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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

## LEARNING & TEACHING COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Present:** Dr P Haughan (in the Chair), Dr J Bennett, Dr R Cousins, Mr F Doolin, Ms S Murray, Dr D Mangione, Dr L McLoughlin, Dr A Owen, Dr C Penketh, Dr C Walsh

**By Invitation:** Mrs S Anton, Mrs G Mair, Dr L Hilditch

**Apologies:** Dr L Bourke

**Secretariat:** Mr D Dykins

The Chair welcomed all members. As the membership had substantially changed since the previous academic year, each member gave an explanation of their role on the Committee. In particular, Dr Bennett was welcomed in his changed role as Director of Learning and Teaching Development.

#### 1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Members had received the minutes of the meeting of the Learning & Teaching Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017. These were approved as a correct record, subject to correction of *Departments* to *Subjects* in item 9ii.

#### 2. Terms of Reference (ToR)

(i) Learning & Teaching Committee 2017-18.

Members had received the ToR which had been agreed at the last L&T Committee meeting. It was noted that documentation for future meetings would need to reflect Dr Haughan's new title, PVC Student Life & Learning.

(ii) Student Sounding Board 2017-18.

Members had received the ToR from 2016-17.

**Action:** Mr Dykins to amend the 2016-17 ToR and publish for 2017-18

#### 3. Matters arising

(i) Lecture Capture (actum 3i)

Mr Beecroft had provided a summary of recent developments, noting that the 2016/17 Lent term project had highlighted a number of issues which have now been reviewed. The project has been re-initiated involving a discrete set of subject blocks before any further wholesale

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rollout is considered. The renewed project started on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and will run for the remainder of the current term.

Dr Bennett said the summary was very useful, but noted that the delayed rollout meant the University was currently behind the sector in this area. Dr Penketh noted that subjects in her Department were heavily involved, but that some clarification of project detail was needed.

**Action:** Dr Penketh requested clarification.

(ii) Anonymous Marking (actum 3ii)

Mr Doolin said that the SU had decided not to pursue anonymous marking, as it was not felt to be in the students' best interest.

(iii) Learning Spaces (actum 3iii)

Dr Penketh queried the decision-making process when upgrading rooms. Dr Bennett noted that the Learning Lab was sometimes being used for general or seminar classes, rather than ones that specifically exploited the technology installed in the Lab.

Members felt that the Committee should have some involvement in University level discussions about changes to Learning Spaces.

**Action:** Dr Haughan to pursue the creation of a Learning Spaces sub-group of L & T Committee with potential to feed into the Estates Planning Group.

(iv) Booking IT items (actum 3iv)

Mrs Murray advised that she was currently putting together a proposal for consideration by L&T Committee.

**Action:** Ms Murray to submit proposal

(v) Minute-writing Guidance for SSLC (actum 9i)

The Chair requested that Mr Doolin consider how best to train minute-takers for SSLCs.

**Action:** Mr Doolin to provide feedback at the next meeting

(vi) Level C and I Evaluations (actum 7ii)

The Chair requested that anyone interested in joining the sub-group of the Committee set up to consider evaluations for level C and I blocks should contact her directly.

(vii) Outcomes of the New Classification System

Final Undergraduate Degree Classifications for 2016/7 as produced by the two different calculation methods agreed by Senate were presented by the Registrar. Dr Walsh suggested that the University should be cautious about making a decision about moving permanently to the new algorithm, as the evidence of the effect of the changed algorithm on student outcomes was not conclusive. The Committee recommended that both algorithms should be applied again this year, and an identical comparison exercise be run again for the October 2018 L&T Committee. Dr Bennett noted that the algorithm which dropped level C marks could present mixed message with regard to engagement at level C.

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Members agreed to **RECOMMENDED to Senate** that the dual algorithm process be maintained for this year.

#### 4. Student Success: Retention and Engagement

##### (i) Review of Retention and Engagement Process and Strategy.

Members had once again received the document *Promoting, Valuing and Monitoring Student Engagement in 2017/8; A new approach for Level C* which had been discussed at an earlier meeting. The Chair asked members for any feedback so far with the approach. Dr Bennett said that frontloading of tutorials in Induction week had worked very well. Dr McLoughlin said that there was a question over the need for the same number of tutorials in additional blocks. She also said that some staff felt uncomfortable about asking students to sign the engagement statement initially but they reported that generally students were happy to sign it. Mrs Mair said that the Employability Team had found the embedding of Employability into Level C to be a very positive development. Overall, there were no major concerns reported. Issues raised included; the inclusion of psychometric testing and its value to the tutors and the capacity of shuttle buses (which has been addressed).

