# THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**ACADEMIC YEAR RESTRUCTURE PROJECT BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014**

Present: Mark Thomson (Chair), Elizabeth Aitken, Cath Baldwin, Paula Bruton, Rachael Elliott, Chris Fryer, Tom Hewlett, Mark Hoffman, R Hoggard, H Kearns, Mandy Li, Tom Maksymiw, Neil Mclean, Osmana Raie, Martin Reid, Ron Riley, Rachel Ward.

In attendance: Ann-Marie Foxcroft (Secretary)

Apologies: Sarah Ashwin, Hannah Bannister, Keith Clarkson, Ginney Pavey, Wayne Tatlow, Linda Taylor, Joy Whyte, Claire Warne, Chris Wood.

1. Update from Chair
   1. Mark Thomson thanked everyone for their ongoing contributions towards the implementation of the new academic year structure and reported that the project is currently on track as the first stage of detailed implementation planning in departments begins producing outcomes; namely, an indication of the extent to which departments will make use of the LT0 2016 exam period; and how they plan to organise their taught provision over the new 11-week teaching terms.
   2. He reported that there had been an initial demand for LT0 exams with some departments planning to phase in exams for all of their MT courses. Registry are in the process of drafting LT0 and ST 2016 exam schedules which will also allow the Registry and Assessment Regulations teams to begin evaluating the regulatory changes necessary under the new academic year structure, e.g. to the degree regulations governing student progression/ completion.
   3. Once the draft ST 2016 exam schedule is complete, we will be able to plot out the timing of sub- and School Board of Examiners meetings. We will then be in a position to determine whether the timing of the Graduation Ceremonies can be brought forward. Whether the timing of the ceremonies is in fact moved will be a matter for the project executive.
   4. The need to determine the extent to which rooms currently booked for LT0 2016 exams can be released is particularly pressing for the EMPA. This issue raises a matter of principle about allocating space when there are multiple demands for its use. The Director of Estates is in the process of developing a 'space allocation policy' to help make determinations in such cases.
   5. Any regulatory changes arising out of the new academic year structure, departmental statements on assessment principles/approaches and the outputs of the feedback working group to be put to the May 2015 Academic Board meeting.
   6. If departmental ‘statements of assessment principles’ result in changes to how some courses are assessed (which seems certain in at least some cases), or if changes to course assessments arise out of AYR planning, these need to be submitted to USSC/GSSC by May 2015 to be included in the 2015/16 Calendar.
   7. In response to Unison requests for a Town Hall style meeting with contracted out staff, the Chair reported that he had met with the Director of Residential Services and the Director of Facilities Management to discuss communications with cleaning and catering staff on 'term-time only' contracts. We will produce a 'fact sheet', setting out the revised academic year structure, and emphasising that the demand for the services this category of staff provide is independent of core teaching, i.e. owing to ancillary programmes/activities. We will then offer to hold a Town Hall meeting in early February.
2. Updates from Service Areas and Departments
   1. Mark Hoffman (Department of International Relations) reported that reading week information had now been agreed within the department.
   2. Martin Reid (Library) reported that:
3. There are a small number of staff within the library on term-time only contracts but these are being discussed with HR.
4. Changes to library opening times would be adjusted in line with the new academic year structure and would not cause any problems.
   1. Hannah Kearns (Residences) reported that Halls of Residence contracts were being updated to align with the new academic year structure.
   2. Robin Hoggard (Governance, Legal and Planning) reported that the changes to the academic year structure would have an impact on the committee structure and the reporting process.
   3. Neil Mclean (Teaching and Learning Centre) reported that TLC has been working with TQARO on a number of assessment related arrangements to support departments in adapting their taught provision under the opportunities arising from the structure of the new year.
   4. Paula Brunton (Human Resources) reported that:
5. HR have been looking at the term-time only contracts.
6. HR and working with GLPD on committee and HR processes.
7. A working group has also been set up to look at the wider implications of the changes to the academic year including VISA implications.
   1. Tom Maksymiw (Students’ Union Education Officer) reported that:
8. There has been a generally positive response from students to a reading week although there are some concerns about how access to academic staff will work.
9. There has also been a positive response to LT0 exams with students feeling that it takes some of the pressure off them later in the year. The Disabled Students Officer has also welcomed the introduction of LT0 exams noting the mental health issues associated with having all exams in the Summer Term.
   1. Osmana Raie (Department of Finance) reported that LT0 exams had been discussed at staff/student committees and that feedback from student reps was that they were concerned about the impact it would have on one year Masters’ students. These students are already under pressure in MT applying for jobs when they finish their studies and the addition of LT0 exams would be and additional pressure.
   2. Elizabeth Aitken (Summer Schools) reported that having taken the decision to move summer schools forward by two weeks they were in the process of ironing out some issues relating to clashes with open days and widening participation.
   3. Rachael Elliott (Residential Services) reported that the roles in Halls of Residence were term-time only and that Residential Services would need to consider the provision of support outside of term time.
   4. It was also queried whether the new academic year calendar which was originally circulated would be updated to reflect the new structure.

