There will be a meeting of the Education Committee at 10.00am on Thursday 28 March 2013, in the Vice Chancellor’s Meeting Room, Aston Webb.

Apologies for absence should be addressed to Faye Webley, Registry, Academic Services (tel. 47682 email: f.webley@bham.ac.uk).

Clare McCauley
Secretary

AGENDA

1. **Minutes**

   To approve:

   The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013.

2. **Curriculum Review**

   To consider:

   Outcomes from the undergraduate Curriculum Review presented at Senate.

3. **University Education Strategy**

   To receive:

   The University Education Strategy 2013-15.

4. **Change to Resit Period in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences**

   To receive:

   A proposal on the change to the resit period.

5. **Report from University Quality Assurance Committee**

   To receive:

   A report from the University Quality Assurance Committee.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

   To note:

   That the next meeting will be held at 10.00 on 9 May 2013 in the Vice Chancellor’s Meeting Room, Aston Webb.
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

13/01 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2012 (UEC.13.01.01) be approved.

13/02 University Education Strategy

Considered:

The Draft University Education Strategy, 2013-15 (UEC.13.01.02).

Noted:

i. That the Strategy had been written by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) following consideration of a very preliminary draft at the meeting of the Committee in December.

ii. That Senate would consider the Strategy at its meeting in March 2013.
Resolved:

i. That minor amendment to nomenclature needed to be made.

ii. That the following substantive changes were required:

- Reference to College Learning and Teaching Strategies, rather than full inclusion/explanation of College activities;
- Reference to the Employability Strategy;
- Reference to University Graduate School objectives, including around part-time and international students;

iii. That once these changes had been made, the draft be circulated to Directors of Education and other key stakeholders for wider comment, noting that discussion with staff in Schools should be carefully messaged to the effect that:

- The Strategy was for two years, to dovetail with the Strategic Framework timeline (to 2015) and to cover the period until QAA Higher Education Review in 2015/16;
- The Strategy was factual, capturing and drawing together current and planned activity/aspirations; and therefore
- Any feedback should focus on whether the main precepts were clear and complete and resonated with activity in Colleges/Corporate Services.

13/03 Transition Review/Personal Tutoring Update

Received:

Material prepared for students and staff for the forthcoming Transition Review, including publicity information from Professional Services.

Noted:

That the procedure for the Specific Check on Transition Review was being finalised, with preliminary findings presented to the May Committee meeting and written reports submitted to the June meeting.

13/04 Date of Next Meeting

Noted:

That the next meeting would be held at 10.00 on 28 March 2013 in the Vice Chancellor’s Meeting Room, Aston Webb.
### University of Birmingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>University Education Strategy, 2013-2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate Sponsor</td>
<td>Karen O'Brien, PVC (Education)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Author / contact | Karen O'Brien, PVC (Education)  
| | Jeff Bale, DPVC (Education)  
| | Clare McCauley, Director of Registry |
| Purpose | Senate is invited to consider the report on the Education Strategy. |
| Executive Summary | The Education Strategy is aligned with and sits beneath the University Strategic Framework, "Shaping our Future" (2010-2015), in particular the strategic goal to "provide our students with a distinctive, high quality experience". The Strategy is also aligned with the Student Charter. |
| The goals are: | |
| 1. | We will maintain our commitment to providing excellent teaching, informed by our subject specific research and by our continuing development of expertise in teaching practice. |
| 2. | We will ensure that excellent teaching is valued, esteemed and appropriately rewarded. |
| 3. | We will continue to enrich and diversify our teaching delivery, making best use of our physical and virtual spaces, information services and cultural resources. |
| 4. | We will undertake a thorough review of our assessment and feedback practices in order to ensure we use assessment for learning and develop a balanced and coherent approach to the ways in which we measure student achievement and progress. In tandem with a group of leading UK universities, we will aim to move from the existing degree classification system to an approach based on the GPA system. |
| 5. | We will provide a variety of additional learning opportunities for students to allow them to challenge and distinguish themselves, through supplementary study for additional credit, and through new curricular and co-curricular offerings. |
| 6. | We will continue to improve our comprehensive, individualised academic support for all our students to enable them to reach their full potential. |
| 7. | We will offer all of our students opportunities to realise the benefits of an international education, whether on the University of Birmingham campus or studying abroad. |
| 8. | We will continue to enhance the training and academic support available to our PGR students. We will deliver the recommendations of the undergraduate curriculum review. |
| Timing | N/A |
University Education Strategy, 2013-15

Introduction

This Education Strategy is aligned with and sits beneath the University Strategic Framework, "Shaping our Future" (2010-2015), in particular the strategic goal to "provide our students with a distinctive, high quality experience".

http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/shaping-future.pdf

The Strategy is also aligned with our Student Charter:
http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/birmingham/student-charter.aspx

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with College Education Committees and with staff in key student-facing professional services. It will be due for renewal in conjunction with the renewal of our Strategic Framework in 2015.

