Imperial College London

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Minutes from the meeting held on
Thursday 7 November 2019

Present
Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Ashley Brooks – ICU Deputy President (Education)
Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Dr Edgar Meyer – Associate Dean (UG Programmes & Education Quality), Imperial College Business School Professor
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)
Judith Webster – Director of Academic Quality and Standards
Professor Xiao Yun Xu – Director of the Graduate School
Scott Tucker – Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards) – Secretary

In attendance
Mike Horner - Service Line Manager (Education), Information & Communication Technologies (Item 4.2)
Debra Ogden, Deputy Director of Student Services (Item 4.2)
Hailey Smith – Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office (Item 6)

Apologies
Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Martin Lupton – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine

1   Welcome and Apologies

1.1   The Chair welcomed attendees, particularly new members attending for the first time and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2   Minutes   LTC.2019.06

2.1   The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 7 November 2019.

2.2   The Committee noted the summary against outstanding actions from 2019/20.

3.   Matters Arising

3.1   There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.   Digital Learning and Learning Technology

4.1   Digital Learning update

4.1.1 Item deferred. It is anticipated that the Committee will receive an update on Digital Learning from the Director of the Digital Learning Hub at the LTC to be held on 23 January 2020.

4.2   Learning Technology update

4.2.1 The Committee received a presentation on equality, diversity and inclusivity initiatives from the Service Line Manager (Education) and Deputy Director of Student Services. Three initiatives were highlighted: Blackboard Ally; Captioning of Lecture Recordings (Verbit); and Improving Study Efficiency.

4.2.2 The adoption of the Blackboard Ally product is being explored with the aim of making existing digital course content more accessible whilst identifying existing content that fails accessibility standards. Blackboard Ally is a Blackboard Extension that assists in making digital course content more accessible by generating alternative formats for existing Office 365, PDF and HTML file content including audio, electronic braille and ePub versions. It provides Institutional course reports that identify the level of accessibility compliance.

4.2.3 The Committee agreed that this was arguably an appropriate time to review existing digital content in Blackboard following the rollout of redesigned undergraduate programmes and the current curriculum review of postgraduate taught programmes. It was highlighted that parity of experience and improved accessibility would benefit all students. It was acknowledged that any review of existing Blackboard content would be resource intensive for academic colleagues, but that ICT and Learning Technologists might support any review process.

4.2.4 Following an extensive Market Assessment ICT have identified an automated captioning service (Verbit) for Panopto lecture recordings. Verbit is currently being piloted at the College and offers an automated audio to text transcription and captioning service that incorporates adaptive, AI driven self-learning algorithms that deliver 90%+ accuracy. Benefits include parity of student experience, support for students where English is not their first language and the ability to identify curriculum topics within lectures through a search function.

4.2.5 The cost associated with the technology was discussed and estimated to be $1 per min of lecture time, equating to 150,000 lecture mins per month, and therefore approximately $1m per academic year to provide text transcriptions for all lectures.

It was noted that it is a Coursera requirement for lectures to be scripted. However, as Panopto is not compulsory at the College, the implementation of Verbit could not currently be rolled out for all lectures. As a result, there are policy as well as monetary considerations.

There are other existing technologies that would allow the College to meet current equality, diversity and inclusivity legislation. Although many are more cost effective than Verbit, the functionality can be reduced and automated audio to text transcription accuracy lower.

4.2.6 The promotion of existing inclusive technology that staff and students can exploit to improve their study efficiency was discussed. The presenters advocated a series of training courses and initiatives which would promote the use of existing inclusive technology to improve student study efficiency. It was noted that some inclusive tools are embedded into Office 365 but these do not effectively signposted.

The EDU are not directly involved in this project but have been delivering workshops on how to make teaching more accessible. As a result, any series of training courses would need to be sustainable and complimentary to existing professional skills courses.

4.2.7 The Committee agreed the following areas for further exploration:

Blackboard Ally
- Consider the delivery of show and tell sessions across College with a message that Blackboard Ally is not just about changing legacy content; it is about planning for future accessibility.

Auto captioning (Verbit)
- Consider how the College might widen the pilot to other Departments with a view to making a 2020/21 planning round submission to adopt the service.

