ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 1 November 2018

M I N U T E S

PRESENT:

Provost and President (Chair)

Dr Tracey Allen; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor David Bogle; Dr Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Mr Ashley Doolan; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Clare Goudy; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Sandra Leaton-Gray; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Sam Smidt; Professor Li Wei; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Andrew Wills; Dr Stan Zochowski

In attendance: Ms Annabel Brown; Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary to Academic Committee); Ms Rachel Port (Minutes); Professor David Shanks

Apologies for absence were received from

Preliminary business

1 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2018-19**
[PAPER 1-01 (18-19)]

1.1 ***Received*** – the AC terms of reference and constitution and membership for 2018-19.

2 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE 2018-19**
[PAPER 1-02 (18-19)]

2.1 ***Received*** – the terms of reference for the sub-committees of AC for 2018-19 session.

3 **MINUTES OF 14 JUNE 2018 MEETING**

3.1 ***Approved*** – the Minutes of the AC meeting held on 14 June 2018 [AC Minutes 33-43, 2017-18].

4 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

4.1 There were no matters arising.

Matters for discussion

5 **PROVOST'S BUSINESS**

5A **Student numbers 2018-19**

5A.1 UCL had met its overall target for undergraduate student numbers for 2018-19 entry while maintaining entry grade requirements. The Provost was pleased with this situation and noted that meeting student numbers was important from a financial perspective.

5B **Applications from prospective students for 2019-20 entry**

5B.1 UCL received its first tranche of prospective student applications for 2019-20 entry last month. Some 20,000 applications had been received which represented an increase of some 25% compared to the number of applications submitted at the same stage two years ago. This increase consisted of a 9.9% increase from UK -

8.3   In light of the development of these meetings, there was no need to continue ASER Intensive as a separate activity in 2018. As part of the ASER process in 2018-19, departments would be asked to reflect on how to embed the principles of inclusivity in all aspects of the academic cycle, via the Inclusive Curriculum Health Check. Also, departments that submitted an undergraduate ASER would be asked to develop a TEF narrative as part of the preparations for subject-level TEF in 2019-20 [see Minute 10 below].

8.4   In response to a query about action to be taken following the ASER Support meetings, it was noted that two senior leads in Academic Services and two more in UCL Arena were responsible for tracking and analysing all ASER plans to monitor progress of agreed actions. These meetings for 2018 would take place between April and July 2019 and it was suggested that they might be held earlier each session in Autumn Term. An alternative approach was suggested to reverse the process by holding the support meeting first and the action be developed from that discussion to speed things up. More flexibility in the preparation of the ASER Plan submission was suggested. Certain QA requirements had to be met through the ASER process, but the OVPESA would welcome feedback on the process next session once the requirements of subject-level TEF were known.

9   **ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2017-18: QUALITY ASSURANCE**
[PAPER 1-06 (18-19)]

9.1   *Received* – the above report, introduced by the Director of Academic Services, Mr Derfel Owen.

9.2   UCL was required to prepare an annual accountability report to Council detailing the institutional arrangements to assure and enhance the quality of UCL's academic provision. The report contained an associated action plan that now included more detailed information about the proposed actions as was requested by Council last session. The action plan was formulated to complement those actions to enhance education and the student experience in the OVPESA's annual report on Principal Theme 2 and in the Registrar's annual report on Key Enabler A.

changed in this second exercise. This second pilot would use a single model and subjects would no longer be clustered. There would be 34 subjects based on the Common Aggregation Hierarchy of which UCL would deliver 24. Therefore, UCL would need to produce 24 submissions plus an over-arching institutional submission by end February 2019. It was noted that UCL's interdisciplinary programmes did not sit comfortably with the current subject hierarchy and careful consideration would be given to lobbying for subject groupings subsequent to the pilot exercise.

10.3 In terms of metrics, those on teaching intensity had been dropped from the previous exercise but there were two more elements of the NSS included in the second pilot of Learning Resources and Student Voice. Within the NSS it was noted that UCL Library Services scored well in relation to learning resources and it would be able to help with provision of individual statistics at subject level to departments. It also scored well in terms of online reading and had some 3 million visits to its learning spaces each year.