Delivery rests with the PVC (Education), DPVC (Education), DPVC (Staffing), DPVC (Cultural Engagement), College Directors and Deputy Directors of Education, the University Senior Tutor, Academic Services (including Registry, CLAD, Library Services, Learning Spaces, Student Services, and the Careers Network -including the Enterprise and Innovation unit), Heads of Education and academic and professional staff within Colleges, HR, IT Services, the STEM Education Centre (in EPS) and the Guild. Each College has a delivery plan under each of the headings below.

Goals

1. We will maintain our commitment to providing excellent teaching, informed by our subject specific research and by our continuing development of expertise in teaching practice.

a) The Centre for Learning and Academic Development (CLAD) will support our staff through initial training of all staff and PGTAs new to teaching, and through continuing professional development for staff who teach.

b) HR will ensure that all staff new to teaching complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) as a condition of completing probation; the PVC (Education) and Heads of Colleges, in conjunction with HR, will oversee changes of contract or appointments of teaching-focused staff on the basis of demonstrable teaching excellence; criteria for teaching excellence will be applied in appointments and promotions both for teaching-focused staff and staff on research and teaching contracts[other than readership promotions].

2. We will ensure that excellent teaching is valued, esteemed and appropriately rewarded.

a) We value the contributions that every member of staff makes to teaching. We will use the PDR process, and a new Peer Observation process to identify exceptional teachers. We will
review the prizes, fellowships and other measures of esteem to ensure that they appropriately reflect and recognise outstanding teaching.

b) CLAD and the DPVC (Staffing) will build on the work of the Valuing Teaching @Birmingham project to review current fellowships and prizes, including the Birmingham University Teaching Fellowships.

c) CLAD and the PVC (Education) will develop a strategic approach to the National Teaching Fellowships scheme.

d) College Directors of Education, working with HR, will support the career development and promotion of teaching-focused staff from lecturer to professorial level.

3. **We will continue to enrich and diversify our teaching delivery, making best use of our physical and virtual spaces, information services and cultural resources**

a) IT Services and Academic Services will implement a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), from 2013-14, and oversee a smooth migration of content and resources to the new VLE.

b) The e-learning team in CLAD and the University Education Committee, working with College e-learning teams and academic staff, will ensure that the new VLE facilitates and drives new approaches to educational delivery predicated upon:

- common access to all educational resources and materials within the VLE to all staff and students (within copyright constraints)
- closer integration with the Library to ensure a joined-up approach to information resources, reading lists, and CLA and other copyright compliance
- greater integration of collaborative and interactive learning tools into mainstream curriculum delivery
- enabling students access to their evolving portfolio of work, including online feedback, in ways that promote students' engagement with their own academic development.

c) Our Cultural Collections will be further embedded in the delivery of a wide range of academic programmes, to ensure these provide an inspiring learning environment for our students. We will strengthen cross-disciplinary usage of the University's cultural assets, and provide improved physical and digital access for innovative teaching and, in particular, for undergraduate research.

d) The Library will utilise available and emerging technologies to develop and promote embedded and tailored information literacy programmes, and will seek to develop learning materials which support independent learning.

4. **We will undertake a thorough review of our assessment and feedback practices in order to ensure we use assessment for learning and develop a balanced and coherent approach to the ways in which we measure student achievement and progress. In tandem with a group of leading UK universities, we will aim to move from the existing degree classification system to an approach based on the GPA system.**

The PVC Education, DoE (LES) and CLAD will oversee the implementation of the "BALI" assessment review project for all undergraduate degrees. The goals of this review will be to give clarity about the criteria by which we assess and the skills and knowledge required for particular degrees; to introduce more consolidated assessment, at programme level, at advanced stages of study; to review the balance between summative and formative assessment; to improve the timing of feedback to maximise its usefulness; to move towards
more online feedback, using the new VLE to allow students to store and reflect on their portfolio of assessments and comments.

5. We will provide a variety of additional learning opportunities for students to allow them to challenge and distinguish themselves, through supplementary study for additional credit, and through new curricular and co-curricular offerings.

a) The Guild in partnership with the University will develop a new structure for promoting, supporting and recognising volunteering activities, reflecting our institutional ambition, set out in the Strategic Framework, to become an engaged and outward-looking university.

b) Registry will develop an enhanced degree transcript to recognise and certify student achievement; we will develop a means of capturing, within degree classifications (existing and GPA), additional credits.

