

SEN10D030

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Author: Secretary to the Learning and Teaching Committee
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The following items were considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 27 April 2011, and are presented for the Senate's information.

(For all documents referred to within this report, please refer to the LTC agenda 27/0411 – see page below – at:

<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/ltc/ltc1011/270411>)

1. **Statements by the Chair**

1.1 **Term of Office of Chair of Senate Student Discipline Committee:**

The Chair reported a recommendation that the term of office of the Chair of the Senate Student Discipline Committee, Professor Nigel Norris, be extended until the end of the academic year 2012/13. LTC strongly endorses this recommendation which is to be considered by the Senate under its item on Senate Membership (agenda for 15 June, 2011, refers).

1.2 **Final Report of the Review of External Examining by Universities UK and Guild HE:**

This report had been received and will be considered at the meeting of LTC on 29 June 2011.

2. **Background to the New Academic Model**

The Committee has received an overview of the external and internal drivers which underpins the development of the new academic model (**LTC Document LTC10D060 refers**). In addition, members have considered a confidential report by Professor Graham Gibbs following his visit to UEA (**LTC Document LTC10D061 refers**) noting in particular that UEA should consider whether student recruitment is in fact crucially dependent on the perceived wide choice of modules available to prospective students. Information presented from the UEA Admissions Service at the meeting would not sustain such a premise as surveys of prospective students do not mention a wide range of choice of modules as the deciding factor for choosing to study at UEA. Students were found to focus more on the University's reputation rather than a wide range of choice of modules. Members have also received a report from the Taught Programmes Policy Group concerning the development of a UEA assessment compact in the near future. (**LTC Document LTC10D062 refers**). In addition, members have noted a paper on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) (**LTC Document LTC10D063 refers**) which will be considered at the LTC meeting on 29 June, 2011.

3. Features of the New Academic Model

A summary of responses to the consultation paper on the principles of the new academic model from Schools and the Union of UEA students has been considered with the following outcomes: **(LTC Document LTC10D064 refers)**.

a) Members endorsed the following features **(LTC Document LTC10D065 refers)** relating to the Undergraduate assessment regulations as part of the proposed new academic model:

- all modules need to be passed. Members of the Committee noted that teaching strategies and course design would need to be changed considerably in some Schools of Study to minimise an undesirable increase in the number of failing students;
- there will be no automatic right to reassessment. Members noted that although there will be no automatic right to reassessment, it is expected that reassessment will still be offered provided students satisfy certain criteria. Details of these criteria will still have to be worked out, they need to be understood, fair and clear as they convey an entitlement to reassessment;
- the May/June exam period to be of no more than four weeks' duration. It was noted that this will only be achieved if the volume of summative assessment items declines substantially and details of how this can be achieved will be worked out at a future LTC meeting. Further discussions on how to use the remaining two weeks for purposeful activities for students also need to take place at a future LTC meeting;
- 'free' choice as a requirement within regulations will be discontinued. Students will still be able to make module choices but in a defined way within course profiles. Members noted that a defined choice of modules will be decided by the relevant course director when determining a course profile. More work is needed to flesh out the details of how choices will be defined and appropriate credit volumes of these choices. Special care is also required when thinking about defined choices as part of joint honours courses covering subjects from two different Schools of Study. It was agreed that a joint course will have an assigned course director from one School of Study and an assigned assistant course director from another School of Study to ensure appropriate defined choices of modules and effective communication between both Schools;
- each BA/BSc (Hon) degree should consist of at least 360 credits with 90 credits at UEA level 3 to comply with the Higher Education credit framework for England;
- programme level outcomes, and their assessment, to be clear for all courses. It was noted that in some instances professional accreditation was dependent on module level outcomes and therefore in these instances the focus needed to be on the module level outcome;
- more algorithmic degree classifications leading to a reduction in the discretion of the Board of Examiners. Members noted that Boards of Examiners should have very limited discretion which should mainly centre on extenuating circumstances when considering students at borderlines;
- degree weightings between years (e.g. years 2 & 3 for a 3 year BA/BSc) to be harmonised across all subjects and to take account of exit velocity, the split for three year degree programmes to be 40% for year 2 and 60% for year 3 to take account of the student as an improving learner. Further work

was needed to decide on appropriate weightings for four year degree programmes. **(LTC Document LTC 10D066 refers);**

