1. **Key Purpose of the paper**

To report to Senate on the 8 Nov. and 1 Dec. 2017 meetings of ULTSEC. The minutes of these meetings are attached as Annexes 1 and 2, and the full papers for both meetings are available at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/governance/committees/ULTSEC/docs/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/governance/committees/ULTSEC/docs/).

2. **Key issues addressed in the minutes:**

Members of Senate are asked to note ULTSEC’s:

a. Discussion of reports from the University’s branch campuses (Annex 1, Minutes 1 to 3).

b. Consideration of the annual report on the outcome of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (Annex 1, Minutes 4 to 6).

c. Discussion of the first year of the full implementation of Stage Evaluation Questionnaires (Annex 1, Minutes 7 to 9).

d. Consideration of a paper on the academic teaching qualifications and opportunities for professional recognition; agreement of priorities in this area; and the intention to review the provision in this area (Annex 1, Minutes 10 to 12).

e. Discussion of a first draft of a proposed University Education Strategy, and the plans to conduct a wide consultation on an updated draft during the Spring Term 2018 (Annex 2, Minutes 1 to 3). The updated draft will be considered at the 6 Mar. 2018 meeting of Senate, as part of the University-wide consultation.

f. Discussion of a paper on the University’s performance in the in the 2018 Times Good University Guide; the Committee’s request for further analysis of the University’s poor comparative performance on services and facilities spend; and the Committee’s resolution that the KPIs for the new University Strategic Vision and Education Strategy should not include the proportion of good degrees awarded (Annex 2, Minutes 4 to 6).

g. Consideration of a report from Internal Audit on assessment and feedback, and the decisions taken by ULTSEC in relation to the recommendations in this report (Annex 2, Minutes 9 to 11).

h. Approval of a procedure for considering requests for additional Out of Hours student access to University facilities (Annex 2, Minutes 12 to 14).

i. Approval of 2+2 Pathway Agreement with Harbin Engineering University, and of a proposal to renew the educational partnership with Durham University for the MA European History (Annex 2, Minute 22).

j. Re-validation of taught programmes in Civil Engineering, Music, Planning and Urban Design and Psychology following successful Learning and Teaching Reviews.

Senate is also asked to note the reports of chair’s action taken on behalf of ULTSEC, attached as Annexes 3 and 4.

3. **Recommendations:**

There are no items recommended to Senate.
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
8 November 2017
Minutes

Present: Professor S Cholerton (Chair), Dr P Ansell, Dr M Armstrong (vice Professor S Stead), Professor R Barton, Professor M Bentley, Professor P Bradley, Mrs L Braiden (Chair for Item 1), Professor A Broderick, Mr I Garfield (vice Ms C Rogers), Dr R Graham, Dr C Guilding, Dr R Harrison, Professor B Hirst, Ms E Kampouraki, Professor J Kirby, Dr S Marsham, Dr S Meacher (Secretary), Mr R South, Dr R Valentine (vice Professor J Calvert), and Mr G Watkins.

Apologies: Professor H Berry, Professor J Calvert, Dr S Edwards, and Ms C Rogers, Professor S Stead, Mr D Sharples, Mrs J Taylor-Roe.

In attendance: Ms N Oosman-Watts (Item II) and Ms S Gill (Item IV).

Part 1: Strategic and Policy Issues

I Reports from the Branch Campuses

1. Considered: updates from Newcastle University London (NUL), NUMed Malaysia (NUMed) and Newcastle University International Singapore (NUIS) (Documents A1-3).

2. Noted:

a. That recruitment to the MBBS and Biomedical Sciences programmes delivered at NUMed had been above original targets. The increasing numbers had made it necessary to look into options for expanding learning and teaching space and re-purposing current space for activities such as Team-Based Learning. It was suggested that the Estates Support Service could advise on possible teaching space conversion solutions.

b. That staff recruitment was another area for development at NUMed, particularly with regard to recruitment into certain specialties (notably this year Medicine, Surgery, Childrens’ Health and Women’s Health) and senior staff at NUMed were working with the Executive Director for HR to enhance recruitment procedures as a means of addressing this. Work was also ongoing to make local packages attractive for locally employed Government Hospital specialists. The Malaysian Ministry of Health had recently relaxed the rules about their employees working for private medical schools as from January 2018 and NUMed leadership were working with local departments to try and create an attractive package for applicants.

c. That the BSc Biomedical Sciences at NUMed had been given full accreditation by the Malaysian Qualifications Authority and Malaysian Ministry of Health Education in February 2017, and the final accreditation visit for the Foundation Certificate in Biological and Biomedical Sciences had also taken place in July 2017. The outcome of this process was expected imminently.

d. That NU London also reported above-target recruitment to undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. Direct recruitment (rather than via agents) had increased by 3% to 50% reducing agent costs and reflecting the robustness of the NUL marketing and recruitment services partnership. Recruitment to English-language pathway programmes was significantly below target, however.