6. We will continue to improve our comprehensive, individualised academic support for all our students to enable them to reach their full potential.

a) The University Senior Tutor (UST) will oversee the full implementation of the Code of Practice on Personal Tutoring, and will work with senior tutors within schools to ensure consistency and effectiveness. The UST will work with Student Services to ensure that high quality information is provided to academic staff and to new students to raise and maintain awareness of this support. The UST and Student Services will oversee the annual Transition Review for all first year (and new direct entry) undergraduates.

b) The Guild’s sabbatical officers will work with the UST to ensure that students’ perspectives and advice are embedded within the Personal Tutoring process.

c) Library Services will be actively positioned as the central physical and virtual locus of student academic support in the University. Its Subject Advisors will continue to develop and tailor embedded information literacy training and support. The Academic Skills Centre will be developed and adapted to meet the study support needs of students in academic writing, mathematics and statistics.

7. We will offer all of our students opportunities to realise the benefits of an international education, whether on the University of Birmingham campus or studying abroad.

a) On the Birmingham campus and in our overseas teaching facilities, we will foster styles and settings for teaching that promote intercultural and international awareness. The English for International Students Unit (EISU), the International Student Advisory Service, along with other parts of Student Support will facilitate this and will undertake new initiatives to encourage better integration between international and home students on campus (for example through a “Birmingham Friends” peer-mentoring initiative and through the new student-authored guide for new international students).

b) We will significantly increase the number of students undertaking a period of study or work overseas with the aim of achieving 15% participation of the undergraduate cohort by 2015-16. International Relations, the Careers Network and Colleges will work together to realise this target and to assure the quality of those opportunities.

c) The Careers Network, through the Employability Strategy (2011/12 – 2015/16), will ensure that by 2015 students at the University of Birmingham will receive high quality career development support based on best-practice across the HE sector, both within and alongside the curriculum. These enhanced services will include increased services for international students, improved online provision for part-time and distance learning.
students, a major growth in both intra- and extra-curricular employability and work-related learning opportunities, and a significant increase in alumni and employer-related engagement.

e) We will increase the number of flexible study opportunities for international students to come to Birmingham, and continue to ensure the study and assessment needs of incoming students are accommodated within schools.

8. **We will continue to enhance the training and academic support available to our PGR students.**

a) The University Graduate School (UGS) will work with Colleges and key Corporate Services partners to provide an enhanced programme of development workshops and experiential learning opportunities for our postgraduate researchers. The UGS will focus particularly on expanding/tailoring our training provision for part-time and international postgraduate researchers.

b) The UGS will work with College and Corporate Services colleagues to provide a diverse range of academic writing development opportunities, including a Writing Summer School in July 2013.

c) The UGS will explore the feasibility of expanding the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Research Methods and Skills (PGCARMS) with College colleagues in order to open up registration to PGRs across the University.

d) Working with the Senior Tutor, the UGS will ensure that all PGRs have the support of a mentor, in addition to their supervisors, and that the highest level of supervision is maintained.

9. **We will deliver the recommendations of the undergraduate curriculum review.**

See SEN.13.03.05 Curriculum Review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Undergraduate Curriculum Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UEB &quot;Sponsor&quot;</td>
<td>Professor Karen O’Brien, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author / contact</td>
<td>Professor Karen O’Brien, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:pvceducation@contacts.bham.ac.uk">pvceducation@contacts.bham.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>UEB is invited to consider proposals following a review of the Undergraduate Curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>The Steering Group seeks approval for further scoping and implementation of Phases 2 and 3 of the Curriculum Review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Status of paper after Senate | Not for external circulation but can be discussed at College Boards and shared with all Heads of School and Heads of Education |
Undergraduate Curriculum Review

1 Background

In March 2012, Senate approved a wide ranging review of the University's Undergraduate Curriculum (SEN.12.03.04).

The paper set out the reasons for the review as follows:

"Curriculum innovation" is a stated aim of our Strategic Framework, and is a clear responsibility of any university that continually strives to produce well informed, capable and rounded graduates. Recent feedback from students, particularly via NSS, suggests that we have considerable room for improvement in areas such as assessment and feedback, organisation and management and academic support, and curriculum review may be one way to address this. In a competitive environment, we also need to ensure that our degrees are competitively positioned and that we can articulate our educational mission more clearly to our prospective students. Some Colleges (notably CoSS) have undertaken extensive reviews of curricula, but there has not been an institution-wide project of this kind for many years. There are risks associated with simply taking the structure of our undergraduate degrees for granted and not periodically reconsidering them from first principles".

Following Senate approval, the review was overseen by a Steering Group chaired by the PVC (Education) and including the Deputy PVC (Education), College Directors of Education, the Director of Registry, the President of the Guild, the Director of CLAD and Learning Spaces and the University Senior Tutor. An Advisory Group provided additional, high level academic input in key areas and consisted of Professor Peter Davies, Professor Marie Fox, Professor Martin Freer, Professor Paul Moss, Professor Mark Pallen, and Professor Cillian Ryan.

