irenie Morley and Ms Sandra Hinton to note]**

5 WORKING GROUPS OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Noted

5.1 In order to fulfil its Terms of Reference, EdCom would require the support of a number of specialised working groups, to be set up as necessary. Working groups of EdCom would normally be serviced by the EdCom Secretary.

Received

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

Reported

5.3 The Chair proposed the establishment of two working groups of EdCom as follows:

- (1) *Programme Diet and Module Selection Management Group* consisting of:
 - A representative from each School;

- Members of Registry including the Director of Student Services and a member of PORTICO Services (as necessary);
- A student;
- The Chair of EdCom (who would chair the working group).

(2) *Regulation Review Group*, consisting of:

- The Faculty Tutors;
- A student;
- Members of Registry, including the Director of Student Services (who would chair the working group);
- The Chair of EdCom.

5.4 EdCom officers would draft full Terms of Reference and Membership for each group to be approved by EdCom Chair's Action.

RESOLVED

5.5 That the establishment of the above two working groups of EdCom be approved.

5.6 That Terms of Reference and Membership for each group be drafted and approved by EdCom Chair's Action. **[Action: Professor Mike Ewing and Ms Sandra Hinton]**

6 UCL RELIGIOUS EQUALITY POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Noted

6.1 At its meeting of 1 December 2010, the UCLBE had discussed a draft Religious Equality Policy for Students and had raised a number of practical considerations including the difficulties of setting an examination timetable whilst recognising all religious observances. In order to inform its consideration of the issues, EdCom invited the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator, Ms Sarah Guise, to brief the Committee on the development of the Policy.

Received

6.2 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/04 (10-11) – a briefing paper from the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator on the development of a Religious Equality Policy for students.

6.3 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/05 (10-11) – the draft Policy.

6.4 An oral report from the **Equalities and Diversity Coordinator, Ms Sarah Guise.**

Reported

6.5 In July 2009, the Vice-Provost (Academic and International), Professor Michael Worton, had initiated a small working group to develop a religious equality policy for students in response to a number of practical queries about

teaching and learning and religious observance. Several drafts of the policy, based on good practice from other universities, were then circulated amongst working group members and relevant colleagues. The policy was put on hold in February 2010, pending the outcome of the Caldicott Inquiry. The next stage in the development of the policy would be to incorporate any relevant recommendations from the Caldicott Inquiry into the policy and to consult with university chaplains and religious and philosophical student societies.

Discussion

6.6 During EdCom's discussion, the following points were made:

- although the impact of the policy on a number of relevant contexts (such as Health and Safety and ID cards) had been thought through, its impact on examination scheduling and related issues was vague and as a result might make it unworkable, for example the publication of examination dates three months in advance.
- there appeared to be no consensus on what would count as a 'major' religion or how long religious festivals should last. The Religious Calendar also contained a very large number of holy days, including many days of Christian significance, such as St Swithun's Day, for which taking leave was not usual.
- a suggestion that UCL should define its secular position more clearly on its website in order that prospective students could make an informed decision. While every effort would be made to accommodate the religious beliefs of current students, UCL had no legal obligation to schedule examinations around (eg.) Ramadan and could not guarantee that religious festivals or holy days would be taken into consideration when drawing up examination timetables, coursework or booking accommodation for field trips etc.
- the policy was explicitly a Religious Equality Policy for Students, but it contained a number of serious implications for staff. For example, it stated that the failure to exercise appropriate care when expressing a broad moral judgement would be dealt with under the Disciplinary Code and Procedure. It was noted that staff should be covered by their existing staff contractual arrangements and that more explicit reference to this should be made in the policy.

RESOLVED

- 6.7 That the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator, with the assistance and advice of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Edcom, the Dean of Students (Welfare) and the Director of Student Services, should re-draft the policy, taking into consideration the above views expressed by EdCom and making UCL's position clearer before referring it back to the Vice-Provost (Academic and International). **[Action: Ms Sarah Guise, Professor Mike Ewing, Mr David Ashton, Professor Vince Emery, Dr Ruth Siddall]**
- 6.8 That the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator should request comments on the draft from FTCs and UCL Chaplains. **[Action: Ms Sarah Guise]**

- 6.9 That the UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer should circulate the draft to the UCL Union for discussion and comment. All comments to be referred back to the Equalities and Diversity Coordinator. **[Action: Mr Michael Chessum]**

7 **MOODLE ARCHIVE – POLICY ON EDITORIAL CONTROL**

Noted

- 7.1 During summer 2010, a new Moodle Archive was set up. Teaching staff do not have editorial control over the archive material.