10.4 The tight timescale for the preparation of submissions was noted. Drafters were required for each submission and while it was easy to identify those individuals for some submissions, it was considered to be more difficult for multi subjects. Nominations would be sought from Faculty Deans to act as drafters and honoraria payments would be offered in recognition of this important work and the short timescale for its production. Briefings would be given to Faculty Deans and other senior staff, as well as Faculties and HoDs. It was intended that the ASER narrative drafts would be used to develop these submissions and these narratives would be discussed by the UCL Submission Review Team with the Faculty Vice-Dean (Education) and Faculty Tutor concerned. Further support and guidance would be provided to drafters with drafting awaydays to be held in January. It was considered that most UCL submissions would achieve a silver/bronze rating but that the narrative part of the submission could help improve things.

10.4 Some members commented that the TEF process appeared to have many similarities to the REF exercise and considered it likely that the TEF would be used for reputational review and funding in future. It was proposed the PSLT should be made aware of this important area of work and the level of input required by departments and drafters in a short timescale.

ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith

11 **REFOCUSING INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW**
[PAPER 1-07 (18-19)]

11.1 ***Received*** – the above report, introduced by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith.

11.2 UCL's IQR process was a key part of UCL's quality assurance monitoring framework. However, the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) felt that the process could be refreshed and the proposal at AC-07 (18-19)

directly upwards to AC. AC would therefore receive an annual report about UCL's IQR process henceforward. Any issues surrounding the IQR process could still be escalated upwards to both EdCom and RDC, and while there was the option to set up a special review in exceptional circumstances, this had not occurred over the past 5 years. It was also proposed that the initiation of IQR review teams include increased seniority of membership and they would continue to cover both taught and research student issues.

11.3   Some members commented that the helpfulness of the IQR process varied according to the IQR Team as in their experience of their own department having undergone the process. The Chair would continue to be the key person on the Review Teams and it was intended to involve HoDs in their membership to help raise the profile of the process. In response to a query, it was noted that the links between the ASER Intensive process and IQR were light touch.

11.4   One member noted that their department had undergone an IQR process last session under the current procedure and felt that the appointment of the external members to the IQR Team was crucial. The member concerned noted that the external subject specialist was appointed by the department undergoing the review, in line with the IQR procedure, but in their view the external was not in their view considered to be independent enough. It was suggested that the process for appointing externals on IQR Teams could be handled differently and that the same level of independence was required as when appointing external examiners. It was noted that in some other institutions the external subject specialists were appointed by the Faculty Dean concerned, not the department undergoing the review.

RESOLVED

11.5   That AC approved the proposal as set out at section 6 in AC 1-07 (18-19) for AC to assume oversight of the refocused IQR process.

ACTION: AC members *(to note)*

Other matters for approval or information

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12   **ANNUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE REVIEW – PGT PROGRAMMES 2017/18: OUTCOMES**
[PAPER 1-08 (18-19)]

12.1   ***Received*** – the Annual Student Experience Review – PGT Programmes 2017/18: Outcomes report.

13   **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SUPPORT TO STUDY REVIEW**
[PAPER 1-09 (18-19)]

13.1   ***Received*** – the Health, Wellbeing and Support to Study Review proposal.

14   **ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2017-18: LIBRARY COMMITTEE**
      [PAPER 1-10 (18-19)]

      14.1   ***Received*** – the Library Committee Annual Report for 2017-18 session.

15   **ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2017-18: RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE**
      [PAPER 1-11 (18-19)]

      15.1   ***Received*** – the Research Degrees Committee Annual Report for 2017-18
              session

16   **REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC
      COMMITTEE**

      16.1   ***Received*** – AC officers had received the following sets of minutes since the last
              meeting of AC:

              x   Education Committee – 2 June 2018 and 19 July 2018
              x   Library Committee – 11 June 2018
              x   Research Degrees Committee – 5 June 2018
              x   Research Governance Committee – 7 March 2018
              x   Student Experience Committee – 10 May 2018 (unconfirmed)
              x   Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee – 11 June 2018
                   (unconfirmed)

17   **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

      17.1   The dates of upcoming AC meetings were as follows:

              x   **Tuesday 19 February 2019, 10.00am**
              x   **Monday 24 June 2019, 10.00am**
              x   **Thursday 14 November 2019, 10.00am.**