

## Teaching Committee Minutes – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 2pm, 2.11 Appleton Tower

**Present:** Alan Smaill (Convener), Björn Franke, Neil Heatley, Johanna Moore, Frank Keller, Martin Wright, Boris Grot, Don Sannella, Gill Bell, Ian Murray, Alexandra Welsh (Secretary).

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Charles Sutton, Mark Van Rossum, Helen Pain, Paul Anderson, Julian Bradfield, Mary Cryan, Jane Hillston, Perdita Stevens.
- 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** Time was taken to allow the committee to read through the minutes. It was noted that these should be available in advance of the meeting.

**3. Matters Arising:** Revising actions from last meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

**3.1** HP has completed the action from the last meeting to investigate admissions under the minimum entry requirement.

**3.2** Borderline decision policy needs to be published under Policies for students. This needs to be discussed with NH so that items can be consolidated. BF will change the policies with College with regards to the proforma.

**ACTION ONGOING:** BF and NH will chase this up and add to policies for Teaching Committee for publication.

**4. IRP Marking Proposal:** FK presented the IRP Marking proposal on Mark Van Rossum's behalf. It was acknowledged that the College is putting pressure on the School to reduce the amount of courses being currently offered. It was noted that there was a slight typo in the final marks notes on the first page. FK/MVR will amend the typo. It was agreed that this proposal should be implemented.

**5. Peer Observation:** It was agreed that tutors are able to observe lecturers and will be paid in line with University guidelines. This is open to new and existing staff and information is already available in the induction pack.

**6. Marking Deadlines:** It was discussed that the need to revise marking deadlines as well as the exam scrutiny process is still ongoing.

**7. Year Organiser Reports:** BF is concerned about the poor quality of feedback that have been provided to students historically. It was agreed that examples of good feedback should be published to help guide staff to provide constructive feedback and afford the student the opportunity to improve. FK feels that feedback should be broken down in to multiple headings to help with this. BF suggested Strengths, Weaknesses, and Improvements as headings to consider when providing feedback. It was discussed that new staff have little experience of what to expect.

**ACTION:** FK will make tweaks and send to ITO to upload to Teaching Committee.

A point from the previous minutes was discussed 'The UG4 report made a request that the school would support the 'Better Informatics' web site. Need to obtain more information regarding the website before committing to being involved'.

**ACTION:** NH will pick up the last action point again to contact M. Cryan and get more information.

NH explained that that he has spoken to T. Colles about making coursework release deadlines appear on Theon student portals a priority but EUCLID took over.

- 8. Moderation Practice for MSc Dissertations:** FK feels that the Moderation Practice to MSc Dissertation are currently not good so the proposal is an attempt to improve moderation whilst complying with University regulations and being compatible with the increase in MSc student numbers. It was noted that the increase has put pressure on finding enough staff to moderate MSc dissertations. BF indicated that the upper limit of projects is expected for the MSc cohort. It was proposed that the new criteria should be used this year to project sooner if a student is at risk of failing. BF stated that 85% of MSc students will attain the project stage. This will also more effective use of resources.

**ACTION:** FK will tweak the Moderation Practice for MSc Dissertations proposal. Change required to point 4 - moderate when marks are on different side of boundary (boundary = 50% or 70%), and where any agreed mark is below the boundary.

- 9. School Plan:** NH and MW discussed the key actions of the programme course review as part of the academic provision of the School portfolio. The student cohort is increasing and growth is inevitable but there is a need to review programme structures and improve efficiencies in our delivery. This will include teaching spaces. MW went through key points of the 'Learning, Teaching and Student Experience' (page 8 of the School Plan) and the actions points (page 10 of the School Plan). The first six action points have been done. MW is finalising a business case for point 7 this week. Point 8 requires a working group which would make recommendations to the Strategy Committee. Point 9 will be taken to Strategy Committee. Point 10 is ongoing with College. A Strategy Committee meeting held soon. The Strategy Committee will define what a course is and what optional courses are given teaching commitments. It was agreed that for point 11, there needs to be a control put in place.

MW advised that the Informatics School growth should not be taken for granted, especially regarding the uncertainty of the overseas and T4 visa student intake. If the overseas student numbers dropped the school would have to scale back. This could mean that if staff left they may not be replaced. It was discussed that with the increase in demand could be an opportunity to improve the quality.

