

LTC11D059

Title: Faculty Associate Deans (Learning, Teaching and Quality)
Author: Faculty of Social Sciences Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
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Issue

To receive the minutes of the Faculty of Social Sciences Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting held on 25 January 2012.

Recommendation

None.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity

Not applicable.

Timing of decisions

Not applicable.

Further Information

Contact details: Mr Paul Vazquez, Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator, telephone: 01603 593270, email: p.vazquez@uea.ac.uk for enquiries about the content of the paper.

Background

Not applicable.

Discussion

Not applicable.

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
Faculty of Social Sciences**

**Minutes of the meeting of the SSF LTQC held on Wednesday 25
January 2012**

Present: Mrs Helena Gillespie (Chair & Associate Dean LTQ), Paul Vazquez (Secretary), Dr Jonathan Dickens (SWP), Miss Meg Evans (Academic Officer, Union of UEA Students), Dr John Gordon (EDU), Mr Richard Havell (Student Representative), Dr Shawn McGuire (DEV), Mr David Mead (LAW), Dr Bibhas Saha (ECO), Mr Matthew Wright (SSF Faculty Convenor).

With: Laurence Wild (LTS).

Apologies: Professor Naresh Pandit (NBS).

1 MINUTES

**Document
11M004**

The Minutes had not correctly captured details of the SWP response to its NSS results (page 7 of 11). The response had intended to show that, against a background of a national trend for older students to give less positive NSS scores than younger students, and taking into the account the higher than average age profile of the Social Work programme, the School had been very pleased with its results.

Approved: Minutes from the meeting of 7 December 2011, subject to the change noted above.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** The Minutes available via the Blackboard folder for the meeting have been updated to reflect the change.]

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters arose from the Minutes at this meeting.

SECTION A: ITEMS FOR REPORT

A1 DEFINITIONS

Reported that:

1. Discussion at New Academic Model (NAM) meetings had revealed that different Schools used different terminology for the same or different things (eg “course” and “programme” were interchangeable in some Schools, but had distinct meanings in others)

2. A further issue had also become apparent in the limited or different facilities for contacting groups of colleagues, given the different structures and roles within the Schools and different terminologies and job titles.

(In discussion it noted that:

- In SWP “courses” were sometimes components of modules and that “programmes” were the overall coherent grouping of modules into a set programme of study.)

Agreed that within SSF:

1. “Module” should be a discrete block of teaching content.

2. “Course” should mean a cognate group of modules leading to an award.

3. “Programme” should be a descriptor for a group of courses (for example all those at undergraduate level or all those at taught postgraduate level).

4. The Chair would continue to communicate with the School Directors of Learning and Teaching (DLTs) with information for dissemination to colleagues. This would allow School DLTs to pass on extra information or guidance which was relevant to a particular School, School structure or role holders in addition to original information.

A2 UPDATE ON THE NEW ACADEMIC MODEL

Reported that:

1. Notes for the November 2011 New Academic Model Working Group meeting had been added to the Blackboard folder for this meeting.

2. The Chair had emailed DLTs and Heads of Schools (HoS) on 17 January 2012 to outline some issues which had arisen regarding the NAM taught postgraduate (pgt) regulations and to seek their views:

- As a Faculty, approx 25% of SSF students were studying at taught postgraduate level, compared to approx 10% of students in other Faculties;
- SSF had more pgt students than the other Faculties combined, with more complex and diverse programmes, meaning that it was very important to the Faculty to ensure that any NAM pgt regulations worked well for SSF;
- Colleagues should bear the importance of pgt courses in mind when they are consulted on this issue and provide their responses.

3. The Academic Director for Taught Programmes (ADTP) had requested feedback and comments on 6 specific items. The Chair wished to consult colleagues within the Faculty to enable the NAM Working Group to make recommendations to the ADTP, who in turn would discuss them at the Taught Programmes Policy Group (TPPG) before recommendations were made to the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC).

