

SEN10D021

Title: Report of the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held on 2 February 2011
Author: Secretary to the Learning and Teaching Committee
Date: February 2011
Version: Final
Circulation: The Senate – 23 February 2011
Agenda: SEN10A003
Status: Open

The following items were considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2011, and are presented for the Senate's information.

(For all documents referred to within this report, please refer to the LTC webpage 02/02/11 – see page below – at:

<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/ltc/ltc1011/020211>)

1. Statements by the Chair

Timetabling:

The Chair was pleased to announce that timetabling for the spring semester 2011 had been completed in good time due to the hard work of staff in Faculty Offices in liaison with the SITS development team. There had been minor issues which needed to be addressed in future to improve timetabling, including the timetabling of year-long modules; currently, timetabling for the autumn semester and spring semester was separate and therefore work in Teaching Offices had to be repeated in respect of year-long modules. This problem is expected to be resolved for the academic year 11/12. In addition, not all timetables were available to be seen by students on E:Vision. This issue affected timetables in EDU, SWP and MB/BS which are complex; further technical development is required to publish these on E:Vision. Members of the Committee also noted that room changes were not always picked up by students (for example, changes to seminar rooms which are likely to change from week to week). The PVC (Academic) would be writing to the Chair of the Taught Programmes Monitoring Group, Dr Andrea Blanchflower, with a request to remind students that seminar rooms could change for different weeks of the semester and that students should check E:Vision on a regular basis well ahead of scheduled seminars to ensure they know the correct location of the seminar room.

Tuition Fees 2012:

The Chair reported that the University would submit a bid to the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) in March 2011 in relation to the tuition fees which UEA would want to charge from September 2012 onwards. Once the bid had been submitted to OFFA, the University would be free to publish provisional tuition fees for 2012. OFFA would inform the University by the end of June 2011 if fees proposals submitted in March 2011 had been approved.

HEFCE grant statement:

The HEFCE grant statement for the academic year 2011/12 is expected to be sent to the University on 17 March 2011. The University anticipates that student number controls will remain in place.

Doctoral Training Grants:

The University's bid to establish an ESRC Doctoral Training Centre had been unsuccessful which also means that UEA will not receive any ESRC funding for PhD studentships until at least 2015. The University would be appealing this decision and will enter the next competition to establish a Doctoral Training Centre in 2015 provided the funding methodology remains unchanged.

Learning and Teaching Strategy Day:

The Chair reminded members that an LTC Education Strategies Day will take place on 5 May 2011 and encouraged all members of the Committee to spread the word amongst the academic community to ensure a good turnout. It is expected that a Blackboard (or similar) site would be established shortly which would be populated with appropriate material in preparation for this Event.

ISD Education Board:

The ISD Education Board will make its first report to LTC on issues discussed in the academic year 2010/11 at the LTC meeting on 29 June 2011.

Student Progress Meetings:

Guidance from LTQO had been issued to Schools emphasising that these meetings should take place even though some coursework marks might be too late to be considered in view of extensions given arising from the University network problems experienced in December 2010. The Chair of a Board of Examiners should take Chair's action if marks which had to be confirmed by Student Progress Boards were unavailable at the time of the student progress meetings for Autumn Semester 2010 Visiting students. Affected Autumn Semester 2010 Visiting students would be written to by the Teaching Offices apologising for a delay of confirmed marks.

National Teaching Fellowships:

The Chair announced that a call for applications for National Teaching Fellowships 2011 had been sent to all members of academic staff in early February 2011. The internal closing date for applications was 4 March with a national closing date of mid-day on 23 March, 2011.

2. Confirmation of Chair's Action

Members have confirmed Chair's action since the last meeting of the Committee, including:

- i) regulations for prizes and scholarships (**LTC Document LTC10D034 refers**).
- ii) a revised procedure for professional misconduct and/or unsuitability meetings (to reflect changes previously made to the disciplinary procedures) (a copy can be accessed at: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/studentexperience/discipline%26pmu/Procedurefordealingwithallegationsofprofessionalmisconductandunsuitability>).
- iii) a suite of undergraduate Japanese language programmes in the School of Language and Communication Studies for September 2011 entry. Pressures relating to marketing and funding of an academic post necessitated approval via Chair's action. Outstanding actions within the course proposal such as concerns about potential low numbers of applications, the administration and organisation of the year abroad and library provision, will be addressed by LCS in a report to the LTC meeting on 18 May 2011.

