

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD

LEARNING AND TEACHING QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2008

Present: Dr Philip Broadhead (Chair) Dr Jorella Andrews
Mr Jesse Fajemisin Dr Victoria Goddard
Ms Mary Claire Halvorson Ms Vee Harris
Ms Mary Nixon Professor Carrie Paechter
Professor Len Platt Ms Juliet Sprake
Dr Gareth Stanton Mrs Vivien Taibe
Dr Michael Young Ms Denise Miller (Secretary)

Apologies: Dr James Martin; Dr Ida Pu; Dr Basem El-Haddadeh; Ms Jess Tratt

In attendance: Professor Dennis Atkinson (for item 16.2); Mr Gareth Bodrell;
Ms Anne Francis; Dr Victoria Korzeniowska; Dr John Phelps

OPEN BUSINESS

14 MINUTES

Resolved:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2008

15 THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Received:

a paper from the Quality Administrator with detailed analysis of the results of the National Student Survey 2007-08 (08-428)

Noted:

- (i) that earlier in the year 62% or 787 of final-year undergraduates at Goldsmiths responded to the fourth National Student Survey (NSS) on their learning and teaching experience, with the data being released to the press in September 2008. The data has increasing significance, not only for feedback on the student experience but also in terms of league tables and information for prospective students who can view the data online through a link from the UCAS site
- (ii) that the College was receiving good feedback for its teaching, and had improved, against the national trend, for Assessment and Feedback. The College could take note of some excellent achievements, in particular the Department of Design had

received very good student feedback, with Social Work also deserving congratulations

- (iii) that areas where some improvements could be made at departmental level were identified as Academic Support, and Organisation and Management, particularly with respect to joint degrees. The Committee also noted that the College could do better with respect to scores for Personal Development, and that while the 3D graduate scheme was considered one of the best in the sector the level of engagement of students could be improved
- (iv) that it was important for the NSS results to be reflected both in the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy and action plan and departmental Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategies and plans
- (v) that this year in the annual planning round departments would be asked to report on the implementation of their Learning and Teaching Strategies and issues arising from changes that had been introduced or were planned
- (vi) that while in future the Head of the Learning Enhancement Unit would discuss NSS data with Heads of Departments and Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee chairs, this year the Chair had spoken to departments who had not done as well as they would have liked to in the survey. Discussion with Heads of departments had identified the most problematic issues, informed by careful consideration of the data, and action had already been taken
- (vii) that at the institutional level issues would be picked up by the Chair in the planning round, however with respect to Learning Resources SMT had already approved an extra investment in the Library and changes to the College's infrastructure that should increase students' satisfaction with the learning resources available to them
- (viii) that the Students' Union was also taking action with respect to Academic Support, in encouraging students to understand the importance of keeping timetabled meetings with personal tutors in order to build a relationship of trust and support

Recommended:

- (i) **that the College and academic departments should consider the appropriateness of their respective Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategies in taking forward issues arising from student feedback including the NSS, and should revise their strategies and action plans appropriately**
- (ii) **that a forum of Heads of Departments and Chairs of Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees, with student representation, should be established to consider how to address issues raised by the NSS**
- (iii) **that the paper be circulated to Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees for consideration and response**

16 PERIODIC REVIEWS

16.1 Periodic Programme Review of Social Work: Department of Professional and Community Education

Received:

the report of the Periodic Review of Social Work programmes in the Department of Professional and Community Education (08-429) and the response from the Department (08-430)

Noted:

- (i) that the Department of Professional and Community Education's Social Work programmes were reviewed on 22 April 2008 with the panel forming a positive view of the programmes and commending the cohesive staff team, which they found to be engaged and energetic with an impressive research profile and culture
- (ii) that the panel had also been impressed with the way that the programme team had proactively taken on board feedback from the NSS
- (iii) the Department considered the review to have been productive and was actively taking forward the panel's recommendations, particularly those concerning dyslexic students, admissions and resource issues

16.2 Periodic Programme Review of MA Education: Culture, Language and Identity

Received:

the report of the Periodic Review of MA Education: Culture, Language and Identity (08-433) and the response from the Department of Educational Studies (08-434)

Noted:

- (i) that the Department of Education's MA in Education: Culture, Language and Identity was reviewed on 19 June 2008 the panel commended the programme team for their student centred approach, for providing a rich, supportive environment and for their professional integrity in delivering quality to students
- (ii) that the Department was pleased with the report and had responded positively to its recommendations
- (iii) that the length of the programme's dissertation was longer than that recommended by the College framework, with students choosing to do either the long dissertation or a shorter report
- (iv) that recommendations 5(i) and (ii) concerning the dissertation and report had not been accepted by the Department, however the Committee considered that there were potential benefits to be gained from aligning the programme with the College framework
- (v) that the Department could consider the benefits of having students choosing between a dissertation and a report and whether these benefits could be achieved with a programme structure that conformed to the College framework.

