

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Confirmed minutes from the meeting held on
Thursday 29th June 2017

Present

Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office
Professor Peter Cheung – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School
Dr Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Mr Luke McCrone – ICU Deputy President (Education)
Ms Diane Morgan – Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School
Professor Alan Spivey – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences

In attendance

Ms Komal Patel – Strategic Planning Officer (for items 6 and 8)
Mr Andrew Peat – Strategic Planning Officer (for items 6 and 8)
Sophie White - Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement).

Apologies

Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Professor Des Johnston – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Mr Martin Lupton – QAEC representative
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Learning and Teaching Committee Terms of Reference and Membership for 2016-17 LTC.2016.01

The Committee approved the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) terms of reference (ToR) and membership for 2016-17, noting that the LTC was intended to be decision making body would make high level strategic decisions. QAEC's role would continue with a focus on quality assurance and operational matters.

- 2.1** It was noted that the following ToR: *“To provide oversight of “task and Finish groups and ensure timely delivery of proposals to support the APL work stream”* may need to be removed for 2017-18. It was further noted that it was likely the Committee's Terms of Reference would develop over time.

3. Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan LTC.2016.02

The Committee considered the L&T Strategy Implementation Plan and noted that the broad timelines had been built on assumptions and the actual time periods needed would become clearer as matters progressed. However, the bulk of the work should be completed over two academic years.

4. Learning and Teaching Strategy Investment Plan LTC.2016.03
The Committee considered the L&T Strategy investment plan.

4.1 It was noted that the final allocation of budget was lower than requested (from £5M to £3.5M for the first year and from £6.5M to £5M for the second year). The final figures had been based on the fact that the L&T Strategy was coming into effect later than previously thought and, furthermore, the College had indicated more funds may be available if required. The document provided to the LTC would be updated to reflect the actual amount received and would be kept under review by the Education Office.

4.2 Professor Buitendijk explained that she was now pushing for departments to start hiring their extra staff so that the implementation of the L&T Strategy could start in earnest. The Education Office would be tasked with keeping track of how the budget was being allocated and spent and measures would be put in place to ensure that funds were only spent on L&T Strategy activities. Departments would be required to account for their spending. Professor Buitendijk also explained that funds may be withdrawn from departments if appropriate progress was not being made.

4.3 It was clarified that funds could be used to promote internal staff or recruit new academic staff and that funds could also be used to back fill posts whilst existing staff were engaged on L&T Strategy activities, however, the intention was that funds should not be spent on administrative positions. It was further noted that work to better define learning and teaching career paths would commence shortly (see item 5.2).

5. Implementation Priorities

5.1 Curriculum Review LTC.2016.04
The Committee considered the details of the curriculum review.

5.1.1 It was noted that Professor Buitendijk had been meeting with Heads of Departments to set out the ground work for the proposed curriculum review.

5.1.2 Ms Caseley explained that the Education Office were in the process of designing a series of questions to help departments decide where they are currently positioned and where they intend to be in two years' time. The questions would be circulated to departments shortly. Departments would then be asked to put forward a brief plan on how they will move forward with their review.

5.1.3 It was noted that Professor Buitendijk would be meeting with Dr Roberto Trotta shortly to discuss how Horizons provision would be utilised as an integral part of the L&T Strategy.

5.1.4 It was confirmed that the bulk of the curriculum review work should be completed over the next two academic years. It was noted that some departments were much further ahead than others and that therefore timescales may vary from department to department. It was noted that funding and resource had been identified for the next four academic years and that, for the latter period, this would be focused on evaluation and reflection activities.

5.1.5 Dr Kingsbury explained that the EDU would have a two layer approach to curriculum review. Firstly, the EDU would help departments to decide where they were and where they wanted to get to and secondly, the EDU would empower staff to make changes. Part of this latter activity would be via the creation of a network of local experts offering support and guidance. The EDU would be refocusing and repurposing existing materials and workshops to create a tool kit for departments.

