

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD

LEARNING AND TEACHING QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2010

- Present: Dr Philip Broadhead (in the Chair), Ms Francesca Bancarino, Dr Jorella Andrews, Ms Anna Furse, Dr Victoria Goddard, Ms Mary Claire Halvorson, Mr Mike Jones (substitute for Dr Basem El-Haddadeh), Dr Victoria Korzeniowska, Ms Mary Nixon, Ms Bindiya Patel, Dr Juliet Sprake, Dr Anna Traianou, Dr Michael Young, Dr Joanna Zylinska.
- Apologies: Professor Les Back, Dr Basem El-Haddadeh, Professor Len Platt, Mrs Vivien Taibe.
- In attendance: Ms Clare Cousins (Secretary), Ms Anne Francis, Dr Mira Vogel, Mr Gareth Bodrell.

OPEN BUSINESS

1 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Received:

the College policy on conflicts of interest (10-339).

2 STANDING ORDERS

Received:

the College's Standing Orders (10-338).

3 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Received:

the terms of reference and membership of the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee and its sub-committees for 2010–2011 (10-368).

Noted:

that the terms of reference of the Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees did not refer specifically to the consideration of the National Student Survey results,

but that this was required for the Annual Programme Reviews, which were included in the terms of reference.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Noted:

- (i) that the Warden's Open Meeting was to be on the same day as the next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee;
- (ii) that the University of London External System had changed its name to the University of London International Programmes;
- (iii) that the Head of Goldsmiths Learning Enhancement Unit (GLEU) had left and that the structure would change later in the autumn term, with the role being filled by a 0.5 secondment from a College department rather than an external appointment, and the Pro-Warden (Students and Learning Development) was Acting Head in the meantime;
- (iv) that the GLEU Strategic Plan, which had been approved by Academic Board, still applied;
- (v) that the main purpose of GLEU was to support learning enhancement and technology-enhanced learning.

Resolved:

that the next meeting of the Committee would start at 2:30 p.m.

5 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2010 be approved.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Received:

a report from the Quality Administrator on matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2010 (10-369).

Noted:

that paper 10-179 (minute 62 refers) had not been updated to include an amendment agreed at Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee and therefore the paper would return to Standards Scrutiny Sub-Committee and be re-submitted to Learning and Teaching Quality Committee.

7 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

The following actions taken by the Chair were noted.

(i) Change to the assessment regulations for the University of London External System BA in English

In order for arrangements to be in place for the start of the academic year, the Chair had approved, on the recommendation of the Chair of the External System Sub-Committee and the Chair of Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee, an amendment to the assessment regulations (degree calculation formula) to align the assessment regulations for the University of London External System English programme with the regulations for internal students as well as those for the University of London External System Computing programmes.

(ii) Regulatory change to the University of London External System English programme

In order for arrangements to be in place for the start of the academic year, the Chair had approved, on the recommendation of the Chair of the External System Sub-Committee and the Chair of Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee, an amendment to the regulations regarding students who had previously received a University of London award, or whose registration with the University had been terminated because they had exhausted the permitted number of attempts at an examination. With effect from 2010-11, students would only be considered for re-registration in the same subject or field of study after a period of three years had elapsed after the initial period of registration. Permission to register in these circumstances would be granted at the discretion of the University and would be subject to any further conditions specified, either in the Programme Specification and Regulations booklet or by the University.

(iii) Change in the requirements of the thesis for the award of MPhil/PhD in Performance

In order for arrangements to be in place for the start of the academic year, the Chair had approved, on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board, an amendment to the requirements of the thesis for the award of MPhil/PhD in Performance to comprise a written thesis of 30-80,000 words for the PhD or of 15-50,000 words for the MPhil and for both awards a portfolio of practical work approved by the supervisor and appropriate to the terms of the thesis.

8 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2010

Received:

a paper from the Quality Administrator on the College's results in the 2010 National Student Survey (10-370).

The Committee discussed the National Student Survey (NSS) results. There had been some good outcomes, such as an improved rating for teaching and an excellent result for the Design Department, ranking equal first in the country in its subject area for student satisfaction and for teaching. However, the overall outcome was not as good as it ought to have been. The College level remained the same because gains by some departments had been offset by losses in others. This volatility needed to be understood and addressed in order to maintain and build on current scores.

