UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on
Thursday 5 November 2009

Present:

Ms C Fyfe (Chair)
Mrs L Bailey Professor Cashmore
Mr D Cox Dr P Edirisingha (vice Professor Salmon)
Dr J Goodwin Mr P Jackson
Ms L Jones Dr M Rawlinson
Mr A Smith

In attendance: Mrs L Masterman (Secretary) and Miss K Pountney (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Salmon, Dr J Scott and Professor Thomas

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

09/M1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Group considered its terms of reference and membership. It noted that its terms of reference were the same as those for its predecessor the Student Experience Enhancement Committee but that the membership had been amended to reflect the College structure. The Group noted that it reported to the Academic Policy Committee under the new committee structure.

In discussing its membership, the Group agreed that it was important to ensure that there was appropriate representation for distance learning. It therefore agreed that the Chair would liaise with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for distance learning to agree the best way to achieve this.

09/M2 MINUTES OF THE FINAL MEETING OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Group considered the minutes of the Committee meeting of 18 June 2009.

The Group approved the minutes as a correct record.

Arising from Committee minute 09/M30, the Chair reported that the QAA Institutional Audit report had now been published on the QAA website and it would be considered by the Academic Policy Committee at its forthcoming meeting.
CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair reported that:

a) she would be holding a focus group later in the Autumn term for campus-based undergraduate and postgraduate students who had started their studies this academic year. The focus group would be student centred and would consider practical matters which related to the student experience in the first few weeks of term. The meeting would be attended by representatives from a range of services. The Chair reported that the previous focus group, held two years ago, had been a successful exercise and had led to the identification of several improvements which would impact on the experience of new students in future years. A report on the issues raised at the 2009 focus group meeting would be presented to the next meeting of the Group.

b) the Government’s new framework for Higher Education had been published on 3 November 2009. The Group agreed that it would discuss the new framework at its next meeting.

c) the 2009 annual report of the National Student Forum was now available. The report raised issues identified by the National Student Forum relating to the student experience which might be considered by Higher Education institutions.

PEER OBSERVATION OF MARKING AND FEEDBACK

The Group received a paper detailing the Peer Observation of Marking and Feedback guidelines, together with the latest version of the Peer Observation of Marking and Feedback form.

The Academic Practice Coordinator reported that a meeting had been held with heads of department or their nominees to introduce them to the scheme, which would replace Peer Observation of Teaching in the 2009/10 academic year. The aim of the exercise was for observers to identify good practice for dissemination and offer advice on any areas with scope for improvement.

The Group encouraged departments to make sure that their Staff Student Committees were aware of the scheme and of its goal to actively improve feedback to students.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK WORKING GROUP

The Group received a report of a meeting of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group held on 22 September 2009.

The Group noted that the Chair of the Working Group and the Academic Practice Coordinator had begun an evaluation of the pilot departments’ experiences of the Working Group’s Assessment and Feedback ‘Quick Wins’ proposals. A workshop for departments on e-assessment, considering its positive and negative attributes, would take place on Thursday 17 December 2009.

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1 The Annual Report can be downloaded from the National Student Forum website: [http://www.nationalstudentforum.com/](http://www.nationalstudentforum.com/)
09/M6 LEARNING SPACES

The Chair reported that the development of the Museum Studies Learning Studio had been completed and the space had been in use since September. The Registrar had agreed to fund an evaluation of the Learning Studio, the results of which would inform the planning of future teaching space developments.

09/M7 PERSONAL TUTORS WORKING GROUP

The Chair of the Personal Tutors Working Group reported that the Guide to the Personal Tutor System flyer that was circulated to students last year in hard copy would shortly be e-mailed to students and members of the teaching staff, via departmental secretaries.

09/M8 WORKING GROUP FOR STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

The Group received minutes of a meeting of the Working Group for Student Employability held on 6 July 2009. It noted that the Group’s work on Careers Tutors would culminate with a letter soon to be sent by the Vice-Chancellor to heads of departments to advise them of the new responsibilities and broader role of the Careers Tutor.

