

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on
Thursday 22 March 2018

Present

Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School
Mr Martin Lupton – QAEC representative
Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Dr Edgar Meyer – Business School representative
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services
Ms Kirstie Ward – Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards) - Secretary

In attendance

Ms Komal Patel - Strategic Planning Officer (for item 7)
Professor Paul French – Professor of Physics and Vice Dean (Research) – FoNS (for item 5)
Dr Suzanne Rolfe – Funding Strategy Manager (for item 5)

Apologies

Mr Nick Burstow – ICU Deputy President (Education)
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. Minutes – Paper LTC.2017.40

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2018.

2.2 Outstanding Committee actions were noted as follows:

2.2.1 Minute 5.6 refers: An update from Dr Martin Edwards would be presented in the summer term.

2.2.2 Minute 8.1.4 refers: It had been subsequently agreed that exemplars were not required for the workshop, which had taken place the previous day.

2.2.3 Minute 8.2.2 refers: Action completed

2.2.4 Minutes 8.2.3 refers: Action completed

3. Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4. UCU Strike Action (verbal update)

4.1 The committee were informed that contingency planning in respect of the further planned strike action was being put in place. This included the mapping of potential scenarios against mitigating actions. This information would be distributed to the wider College community in due course.

4.2 It was discussed by the committee that the strike action had highlighted business critical areas which were potentially vulnerable as they were currently 'single points of failure'.

5. Review of RCUK PhD funding process – Paper LTC.2017.41

5.1 The committee welcomed Professor Paul French and Dr Suzanne Rolfe to the meeting to discuss the findings of the recent review of the processes and procedures within the College to manage the funding of students by RCUK. The committee noted that whilst the review had concentrated on RCUK funded students, any recommendations should be applied across the full PhD provision of the College.

5.2 Professor French provide the background for the review, which had been put in place in order to understand and re-assign the tasks and responsibilities of recently retired financial controller, Malcom Aldridge. The review had found that there was significant fragmentation of the management and understanding of the funding processes for RCUK funded students. The review had also found as part of the wide scoping exercise that had been undertaken with staff and students that there was a disparity in the experience of PhD students which needed to be addressed.

5.3 The review paper highlighted that there were concerning areas in which there were 'single points of failure', members of staff in which all knowledge of a particular aspect of provision resides. The current student systems do not hold sufficient data, or in an accessible way where it was needed. These issues hampered the production of statutory returns and led to manual, time-consuming processes in order to meet the College's obligations.

5.4 The committee considered the recommendations in the paper, which has also been reviewed by VPAGR, and is to be presented to the Provost Board for final agreement. The endorsement of each recommendation was made as follows:

5.4.1 *Consolidation of information and processes associated with RCUK PhD funding: The committee agreed the recommendation, additionally agreeing that this should be extended to all PhD studentships.*

5.4.2 *Nicks Jennings to replace Malcom Aldridge as PI of EPSRC DTP and iCASE: Agreed*

5.4.3 *Je-S training documents be made available by the Research Officer to other staff members as needed: Agreed*

5.4.4 *Management of the disability student allowance to be transferred from Malcom Aldridge to the Central Finance Office: The committee considered that the more appropriate area to be responsible for this provision would be the Disability Advisory Service, as they manage this process*

for current taught programme students. Professor French agreed to take this forward with Disability Advisory Service.

Action: Professor Paul French

5.4.5 *Transfer of input for RCUK audit from Malcom Aldridge to the Central Finance Office: Agreed*

5.4.6 *Co-ordination and submission of the EPSRC DTP FES to be taken over by the Central Finance Office from Malcom Aldridge: Agreed*

5.4.7 *Standard welcome letter template that includes the required fields for the Je-S student record to be used by all departments, copies to be stored centrally for reference purpose as the repository for this information: Agreed. The Committee agreed that a standard format welcome letter was appropriate however agreed that a central repository should only be relied in the short term for the collection of relevant PhD studentship data. An alternative solution should be in place from October 2019.*

5.4.8 The committee agreed that the welcome and induction of PhD students should reflect the work currently being undertaken to improve the experience of students in other provision, and that this would be taken forward between Professor Rolfe and David Ashton, Academic Registrar.

Action: David Ashton, Professor Paul French

5.4.9 *Required fields in the new student record system (SRS) in initial rollout: Agreed*

5.4.10 The committee discussed the most appropriate method to maintain the additional fields that would not be available as part of the initial rollout of the SRS. It was agreed that as individual departments have developed tools to track this information, a review of current provision and then implementation of College wide version would be undertaken.

Action: Professor Paul French

5.4.11 *Research Office Funding Strategy Team to generate and maintain a spreadsheet of RCUK-funded doctoral training partnerships and centres: The committee agreed the recommendation, additionally agreeing that this should be extended to all PhD studentships*

5.4.12 *Continuation of the current arrangements for the completion of the Je-S student record within one month of commencement of studies: Agreed.*

5.4.13 *The end date for PhD students should reflect the approval of the corrected PhD thesis, rather than the funding end date: Agreed. The committee agreed that the end date for registration should be set for the submission date, rather than the funding end date, to be extended for resubmission where required.*

5.5 The committee discussed the changes to student access to services such as email following completion of their studies. It was agreed in principle that it would be beneficial for students to retain their 'student' e-mail account.

5.6 The committee reflected on the outcome of the student consultation that had formed part of the scoping exercise. It was noted that whilst the feedback received was mainly positive, it had highlighted that additional action was required to provide pastoral care beyond the academic supervisory support. As further review of the role of the supervisor or mentor was to be completed at the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee it was agreed that this should be brought back to

the Learning and Teaching committee in the Summer term for discussion and to agree any further actions.