e. That progression across programmes at NUL had proven strong with on average 93% of students progressing from 2016/17 into 2017/18 programmes (97% of HE students and 85% of pathway).

f. That the results from the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Stage Evaluations at NUL suggested that student satisfaction with their experience was low. Particularly disappointing satisfaction scores had been received for learning resources. Programme leaders would be sharing
their action plans with student cohorts to show clearly how their feedback was being responded to.

g. That activity at NUIS was currently focused on ensuring a successful start for the new joint undergraduate programmes, which began in early September. The Head of Academic Operations recorded his gratitude for the contribution of Ms L Johnstone from LTDS to supporting the implementation of quality management procedures for the new programmes.

h. That the official opening of the Newcastle Research and Innovation Institute Singapore (NewRIIS) had taken place on 2 November 2017. The opening ceremony had been attended by potential research and industrial partners with whom the institute hoped to foster collaboration opportunities.

i. That the Singapore Committee of Private Education had awarded NewRIIS Private Education Institution status, which meant that the University could now move forward with its plans for the delivery of new MSc programmes.

3. Resolved:

   a. That the Estates Support Service liaise with the NUMed Dean of Academic Affairs to provide advice on learning and teaching space development. **Action: IG**

**II Destination of Leavers from Higher Education**


5. Noted:

   a. That the Committee considered the annual report summarising the latest graduate destination data for the University relating to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey of 2015-16 graduates. The University had met or exceeded each of its response rate targets for the survey, as set by HESA.

   b. That the DLHE survey was particularly crucial as it influenced the University’s league table position and provided two of the six metrics for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): these were the Employability Indicator and the Highly Skilled metric, which both focused on the UK undergraduate population. The Employability Indicator had risen slightly, and although this did not influence league tables, it was likely to benefit the University in the next TEF. Highly Skilled Employment Indicator was the proportion of UK undergraduate full-time leavers (who responded to the survey) reporting they were in highly skilled employment or further study. The University’s score for this measure had decreased slightly to 80.6%, and the institution needed to aim for a minimum of 82.1% in next year’s DLHE survey of 2016-17 graduates to have a chance of achieving a positive flag for this metric in the TEF.

   c. That the Times Good University Guide was the first league table each year to publish the latest DLHE data, and in this year’s guide the university ranked 28th for Graduate Prospects: a drop from 15th in the previous year.

   d. That location and regional differences were arguably a contributing factor to the University’s performance; however, such differences were not taken into account by league table calculations.

   e. That data relating to MBBS graduates who were undertaking NHS Foundation Programme training could be included in the University’s DLHE figures.

   f. That the report also included Longitudinal Educational Outcomes data, which had been released by the Department for Education in June 2017. This data would be included in the next TEF as a supplementary metric and showed that 80.8% of Newcastle graduates were in further study or sustained employment three years after graduation, which ranked the University 12th out of 20 Russell Group institutions [NB. not all Russell Group institutions had disclosable data].
g. Due to the highly competitive nature of graduate destinations rankings, there was a continuing need for effort from all staff – and particularly the Academic Leads for Employability and Enterprise – to support the collection of as many positive outcomes as possible for this year’s DLHE data collection. The University’s performance in the 2018 DLHE survey would rely heavily on support from Schools in collecting data to ensure a positive outcome. A faculty-specific DLHE data report would be shared with each FLTSEC, and data would also be shared at the next Employability and Enterprise Forum.

6. Resolved: that the FMS Deputy Dean liaise with the Careers Service regarding the provision of NHS Foundation Programme information for the DLHE survey. **Action: RV/NOW**

III Stage Evaluation Questionnaires

7. Considered: a report with headline results from Stage Evaluations conducted for the 2016-17 academic year (Document B).

8. Noted:

   a. That, in line with the approach agreed by the Committee at its meetings held in July 2014 and, following a pilot phase, in February 2017, Stage Evaluations had been conducted for the first time in 2017. All stages of undergraduate programmes were required to conduct Stage Evaluation, including branch campus provision, but excluding final-year students (who are invited to participate in the National Student Survey), intercalating students, and Erasmus students. The PVC Learning and Teaching had granted an exemption from Stage Evaluations for INTO Newcastle University.

   b. That all Stage Evaluation questionnaires used the same question set, which was a combination of Likert-style and free-text comment questions. As agreed by ULTSEC at its meeting in February 2017, the questionnaire used the same core questions as were used in the National Student Survey 2017, augmented by additional Newcastle-specific questions relating to learning resources and support.

   c. That, in the terms of overall satisfaction rate, 72.0% of students agreed with the statement ‘Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course’, based on an overall response rate of 23.4%. Both figures were substantially below the levels that the University normally obtained when participating in external national surveys. These differences were suggested to be multifactorial including a possible tendency for students to be more positive when asked about their experience by an external agency and students to be more positive about their experience after having experienced the final year. There was no institution wide promotion campaign of the stage evaluation unlike the external surveys which may account for the difference in response rate.

