

Centre for Alternative Technology: Academic Council

Meeting Minutes 2nd November 2021

(Minutes of previous Academic Council meetings are available from the [Quality Assurance](#) section of the GSE website)

Present (online): Adrian Watson (AW); Alison Pooley (AP); Tim Coleridge (TC); Jane Fisher (JF); Sarah Dalrymple (SD, LJMU Link Tutor); Jemma Pennington (JP); Peter Tyldesley; Alice Read (AR), Nina Xenitdou (NX); Vivian Miller (VM), Teresa Serrano (TS)

Item

1. **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

SD leaving at 11 so meeting recorded. Frances Hill & Luana Parisi send apologies

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 27th July 2021 were accepted as an accurate record. **Action: AR to publish minutes of the July 2021 Academic Council meeting on the GSE website. Action Complete**

3. **Matters Arising**

Items from previous minutes in brackets.

3.1 Rolled over from April 2021 Minutes

(4.3) TC asked whether UEL could allow extensions/more flexibility over the 7 day EC rules for UEL students? LJMU students receive up to 3-week extensions at the module leader's discretion TS extending 7 days extension at UEL to 4-5 weeks. Unsure if EC third attempt in sept to be kept in future but that is currently in place. TC clarified that we could offer unified extension policy to match UEL to LJMU. AW EXT/EC applications increased dramatically, would be useful to be consistent across both unis. SD LJMU have 3 weeks as standard, evidence requirement currently slightly less strict but that is the only difference and unsure when that will change.

Action: AW to meet with TC and AR to discuss then feedback to TS

(7.4) LP to share HEA moodle training module and/or relevant information which is suitable for CAT staff.

Action: AR to pass list of who needs access to TS. Action Complete

- (8.7) Action for Sarah rolled over as absent: *Consideration for next academic council meeting on the timing of re-validation/modifications of programmes and how this impacts LJMU programmes in turn.* **Action Complete**

TC asked if LJMU could allow shorter lead in for September modules to accommodate for UEL revalidation. SD cannot see why notable to put in place changes for Sept 22 if modular level. JF mismatch as UEL module changes wont be ready until March, LJMU ones by April which is almost 11 months later than policy.

Action: SD to speak to Academic Registrar via email copied to JF and TC

- (9.2) Elsevier access system to JISC. **Action Complete** – JISC will be provided for the rest of the year then annually from January. Awaiting letter from JISC.
- (9.4) Issues around submitting large files. TS confirmed everything is passed through Moodle at UEL, however students are limited in file size as this is good practice. **Action Complete** - issue resolved with new 100mb limit within Turnitin and moodle.

It may be possible to upload to MS teams anything video/audio made remotely. **Action Complete** - AW spoke to TW, should not be issue with capacity for storage within Teams.

3.2 From July 2021

- (4.1) AW issues not raised fully with UEL regarding maternity and paternity as EC/intermission. TS policy was under review, once published can be discussed. Pregnancy not EC. AW looking at maternity/paternity leave rather than EC, has bigger impact than intermission. Mat/Pat is statutory right which isn't included in the current policy.

Action: TS will meet person doing policy update, or AW can join.

AR LOA with LJMU stops all deadlines, UEL undergrad intermission does this but postgrad the deadlines still stand.

Action: TS to check the CAT policy and discuss with AW outside the meeting.

- (5.1) AW asked if any present student reps wanted to help with QAA. VM said they think it should be shared with other students.



Action: AW to share more widely amongst student body

Graduation next summer? If it is possible to have more students on site.

(7.1.1) AW changes have been made to website.

Action: Student reps to check if more accessible.

(7.1.2) **Action Complete:** AW students can pay module by module or termly starting from Sept 22

(7.1.4) **Action: TC and AR to check if meeting notes circulated. Action Complete** – Folder now in Teams

4. **University Partner Updates**

SD for LJMU:

External examiner report for Eric Brimstone No others, unsure on timing when flagged to JF. EE's get automatic notification and should submit within month. Via online system (webhub).

CME is due to happen soon, SD will support JF through that

Equality & Diversity report is great to see, looking forward to seeing more and LJMU can offer support with this if needed

Collaborative Provision, who support link tutors, are now running regular drop-ins. Informal way to raise questions if anything needs quick response.