- (vi) that the programme was clearly of a good standard with strong academic leadership

Resolved:

to ask the Department to consider the benefits of having students choosing between a long dissertation and a shorter report and whether these benefits could be achieved with a programme structure that conformed to the College framework, and to report back in detail to the Committee's next meeting

17 ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Received:

from the Academic Registrar a paper proposing changes to the treatment of borderline candidates (08-364)

Noted:

- (i) that the last meeting of the College Board of Examiners was held on 24 June 2008
- (ii) that as the Board had consistently declined to use its discretion in respect of borderline classifications the Academic Registrar proposed to Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee at its 22 October 2008 meeting that the regulations should be amended to remove or restrict the current levels of discretion in classification of borderlines
- (iii) that the Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee welcomed the Academic Registrar's recommendations to remove the current discretion with respect to borderline candidates (those who fall within 2 percentage points of achieving a higher classification) and instead to always award the higher possible classification to borderline candidates who have obtained marks in the higher classification in courses totalling at least 4 course units in value at levels II and III, and recommended them for approval
- (iv) the Sub-Committee also recommended for approval the Academic Registrar's other proposed changes to treatment of candidates with mitigating circumstances including that mitigating circumstances could allow a higher classification for those borderline students with only three course units in value at Level II and III in the higher classification, with two reservations. One being that this clause could not be used for anything other than mitigating circumstances (eg not exit velocity which is already accounted for in the weightings applied to the formula for calculation of honours), and the second was that provided there were clear guidelines as to what constituted mitigating circumstances, the Board of Examiners should be able to decide on this without referring the decision to a Pro-Warden
- (v) that the Sub-Committee also discussed the Academic Registrar's contention that the current convention of quoting marks to two decimal points when calculating class of honours at Boards of Examiners' meetings might be considered to indicate a level of precision which cannot be justified, and recommended that the convention should be abolished, subject to a sample modelling of marks being undertaken to demonstrate that students would not be disadvantaged
- (vi) that since course unit marks used in the degree class calculation normal comprise a weighted average of course work and examination mark, subject to normal rounding,

there is usually a small error in the calculation, but even allowing for the maximum number of errors to accumulate within the formula, because of the final division, the greatest possible error in an individual candidate's indicative classification mark when given to two decimal places would be at most + 0.5 of a percentage point (in their favour), and -0.49 of a percentage point against. Since it would therefore be possible for a candidate with a borderline mark that would be rounded up to have an actual mark that is above the borderline normal rounding would not disadvantage these candidates.

- (vii) that for a mark to be rounded down the decimal part must be 0.49 or less, hence it is not possible for a borderline candidate with a mark that would be rounded down to have an actual mark that is above the borderline and so these students would not be disadvantaged by rounding down
- (viii) that the recommendations added clarity to the regulations and that changes would be published to students in the normal way

Resolved:

- (i) that the regulations be amended in accordance with Appendix II of the paper, subject to the deletion under point 5 of reference to a recommendation being made to a designated Pro-Warden
- (ii) that the current convention of quoting marks to two decimal points when calculating class of honours be abolished

18 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Received:

from the Planning Office a proposal for a framework for offering short courses for Continuing Professional Development (08-435)

Noted:

- (i) that CPD provision was important in the context of Life Long Learning, employer engagement and knowledge transfer, and in addition could help maintain links between the College and alumni
- (ii) that there was demand for CPD with PACE getting requests and offers every week, and a number of departments interested in delivering short CPD courses; while the College wished to develop and offer CPD courses in a timely manner it also wished to safeguard the College's reputation for quality and standards
- (iii) that the Planning Office was proposing a broad framework to be piloted by the College's Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship which already had short courses designed and ready for approval and could run them as early as the spring term
- (iv) that at a special meeting on 13 November 2008 Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee had considered the paper and made some comments, the most important of which were that the Sub-Committee was concerned that there should not be any conflation

between the CPD and modular degree frameworks, and that the CPD courses could award notional credit that would need to be activated through APCL