2 Consultation

From April to December 2012, University-wide consultation was undertaken through:

- Six intensive workshops (April and May 2012) for; two open 'town' meetings hosted by the PVC (Education) in June 2012, and a series of student workshops (June 2012 and November 2013).

- An online consultation period opened in July 2012, with a staff e-card reminding staff of this in mid-September – https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/university/curric-review/index.aspx

- Formal papers with emerging headlines were considered by UEB on 11th June and by Senate on 13th June and University Education Committee on 17th July 2012.
• Between September and November 2012, the PVC (Education) and College Directors of Education hosted a series of five College Roadshows to which all College staff were invited. These explored emerging recommendations in a College-specific context.

3 Broader Context

The curriculum review has been discussed in the light of six related, continuing areas of educational development within the University of Birmingham:

• the recently new selected iVLE (facilitating new forms of teaching delivery and interaction and promoting greater digital literacy among students and staff);
• the ITSMP timetable project (rationalising space usage and creating timetabling opportunities for new curriculum components) – phased implementation from summer 2012;
• GPA consultation on-going (creating an opportunity for new approaches to assessment and recording student achievement);
• learning space developments (creating more flexible study space in the new Library, the Learning Centre and elsewhere, and also the Cultural Gateway);
• Liberal Arts (potentially offering a platform for stretch and interdisciplinary learning far beyond those taking this particular degree) – first intake 2013.
• Enhanced University Transcript – our own Birmingham version of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) including more granular information about student academic achievement and recognising verifiable additional activities such as the PSA, volunteering, additional credits taken etc.
• International Study opportunities – creating many more flexible overseas study opportunities available to all students, with an aim of achieving 15% undergraduate participation by 2015 and 20% by 2018
• NSS Action Plans – using quantitative and qualitative data from NSS to improve our performance and also inform the strategic approach to our educational offering

These and other continuing projects and enhancements are captured in the Education Strategy 2013-15 (to be considered at the March Senate) which sits alongside this document and is aligned to our Strategic Framework.

4 Proposals

4.1 A series of key, interrelated recommendations with overlapping, phased timescales will deliver a refreshed and transformed undergraduate curriculum. Full implementation will be completed for the 2015 intake. Implementation is keyed to a review of our credit architecture and the ways in which we capture
school teaching effort through SSRs, including a fundamental overhaul of our current “MOMD” (modules outside the main discipline) system.

In essence, the Curriculum Review will aim to achieve:

- reinvigorated, largely single honours degrees within which students will be able to build their own customised portfolio of experience, skills and academic breadth accredited as part of their degree, including:

  the opportunity for all students to undertake for credit an intensive summer project working in cross-College, interdisciplinary groups; also to choose a “personal development module” in conjunction with a work placement, volunteer placement or research internship; access to a enhanced suite of 10 and 20 credit term-year-long breadth modules specifically adapted for multiple audiences;

  an entitlement for students to take up to 20 out of 120 credits per year outside of their main programme\(^1\), and/or register for 20 credits over and above their annual load, and for this to be recognised as part of their degree;

  an entitlement to study a language free of charge and to have the chance to study abroad.

- degrees planned and assessed as a whole, not as an accumulation of modules; assessment will be scaled down and fully aligned with learning outcomes at the programme level, not just at the module level;

- recognition for student effort and engagement outside the curriculum – building upon the PSA and adding opportunities for facilitated volunteering and skills development;

- rapid change and diversification in types of teaching delivery, enabled by our new VLE, and other learning technology refurbished spaces and by new peer support for teaching enhancement;

- personal academic support for all students, particularly in the “transition” phase of the first year.

Note on the Shape of the Academic Year: No consensus has emerged, following extensive consultation, about the shape of the Birmingham academic year (currently two 11 week semesters and 8 weeks in the summer term). A further review of this is being led by Peter Byers (in the light of both teaching and recruitment needs), but in the meantime, the Steering Group recognises the imperative to add contact time to the current, 22 week teaching year, particularly in first year. The Birmingham Project (see below) specifically addresses this concern.

4.2 Resourcing: if approved by Senate we will undertake full financial costings based on existing intake forecasts for home and overseas undergraduate

\(^1\) In regulated degrees this will typically be lower, and this will not apply to the MBChB
numbers, and projections about likely the percentage uptake of the optional curriculum elements.

In terms of academic staff resource, the Review aims to create more time for new activity by creating efficiencies in the area of assessment. We are also exploring in detail with Planning how we can make more transparent to Schools the ways in which we allocate student FTEs to schools/costs centres in terms of their module registrations. These are captured in retrospect such that a proportion of a single honours student registered on a programme in school X but taking 20 credits or more outside of school Y is assigned to school Y. This formula should allow us to make visible more cross-school and cross-college delivery, so that schools (for example LCHAM) who have additional staff capacity due to under-recruitment could be incentivised to teach more outside students. A document that captures the external module delivery component in SSRS will enable schools to demonstrate their contribution to the University.

