College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 18 November 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:

Dr N Hulton  Convenor  
Dr S Anderson  School of Informatics  
Prof S Bates  School of Physics & Astronomy  
Dr T Bruce  School of Engineering and Electronics  
Dr J Byatt-Smith  School of Mathematics  
Mr J Garforth  UG Student Representative, EUSA  
Ms L M Henderson  Academic Affairs Officer  
Prof C Pulham  School of Chemistry  
Prof G Reid  School of Biological Sciences  
Dr Sue Rigby  School of Geoscience  
Dr D Williams  Head of Academic Affairs  

In Attendance:

Mrs L Archibald  Minutes Secretary  

1. **APologies**  
   
Noted  

Apologies were received from Prof J Ansell (Dean of Undergraduates Studies HSS), John Martin (Deputy Head of College), James Holloway (student representative)  

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**  
   
Considered  

The minutes of the Learning & Teaching Committee held on 21st October 2008 (Paper A)  

Resolved  

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record, subject to amendments to the attendance list.  

2.1 **MATTERS ARISING**  

- Scholarships Committee.  

The Convenor was working on the composition of the committees and would contact members of staff in the near future.  

- VLE
The Convenor confirmed that he had passed on the committee’s views regarding the suspension of this project.

- **Information Services Issues**

A Strategic planning meeting was scheduled in the near future, after which the committee would discuss the matter in more detail.

3. **EUCLID**

**Received**

A presentation from Mike Calvert regarding the current status of the EUCLID project.

Mr Calvert outlined developments in regard to the EUCLID implementation plan, particularly relating to the Curriculum Management functionality (i.e. creation and maintenance of new programmes and courses; on-line course selection; Degree Programme Tables). A copy of this presentation is available on-line.

**Noted**

- The on-line course selection system prohibits the selection of clashing courses and will automatically avoid these, provided that the necessary information has been input into the system.

- It is therefore essential that School timetables are up to date and it was felt that there needs to be discussion at College and University level on the extent to which “activities” such as laboratory classes and seminars are input into the system to ensure a consistent approach.

- There are still discussions at University level on the date when the on-line course selection system will be available to students. If it is early (e.g. in April) then courses may not have been finalised, if later (i.e. in September) then students may have a short time to make their selections and there is the possibility of errors being made.

- It was confirmed that there will be a facility to amend course selections after registration.

- Schools indicated that they intend to provide guidance for 1st years in making their course selections.

- It was noted that students will not be able to register more than 120 points.
- A mark entry validation system is needed for EUCLID (preferably a double entry checking system). Such a checking system is available in SMART and is considered invaluable.

- Online training is available for ‘BOXI’ as a reporting and query tool, but this is felt to be inadequate. It is important to ensure that people competent in the use of ‘BOXI’ are in place in schools. The EUCLID Project Board are to discuss possible further training to be supplied by IS on the generic use of ‘BOXI’, with further guidance from EUCLID on understanding of the data structures within EUCLID.

**Action**

Secretary to schedule a further discussion at CL&TC on: the input of “activities” into the on-line course selection tool and the timing of the opening of student on-line self selection of courses.

4. **CONVENORS REPORT**

- **SPGSC.**

Divinity were currently considering the possibility of allowing students the option of taking written exams or using a laptop. This process was suitable for WP text but the option of diagrams was still being investigated. PGT had been asked to volunteer to experiment having assessments with laptops. Committee members should contact Nora to discuss more specific requirements.

- **TPRS.**

It had been suggested by Simon van Henighan that members should consider having fewer groupings in TPRs. The Committee would consider whether this was appropriate and the Convenor would respond.

- **PGT Survey.**

This survey has only had an 18% response rate from March-May this year. The Committee were asked to think of ways to encourage students to respond.

- **SUGSC (DW).**

Extenuating circumstances. The paper regarding the new procedure had been endorsed by other colleges.

- Year Abroad Progression Committee.
A small percentage of students had failed the year abroad. The majority of such students were at institutions where the language of instruction was not English and they had experienced difficulties. Schools were urged to ensure that any students put forward have adequate language skills. It was noted that language training is not always available within the University.

- Alignment of Learning Outcomes and Assessment.

The Convenor had been asked to present a paper to the next SUGSC.

- Programme Learning Outcomes year to year.

It was agreed last year that individual schools should plan the most effective way to think about this problem – specifically in articulating learning outcomes. The Convenor would respond to SUGSC including a paragraph from each school saying what they were doing in this respect.

- Review of year – management strategy.

This issue was discussed by the University working group looking at problems with the current structure and potential changes. The Working Group is proposing some modifications to the current format to allow for more teaching time. The College favours the option of exams after Christmas and this was to be discussed at CSMC. DOTs should have an input into these proposals and should discuss these with Heads of Schools, outlining any impacts they feel this may have.

5. BOARD OF EXAMINERS MODELS

Received

Verbal updates on progress on restructuring towards new University examination board guidance

School of Biological Sciences: 1st and 2nd years and honours boards were compliant with the new guidance

School of Chemistry – an update would follow

School of Engineering and Electronics - 1st and 2nd year fully compliant. The existing groupings at honours level will remain in the four disciplines. Looking at the possible integration of PG taught Boards.