BF noted that some students do the same courses but graduate with different degrees which has an impact on resources which is not sustainable. It was agreed that the curriculum needs to be revised regarding sustainability. BF acknowledged that the MSc cohort numbers are

daunting. School is looking at new ways to detect students who are admitted with a low entry level and consequently need additional academic support. It was proposed that the MSc programme be split into two – Advanced and Introductory programmes in order to benefit both the novice and advanced students.

It was discussed that a working group was needed for Curriculum review and distance learning review.

**ACTION:** BF will work on exploring this proposal of MSc split and groups.

NH added that course changes need to be done now. Any changes need to go through the Board of Studies. This applies to courses which are delivered to different cohorts.

**ACTION:** NH to support BF to chase up course changes.

**10. Extensions on extensions:** BF and NH briefly clarified the extensions process as some students are requesting extensions on extensions for course work. If a student has a valid reason for an extension, which meets the new Taught Assessment Regulations Academic Year 2016/17, then the student should be asked how long they are requesting the extension. 2x working days can be granted by ITO staff, 7x calendar days can be granted by Year Organiser and anything beyond that would require a Special Circumstances Form to be submitted. If the student requests an extension and then the class receives an extension, the student would either receive the class extension plus one working day or the specific extension, whichever is longest. It was discussed that extensions should not be given to student if there are ongoing issues, but that a Special Circumstances Form would be more appropriate response.

**11. Recruitment Committee Report:** HP submitted a Recruitment report to be tabled at the Teaching Committee which was read out. It has been reported that the MSc selection team has been looking at the MSc selection criteria and its need to be more selective regarding the student intake. Do not want to set students up to fail. It was agreed that a pilot scheme to charge a deposit fee for MSc students (2017/18 intake) should be tried. It was suggested that a £1,500.00 and conditional offer could be a way of being more selective but that the mechanisms still need to be sorted out. It was acknowledged that this could cause issues. It was discussed that the deposit figure is quite high and may look daunting to prospective students but College doesn't agree. BF noted that this would be about a 10% deposit and that competitors are doing the same. Some are even asking for half, upfront for international students. It was discussed that the different cut off dates are problematic during the selection process as some students could roll over in to the next academic year's selection if they haven't received an offer in the year they applied.

It was discussed that the extra effort would increase the University's ranking and would be better for the students.

**12. December Exam Pilot:** The exam pilot for Semester 1 has started. College has agreed the change and this should make a difference. This is a trial for now and will need to come back to

Teaching Committee. There should be no more than 3x exams in any 1 diet. BF advised that College is open to compromise. It was discussed that the staff feel under pressure to do more but more discussion is required if they need to do more.

- 13. Report from the Director of Teaching and Deputy Director of Teaching:** BF feels that the attendance to meetings is disappointing.

It was discussed that more advertising and better specifications of courses and programmes would help the School. The web structure would need to be looked at.

BF acknowledged the limited resources and student number scalability.

#### **14. AOCB**

##### **CDT Project Supervision**

BF advised that CDT Project supervision in MSc counted against MSc workload. As the workload is more PGR than PGT the supervisor workload need to be reassessed. BF thinks that this is disadvantaging the PGT students.

##### **Special Circumstances**

FK advised that Year Organisers are not in regulation with the University's policies and feels there needs to be a standardised SCC. IIRC clarified that the regulations exoert, AS, would not be expected to attend all the SCC meetings. It was felt it was not fair to add to Senior Tutor's workload and that a regulation expert needs to be consulted.

**ACTION:** All convenors to sort out SCC and keep on a Year by Year basis. It was agreed that CDT programme directors should be added before January 2017.

**Course Registration:** DS expressed his concerns regarding the course registration difficulties which occurred at the beginning of Semester 1 2016/17. BF acknowledged there were issues with courses registered using PATH. Given the difficulties the process would revert back to the Personal Tutors registering students in their relevant chosen courses during their initial PT meetings.

#### **15. Items to be discussed at next Teaching Committee Meeting – at 14.30hrs Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016 in the Informatics Forum, Room 2.33.**

- School / College / IO Responsibilities re. Student exchanges
- Exam Rubric
- Viewing the Guide for Examiners
- Reduced Length of 2016/2017 Semester 1