Action: Mark Thomson to update the new academic year calendar

* 1. Mandy Li (Timetables) reported that Timetabling have been implementing a new timetabling system. It was also noted that while information relating to Wk 6 needed to be submitted by mid-March it would need to be processed and would not be available immediately.
  2. Rachel Ward (Conferences and Events) reported that

1. She had met with Elizabeth Aitken (Summer Schools) and Hannah Bannister (Student Services) to discuss bringing the summer schools forward two weeks which, in some cases, would result in a conflict with the examination period. It had been agreed that examinations would not be timetabled in the NAB during the last two weeks of the examination period.
2. That the main conflict with holding the summer schools two weeks earlier would be it would clash with when the main open day was held. In addition, widening participation dates are likely to fall within the same period.
3. Anyone requesting dates for events, especially in September, should notify Conference and Events as soon as possible. This September there is the additional complication that summer schools will be running as normal as they won’t be brought forward two weeks until next year putting additional strain on rooming.

Action: Rachel Ward, Elizabeth Aitken and Osmana Raie to discuss the details surrounding clashes between executive courses and summer schools.

1. The Graduate Open Evening places a significant demand on rooming, but should not be affected by timetabling issues as it is normally booked early in the timetabling process. Tthere might be some impact due to reading week timetabling, however.
   1. There was a brief discussion on the Space Allocation Policy which, it had been noted, was in the process of being updated. Several members of the Project Board felt that this was needed as soon as possible to assist with any conflicts. Concerns were also raised that the current criteria did not factor in certain activities.

Action: Mark Thomson to find out how soon the Policy would be available.

* 1. Chris Fryer (Centre for Learning Technology and Innovation) reported that

1. There had been some interest in providing additional learning activities during Wk 6. It was noted that these activities did not have to be in Wk 6 and that it would be more useful to align them so that they complimented students’ studies.

Action: Chris Fryer to discuss further with Mark Thomson and Neil Mclean.

1. Departments could also consider using other modes of assessment in LT0 (e.g. take home or electronic exams). Moodle is already set up to assist with these. It was noted by the Chair that as take-up for LT0 exams increases departments will need to consider using these alternative methods of assessment due to the physical restrictions of the estate.
   1. Cath Baldwin (Recruitment and Admissions) reported that
2. Alternative arrangements for open days had been explored (such as holding them on Saturdays). The most notable issue was the restricted access to the Peacock Theatre on Saturdays which would mean using alternative venues that had a smaller capacity.
3. There had been some issues with the graduate admissions system but these should be resolved by Christmas. There had not been any similar issues with undergraduate admissions due to the smaller numbers of applicants.
4. The only issue that Financial Support Office is likely to encounter is the availability of staff to sit on financial awards panels due to their timing. There shouldn’t be any processing issues.
   1. Tom Hewlett (TQARO) reported that the Calendar production should not encounter any issues and the deadline will just be brought forward.
5. IMT Presentation
   1. Ron Riley (Information Management and Technology) gave a short presentation showing how users of IMT systems will be asked to map their various process deadlines using a Sharepoint calendar. He asked that users map these deadlines for this year and next year so that a picture of the expected changes can be created.
   2. Users would be able to overlay their deadlines and activities with those of other areas that they are interlinked or impacted by. In doing so, they can receive updates when activities are updated.

Action: Ron Riley to look into the possibility of setting the system up so that certain areas are automatically included for users.

* 1. IMT hope to roll out the system to users in early LT.

AMF  
11 December 2014