College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 19th February 2008

Present:
Dr N Hulton                Convenor
Dr S Anderson              School of Informatics
Dr S Bates                 School of Physics
Dr J Bond                  School of Biological Sciences
Dr T Bruce                 School of Engineering & Electronics
Dr J Byatt-Smith           School of Mathematics
Prof R Fisher              PGT Adviser
Ms L M Henderson           Academic Affairs Officer
Dr M Paton                 School of Chemistry
Ms R Atherton              School of Geosciences (on behalf of S Rigby)
Dr D Williams              Head of Academic Affairs
Ms L Burns                 Minutes Secretary

1. **APOLÓGIES**

**Noted:**
Apologies were received from Prof J Ansell, Dean of Undergraduates Studies, CHSS, Dr J Martin, Deputy Head of College, Dr S Rigby, School of Geosciences and Mr S Martin, Student Representative UG.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Considered:**
The minutes of the meeting of the College Learning and Teaching Committee held on 21 January 2008. (Paper A)

**Resolved:**
The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record.

2.1 Matters Arising

**Noted:**
i) **TEAM Testing** (item 6). Lynda Henderson had contacted the Institute of Applied Language Studies who confirmed that funding for courses was currently only available for postgraduate students. IALS would be able to support more test sessions during freshers week and more student on courses.

ii) **Off Campus Examining** (item 9). A paper was being prepared on this subject which would be sent to SUGSC in two weeks time.

3. **EUCLID**

Ms M Stewart, **EUCLID attended for this item**

**Received:**
An overview of the current situation regarding the timetable for implementation of PCAM/CCAM.

**Noted:** The following points were noted in discussion:
It was felt that first year students should be given more assistance with complicated course choices and that self enrolment should not be the main route for these students.
- A ‘shopping trolley’ system will be employed to simplify course choices. This would be familiar to students through other web sites such as online shopping sites.
- Course changes can be made by students within the first two weeks of the semester
- An individual meeting with the Director of Studies should still be required to ensure choices were appropriate and to give guidance.
- A ‘pop up’ advice box would be attached to each step to provide the student with more information and guidance.
- Frequently Asked Questions and Hotline support number will be made available.
- It would be beneficial for the EUCLID team to have input from Directors of Studies themselves to discuss the practicalities of the system.

Resolved:

The College Office would compile a list of concerns from Directors of Studies which would be passed to Moira Stewart before June  (ACTION DW)

4. LEARNING & TEACHING PLANNING SESSION

Received:
An oral report from the Convenor on issues arising from the meeting held on 14th February

Noted:
A plan in the form of a formal paper was needed on the future progression of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The session had generated good discussion and some interesting ideas. The Convenor extended his thanks to the strategy project team and the staff who took part.

- Options included:
  > the scheme should continue as it is
  > the progressive model should be extended to more courses
  > there should be school-based focus on 1 or 2 schools per cycle
  > there should be theme based implementation broadly following QAA enhancement themes
  > consolidate courses already embedded and use as motivators for other academic staff.
- Recent newspaper articles regarding the use of clickers which reflected very well on the University.
- Additional sources of funding to support the development would need to be identified.

Resolved

The Convenor would prepare a paper on this subject which he would circulate to the Committee for comments. (ACTION NH)

The notes of the last Teaching and Learning Planning Session would be circulated to the Committee for information (ACTION LH).
5. **Teachability**

**Considered:**

**Noted:**
- Schools had been asked to carry out self assessments, generate action plans and address any practices that did not meet the required standards.
- No significant problems were found across the College as a whole.
- Appendix 2 of the document set out various examples of the identification of issues from the of self assessment within Schools.
- Appendix 4 outlined activities that will take place over next year. The theme for the academic session would be the design of programmes and courses and the incorporation of competence standards.
- The structure of the document was helpful and reflected the great efforts made in schools which should be commended.
- A shared repository of best practice within schools could be useful.