Improving Study Efficiency
- Consider how the College could deliver a sustainable and enduring programme and how academic colleagues can embed existing technologies into their own teaching.

4.2.8 Overall, the Committee agreed that further consideration would need to be given as to how best to collectively support the three related projects. A carefully developed business case would need to be produced, where required. Further discussion will take place at a future LTC meeting.

ACTION: Secretary

5 **Recommendations from the Learning and Teaching Strategy Review – planning and prioritisation** LTC.2019.07

5.1 The Committee received an update from the Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office. It was reported that the 'Recommendations from the Learning and Teaching Strategy Review – planning and prioritisation' document was presented to Provost's Board on 31 October 2019, where the positive actions that were being taken were welcomed. Provost's Board agreed that College investment was proportionate to the output and that funding to support the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy should continue.

5.2 Although there were 31 review recommendations to be taken forward, it was clarified that many of these were minor enhancements and that some recommendations are already being implemented. It was agreed that almost all recommendations could be accommodated in the present budget.

5.3 The Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering, suggested that it would be appropriate, where possible, to link priorities from the Learning and Teaching Strategy Review to the College's academic strategy.

5.4 The Chair suggested that, as a priority, the actions relating to promoting inclusivity should be progressed. However, these should not be developed in isolation and a holistic approach should be adopted. Actions with a lower priority rating should continue to be considered but not progressed in the short term.

5.5 The Committee agreed that the prioritised actions should be developed further, including the inclusion of timelines and consideration of whether working groups need to be formed.

In addition, the principles behind any KPIs, what is intended to be measured and how KPIs could be embedded, where relevant, in existing internal quality assurance processes should be agreed and presented at a future LTC.

<div align="right">**ACTION: Head of Strategic Projects**</div>

5.6 The Committee discussed a number of recommendations including 'Have a clear career path for Teaching Fellows' (22). It was agreed that the College needs to clearly define a career path for Teaching Fellows in order to keep outstanding talent. The group debated whether this could be addressed with a communications drive to increase awareness of existing possibilities. However, on reflection, the Committee felt this was more than a communications issue and that a change in culture was required. It was felt that the College Consuls should be consulted in order to devise a strategy to achieve fundamental change. The Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering, agreed to distribute papers and share data with the Committee on current educational research, in order to inform future discussions.

<div align="right">**ACTION: Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering**</div>

6 Postgraduate Taught Curriculum Review

6.1 The Committee received a paper on the planning for Postgraduate Taught Curriculum Review and lessons learned from the Undergraduate Curriculum Review, presented by the Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy).   LTC.2019.08

6.2 During Autumn 2017 discussions it became clear that most Departments wished to review PGT curricula for 2021/22 entry, to align with the third year of their new UG curricula (coinciding with the offer of shared Level 7 modules as electives in MSci/MEng programmes). However, most PGT programmes within the Faculty of Medicine plus CEP completed the review of their PGT Programmes in March 2019.

6.3 The Committee acknowledged the broader spread of Departmental timescales for the review of PGT curricula and lessons learnt from the Curriculum Review of UG programmes. Following discussion, the Committee endorsed the following approaches:

*Note: **Bold text** indicates additional information to that presented in the original paper.*

Timeline
- In line with the original discussions, and to ensure a smooth transition for shared Level 7 modules (and in some cases, Level 6 modules), all postgraduate taught programmes should have completed their Curriculum Reviews in time for their 2021/22 cohorts. This means that, at the latest, revised programmes should have passed through Programmes Committee before the end of March 2021. Each Department will form a view of the most practical timeframe for the review of their PGT curricula. There is a significant advantage for programmes to have been approved earlier in the cycle, in time for them to advertise the revised programme in the course guides for the start of the recruitment cycle in Autumn. For example, this means that, for 2021 entry, they should have been approved by the end of July 2020. Departments, for which student recruitment is a priority, should be encouraged and supported in making a Curriculum Review submission in time for July prospectus deadline. Support in writing effective marketing material may also be required from Student Recruitment and Marketing.