   d. That the headlines report provided evidence that the results could serve as a source of rich data, which could be used for quality enhancement purposes. The data collected in 2017 would serve as a useful basis for longitudinal evaluation in future years. The Committee noted that caution should be exercised against using the data as a basis for making policy decisions in isolation from other sources of evidence.

   e. That the data appeared to indicate that Stage 2 students were marginally less satisfied than their Stage 1 peers. It was suggested that one factor behind this finding could be that Stage 2 students tended to have more confidence to be critical of their student experience.

   f. That the Committee agreed that further analysis of the data would be helpful. In particular, it was felt to be important to give consideration to the proportion of students who were actually dissatisfied with particular aspects of the student experience.

   g. That quantitative data should be shared with Deans of Undergraduate Studies, but that the data should not be published centrally at this point. Ease of use of the data and reporting and presentation formats for management information of this nature should be discussed by the Digital Campus Steering Group.
h. That further investigation should be carried out into the utility of qualitative data from Stage Evaluations. The Committee suggested that consultation should take place with FLTSECs regarding the use of free-text comments from Stage Evaluations.

i. That Stage Evaluations had not been conducted by Combined Honours or the School of Medical Education. In the case of the former, a programme-level questionnaire was in use, which had been co-created with the student body, and it was the preference of the Faculty to allow this practice to continue. The Committee suggested that Combined Honours could submit a formal request to be exempted from conducting Stage Evaluations for consideration by the PVC Learning and Teaching. The School of Medical Education should be required to conduct Stage Evaluations for the MBBS programme but these could be supported by the Faculty’s own virtual learning environment, provided results data could be shared with LTDS.

9. Resolved:

a. That LTDS carry out further analysis into the proportion of students who were dissatisfied in Stage Evaluations. **Action: SM**

b. That LTDS share the full set of quantitative data with Deans of Undergraduate Studies, carry out further investigation and consultation into the potential for sharing and presenting Stage Evaluation qualitative results data, and consult on the implications of doing this with FLTSECs. **Action: SM**

c. That the School of Medical Education and Faculty of Medical Sciences Learning and Teaching Support Unit arrange for Stage Evaluations to be conducted for the MBBS programme in 2017-18. **Action: JM**

d. That LTDS discuss options for the implementation of Stage Evaluation with Combined Honours. **Action: SM**

**IV Academic Teaching Qualifications**


11. Noted:

a. That at its meeting in February 2017, the Committee had considered papers on the operation of the UKPSF CPD Framework, and the proportion of academic staff at the University who possessed a HESA-recognised Academic Teaching Qualification (ATQ). The Committee requested that a paper should be produced for discussion at FLTSECs on ‘where and how support for engagement with professional recognition could be prioritised’ leading to a report back to ULTSEC. This consultation was undertaken in the spring and summer 2017.

b. That since the request was made by the Committee, the staff responsible for CASAP, ILTHE and the UKPSF CPD Scheme had moved from the then Staff Development Unit to LTDS, and now constituted LTDS’s Academic Practice Team. Additionally HESA had published additional sector-wide data on the number and proportion of staff at English HEIs who held ATQs. The report considered by the Committee addressed the issues raised in February 2017, taking into account these important changes to the broader context.

c. That the latest figures on the proportion of academic staff at the University who possess a HESA-recognised Academic Teaching Qualification (ATQ) showed that 46% of Newcastle’s eligible academic staff had an ATQ in 2015-16. This represented progress towards the University’s current aim of 50% of academic staff holding an ATQ. It placed Newcastle 15th out of the top 30 English universities in the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide. Consequently, the University’s performance was consistent with that of universities it regarded as comparators.

d. That the University awarded ATQs to its own staff through its HEA-accredited UKPSF CPD Scheme. This has three routes: CASAP and its constituent modules; the Certificate in Medical Education delivered by FMS; and through the UKPSF Experiential Route. Whilst the Experiential Route had
been growing since its introduction, and that the addition in 2016-17 of the ability to award D3 through this route had been a valuable development, it was clear that the programme routes had a very significantly greater impact in terms of UKPSF awards that directly support the University in achieving its objective of having 50% of its academic staff holding an ATQ.

e. That there had been a very significant increase in the demand for CASAP since 2013-14. The number of runs of the first two CASAP modules (i.e. those that comprise the Newcastle Teaching Award, and which are the typical probationary requirement for new academic staff) had been increased to meet this demand, but anecdotal feedback indicated that some new academic staff were waiting longer than was desirable (both for the support and development of new staff, and in order to allow such staff to complete the Newcastle Teaching Award within their two year probationary period). There was also anecdotal evidence of unmet demand among research students who wished to develop their learning and teaching knowledge and practice, and to be involved in teaching while they are research students.

f. That the Committee considered the following five priorities recommended within the report for supporting staff to gain professional recognition for their learning and teaching practice, to meet the demand for CASAP and for training for research students:

