



SENATE

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Ms B Akua-Sakyiwah (GSA Representative), Dr H Altink, Mrs L Booth, Mr N Dandy, Mrs K Dodd, Dr R Ogden, Mr G Osborn (YUSU Representative), Dr A Parsons, Ms E Roberts, Dr L Siciliani, Dr H Smith, Prof C Thompson, Dr R Vann, Dr R Waites, Dr M White

In attendance: Ms C Moore (Secretary), Dr Z Devlin, Ms C Lowe (Project Leader, Learning Enhancement), Dr J James

Apologies: Dr TT Arvind, Prof W Bonefeld, Prof P Drew, Mr B Saynor

11-12/38 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2011 were **approved** (UTC.11-12/23).

11-12/39 Action Log

The UTC action log was **considered** and it was **noted** that a number of ongoing actions had now been resolved. The following actions were **noted**:

- a) Liaison with Sue Johnston from Campus Services with respect to the optimum frequency for blackboard cleaning. **ACTION: Chair with input from Dr Vann**
- b) Data on PhDs to include the outcomes of vivas as well as submission rates. **ACTION: Mrs Dodd**
- c) No change in membership of the SCA to occur until the new Chair was in post. **ACTION: Mrs Dodd**

11-12/40 English: MA in Culture and Thought after 1945

Further to M10-11/77, it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee had been addressed by the Department to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval had been granted.

11-12/41 Health Sciences: MSc in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Advanced Clinical Practice

Further to M10-11/137, it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee were being addressed by the Department but final approval had not yet been granted. **ACTION: Health Sciences to provide the outstanding information as soon as possible.**

11-12/42 History and Politics: MA in History and Politics (re-titled MA in Contemporary History and International Politics)

Further to M10-11/175, it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed and that a cross-departmental meeting was being organised. The Chair **decided** that the outstanding matters would need to be addressed prior to the next meeting of the Committee in December or the Departments would be required to start the approval process from scratch. **ACTION: History and Politics to provide the outstanding information as soon as possible.**

11-12/43 Centre for Women's Studies: MA in European Gender and Equality Studies (EGALES)

Further to M10-11/210, it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed. **ACTION: CWS to provide a progress report on the outstanding matters in time for the next meeting of the Committee in December.**

11-12/44 Mathematics: PhD Programme in Mathematics (with Foundation Phase)

Further to M11-12/19, it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed.

11-12/45 Politics: Politics Mundus MAPP (Erasmus Mundus Programme)

Further to M11-12/20, it was **noted** that this programme had been approved at the meeting of Senate on 1 November 2011, having been given conditional final approval by UTC. The Committee also **noted** that the conditions of approval were still to be addressed.

11-12/46 Oral Report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair, as follows:

- The project on allocating optional modules had been approved at SIPIG in September and work was underway. Progress so far was good. The group report would go to SIPIG and UTC would be informed of outcomes and evaluations in the Summer Term
- The student representation paper had been amended in the light of comments from the last UTC meeting and circulated electronically to UTC members for final comment. Staff would be alerted to the changes, in the first instance, at the Forum for Learning and Teaching workshop "creating a strong staff student community" on 17 November. The paper would go to Senate on 31 January 2012
- The Senior Management Group had held discussions regarding the top priorities for additional recurrent funding from 2012/13 in the light of the new fee regime. The first

tranche of extra funding would focus on enhancing learning and teaching, through improving access to the Library and learning resources, employing additional academic staff, funding postgraduate teaching assistantships, and fully funding the Maths Skills Support Centre. A second tranche of funding would hopefully be finalised later in the year. A public announcement would be made in due course and at this point the information could be made available to prospective students.

11-12/47 Oral Report from the Student Representatives

The Committee **received** an oral report from the student representatives.

The YUSU representative **noted** that:

- YUSU was looking forward to contributing to the Annual Programme Review process
- the election of course representatives had gone very well, with a significant increase, from last year, in the number of nominations and the proportion of students voting, and only 19 positions going unfilled. Departments were thanked for their cooperation. A paper would be presented to the Committee at the next meeting giving full details and noting future developments.

