

LEARNING TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2009

Present: Dr Nick Watmough (Chair), Mr Stuart Alder (PG Student rep), Dr Susan Barker (PHA), Dr Richard Bowater (BIO), Dr Nigel Clayden (CHE), Prof. Robin Haynes (ENV), Dr Helen James (SCI rep on TPPG), Dr Alan Kendall (ENV), Dr Geoff McKeown (CMP), Mrs Rachel Paley (Secretary), Mr David Sheppard (Academic Officer, SU), Dr David Stevens (MTH).

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Paul Grassby (PHA), Dr Ben Milner (CMP) and Mr Sean Rose (SCI Faculty Convenor)

SECTION A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Considered:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2009 were considered and confirmed as a correct record.

A2. STATEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed new member, the DoT for ENV, Prof Robin Haynes and welcomed those colleagues standing in for DoTs.

The Chair thanked Dr Alan Kendall for his full contribution to Committee meetings throughout his service.

The Chair reported the following to the Committee:

(i) Plagiarism and Collusion (P&C) Policy

The P&C policy is being revised for the next academic year and will be considered at the next meeting of LTC. The Chair advised that he would distribute this to DoTs for comment.

(ii) CCS Review Group

The recent meeting of the CCS Review Group discussed the issue of compensation of marks. There are differences of opinion between the Faculties, with HUM preferring 'option C' where students would have to pass all modules. SSF have asked for a review of practice across the 1994 group to benchmark against.

The Chair confirmed that he had stressed the importance of pre-requisites in course profiles and how this could be enforced – i.e. a student must pass in order for the module to be an effective pre-requisite.

A3. FEEDBACK FROM LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

(i) Institutional Audit

The Chair thanked colleagues who had participated in Audit and confirmed that a preliminary letter of 9th April has been received by University, the draft report is expected by 29th May.

The Auditors found 'confidence in soundness and current/future management of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities.'

There were six commendations, one to highlight is that "*the specification and application of the framework for student involvement in QA throughout the University which afford significant opportunities for students to express their views*"

There were also six recommendations (which are advisable, i.e. we must do by next audit). It is important to wait to see the final report as there will be considerable detail, for instance in the use of 'levels' and in some areas of the application of policy. One of the recommendations is: "*Review guidelines for the operation of joint degree programmes offered within University to ensure students enrolled on such programmes are provided with academic support consistent with that provided for single honours students.*"

The Teaching Office are looking at what can be achieved for the new academic year in terms of providing specific handbooks to students on the true joint degree programmes.

Two desirable recommendations are around "*Peer review*" and "*Training and support of PGR students involved in teaching.*"

(ii) Higher Education Academy

CSED has received a report which appears to be generated from a database regarding institutional contacts and activity. There appears to be a low take-up on mailing lists in SCI. It would therefore, be good for DoTs and Heads to encourage colleagues to get on the mailing list. (Action: Secretary to check that this is free).

(iii) LTC Review of Assessment

A paper on degree classifications comparing UEA and UK institutions for the period 2005/6 – 2007/08 has been circulated to Heads of School. The intention is that they should be discussed with DoTs and Exam Board Chairs. This item will be scheduled at the next meeting to confirm that these conversations have taken place and to note any matters arising.

(iv) External Examiners report pro-forma

LTC approved the new external examiners report pro-forma, which dispenses with the oft criticised tick boxes and allows a structured narrative. (Filed as document A in the minute book, but final version excludes the annex). The pro-forma relies on strict application of the Code of Practice on external examiners.

Action: Secretary to gather information from Board secretaries on current sampling procedure for Committee to consider.

(v) *Supervision of PGT students undertaking their dissertation*

LTQO have produced draft guidelines and a 'Research Project Agreement'. The former is very detailed and considered excessive and almost certainly covers material that is in SCI MSc Handbooks. The Research project agreement was approved at LTC and the Chair would like all SCI PGT to adopt on a voluntary basis.

Action: Secretary to arrange briefing session for Chair with MSc course directors

A4. LEARNING ENHANCEMENT

Considered:

The report from the Dean of Students Office on their learning enhancement service (filed as Document B in the minute book). For this item, the Committee were joined by Dr Stephen Ashworth, the Science Associate Dean for Admissions and Dr Robert Jenkins the Learning Enhancement Tutor (Mathematics and Statistics).

The Chair introduced this item to the Committee by explaining that when this item was taken at LTC, there was much discussion around admissions requirements for mathematics. Although all students are expected to have a grade C in GCSE Mathematics, in practice this can be achieved by taking the lower level paper and so these students will not have covered the full mathematics syllabus. It is not possible to identify these students from the information received from UCAS.