- Continuing to progress towards the benchmark of 50% of academic staff having an ATQ.
- Increasing the number of runs of CASAP Module 1 from four to five with immediate effect, and of Module 2 from three to four from 2017-18, by reallocating staff time from support for the UKPSF Experiential Route.
- Developing new more group-based approaches to supporting staff on the Experiential Route in order to free up resource to support UKPSF programme routes.
- Maintaining the Experiential Route as open at all levels (D1/D2/D3) but placing greater emphasis on support for D3 applications to support the continuing professional development of the next generation of leaders in learning and teaching at Newcastle.
- Continuing with the current pilot of supporting research students with sufficient teaching to gain D1 through the experiential route, and if this pilot was successful to make this the default route for research students seeking this recognition.

g. That a full review of CASAP and the UKPSF CPD Scheme would be initiated in January 2018 by LTDS. This would include wide consultation across the University and the full involvement of ULTSEC and Staff Committee. Any revised approach would be unlikely to come into effect until September 2019.

12. Resolved: that the Committee endorse all of the proposed priorities as set out in Document D.

Part 2: Routine Business

V Statements from the Chair


VI Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Action Log

14. Confirmed: the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 18 October 2017, and noted the progress against the actions agreed by the Committee (Documents J and K).

15. Noted:

a. That the minutes of the 18 October 2017 meeting of the Committee omitted the name of the SAgE Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) from the list of attendees and included the name of the Director of Student Services in error.

16. Resolved: that the minutes of the 18 October 2017 meeting be corrected and republished. Action: SM

VII Reports from Members
17. Reported:
   
a. That the Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that the majority of Schools in HaSS had fulfilled the requirement to provide a piece of consolidated feedback to students on the outcomes of student surveys and issues arising from Student-Staff Committees. Remaining Schools would be providing the consolidated feedback after November Board of Studies meetings.

b. That the FMS Deputy Dean reported that all Schools had fulfilled the requirement. A range of mechanisms had been used for this, including dedicated slots within induction lectures, Student Voice notices on Blackboard, noticeboards, and Facebook groups.

c. That the SAgE Associate Dean reported that the Dean of Undergraduate Studies had met with Directors of Excellence in Learning and Teaching to emphasise the importance of this requirement, and all of the Faculty’s five Schools would be reporting to the forthcoming FLTSEC meeting on how they had provided the consolidated feedback.

d. That with regard to student representation and the Student Voice, the new MySchool App, which had been demonstrated at the October meeting of the Committee, was now being widely communicated, however, not all Schools had provided NUSU with details of their course representatives yet. It had come to light that some Schools had renamed their Student-Staff Committee as the Student Voice Committee (and other Schools were considering also doing this), but introduced the possibility for confusion and/or inconsistency in the student experience. The Committee suggested that consideration be given to whether there could be flexibility within the Student Representation Policy for the nomenclature of Student-Staff Committees.

e. That the HaSS Dean of Undergraduate Studies had, together with a number of other University representatives, attended the recent ‘Wonkfest’ conference organised by WonkHE, and suggested that broad institutional representation at this event would be very useful in the future.

f. That the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Spaces Sub-Committee reported that a recommendation on the simplification of the process for requesting out of hours access to University buildings would be submitted for consideration at the December meeting of the Committee. A Cluster Strategy Task and Finish Group had also recently been established, and would report to the Committee on its recommendations in December 2018. The Committee also noted the significant implications for the student experience of the refurbishment of the Claremont/Daysh buildings, and requested that further discussion of this project take place at the Committee in the near future.

g. That a Task and Finish Group had been set up to oversee a review of the University’s current and future VLE provision encompassing both Blackboard and the LSE systems used in parts of FMS. The Group was keen to consult as fully as possible with staff, academic and professional, and students. A staff survey and student questionnaire had been launched in October and November respectively.

h. That it was expected that external reviews of the academic quality and standards of elements of the University’s provision would take place during the current academic year. These concerned a QAA review of Northumberland College, which delivered awards validated by the University; an Independent Schools Inspectorate review of INTO Newcastle University provision; and potentially an Educational Oversight review of NU London, although this had not yet been confirmed.

18. Resolved: that LTDS and NUSU should consider the issue highlighted in Noted d above, and bring forward an amended policy for consideration by the Committee. Action: SM/GW/RS

VIII Report from Student Experience Sub-Committee

19. Received: a report from the 18 September 2017 meeting of the sub-committee. (Document G)

20. Noted:
a. That the Committee noted Student Experience Sub-Committee’s consideration of an update on the provision of support for students with mental health issues, following concerns being raised about the level of support in recent Annual Monitoring and Review exercises, itself reflecting increasing demand for mental health services across the university sector. A number of initiatives had been employed to address the increasing demand, including the recruitment of 9 new therapists (1 FTE and 8 part-time), offering out of hours appointments, and increased provision of online and self-help resources, as well as the forging of closer links with community services.

