

# CONFIRMED

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

## LEARNING & TEACHING COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

**Present:** Dr P Haughan (in the Chair), Dr N Almond, Dr J Bennett,  
Dr L Bourke, Dr B Evans, Ms S Murray, Mr N McLaughlin-Cook,  
Dr C Penketh, Mr P Shakya, Dr C Walsh

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

**Secretariat:** Mr D Dykins

#### 1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Members had received the minutes of the meeting of Learning & Teaching Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016. These were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to explain that the list of FAQs at the Network of Hope (NoH) was being developed.

#### 2. Learning & Teaching Committee Terms of Reference

Members had received the terms of reference, which now captured changes in the Committee's remit prompted by the White Paper and the TEF.

#### 3. Matters arising

##### (i) Update on Planning for Changes to DSA

The Chair reported that students were already being assessed using the new procedure, which continued to incorporate the use of external assessments. There had been only two appeals to date, and these were currently being considered.

Dr Almond said that 25 rooms had had lecture capture equipment installed; this included a microphone facility attached to the lectern and a stop-start button for recording. Staff were able to manage their own recordings via an online platform which would eventually be fully integrated into Moodle. Procedure had not yet been finalised, and Dr Almond was currently looking for 12 members of staff to take part in a pilot project leading up to the end of the current term, extending this to between 30 and 40 staff in January 2017. Mrs Mair and Mr Shakya asked whether it would be possible for Careers, SALA and the Students' Union to be part of the pilot; Dr Almond said he would welcome their involvement, as the facility had applications beyond capturing the content of a standard lecture.

Dr Haughan emphasised the importance of the pilot, as a decision would have to be made in February 2017 whether to roll the system out to all teaching rooms based on this. Dr Evans asked whether other institutions who were already using the system had experienced any issues; Dr Almond said that feedback from HEIs had been largely positive, but he stressed that comparisons were not always useful as the University had to be sure it was appropriate in its own context and environment.

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**Action:** Members to publicise pilot within Faculty for volunteers and direct queries to Dr Almond

**Action:** Dr Almond to provide a list of the rooms which have had the equipment installed, to be circulated by Mr Dykins

(ii) Anonymous Marking

Mr Shakya confirmed that discussions on the final draft of the questionnaire were ongoing.

(iii) Standardisation of Degree Classifications

Mr McLaughlin-Cook reported on a project by UUK for HEFCE, the outcome of which would have ramifications for all HEIs with degree-awarding powers. A draft questionnaire was being produced which would be sent around for consultation in December 2016. The final questionnaire would be sent out to HEIs in January 2017, and the results would then be compared to HESA data and used in focus groups with the aim of producing draft recommendations in April 2017. The final set of recommendations, to be issued in June 2017, are likely to define a set number of methodologies for arriving at degree classifications. Each HEI will then choose one of the methodologies to apply to its awards and be required not only to explain the methodology to their students receiving an award, but also to give a rationale as to why the particular methodology had been chosen. Mr McLaughlin-Cook noted that the University's current rationale for weighting Level H more heavily than certain other HEIs would still align with its current methodology as it reflected the philosophy of the curriculum.

Dr Haughan advised that Rectorate Team had agreed that in Summer 2017 degree classifications would be calculated twice, once using the current method, and then again using a slightly different algorithm. Whichever method benefitted each individual student more would then be chosen.

**Action:** Mr McLaughlin-Cook to arrange for feedback from LTC on draft questionnaire

(iv) Pro Forma for Peer Observation

Members had received the standard pro forma and confirmed that this was in use in all Faculties, with the exception of Education where Ofsted requirements entailed a slightly different format.

(v) Mobile Phone Use and BYOD

Dr Hilditch and Dr Almond confirmed that the Technology CoP was currently drafting a policy on mobile phone use and BYOD.

(vi) Update on FHEA

Mrs Anton said that, working alongside Dr Almond, she was targeting departments with low percentages of members. She confirmed that she had the backing of Faculty Deans and the Staffing Committee in her efforts to encourage greater participation. Dr Almond noted that an FHEA session would be run at the next Learning & Teaching Day.