3. Graduate Employability and First Destination Statistics

The Committee received a report on graduate employability and first destination statistics from the Careers Information Manager of the UEA Careers Centre (**LTC Document LTC10D036 refers**). Employability data supplied by the Careers Centre to Schools of Study was for the first time available on-line which would allow a large dissemination amongst relevant staff and a more sophisticated analysis of the data. The Committee noted that employment statistics for UEA graduates were slightly better than the national average in terms of gaining employment; there were however marked differences between the different subject areas offered at UEA and graduates from the Faculty of Health performed better than other UEA graduates. The Committee was pleased that the UEA Careers Service had experienced a 50% increase in careers guidance activities during the last academic year.

4. Networking Problems

The Committee considered a letter from Union of UEA students regarding the network problems experienced by students in December 2010 at UEA (**LTC Document LTC10D037 refers**) and discussed issues arising from the networking problems experienced by students and approaches on how to deal with these at University level.

The Committee was pleased to hear that the University had put measures in place to build more resilience into the networking core and that the Executive Team was reviewing disaster plans to prevent such an event from happening again.

Members of the Committee further noted that Faculty Associate Deans had moved swiftly to issue extensions to submission deadlines, although different deadlines were issued by SCI (revised deadline 20 January 2011) and SSF/HUM (mainly 48 hrs extensions to cover the exact period of the loss of networking services). Such differential treatment had resulted in protests from the UEA Union of Students and in a request for a University response on the treatment of all affected students to compensate for the lack of networking facilities.

Members agreed that all students affected by these networking problems needed to be treated fairly by Boards of Examiners when decisions on progression and degree awards were considered at the meetings of the Board of Examiners in June 2011. Paperwork presented to the Boards of Examiners would be annotated to indicate which assessment items had been affected to enable the Board of Examiners to make a considered judgement when considering students for degree awards and progression. A protocol detailing how networking problems should be considered by Boards of Examiners will be issued by the PVC (Academic) in good time before the meeting of any Boards of Examiners in June 2011. This protocol will also be sent to External Examiners to raise awareness of the issue. The Taught Programmes Policy Group (TPPG) was tasked with agreeing a sensible policy on communicating with students in case a similar situation arose in the future and to consider what decisions should be made with regards to extension to coursework submission deadlines in a potential future scenario of a similar kind.

5. CSED Activities

The Committee received a report on CSED activities for the academic year 09/10, comments on CSED activities during the current academic year and planning of CSED activities for 11/12 (**LTC Document LTC10D038 refers**).

In its consideration, members noted that every new adviser ought to attend a session on advising students at UEA. The PVC (Academic) would remind Heads of Schools of this requirement. If CSED sessions published in the brochure clashed with major teaching events in Schools, CSED staff would be happy to lay on bespoke sessions in Schools at a mutually convenient time.

6. New Academic Model

The Committee was reminded that Schools had been sent a consultation document on the proposed new academic model, responses to be received by LTQO by 31 March 2011. These would be discussed at a special meeting of LTC on 27 April 2011 with a view to agreeing the final details of the new academic model for endorsement by Senate in June 2011 and for the new academic model to be introduced from September 2013.

The Director of Taught Programmes reported that Professor Graham Gibbs would be visiting UEA on 3rd/4th February and 10th/11th February 2011 to advise Schools of Study on assessment and feedback strategies within the new academic model. All Schools of Study which had requested a meeting with Professor Graham Gibbs had been allocated an appropriate slot.

7. Review of Guidelines for the Peer Observation of Teaching

The Committee considered a report on the proposed guidelines for peer observation of teaching. **(LTC Document, LTC10D039 refers)**

The Committee welcomed the new Code of Practice on the Peer Observation of Teaching as an important improvement and endorsed the Code of Practice subject to a few minor amendments clarifying how often peer review of teaching should take place.