Action: Secretary

6. Vision for learning and teaching space (verbal update)

- 6.1 The Chair provided an update on the current work in developing innovative learning and teaching space to support the changes in pedagogy.
- 6.2 It was reported that there had been constructive meetings with high level representation across the College to develop and support an institutional strategic plan. This would prioritise those areas that fall below current acceptable standards for urgent re-development, and that there would be a new College-level committee that would be responsible for taking forward the vision for (learning and teaching) space.
- 6.3 It was noted that improvements had been made to the student experience as part of the space sharing initiative, particularly around the timetabling of examinations. The committee expressed concern that following the resignation of John Crook, Head of Timetabling, that the project would lose momentum. The committee were informed that arrangements to appoint a replacement for this post were in train and that contingency planning to cover any period in which the post was unfilled was in development.

7. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) subject pilot (verbal update)

- 7.1 The committee received a verbal update on the TEF subject level pilot exercise, in which the College was participating.
- 7.2 The pilot considered 2 models. In one model, known as “bottom up”, each subject area within the participating organisation were provided with their metrics. These subject areas would then be grouped, and a submission on these metrics was produced at the group level. A short over-arching statement from the intuition would also be provided as part of the submission.
- 7.3 The College were required to complete the pilot as part of the second model. In this “by exception” model the metrics for each subject area were provided alongside that of the College. Those areas that fell above or below (i.e. gold or bronze) were required to complete a short submission paper, as well as two subject areas for which the metrics did not necessarily correlate correctly.
- 7.4 In completing the subject area submissions, the departments were supported by Business Planning. The submissions were also reviewed by the Imperial College Union, with the final versions agreed by Professor Buitendijk prior to the recently made submission to HEFCE.
- 7.5 It was noted that the results of the review were expected to be received in early summer (May/June). The College would only receive its rankings and not that of other pilot organisations. These results are confidential and embargoed from being disseminated outside of the College.
- 7.6 Ms Patel informed the committee that following an analysis of the results for each model, it was likely that year 2 of the project would likely be a further trial of a refined version of one of the models. It was not yet known if the College would be requested to be involved for this stage of the pilot. The final version was likely to be implemented from September 2019.

7.7 The committee offered its thanks to the Business Planning team for their professionalism and support during this process.

7.8 It was discussed that there was potential for subject level results be used in a negative way, rather than to positively enhance provision. It was likely to have an impact on public perception and potential applicants to Higher Education institutions. It was important for the sector to be influential in the design and implementation of Higher Education policy.

8. European hub of research-intensive universities actively involved in evidence-based education innovation (verbal update)

8.1 The Chair provided a verbal update to the committee with regards to the development and aims of the group. A primary consideration was the development of measures to measure the impact and development of student wellbeing alongside the academic learning gain. Research projects will be developed by the group, which will access external funding where appropriate.

8.2 The Chair also informed the committee of the provisional information of the 'University of Europe' under current development within the European Council. Notes of the group discussion would be circulated to the group.

Action: Chair

9. Curriculum review

9.1 Update of curriculum review process – Paper LTC.2017.42

9.1.1 The committee received an update of the curriculum review process. A workshop had been held the previous day in which there was discussion regarding Consumer Rights requirements, modularisation and quality assurance. Whilst there had been very positive interactions as part of the workshop, it had been clear that there remained concerns amongst some members of the community regarding modularisation. It was agreed that the reasons for the decision to move to a modular structure be needed to be re-iterated.

9.1.2 The committee discussed the need to provide practical examples within a departmental or field of specialism context, to demonstrate how and why this process is beneficial and what would be the consequences if it were not completed. It was noted that there were some areas of the College that had expressed that there was too much bureaucracy, but conversely others that felt that there had been insufficient guidance or direction.

9.1.3 A draft 'roadmap' had been provided as part of the paper (LTC.2017.42). The committee were requested to provide feedback as soon practically possible to Emma Caseley, for it to be then distributed to staff involved in the curriculum review.

Action: All committee members

9.2 Student engagement in the curriculum review process – Paper LTC.2017.43

9.2.1 The committee noted the paper provided by Nicholas Burstow, Deputy President (Education), Imperial College Union. The paper highlighted the areas in which students had reported that they had been actively engaged in the curriculum review process to date.

9.2.2 The paper also highlighted 3 areas in which the student reps had reported that there had been limited or unsatisfactory engagement. It was agreed that action needed to be taken to ensure that

all areas fully engaged with students in a meaningful way as part of the curriculum review process, utilising the model provided in the paper.

- 9.2.3 The committee requested an update with regards to student engagement with the curriculum review at the June 2018 meeting.

Action: Secretary

10. Risk Log – Paper LTC.2017.44

- 10.1 The committee noted that the risk log had been updated so that the item '*revised single set of regulations are not agreed in time to inform curriculum design*' had changed from 'amber' to 'red'. The committee were informed that an extraordinary meeting of QAEC was to be held the following day to review the current proposals.

11. Reward, Retention and Recognition Framework for teaching staff – Paper LTC.2017.45

- 11.1 The committee noted the paper making recommendations with regards to the reward, retention and recognition of teaching staff.

12. Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan – Paper LTC.2017.46

- 12.1 The committee noted the update to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan.

13. Educational Research

- 13.1 Professor Martyn Kingsbury was not available so this item was deferred to the next meeting.

Action: Secretary

14. Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG)

- 14.1 The committee noted that this paper would be circulated prior to the next meeting

Action: Secretary

15. Dates of next meetings 2017-18

Wednesday 16th May 2018, 10:00-12:00, Ballroom, 58, Prince's Gate