ECO confirmed that they have raised their entry requirements to grade B in GCSE Mathematics to help address this problem.

It was recognised that there may also be a retention issue in the two years between taking GCSEs and starting a degree.

During the conversation the following points were made:

- i) CMP confirmed that they have raised their admissions requirements to grade B in GCSE Mathematics for 2009 entry. The intention is to monitor the impact that this has on the new cohort. CMP also split students on entry into different modules dependent on whether or not they have A-level Mathematics.
- ii) ENV have recently altered their mathematics teaching and enable students with higher level maths to take the advanced level modules.
- iii) BIO would consider raising mathematics requirements for some courses – such as Biochemistry.
- iv) There can be benefits to raising admissions requirements for the profile of the degree and for the students and teaching staff. However, it was noted that grades attained by students can be subject (or market) specific.

- v) It was noted that it would be helpful to have additional data on students' GCSE mathematics entry grades at admission and the grades of those students seen by the Learning Enhancement Tutor.

Actions:

- i) DoTs to take this issue forward in their Schools - to consider the timing of help, do students need intensive maths training at the start of the course or is it better for repetition throughout the year to help students retain the material. Also to consider whether the maths teaching is embedded into existing modules or in 'stand alone' maths modules.
- ii) The AD-Admissions to check what data is available for GCSE mathematics on entry to SCI Schools and to make any such data available to the secretary of the Committee.
- iii) The Learning Enhancement Tutor to provide data regarding students using the service and their grades on entry (in a suitable anonymised format) to the secretary of the Committee.

A5. COURSE TESTS IN SCIENCE

Considered:

A report from Caroline Rose, Senior Administrator in the Science Teaching Office (filed as Document C in the minute book). For this item, Caroline Rose joined the meeting.

The Committee broadly agreed with the recommendations in the report, but it was noted that it not always practice to return course tests. There is an issue in PHA around arranging invigilation for course tests (all exams have to be run by the School not the Exams Office). (Action: Susan Barker to write a note on the problems for the Chair).

Committee members expressed concern regarding recommendation 4.4 and asked if the text could be amended as follows:

4.4 The person responsible for organising the course test should ensure that they are familiar with the rules governing the conduct of examinations. The tests should be written in a manner to prevent cheating and collusion. In line with good practice, attendance sheets signed by the students should be produced for course tests.

Action: Caroline Rose to amend text and report to be sent to secretary of the Exams and Course tests review group.

A6. MASTERS PROVISION AND BOLOGNA

Considered:

The report from the RSC on Masters provision and Bologna (filed as Document D in the minute book). The Committee noted the reports made by Teaching Directors on their School's current masters provision and future plans as shown below.

- i) MTH – Integrated Masters (IM) programmes attract good students and have higher admissions requirements. There are shared economies with the stand-alone masters which shares modules with the IM programmes.
- ii) PHA – only offers the MPharm – already an IM programme. The PGT masters is a CPD programme for practising pharmacists and is at a higher level.
- iii) CHE – Notes that there is a QAA need to ensure that the IM is equivalent to MSc level and this is the understanding of UK students. CHE now has 50% of students on the IM programmes.
- iv) ENV – Currently offers a range of MSc programmes. The proposal is to introduce IM programmes in combinations on Environmental Sciences by 2010. The intention is to target UK students at the higher end of the market.
- v) BIO – currently offers a wide range of 3 year BSc degrees. Additionally there are three stand-alone MSc programmes which are targeted at a wider international market and the School are considering expansions to this profile. BIO are also considering introducing 4 year IM programmes.
- vi) CMP - have a number of 1 year MSc programmes and have recently introduced 4 year MComp degrees considering economies in co-teaching modules. The different programmes are attractive in different markets and have been designed with this in mind.

A7. MODULE MONITORING

Considered:

The Committee considered and approved the module monitoring reports from ENV and PHA (filed as documents E and F in the minute book).

SECTION B: ITEMS FOR REPORT

B1. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received:

A document of issues to report to SCI LTQC was received (filed as Document REP1 in the minute book).

B2. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, 9 June, 2pm-4pm.