Part 3: Matters of Report

IX Report of Chair’s Action

21. Noted: the Chair’s Action taken on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting (Document O).

X Any Other Business

22. Reported: that there were no items of Any Other Business.

XI Dates of Future Meetings

23. Reported: that meetings of the Committee would be held as follows:

- 1 December 2017, 09.00, 5.13 King’s Gate
- 31 January 2018, 13:00, 5.13 King’s Gate
- 14 March 2018, 13:00, 5.13 King’s Gate
- 2 May 2018 (Videoconference), 08.00, NUBS Boardroom
- 6 June 2018, 13.00, 5.13 King’s Gate
- 4 July 2018, 13.00, 5.13 King’s Gate
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
1 December 2017

Minutes

Present: Professor S Cholerton (Chair), Dr P Ansell, Professor P Bradley, Mrs L Braiden, Professor J Calvert, Dr S Edwards, Dr R Graham, Dr R Harrison (Minute Secretary), Professor B Hirst, Ms E Kampuraki, Professor J Kirby, Dr S Marsham, Ms L Nicholson, Mr D Sharples, Mr R South, Professor S Stead, Mr G Watkins and Mr J Williams (vice Mrs J Taylor-Roe).

Apologies: Dr M Bentley, Dr C Guiding and Mrs C Rogers.

In attendance: Dr C Campbell (Item II)

Part 1: Strategic and Policy Issues

1 Education Strategy

1. Considered: a proposed initial draft of a University Education Strategy (Document A).

2. Noted:

a. The significant consultation that had taken place on the development of the draft Education Strategy, prior to and alongside the development of the new University Strategic Vision. The draft Education Strategy had been developed to ensure effective implementation of the education elements of the University’s Strategic Vision, and the four guiding principles of the Strategic Vision had been embedded in the text of the draft Education Strategy.

b. That the primary intended audience for the Education Strategy was internal, as it would be a key reference point for the development of educational provision at the University over the next five years. It was anticipated, however, that key themes and issues set out in the Education Strategy would be embedded within externally facing materials. The approach to doing this would vary depending on the channel of communication, and the intended audience.

c. That the direction and content of the draft Education Strategy set out in Annex 1 was welcomed. A number of detailed suggestions for revision were made:

i. That the word ‘partnership’ should be added to paragraph 3 before the reference to ‘co-creation’, to emphasise the partnership working between staff and students.

ii. That in paragraph 5 the word ‘encourage’ should be replaced by ‘empower’.

iii. That in a number of places the language in the draft Education Strategy could be made less complex, and that the phrasing needed to be more active in order to emphasise the role of the Education Strategy as a call to action for all members of the University.

iv. That the commitment to inspire, challenge and support students needed to be augmented by clear references to enabling student success.

v. That the term ‘entrepreneurial’ was potentially limiting, and greater emphasis should be placed on ‘enterprise’ and ‘enterprising’.

vi. That the reference to ‘limits of knowledge’ was recognised as valid, but that the word ‘limits’ had potentially negative connotations and this statement could usefully be amended.

d. That the section of the draft Education Strategy on developing the whole student would link closely to the development that was already underway of a new Graduate Framework. This would replace the existing Graduate Skills Framework, with a more broadly conceived but less complex approach that addressed holistic student development.
e. That the proposed key actions set out in Annex 2 were also welcomed, although it was noted that these were less developed than the main Strategy set out in Annex 1. A number of detailed suggestions for revision of Annex 2 were made:

i. The need for a clearer and stronger emphasis on how the University would deliver the commitment to students benefitting from studying in a research-intensive environment.

ii. The importance of ensuring that all the objectives in the main body of the Strategy were clearly reflected in at least one of the key actions in Annex 2.

iii. The need to be clearer about the way that the actions relating to Technology Enhanced Learning linked to and supported activities in relation to the other key themes in the draft Education Strategy.

iv. That some of the points in Annex 2 should be combined into a single action (for example 13 and 14).

v. That consideration should be given to whether the action points in Annex 2 should be presented under sub-headings for each of the four key themes in the draft Education Strategy.

vi. That point 16 could usefully be re-phrased to reflect earlier language about supporting students to fulfil their potential, rather than introduce the concept of the student learning experience.

3. Resolved: that the draft Education Strategy and covering paper should be amended in line with the Committee’s discussion, and circulated at the start of January 2018 for a University-wide consultation. (Action: SC/RH)

II The Times Good University Guide 2018


5. Noted:

a. That while the University’s fall of four places between the 2017 and 2018 Guides reflected in part lower levels of NSS and DLHE performance in 2018, the element of the Guide in which the University was ranked lowest continued to be services and facilities spend. While it was welcome that the University had risen from 69th to 65th on this metric, this was still a matter of concern. It was possible that the disappointing performance on this metric might reflect in part the devolved nature of the University, with services and support that was provided centrally (and therefore counted towards the service and facilities metric) being devolved at Newcastle (with the result that it did not count towards this metric). It was also possible that it reflected lower levels of spend, or more likely it was due to some combination of these two factors. The University needed to understand the extent to which its performance on this metric reflected organisational structure, and how far it was due to lower levels of spending on key services in support of the student learning experience. This understanding was essential to inform decision making on how to address the low level of performance on this metric.