5.2 Review of Learning and Teaching Career Paths

The Committee received a tabled paper and an update from the Vice Provost (Education).

5.2.1 Professor Buitendijk tabled a paper she would be presenting to the next Provost's Board. The paper contained a proposal to set up a small working group to develop a new framework for the reward, retention and recognition of teaching staff. The framework would ensure that teaching staff were able to access promotion on the basis of their contributions to the College's educational mission through their achievements in educational leadership and educational research.

5.2.2 The LTC were supportive of the proposal and noted that it was intended that professorships in educational research and professorships in practice in education would be created. The aim was for teaching to be considered as important as research and acknowledged and rewarded accordingly.

5.2.3 It was noted that the College currently uses the Hay profiling methodology for job evaluation and it was felt that whilst this worked well for administrative posts, it was less useful for academic posts. It was agreed that a pragmatic approach would be to initially investigate how Hay methodology this could be put to better use but that if it was found to be less than ideal to investigate alternative options.

5.2.4 The LTC recognised that a culture change would be needed to ensure teaching and educational research were as valued as highly as the College's traditional

research activities. It was agreed that the College should identify high impact educational journals and encourage the publication by College staff of educational research. It was further the agreed that the College should lobby the new Office of Students in order to raise the profile of and importance placed on Higher Education research.

5.3 Review of Lecturer and Module Evaluations

LTC.2016.05

The LTC considered a proposal for the review of the existing mechanisms for lecturer/module evaluations.

5.3.1 The Group noted that the Surveys Working Group established in 2013 had rationalised the number of College-wide surveys but that, for various reasons, their project to migrate the SOLE lecturer/module evaluations from Student Viewpoint to Qualtrics had not progressed and was unlikely to happen in the short to medium term.

5.3.2 It was further noted that research into gender or ethnic bias in SOLE lecturer/module evaluations was underway. The findings would help inform future discussions on the continued use of quantitative assessment.

5.3.3 The LTC agreed that a new approach to lecturer/module evaluation would be needed to take forward the actions set out in the L&T Strategy. New methods which should be considered include introducing mid module evaluations and dialogic assessment. The Committee agreed to the establishment of a new Surveys Working Party (which would replace the one established in 2013). The new group would review the existing mechanisms for lecturer and module evaluations (SOLE and MODES). LTC members were invited to nominate representatives from their Faculties to join the new group.

ACTION: Faculty Members

6. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

Ms Komal Patel gave an update on the TEF: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/tefoutcomes/#/>.

6.1 The LTC were happy with the College's outcome but acknowledged the process and methodology used to assess teaching excellence at present were flawed. It was felt that the College's statement, with an emphasis on addressing the below benchmark score for assessment and feedback, was instrumental in the achievement of the Gold rating. It was noted that other institutions with similar scores for assessment and feedback had not achieved a Gold rating because they had not demonstrated in their statements a clear commitment to addressing the issue. The College's emphasis on students as partners, a key component of the L&T Strategy, was also a factor in the Gold rating.

6.2 It was noted that the rating lasted for three years and it was acknowledged that the College must not be complacent and should continue to focus on enhancement activities.

6.3 Ms Patel reported that the Strategic Planning Division would be considering the outcomes of other HEIs to establish what could be learned for future iterations of the TEF. It was noted that there would also be an independent review of the TEF and that HEFCE's plan to differentiate tuition fees according to TEF rating was contingent on the review's findings.

6.4 It was further noted that HEFCE were looking for volunteers for subject level TEF (the next iteration of the process, currently planned for 2 years hence)

7. Update from the Academic Standards Framework (ASF) Task and Finish Groups LTC.2016.06

The LTC noted an update from the ASF Task and Finish Groups.

7.1 It was noted that Admissions and Registration Task and Finish Group had now completed its work and the Complaints and Appeals group were similarly close to finishing.

7.2 It was noted that the Assessment Task and Finish Group were not so well advanced but would be considering a first draft of the assessment regulations based on the outcomes of their earlier discussions at their final meeting scheduled for 4th July 2017.

