The twentieth meeting of the University of London International Academy Academic Committee (Confirmed)

Friday, 14 October 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:
Dr M Stiasny (Pro Vice-Chancellor, International, and Chief Executive, International Programmes; Chair, Academic Committee)
Dr S Anderson (Chair, Complaints Resolution Panel)
Mr S Askey (Director, Undergraduate Laws Programme, International Academy)
Dr K Baker (Chair, Inclusive Practice Panel)
Prof J Broadbent (Chair, Institutions Sub-committee)
Dr J Clark (Chair, Quality Assurance & Student Lifecycle Sub-Committee)
Mr N Deyes (Chair, Systems and Technologies Sub-committee)
Dr P Frantz (Chair, EMFSS Board of Examiners, LSE)
Mr J Ginman (Chair, Learning Teaching and Assessment Sub-committee)
Ms Rachel Knight (PG student member – Postgraduate Diploma in Law)
Prof F Macmillan (Dean, Undergraduate Laws Programme)
Ms Hannah McHugh (UG student member – LLB graduate)
Mr C O’Callaghan (Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive, International Academy)
Dr N Poole (Chair, CeDEP Board of Examiners, SOAS)
Prof C Rust (Emeritus Professor of Higher Education, Oxford Brookes University)
Dr S Wilson (Director, QSG, International Academy and Executive Secretary, Academic Committee)
Prof N Pachler (Pro-Director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation, Institute of Education)
Dr J Stockdale (Chair, Assessment Offences Committee)
Prof W Morrison (Professor of Law, Queen Mary University of London)
Prof Della Freeth (Pro-Director (Learning & Teaching), LSHTM)
Mr M Kerrison (Director, Educational Innovation and Development, International Academy)
Prof R Lingwood (Vice-Principal, Student Experience, Teaching & Learning, Queen Mary)
Ms P Roberts (Director of Student Recruitment & Enrolments, International Academy)

IN ATTENDANCE
Mr J Berry (Head of Student Affairs, International Academy, Secretary)
Ms A Asare (Programme Manager, International Academy, Assistant Secretary)
Mr Andrew Freud (Programme Manager, International Academy)
Mr Nic Charlton (Learning Technologist, International Academy)

APOLOGIES
Prof R Deem (Vice-Principal, Education, RHUL)
Dr P Frantz (Chair, EMFSS Board of Examiners, LSE)
Prof R Jackman, (Interim Academic Director of the International Programmes Office, LSE)
Prof Mike Cook (External member. Professor of Healthcare Leadership and Management, University of Bedfordshire)
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1880. The apologies for absence are recorded above.

1881. Professor Cook had submitted written comments which were read out by the Chair at appropriate points of discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

1882. The Chair welcomed new members, Mr Sam Brenton (Director of Digital Learning, Cass Business School, City, University of London), Prof Mike Cook (External member. Professor of Healthcare Leadership and Management, University of Bedfordshire), Ms Rachel Knight (PG student member – Postgraduate Diploma in Law) and Ms Hannah McHugh (UG student member – LLB graduate)

1883. The Chair thanked outgoing Committee members Prof Sue Jackson, Rev Peter Simpson, Mr Tobias Tretter, Prof Susan Nash and Professor Ian Dennis for their service to the Committee. The Chair will also write a letter of thanks to each former member to formally note the Committee’s thanks.

1884. The Chair formally acknowledged the sudden and sad passing of Dr Roger Mills, CDE Fellow, and long-time associate of the International Academy. Roger contributed to International Academy committees and panels, was chair of the first MOOC panel and a great supporter of the International Programmes. It was suggested that a fitting tribute would be to name a scholarship in his memory and this proposal is being taken forward. Academic Committee will receive an update in due course.

1885. The Chair informed the Committee that due to the University of London’s commitment to environmental sustainability and cutting carbon emissions from University buildings by 43% by 2020, the International Academy is taking active steps to reduce the amount of printing completed for committees. The default position for all International Academy committees from 2016-17 onwards is that only electronic papers will be provided to members. However, printed copies can be provided on request.