LJMU Faculty Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (FQAEC) require Minutes of Academic Council, SD needs to submit a review and one question is 'are minutes of AC being submitted to the FQAEC committee.

Action: SD finding out how to submit minutes. Will report back to AR and JF

TS FOR UEL:

TS asked how the CAM report are submitted. TC will speak about this in next point.

TC raised that 4 opportunities to submit in last academic year very complex for us to control. Would be better if unified with LJMU as 3 attempts if possible. Can work on what Daniel (link admin) suggests for next year.

TS delivery being changed, some onsite and some online – looking at options but face challenges.



TS where are older reports available? AR not public facing so will need to give access. TS unsure who receives them at UEL.TC can send most recent ones to TS. Training given about a month ago. New template was made available last month. Data available Friday 12th November, CAM report submission deadline 6th December.

5. Programme Leader Reports:

MArch AP

Good intake in sept, still supporting 50% final year students due to EC who should have finished in summer, will be finishing in January. End of yearbook will be available in February hopefully. Build project still ongoing.

New cohort doing outreach work in Milford Haven.

Everything on track for current 5th year hand in in June. Discussion on graduation ongoing for 19/20 and 20/21 students next summer TBC.

No programme committee meeting yet, but feedback at the end of every teaching week. Latest online feedback included Ed Parson (CAT facilities manager) to ensure transition back to site is smooth and safe.

MSc LJMU JF

New External Examiner start for MSc SFNR (Prof. Damian May). Verbal feedback specific to two modules, reports still outstanding. Eric Millstone retired from External Examiner role.

CME later this month leading into enhancement and development plans.

Quite busy, October Ecology module distance only recently due to covid complications.

MSc UEL TC

External Examiners – have 2 currently. Robin Roy just finished 3-year term however he has agreed to 1 year extension as it is collaborative review year – thanks to Robin for this. New energy/engineering External Examiner needed for Sept 22. Thanks to EEs for continuing in role despite personal difficulties.

CAM report underway, entering into key dates for review process which will be written up between now and December. Not all CAM reports audited now, last spring no feedback at all. Would be good to have feedback/ongoing dialogue about findings. AW some response would be useful.

TC unable to hold PC meeting due to personal illness. Feedback gathered via anonymous online forms, as well as online/onsite feedback meetings to collect key points for discussion.

Anonymous survey after the assignment released. Email address for student reps if they wish to discuss things in person.



Main feedback: amount of information given in first module in September is overwhelming, largely positive response about use of teams, locating information within teams confusing, longer changeover before sole use of CAT email account instead of personal one at start of course, confusion on what is core/optional in September for different pathways – more signposting required, students forming geographical groups to link up locally for networking – how much we facilitate this (GDPR issues), more connections between 2nd year students and new students – thanks to Reps for the introduction session, marketing and alumni links would be great.

AW reiterate thanks to student reps. Aware of overwhelming first module, will look at this but changes have been made this year. VM asked what has changed this year? AR lots of effort put into getting students onto teams early and the timetable streamlined and released earlier this year. Understand issues reading lots of long documents which will be reviewed. Meeting with TC to review this didn't go ahead recently but will be replanned. TC thanks to SSO for the work to get everyone into teams as the main 'VLE' in August instead of waiting until LJMU/UEL logins to arrive after the start of teaching. JF training sessions on how to use team by SSO were really helpful, students who didn't engage in these have struggled. TC introductory videos to support module guides could be considered for the future. AR important to include marketing in changes so new students know what to expect.

6. Student Progression

Still have some students from 17/18 and 18/19 intake in progress. 19/20 hit most by covid, some students managed to complete. More up to date information will be available after the October LJMU board has been processed. No obvious issues, retention rate like before.

Action: AR to gather data on why students withdraw for next meeting. Updated Progression data to be presented at January AC.

7. COVID-19 Impacts on Students

AW thanks to JP for data on Extenuating Circumstances (EC) applications. Number of EC forms has increased 2.5-3 times since covid. Huge increase will impact progression rates. MArch disproportionately hit – more like 4-5 times the number of applications.