(vii) URLs for Scanning

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Ms Murray confirmed that she had access to the reports on usage created via the URLs and will start disseminating these shortly. She was considering how often the reports would be required and advised that there would be some zero returns.

### 4. University Submission for the TEF

Members had received the Year Two Additional Guidance document which Dr Haughan had produced to provide a more user-friendly version of the official guidance document. She gave an overview of the document, starting with the Implementation Timeline. This included briefing events which she would be attending with the President of the SU later this term. More detail would be provided from HEFCE at these events. Dr Haughan also advised that she had recently attended a meeting of PVCs which included discussion on the TEF. The meeting had raised a number of queries around benchmarking and data validity. It also confirmed that, in addition to institutional level, the TEF would develop to awarding Gold, Silver or Bronze at subject level following pilots run in Year Three of the scheme, though again questions were raised as to how this would fit with the overall institutional award. Dr Haughan noted that Departments would be more exposed in Year Three, and advised that she would be meeting with Departments shortly to ensure that their narrative was carefully highlighted, including approaches to combined honours awards. The deadline for Year Two submission is 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

The Chair drew members' attention to the Assessment Framework (Table 2), and then to the University's submission (Section G) which detailed the metrics the University would be submitting. She noted that the flags were generally positive, though the requirement that the last three years' data be averaged meant University DLHE statistics contained some minus ratings from 2013/14 and 2014/15, hence the current overall Silver rating. She also noted the split metrics which broke the data into student categories such as *disadvantaged*, *ethnicity* and *disability*; these, she said, would require a narrative to explain any differences to core metrics. Dr Bourke asked whether the TEF process mapped onto any internationally recognised processes and was told that currently they were not.

Dr Haughan advised that entering the TEF was not yet compulsory, though a submission was contingent upon an institution meeting criteria such as having an Access Agreement and the ability to supply reportable metrics. The University had considered not entering the scheme, but had decided that, given the current tie-in to allow inflationary increases in fees and its likely incorporation into certain league tables in future, it would disadvantage the University if it did not. She noted that currently HEFCE would not state whether the final award would be based mainly on the strength of metrics or on the narrative supplied.

Dr Almond felt that the narrative should explain apparent discrepancies in the metrics, which included, for example, highlighting the University's Merseyside catchment area and demonstrating that for certain relevant years the area had documented area-specific employment issues which would inevitably impact upon graduate employment rates for Hope graduates in those years. In light of this, he asked whether the data would be transparent in order for benchmarking against other regional HEIs to take place; Dr Haughan said that institutions' submissions would not be compared against each other, but would be given a rating based on solely on the strength of the submission. Mr McLaughlin-Cook said that representatives from other HEIs at a recent conference suggested that the University may be misinterpreting certain employment statistics; Dr Haughan said she had reviewed the data carefully, and it aligned with the conventions set out in the HEFCE guidance document.

### 5. Student Voice

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### (i) Campus-wide Issues highlighted at SSLCs

Dr Bennett reported certain issues specific to Creative Campus, such as the increased expense of items sold in its food outlets. There were also adverse comments relating to assessment deadlines, timetabling and the suitability of certain rooms for some sessions, which were sometimes too small or simply not fit-for-purpose. Dr Bourke also noted a number of issues. Both said they would forward these separately to Dr Haughan for appropriate action. Mr McLaughlin-Cook reported the success of a “buddying” system to encourage students from different levels to meet for mutual support.

**Action:** Mr Dykins to invite Mr Ellison to attend the next meeting.

Dr Penketh said that there had been issues with the University app, though Dr Haughan said that she would be seeing the Director of IT to get these resolved.

**Action:** Dr Haughan to meet with Mr Beecroft to ensure issues with the app have been resolved

It was noted that changes to induction programmes for all UG levels had helped to alleviate certain issues. Ms Murray noted that the 10 weeks of 24-hour library access had now been clarified following student feedback. The 10 weeks would now be split into two blocks: 13th February - 30th March 2017 leading up to dissertation submission; and 15th May - 1st June 2017 to cover the examination period. Dr Penketh said that Level H students had given positive feedback about the dedicated Level H learning spaces. Dr Evans said that there were some complaints about noise levels in the Library. The Chair wished to pass on the Committee’s thanks to the Library Staff for responding to feedback promptly and effectively.

