

# LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE



## Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2009

- Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor T.B. Ward) (in the Chair), the Director of Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (Professor C. Vincent), the Director of Taught Programmes (Professor G. Moore), the Director of Partnerships (Ms E. Towner), the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), the Faculty Associate Deans (Learning, Teaching and Quality) (Mr I. Farr, Dr S. McGuire (vice Dr S. Connolly), Dr N. Spalding and Dr N. Watmough), Mr G. Sorrell (City College), the Finance Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr M. Jopp)\* (vice the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students and Student Member nominated by the Union of UEA Students (Mr R. Reynolds)
- With: The Director of Faculty Administration (SCI) (Mr M. McGarvie), the Assistant Registrars (Ms C. Gray (*Committee Secretary*) and Ms E. Roberts), Senior Administrator (Miss H. Coman), the Project Officer – Transitions into/within HE - (Ms Anne Vallins) for Minute 6 (2), Dr Helen Webster (Dean of Students' Office) for Minute 8, and the Committee Clerk (Mrs R. Phillips) as an observer.
- Apologies: The Academic Registrar (Mr R. Evans), The Head of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office (Ms A.E. Rhodes), the LTC Director of Staff Development (Mr P. Levy), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), the Library Director (Mr N Lewis), Faculty Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching and Quality – Social Sciences) (Dr S. Connolly) and the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr D. Sheppard).

## 2. MINUTES

Confirmed

the Minutes of the meetings held on 27 May, and 7 October 2009.

## 3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Reported that:

- (1) Dr Annie Grant, Dean of Students' had won a National Teaching Fellowship. Congratulating Dr Grant on her award, the Chair noted that the University now had two National Teaching Fellows, the other being Dr Adam Longcroft (EDU);
- (2) the Universities' Science, Innovation and Skills Committee had published its final report on students and Universities. The report may be consulted at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmdius/170/170i.pdf>

Responses to the report had been published by:

- a) the Quality Assurance Agency at:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/news/media/IUSSresponse.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/media/IUSSresponse.pdf)

- b) Universities UK at:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Newsroom/Media-Releases/Pages/UniversitiesUK%E2%80%98disappointed%E2%80%99byInnovation,Universities,ScienceandSkillsCommitteefinalreport.aspx>

The Chair recommended that members consult this report as it contained recommendations to Government, including greater clarity of roles and responsibilities in Higher Education, publication of a range of information such as contact hours and class/lecture/seminar group sizes which students could expect while at University and data on graduate destinations. It also covered issues around the future role of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the role of the external examiners' system in the UK concerning maintenance of academic standards.

- (3) HEFCE had also published the report of its sub-committee for Teaching, Quality and the Student Experience on HEFCE's statutory responsibilities for quality assurance at:

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09\\_40/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_40/)

(This report focussed on the quality and standards of UK degrees and called for a revision of the QAA, the external examiners' system and more accessible public information on quality, standards and the wider student experience.)

- (4) Union of UEA Students had published a report on the Student Experience. This could be accessed at:

<http://www.ueastudent.com/experience09>

- (5) the fourth Learning and Teaching Day would be held on 16 April 2010 and advance publicity would be circulated as soon as possible.

#### 4. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION

Confirmed

- (1) Chairs action (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC09D010)
- (i) a new Partnerships Guidance note setting out different types of partnership arrangements and the level of involvement of the Partnerships Office (Appendix A);
  - (ii) revised Prize regulations;  
  
(Members also welcomed the launch of a new University web site for University prizes under the auspices of the Development and Campaigns Office);
  - (iii) an update of the current position regarding the provision of admissions statistics for Periodic Programme Review;

- (iv) a revised timetabling slotting system to aid understanding and communication with staff and students which a sub-group of LTC would monitor to ensure continued development and implementation (Appendix B);
  - (v) addition to the Advising System, to include guidance on what to do if a student requested a change of adviser. The relevant website had been updated;
- (2) Revised Fitness to Practice procedures in the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D011);
  - (3) Revised Code of Practice for the External Examiner System for Awards (Taught Programmes);
  - (4) A new award of MSci (Master of Sciences) for a range of programmes in the Faculty of Science, including in Environmental Sciences and Biological Sciences.