4.3 Phasing. The Curriculum Review will be implemented as a series of projects, on a phased basis.

**Phase 1** (implemented)

**Support for individual learning and success**

- **Personal Tutoring:** from 2012, revised Code of Personal Tutoring requiring enhanced personal support for all students, see [https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/resources/educationmatters/personaltutors/index.aspx](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/resources/educationmatters/personaltutors/index.aspx). **Project lead, the Senior Tutor**

- **Academic Skills Support:** from 2012, new Academic Skills Centre opened in the Library offering drop-in, individual support in mathematics and academic writing. **Project lead, the Skills Centre team within Library Services**

- **Transition Review:** formal individual review for all first year undergraduates in weeks 4 and 5 of Spring term, accompanied by a university-wide suite of re-induction events involving the Careers Network, the Library, the Academic Skills Centre, the Guild, and the Student Support team. **Project leads, Senior Tutor and Director of Student Services**

- **Small Group Teaching/Academic Tutoring:** from 2012, significant university investment (£200K) to support an undertaking that all first year students will experience small group/lab teaching at regular intervals (at least fortnightly) throughout their first year. **Project lead, PVC Education**

**Phase 2** (pilot projects in 2012-13 and full implementation from 2013-14).

**Assessment that promotes incremental and consolidated learning**
• **Major Assessment and Feedback Review.** Building on the TESTA project (2011-12) and the HEA collaboration on the BALI (Birmingham Assessment for Learning Initiative), we have embarked on a major review, programme by programme, of our entire undergraduate assessment portfolio. The project is now being conducted collaboratively with Nottingham University, with the following key objectives:

  mapping, across modules, of undergraduate assessment pathways such that assessment and feedback facilitate sequential progression through degrees;

  efficiency and effectiveness in assessment, rebalancing formative and summative assessment, and releasing more time for teaching;

  introduction of whole programme and synoptic assessment in later years of study above the module level.

The project is well underway (English, Psychology, Civil Engineering and Biochemistry have already been through this process). *Project lead, Jon Green*

**A curriculum that promotes practical engagement with the world beyond the university**

• **Personal Development Module.** Building on a DIF-funded pilot in CoSS which will offer all undergraduates a 10 credit opportunity to engage in practical, placement-based study, we will offer all undergraduates the chance to gain 10 credits for

  i) a facilitated internship or volunteering placement during vacations, for which formal preparation, support and assessment will be provided jointly by schools and by the Careers Network;

  ii) a research internship working with academics on specified projects with an emphasis on putting learning into practice (for example the “politics into practice” offering currently available;

  iii) an “Enterprise for All” module, supported by the Enterprise and Innovation Centre (who will convert some of their offerings into credit bearing modules) with leadership from the Business School. This will be a distinctive and university-wide offering.

*Project lead: Glyn Watson, with input from Eluned Jones, Dan Corlett’s successor, Francis Green and Kiran Trehan*

**Student Volunteering.** We will enhance our support and recognition of student volunteering in partnership with the Guild of Students and the University Council. We have instigated a project to scope out the opportunities for significantly enhancing the quantity and range of our student engagement with volunteering, in line with our Key Performance Indicator of University engagement. implemented. This would probably involve the creation and planning of a band 500/AR6 post. Project outputs will include:
Enhanced provision and partnership between the Careers Network and the Guild to source and support high quality student volunteering placements;

Recognition of some volunteering activities via the enhanced university transcript;

Incorporation of some volunteering activities (for example schools placements) into the 'Personal Development module'.

This project is already underway and due to report in late 2013. Project leader Sue Welland (Careers Network)

Stretch and Challenge

- **Supplementary modules**: We will give our students options for supplementary study, over and above the 120 credit per annum allocation, allowing them to take (and, without risk, fail) additional credits recognised either through module substitution (counting the highest mark), through a conventional degree classification or GPA formula. With appropriate restrictions for accredited degrees. Project initiated for implementation in 2014-15. Project lead Jeff Bale

- **Languages for all**: All students will be offered the opportunity to study languages at no cost to them. We will significantly increase the availability and range of Language module offerings, in 10 and 20 credit variants as "MOMD" and supplementary modules, with a particular emphasis upon culturally and socially contextualised language study, as delivered by academic staff in LCHAM. Capturing and aggregating SSRs will recognise and increase academic staff engagement in university-wide teaching. Project initiated from 2013-14. Project leads Matthew Rampley and Clodagh Brook