1886. The Chair noted that papers AC20/7b (QASL minutes) and AC20/9c (BSc Management and Digital Innovation programme approval) were circulated late by email.

1887. The Chair outlined the Academic Overview for 2015 – 16 and stated that during the 2015-16 academic year there were 112,138 examinations sat by 41,249 students, resulting in 6,979 awards:
   - 535 – Firsts or distinctions
   - 4,437 – Upper seconds, merits, lower seconds, credits
   - 2,007 – Thirds or passes
This represented a record number of Firsts and Upper Second degrees awarded for the academic year.

1888. The Chair gave an overview of the academic priorities for 2016 – 17, which included:
   - The consolidation of the MSc Professional Accountancy following the successful launch in January 2016. It was reported that there are currently approximately 1300 students enrolled across two MSc pathways and a Postgraduate Diploma.
   - The planned launch of the Global MBA with a projected launch date of April 2017.
   - Invitations for member institutions to submit expressions of Interest for new programmes, including the following areas where market research had indicated significant recruitment potential:
     - Postgraduate study in Global Supply Chain Management
     - Postgraduate study in Software Engineering Management
     - Postgraduate study in Telecommunications and Wireless Systems
Further programme developments which are under discussion and Academic Committee will receive updates on in due course.

The development of 7 MOOCs to be launched in 2016-17, as follows

- Pre-Global MBA preparation course ‘International Business Essentials’ launching in January 2017
- Introduction to Apache SPARK and AWS (Goldsmiths)
- Air Pollution (RHUL)
- Get Interactive: Practical teaching with technology (UoL/Bloomsbury Learning Environment)
- Global Diplomacy the United Nations in the World (SOAS)
- Global Energy and Climate Policy (SOAS)
- Information Security (RHUL)

1889. The Chair asked the Committee to join in welcoming City, University of London into the federation. The International Academy has engaged in a number of structured meetings with the senior teams within each School at City, University of London. This has provided an opportunity for UoLIA to showcase the work currently undertaken and to provide information on the ways in which we can work to support the shared aims and objectives of City, University of London and the International Academy.

TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP FOR THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES (AC 20/1)

Received

1890. Paper AC 20/1, the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for the Academic Committee which were approved by the Chair of the Board of the University of London International Academy, the updated committee structure for 2016-17 and the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for the Sub-Committees of the Academic Committee were received.

MINUTES

Received

1891. The minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Academic Committee held on 14 July 2016 (Paper AC 20/2 – AC19), was received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1892. The Chair referred to the action sheet and noted that many of the actions will be addressed during matters arising.

Agreed

1893. That the minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Academic Committee be approved.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

VLE Inclusive Practice Policy and Guidelines

Received

1894. Paper AC 20/3 ‘The VLE Inclusive Practice Policy and Guidelines’ was presented to the Academic Committee by the Learning Technologist, UoL International Academy.
Noted

1895. The VLE Inclusive Practice Policy and Guidelines was originally considered at the Inclusive Practice Panel.

1896. That the impetus for the creation of this document came as the result of accessibility considerations during the development of the MSc Professional Accountancy and was based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which are accepted as the standard for web content and inclusive practice. As all students are expected to engage with their VLEs, this work has relevance to all International Programmes VLEs.

1897. This project will be supported by a VLE accessibility benchmarking exercise managed through the Annual Programme Planning and Review (APPR) process.

1898. The document requires further development as it does not currently reference all kinds of disability and that there is a need to create a relevant list of recommendations that apply to existing VLE content and set expectations for future content. Further consideration should also be given to the audience for the document (learning technologists, programme directors, administrators, etc) and how to create clear guidance that meets their various needs and levels of understanding.