Action: AW to Monitor MArch ECs

AP follow similar pattern to other Architecture programmes, SCHOSA conducted research into this and follows similar pattern to rest of country. Possibly due to studio work being impacted.

AW would be useful to see LJMU/UEL data to compare. AP MArch students generally younger cohort so may have impacted them differently. AW difficult to say for sure, covid impacts individuals differently – important to highlight impact on progression as it will be issue for a while yet.



AR extension vs EC issue again, 3 weeks LJMU extension reduces the need for EC whereas UEL must apply for EC. TS share views that Masters has been hit more at UEL. TC part time MSc option for Sept 21 is likely to reduce EC's as students know impact on studies now. AW data anonymised so difficult to look at in more detail. Headline data just to raise awareness.

8. Student Equality and Diversity Data

AW looking more closely at equality and diversity site wide at CAT. Pulling application/enrolment data together to review and identify any bias.

Increase in overseas students. EU students now classed as overseas, impact of Brexit on new student applications not as high as expected.

MSc bias towards female slightly at application but this lowers at enrolment. Need to ensure no unconscious bias which is reducing the progression from application to enrolment.

MArch predominantly younger, average age 25-30. Fairly sure this is due to access to student loans relating to completion of Part 1. MSc more broader spread, average at 46/47 with oldest student this year at 80.

Ethnicity is where the concerns lie, very high percentage white-British with other-white making up most of the remaining students. Reflective of other Welsh institutions, but not UK. Continual work required here.

Disabilities around 14-15% declared, matches undergrad but compared with postgrad is much higher than the average. Progression from application to enrolment very promising. Rebecca Upton now appointed as Additional Learning Needs Support and students have access to EAP for additional assistance if needed.

Need to ensure no bias with social class and deprivation issues, most students have degree therefore limited to how we can impact this but larger %'s are in higher index of multiple deprivation.

PT asked if we can get benchmarks to compare against?

Action: AW to get data from LJMU/UEL if possible to compare against. PT to share with Diversity and Inclusion working group at CAT

TC GSE staff away day recently raised discussion on fees policy, framed on ethnicity and deprivation index. Support for less affluent backgrounds to access funding and grants/bursary.

Action: AW will revisit options on this.



9. **Quality Assurance Manual update**

Document in preparation for QAA pulling together all approaches to academic standards, quality assurance and student experience. Created in 2017 but updated regularly. QAA have reviewed quality and current update has new names rather than codes. Newer policies from last 12-18 months included.

AW asked if there are any objections. None raised.

Action: AR to publish Action complete

TC asked for highlights or tracked changes in future to enable quicker review of document changes. AW will do this in future.

10. **Quinquennial review of UEL programmes (AY 2021/22)**

QAA review update

In process of course updates and self-evaluation documentation. Deadline approaching.

MArch team looking at revision to modules but no major changes

MSc TC:

More revision happening to consolidate 5 programmes down to 3. Extensive work within team about teaching of research methods to encourage more students to progress from PG Dip to MSc. Core 15 credit module for research methods in new courses for UEL then filter to LJMU.

In discussion with QAA, collating data for review. Open student input from whole cohort instead of just reps.

11. **Any Other Business**

JF – formally minute that LJMU allow staff extra 2 weeks for marking during covid. Multiple deadlines due to extensions for students but no extension for staff currently given. VM – lots of students experiencing delayed marks, how does that happen if staff don't get extension. JF – usually due to illness or other personal issues. VM – not always communicated to students other than email. Good to know the reasons behind it. TC – so many deadlines and resubmission deadlines (3 x LJMU and 4 x UEL) the marking has been very complicated. Ongoing challenge to try and keep track of what is due and who is available. AR – no breaks for staff during academic year, not managing expectations for students or staff wellbeing to allow for holiday/breaks. AW we need to maintain confidentiality of staff illness which is tough when marks are delayed.

AW – SSO's thanks for assessment boards preparation, lots of positive feedback from external examiners.



TC – welcome new colleague Sam Saville to the GSE team. Sam worked at CAT previously with the distance learning course. Sam will be teaching across several modules.

AW – will be another member of the team joining in the Spring but will be announced soon

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

January 2022 – dates to be circulated.