EXTRACT FROM TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE MINUTES: 17.10.12

12.83 External Examiners’ Access to VLE (Min 12.69 iv)

The Committee had asked the Director of Access and Distributed Learning to revisit external examiners’ access to the University’s VLE for the purposes of commenting on the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Ms Alexander reported that ADL facilitated access in response to individual requests. There was no standard access for all external examiners as this would require the collection of a considerable amount of personal information and the provision of individual visitor codes.

The Department’s survey of Faculties revealed that the majority of external examiners did not have access and, for those who did, it was restricted, either under supervision from the module co-ordinator or with the ability to view only those materials they would have seen in paper format for moderation purposes. Most Faculties/Schools supported examiners having restricted access and the responses suggested different ways in which restrictions could be applied: read-only access, time restrictions, access as for standard paper-based assessment, access only for courses taught fully online. It was noted that it would also be important to ensure that external examiners understood and took account of the context in which the online materials were presented (eg online discussions), and to protect the University’s intellectual property rights in courses with a significant amount of interactive materials.

AGREED that:

1. unrestricted access to the VLE for all external examiners not be provided;
2. where an external examiner wished to have access, the Course/Subject Director discuss the level of access with the external and make arrangements with ADL accordingly;
3. the University’s approach be communicated to new external examiners at induction and the External Examiners’ Handbook be updated accordingly.