The GSA representative **noted** that:

- the GSA had seen an increase in the number of students seeking advice and support.
ACTION: GSA to analyse data to see if any themes emerge
- the GSA was involved in training course representatives.

11-12/48 Report on Aspects of the New Modular Scheme

The Committee **received** a report on aspects of the undergraduate new modular scheme (NMS), one year after its introduction (UTC.11-12/25).

The Committee **noted** that:

- the Planning Office had reported that their modelling of student numbers had shown a slight increase in the proportion of students progressing from the first to the second year. This indicated that fears that the NMS would lead to a significant increase in outright academic failure in highly quantitative subjects had not been borne out. It was **noted** that the impact of the NMS rules had been mitigated by the introduction of threshold standards in Mathematics and the amalgamation of smaller modules into larger modules in Physics (although this had disadvantages)
- further work was needed to investigate the perceived barriers to internal programme transfers during the first term. **ACTION: Secretary**
- departments should encouraged to build in to their timetabling process modules from other departments which are popular with their students as electives, if they felt they would be valuable to their students

- a process review of visiting student activities was being undertaken. The Chair had spoken to the Panning Office about clarifying the funding model for Departments
- the common assessment period (CAP) was felt to be too concentrated by some students and departments. **ACTION: Examinations Office/SCA to consider possible remedies including extending the CAP and/or staggering assessment periods and separating finalist examination boards from progression boards**
- the success of weeks 8-10 of the Summer Term under the NMS had varied, with some departments making successful use of this period and others reporting difficulties such as a lack of staff availability due to marking demands, poor student engagement (e.g. due to seeking employment) and uncertainty about the balance between departmentally and centrally provided activities. Further work was needed to ensure that weeks 8-10 of the Summer Term 2012 were a success and it was vital to start planning now. **ACTION: Chair, Secretary, Project Leader, Learning Enhancement, YUSU representative and Academic Registrar to discuss**
- a working group would be established to look at the structure of the academic year in the light of ongoing concerns about this issue. **ACTION: Secretary.**

11-12/49 Arrangements for the 2012 National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

The Committee **considered** arrangements for the 2012 National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) (UTC.11-12/26).

In relation to the NSS, the Committee **decided** that:

- a) the National Student Survey should start in week 3 of the Spring Term;
- b) B1 (careers – to provide a baseline given developments in this area) and B10 (assessment) from the additional banks of questions should be included in the NSS;
- c) last year's open question had been very useful and should be repeated: "Looking back at your degree course as a whole, what one academic experience has been most rewarding or useful, and what one change do you think would most improve the course?"
- d) the incentive of a £1 donation to the University Hardship fund for each completed survey should be retained;
- e) the Department of History should trial blocking out slots in a computer room for students to complete the NSS and the impact of this on response rates would be evaluated. **ACTION: Dr Altink and Mrs Dodd**
- f) departments should be encouraged to present evidence to their students of how the NSS data had resulted in positive changes;
- g) the approach to publicity should be similar to the previous year but publicity material should be available earlier.

In relation to the PTES, the Committee:

- a) **decided** that the University should participate as there was a need for better data on the experience of postgraduate students and the PTES had the advantage of allowing benchmarking against other institutions;
- b) **noted** that the survey was poorly constructed and consequently only a subset of the data might be analysed;
- c) **decided** that there should be no institutional questions given the length of the survey;
- d) **decided** that the PTES should run between 19 April and 14 June;
- e) **noted** that publicity was key to improving the response rate and that the University and the GSA would need to work together on this.

11-12/50 Learning and Teaching Action Plan for 2011-12

The Committee **considered** and **approved** the Learning and Teaching Action Plan for 2011-12 (UTC.11-12/27). It was **noted** that:

- a meeting of PGWT coordinators had been held and been useful in assessing the success of the implementation of the new PGWT policy
- that a substantial review of the York Award had been put on hold pending a pilot of the NUS Student Skills Award with YUSU
- the theme of internationalisation was being taken forward by the Project Leader, Learning Enhancement.