The Group noted that the Working Group planned to focus its work in the 2009/10 academic year on the engagement of alumni in student employability issues.

09/M9 WORKING GROUP FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Group received reports of meetings of the Sustainability Working Group held on 15 July, 8 September and 12 October 2009.

The Group noted that the Chair of the Working Group had given a presentation at a national conference on TRAC on 4 November which had been well received as it focussed on the student experience. The Chair of the Working Group reported that the Group was currently gathering qualitative data on the teaching activities of seven pilot departments, beginning with the School of Biological Sciences.

09/M10 STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEES

The Group considered and agreed a proposal presented by the Academic Affairs Officer of the Student’s Union to establish a new working group that would consider the operation of staff student committees within the University.

09/M11 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

The Group received the National Student Survey Results summarised by department. The Chair encouraged departments’ results to be considered in detail by their relevant College Academic Committee and for a report on any trends or themes along with an action plan to be submitted to the Academic Policy Committee. The Group noted that it

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2 The National Student Survey Results by Department are available to download from BlackBoard via the Student Statistics link found under the heading ‘My Courses’
would be useful for departments to look at the free text comments on the survey as these often contained valuable information which may help to explain particular results.

The Academic Affairs Officer of the Students’ Union reported that course representatives had been encouraged to consult the NSS results for their department and to raise three issues they identified as being worthy of discussion at their respective staff student consultative committees. The Group agreed that it would also be useful for student representatives to raise the three identified issues at the College Academic Committees.

**09/M12 RECRUITMENT AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

The Chair reported that the University had held discussions with departments with high levels of recruitment to postgraduate teaching programmes to ascertain how they were managing with the increase in student numbers. The discussions had particularly focused on teaching resource and had revealed that there was strain on the system in particular areas. The Group noted advice from IT Services that departments which used specialist software should check licence availability in the software catalogue\(^3\) to pre-empt any possible access problems as a result of increased student numbers.

**09/M13 ROOM ALLOCATIONS**

The Group noted that the room allocation process for the 2009/10 academic year had gone well, including the handling of late changes. The Group wished to record its thanks to staff in Academic and Research Services for the improvements implemented over the past year which it believed had made a real difference to the process.

**09/M14 UNIVERSITY TEACHING FELLOWS**

The Group received notes from an annual review meeting of the operation of the University Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

The Group considered and approved a proposal to treat student nominations as part of the evidence towards an applicant’s suitability for an award. The Group agreed that the Chair would liaise with the Students’ Union to establish the most appropriate means to publicise the nomination process to students.

**09/M15 NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOWS 2009**

The Chair reported that Rose Griffiths, Senior Lecturer in Education, had been made a National Teaching Fellow. The Group wished to record its congratulations to Ms Griffiths for her achievement.

A list of the Teaching Fellows at the University is attached as an appendix to this minute.

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\(^3\) Software licence information can be viewed at: [http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/itservices/resources/is/ss/software-catalogues/optional-cfs](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/itservices/resources/is/ss/software-catalogues/optional-cfs)
09/M16  **TEACHING ENHANCEMENT PROJECT FUNDING**

The Group considered a proposal from the Teaching Funds Approvals Groups regarding Teaching Enhancement Project Funding from October 2009.

**The Group agreed** to recommend approval of the two stream proposal for project funding for teaching enhancement projects.

09/M17  **TEACHING FUNDS APPROVALS GROUP**

**The Group received** the minutes of meetings of the Teaching Funds Approvals Group held on 26 June and 28 October 2009.

09/M18  **DATES OF 2009-10 MEETINGS**

The Group noted the dates and times of its next meetings in the 2009/10 academic year as follows:

- Thursday 25 February 2010  2.00 pm
- Friday 28 May 2010  2.00 pm

Duration of meeting: Two hours  

CHAIR