**Action:** Ms Murray to review relevant signage, particularly around PC Suite areas, and consider changing the zoning in the assessment.

Dr Penketh said that certain assessment anxieties had surfaced at SSLC, but she acknowledged that this might be due to the timing of the SSLC meeting. Dr Bennett noted that since the approval for the dissertation period had shifted there was now a smaller window for completion of dissertations.

**Action:** Dr Haughan to review the assessment schedule to see whether it would be possible to create a wider window for the dissertation

Mr Shakya advised that he had had positive feedback on the webinar that had been delivered for NoH students, adding that the webinar format could be further exploited for collaborative provision.

### (ii) NSS 2017

Dr Haughan confirmed that she had set up a meeting for dissemination of good practice for NSS 2017. The Survey would go live on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Level H internal evaluations had already taken place.

## 6. **Student Data Group**

### (i) Update

Members had received the briefing paper which summarised what, and how, data was being used. Dr Walsh said Departments which were highlighted were contacted and offered support

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on ways to improve key metrics. As the role of the Data Group was beginning to be better understood across the University, she said it was pleasing to note that more Departments were approaching the Group for assistance without being prompted. She urged members to encourage other colleagues to do the same. It was likely that more far-reaching interventions would be required in relation to NSS scores, and Dr Walsh said that the Group had commissioned a survey at Creative Campus, the results of which should point to good practice which can be applied throughout the University. She noted that there had been a good response to the training of Library staff at Creative Campus to take on pastoral care roles.

Dr Haughan noted that the briefing paper had purposely been anonymised, though Dr Walsh said that it was difficult to avoid identification of certain departments due to the specific nature of certain data. Dr Bourke noted the use of focus groups to better understand underlying issues, particularly as these often had the dual function of getting qualitative feedback whilst at the same time managing certain frustrations students may have, particularly around issues that might not surface during the standard SSLC meetings. Dr Walsh acknowledged that focus groups provide a good depth of information, but cautioned that they can be time-consuming. Members agreed that the use of focus groups might be further explored.

### (ii) Plan for Student Success

Members received the existing plan in order to consider amendments. Dr Haughan requested that these be forwarded to her for review. Dr Bennett queried how the role of Applicant Days was promoted to students, as anecdotally there was evidence that some applicants living a considerable distance outside the region assumed that two visits would be necessary; he suggested the use of Skype. Dr Haughan said she would feed the comment back to the Recruitment Team.

Mr McLaughlin-Cook said that certain areas would not necessarily compare favourably with standards elsewhere in the sector and should therefore be reviewed. For example, the maximum time for receiving feedback on assignments of four weeks does not compare favourably with certain HEIs and could produce an unfavourable rating in surveys. However, as this often related to norms a student brought with them from High School (where prompt feedback was usual), he noted that this could be nuanced to increase the feedback window incrementally as a UG student progressed to Level H.

**Action:** FQLT chairs take this back to Faculties for their views and report back to LTC

## 7. **Implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy**

### Communities of Practice and HEFCE Bid

Dr Haughan announced that the University had submitted a bid to the HEFCE Catalyst Fund for support to create a searchable online repository for artefacts (narratives and material) created by CoPs; the bid had been successful and the University had been awarded £50k to develop the project. Dr Almond said a computer scientist had already been identified to undertake the work, with the remit to develop a fully accessible system for uploading and searching artefacts. Once the system has been set up, an internal promotional campaign will attempt to encourage staff to use the system as an enhancement tool for their own teaching and research.

Dr Evans queried how narratives would be created; Dr Almond said it was hoped that as much raw dialogue as possible could be captured, adding that Dr Hilditch had a template for this. However, he said that care would need to be taken that artefacts were not repetitive.

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Dr Almond said that he would be asking CoPs facilitators to share suggestions with LTC on how ideas from CoPs could be cascaded within Faculties. He noted that the Research-Informed Teaching CoP had been given a budget to engage external speakers and said he would be encouraging others to consider making bids for resources which could develop their CoP.