11-12/51 Language and Linguistic Science: New Ab Initio Language Programmes

The Committee **considered** proposals to make major modifications to programmes [German and Linguistics; Spanish and Linguistics; German and Philosophy; Linguistics with German; Linguistics with Spanish; French and German Language; French and Spanish Language; German and Spanish Language] in Language and Linguistics to allow students to study either Spanish *or* German ab initio (UTC.11-12/28). The proposal had been considered by Dr Altink and Dr White in advance of the meeting and it was **noted** that the Department had responded satisfactorily to the queries that they had raised. The proposal had the support of the external examiner.

The Committee **noted** that students on the programme would receive bespoke additional teaching in their ab initio language in their first year. At the start of the second year, the students would join the cohort of students who had entered with A-level in German or Spanish but would have access to back-up classes. It was **noted** that the Department had the capacity to teach these additional students and a sense of collegiality within the ab initio student group would be encouraged by a system of peer mentoring.

The Committee **approved** the major modifications. It was **decided** that the Department could recruit for 2012 entry if it wished, on the condition that the teaching resources would

be in place and assuming that the Department could recruit sufficient numbers in the time available. [Secretary's note: the Department should be aware that if it makes offers to students the Department may be committed to running the new modules even if the minimum numbers for viability are not achieved.]

11-12/52 Department of Mathematics: Periodic Review Report, the Agreed Action Plan and External Assessors' Reports

The Committee **considered** the periodic review report, the agreed action plan and external assessors' reports for the Department of Mathematics (UTC.11-12/29).

It was **noted** that the review had prompted lively debate and that a number of strengths and areas for further development had been identified. It was **noted** that the Department had performed fairly poorly in the NSS and NSS feedback reflected issues raised at periodic review.

Key issues had included:

- the need for improved transparency in relation to staff workloads
- the need to improve the effectiveness of the Staff Student Committee
- the need to monitor carefully the impact of making coursework formative given that it ran counter to a move within the University to diversify assessment practices and could lead to students not engaging with core material. The Committee **decided** that the Board of Studies must consider data on the impact of the change on coursework submission rates and attendance at associated classes. **ACTION: Department.** It was suggested that the Department could introduce a requirement for submission of coursework/attendance at associated classes to remain in good academic standing (advice on this could be obtained from Mrs Dodd)
- the need to improve transferable skills training. The Department should also work with the Careers Service to publicise jobs that require mathematical skills
- resistance within the Department to trialling supervised access to examination scripts for students
- the need to include the Department in any discussions on space and blackboard provision. [Secretary's note: this is being taken forward, see minute 11-12/39 (a)]

The Chair **noted** that it had been agreed with HR that all departments should have a clear system for workload allocation but that it would be inappropriate to impose a single University system. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to have a workshop on good practice in this area, drawing on good departmental examples such as those used in the Departments of English and Physics. **ACTION: HR**

11-12/53 Undergraduate External Examiners Reports and a Report to the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA)

The Committee **considered** a summary of undergraduate external examiners reports and a report to the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) held on 7 October 2011 (UTC 11-12/30) (this item was deferred from the last meeting).

The Committee **noted** that:

- it supported the SCA's proposal that external examiners should be encouraged to meet with students during their visits to the University in order to get a sense of their experiences of the programme
- Professor John Robinson, the PVC for Learning and Teaching elect, would be asked to maintain an oversight of the mitigating circumstances policy
- the Project Leader, Learning Enhancement was working with the SCA on encouraging the use of the full mark scale [Secretary's note: starred firsts have not been abolished under the NMS and thus provide an incentive for students to strive beyond a 'standard' first class degree.]
- some institutions within the UK were considering using grade point averages but that this would require a significant cultural shift in marking practices and could encourage students to petition marks
- it agreed with the SCA that the penalties for late submission were not draconian and that departments should ensure that the submission of work was managed effectively so that, for example, students did not have to face long queues
- the external examiners' reports were generally very positive and that all standards had been met [Secretary's note: there are no external examiners' report for undergraduate programmes delivered by the NSLC. **ACTION: Examinations Office to check.**]

11-12/54 Updated Register of Collaborative Provision

The Committee **noted** that the updated register of Collaborative Provision was available online.