1899. A member commented that any VLE development work should be aware of a recent ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union on the use of hyperlinks to works protected by copyright. Details of the judgement are available at: http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2016-09/cp160092en.pdf

1900. It was agreed that for the policy to be actionable clear guidance documentation was necessary, in order to raise people’s literacy on accessibility matters. It was suggested that the proposal to bring the policy back to the next meeting of Academic Committee may not allow sufficient time for the necessary iterative experiential learning to take place and that the process should not be rushed.

1901. The Chair of the Inclusive Practice Panel noted the guiding principle that documents available to students should be accessible to all and reflected on how much progress had been made since formation of the Panel.

AGREED

1902. That Academic Committee endorses the development of a VLE inclusive practice policy and guidelines

1903. That a working group of members from the Inclusive Practice Panel, the Learning Technology team and the Quality, Standards and Governance Directorate draft the VLE policy and guidelines document

1904. That the resulting policy is considered by the IPP and subsequently recommended for approval at Academic Committee by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

Student Experience Survey

Received

1905. Paper AC 20/4 ‘Student Experience Survey 2015-16’ was presented to Academic Committee by the Head of Student Affairs: Quality, Standards and Governance.
Noted

1906. A late programme level response to the survey from the MSc/MBA International Management and MSc International Business programmes at Royal Holloway was tabled as a supplement to paper AC 20/4b.

1907. That the results and findings of the Student Experience Survey were considered by Academic Committee in May 2016 (minutes 1718 – 1732 refer) with consideration of responses at sub-committees in June and September 2016. LTAS considered the results and findings in June resulting in the following actions:
   - That the Learning Technology Team and Quality, Standards and Governance colleagues work to establish a baseline expectation regarding programme VLEs.
   - That a working group be established to review the clarity, consistency and structure of assessment criteria.

1908. QASL discussed the survey findings and published responses in September resulting in the following actions:
   - That further analysis be requested relating to the differences between the experience of independent learners and students at teaching institutions
   - That closing the feedback loop activity by programme teams is a valuable exercise that should be regularly evaluated and improved upon
   - That good practice was identified in received programme level responses, but that a number of programme responses were outstanding

1909. That 19 out of 27 responses to the survey had been received from programme teams at the time of the meeting. Due to the size of the programmes who had responded, 95.1% of the survey population had received feedback from their programme team.

1910. Members commented on the presentation of programme level responses, stating that there were some excellent and accessible examples and others that could be considered less effective. The Chair of LTAS confirmed that work was underway to identify good practice from the responses and provide guidance for future closing the feedback loop activity, but that programme teams should have flexibility to continue the conversation with their student body in the most appropriate way. The Chair of QASL reflected that it was evident from the sub-committee’s discussions that programmes are learning from each other’s approaches.

1911. A member noted that the satisfaction levels for each programme were over 50%, which was seen as commendable.

1912. The Committee were advised that following publication of the results in July, the International Academy will engage in a second phase of activity responding to the findings of the survey. This work will explore the key themes in greater depth and be completed in consultation with the Student Voice Group

1913. A member requested clarification on benchmarks for student experience in distance learning in the context of the Student Experience Survey. It was confirmed that although certain questions from the survey could be benchmarked against the NSS and PTES survey results, that no direct benchmarking against distance learning in the wider sector currently takes place. It was however noted that internal benchmarking of International Programmes provision does take place as part of the process.

1914. Another member noted the distance travelled by the International Academy over the last 4 years in terms of assessment, with the introduction of the Assessment Principles, continuous assessment and other innovations, which students are asking for, as evidenced by the survey results.
AGREED

1915. That members should send any further comments to the Head of Student Affairs.

Guidelines for Examinations

Received

1916. Paper AC 20/5 ‘Guidelines for Examinations 2016 – 17’ was received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1917. A member commented that the new Assessment Quality Panel, which has been established by the QASL, may wish to separate out what is compulsory practice and what are points of guidance in the document.