A coherent and efficient curriculum

- **Joint honours**: We will conduct a major review of our undergraduate joint honours degree portfolio with a view to achieving a marked reduction in the number of degrees offered in this format, creating more unified and consolidated interdisciplinary degrees, and to finding new and more flexible ways of delivering the remaining degrees. We will aim to reduce the timetabling and other resourcing inefficiencies associated with our complex portfolio of JH degrees in the interests of creating more time and space for our larger programmes. We will bear in mind throughout the vulnerability of provision in certain areas, particularly languages. We have conducted a major piece of research into issues of historic intake, student satisfaction and timetabling constraints associated with joint degrees. CAL has already embarked upon this process with an extensive review of JH underway, and this will be transferred to other Colleges. Project leads Craig Blunt and Steve Ellis
Transforming Teaching Delivery

- We will transform our modes of teaching delivery, particularly with respect to large lectures, and we will use lecture capture and our new VLE to rebalance the interactive, as opposed to “content transfer” aspects of teaching. We will use multiple collaborative technologies to enlarge and diversify the ways in which staff and students converse beyond the classroom. This has been a work in progress for the last three years, but we will use peer observation of teaching and teaching materials (see below) to disseminate practice and accelerate change. *Project leads Jon Green and Natalie Rowley*

Valuing Teaching

- We will foster excellent teaching through a variety of means, including promotion criteria (revised 2011-12), and enhanced options for teaching-focused careers (HR guidance completed 2011-12). Following our HEA collaborative project “Valuing Teaching at Birmingham” (final report February, 2013), we will review teaching support networks and prizes and awards, and consider establishing a *Birmingham Teaching Academy* (possibly within CLAD). We will also implement a new Peer Observation of Teaching scheme which will use inter-generational peer review of teaching activity and materials to encourage dialogue and change in teaching practice. A CLAD-funded pilot is currently underway (project lead Jeremy Pritchard) for adoption in 2013-14. *Project leads Julie Scarratt, Jeremy Pritchard and Martin Stringer*

*Phase 3* (pilots 2013-14, implementation from 2014-15)

Opportunities for Breadth, Intellectual Adventure and Skills Development

Transforming MOMDs. Evidence from our extensive MOMD research project indicated that, with the exception of languages and medicine (for example, the very popular module “Good Brain, Bad Brain”), cross-College uptake of modules outside of the main discipline is rare. Moreover, MOMD uptake has diminished in the last four years, despite there being a large number of MOMDs, in theory, still available. Although the available data are incomplete and unreliable, due in some cases to MOMDs being offered because of ‘spare’ places on existing modules, and a lack of differentiation between student registration types, it was found that MOMD registrations are mostly during the first year of study, with few higher level modules being taken. A number of Schools actively discourage students from taking modules outside their School, and most MOMDs are simply existing modules opened to students from other Schools with no significant adjustments for lack or prior learning. Student focus groups were particularly negative about the current system.

We therefore propose that we retain the current requirement that “unless the Senate or delegated authority agree otherwise, all such programmes must include the opportunity for Registered Students to take at least 20 credits from outside the main subject” but that we review our existing MOMDS and create new interdisciplinary offerings in areas of great interest to students (for example arising from the current discussions with the Guild
about a cross-university offering in "environmental sustainability"). The emphasis will be upon:

Cross-college portability, and modules specifically designed to include students who are not on programme;

A flexible offering at 10 and 20 credits, with entitlement for students to take these as "supplementary study" options and flexible delivery (either in year or as intensive, block delivery in the summer term – see Birmingham Project below)

Transparent capture of load through SSRs, such that small units with high Breadth Module uptake (for example CWAS) can demonstrate staff effort and significant University teaching contribution;

Interdisciplinary and innovative content, with alignment to research centres and to our cultural engagement strategy – for example the Cultural Engagement team's new MOMD in "Making Culture" (from 2012)

*Project lead, tbc with input from Keith Shear (CWAS) and Ian Grosvenor*

**The Birmingham Project:** As part of the Breadth offering above, all students will be offered, in the third term of their first year, an opportunity to undertake a ten credit "Birmingham Project". The Project will promote both cross-disciplinary and cross-national dialogue among our diverse undergraduate students. It will give students a unique opportunity to work together in groups across colleges and disciplines, with staff facilitation, on a themed group project to which they can all bring their own subject expertise. The Project will be delivered intensively during the final two weeks of the summer term, will amount to ten credits counting towards second year, and will be supported by a dedicated project officer. We will use CLAD enhancement funds to incentivise the development of a suite of new project offerings and the redevelopment of some existing MOMDs for intensive block delivery in this form. For MBChB students, this could constitute a "student selected component". An initial pilot project in summer 2014 will be followed by full implementation in 2015-16. *Project lead Andrew Davies.*

**Skills Modules:** We will use our new Academic Skills Centre and our STEM Education Centre to deliver a suite of 10 credit offerings in key areas such as statistical skills for non-social scientists, academic writing for science students, mathematical modelling etc. These could be taken either within curricula or as supplementary study options. We would also explore ways in which these might build into an "Academic Skills Award" (in parallel to our Personal Skills Award). This proposal has yet to be fully developed and we are also awaiting the outcome of our current bid to the Nuffield Foundation's Quantitative Methods training programme.