Mr Doolan said that there was a need to review the release of ID cards in order for students to be able to access their loans promptly. The Chair asked that the hardship fund be promoted to students through the SU.

The Chair said that a student survey regarding the first 6 weeks would be sent out this term. Members agreed that a parallel survey for staff would also be useful. Dr Walsh said that she would be looking at feedback on the Tutor Guide. These will be part of the agenda for the next L&T Committee meeting.

**Action:** FQLT Chairs to include feedback on the Tutor Guide on their agenda for their next meeting and to feed back to the Registrar

##### (ii) 2017 Degree Classification Outcomes

Following on from 3vii (above), members had received a set of documentation, which provided summaries and details of Faculty, Department and Subject undergraduate classifications for 2016/7. The Registrar noted that the summary document (LTC 415a) compared summaries of classifications from 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. Overall there was little difference when the two top bands were combined (First and Upper Second), though 2016/17 the balance had moved in favour of Firsts.

The Chair queried how Subjects which had a lower than average profile highlighted in the data might be targeted. Dr Walsh said that she and Dr Bennett were encouraging Subjects to approach the Data Group and emphasised that their approach was wholly supportive.

Dr Penketh noted that timing of ARE deadlines was problematic given availability of data. The Chair suggested that these developments be considered at the review of AREs at the Joint Meeting of L&T and Academic Committees next week.

Dr McLoughlin thought that more detail on withdrawal rates would be helpful though currently it was not possible to drill down to very specific detail. Dr Bennett suggested that Level C coordinators track such students, but Dr Penketh felt that this could add significantly to workloads.

**Action:** Dr Walsh to review the design of the withdrawal form to assist in data gathering.

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Dr Walsh also highlighted that although pass rates for students assessed in the May/June period were reasonable, those from the August assessment period were very disappointing. She said that she would be working with SSCA to find a way forward with this issue and would bring a proposal forward to the University through Academic Committee.

## 5. TEF

Members had received the summary confirming the University's Gold Status and Statement of Findings; they also received the DfE Document on Lessons Learned. Dr Haughan said that the University had yet to decide whether Hope would make a year 3 or 4 entry but would be required at a minimum to re-enter in year 5. Year 5 will involve scrutiny of metrics at Subject level. She advised that there were currently two models being piloted for Subject-level scrutiny, one a top-down approach, and the other a bottom-up one. The University had made the decision not to be involved in the pilot. Dr Bennett asked whether LEO data, currently used in a supplementary fashion, would be included; Dr Haughan confirmed this will happen.

The Chair noted that in the new iterations of the TEF the NSS metric had been reduced in significance by 50%, which would favour Russell Group universities but disadvantage Hope.

## 6. Student Voice

### (i) NSS 2017: Consideration of the Analysis of Results

Members had received data and commentaries on the University's recent results in the NSS. This included a commentary on Equality & Diversity results and Department percentage scores. Dr Haughan said that the results had been very pleasing, particularly in the light of the Students' Union boycott. Dr Walsh said that she would be approaching all HoDs to facilitate the sharing of good practice and plans to improve (or maintain) scores.

The Chair noted that results for questions 4, 15 and 21 were generally below the national average across the University and that these needed attention at a cross University level. On a more granular level Dr Walsh and Dr Bennett said they would meeting with HoDs to discuss data were appropriate.

The Committee requested that Student Comments also be comprehensively reviewed.

**Action:** Dr Bennett to review Student Comments and Faculty Representatives to include on their Faculty Boards and FQLT agendas

### (ii) NSS 2018: Faculty Plans

Members had received outline plans from each Faculty

## 7. Student Data Group: Update

Dr Walsh said that the group were continuing with data analysis as requested by colleagues across the University. She said she was reviewing data from the students at risk screens and was in the process of contacting HoDs. She noted that she was focusing on Department data and requested that HoDs should approach her for support in any areas where they felt improvement was needed.

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## 8. Implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

### (i) Communities of Practice Action Plan

Members received the action plan coming out of the COPs. Dr Bennett noted that the breadth of actions underlined the popularity and effectiveness of the CoPs. Currently there were 34 CoPs active, though he felt that there might be potential to rationalise and consolidate these for greater effectiveness.