- **Faculties will be asked to produce a curriculum development map to inform planning and resource allocation, including QA and EDU input.**

Lessons Learnt
- Support from colleagues for the review of ideas and preparation of paperwork is to be retained during PGT Curriculum Review. Following Departmental suggestions, the Reference Panel mechanism will be reviewed by the Education Office with greater emphasis on peer-support and matching Departments with disciplinary overlap to work together, while retaining input from Quality Assurance and Educational Development expertise.

- The Education Office will explore the potential for more localised workshops that are bespoke to a Department's, or groups of Departments', needs.

- More consistent and well-aligned support from and between the Quality Assurance Team and the Educational Development Unit will be required to support PGT Curriculum Review.

- High-quality worked examples of Programme and Module level documentation will be made available to Departments for reference. Various examples will be drawn from a range of disciplines and programme structures.

- Continued coordination between Departments, Faculties, central College committees, and support services during PGT will be fostered and encouraged.

- Faculty Education Committees will be asked to include FEC level feedback in the submission of a programme to Programme's Committee as part of Curriculum Review. This should be in the form of FEC minutes.

- The module descriptor template will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance team with a mind to making it more accessible to completer and reviewer and considered for approval by Programmes Committee.

Resources and Support
- Departments will be asked and supported to identify a practical timeline for PGT Curriculum Review. These timelines will then be used to plan appropriately timed and resourced support for the review of PGT programmes and submission of Curriculum Review paperwork.

- Support for undertaking Curriculum Review and for the review of paperwork prior to submission to committee will remain crucial. Support mechanisms will be restructured by the Education Office in light of Department feedback and will focus on fostering peer support. **Programmes Committee members will not be asked to chair panels but continued face to face interaction across teams will remain.**

- Support from central teams for PGT Curriculum Review will be required (in particular support from Quality Assurance Team and Educational Development Unit colleagues). Areas of support will be adapted to suit postgraduate taught programmes - drawing from Departmental feedback and priorities raised in the most recent Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

- Student engagement will be as important for PGT Curriculum Review, as it was for UG. The Framework for Student Engagement has been updated to reflect Curriculum Review within a PGT environment.

- Those Departments who have already completed Curriculum Review of PGT programme will form the basis of an important community for the sharing of good practice and experience.

Further LTC recommendations:
- **There will be increased flexibility in Collaborative programme design, but the College should establish hard lines, where appropriate**

- **Departments should propose where a programme is either an MSc, MA or MRes, based on a clear rationale. It is acknowledged that the distinction is often based on value, currency and marketing considerations**

- **At least one exit award is expected (e.g. a PG Cert or PG Dip) and it is acknowledged that this will be determined by the structure of the programme**

6.4 It was agreed that the approaches set out above are communicated to Senate for noting.

7   Apprenticeships

7.1   Update on the College's involvement in apprenticeships

7.1.1   The Director of Strategic Planning provided an update via email. The College,   **7.1.1**
along with all other providers, has been invited to re-apply for the Register of
Approved Training Providers. Since the Business School now has plans to
offer a programme at Level 7, the application is underway.

8   Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan

8.1   The Committee noted the implementation plan. There was nothing further to   LTC.2019.09
report from the Head of Strategic Projects.

9   Educational Research

9.1   There was nothing further to report from the Director for CHERS.

10   I-Explore Module Innovation Group   LTC.2019.10

10.1   The Committee noted the I-Explore Module Innovation Group (IMIG) Report
September – October 2019. An update on how timetabling arrangements are
progressing will be provided at a future meeting by the Assistant Provost
(Learning & Teaching).

11   QAEC

The Committee was reminded the QAEC minutes were available at
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate-
subcommittees/quality-assurance-enhancement-committee/

12   Senate

The Committee was reminded the Senate minutes were available at
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate/

13   Any Other Business

13.1   The Future of University Admissions
The Director of Strategic Planning provided an update via email. The
Government has launched a consultation concerning the future of university
admissions. Strategic Planning is leading on the response and has arranged
meetings with staff in relevant Faculties.

14   Meeting dates for 2019/20

14.1   The Committee noted the following meeting dates, all scheduled from 15.00-
17.00:
- Thursday 7 November 2019
- Thursday 12 December 2019
- Thursday 23 January 2020
- Thursday 5 March 2020
- Thursday 2 April 2020
- Thursday 14 May 2020
- Thursday 4 June 2020
- Thursday 30 July 2020