4. The Chair had already taken the request to the SSF Faculty Executive for discussion earlier in the week and initial comments from the Dean of Faculty (DoF) had been received, including the suggestion that 2 sets of pgt NAM regulations might allow for conventional and non-conventional courses to comfortably sit within the NAM.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- For ECO there were no immediate problems within the proposals and the School was content with the first proposal from the DoF;
- as a general principle, the ug and pgt NAM regulations should be as similar possible wherever possible to aid clarity, transparency and simplicity of operation;
- however, alterations within specific areas may be required for professional reasons elsewhere (eg professional placements for SWP or courses within EDU);
- DEV were likely to introduce a pgt course which entailed a placement in the foreseeable future and flexibility over the options available within the regulations in terms of this would be very welcome;
- DEV also had further concerns regarding other areas of the pgt NAM regulations, especially concerning defined choices and synoptic reassessment;
- within EDU, the Masters in Teaching and Learning and in Advanced Educational Practice would require flexibility in the regulations to both enable them to comply with professional body accreditation requirements and in terms of making them appeal to the limited market for students, especially with regard to UEA's competitors;
- the LAW pgt Teaching Executive was due to meet next week, so further feedback would be available following the meeting. In the meantime, the DoF's first proposal was not problematic for the School and a minimum module size was also no problem to the School. However, defined choice and synoptic reassessment may be issues for the School. The School would also carefully consider the implications for its Postgraduate Diploma conversion course as this was not a conventional Masters programme and may, therefore, require further flexibility. The School's standard LLMs would all fall into the DoF's third category;
- a further issue to bear in mind was that the composition, profiles and experience of pgt students in other Faculties were likely to be different to SSF, for example HIS MA students were generally likely to have previously undertaken a BA in the same subject, whereas SSF Masters

students may not have previously undertaken a ug degree in the same subject area;

- the MRes in Social Sciences would also require flexibility given its Faculty-wide content and modules and, if current discussions moved forwards as expected, the need for slightly different variants of it to be available to different Schools;
- ECO had found that it had a comparatively high rate of non-attendance which may prove to be an issue for the School within the NAM regulations. In particular, the School had a high proportion of International students and its recent experience was that International students sometimes had to miss classes due to visa issues and being stuck off campus, sometimes overseas, in order to renew a visa. As long as such issues were able to be treated as “authorised” absences rather than counting towards the 20% non-attendance limitation, the School would be able to work around this;
- Schools were currently under huge pressure to meet ug level NAM deadlines, but the same deadlines did not appear to be in place for pgt NAM regulations, leading to concern that the pgt regulations and associated issues might be too rushed and overlooked with the focus very much on ug regulations;
- the NAM regulations for pgt would need to be in place for the 2013/14 academic year. The recommended regulations would go to LTC for consideration at its meeting on 16/06/2012, with 2 Working Group meetings before then;
- EDU would like further guidance as to whether marking to a percentile scale would be compulsory, or whether there may be flexibility to mark in other ways. In particular, the PGCE might be marked within the QTS marking bands, as these would be relevant to the programmes, but this would mean a set mark (eg 65% for ‘very good’), rather than a full percentile range.

Agreed:

- 1. Members to provide any further feedback to the Chair as soon as possible to enable discussion at the next NAM Working Group meeting.**
- 2. EDU should additionally make its case to use a marking scale outside of the standard percentile scale if it wished to pursue this.**
- 3. The Chair would prepare a report for the ADTP outlining the Faculty’s comments and recommendations, which would be available to members at a future meeting and/or via the FLTQC Blackboard site.**

A3 TIMETABLE FOR PERIODIC REVIEW PROGRAMME

**To be
tabled**

Reported that:

It had been hoped to bring details to the meeting, but that it had taken longer

than expected to obtain the information and resolve queries which had arisen. The Timetable would either come to a future meeting for approval or receive Chair's Action to approve it and be made available to a future meeting for information.

A4 NOTE FROM THE PVC (ACADEMIC) OF 13 DECEMBER 2011 RELATING TO LTC MEETINGS AND RELATED ISSUES **Document 11D017**

Received:

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic)'s memo of 13 December 2011.

Reported that:

1. Item 8. The name change from 'Academic Adviser' to "Personal Tutor" may potentially lead to a review of what the role might entail, but that this would be for the future as there were no plans for an immediate review.

2. Item 9. In addition to the PVC's comment here regarding word count penalties, this issue was scheduled for further discussion later in the meeting.

3. The underlined hyperlinks shown on the printed version of the documents for the meeting would work from the electronic version of the document on the FLTQC Blackboard site.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- the name change to "personal tutor" might lead International students to interpret this as "personal tuition" for a volume of individualised tuition, guidance and support which would be unmanageable).

Agreed: Any further comments on the name change from 'Academic Adviser' to "Personal Tutor", or any of the other items within the note, should be passed to the Chair for communicating back to the PVC (Academic).

A5 PTES 2010 OUTCOMES

Reported that:

1. The comparatively low PTES response rates and lower numbers of pgt students compared to ug students meant less reliable data than that from the NSS.

2. Statistics had been received from the Planning Office at Faculty level, which was of interest, but not detailed enough to enable detailed future planning or action plans for Schools.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- DEV had received good quality School-level data, but it contained nothing which highlighted any issues the School was not already aware

of.