**5. The Birmingham "Offer" from an Applicant Perspective**

The curriculum review has been informed both by pedagogic imperatives, NSS perspectives and an awareness of the need to enhance the attractiveness of our
degrees to potential applicants. How might this be articulated to potential applicants? A Prospectus entry might run like this:

"Birmingham University offers you a unique opportunity to deepen your knowledge of your chosen subject, and at the same time to broaden your horizons in ways you might not yet have imagined.

At Birmingham you will experience a curriculum in which assessment will promote your learning, and assessment tasks recognise the diversity of talents of our students.

You will engage in a curriculum that offers you breadth, stretch and challenge through new degree programmes which give you access to a huge range of subjects and ideas, the opportunity to work with fellow students from different disciplines in the new summer 'Birmingham Project' and to customise your degree according to your interests. Your degree can incorporate international study abroad or working in industry. You can study a language throughout your degree, at no cost to you, and sample new subject areas and take extra credits to add value to your final award.

Your learning experience at Birmingham will be personalised and supported through the excellent system of academic and personal tutoring, you can choose a work placement, enterprise module or vacation research project through the 'Personal Development Module', and you will have access to our new Academic Skills Centre. Your involvement in volunteering activities will be recognised and recorded in an enhanced transcript of your achievements at university.

Above all, we will ensure that your degree is tailored to your individual needs and aspirations, that you are personally supported in your learning and that you have opportunities to develop your talents and interests and to distinguish yourself."

NB. This high level statement will need to be complemented by School/Departmental/Programme specific statements which build in these commitments to all our students to their particular subject area. Statements at this level will enable applicants and students to see how the educational experience on the ground will differ from that of other universities. We will ask all schools to adjust their prospectus and course information statements to reflect this enhanced offer.

6 Piloting, Testing & Implementation

The appendix sets out the projects, with academic and administrative leads and related projects.

Phase 1 projects are already in the process of being implemented, namely Transition Review and Assessment Review.

Phase 2 projects are in the process of final adjustment to proposals in advance of implementation (Joint Honours)

Phase 3 projects are in the process of research and feasibility stages. For these, each study will deliver the following within the context of their strand by January 2014:

- Feasibility Assessment
- Scalability
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
- Implementation Plan (If applicable)
- Implementation Costs (If applicable)
- Recommendations

In tandem and following extensive discussion with academic staff and current students, we will undertake market testing of these proposals with employers and prospective students.
## Appendix 1: UG Curriculum Review Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UG Curriculum Review Project</th>
<th>Lead Sponsor</th>
<th>Related Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 1 – Implemented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Tutoring</td>
<td>University Senior Tutor</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills Support</td>
<td>PVC</td>
<td>Library Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Review</td>
<td>University Senior Tutor</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Teaching/Academic Tutoring</td>
<td>PVC</td>
<td>DoEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 2 – pilot projects in 2012-13 and full implementation from 2013-14</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Assessment and Feedback Review</td>
<td>Dr Jon Green</td>
<td>CLAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development Modules</td>
<td>Dr Glyn Watson</td>
<td>Careers Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Volunteering</td>
<td>PVC and Sue Welland</td>
<td>Careers Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Modules</td>
<td>Professor Jeff Bale</td>
<td>Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages for All</td>
<td>Matthew Rampley and Clodagh Brook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Honours</td>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Teaching Delivery</td>
<td>Drs Jon Green and Natalie Rowley</td>
<td>CLAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Teaching</td>
<td>Professor Martin Stringer</td>
<td>CLAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 3 – pilot projects in 2013-14, implementation from 2014-15</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming MOMDs</td>
<td>TBC with input from Keith Shear (CWAS)</td>
<td>Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Project</td>
<td>Dr Andrew Davies</td>
<td>CLAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Modules</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing the Resit Period for Phase 1 MBChB & Year 1 BDS

Summary:

A proposal is outlined that highlights the advantages to the MBChB and BDS programmes of moving the Summer resit period for Phase 1 (Years 1-2) students from end-August to mid-July. This will have impact on re-sitting students as well as on programme-related, academic staff. The benefits of the proposal would be measured by improved student experience, better staff work-load allocation (including reduction in risk) and more timely progress decisions, whilst there may be some adverse consequence for the relatively few weaker students or those with protracted extenuating circumstances.