It was noted that, despite some concerns about methodology, the NSS was an important measure, especially in the context of fee increases and the related student expectations. Actions needed to be taken this term and every department needed an action plan to address its weaknesses, in order to raise the score where necessary or, in high scoring departments, sustain the current level. These could feed into departments' Learning and Teaching strategies and ideas should be shared between departments. Areas to focus on were employability, included within personal development, and assessment and feedback. The Employability Strategy was going to Student Committee on 2 November. The Feedback Policy was to be considered at Learning and Teaching Quality Committee on 17 November. Departments were also being encouraged to engage with the Careers Service.

It was noted that the need for more books and/or funding for the library had featured heavily in the negative comments. A possible funding level per student had been discussed with the Librarian, although it had been agreed that this might not be appropriate for some departments.

In personal development, Educational Studies, PACE and Visual Cultures had scored highly. In the current climate, improving job prospects was a priority for students. It was reported that Psychology had included an employability-focused course as an assessed part of its programme, which was an approach that could be adopted by other departments. Postgraduate programmes that included placements appealed to students but student numbers at undergraduate level would make placements resource-intensive for staff in setting up appropriate placements and in ongoing administration. The Head of Careers reported that an audit on employability had been carried out to identify good practice and the results were to be discussed with GLEU. The Head of Visual Cultures had invited alumni of the department to talk about what they were doing now and how their degree had helped. The department was also embedding transferable skills in courses.

The impact of recent improvements was discussed. Some departments had addressed issues and yet had not seen an improvement in NSS scores. Student scores may have reflected grievances in their first and second years. Students needed to be made aware that their complaints had been acted upon, which Departmental Student Co-ordinators could facilitate. The Music Department was integrating NSS terminology within the Department, for example, referring specifically to feedback. Similarly, NSS questions could be included in the Staff/Student Forum agenda. It was reported that the NSS Forum had discussed running a survey similar to the NSS for second year students. This would give the opportunity to address issues before students' final year and highlight changes made.

Departments had noted a discrepancy between course evaluation and NSS results. This may reflect satisfaction with individual courses but less positive overall experiences. Furthermore, joint degree students have to align themselves with one department so cannot comment on both.

It was noted that the timing of the survey coincided with a stressful period for students when concerns relating to feedback might be salient. The potential impact of poor scores on student recruitment was discussed. Some institutions had strong student applications despite lower scores.

It was noted that Learning and Teaching Quality Committee members were not necessarily members of Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees. As the NSS Forum was also partially functioning as a Learning and Teaching forum, it was queried whether colleagues from the Centre for Cultural Studies and ICCE were being invited.

Resolved:

- (i) that the Employability Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (ii) that the main priorities were departmental action plans, employability and feedback;
- (iii) that the NSS Forum notes be passed on to Committee members;
- (iv) that the Head of Visual Cultures be invited to the next NSS Forum meeting to discuss actions taken in the department;
- (v) to find out whether representatives from the Centre for Cultural Studies and ICCE were being invited to the NSS Forum.

[Secretary's note: It was confirmed that the Heads of all academic departments were invited to the NSS Forum.]

9 ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW

Received:

a supplementary paper from the Head of Quality and Standards on the Annual Programme Review process in 2008-9 (10-371).

The Committee noted that this was the second report for 2008-9 and incorporated those reports not submitted by the March 2010 deadline. Now there were only two reports outstanding, giving a current completion rate of 99%.

The suitability and cleanliness of teaching rooms had again been raised as an issue by students. A large number of rooms had been redecorated and new chairs had been purchased over the summer to replace hostess chairs. All rooms were to be refurbished by the start of the 2011-12 academic year. Key performance indicators had been introduced for cleanliness.

The report referred to a staff training programme on the VLE, involving a 'driving licence' qualification, that had been introduced and that all staff in the History department were expected to obtain. The Academic Developer (Technology-Enhanced Learning) reported that this was a training programme with a focus primarily on uploading to the VLE and interactivity had not been included at this stage.