b. That there had been an improvement in Staff-Student Ratio (SSR) compared to the previous year, resulting in a rise from 51st to 37th on this metric. The recent HESA staff return suggested that for 2016-176 the SSR would fall again, to under 14.

c. That the University was strongly committed to widening participation, acknowledging that pursuit of this agenda would lower average entry tariffs. It would be helpful to see the impact of this broken down by subject, to give an indication of the extent to which different subjects were contributing to delivery of the University’s widening participation agenda.

d. That the Good University Guide, along with other league tables, used the proportion of firsts and upper seconds awarded as a performance metric. This was problematic as it could be seen to incentivise the award of firsts and upper seconds. The Committee felt that it was also problematic to set institutional targets for this particular metric, and to include it in institutional KPIs. Degree
classifications were however, a key measure of student outcomes and it was therefore important that degree classifications were regularly monitored.

6. Resolved:
   a. That Planning should conduct further analysis of the data on services and facilities spend, comparing the University’s spend to that in its broader, 35 institution comparator group, to better understand the different extents to which the University’s lower levels of spend reflected organisational structures and actual spending levels, and to report on this to the 14 Mar. 2018 meeting of the Committee.  (Action: CC)
   b. That the University’s Strategic Vision and Education Strategy should not include a KPI or target in relation to the proportion of good degrees awarded, but that this data should instead be included in the set of additional metrics that would be monitored alongside progress to delivering KPI targets.  (Action: SC/RH/CC)

III NUSU Impact Report

7. Received: the NUSU Impact Report for 2016-17 (Document C).

8. Noted: that consideration of this item should be postponed to the 31 Jan. 2018 meeting of the Committee.

IV Internal Audit of Assessment and Feedback

9. Considered: the draft report from the Internal Audit of Assessment and Feedback, and a paper setting out those Internal Audit recommendations where a decision was needed from the Committee (Documents D1 and D2).

10. Noted:
   a. That the Internal Audit report was described as draft, as while the report itself had been finalised there were four recommendations where a response to the report could not be made until ULTSEC had considered the issues raised. Document D2 provided contextual information to support the Committee’s consideration of these recommendations.
   b. That the draft Internal Audit report had recommended that the University review its policy that feedback on assessed work be provided within 20 working days, as several comparator universities now had a limit of 15 working days. Document D2 demonstrated that while this was the case, many comparator universities had not reduced this limit. It also showed that there was no simple correlation between the length of the institution-mandated maximum time for returning feedback, and student views on timeliness of feedback as recorded in NSS results; and that the University had one of the highest NSS scores in its comparator group for timeliness of feedback. The Committee also noted that the most recent NUSU survey of students on assessment and feedback had shown that lack of timeliness had not at that time been a serious concern of students.
   c. That it was important that the guidelines regarding the security and confidentiality of assessed work that would be developed in response to Recommendation 7 in the draft Internal Audit report were proportionate, and did not jeopardise the timely provision of feedback.
   d. That Recommendation 4a. in the draft Internal Audit report did not acknowledge that the University, working with students, had already developed and published guidance on what constituted effective feedback on assessed work. This guidance remained appropriate.
   e. That there was insufficient acknowledgment within the draft Internal Audit report of the very considerable work at academic unit, faculty and institutional levels to provide guidance, training and development opportunities for academic staff on providing effective feedback on assessed work. In addition to this work, LTDS had developed a new set of resources (Newcastle University Learning and Teaching Essentials) that would be published once the new University intranet was available. These would provide staff with up-to-date and focused guidance on key issues, including those relating to assessment and feedback.
f. That the draft Internal Audit report had identified some small variations between academic units in the enforcement of deadlines for the submission of assessed work, and on this basis had recommended that the policy should be reinforced and all academic units instructed to enforce submission deadlines rigidly. Views on this recommendation differed. Some advocated that the report’s recommendation be implemented; others felt that the variations identified in the report were minor, and that permitting this extent of variation within the existing policy appropriately respected professional judgment exercised at the local level. There were also concerns that rigid enforcement created a significant risk of disproportionate impact on students, a view supported by student representatives present at the meeting.

