

**GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE**  
**University of London**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**LEARNING AND TEACHING QUALITY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2006**

**Present:** Dr Philip Broadhead (in the Chair) Dr Jorella Andrews  
Mr Andrew Brett Ms Hannah Bullivant  
Ms Mary Claire Halverson Ms Vee Harris  
Ms Jennifer Huseman Dr James Martin  
Professor Carrie Paechter Professor Nirmala Rao  
Professor Maria Shevtsova Ms Juliet Sprake  
Dr Gareth Stanton Mrs Vivien Taibe  
Mrs Liz Thussu (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Mr Bob Westaway

**In attendance:** Mr Gareth Bodrell; Dr Richard Grayson (for item 8 only);  
Dr Basem El-Haddadeh; Ms Anne Francis; Ms Denise Miller;  
Ms Mary Nixon; Dr John Phelps

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Noted:

the College policy on conflicts of interest (S06.133)

**2 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Noted:

that the Chair welcomed all present to the first meeting of the Committee

**3 MINUTES**

Received:

the minutes of Academic Committee held on 10 May 2006

Noted:

that Academic Committee was considered the immediate predecessor of the Committee

#### **4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Noted:

there were no matters arising

#### **5 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Received:

Learning and Teaching Quality Committee's terms of reference and membership for 2006 – 2007 (R06.222)

Noted:

- (i) that Ms Vee Harris was a member of the Educational Studies Department, not PACE as given in the membership
- (ii) that it was intended that the Committee would take responsibility for strategic developments within the areas of academic standards and learning and teaching quality
- (iii) that those members representing subject areas should brief all departments in their group on the Committee's discussions
- (iv) that that while Academic Committee was considered the immediate predecessor of the Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee was also represented in the Committee's remit, and that as far as possible those present represented a combination of the membership of both committees with some currently in attendance who would later be added to the membership
- (v) that it would be appropriate to co-opt Dr Victoria Goddard, of the Department of Anthropology, who had been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2004

**Resolved:**

**to co-opt Dr Victoria Goddard onto the Committee**

#### **6 APPLICATION FOR DEGREE AWARDING POWERS**

Received:

a briefing paper on proposals in relation to the College's application to the Privy Council for degree awarding powers (R06.223)

Noted:

- (i) that the College would be applying for degree awarding powers (DAPs) as advised by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London

- (ii) that a DAPs project team had been established, sponsored by the Pro-Warden (Academic) and managed by the Head of Quality, who would meet regularly throughout the process
- (iii) that the proposed schedule meant that the College needed to produce a Critical Self Analysis document by the spring of next year, to be approved by Academic Board and Council in the summer and submitted, with supporting documentation, in the autumn of 2007
- (iv) that following this in 2008 the auditors would visit the College regularly over the course of a yearly academic cycle, sitting in on committee meetings at both College and Department level, and talking to staff and students
- (v) that four University of London Colleges already have degree awarding powers (LSE, UCL, Kings and the Institute of Education), and others were in the process of applying
- (vi) that DAPs can only be used by Colleges with the agreement of the University, and that discussions regarding Colleges' use of DAPs and the impact on the current degree awarding process continue
- (vii) that the process of application is administered by the Quality Assurance Agency on behalf of the Privy Council
- (viii) that the process is comparable to institutional audit although it encompasses more, and consequently the QAA had agreed that the College's next audit, which was due in 2009, could be combined with the DAPs application and both undertaken in 2008
- (ix) that the strategic role of the Committee in bringing together quality assurance and enhancement would be critical to the success of the application
- (x) that the College had no intention of leaving the University of London, and intended to use DAPs strategically, maintaining the University of London brand where appropriate
- (xi) that the Students Union welcomed the application and would have a significant role to play in its success and that this would be made clear in any documentation
- (xii) that DAPs would be a standing item on the Committee's agenda for some time
- (xiii) that the application would cost the College £40,000 and came with some degree of risk
- (xiv) that the project team would be meeting next on 15 November 2006 and had a budget of £2,000 to potentially spend on external consultants to talk to the Committee and other interest groups about the process

**Resolved:**

**to endorse the proposal to nominate external advisors to assist the College in preparing for the application**

## **7 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

### **7.1 Revision of Learning and Teaching Strategy**

Received:

the current College Learning and Teaching Strategy (R06.224)