1918. The Committee was informed that the Guidelines for Examinations were considered at the annual Chairs of the Boards of Examiners meeting and that the Chairs indicated that they were broadly happy with the changes.

AGREED

1919. That the Guidelines for Examinations 2016-17 be approved

SUB - COMMITTEES AND PANELS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Institutions Sub-Committee

Received

1920. The confidential minutes of the Institutions Sub-Committee held on 18 May 2016 (AC 20/6 – ISC 31) were received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1921. The ISC 31 minutes included a number of recommendations and agreed actions. The Academic Committee was invited to note that the Board of the University of London International Academy, at its meeting held on 14 June 2016 approved the following:
  • Changes in programme recognition of two recognised centres
  • One candidate institution to offer the International Foundation Programme
  • Two candidacy applications to offer the EMFSS programme
  • One candidacy application to offer the LLB and EMFSS programmes subject to formal ratification that university status is granted to the institution.
  • One candidacy application to offer the MSc in Professional Accountancy
  • Two candidacy applications to offer the LLB
  • The recognition status of eight institutions
  • The removal of candidacy from two institutions
  • The inclusion of a recognition expiry date in the University’s agreement with the teaching institutions.

1922. The Board of the University of London International Academy, at its meeting on 14 June 2016, did not approve the following:
  • Changes in programme recognition of two recognised centres
  • One candidate institution to offer the LLB and EMFSS programmes.
AGREED

1923. That the minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the Institutions Sub-Committee held on 18 May 2016, be endorsed.

Quality Assurance and Student Lifecycle Sub-Committee

Received

1924. The minutes of the Quality Assurance and Student Lifecycle Sub-Committee meetings held on 24 June 2016 (AC 20/7a – QASL 35) and 23 September 2016 (AC 20/7b – QASL 36) were received by Academic Committee

Noted

1925. QASL considered reports and discussions on a number of topics including:
- BD Divinity and Theology
- Examination Centres
- Annual Programme Reports from:
  i. BA Classics 2014-15
  ii. BA History 2014-15
  iii. Combined Degree Scheme 2014-15
  iv. MA Applied Educational Leadership and Management 2014-15
  v. MBA International Management and MSc International Business 2015
  vi. MSc Livestock Health and Production and MSc Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health 2015
  vii. CeFIMS 2012-13 and 2013-14
  viii. PG Laws 2015
  ix. MSc in Organizational Psychology and MSc in Human Resource Management 2014-2015
  x. Postgraduate programmes in Development, Economics and Policy (CeDEP)
- CeFIMS Postgraduate programmes
- External and Intercollegiate Examiners Reports annual summary
- Student Experience Survey
- Policy on Examination Centres
- Assessment Quality Panel

1926. Some members of Academic Committee shared reservations concerning the Policy on Examination Centres and the view that there was a high risk in allowing independent teaching institutions to also operate as examination centres for International Programmes students. Examples of existing established arrangements that would be complicated by a change in policy were raised and the view given that where the standard of exam centre provision was otherwise lacking in a certain territory, it may be disadvantageous to students to discard the possibility of using a recognised teaching institution.

1927. It was suggested that a clear distinction should be made between the venue and the administration of the examinations.

AGREED

1928. That QASL would note the concerns raised at Academic Committee and give further consideration to the Policy on Examination Centres at their next meeting.

1929. That the remaining minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the 35th and 36th meetings of QASL be endorsed.
Systems and Technologies Sub-Committee

1930. The minutes of the Systems and Technologies Sub-Committee meetings, held on 28 June 2016 (STSC 30 – AC 20/8a) and 12 September 2016 (STSC31– AC 20/8b), were received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1931. The STSC considered reports and discussions on a number of topics including:
   - IT strategy, innovation and forward-thinking
   - Administrative Recheck Payments Business Case
   - Usage and Investment by UOLIA in SITS
   - Track C learning technology
   - Online Applications Re-engineering Project
   - Self-service Course Transfer Project
   - UOLIA ICT Risk Assessment
   - Identity and Access Management (IAM) Project
   - Student Retention Project
   - Digital Student Project
   - Business Case Schedule and other workflows

1932. A member questioned, with reference to the student retention project, what use the International Academy would make of information provided by learner analytics. It was confirmed that directing pastoral and academic support for at risk students is a developing work stream of the Student Experience team. It was added that although there is a challenge identifying at risk students because of the lack of traditional touch points, work is ongoing with programme teams.