LEARNING TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2009

Present: Dr Nick Watmough (Chair), Mr Stuart Alder (PG Student rep), Dr Richard Bowater (BIO), Dr Nigel Clayden (CHE), Prof. Robin Haynes (ENV), Dr Helen James (SCI rep on TPPG), Mr Ben Milner (CMP), Mr David Sheppard (Academic Officer, SU), Dr David Stevens (MTH), Jean Whiting (acting Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Susan Barker (PHA), Mr Sean Rose (SCI Faculty Convenor)

SECTION A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Considered:
the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 April 2009. It was noted that in item A3 of the last minutes, the paragraphs were numbered incorrectly. On condition of the above being amended, the minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Any matters arising from the last meeting, were addressed in the Items to Report document (Rep 1).

Further comments from the Chair were:

Item A2(i), Plagiarism and Collusion (P&C) Policy

the Chair had circulated a report for consultation and reminded Directors of Teaching to consult with colleagues, obtain comments and feed these back to the Chair. It was noted that the report had also been circulated by colleagues in LTQ and this had been causing confusion. The Chair was endeavouring to encourage LTQO to use the Faculty structure within Science, and to send consultation documents to SCI LTQC in the first instance.

Item A2(ii), CCS Review Group

the Chair raised the issue of compensation of marks. The CCS Review Group noted the differences between Faculties - HUM preferred students to pass all modules, whereas SSF wanted to have a review of practice across the 1994 group to benchmark against. It was noted that the default was likely to be that modules would be passed. If SSF wanted something different then that could be possible. For professional schools, the equivalent would need to be passed. Condoned failure (if it was still to be called that) would only be for 20 credits worth of modules. These proposals would have to be considered by Senate, and implementation would be in 2011/12 at the earliest.

Item A3(i), Institutional Audit

that the report from Institutional Audit had been received and was being considered by Associate Deans.

Item A3(ii), Higher Education Academy

the Chair confirmed that he would circulate this report

Action: Chair to circulate report.

Item A3(iv), Supervision of PGT students undertaking their dissertation

the Chair had met with colleagues recently about this. It would be helpful to have all of the information about PGT dissertations in one document. Noted that the Chair was gathering more information, liaising with colleagues, and would be taking this forward with Joanne Ashman.

Action: Chair

Item A5, Course Tests in Science

noted that the Chair would be meeting with the PVC Academic to discuss teaching and learning issues. The Chair confirmed that he would discuss course tests and also question whether it could be possible for Faculties to see the examination timetable before it is published to students.

A2 STATEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Paul Grasby (PHA) for his contribution to SCI LTQC and he noted that Susan Barker (PHA) was now the Director of Teaching for PHA.

Sean Rose would be replaced by a new SCI Faculty Convenor next academic year, and Sean was thanked for his contribution, and it was noted that this may be Stuart Alder's last meeting, so again thanks were conveyed for his contribution too.

A3 FEEDBACK FROM LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

The Chair commented upon the following:

SCI Executive

the ACAD PVC attended, and he raised issues about employability and recently circulated memos from the Learning and Teaching Committee meetings. He was keen to know that this information was being passed onto Chairs and DOTs. DOTs acknowledged that they were receiving the information. The PVC made a general point to SCI regarding student representation and that improvements could be made in relation to SCI representation. He wanted HOS to ensure that SSLCs and School Boards were active in encouraging student participation. The PVC was also keen to encourage the HOS to make use of Blackboard and other IT systems. The Chair stated that at the Executive Away Day in July, issues such as the above would be discussed.

Action: Chair to bring forward to away day discussions

In relation to employability, there was an updated report available for information.

Action: Chair to circulate the web link for the above report.

UEA Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

there had been five nominations from SCI. The Chair had been involved in the process this year, but in future wanted someone else from SCI to be involved and it was suggested that a former winner such as Kay Yeoman or David Wright could take on this role. Paul Hammerton was also another suggestion.

The Chair would be asking the Dean to write to the nominees who had not been successful in obtaining this award, as a way of acknowledging exceptional performance.

Action: Chair to provide these alternative names to LTQO with a view to being the SCI representative on future Groups of the Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Teaching Fellowship Panel

the Chair would like to stand-down from this Committee, and asked that if anyone had any alternative suggestions for a replacement, to let him know.

TESS (Teaching, enhancement and student success)

this was a mechanism by which support is offered for continuing projects and academic projects, worth around ¼ million.

CSED activities

around 50 colleagues had undertaken training of at least half a day. Some Schools actively used CSED, however there does seem to be low-level activity and CSED is going to be reviewed. Ben Milner is the SCI representative for this review.

A4 MODULE MONITORING

Noted

that ENV and PHA module monitoring reports had been considered at the last meeting.