Post Meeting Note

The Assessment Task and Finish Group scheduled for 4th July 2017 was cancelled.

8. Education Evaluation

Mr Andrew Peat gave an update on the latest Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data.

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name,114470,en.html>

8.1 It was explained that LEO is a set of official experimental statistics on employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates by degree subject studied and university attended. It was noted that this was the first time the data had been released and that tax records for undergraduates (for the tax year 2014-5) formed part of the data. The data only covered undergraduate students who were UK domiciled before the start of their course and who were now working in the UK.

8.2 It was noted that, for annual earnings, Imperial had come top in three categories:

- Computing Science
- Physical Sciences
- Agriculture (due to historic data for undergraduate students who had graduated from the now closed programmes at Wye campus)

The College had also come second in the country in Maths. The College was 26/31 for Medicine but the annual earnings for that subject were very tightly packed so the ranking could not be considered significant.

8.3 Mr Peat reported that the Strategic Planning Division were now interrogating the data to further understand the impact on the College. For example, they were trying to understand why Imperial does not do well on sustained employment. It was acknowledged that LEO was a blunt instrument, for example it does not distinguish between graduate and non-graduate jobs and some data was suppressed by HEFCE, e.g. unemployment data. It was also noted there was a concern that the data would be used in university rankings.

8.4 It was further noted that the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) survey would be reviewed and the DHLE measurement was likely to move to capturing employment statistics and earnings at 15 months after graduation from the current 6 months after graduation.

9. Educational Research

The Committee noted a verbal update from the Director of Educational Development.

9.1 It was reported the EDU will receive two fully funded educational research studentships to help with the evaluation of the L&T Strategy. One studentship had been filled and the remaining studentship might be split into two part-time positions which would be suitable for existing EDU staff already working in the educational support roles.

9.2 Dr Kingsbury further reported that at the EDU's away day they would be discussing establishing a library of educational research methods. The aim would be to equip the staff who had an interest in educational research with the tools they would need to build on their local and specific projects to develop this into publishable wider reaching research.

9.3 The EDU would also refocus and re-launch the existing internal Educational Enquiry Network (EDEN). The refocused network would be a means for staff interested in educational research to connect and share experiences and findings. EDEN would hold regular meetings. This network would also connect and align with the existing, internal, Medical Education Research Unit (MERU).

9.4 The EDU would also be developing standard methods online course for staff to access. The EDU PhD students would also be able to attend the research methods module on the MEd in University Learning and Teaching but, for a number of reasons, it would not be possible to open this up more widely at the present time. It was also noted that the new cohort of MEd students would be encouraged to pick projects linked to the L&T Strategy.

9.5 It was also noted that the £0.5M Excellence Fund would continue to exist separately from the L&T Strategy budget and that research and projects could continue to be funded via this route.

9.6 The LTC agreed that an educational research strategy would be needed and that it would be important to measure the effectiveness of the strategy as well as the research output.

10. Online Learning and Innovation Group (OLIG)

LTC.2016.07

The Committee received the unconfirmed minutes for the OLIG meeting held on 19th June 2017.

10.1 It was noted that the College had now signed an agreement with Coursera but that the choice of platforms (either Edex or Coursera) for online provision would be left to each online course developer.

10.2 It was also noted that the Business School were progressing with their proposed new MSc in Business Analytics and would be using the Edex platform.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Dates for Meeting 2017-18

Tuesday 19th Sept 2017 at 10:00-12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 31st Oct 2017 at 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building

Tuesday 28th Nov 2017 at 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building

Thursday 19th Dec 2017 at 10:00-12:00, Drawing Room, 170 Queen's Gate

Tuesday 23rd Jan 2018, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building

Tuesday 20th Feb 2018, 10:00-12:00, Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building

Thursday 13th March 2018, 10:00-12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate (TBC)

Thursday 15th May 2018, 10:00-12:00, Ballroom, 58, Prince's Gate (TBC)

12. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS

There was no reserved business.