- EDU had a large number of responses, accounting for approx 1 in 5 of the University's overall responses, but this response rate was still a low percentage of the high number of EDU pgt students. This also meant that EDU responses may have had a disproportionately high effect overall outcomes.)

Agreed:

1. The Chair would write a report for the SSF Faculty Executive, incorporating a brief summary paragraph from each School. Please would members provide details within the next 3 weeks.

2. Given response rates and usefulness of the data, some Schools may wish to opt out of PTES 2012. The FLTQC would return to this as a future meeting.

3. The switch to course-level evaluation from this year may mean that the data from PTES would no longer be required, or may be required less frequently.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** Further information regarding the PTES data available to DEV was received after the meeting:

DEV-specific output was discussed at Autumn SSLC and Teaching Committee meetings.

In general, the comments are heartening, though very general in most cases, making it difficult to devise concrete courses of action in response. A few salient points emerged:

- Motivations to study are varied – professional and personal development feature, reflecting a diverse intake
- UEA and DEV reputation a key reasons for attracting PGT students here; we have to protect this brand, as word of mouth from alumni matters a lot
- Positive on teaching quality, more mixed on contact time (possibly reflecting unreasonable expectations of contact at PGT level)
- Positive points – intellectual interest, stimulating, develops critical thinking, clear assessment criteria; dissertation supervision
- Mixed points – fairness, speed, and future value of feedback; timetable fit and communication about timetable changes
- As before – quite a few are surprised by the heavy workload
- Library on balance positive, more mixed about ITCS (though with 2010 system collapse, failure of print services in autumn 2010, I expected them to be much more critical – I was)
- Real improvements in addressing personal / professional development, compared with past – while some want more, we are pleased to see this noted in qualitative and quantitative comments
- Qualitative comments reflect above; positive on teaching and intellectual content; critical on ITCS, feedback issues, details of assessment, and contact hours.]

A6 ADDITIONAL COSTS TO STUDENTS

**To be
tabled**

Received:

A document from the Chair (DOC 11D019) summarising details of additional costs to students within SSF.

[SECRETARY'S NOTE: The updated document has been added to the FLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting.]

Reported that:

1. No Schools appeared to charge for dossiers of material or printed items.
2. Books were suggested but not required to be purchased and should be available from the Library.
3. Social Work programmes required CRB clearances at a cost to each student of approx £44.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- SWP students received a bursary towards costs for attending placement;
- EDU had contributed towards petrol costs where placements were over 25 miles from Campus this year due to feedback from students regarding difficulties in meeting travel costs to placements;
- DEV had one compulsory ug field trip at £175 for a fortnight, which represented approx 20% of the cost borne by student with the remainder borne by the School. There were no compulsory field trips at pgt level;
- although it was not compulsory to purchase text books within ECO, they were required for the courses and students generally bought them, with only limited numbers choosing to borrow them. The approx cost for textbooks was £300 to £400 at ug level across a 3 year course or approx £200 at pgt level;
- LAW students were similar to ECO, with most choosing to buy the required books at a similar approx cost to ECO.)

Agreed: The Chair would update the document and return it to TPPG as the Faculty's response. It would also be added to the FLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting.

[SECRETARY'S NOTE: The updated document has been added to the FLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting.]

A7 TIMETABLE FOR UNDERGRADUATE ONLINE ENROLMENT

**To be
tabled**

Received:

A document from the Learning and Teaching Service (DOC 11D020) outlining

the timetable for online enrolment for undergraduate students.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** The Timetable document has been added to the SFLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting.]

Agreed:

To feed back to LTS the hope that deadlines for timetabling will be considered in conjunction with the timetable for online module enrolment.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** Message sent to John Tully, the LTS lead, to pass this comment on.]

SECTION B: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

B1 STATEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

(a) Update on BIU Survey and future attendance at meeting.	Document Tabled
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Reported that:

1. Following the presentation at the December meeting, BIU has confirmed that the NSS-style Student Survey would take place from approx 15 February 2012 and would run for approx 3 weeks. Garrick and Sree would be returning the FLTQC meeting of 7 March 2012 to update members on progress.

2. The Chair had received a paper copy of the final version of the Survey (DOC 11D021), which was available for members to see during the meeting.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** The Survey has been added to the FLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting.]

3. First year students had a shorter version of the Survey excluding the section regarding student services as they are unlikely to have much experience of this so early on; the section would be replaced by questions on their transition to HE.