#### 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

##### Received

the final report detailing findings of the QAA's Institutional Audit visit in March, 2009 including the published version. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D012)

The reports can also be viewed at the following web links below:

<http://qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/institutional/eastAnglia09/RG526EastAnglia.pdf>

<http://qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/institutional/eastAnglia09/RG526aEastAnglia.pdf>

##### Considered

an action plan in response to the recommendations. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D013)

##### ENDORSED

the action plan in response to the recommendations.

#### 6. STUDENT SURVEYS 2009

##### Considered

the outcomes of

- (1) the National Student Survey (NSS) 2009. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D014)
- (2) the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), 2009. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D015)
- (3) the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), 2009. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D016)

RESOLVED that

*With regard to the National Student Survey*

- (a) members were very pleased to note that the University had continued to perform exceptionally well in comparison with other mainstream Universities;
- (b) the NSS outcomes would be considered at Staff Student Liaison meetings in the first instance and a report sent to the relevant School Board/Teaching Committee;
- (c) the Taught Programmes Policy Group (TPPG) would also give attention to the outcome of the NSS and would specifically deal with the comments that good feedback was incompatible with anonymous marking;
- (d) the example of how the School of Computing Sciences (CMP) had made use of the outcomes of the NSS in a very creative manner by investigating correlations between module feedback questionnaires and the NSS should be highlighted. Such an approach had helped CMP identify weaknesses in teaching which were now being addressed. Other Schools might benefit from adopting CMP's approach and might wish to get in touch with the School's Learning, Teaching and Quality Director in CMP, Dr Ben Milner, to find out more details;

*With regard to the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey*

- (a) as the survey took place between April and June 2008, its timing meant that postgraduate taught students were unable to comment on their experience regarding their final preparations for and writing up of their dissertations;
- (b) the response rate of 12.8% was slightly disappointing and called the validity of the survey into question;
- (c) the survey needed to be better publicised in the future via e-mail reminders and Broadview;
- (d) the duration of the survey might need to be extended into the summer to improve the response rate;
- (e) an appropriate forum within the Schools/Faculties needed to be identified to disseminate the outcomes.

*With regard to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey*

- (a) the response rate of 28% was low (compared with the national average of 29%) which had tempered the outcomes of the survey. Bearing in mind this low response rate, UEA was not allowed to publish these figures as a response rate of at least 30% was required before official reference can be made to the figures;
- (b) nearly four out of five students rated their over all experience as having met or exceeded their expectations, a small increase compared with the 2008 outcome;

- (c) students commented positively on their experience of supervision but less so on infrastructure and the research environment;
- (d) efforts could be made to promote a higher response rate in the next survey which is expected to commence in March, 2010.

7. LTC PRIORITIES 2009-10

Considered

LTC priorities for 2009-10. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D017)

ENDORSED

the priorities that would guide the work of LTC during the current session.

(In discussion, members

- (i) acknowledged the considerable groundwork that had been undertaken by a number of LTC members and members of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office to identify such a concise list of priorities for 2009-10;
- (ii) recommended that for future years, consideration should be given to agree a five-year priority list if possible, bearing in mind the fast changing environment.)

8. LEARNING ENHANCEMENT

Considered

a report on 2008-09 from the Learning Enhancement Team, Dean of Students' Office. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D018I)

Reported that

- (1) the Dean of Students' Office had improved efficiency in providing significant support to students via a new appointments software system;
- (2) students were especially keen to receive advice on essay writing and essay planning;
- (3) the Learning Enhancement Team had also held workshops in Schools which had resulted in the embedding of its service in the Faculties;
- (4) the School of International Development (DEV) had worked collaboratively for its collaborative relationship with the Learning Enhancement Team.
- (5) writing in English posed a major challenge for international students and Schools were encouraged to address this challenge by giving out more information on the conventions of academic writing to help international students.

(In their consideration, members joined the chair in congratulating DEV for its work with the Learning Enhancement Team encouraged other Schools to learn from this model. (Interested colleagues were encouraged to contact Dr Colette Harris in DEV to find out more).

9. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Considered

- (1)
  - (i) academic appeals, 2008-09. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D019);
  - (ii) academic complaints, 2008-09. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D020);
  - (iii) academic discipline, 2008-09. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D021) ;
  - (iv) professional misconduct and/or unsuitability, 2008-09. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D022)
  - (v) appeals – equal opportunities monitoring forms feedback, 2008-09. A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D023)
- (2) Office of the Independent Adjudicator performance statistics, 2008. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D024)

(In their detailed consideration, members:

- (i) noted that the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 undergraduate academic and postgraduate taught appeals had slightly increased compared with the previous session. This might be due to a variety of factors, including increased student numbers, greater awareness of and willingness to use the procedures;
- (ii) were informed that the number of academic complaints remained fairly static at a relatively low level;
- (iii) heard that there had been another increase in the number of academic discipline cases. A number of factors might be in play here, including the effect of the separation of academic progress matters from course regulations, the readiness of Schools to have recourse to the formal discipline procedures and the operation of other procedures such as that concerning plagiarism and collusion. In addition, there were a total of 16 cases before the Senate Discipline Committee arising from allegations of use of unfair means in examinations, six of these students being registered on a programme in INTO UEA;
- (iv) noted that there had been a significant increase in cases referred to the Professional Misconduct and/or Unsuitability Committee (PMU) in comparison with the previous session;
- (v) received data on the number and outcomes of complaints by UEA students/recent graduates submitted to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). It was pleasing that these figures showed a decrease in comparison with the previous session.

- (vi) understood that there were an ongoing reviews of the disciplinary and PMU procedures. Revised proposals and draft regulations would be brought to the Committee for approval by the end of the current session.)

10. LTC REVIEWS

Considered

a report on the review of Common Course Structure degree regulations. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D025)

ENDORSED

the principles identified by the Review Group that would underpin, inform and guide the review.

(Members noted that

- (1) to increase the academic requirements for progression to the next stage of study compared with the current requirements
- (2) details of what might constitute a narrow fail and of entitlement to reassessment are currently being defined
- (3) a sub-group comprising the Director of Taught Programmes and members of Learning, Teaching and Quality Office would work on draft "top-level" regulations with a view to circulating these to the CCS Review Group for consideration
- (4) key features of the revised regulations would be presented to LTC in March, 2010

11. FACULTY ASSOCIATE DEANS (LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY)

Received

minutes of the meetings of the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees:

HUM – (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D026)

SCI – (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D027)

SSF – (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D028)

FOH – (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D029)

12. DIRECTOR OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Received

a report on the programme of academic practice events, 2009-10. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D030)

(Members welcomed the continuation of a number of academic practice events, via the Centre for Staff and Educational Development, which promoted training in new and existing LTC policies and procedures.)

13. TAUGHT PROGRAMMES POLICY GROUP (TPPG)

Considered

(1) a written report of the meeting of the TPPG on 24 June 2009

- Draft Code of Conduct in Creative Writing
- Taught Postgraduate Issues
- Marking criteria and feedback
- Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Midwifery
- On-Line Evaluation of Teaching
- Overview of Stage 2 Academic appeals

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D031)

(2) An oral report on the meeting of TPPG on 21 October 2009

- Policy Group Agenda for 2009/10
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

RESOLVED that

(1) the draft Code of Conduct in Creative Writing be supported.

(2) the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students hold an annual event to discuss issues affecting postgraduate taught students such as reasons for registration for particular postgraduate taught programmes (e.g. employability and research degrees), support during the dissertation period, teaching and assessment strategies, study skills, marking criteria and plagiarism.

(3) the priorities identified for the Policy Group during 2009-10 be approved.

(In discussion, members noted

*With regard to the draft Code of Conduct in Creative Writing*

(i) had been written in response to a case where a student had breached acceptable standards of behaviour in the content of a piece of written work submitted for assessment. The TPPG considered that it would be helpful for Schools to have a clear disciplinary route to follow and the issues raised by the Code would be fed into the Review of Discipline by the Directors and the Dean of Students)

(ii) that consultations on marking criteria and feedback had been positive and that students would find provision of such feedback useful. The Policy Group was mindful that provision of feedback to students was one of its priorities for 2009/10

*With regard to the Postgraduate Diploma and the MSc in Midwifery*

(iii) students on the MSc in Midwifery would be permitted to be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery following successful completion of 120 credits worth of study whilst still continuing on the Masters programme. Such an approach was necessary if students were to practise as midwives before completing the dissertation element of the MSc;