School of GeoSciences - very clear and manageable proposals. The structure was being remodeled to reduce the number of Boards and to streamline at the PG taught level. The School was also looking to standardise examination procedures across UG and PG.
School of Informatics - all are compliant. The PG taught was already a combined board.

School of Mathematics - their Board structure was almost fully compliant. Looking at the ‘service course’ Board structure.

School of Physics and Astronomy - have looked at this in detail and have taken on as much as possible. The School found this to be a very helpful exercise.

The involvement of external examiners was briefly discussed. It was felt that it would be useful for the external examiners to be invited to attend the January boards if they wished to so that they could be involved in the whole process and meet with students.

6. NEW IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS

Considered

Schools were asked to comment on new home office recommendations on the proposals to monitor students attendance.

Noted

- At the current time there was still a level of debate on the policy. Among these, was the issue of what exactly will constitute monitoring attendance and how it will work.

- The Principal has written directly to the Home Office listing a number of concerns the University of Edinburgh has.

- It was unanimously felt that any such procedure which required Schools to monitor students attendance would require an enormous amount of extra work. For discrimination reasons, this new legislation would have to be applied to all students within the University.

- The University has a policy of encouraging students to take some responsibility for scheduling their own time. Taking an attendance list may cause tension and relations may suffer

Agreed

- It was agreed that a robust college response was needed to this issue. The Convenor would meet with the Head of College to frame a college level response.

- The Convenor would forward any response to Committee members

ACTION
7. **BSC General Degree & BSc Ordinary Degree in a Designated Discipline**

**Considered**

Amendments to the College Regulations Paper B)

**Noted**

- The background to this document was that if a student does a joint degree outside the College and fails to progress to senior honours, the chances are they will not be eligible for ordinary degree (as there will not be enough S&E elements).

- It was thought that the College should if possible come up with generic regulations that could cover all the degrees within the College, without having to change the regulations each time.

- There are problems with the BSc General degree in that currently a student can achieve a BSc General without having taken any honours science.

- It was suggested that for ordinary degrees the College should determine the requirement. The student would have to have met the requirement for progression to senior honours.

- In effect this would mean that a student would have 120 attained at Ordinary level, rather than as current 80. This will simplify requirements although make the barrier slightly higher. This was thought to be potentially a good idea, although it was in need of clarification.

- Another suggestion was that with BSc General, a student would have taken half courses in Science & Engineering (30 in S&E at level 9).

- If these suggestions were approved into the regulations, suitable transitional arrangements would have to be made for students already on these courses.

**Resolved**

The proposals were accepted

**Action**

David Williams to re-draft regulations accordingly.  

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*DW*
8. PERMISSION TO TAKE LEVEL 7 COURSES IN YEAR 2 OF PROGRAMMES

Considered

Guidance on the inclusion in Degree Programme Tables of Level 7 courses in year 2 programmes (level2).

Noted

- The paper draws attention to possible problems with degree programme tables concerning permission at year 2 at study level 7.

- The document describes permissions in the curricula project. Single honours and integrated – max 70 points at level 7 combined level 8. It also describes the position for number of programmes in our college & schools with the credits at level 7 year 2.

- Some schools do not permit students to take level 7 in year 2 although some students do take these as additional over and above 120 or level 7 taken in place of optional courses (although this is not formally allowed in DPT and tend to be language courses)

- This will not be permissible in EUCLID – either a concession must be given or DPT set up to indicate if permitted to take level 7 in year 2. This means for those schools who do not permit level 7 at year 2 they will have to have a good reason to allow students to do so.

- Progression rules proposal will allow up to 120 at level 7 – take 480 at level 7 or above.

- There will be a similar problem with PGT students where students take level 9 as addition options which may not be formally allowed.

9. EUCLID

Received

A brief oral report from the Head of Academic Affairs regarding the current situation.

Noted

- On the assessment side, two groups had been set up. A group considering business processes and another considering more technical aspects of interfaces.
- Concern was expressed regarding the load on the system at times of high data input and of the reliability of the system during times when it would be put under enormous pressure. EUCLID was aware of this issue and was carrying out tests, although it was difficult to simulate exact situations.

- It was suggested that a back-up system should be employed into which information will be backed-up on a regular basis, rather than a one-off download if there is a problem in EUCLID.

- Curriculum management EUCLID were arranging for a team to come and give a demonstration detailed PCAM/CCAM timetables on Thursday 11th December. The College Office would contact TOs shortly asking them to disseminate the information within, Schools and to Convenors of Boards of Studies.

10. NEW PROGRAMMES / COURSES

Geosciences – These programmes were agreed in principle although clarification was still needed. It was agreed that these programmes would be formally approved off-line, after the Geoscience Board meeting.

Physics – The new programme was approved

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- VLE

Noted

- It was crucial that core operating systems such as e-mail and student admission system could be supported at all times.

- Schools should identify critical moments in the academic year when additional support would be needed.

Agreed

- The Convenor would contact J Haywood regarding problems schools have experienced with the level of system support of WebCT, advising that it was felt to be reducing to an unacceptable level. Clarification was needed to identify which systems were guaranteed as a base-line system and a strategy needed to have an alternative back-up.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20th January 2009 at 2.00 p.m. in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building