[Secretary's note: a register of Higher York agreements is also be available online.]

11-12/55 Register for Research Degree Collaborations

The Committee **noted** that a register of Research Degree Collaborations was now available online.

11-12/56 Approval of External Assessors

It was **noted** that the Chair had approved the following external assessors:

- for a validation visit to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum: Dr Gill Chitty (Council for British Archaeology)
- for the Periodic Review of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television: Professor Stephen Lacey (Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural

Industries, University of Glamorgan) and Professor Robin MacPherson (Edinburgh Napier University).

11-12/57 Updated Register for Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

It was **noted** that the updated register for Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies was now available online.

11-12/58 Updated Register of Distance Learning Programmes

It was **noted** that the updated register of Distance Learning Programmes was now available online.

11-12/59 Modifications to, and Withdrawals of, Programmes of Study

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between October and November 2011 (UTC.11-12/31). The Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had **approved** modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study as follows (further details are available from the Academic Support Office):

Electronics: Approval for 2011/12 cohort only of the MEng/BEng Foundation Year to change the pass mark for Maths 1 and Physics 1 from 40% to 50%.

Health Sciences: Approval for the withdrawal of the MSc in Nursing which will now not recruit for the 2012/13 academic year. Approval for the suspension of the PGDip in High Intensity IAPT for 2012/13 pending a departmental review. Approval of the suspension of the PGCert in Low Intensity IAPT for 2012/13 pending a departmental review.

Language and Linguistics: Approval from October 2011 to change the assessment date for the Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology project/report (worth 40% of the module marks) from week one of the Summer Term, to week ten of the Spring Term. This is a stage one, 20 credit module, taught over three terms.

Law: Approval from October 2011 of structural changes to the LLM in International Comparative and Commercial Law.

Mathematics: Approval of the request to withdraw the MSc in Mathematics with Modern Applications from 2012/13 following several years of poor recruitment.

National Science Learning Centre – Postgraduate Certificate in Science Education and Leadership: Approval from October 2011 to change the summative assessment for the Strategic Leadership and Management module to focus on emotional intelligence, rather than change management, the module and programme learning outcomes will not be affected by this

change. Both the subject contact and external examiner are supportive of this change. Approval from October 2011 that participants complete two pieces of formative assessment rather than three. Participants who still feel they need further support will be offered an opportunity to do a third piece of formative work.

Physics: Approval for 2011/12 cohort only of the Physics Foundation Year to change the pass mark for Maths 1 and Physics 1 from 40% to 50%. Approval of the request to change the teaching of the week long intensive MSc Fusion energy module, *Frontiers of Fusion*, from week 4 summer term to week 11 Spring Term (Week 1 Easter Vac) for 2011/12 only, to take advantage of some EPSRC funding. The module will be taught as usual in 2012/13.

Politics: Approval from October 2011 of the merger of the MA research workshop (10 credits) with the MA dissertation (90 credits) to form a 100-credit MA dissertation module.

Theatre, Film and Television: Approval from October 2012 for the programmes currently titled: MA/MSc in Post Production with specialisation in Visual Effects and MA/MSc in Post Production with specialisation in Sound Design, to change to: MA/MSc in Post Production with Visual Effects and MA/MSc in Post Production with Sound Design. The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate exit awards will also be changed to represent this programme title change: Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Post Production with Visual Effects and Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Post Production with Sound.

11-12/60 Dates of the Next Meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of the next meetings (all at 2.15pm in HG15, Heslington Hall unless otherwise stated):

- Monday 12 December 2011
- Monday 19 December 2011 (12.15-3.00pm including *lunch – meeting to consider APR reports*)
- Monday 16 January 2012
- Monday 12 March 2012
- Monday 21 May 2012
- Monday 25 June 2012