Notable developments in CoPs included: *Internationalisation*, which was focusing on EU Students post-Brexit and how the UK's resulting isolation could be tackled; and the *Online/Mobile Technology CoP* were looking at the use of technology to engage remote speakers, using high quality software and streaming. Dr Ghalib had created an app based on word banks to support students in writing coherently within academic conventions and he was keen to plan a launch event. Dr Haughan fully supported the idea of such an event. Dr Almond said that Dr Ghalib was already working on an enhancement to the app to include referencing conventions.

Dr Almond said that it was important that links between LTC and the CoPs should be maintained, with a flow of suggestions both ways. Any suggestions from LTC for CoPs should be directed to him in the first instance.

### 8. Staff Development

#### Update on PGCert LTHE

Dr Almond advised that the next assessment board would take place on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. He was confident that this would produce 20 new Fellows for the HEA, with 3 or 4 associate Fellows. This exceeded typical numbers at many larger HEIs and Dr Bennett suggested recalculating the league table with the new numbers. Dr Haughan noted that membership of FHEA was gaining in importance, particularly in relation to the TEF, and as such it was now a standing item on FQLT agendas; Mrs Anton said she would send an update to Faculty Deans and FQLT Chairs. Dr Penketh asked whether there were any benefits to gaining Senior FHEA; Dr Haughan said that senior membership was almost certain to be a feature of TEF particularly at subject level.

### 9. Faculty Quality Learning & Teaching Committees

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

- (i) Arts & Humanities
  - 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dr Bennett noted that peer observations had now been launched.

- (ii) Education
  - 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016
  - 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016

Dr Penketh drew members' attention to the Key Practitioners' initiative which was continuing with the support of Visiting Professor Ruth Pilkington, who was working closely with Professor Lin Norton to support Faculty members applying for FHEA. Dr Penketh said more detail on the mentoring scheme would be available for discussion at the next LTC meeting. She also noted the discussion

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on the revised ARE process and the Co-design workshops; these required greater clarity which the FQLT Committee suggested might be provided via a workflow diagram. Dr Almond advised that this would eventually be driven by an online system, though this was currently not ready for a launch. However, he said that the documentation approved at June 2016 Senate included timeframes.

**Action:** Dr Almond to put together a suitable timeline and progress through Academic Committee

- (iii) Science
- 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

Dr Walsh said that the Faculty had reviewed electronic marking and were currently conducting a pilot scheme which included the use of audio. Dr Almond reminded Dr Walsh that training on GradeMark was available. Dr Walsh said that the subject of health and safety in relation to VDU use had been discussed; Mrs Anton said she would look at any information available which could be forwarded to staff and reminded members that staff were entitled to a free eye test. Dr Walsh said that themes for the current academic year in terms of enhancement were emerging.

Dr Haughan noted that a number of alternative forms of marking assessments were available and at the end of the academic year each Faculty would be asked to provide a review of those which had been used. Dr Walsh queried whether electronic marking was compulsory; Dr Haughan confirmed it was not. Dr Almond added that the impact of electronic marking would have to be carefully monitored.

### 10. Faculty Boards & Network of Hope

Members received and considered Learning & Teaching issues arising from the minutes of Network of Hope Experience and Academic Oversight Committee meeting and Science Faculty Boards. Arts & Humanities and Education Faculty Boards' most recent available minutes were received at the Joint Meeting of Learning & Teaching and Academic Committees on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

- (i) Network of Hope
- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Mr McLaughlin-Cook advised that, following the introduction of Masters programmes at St Mary's, initial issues had now been resolved and the first SSLC for this group would be meeting shortly. He also noted that he had visited each college to provide regulatory training for support tutors; tutors now also had access to the FSAA Moodle and relevant support material. He noted that the Hope Experience event was not as well attended as hoped; a survey revealed that students wanted the event in their own college, rather than travelling to Hope Park. Mr McLaughlin-Cook was considering this for future events.

- (ii) Science
- 8th June 2016

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- 16th September 2016

Dr Walsh advised that no significant issues had arisen relevant to other Faculties/Services.

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

#### Learning & Teaching Development Fund

Dr Haughan reminded members that there were still some funds available and asked for any suggestions on how the fund might be used this year to be submitted directly to her.

Dates of Next Meetings:

- Wednesday 22nd February 2017 at 2.15 pm
- Wednesday 24th May 2017 at 2.15 pm