AGREED

1933. That the minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the Systems and Technologies Sub-Committee meetings on 28 June 2016 and 12 September 2016 be endorsed.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Sub-Committee

Received

1934. Academic Committee received the following papers:
   - The minutes of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Sub-Committee meeting held on 23 June 2016 (AC20/9a – LTAS 24) and 15 September 2016 (AC20/9b – LTAS 25)
   - New LSE programme BSc (Hons) Management and Digital Innovation (AC 20/9-c)
   - New QMUL programme Global MBA (AC 20/9-d)

Noted

1935. LTAS 24 and 25 considered reports and discussions on a number of topics including:
   - MA Muslim Minorities in a Global Context
   - MA Global Diplomacy: South Asia pathway and MSc Finance (Banking)
   - Student Experience Survey
   - Redrafted Common Awards Framework
   - Update from Director of Education, Innovation and Development
   - BSc (Hons) Management and Digital Innovation (LSE)
   - Global MBA (QMUL)
AGREED

1936. That the following new programmes be recommended for approval:
   - BSc (Hons) Management and Digital Innovation
   - Global MBA

1937. That the minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Sub-Committee meetings held on 23 June 2016 and 15 September 2016 be endorsed.

SUBJECT COMMITTEE AND PANELS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Laws Programme Board

Noted

1938. The minutes of the Laws Programme Board meeting, to be held on 01 November 2016 (LPB 7), will be received at the next Academic Committee meeting in March 2017.

Inclusive Practice Panel

Received

1939. The minutes of the Inclusive Practice Panel held on 22 September 2016 (IPP 11) were received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1940. IPP considered reports and discussions on a number of topics including:
   - Thematic Review of Special Arrangements
   - Accessibility and the International Programmes offer
   - Examination Centres Survey

AGREED

1941. That the minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the Inclusive Practice Panel meeting held on 22 September 2016, be endorsed.

Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards Panel

1942. The minutes of the Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards Panel held on Wednesday 7 September 2016 (SSBA 1)’ was received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1943. SSBA considered reports and discussions on a number of topics including:
   - International Academy Student Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards Terms of Reference.
   - Sir John Cass Foundation Distance Learning Scholarship Programme
   - Ede & Ravenscroft Award
   - Convocation Trust

AGREED

1944. That the minutes, recommendations and agreed actions of the Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards Panel, be endorsed.
MATTERS ARISING

Teaching Institution Recognition Framework

Received

1945. Paper AC 20/12 ‘Update on timelines for a review of the University of London’s Teaching Institution Recognition Framework’ was received by Academic Committee.

Noted

1946. That a review of the University of London’s Teaching Institution Recognition Framework (TIRF) is ongoing, and that the review will include consideration of issues previously highlighted by the Academic Committee on the following matters:
- Minutes 1518-1527 (AC16 Oct 2015): Risk assessment framework for candidate institutions: It is expected that the process for considering candidate institutions will change, which in turn may impact on the risk assessment framework for candidate institutions, which was considered by the Academic Committee at its meeting in October 2015.
- Minutes 1696-1698 (AC17 Feb 2016): The University of London’s legal obligations to students outside English jurisdiction: Consideration will be given to the International Programmes’ position in circumstances where a recognised centre does not meet an indicator on the Teaching Institution Recognition Framework (TIRF), but is compliant with local law
- Minutes 1759 – 1763 (AC18 May 2016): Review to consider independent support for students: Work on issues arising from this review will be taken forward as part of the general review of the TIRF.