The Chair informed the Group that he thought that there was going to be a discussion at SCI LTC on module monitoring and sharing best practice, however, the item had only been an item to report.

Considered the module monitoring reports for BIO, CHE, CMP and MTH. The comments/issues raised by the DOTs for their Schools were:

Richard Bowater (BIO):

- Most modules had been evaluated
- Variability of student response rate, and would be interested to see the results of the online evaluation
- BIO will be having a Teaching afternoon session for academic staff in July
- BIO have set up a blackboard site for admin information to be posted to. It was a good repository of information.
- Introduction of a careers festival in November last year.

Ben Milner (CMP):

- First year in CMP has been modified
- Computer revolution module has been moved to first semester

- More programming has been brought into the first year
- We followed the BIO idea of an induction week
- Contact hours has increased
- Attendance issues would need to be addressed. A section has been added to the CMP Handbook, and “sign-in” sheets were being considered for lectures/seminars.

David Stevens (MTH):

- Quality of teaching rooms is still a regular comment made by students
- Students and their expectations of what will be available on Blackboard, ie., lectures notes, etc before the lecture. (Noted that in BIO, lecture notes were not placed on Blackboard before the lecture, and that it had been found in MTH that if notes were put onto Blackboard before the lecture, then attendance at the lecture subsequently reduced)
- Peer guided learning was being used in MTH. 2nd and 3rd year students were offered training, and then paid to provide supplementary classes.

Nigel Clayden (CHE):

- Commented upon the difficulties with the actual process.

The Chair noted that the pro formas had been received from CHE, and that Nick Watmough and Nigel Clayden, would meet to finalise the process for CHE.

Action: Chair to meet with Nigel Clayden.

A5 TIMETABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Considered

A timetabling discussion document from a working group consisting of Andrea Blanchflower, Nigel Shed and Rob Evans.

Noted

there was a finite amount of teaching space and there are unpopular teaching times, and consequently, the room booking system is not being used efficiently. This discussion document outlined two options:

(1) can the system be re-designed?

and

(2) should we move to a computer generated timetable?

The Group expressed their reservations about moving towards a computer-generated system for timetabling. However, it would be useful if a demonstration could be provided to show how the system would work. At UEA there are numerous modules and diverse programmes, and a system was needed to accommodate UEA's requirements. The problem of timetabling should be addressed through redesign of the current slotting system. Academic colleagues should adhere to their advertised slots. It was noted that if sub-slots were used, it was possible to use the week more effectively and it was suggested that the indiscriminate use of broad slots should not be used.

Action: Chair to feedback the Groups concerns/issues to Andrea Blanchflower (NW)

A6 PGT EXAMINERS REPORTS

Considered

Draft responses to PGT External Examiners Reports. Directors of Teaching were asked to read and comment on the draft responses, and the comments/issues are below:

BIO (Nigel Clayden and Susan Barker):

- 2.8 was included in another point. Should this be a separate point?

Action that Richard Bowater would separate and add another point.

Applied Ecology:

- In the follow-up action section, avoid undue delays. Suggest what the origin was and then state why it would not happen in future
- All other issues were addressed.

Action that Richard Bowater would update.

A7 HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH AND INNOVATION GROUP

Considered

The report from the Higher Education Research and Innovation Group on hypotheses for enhancing undergraduate engagement in Year 1.

Noted

That this report has been commissioned by the Vice-Chancellor. It is important to remember that the ideas of HERIG derive from Heads of School and it was a well supported document. The Chair thanked DOTs for their comments on this document. He would clarify some further points with colleagues, obtain the response from PHA, and once he had more complete information, he would circulate the document to colleagues. A response was required by LTC in Autumn 2009.

The Chair talked about the health check issues, and whether this should be routed through the SSLC meetings, where an item could be to talk about first year modules, and their progress. The first time that concerns/issues arise about modules, is via the module evaluation process, and it would be useful to find out about potential issues, earlier.

Action: HERIG to be returned as an agenda item in the next academic year.

A8 ORDINARY DEGREES

Considered

Response to TPPG from CHE, CMP and MTH.

A10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The chair reminded the Group about alternative representatives for the Excellent in Teaching Panel, and the Teaching Fellowships Panel.

SECTION B: ITEMS FOR REPORT

B1. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received:

Issues to report to SCI LTQC in document REP1.

B2. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted

Proposed dates for the next session were:

(All times are 2-4pm on Wednesday afternoon)

14 October 2009

16 December 2009

10 February 2010

5 May 2010

9 June 2010