4. The questions and format of this year's survey had been finalised, so comments would feed into the consideration of changes for next year and could be presented to Garrick and Sree at the next meeting.

5. The data should be disaggregated by courses, with School data and Faculty-level data as well. Again, comments on the data, once received, would help to improve it for future years.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- the Survey seemed very long and there were concerns that students would not want to take the time required to complete it, leading to low response rates and/or incomplete responses;

- in order to make the volume of data received more manageable, Schools should only receive the detailed data in relation to the academic aspects of the course and not detailed data relating to other areas and services;
- question 87 was the only one relating to the course and had a free text box for the title of the course, which could therefore be populated by students on the same course in a range of different formats, leading to a requirement for a lot of data cleansing to ensure that responses were correctly grouped into the right courses. It would be inappropriate for Schools to have to spend time doing this.)

Agreed:

- 1. Members to ensure that colleagues were aware of the Survey and inform students of its importance to try and encourage its completion.**
- 2. Once the data was available, feedback should be provided to BIU to enhance future surveys and data.**
- 3. The Chair would ask BIU whether a message could be issued centrally to alert students to the Survey.**

(b) External Examiners' Reports.

Reported that:

1. Further progress had been made with the outstanding External Examiners' Reports.
2. Those which had not yet been received were being chased by the Assessments Office. Those which had been received were being processed by LTS Team Leaders in conjunction with the Chairs of the relevant Examination Boards. Where draft responses were available, they had been passed out to Faculty LTQC members for their comments and where comments had been provided, they had been passed back to the Team Leaders to enable the responses to be issued.
3. It was envisaged that where FLTQC members were in agreement with the draft response or had very minor comments or suggestions on it, those comments would be passed on and the response issued, with only those cases where major concerns were raised requiring further FLTQC action.

Members should expect to receive further Reports and draft responses for consideration.

B2 UNION OF UEA STUDENTS' FEEDBACK ON THE ABOLITION OF WORD COUNT PENALTIES

(Postponed from the January 2012 meeting)

Received:

An oral report from Meg Evans.

1. From this year, under the new University policy, no penalty would be applied to word counts unless the word count was a distinct learning outcome of the module. In such cases, the module description should clearly note that this was the case.

2. The Union's view was that the University should allow some flexibility in terms of word counts where this was not a distinct learning outcome, so no penalty should apply. This also helped to resolve the issue in a lack of equality in the application of penalties in different Schools and the confusion surrounding the different penalty schemes previously in existence.

3. TPPG had discussed this issue since the change to the regulations, largely driven by the Faculty of Health for professional purposes, where meeting word counts are a key issue. The current proposal was that a 40% mark cap should apply when a word count was exceeded and that penalties should apply for non-declaration of a word count and /or providing a misleading word count.

4. The Union believed this proposal was unfair. It carried no recognition of the scale of exceeding a word count, so 1 word extra would be penalised in the same way as 1000 extra words. The Union supported the view that substantial extra work would generally penalise itself as being irrelevant. Additionally, the penalty was not proportionate to penalties for other arguably more serious offences such as the Plagiarism and Collusion penalties or breaching patient confidentiality in Health Schools.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- there would be problems in confirming word counts for items not submitted electronically;
- a simple system was needed, with either no penalty or a very clear framework to both understand and implement, or there would be a large risk of it not working;
- ECO was prepared to continue with no penalty, even if this meant that occasionally items might exceed suggested limits;
- DEV had concerns over the extra work that a lack of penalties was resulting in, both in terms of the extra time students were spending on their assignments and the extra time spent marking them;
- EDU felt that the suggestion of specifying a number of pages with a set font and pagination was worth further consideration.)

Agreed:

1. A quick straw pole of members showed a lack of support for a cap at 40%, with the preferred option being a simple and clear graded penalty scheme to take account of the volume by which a word count was exceeded. The Chair would confirm this to the ADTP.

2. Members should pass any further comments onto the Chair and Meg Evans please.

B3 PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING

**Document
11D018**

Received:

An email from Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) of 6 December 2011.

Reported that:

1. There had been a meeting on 20 September 2011 about this issue, with a session run by CSED for dissemination of good practice and staff development, outlining very much a 'light touch' process.