1947. That members will be kept informed any developments and recommendations arising from this review.

Reporting lines for International Foundation Programme Board

Noted

1948. That further to discussion concerning appropriate reporting lines (minutes 1707 – 1717 refer), the International Foundation Programme Board (IFPB) will report to Academic Committee. This is confirmed in its Terms of Reference document (AC 20/1). The situation will be reviewed in due course.

CeFiMS Postgraduate Diplomas

Noted

1949. That the Periodic Programme Review for the Centre for Financial and Management Studies (CeFiMS) suite of programmes at SOAS has been scheduled for 1-2 November 2016 and that QASL has required that the alignment of CeFiMS Postgraduate Diplomas be addressed through the process (minutes 1837 – 1838 refer).

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON GOVERNANCE

Board of the University of London International Academy and Collegiate Council

Noted

1950. Discussions from the Board of the University of London International Academy on 14 June 2016 highlighted:
- Approval of New Programmes
• Student numbers fluctuations against operating plans
• Bachelor of Divinity
• International Foundation Programme Governance
• Report from Institutional Sub-Committee
• Financial reports
• Tax issues
• Risk register
• Investment in new programmes
• Examiners payroll arrangements
• UG Laws Senior Strategic Governance

1951. Members asked questions regarding the payment of examiners, the payment of academics for other services and the migration of historic data to a new external body providing payroll services. The Director of Operations took a note of the concerns raised.

Collegiate Council

Noted

1952. Discussions from the Collegiate Council meetings on 1 July 2016 and 30 September 2016 highlighted:
• University title and University Bill
• Finances and Budget
• Estates Strategies
• Reports from UoLIA, SAS and University of London Institute in Paris
• Impact of Brexit and EU membership
• Delegated functions
• Degrees and Awards

International Academy Finance Committee

Noted

1953. Discussions from the International Academy Finance Committee's meetings held on 19 May 2016 included:
• Student numbers and metrics
• Programme Investment
• Use of the Contingency and Development Fund (CDF)

MATTERS FOR REPORT

Terms and Conditions (AC 20/13)

Received

1954. Paper AC 20/13 ‘An update on Student Terms and Conditions and details of revisions made to the 2016-17 document’ was received by Academic Committee.

Chairs of Boards of Examiners Meeting

Received

1955. Paper AC 20/14 ‘A summary of the notes from the Chairs of Boards of Examiners meeting held on 15 September 2016’ was received by Academic Committee.
Appeals and Complaints

Received

1956. Paper AC 20/15 ‘Amended reporting timeline for Stage 3 of the Procedure for University of London Student Complaints and Academic Appeals and receive, Stage 3 Annual Review Report and procedural updates to the Stage 3 Operational Handbook’ was received by Academic Committee.

CHAIR’S ACTIONS

Noted

1957. Members were asked to note that Chair’s Action was taken on the following matters:
   - 02.08.2016: to approve the Programme Closure Policy with revisions to explicitly acknowledge the rights of students as consumers in compliance with CMA guidance, as agreed at AC19.
   - 02.08.2016: to approve the Common Awards Framework paper including detail on how recognition of prior learning would be applied at Level 7, following revisions agreed at AC19.
   - 30.09.2016: to approve the annual UoLIA Quality Enhancement Review (2015-16) for consideration at the University of London Academic Quality Advisory Committee (AC 20/16)

1958. Members were asked to note that Chair’s Action has been taken to approve suspensions of regulations for:
   - EMFSS (LSE): 9
   - Petroleum Geoscience (RHUL): 1
   - Business Administration (RHUL): 1

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dates of forthcoming Academic Committee meetings

1959. Members were asked to note the dates of forthcoming meetings:
   - Friday, 03 March 2017, 10am
   - Friday, 19 May 2017, 10am

RESERVED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

[AC Minutes 1960-1976 are considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.]