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 Sharpes, 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
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