11. Resolved:
   a. That the responses to Recommendations 1, 2, 6 and 7 in the Internal Audit draft report, set out in Document D1, were appropriate.
   b. That having reviewed the University’s current policy on turnaround times for feedback, the current aim of doing this within 20 working days be reaffirmed (subject to ensuring that the policy made it clear that 20 working days was a limit not a recommendation, and that the definition of when the University was ‘open’ and whether the 20 working day limit included the day of submission).
   c. That the chairs of ULTSEC and FLTSECs should write to Heads of Academic Unit to remind them of the importance of capturing and retaining the required information to allow implementation of the 20 working day turnaround to be monitored. (Action: SC/JC/SE/RG)
   d. That the University had already defined what constituted effective feedback so that further work on this was not required, but that this information should be more effectively disseminated through the publication of short guides on feedback as part of the Newcastle University Learning and Teaching Essentials initiative (which would be launched when the new University intranet was made available to staff). (Action: GRB)
   e. That the project to develop guidelines on the use of mark proformas to support effective feedback on assessed work should be completed, and these guidelines published. (Action: GRB)
   f. That the project on developing the University’s policies and systems for online submission, marking and feedback should continue, including the promotion of the use existing of services as well as the development of these services. (Action: RG/DS)
   g. That the policy on the enforcement of deadlines for the submission of assessed work should not be amended, and that there was no need to instruct academic units to enforce submission deadlines rigidly.
   h. That chairs of FLTSECs and Head of LTDS should agree a more consistent and clearer definition of the granularity of reporting from academic units on compliance with the 20 working day turnaround requirement, for implementation in the 2018-19 round of AMR. (Action: RH)
   i. That SAgE should include in future Faculty Annual Strategic Reports consideration of performance against the 20 working day turnaround for feedback on assessed work. (Action: SE)
   j. That the PVC – Learning and Teaching and Head of LTDS should finalise the response to the draft Internal Audit report on the basis of ULTSEC’s decisions, and submit this to Internal Audit. (Action: SC/RH)

V Learning and Teaching Spaces

12. Considered: the termly report from the Learning and Teaching Spaces Sub-Committee, and a proposed mechanism for considering requests for additional Out Of Hours access to facilities (Documents E and E1).

13. Noted:
   a. The progress on a range of learning and teaching spaces projects, as set out in Document E. The Committee particularly noted that a budget was now in place to pay for furniture for smaller
developments, and that Executive Board had approved the budget for larger refurbishments (for example of lecture theatres and seminar rooms) for final approval by Council in December. In relation to the latter the agreement was that there would need to be an annual report of activity, but subject to this being satisfactory the budget would roll forward from year to year.

[Secretary’s Note: Council approved the budget for L&T refurbishments.]

b. That the Sub-Committee was proposing a revised process for considering requests for additional Out Of Hours Study Space, taking account of the concerns raised previously at the Committee that the proposed process was too complex. The process now proposed addressed this, while ensuring the process remained sufficiently robust. Additionally, in response to feedback it now included two routes for such requests to be made: one through NUSU officers and structures, and one through Student-Staff Committees.

c. The significant concerns of some members of the Committee regarding the failure to incorporate 24-hour access into the design brief for the Urban Sciences Building, which SAgE had specifically asked to be included. There were also concerns if current guidelines on Out Of Hours access meant that such access would not be possible other than on the ground floor, as many buildings had specialist equipment on levels above the ground floor so that Out Of Hours student access to this equipment could legitimately be needed Out Of Hours.

d. The significant and welcome progress made in recent weeks to allow increased Out Of Hours access to the Urban Sciences Building, and the importance of ensuring in all future new builds full account was taken of Out Of Hours access when specifying these projects.

e. That while there remained some concerns about the potential length of time it may take to consider and, if approved, implement requests for additional access, the obligation in the proposed process on the University to take a pro-active approach on Out Of Hours access was welcome.

14. Resolved:

a. That ESS should investigate when and where the decision was taken not to include a need for 24-hour access in the design of the Urban Sciences Building, and report back on this to ULTSEC. (Action: CR)

b. That the proposed process for requesting additional Out Of Hours access be approved, subject to ensuring regular and effective reporting through the Learning and Teaching Spaces Sub-Committee on requests and the outcomes of such requests. (Action: CR)

VI NUSU Feedback Campaign

15. Considered: a paper on NUSU’s Feedback Campaign, on feedback on examinations (Document F).

16. Noted:

a. That the campaign was focused on raising student and staff awareness of existing University commitments on providing feedback on examinations and drawing attention to examples of effective practice in providing such feedback, not on seeking revisions to University policy. NUSU’s Education Officer had attended all three FLTSECs to raise staff awareness of the campaign, and answer questions from academic units. There would be a further opportunity to discuss the campaign with academic staff at the DELT Forum on 4 Dec. 2017.

b. The importance of effective communication, so that students were aware of the existing systematic approaches in academic units to providing feedback on examinations and took advantage of these opportunities; and that staff were clear about their responsibilities, and aware that NUSU’s campaign was taking place and the potential for this to increase student demand for feedback.

c. The importance of ensuring alignment of the timelines for the NUSU campaign, and the marking, release of marks and provision of feedback by academic units. This did not mean that the NUSU campaign should not start before marks would become available, but it did mean that it was
important that the campaign was clear to students about the timescales on which feedback would be available from academic units. It was also important that academic units were pro-active in ensuring students were aware of when they could expect their marks and feedback on the Semester 1 examinations.

Part 2: Routine Business

VII Statements from the Chair

17. Reported: that there were no Statements from the Chair.

VIII Minutes from the Previous Meeting and Action Log

18. Confirmed: the minutes of the meeting held 8 Nov. 2017, and noted the progress against the actions agreed by the Committee (Documents G and H).