Narrative:

Some months ago, the College Learning and Teaching Committee considered suggestions made by MBChB that we should move towards an early (July) resit period. Although there were certain structural considerations behind the proposal (and in particular the fact that students having to resit at the end of the second year enter the third year before knowing whether or not they have passed) there were also some important educational benefits.

Under the existing arrangement there is a tendency for some students to cherry pick – to focus their effort on a limit number of modules at first sit, with the aim of picking up the remainder at resit. This is clearly a poor study habit to take forward and is in danger of undermining an end of year assessment which is intended, in its totality, to be a test of the capacity of students to retain and present the learning from all the modules at one time. Those who have tried hard to pass all the modules but have still fallen short may well find themselves working all summer towards resits, with the result that some of our weaker students are already tired when they start the new academic year. The effort involved in learning for the resit might also be reduced by an early date because new learning would be built directly on a relatively fresh knowledge foundation.

BMedSc make the opposite case, suggesting that any educational benefit of early resits is far outweighed by the potential problems relating to “students who have either significant medical or learning achievement issues”. In the wider University, this view is also reflected in comments from Donna Lee. An early resit date would of course be most suitable for students who had failed a limited number of modules by a limited margin, or because of an easily rectifiable error. This covers the great majority of the resitters in the early years of MBChB and BDS and it may be that the particular profile of medical and dental cohorts is the basis for the different perceptions of the MBChB and BDS teams.

It seems clear that there is no appetite for change in the resit date across the University and little potential for consensus on a changed date across MDS. That means that the only remaining possibility to be considered is for MBChB and BDS to change to a July resit date and to leave other programmes (at least those working to a standard academic year) using the standard University dates. This would clearly have some significant consequences.
There is a general agreement that it would not be acceptable to ask staff (academic or administrative) to deal with two resit period across the summer. Just like the students, staff need some sort of break between academic years! A proposal to move MBChB and BDS to a different resit date would therefore necessitate the identification of separate teaching / assessment teams for the two sets of programmes.

Rather than being a problem, this could actually be of benefit to the two sets of programmes, to academic staff and to the institution. At the moment, MDS teaching on a particular topic is often concentrated in one member of staff, who takes the lead role across all programmes. This can overload the member of staff concerned, but just as importantly it can constitute a missed opportunity to involve more staff in teaching leadership. From the perspective of individual programmes it results in the temptation for a presentation designed for one group being ‘dusted off’ and used for another with minimum tailoring to the particular needs of the second cohort. From the point of view of the institution, the focus of teaching leadership expertise in a small number of people increases the risk to provision if that person should become unavailable. Rotating experienced leads between modules on a five yearly or three yearly basis would encourage refreshment of module structure, process and content and would mean that no one should feel excluded from taking a lead role in a particular programme. Although one or two pinch points need to be explored, this splitting of responsibility for programmes could generally be undertaken through the deployment of existing staff.

All in all, we believe that the benefit to be gained from the proposed change in the resit date, for MBChB and BDS are sufficient to justify a detailed exploration of how it might be managed. We would also suggest that this would be an important test bed for researching any changes in learning behaviour and student satisfaction resulting from the shift. It is important to note that the proposals would require no support from central University with regard either to administration or space. All examinations would take place in the College of MDS and administration of process (including printing of scripts) would use only MDS staff.
### Moving the re-sit date for MBChB and BDS to July

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential benefits</th>
<th>Potential problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improves student and staff experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Difficulties for the very weakest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Militates against cherry-picking, encouraging all students to enter May exams with the aim of passing all modules.</td>
<td>• Students who fail multiple modules by a significant margin will find it hard to ‘make good’ in the time available (but many struggle now and multiple fails are often a sign that students are not suited to the programme).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Means re-sit students have the opportunity to secure progress early, enjoy the summer and return refreshed (avoids weaker students entering year at a further disadvantage)</td>
<td>• Students with a significant extenuating circumstances may not be ‘fit to sit’ by the date of an early re-sit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Similarly ensures that staff don’t have organisation of re-sits hanging over them.</td>
<td>These circumstances affect a very small number of students in the programmes concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to find staff to give personalised feedback / run remedial teaching in June / early July, than in late July / August.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students who fail (or who decide to change programme) have a better opportunity to apply for other programmes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Would require separate coordinators to be identified for equivalent modules in programmes with different re-sit periods, but...*

### Spreading the load of module co-ordination more widely

- Brings new perspectives to the teaching of a given topic
- Reduces the risk inherent in having a single academic providing all the modules on a particular topic across all programmes.
- Enables a degree of succession planning within disciplines
- Ensures that module material is tailored to the particular student audience, rather than being re-used across programmes

### Avoids difficulties re: late progress decisions

- Improves position re: confirmation of progress decision before entry to year 3 (MBChB)