10 ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORT: RESPONSE FROM GOLDSMITHS LEARNING ENHANCEMENT UNIT (GLEU) ON POSSIBLE ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Received:

a paper from the former Head of GLEU on possible enhancement activities in response to the Annual Programme Review (10-372).

The Committee noted that the report identified issues and GLEU's approach to dealing with them. It was important to note that since the writing of the report, staffing levels in GLEU had decreased. GLEU colleagues saw part of their role as linking colleagues with each other and would welcome ideas on how to improve this. They were also keen to support innovation, such as peer feedback and audio feedback, but this was being undertaken with individuals in departments at the moment rather than on a larger scale.

Committee members thought that shared examples of projects would be useful. The Learning and Teaching Afternoon on 24 November from 1:00pm to 4:30pm would be a useful session to showcase projects and share them with a wider audience.

A research project had been carried out by some members of the Committee, which had resulted in useful findings on the relationship between learning and teaching, in particular, research-led teaching. It was felt that this should be shared more widely. It was noted that the outcomes would be reflected in the College's Learning and Teaching strategy because the authors were members of the Committee. It was suggested that the report could be held on the Goldsmiths Research Repository or the Higher Education Academy EvidenceNet.

11 REPORT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE DATA AND REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

Received:

a paper from the Head of Quality and Standards reviewing the operation of the quality framework in 2009-10 (10-373).

The Committee noted that an online course evaluation pilot had been carried out in 2009-10. The pilot would run for a second year in 2010-11 but with improvements proposed by the Academic Developer (Technology-Enhanced Learning), who was thanked for her work on the project. In the first year of the pilot, the questions had been tailored to NSS and service-orientated, whereas in Phase 2 questions could be added to encourage student reflection on their learning. The second phase of the pilot would also attempt to address response rates and offer enhanced anonymity.

The Committee noted the common themes emerging from the College's various feedback mechanisms and reviews and the policies that were being implemented to address these.

The Committee noted the proposals to enhance the Annual Programme Review (APR) process. The Annual Programme Review process was intended to highlight issues of value to Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees and function as a useful diagnostic tool. The decision not to combine APR and examinations reports was considered. The issue of late submission was discussed and how this could be addressed.

The proposal to provide feedback to departments following completion of the reports was positively received. Work had been undertaken with the Management Information team to improve the data provided. Programme-level data was being introduced this year as well as data aggregated at department level. The Committee felt that having a mock-up to provide guidance would assist departments in their completion of the form, indicating what kind of data and detail was expected. It was noted that the Departmental Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy should be borne in mind when completing the form, particularly with regard to the action plan.

The APR pro forma was considered and a number of amendments suggested and agreed. It was agreed that the NSS departmental action plans could be copied into the action plan for the APR. There was discussion as to whether question 11, the thematic question, should be included. This might be of interest in future years, depending on the issues affecting the College at the time.

It was agreed that consideration of the reports by a wider group would be beneficial. It was suggested that they should be discussed at the NSS/Learning and Teaching Forum.

The Committee noted the proposals to further integrate the International Programmes into the Goldsmiths' quality framework.

Resolved:

- (i) that Phase 2 of the online course evaluation pilot be supported and that GLEU and the Quality Office should make it as anonymous as possible;
- (ii) that the decision in paper 08-367 to combine APR and examinations reports be not taken forward as the only area of overlap was reporting on External Examiner reports, which had now been removed from the examinations report and added to the APR pro forma;
- (iii) that the APR pro forma be updated to reflect the Committee's recommendations.

12 DIGEST OF ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEES

Received:

a paper from the Quality Administrator on the activities of the Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees in 2009-10 (10-374).

13 EXTERNAL SYSTEM SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Received:

the minutes of External System Sub-Committee's 27 April 2010 meeting (10-375).

14 LIBRARY USER GROUP MINUTES

Received:

the minutes of the Library User Group's 20 April 2010 meeting (10-376).

15 NEXT MEETING

Noted:

that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 November 2010 at **2:30pm** in room 110, Deptford Town Hall Building.

RESERVED BUSINESS

16 SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS

Received:

a list of suspensions of regulations approved by the Chair (10-377).

CC

October 2010