**Resolved:**
A report should be sent to The University Teachability Working Group. (ACTION DW)

6. **Models for Board of Examiners**

**Considered**
A paper for the Academic Assessment Working Group on proposed models for Exam Boards.

**Noted:**
- The Examining Board has two principal functions:
  > stage 1 - to determine final marks on individual courses
  > stage 2 – to determine final degree and progression outcomes with programmes
  There should be a clear distinction between stage 1 and 2
- External Examiners should be physically present at the end of the stage one process to ratify processes and verify marks as robust.
- The Examiners role also includes that of quality control and fairness without unnecessary close involvement in individual cases.
- Clarification should be given to the role of the External Examiner at Board meetings.
- Schools should have clear and consistent guidelines regarding borderline cases and the setting of boundaries. This would prevent the necessity to re-establish rules each year. An archive of cases/decisions could be implemented for future reference.
- Progression of students in the exam function should not be confused with ‘failure to make academic progress’ procedure which is the role of the Senior Director of Studies.

**Resolved:**
- Clarification was needed to be given to the wording of the document particularly in defining the role of the Director of Studies/Senior Director and the Examining Board in determining progression.
- This report should be taken forward to the AAWG noting that the Committee was not opposed to the concepts involved. Note should be made that the College proposals would involve a shift of emphasis in the role of the External Examiner. (ACTION NH)

7. **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Considered**
A paper from the Academic Assessment Working Group on proposed revised policy and practices for special circumstances

**Noted:**
- Principles should be rearticulated as actions for Boards to take when dealing with particular cases.
- Although the Exam Board could devolve recommendations to a sub-committee, the Board itself was ultimately responsible for making final decisions.
- The paper had support from the Committee.
- The AAWG intends to issue a singular statement on special circumstances by April, although this will not be implemented until the next academic year.

**Resolved:**
- The Convenor should seek clarification on items raised. (ACTION NH)
- The Committee should send any comments on the Paper to the Convenor before end March.

8. **EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT**

**Considered:**
A summary of external examiner reports for taught programmes for the academic session 06/07.

**Noted:**
- The report contained some descriptive information and highlighted major issues and cross-college issues.
- As a result of the report last year, there have been a number of revisions made and changes were planned.
- The External Examiners are broadly satisfied with the College standards and did not highlight any further concerns.
- The distribution of External Examiners from comparator institutions was excellent.
- The issue of course and programme boards were under review at a University level.
- The document contained a bibliography of developments in previous years, including honours classifications and marking guidelines which was very useful.
- The QA committee would consider all comments and produce another report. This revised report will be considered again at the L&T Committee in March.

9. **PGT QUESTIONNAIRE DATA**

**Considered:**
School level PGT Questionnaire data.
Noted:

- The College had performed fairly well across the board with no major issues highlighted
- Concern was expressed with the ‘training and development’ section
- Students should be encouraged to take up the opportunity to discuss training with the programme director and consideration should be given to the promotion of training within the University, emphasising those courses which are ‘transferable skills’. This could be communicated at induction sessions.
- Schools should endeavour to raise the response rate from students as much as to ensure that the data collected reflected the student population

Resolved:

- A digest of issues should be created for use as guidance (ACTION LH)
- Schools should contact the College Office within the next 10 days to raise any significant issues. (ACTION DW/DOT)
- The Questionnaire would be circulated in Excel format to make the data more useable. (ACTION LH)

10. NEW COURSES

Considered:
New courses to be approved:
Informatics – 14 new/replacement courses
Physics – 2 new courses

Resolved:
The proposed new courses should be approved

11. EUCLID

Noted:
- The University Assessment Group chaired by Nigel Seaton is currently looking at policy aspects of assessment, including; scaling and marking frameworks with the aim of simplifying the process
- Concerns were raised over the risk management of the project.

Resolved:

- The Convenor should re-engage with EUCLID regarding the severe concerns about the project risk aspects. (ACTION NH)

12. CONVENORS REPORT

Nothing to report.

13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

JCMB Teaching Studio
Physics reported having difficulties booking the studio at JCMB as they had exceeded their time quota.

Increased demand was expected for this venue as courses and teaching methods develop.
Resolved:

Members should inform the Convenor, copied to Dr Martin, of potential future demand for the teaching studio, so that the College can lobby for the necessary facilities.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

18th March at 2.00 p.m. in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building