- (v) that while the intention would be ultimately to offer real credit, credit could only be accumulated towards an award that had been approved by the College in the normal way
- (vi) that the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee had also considered that stand alone CPD courses would need to have a description of their level with respect to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, hence the College would need to develop generic level descriptors to aid with this
- (vii) that the Committee accepted the comments of the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee with the exception of the suggestion that approval of short courses be undertaken by the Sub-Committee
- (viii) that the Committee would have an opportunity to evaluate the pilot scheme and make further recommendations in due course

Recommended:

the approval of the recommendations of the paper, provided that amendments are made to the proposal to take account of the comments of the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee with one exception: that the proposal in the paper, that the Pro-Warden (Students and Learning Development) should be able to approve new CPD courses on the recommendation of Heads of Departments, should stand

19 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Received:

from the Librarian an annual report on the library's services and development in 2007-08 (08-436)

Noted:

- (i) that the library had had an active and successful year, and was running new services including one to make digital copies from printed books, journals and magazines, for incorporation into learn.gold; with 250 scans processed to date
- (ii) that the Library was negotiating with departments to place subject librarians onto departmental Learning and Teaching Committees
- (iii) that management of the Goldsmiths institutional online research repository had been transferred from UCL to Goldsmiths in the summer at the end of the pilot phase. Once software glitches had been ironed out (currently being worked on by the University of Southampton who were the developers) the Library would be adding data from the previous RAE
- (iv) that the first phase of a three year plan to improve the quality of learning space in the Rutherford Building, involving reorganising the ground floor to provide enhanced space for social and collaborative learning, had been carried out over the summer and had proved to be very successful. While the new ground floor area was popular

and intensively used, there was also a new silent study area on the second floor for those who needed it

- (v) that the Library had received £190,000 in extra funding with £44,000 spent up to last Friday. It had now obtained a purchasing card from Finance making it quicker to acquire out of print or foreign materials
- (vi) that departments with a long history of supporting good collections were those that had the highest levels of student satisfaction, nevertheless something could be achieved in the short term by departments buying extra copies of the most frequently used resources
- (vii) that the Library and the Students' Union would meet and discuss collaborating on organising a discussion forum for Library users

20 PROGRAMME SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE: MA ANIMATION

Received:

a proposal from the Department of Media and Communication for an MA in Animation (08-375)

Noted:

that the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered a proposal for MA animation at its meeting on 29 October 2008 and requested some additional assessment criteria plus some minor changes to the documentation including to the grading criteria and the educational aims

Resolved:

to approve the proposed new programme on the recommendation of Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee and subject to the amendments asked for by the Sub-Committee

21 GRADUATE SCHOOL BOARD

21.1 PhD in Art and Politics

Recommended:

the approval of a proposal from the Department of Politics, on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board, for a PhD in Art and Politics with a practical component in addition to the thesis (08-335R)

21.2 PhD in Curatorial/Knowledge

Recommended:

the approval of a proposal from the Department of Visual Cultures, on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board, for a PhD in Curatorial/Knowledge with a visual and/or aural component in addition to the thesis (08-140)

22 STANDARDS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE: 22 OCTOBER 2008

22.1 Operation of Joint Examination Boards following the Abolition of the College Board of Examiners

Resolved:

to approve, on the recommendation of the Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee, a paper from the Academic Registrar proposing regulations for the operation of Joint Examination Boards following the abolition of the College Board (08-365)

22.2 The use of Data to Support Student Recruitment, Retention, Progression and Achievement

Resolved:

to approve, on the recommendation of the Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee, proposals on the use of data to support student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement (08-367)

23 GRADUATE SCHOOL BOARD

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of Graduate School Board held on 7 October 2008 (08-437)

24 LIBRARY USER GROUP

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of the Library User Group held on 24 October 2008 (08-438)

25 PROGRAMME SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 28 October 2008 (08-431)

26 THE FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS (FHEQ)

Received:

the August 2008 second edition of the FHEQ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (08-432)

27 SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS

Received:

a list of the suspensions of regulations approved by the Chair (08-439)

28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

- (i) that more and more often students were raising the issue of teaching in the third term
- (ii) that while there was some variety of practice between departments, which tended to depend on the pattern of assessment, the College may still wish to review this at some point

29 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Noted:

that future meetings of the Committee would be held in room 110, Deptford Town Hall on the following dates:

Wednesday, 11 February 2009 at 10am

Wednesday, 20 May 2009 at 10am

Denise Miller
November 2008