8 **LATE ENROLMENT**

Received

- 8.1 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/07 (10-11) – a briefing paper from the Director of Student Services.
- 8.2 An oral report from the **Director of Student Services, Mr David Ashton.**

Reported

- 8.3 Students enrolling late missed vital induction information and events. Also UCL's Trusted Sponsor status required that it should monitor overseas students with Tier 4 Visas as part of its arrangement with the UKBA deadlines and report those who did not enrol or engage with their studies. On academic grounds therefore, it was proposed that new students should be fully registered and engaging with their studies within two weeks of the start of session or the start of their programme and continuing students should have completed the online re-enrolment procedure by the end of October 2011. EdCom was asked to discuss and to endorse the proposals for commencement in the 2011-12 academic session.
- 8.4 The main points of EdCom's discussion were as follows:
- that the proposals specify that 'start of session' meant from the beginning of teaching (eg. the second week of first term);
 - that Affiliate students would be regular exceptions to the rule and therefore their particular courses should be identified to the Director of Student Services and special provision made for them;
 - that the literature sent to students applying for visas to study was sparse and liable to confuse. However, this was attributable to the paucity of useful information on the UKBA website, to which students were directed by Registry. The Registry itself was not licensed to give advice on visa matters. Applicants could also contact the UCL Union and the UCL Rights and Advice Centre which is licensed to give advice.
 - that the length of time cited in APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/07 (10-11) (para 9) that students absent through illness could self-certify was incorrectly stated as two days. This should read 'five days'.
 - that clear deadlines should be set for applications and for offers to students. FTCs should be consulted about these before they were set.

RESOLVED

- 8.5 That clear deadlines should be set for applications and for offers to students. FTCs would be consulted about these by the Director of Student Services before they were set. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

- 8.6 That subject to amendment of the phrase 'start of session' to 'from the beginning of teaching', the proposals be approved for commencement in the 2011-12 academic session. **[Action: Mr David Ashton]**

9 **FOUR COURSE UNIT MODULES**

Noted

- 9.1 A number of difficulties had arisen from the use of four course unit modules in the Faculty of Engineering Sciences. It was proposed that use of these modules should be discontinued at the end of the 2010-11 academic session

Programmes the further identification and implementation of a more manageable administrative framework within which to process and report assessment activity and outcomes.

- that as the use of four course unit modules had clearly made no demonstrable difference to the high failure rates in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, these programmes should contemplate a return to the classical structure or a split into combinations of multiples of half units.

RESOLVED

- 9.7 That the Faculty Tutor, Engineering Sciences propose to Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering either a return to the classical structure or a split into combinations of multiples of half units. **[Action: Mr Marco Federighi]**
- 9.8 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. **[Action: Professor Richard Simon and Ms Paula Speller]**

10 THE AWARD OF MERIT FOR MASTERS PROGRAMMES

Noted

- 10.1 During its meetings in academic session 2009-10, the UCLBE had considered the formulation of an award of Merit for Masters programmes. The Chair of the UCLBE had also met with the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) to discuss the matter. EdCom was invited to consider the criteria for the calculation of an award of Merit.

Received

- 10.2 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/09 (10-11) – a note from the UCLBE.
- 10.3 An oral report from the **outgoing Chair of the UCLBE, Professor Vince Emery**.

Reported

- 10.4 Some confusion had arisen regarding the exact calculation proposed for the award of Merit, as the paper at APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/09 (10-11) had conflated this with proposals for the calculation of Masters-level borderline Merit cases (see Minute 11 below). Professor Emery clarified that the calculation proposed was that the award of Merit could be made where there was:

‘an overall mark of between 60-69.9% ; the dissertation had a mark over 65% or above; there was no mark below 50%; there were no resit or condoned marks and all the marks were for first attempts’.

- 10.5 If 65% were used as an overall threshold, the Merit could be awarded for Postgraduate Diplomas. It would also comply with the European ECTS

framework. However, UCL would be out of step with the majority of UK HEIs. If the proposal of an overall mark of between 60-69.9% was approved, the Merit could *not* be awarded for Postgraduate Diplomas. EdCom was asked to (i) consider and approve the criteria for the calculation of an award of Merit for Masters programmes (ii) to endorse the calculation at Minute 10.4 and (iii) to endorse the UCLBE's view that the award of Merit should not be offered for Postgraduate Diplomas.