2. The email from PVC (Academic) seemed to be directed towards management of colleagues, and action to be taken against colleagues whose peer reviews may not be as positive as others and seemed to steer away from the 'light touch' intention.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- using Peer Review as a management tool seemed to remove the 'peer' element of the process;
- there was a range of experience of peer review from simply allowing colleagues to pair up at will to allocating a senior member of staff without input from the person being observed. Given that peer reviewing was a very key and difficult task, this discrepancy in allocation of peers might not be appropriate;
- making a judgement on which colleagues might need referring to HoS if issues appeared to be raised in their peer review did not seem to fit comfortably with the role of School DLT, which did not include line management of colleagues;
- peer review comments seemed to be reasonably minor at present (eg comments on size of font in presentations etc). The email from the PVC (Academic) seemed to relate to the very rare occasions on which something really was inappropriate (eg inappropriate or racist comments in a session), but not for the vast majority of reviews;
- observers might be loathe to comment in full knowing that the report might result in disciplinary action for the person being observed, with the result that the report would be of less use to that person in terms of their development;
- UCU may have a view on this;
- the role of Course Directors within the process and particularly in alerting HoS or senior colleagues of issues arising within their teaching team should also be mentioned.)

Agreed:

1. The Chair would consult other Faculty Associate Deans for their views.

2. The Chair would report back to the PVC (Academic), confirming that where the 'light touch' approach was being undertaken, it was working well and seek further guidance.

B4 FEEDBACK ON EXAMINATIONS

Reported that

The Chair was seeking details of the extent to which feedback on examinations, either in group format or personal format, was happening in each School, noting that the University's policy remained the non-return of examination scripts to candidates.

Received responses from the Schools:

ECO - The School had identified 6 compulsory modules in Years 1 and 2 for summary feedback at group level on examinations, with question by question feedback and highlighting the main issues in terms of good or bad performance. It was possible that some basic statistical data would also be provided. This was currently subject to approval by the School.

Agreed

1. Members should please respond to the Chair.

2. The Secretary would ask the member for NBS for the School's response.

3. The FLTQC would return to this issue following the University's May/June examination series.

[**SECRETARY'S NOTE:** Details were received from members after the meeting, as follows:

LAW - all 1st and 2nd year UG exams should have "marker's guidance" published by the end of June. The School had not specified what this should contain or address but sensibly it should cover not simply substantive points (i.e. I was expecting XYZ in answer to Q5) but should draw on common good and poor answers or approaches ("Must of those answering Q5 assumed it meant abc"). It was not expected that much statistical data would be provided.

EDU – A summary of feedback would be provided.

SWP – A summary would be provided. The Psychology team would additionally provide some statistical feedback.

DEV – The School had tried an oral feedback session last year but take up was poor, so it was attempting a different approach this year. The School planned to do another pilot study and provide post-examination feedback for DEV-2D52 (Macroeconomics of Development). This would be in the form of an e-mail/blackboard posting of general comments on where the cohort did well / did less well in the examination, with model answers for each question.

NBS – The current position was that for the MBA programmes there was no generic exam feedback provided, but individual feedback was provided on demand; for the MSc programmes generic feedback was provided for each

module, but individual feedback was not provided; at UG level generic feedback for certain modules was provided as part of an experiment last year, but this revealed that the feedback may be of little value due to its timing. Students were asking for individual feedback especially when a module has been failed. The School felt that coaching before examinations may be of more value than the post-examination feedback approach and was exploring the different options available.]

B5 THE UNIVERSITY'S ASSESSMENT COMPACT
(Postponed from the January 2012 meeting)

**Document
11D016**

Received:

The University's new Assessment compact.

Reported that:

1. The ADTP had led on the Assessment Compact, which had been discussed at TPPG.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- It was unclear whether this included both formative and summative items of assessment ;
- it mentioned timely feedback, but was unclear on whether this was solely in relation to coursework or exams as well;
- it included a comment that "staff will make every effort to avoid a bunching of assessment deadlines", but the wording needed to ensure flexibility as this was not always possible to achieve for every student given different module choices.)

Agreed:

1.The Chair would feed comments back to the ADTP.

SECTION C: ONGOING ITEMS FOR REGULAR REPORT
(Documents were available to view on request at the meeting)

C2. CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

EDU

BA in Educational Studies – name change to BA in Education from the 2013/14 academic year.

BA in Physical Education and Sport – name change to BA in Physical Education from the 2013/14 academic year.

SECTION D: EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

(Further details on the current status of received Reports and those Reports referred to FLTQC members are available via the FLTQC Blackboard site for the meeting).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE ITEMS:

Wednesday 7 March 2012, from 2.30pm to 4.30pm, in ARTS I, room 1.83 (the DEV Meeting Room)

PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

COMMENTS ON THE SSF MODULE OUTLINE FORM

NEW ACADEMIC MODEL – POSTGRADUATE REGULATIONS

PROGRESS ON THE 'GOOD HONOURS' ACTION PLAN

REVISED SENATE MARKING SCALE