- SITS output (which may need to be changed in order for it to be used in the manner proposed) to be used for Board of Examiners paperwork and abandonment of Discoverer reports;
 - ensuring wherever possible that reassessments should be of the item failed. Members of the Committee agreed that this principle should be adopted, although they were aware that complexities need to be further explored to ensure that this will not result in unreasonable administrative overheads for academic staff and support staff. In addition, functionality of SITS to cope with in-year reassessment also needs to be addressed further as currently SITS does not support in-year reassessment;
 - setting a minimum module size of 20 credits;
 - modules to follow a clear progression hierarchy from UEA levels 1 to 2 to 3;
 - that UEA should adopt the numbering applied to level descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and discontinue the current UEA level 0, 1, 2, 3, and M-level descriptors **(LTC Document LTC10D067 refers)** provided the cost of doing so is not prohibitive. Further discussions will need to take place with the Head of the Planning Office in relation to HESA issues;
 - item and module assessment marks to be recorded as integers and year and degree aggregates to one decimal point;
 - the implementation of the new academic model to be phased in, starting with all first year students in 2013-14 with continuing students completing their degrees under the current CCS regulations. Members reached this view after some discussion as to the relative merits of a “big bang” introduction of the new model with a ‘no detriment’ clause introduced to ensure students on existing CCS regulations are not be disadvantaged or a phased approach to implementation, The view of the Committee was that the phased approach was preferred. However, continuing students will be reminded that they need to apply themselves and to strive to pass all modules as this will feature favourably on their Diploma Supplements.
- b) Members of the Committee considered the following proposals and decided not to endorse these:
- introducing a regulation to open to all Schools the practice in the School of Nursing and Midwifery regarding examination by oral assessment, students who have failed their first assessments and reassessments in a module. (Members of the Committee noted that all assessment items in the School of Nursing and Midwifery must be passed and if a student narrowly fails reassessment with a mark of just below the 40% pass mark, students then proceed to oral examination. Success in the oral examination moves the module/item mark to 40% whereas failure in the oral examinations leads to the student being withdrawn from the degree programme.) Members of the Committee decided that this practice in the School of Nursing and Midwifery should not be formalised as part of the new academic model and agreed that once a mark had been confirmed at assessment and reassessment, the mark should not be changed;
 - the assessment load of a module to be linked to its credit. Members of the Committee agreed that this was a difficult concept to implement and therefore no formal linkage of the assessment load to credit should be established.

However, guidance on general principles on assessment loads should be issued to Schools of Study;

- whether to adopt a limited number of course profile templates. After some consideration, members of the Committee decided that course profile templates would be too inflexible to operate and therefore rejected the introduction of a range of standard course profile templates. Members of the Committee agreed that it would be useful to develop more guidance on the construction of course profiles to promote harmonisation of programme level outcomes and to formalise requirements on the number of examinations in view of the proposed reduction in the number of three hour examinations. This issue should be reviewed in a few years' time once datasets were available to compare student performance and to form a considered decision whether student performance was dependent on course profiles;
- whether additional marks schemes to the current pass/fail and 0-100 numerical schemes should be adopted (e.g. banding of marks). It was agreed that the two mark schemes of pass/fail and the numerical mark scheme should be sufficient to grade students' assessment items and that no third mark scheme of banding of marks should be introduced.

4. New Academic Model and implications for Masters Degrees (PGT and IM)

Members of the Committee considered the implications of the decisions made under point 3 above for masters degrees as part of the new academic model discussions. **(LTC Document LTC10D068 refers)**. It was agreed that a Working Party chaired by the Director of Taught Programmes should be established to report to LTC by the end of this semester on recommendations regarding the IM and PGT degree regulations.

5. UEA Policy on marking and dealing with offensive material

The Committee has endorsed the UEA policy on marking and dealing with offensive material. **(LTC Document LTC10D069 refers)** with immediate effect.

6. Members have received reports on:

- (1) the revised arrangements for institutional review which have been announced (these may be consulted at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalreview/>.

These new arrangements are to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 18 May, 2011. Members were also informed that Mrs Mel Steele, Assistant Registrar, (PGR, LTQO) will be attending a briefing meeting on these new arrangements on 4 May, 2011.

- (2) the review of external examining arrangements conducted by Universities UK and GUILDHE. Details of the final report have been published and may be found at:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/PolicyAndResearch/PolicyAreas/QualityAssurance/HowTheSystemWorks/Documents/Review%20of%20External%20Examining%20Final%20Report.pdf>

The report's recommendations will be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 18 May 2011. Professor Tom Ward, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) was a member of the Review Group.