Noted:

- (i) that the current Learning and Teaching strategy covered the period July 2002 to the end of 2006 and consequently needed reviewing
- (ii) that the revised strategy would outline the strategic direction of learning, teaching and assessment for the next five years
- (iii) that the Committee would consider the revised strategy again at its next meeting, after which the strategy would be put out for consultation, with the intention of having a draft strategy by early next term
- (iv) that the revised strategy would follow on from the strategic aims of the College, and would be accompanied by an action plan
- (v) that the revised strategy would include an explicit framework for assessment, and that as the College review of assessment policy and practice continued the strategy would need to include its recommendations
- (vi) that the revised strategy would also include the role of academic Heads of Departments in sponsoring learning and teaching and aligning learning and teaching policies with the Human Resources strategy
- (vii) that as the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee reports to the Committee it would be appropriate for the revised strategy to cover research degrees in addition to undergraduate and taught post graduate provision
- (viii) that it was important that the strategy was flexible enough to be adapted by particular departments into their own Departmental Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategies with associated action plan
- (ix) that where possible the revised strategy should identify areas where extra resources would be needed to feed into departmental and College planning cycles
- (x) that it was important that the revised strategy should be accessible to a student audience

### **7.2 Report on progress on the feedback on assessment project**

Received:

a report on and proposals in relation to the current Learning and Teaching project on assessment and feedback (R06.225)

Noted:

- (i) that there were several issues around the definition, policy and practice of feedback to students that could usefully be clarified in a set of guidelines
- (ii) that the report was good in principle and in the next phase of the project practice based and placement assessment would need to be considered
- (iii) that it was important that assessment policy included the need for Masters students to have feedback in February, as this was a particular necessity for overseas students
- (iv) that it was important that diverse assessment was not discouraged as feedback on all assessments, however small, could put a burden on staff, however this could be addressed with generic feedback, written or in a seminar, and in particular the Educational Studies department had found generic written comments to be very effective and these could then be published on the VLE
- (v) that Dr Cohn was to be thanked for a useful and thoughtful report

**Resolved:**

**to endorse the report and the proposal that a set of baseline requirements for assessments be formulated that additionally cover practice based and placement assessment**

## **8 PERIODIC PROGRAMME/DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW OF POLITICS**

Received:

the report of the Periodic Programme/Departmental Review of Politics and the Departmental response (R06.226)

Noted:

- (i) that the Politics department had been reviewed in March 2006 and that the Head of Department was present to report on the Department's response to the recommendations of the reviewers
- (ii) that the report had been well received within the Department, and that the Department had thoroughly considered the recommendations leading to a strategic refocusing and a number of consequent actions, including restructuring undergraduate programmes by introducing a common first year and introducing half units into level three to allow for more teaching of staff research specialisms
- (iii) that as the review process considers student support it would be appropriate to include student representation on the panel and in future the Quality Office hoped to do so
- (iv) that a central, web accessible database allowing staff and students to view courses available from other programmes would aid departments in taking

advantage of synergies within the College and could usefully form part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy

- (v) that it would be good practice to send responses to Periodic Review reports to the External Advisors on the review panel
- (vi) that the Committee would receive a further report from the Department of Politics in 12 to 18 months

**Resolved:**

- (i) to congratulate the Department of Politics for its positive and creative response to the review**
- (ii) that establishing a central web accessible database allowing staff and students to view courses available from other programmes should form part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy**
- (iii) to send responses to Periodic Review reports to the External Advisors on the review panel**

## **9 STUDENT FEEDBACK**

### **9.1 Student feedback and the National Student Survey**

Received:

a report on the results of the 2006 National Student Survey and proposals for their use to inform the assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching quality (R06.227)

Noted:

- (i) that the National Student Survey had been run for the second time in 2006, giving similar results to the first in 2005, hence giving credibility to the survey as a benchmark of student opinion
- (ii) that the Quality Office intended to commission a report from a statistician on the National Student Survey results
- (iii) that this year an additional bank of questions would be piloted, covering twelve additional areas, and institutions could opt-in to some of these questions, with the results only available to themselves
- (iv) that members should contact the Head of Quality with any suggestions for questions from the pilot bank to opt in to
- (v) that currently HEFCE was reviewing the TQI website with a view to relaunching it in summer 2007;
- (vi) that the HEFCE review of TQI would conclude in October with the results published in November 2006.

