

LTC09D150

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Report to LTC regarding progress on the Review of Disciplinary Procedures for LTC meeting on 26 May 2010

The joint Review Group reviewing Disciplinary Procedures and Professional Misconduct has now concluded its business. Draft Disciplinary Procedures, draft revised General Regulations for students and a Fitness to Study procedure will be sent to the University's lawyers shortly with a view to present final procedures and regulations to Senate in June 2010. Following any revisions to take account of the legal advice, the Chair of LTC will be asked to approve the procedures prior to their consideration by Senate.

The following principles have been agreed by the Review Group to for approval by LTC and Senate:

1) Senate Student Discipline Committee

- Currently the Senate Discipline Committee considers cases of serious breaches of the General Regulations for Students. In order to clarify issues, the Senate Discipline Committee has been renamed to the **Senate Student Discipline Committee**.
- Membership of the Senate Student Discipline Committee will be increased to enable the Committee to conduct its business more efficiently and to be able to draw on appropriate expertise of academic colleagues. LTC agreed in February 2010 that the current membership of one Chair and four academic members of staff should be increased to 12-15 members in total which would act as a pool of people to be drawn on for Senate Student Discipline hearings. Deans of Faculty have been asked to nominate a certain number of academic staff who can act as Chairs and members respectively.
- The remit of the Senate Student Discipline Committee has also been increased. Currently, the Senate Student Discipline Committee considers breaches against academic General Regulations such as attendance and progress, plagiarism and collusion, cheating in examinations as well as breaches against non-academic General Regulations. In addition, the Senate Student Discipline Committee from the academic year 2010/11 onwards will also sit in a different mode to consider cases against the General Regulation dealing with Professional Misconduct/Unsuitability and therefore the Professional Misconduct/Unsuitability Committee has been subsumed under the Senate Student Discipline Committee. Equally, cases previously considered under the Misconduct in Research procedure for students will now also be considered by the Senate Student Discipline Committee sitting a specific mode.

2) Appeals arising from a decision of the University Disciplinary Officer when dealing with non-academic disciplinary cases

Currently, UEA Disciplinary Procedures stipulate that an appeals arising from a decision of the University Disciplinary Officer is heard by the Senate Student Discipline Committee. Such a hearing usually requires two members of academic staff, two student members and the Secretary to the Committee which is considered to be disproportionate in comparison with the result of the hearing. For example, there have been a number of hearings when the validity of a car parking fine as low as £25 was considered. From the academic year 2010/11 it is proposed that such appeals should not be considered by the Senate Student Discipline Committee anymore and that these appeals will be considered by the Dean of Students in the first instance at Stage 1 without a hearing and using documentary evidence only. If such an appeal proceeds to Stage 2, the Academic Registrar will decide if a hearing is necessary or not. This process has been modelled along the academic appeals procedure.

4) Completely rewritten General Regulation on Attendance, Progress and Engagement

The Review Group also approved a rewritten General Regulation 6 which has been renamed as General Regulation on Attendance, Engagement and Progress to emphasise the engagement of students. A policy to apply this new General Regulation was also approved; this policy will enable Heads of Schools to deal more efficiently with students who exhibit a lack of attendance, engagement and progress.

5) Re-ordering of the General Regulations and introduction of a Fitness to Study procedure

The General Regulations to Students in the Calendar have been reordered to reflect the different areas covered by these General Regulations. Four different sections have been identified as procedures relating to Student Life; procedures relating to Student Behaviour; procedures relating to Academic Provision and procedures relating to University Property. Within the actual General Regulations, the Misconduct in Research procedure has been formally added to the section called procedures relating to Academic Provision, any breaches of this General Regulation will be considered by the Senate Student Discipline Committee. A new Fitness to Study procedure has been added to the section called procedures relating to Student Life. This particular General Regulation relating to Fitness to Study is considered to be a way to ensure that students are fit to study and if it is identified that they may not be fit to study, appropriate sources of support and help are offered. The Fitness to Study procedure does include a procedure which could require students to intercalate if it is considered to be in the student's best interest to resume his/her studies at a later point once they are deemed to be fit for study again.

6) Code of Conduct for Students

A Code of Conduct for Students was considered by the Review Group and referred to the Student Experience Committee for further consideration. The Student Experience Committee agreed in principle that such a Code of Conduct for Students should be considered and further developed as it would be of good value to the University Community. Further work would have to be done to develop the proposed Code of Conduct and it is anticipated that it will be referred back to the Review Group in the Future.

7) Issues to be considered next academic year 2010/11

The Review Group is aware that some issues will have to be revisited by the Review Group in the next academic year. These include the development of a whistle blowing policy for anonymous allegations within a disciplinary process and procedures to the different sittings of the Senate Student Discipline Committee.