Teaching Committee

COORDINATING GROUP FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2006.

Present: Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Mrs L Booth (LLL), Dr T Boswood (EFL Unit), Ms L Catt (YCAP), Ms C Ellwood (Library), Dr M Ferguson (LFA), Ms S Hodges (ILIAD), Dr H Lawrence (GTU), Mr R Croker (SU), Ms H Richardson (York Award), Ms J Winter (GSA)

In attendance: Dr J James (Administrative Officer, Secretary)

06/19 Welcome

The Group welcomed Lesley Catt, Chris Ellwood, Helen Lawrence, Rich Croker and Jennifer Winter to their first meeting.

06/20 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2006.

06/21 Terms of Reference and Membership

The Group received its membership and terms of reference (agendum 4). There were no substantive changes.

06/22 Library Grant and Lifelong Learning

Further to M06/03, it was noted that the Library had reviewed its resource allocation model: there was no money in the budget for the Centre for Lifelong Learning in 2006/07, but there would be in 2007/08. Library resources for creative writing were a particular need (as it was not taught elsewhere in the University) and it was suggested that Lesley Booth
should make a bid to the Library's Special Purchases Fund for this purpose.

**ACTION: LB**

### 06/23 Hourly Paid Tutors

Further to M06/06, it was **noted** that there was concern about the potential impact of HERA upon the staffing costs of several supplementary programme areas.

The Group was reminded that LFA's tutors had originally been employed on an hourly-paid basis and that this had led to dissatisfaction due to a lack of employment rights. The tutors had, therefore, been moved onto fractional contracts (on the old OR scale) giving them better terms and conditions and boosting morale. A difficulty had now arisen because, following HERA, the University and College Union (UCU) wanted all staff involved in teaching (which would include LFA tutors) to be placed on a minimum of Grade 6 on the single pay spine. This would lead to a significantly increased wages bill for LFA which would be difficult to meet from the available budget. There were also concerns that the expectations of members of staff on Grade 6 were beyond those required of LFA tutors (and that this could lead to management issues). The University did not want to devalue teaching but felt that there were some teaching roles (e.g. LFA tutors) for which Grade 5 was appropriate: the Personnel Office was arguing its case with UCU.

In discussion, it was clear that the problems identified by LFA were relevant to other supplementary programme areas. In addition to the issue of the HERA grading of teaching staff, there was the more fundamental matter as to whether the supplementary programme areas could continue to employ teaching staff on casual contracts (i.e. outside the HERA framework) and, if so, in what circumstances, or whether, in the interests of good employment practice, all teaching staff should be placed on standard University contracts (i.e. within
the HERA framework) on a fractional basis where appropriate. Group members would appreciate clear guidance on this matter. There was concern, for example, that placing teaching staff on standard contracts would limit flexibility in areas where changes (e.g. course cancellations) often needed to be made at short notice.

The Group decided that if the grading issue had not been resolved by mid January then the Chair should take up the case with the Personnel Office.

**ACTION: Chair**

**06/24 Timetabling**

It was noted that LFA had experienced difficulties with evening timetabling at the start of the Autumn Term as budget cuts had led to a decision to remove portering from certain colleges after teaching hours. This issue had now been resolved, with free (for 2006/07) access being provided to Physics and Derwent.

LFA raised concerns about day-time timetabling, particularly in the 4.15-6.15 pm slot. Pressure on rooms meant that some LFA courses had been allocated to a different room each week. This caused difficulties for course participants, particularly those from outside the University (some of whom were elderly). LFA felt that the problems with teaching accommodation could cause LFA to lose market share to courses offered by other organisations within the city.

The EFL Unit noted that teaching accommodation for its intensive summer vacation language courses was now being handled by the Timetabling Office, and living accommodation by the Accommodation Office. An increase in the amount of summer vacation teaching accommodation allocated to the Timetabling Office might be needed to accommodate this increased demand.
06/25 Academic Skills

The Group received details (tabled at meeting) of a TQEF-funded project on learning enhancement, which included elements on (i) assessment and feedback and (ii) academic skills. The project was being coordinated by Ann Firth, the University's Learning and Teaching Development Officer. Ann Firth had already approached some members of the Group about the academic skills aspect of the project and it was recommended that she should contact Sue Hodges to discuss ILIAD’s contribution.

TQEF money was also being used to establish a Rapid Response Fund, which would make small grants to help departments improve teaching and learning.

06/26 Charter for CPD and Lifelong Learning

The Group received a charter (agendum 7) for CPD and lifelong learning courses which had been developed by the ASO in consultation with the CPD Manager. The Charter was designed to be a brief aide memoir for departments involved in the design and delivery of CPD and lifelong learning courses. A number of useful comments had been received from members of the Group.

06/27 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Unit

The Group received an oral report from the Director of the EFL Unit.

It was noted that:

- the second year of centrally funded English language support for overseas students was going well
- the EFL Unit was investigating the possibility of offering, from 2007/08, English language support for overseas students on a self-access basis using the VLE
- the EFL Unit had decided to postpone EiBAS accreditation until 2007/08
- the EFL Unit was, with LFA, moving into new accommodation, with a loss of teaching rooms
- UTC had approved University English language testing scheme.