*With regard to on-line evaluation of teaching*

- (iv) TPPG had welcomed the on-line evaluation of modules by students which had been piloted in several Schools in 2008-2009. A major benefit of on-line evaluation of modules was that data could be processed quickly without drawing heavily on staff time and information could be shared rapidly with staff and students. It was hoped that further development of this tool during 2009-2010 would allow more Schools to participate;

*With regard to the summary of Stage 2 Academic Appeals*

- (v) TPPG had noted that the majority of Stage 2 Academic Appeals for 2008-09 had been made against degree classifications, decisions to withdraw students following academic failure or decisions to award an exit award. The most common grounds for appeals were that students alleged that their extenuating circumstances had not been fully considered by the Board of Examiners;
- (vi) that LTQO would clarify the supporting evidence required from students in support of claims of extenuating circumstances by promoting the pro-forma for reporting circumstances affecting study

14. PG RESEARCH PROGRAMMES POLICY GROUP

## Considered

an oral report from the Director of Research Degree Programmes of the meeting on 5 October, 2009.

## Reported that

- (1) the Executive Team had approved the provisional allocation of 'Roberts' funding to the four Faculties and that details of these allocations would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (2) the Policy Group had also considered how to continue provision of extensive postgraduate research student training which would cover all postgraduate research students registered at UEA and not just 'Roberts' funded postgraduate research students
- (3) the Policy Group had agreed that admissions criteria across UEA for all postgraduate research students needed to become more consistent especially in respect of English language entry qualifications for international students;
- (4) the Policy Group had accepted challenging student number recruitment targets for 2010-11 as proposed by the Deans of Faculty. This meant that an additional 160 good quality students could be recruited which would have significant resource implications for UEA.

## ENDORSED

- (1) the view that it was imperative that UEA quickly develop an on-line application form for postgraduate research students to support a more coherent and efficient admissions process, agreeing that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) take up this proposal with the Web Steering Committee;

- (2) the Policy Group's recommendation that all supervisors of new PhD students should receive training on supervision

15. SEMESTER DATES

Considered  
the proposed semester dates for 2011-12 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D032)

- Reported
- (1) that the Taught Programmes Policy Group had debated a number of options for semester dates for 2011-12
  - (2) the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had supported the proposed semester dates for 2011-12 and these would be presented to Senate at its meeting on 11 November, 2009. Four options for Semester dates for 2012-13 had been sent out for consultation to members of the Policy Group and replies would be presented to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who would make the final decision as to which option would be adopted.) and agreed these subject to the confirmation by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic). A more refined process to agree these dates for future years should also be established to include all interested parties as soon as possible in the consultation process.

Recommended  
the semester dates for 2011-12 as proposed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

16. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received  
reports on:

- (1) the meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 7 October, 2009(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC9D033)
- (2) Partnerships (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC09D033)
- (3) Concessions and Approvals (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC09D034)
- (4) New Course Proposals (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC09D035)
- (5) Quality Assurance Agency

(The Agency had published:

- (i) a new draft Master's Degree Characteristics Reference Point which may be consulted at;

[www.qaa.ac.uk/news/circularLetters/CL1109.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/circularLetters/CL1109.asp)

to which the University had responded. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.LTC09D036)

- (ii) a revised handbook for Institutional Audit : England and Northern Ireland, 2009 which incorporates participation by student auditors and the introduction of a 'hybrid' collaborative provision audit. It may be consulted at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/handbook2009/InstitutionalAuditHandbook2009.pdf>

- (iii) three Outcomes from Institutional Audit papers: The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Subject benchmark statements; Programme Specifications. These could be consulted at:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/news/circularLetters/CL1209.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/circularLetters/CL1209.asp)

(6) UNIVERSITIES UK (UUK)

Reported that

UUK had published a Seminar report on Universities Europe: Longer term developments in European higher education and the implications for UK higher education. This could be consulted at: [www.UniversitiesUK.ac.uk](http://www.UniversitiesUK.ac.uk)

(In addition, regular bulletins on European matters were published by the Europe Unit.)

(7) 'BOLOGNA'

Reported that

the European Commission had published an ECTS Users' Guide, a copy of which was obtainable on request from the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office.