Discussion

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

- It was confirmed that the above calculation had been formulated taking into account the rounding-up of marks performed by PORTICO;
- that if the proposal were approved, it would need to be deployed consistently by all Masters-level exam boards;
- that UCL students were currently disadvantaged by the lack of an award of Merit, as this was commonly awarded by other UK HEIs;

RESOLVED

10.7 That the criteria for the calculation of an award of Merit for Masters programmes at Minute 10.4 be approved.

10.8 That the award of Merit should not be offered for Postgraduate Diplomas.

10.9 That the award of Merit be implemented from the end of academic session 2010-11. See also Minute 11.6 below.

11 CONSIDERATION OF MASTERS-LEVEL BORDERLINE CASES AND A REVIEW OF THE WORDING OF THE SCHEME OF AWARD FOR DISTINCTION

Received

11.1 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/10 (10-11) – a paper from the UCLBE setting out the issues.

11.2 An oral report from the **outgoing Chair of the UCLBE, Professor Vince Emery**.

Reported

11.3 Since the approval by AC in October 2009 of a set of overarching principles for the consideration of Masters-level borderline cases, the Dean of Students (Academic) had received a number of requests for the award of Distinction in cases where marks were below the agreed threshold. EdCom was asked to discuss and approve the amendments to the criteria for the consideration of taught Masters-level borderline cases and to review and approve changes to the wording for the Award with Distinction for the regulations for MA, MSc and MRes and for Postgraduate Diplomas as set out at APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/10 (10-11).

RESOLVED

- 12.3 That CALT should be asked to implement a new marking scheme giving an absolute mark to work and using the full range of marks and that CALT should implement this with immediate effect. **[Action: Ms Sue Bryant, Acting Head of CALT]**
- 12.4 That the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners (and Secretary to the UCLBE) should work with CALT and Portico Services to implement the new marking scheme. **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**
- 12.5 That information on the new marking scheme be circulated as appropriate by the Manager, Curricular Development and Examiners and enshrined in the Academic Regulations for Students (the 'Blue Book'). **[Action: Ms Irenie Morley]**

13 **INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY**

Received

- 13.1 At APPENDIX AC/EDCOM 1/11 (10-11) – the ILTS.
- 13.2 An oral report from the **Deputy Director of Academic Services (and AC Secretary), Mr Jason Clarke.**

Reported

- 13.3 EdCom was asked to note the ILTS. AC Officers were liaising with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) over the finalising of the ILTS Implementation Plan and this would be disseminated shortly. A previous covering email from the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) had not made clear that the Implementation Plan previously circulated had been intended as a draft for consultation and more work was now needed on the Plan to bring it up to date.
- 13.4 In addition to noting the ILTS, EdCom was asked to note that the Assessment Strategy would also be made available on the EdCom Sharepoint as this was a key document on which a great deal of effort had been expended and which defined the context for the business of the Committee. It was also possible that the Assessment Strategy would still be combined with the ILTS as had been originally intended. Officers would confirm with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) whether this was still the intention. **[Action: Mr Jason Clarke]**

14 **ACTION TAKEN BY THE VICE-CHAIR**

14A **Approval of new programmes of study**

Noted

- 14A.1 The Chair of EdCom had delegated authority to the Chair of PMASG, as Vice-

consideration by the full Committee would be referred to EdCom for discussion. A report of PIQs signed off by the PMASG Chair would be reported to EdCom at each of its meetings.

14A.2 The Vice-Chair, acting on behalf of EdCom and on the recommendation of PMASG, had approved the institution of the following programmes of study.

- *MSc Climate Change;*
- *MSc Environmental Modelling;*
- *MSc Advanced Spatial Analysis.*

15 **MINUTES FROM STEERING GROUPS**

15A **Programme and Module Approval Steering Group**

Noted

15A.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 1/12 (10-11) - the Minutes of the meeting of PMASG held on 29 November 2010.

15B **UCL Board of Examiners**

Noted

15B.1 At APPENDIX EDCOM 1/13 (10-11) - the Minutes of the meeting of the UCLBE held on 1 December 2010.

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26 January 2011

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