It was further noted that the Director had, as requested at the last meeting, been in contact with Economics to discuss English language training for those teaching within the Department for whom English was a second language. The EFL Unit had also been filming tutorials groups within Economics for a project to support the Department’s Teaching Fellows, which had provided an interesting insight into the Department's teaching practices. The Director felt that Economics needed to do more to address the English language abilities of those involved in teaching. The Chair asked that this conclusion be fed back to the Chair of the Board of Studies and departmental staff with responsibility for training, so that appropriate action could be taken. It was decided that the Director should raise the issue of the English language ability of those involved in teaching with the Personnel Office/POD (in relation to academic staff) and the GTU (in relation to postgraduates who teach), as the issue affected a number of departments.

**ACTION: TB**

It was noted that the York Award and Careers Service were investigating how they might support overseas students looking for employment (e.g. in terms of CV production and interview skills). It was agreed that Heather Richardson, Tim Boswood and Fran Collins should discuss this issue.

**ACTION: HR, TB and FC**

06/28 ILIAD

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the ILIAD programmes.

It was noted that:
• the numbers undertaking ILIAD for University face-to-face courses had decreased significantly. Support from departments was a significant factor in the uptake of ILIAD for University courses and there was disappointment that some departments did not promote, or make space in their timetables for, ILIAD for University courses, even though their students needed to improve their IT skills. For example, History had recently decided to cancel ILIAD’s contribution to the departmental induction session
• there was a desire to raise the profile of ILIAD
• ILIAD had successfully piloted the VLE induction with 400 students
• ILIAD for Work courses were running successfully and continued to be popular
• it would be difficult to put ILIAD courses on the VLE (as they would need to be made more interactive) - one alternative would be to buy-in a ready made package.

It was suggested that Sue Hodges and Chris Ellwood should meet to discuss opportunities to reduce the overlap between ILIAD for University and information literacy training provided by the Library. They should also liaise with Heather Richardson to make links between information literacy and PDP.

ACTION: SH, CE and HR

06/29 Centre for Lifelong Learning (LLL)

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

It was noted that:

• the number of students on accredited and non-accredited courses had increased significantly. This was attributed partly to funding being withdrawn from other providers of lifelong learning within the city. Many students were
using the PDF prospectus so the Centre would focus on this in the future

- the part-time degree programme had been put on hold
- LLL was looking for funding opportunities. Ongoing projects included a 10-credit module in career development for unemployed adults run in association with Future Prospects (funded by the LSC and the European Social Fund) and a 20-credit module in citizenship for adults with school-age children run in association with the Family Learning Unit (funded by AimHigher). Both projects were having a positive impact on their target audience e.g. encouraging individuals to think about HE.

Secretary's note: LLL is looking for a new Chair of Board of Studies as the current incumbent is standing down after a long period of service.

06/30 Languages for All (LFA)

The Group received an oral report from the Director of LFA.

It was noted that:

- new appointments were continuing to bring benefits to LFA
- online registration and payment was working well
- a range of new courses e.g. for HYMS and departments were being developed
- LFA had taken over the management of Language and Linguistics' German language provision and was supportive of the Department's move into Spanish. Students in the Department could now undertake language assistantships as part of their degree programme
- the issue of credits for LFA courses taken as electives had not yet been resolved
LFA was involved with the Routes into Languages initiative to encourage students to take languages at university and school (post KS 4).

06/31 York Award

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the York Award.

It was noted that:

- there had been a 48% increase in the number of students going forward to the final stage of the York Award
- sign up for the Award and short courses continued to be excellent and departments were supportive
- there were plans to work with new international students
- plans for a York Award for postgraduate students were still at an early stage
- Learning City York was interested in running a version of the York Award for 16-19 year olds.

06/32 Graduate Training Unit (GTU)

The Group received an oral report from the representative of the GTU.

It was noted that:

- the GTU was reaching around 30% of research students and all research students should be receiving training within their departments. The GTU did, however, have some concerns that not all research students were receiving their 10 days worth of training per year
- the GTU's capacity had increased since 2005/06, and there was a good uptake of its courses
- the GTU was teaching to capacity and so any increase in its reach would need to achieved through improved teaching efficiency e.g. making use of the VLE
following student focus groups, the GTU was varying the timing of its courses

the GTU was aware that there was a perception amongst students that some GTU courses were too general, however it was the responsibility of departments to provide discipline-specific training.

06/33 Subject Services Section of the Library

The Group received an oral report from the Head of the Subject Services Section of the Library and Archives.

It was noted that:

- the Section was continuing its work on embedding generic learning outcomes for information literacy within the curriculum
- the Section would work with the new TQEF post in relation to the academic skills project
- in the Autumn Term the Section was reaching its teaching capacity and so it was, in consultation with the VLE team, planning to develop interactive online modules on information literacy as an alternative to face-to-face teaching
- the Section was looking at alternatives to traditional Library tours e.g. podcasts and virtual tours
- the Section wanted to be sure that there was joined up thinking in relation to student induction events (e.g. international, mature, departmental) to minimise duplication of effort.

06/34 YCAP

The Group received an oral report from the representative of YCAP.

It was noted that:
• the number of YCAP participants and graduates continued to grow but administrative support for the programme had been reduced
• the YCAP Board of Studies had taken on responsibility for the Preparing Future Academics programme and progress was being made with this
• a modified version of the YCAP programme was being prepared to satisfy NMC requirements
• a bid to TIDC had been submitted to extract good practice from the YCAP portfolios.

06/35 Approval of Non-Award-Bearing Programmes

It was noted that revised procedures for the approval of non-award-bearing programmes were available on the ASO website.

06/36 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place in the summer of 2007.

jl/ Jan 07