IX Reports from Members

19. Noted: that the monitoring of cumulative changes to programmes required further consideration, in light of guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority. The October meeting of the Committee had considered proposed revisions to the Programme Changes Policy to take account of this. These revisions still needed to be finalised in light of feedback from faculties. This would happen shortly, along with a clear and practical plan for implementation of the revised policy, which took account of issues raised by faculties. (Action: RH)

X Report from Educational Partnerships Sub-Committee


21. Noted:

a. That while both the Committee and Sub-Committee were content to approve the proposed agreement with Harbin Engineering University, there was a view that the approval requirements for such partnerships was greater than they perhaps needed to be given the level of risk in such partnerships. This issue would be revisited as part of the current review and revision of educational partnership policies and processes, and in light of QAA guidance on qualifications involving more than one degree body.

b. That while the University ensured effective oversight of the programmes delivered through its partnerships with INTO UP (for example through annual monitoring, periodic review and external examining), there was also a need (to be aligned with the UK Quality Code) periodically to refresh due diligence enquiries in relation to all educational partners. For most educational partnerships this took place when the partnership was due for consideration for renewal, but the legal agreement with INTO was open-ended rather than fixed-term. The proposal to establish a regular cycle for considering due diligence issues in relation to INTO UP was therefore appropriate.

c. The welcome progress in putting in place up-to-date legal agreements for the small number of partnerships whose agreements had expired. There had previously been suggestions that putting in place new and renewed legal agreements could be made more timely by establishing a set of template agreements, which could be used for the common types of educational partnership in which the University engaged. This has not been progressed, but at a recent meeting with colleagues in similar roles from other Russell Group universities the Head of Learning and Teaching Development had been informed that all 10 of the Russell Group universities present made use of template agreements in this way.

22. Resolved:

a. That the 2+2 Pathway Agreement leading to a dual award with Harbin Engineering University be approved. (Action: LJ)
b. That renewal of the educational partnership with Durham University in relation to the MA European History be approved, subject to the updating of the legal agreement for this partnership as requested by the Sub-Committee. **(Action: LJ/BYB)**

c. That the proposed approach to considering re-approval of INTO UP as an appropriate educational partnership be approved. **(Action: LJ)**

d. That the Legal Services Team should develop a range of template memoranda of agreement for the types of educational partnership in which the University typically engages, and make these available for use in the partnership approval process to allow more timely development of legal agreements. **(Action: AWW)**

**XI Report from Taught Programmes Sub-Committee**


24. Noted:

   a. The decision to revalidate the taught provision reviewed in Civil Engineering, Music, Planning and Urban Design and Psychology, and the Sub-Committee’s discussion of these reports including the action being taken in relation to examples of exemplary practice and recommendations to the University.

   b. That the Faculty of Medical Sciences had taken action to address the issues identified in the LTR of Psychology regarding space and other resources.

   **Part 3: Matters of Report**

   **XII Report of Chair’s Action**

25. Noted: the Chair’s Action taken on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting (Document K).

   **XIII Any Other business**

26. Reported: that there were no items of Any Other Business.

   **XIV Dates of Future Meetings**

27. Reported: that further meetings of the Committee would be held as follows:

   - 31 January 2018, 13:00, 5.13 King’s Gate
   - 14 March 2018, 13:00, 5.13 King’s Gate
   - 2 May 2018 (Videoconference), 08.00, NUBS Boardroom
   - 6 June 2018, 13.00, 5.13 King’s Gate
   - 4 July 2018, 13.00, 5.13 King’s Gate
Name of committee: University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
Title of paper: Report of Chair’s action taken on behalf of the Committee
Purpose of the paper:
For information ✔ For discussion For recommendation For approval
Author(s): Simon Meacher, LTDS
Date of paper: 2 November 2017

1. Purpose of the paper
To report to ULTSEC on approvals by chair’s action that have taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.

2. Key issues addressed in the paper:
To note:
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching has taken Chair’s action on behalf of ULTSEC to approve:
  - A proposal from the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering to proceed with a transitional plan for the introduction of block teaching in 2018-19, subject to a further report on implementation issues being submitted to the Committee later this year.

3. Recommendations:
There are no recommendations.

4. Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):
Not applicable.

5. Further committee consideration/approvals required:
None.

6. Resourcing implications:
None.

7. Is the paper to be closed? (If yes, please state the reason below):
No
Not applicable.
Name of committee: University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

Title of paper: Report of Chair’s action taken on behalf of the Committee

Purpose of the paper:

For information  ✔  For discussion  For recommendation  For approval

Author(s): Simon Meacher, LTDS

Date of paper: 23 November 2017

1. Purpose of the paper
   To report to ULTSEC on approvals by chair’s action that have taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.

2. Key issues addressed in the paper:
   To note:
   Annex I sets out Chair’s action taken in relation to recommendations concerning degree programmes.

3. Recommendations:
   There are no recommendations.

4. Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):
   Not applicable.

5. Further committee consideration/approvals required:
   None.

6. Resourcing implications:
   None.

7. Is the paper to be closed? (If yes, please state the reason below):
   No
   Not applicable.
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