### (ii) Institutional Memory Bank

Dr Bennett explained that this project was supported by the HEFCE Catalyst Fund to the value of £50K following a successful bid for funds. He gave a short presentation outlining the aims of the project and the current stage of development. He noted that an app was being developed which would allow staff to access outputs and discussions of all of the COPs. Users will be able to keep up-to-date with trends and progress of themes and projects over the course of the academic year and will eventually be able to access the service remotely

## 9. Staff Development

### (i) Update on PGCert LTHE and HEA

Members received the update on the PGCert LTHE. Mrs Anton said there was very little change in terms of numbers of fellows. Members queried whether it would be possible to compare the current University Fellowship membership (57%) with other HEIs in the North West. Mrs Anton said she would look into getting the information. Dr Haughan asked Faculty representatives to take participation rates to their Faculty for discussion. Dr Penketh noted that the statistics did not capture members of staff who had moved through the process onto to posts elsewhere.

Dr Bennett said that the team were evolving different ways of delivering the course, and were currently trialling a different model involving expert tutors.

Action: Mrs Anton to advise on HEA membership rates at other North West universities

### (ii) Identification of Staff Training and Development Needs

Mrs Anton said that she would provide a report from the training needs analysis for the next meeting and that this would include requests for HEA workshops.

### (iii) Reflection on Learning and Teaching Day

The Committee discussed the L&T Day held in September. The Chair was particularly pleased with the keynote speech delivered by Professor Stephanie Marshall. The focus on the outputs of CoPs was a particular highlight of the Day. Dr Haughan suggested that it may be more practical in future to have five rather than six sessions. She noted that the Faculty L&T Day would be held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018, with the University L&T Day on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

## 10. Faculty Quality Learning & Teaching Committees

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Members had received and considered minutes of Faculty Quality Learning & Teaching Committees:

(i) Arts & Humanities

- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

HEA fellowship was highlighted and HoDs asked to discuss with relevant staff at performance reviews. Dr McLoughlin noted that there were now four Lead Practitioners and they had expressed an interest in being involved in L&T Days. She said she would pass the names on to Dr Bennett.

(ii) Education

- 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017
- 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dr Penketh noted that the Faculty were looking to identify applicants for the National Teaching Fellowship. Fellows would be mentored by Dr Ruth Pilkington and the Faculty were also looking to identify suitable staff who may be ready for the Fellowship in two or three years.

(iii) Science

- 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017
- 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dr Walsh noted that there had been discussion about the involvement of student societies to help ameliorate issues around homesickness, particularly with students from Northern Ireland. There was also discussion around the use of electronic feedback, where very wide practice had been identified. Dr Cousins said she was currently doing work to get students to respond actively to feedback. Work was ongoing but further detail should be available for the next LTC meeting.

**Action:** Dr Cousins to provide an overview of progress with electronic marking for the next meeting.

Dr Walsh said that issues with the rubric on exam papers were still occurring and asked all academics to be vigilant when preparing papers to ensure that the rubric accurately reflects the information stated on SITS.

**Action:** All Faculty representatives to remind staff to double-check exam papers.

### 11. **Chairs Business/AOB**

(i) Learning & Teaching Development Fund

Dr Haughan reminded members that the fund is available. She asked for any suggestions on how the fund might be used to be submitted directly to her. Dr Penketh asked whether there could be interim dates for requests.

**Action:** Dr Haughan to discuss process for requests with Dr Bennett

(ii) Dissertations

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Dr McLoughlin noted that despite the new regulations last year, there had been some inconsistency around dates for initiating dissertations at the start of Level I. Dr Penketh noted that in her Department Level I students returning to Level H had generally not done any planning over the summer break. Dr Bennett said that the 75% weighting offered for the dissertation in the new classification algorithm should be emphasised to encourage students to do more work over the summer. Dr Owen said there were cross-Faculty issues with Double subject dissertations.

Action: The matter of timing of dissertation preparation be discussed further at FQLTs and be brought to the next LTC meeting.

### (iii) Marking Scales and Assessment Descriptors

Dr Walsh advised that a proposal regarding marking scales arising from SSCA, and having previously been discussed at Rectorate Team, would be presented at the Joint Meeting of L&T and Academic Committees. This was intended to avoid the use of boundary marks. This should be of benefit to students in terms of overall assessment marks. Letter grades would be used on all student work. There would be a transition arrangement for work currently being assessed. Dr Bennett will meet with all HODs and asked that any HOD who was still unclear to discuss further with him. A guidance note will be sent to all staff by the Registrar.

### Dates of Next Meetings:

- Wednesday 22nd November 2017 at 2.15 pm
- Wednesday 21st February 2018 at 2.15 pm
- Wednesday 23rd May 2018 at 2.15 pm