**Resolved:**

- (i) **to endorse the approach to the National Student Survey data proposed in the paper**
- (i) **to invite members to contact the Head of Quality directly with any suggestions for additional questions to pilot**

**9.2 Reviewing student feedback mechanisms: the development of programme monitoring**

Received:

a report on the programme monitoring pilot and proposals for the development of online student feedback and survey systems (R06.228)

Noted:

- (i) that aspects of the current system of programme monitoring were considered to be overly bureaucratic and ineffective by academic departments and that student engagement was declining
- (ii) that the Quality Office and the Students Union had been jointly developing a new model
- (iii) that the new model would mean one meeting for all cognate programmes within a department, rather than one meeting per programme, and that this meeting would take the form of a staff student forum, with student representatives as appropriate, tailored to the size of the department concerned
- (iv) that students would be encouraged to feedback at these fora, which would also would be a place where students could find out about Departmental developments
- (v) that each department would have at least one undergraduate and one postgraduate paid student coordinator, who would be responsible for recruiting student programme representatives
- (vi) that the new model would also include online fora where student representatives could communicate with and brief, and be briefed by, their constituencies
- (vii) that the new system would be piloted in the spring of 2007 by the Departments of Media and Communications and English and Comparative Literature and by the Postgraduate Certificate in the Management of Learning and Teaching
- viii) that after the pilot had been evaluated the Quality Office and Students Union would report back to the Committee in summer 2007
- (ix) that the new model would allow for and encourage much more student-to-student interaction that the current model and the Committee considered this would significantly improve the student experience

- (x) that the Quality Office and Students Union were also proposing to set up a working group to investigate the development of online student feedback systems to encompass both programme and course level questionnaires as well as student satisfaction surveys

**Resolved:**

**to endorse the proposed pilot of a revised programme monitoring process and the related proposal to establish a working group to investigate online student feedback systems**

## **10 PERIODIC PROGRAMME/DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS**

**Resolved:**

**to approve the proposed schedule of periodic reviews for 2006/07 to be undertaken by the Quality Affairs Office (R06.229)**

## **11 EXTERNAL PROGRAMMES**

### **11.1 Encouraging the reporting of plagiarism in the Computing and Information Systems External Programme**

**Received:**

a recommendation from External Systems Sub-Committee regarding payment to examiners for reporting plagiarism (R06.230).

**Noted:**

that the Students' Union were concerned that paying examiners separately for detecting plagiarism was not the best approach to take

**Recommended:**

the approval of the recommendation of External System Sub-Committee regarding payment for reporting of plagiarism (R06.230)

### **11.2 Student representation on External System Sub-Committee**

**Recommended:**

the approval of the recommendation of External System Sub-Committee regarding student representation on the Sub-Committee (R06.231)

## **12 QAA CODE OF PRACTICE**

**Noted:**

- (i) that the following revised sections of the Code of Practice were published by the QAA in 2006

- Section 6: Assessment of students  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section6/>
- Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section7/>
- Section 10: Admissions to higher education  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section10/>

(ii) that these sections of the code of practice would help to inform the development of policies and processes in these areas as appropriate

### **13 QAA INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT**

Noted:

that a revised Handbook for Institutional Audit has been published by the QAA and can be accessed at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/handbook2006/default.asp>

## **RESERVED BUSINESS**

### **14 SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS**

Received:

a list of the suspensions of regulations approved on behalf of the Academic Committee by the Pro-Warden (Academic) (R06.232)

### **15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted:

there was no other business

### **16 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Noted:

that future meetings of the Committee are scheduled for:

15 November 2006 at 10am in room 110, Deptford Town Hall  
 24 January 2007 at 2pm in room 110, Deptford Town Hall  
 21 February 2007 at 10am in room 110, Deptford Town Hall  
 9 May 2007 at 10am in room 110, Deptford Town Hall  
 23 May 2007 at 2pm in room 110, Deptford Town Hall

*DM  
 November 2006  
 Revised December 2006 (minute 11.1)*