8. New Course Proposals

The Committee considered approval of a new course in the School of Political, Social and International Studies: an MA in Broadcast Journalism: Theory and Practice. **(LTC Document LTC10D040 refers)**. The Committee decided that this course proposal should be referred back to the School of Study for further consideration of: possible accreditation of the programme by the Broadcast Journalism Training Council; raising IELTS score from the current proposed score of 6.5; inclusion of modules in Media Law in option ranges and liaison with the School of Law about this issue; and clarification as to whether the programme should be offered for 12 months (being the norm for taught masters provision).

In addition, the Committee considered the approval of a new course in the School of Philosophy: MA in Environmental Sciences and Humanities. **(LTC Document, LTC10D041 refers)**. Members were informed that the School of Environmental Sciences had not yet had the opportunity to consider this proposal at one of its Teaching Committee meetings. It was therefore agreed that the proposal would be considered again at a future meeting of LTC once the School of Environmental Sciences had had the opportunity to consider it.

The Committee approved new course proposals from the School of Literature and Creative Writing for: a BA in Drama; BA English Literature and Drama; and a BA in Scriptwriting and Performance. **(LTC Document LTC10D042, LTC Document LTC10D043 and LTC Document LTC10D44 refer)**.

9. PG Research Programmes Policy Group

The Director of Postgraduate Research Programmes explained that he had been conducting a survey on dissertation supervision and that a report on this issue would be brought to the next meeting of LTC on 17 March 2011.

10. INTO UEA LONDON

Members of the Committee were informed that INTO UEA students had expressed concern that the provision of visa advice for overseas students was confusing and inadequate. Members also noted that in-session English language support was not available to INTO UEA London students, but was available to UEA students. It was drawn to the Committee's attention that there were different expectations and assumptions when dealing with staff who

had been appointed by the Joint Venture Board and those who had not. The Committee was pleased to note that a UEA London Strategy Group had recently been established, comprising the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Dean of UEA London, the Director of Finance, the Head of the Planning Office, the Director of Admissions, the Director of Administrative Services in SSF and the PVC (Academic), to review a number of issues arising from UEA London with a view to dealing with these as effectively as possible as soon as they arose.

11. PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered a report concerning the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee. **(LTC Document LTC10D045 refers)**

12. TAUGHT PROGRAMMES POLICY GROUP

The Committee considered a report on recent activities of the Taught Programmes Policy Group. **(LTC Document, LTC10D046 refers)**

The Committee heard that the Taught Programmes Policy Group had discussed academic levels of modules which will be reviewed in line with the discussions of the new academic model.

A review group to review the Academic Appeals Procedure had been established with a view to implement a revised procedure for the academic year 2011/12.

The current framework of penalties for unauthorised late submission of coursework will remain; extra guidance on how word limits are defined will be published in the regulations for the submission of assessed work for the academic year 2011/12.

Discussions to resolve the issue of approved absences from course tests will continue throughout the academic year 2010/11 with a view to resolving this issue for the academic year 2011/12.

A progress report on the University's intercalation policy and return to study procedures was also received.

The Committee endorsed the policy on student employment subject to clarification in paragraph 5, that a student's "normal commitment" to paid employment will not be considered as an excuse for poor performance by a Board of Examiners.

13. Other items for report

Members received reports on:

- (1) Meetings of the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (FOH, 24 November 2010, **(LTC Document LTC10D047 refers)**, SSF: 15 September 2010 and 3 November 2010 **(LTC Document LTC10D048 refers)**, HUM: 1 December 2010 **(LTC Document, LTC10D049 refers)**)
- (2) Partnerships **(LTC Document, LTC10D050 refers)**
- (3) New Course Proposals **(LTC Document, LTC10D051 refers)**
- (4) CSED Activities **(LTC Document, LTC10D052 refers)**

Members were also informed that:

- (i) the QAA had published a consultation paper on the proposed changes to the academic infrastructure (including the National Qualifications Framework, the

Code of Practice, Subject Benchmark Statements and Programme Specifications), details can be found at:

www.qaa.ac.uk/news/consultation/ai

- (ii) the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had issued a consultation paper on changes to information published by institutions, details can be consulted at:

www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_31

- (iii) the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) had sent out a consultation on three emerging areas: how to increase transparency in issuing formal decisions; how to add an additional student voice to the Board; and whether to open the scheme to complaints about Foundation Degrees owned by Further Education Colleges, further details could be found at:

www.oiahe.org.uk/