



**University of London
External System Academic Committee**

External System Centre for Distance Advisory Sub-Committee

The third meeting of the Centre for Distance Education Advisory Sub-Committee took place on 15 January 2009. The ESAC is invited to receive the attached Minutes of the meeting, and in particular note the decisions set out below and where relevant endorse the recommendations of the CDEAS.

On the evaluation report of the CDE (**CDEAS3/2**), it was **resolved** that the finalised report with executive summary and conclusions would also include (from minutes 70-71):

- a financial summary and details of how the CDE reserve funding was used
- 'value for money' indicators of the CDE small research projects
- indicators of the extent and value of Fellows activities within their Colleges
- more results and clarity of the CDE activities and outcomes
- an executive summary and conclusion aimed at stakeholders of the CDE

On paper **CDEAS 3/3**, regarding Fellows, Consultants and the structure, it was **recommended** that (from minutes 81-84):

- the CDE Fellowship is maintained, new guidelines are drawn up with differentiate between the roles of Fellows and Consultants, an appointments panel is constituted to process the applications for Fellows and Consultants and that existing Fellows, Consultants and a wider group are invited to apply
- the new guidelines include details of finance including how Fellows can claim for their expenses and the rates at which Consultants are paid

It was **resolved** that the Sub-Committee will adapt the process of creating working groups for developing proposals and other activities as deemed appropriate (minute 85).

On paper **CDEAS 3/3**, regarding Research, Professional Development activities and the Online Centre, it was **recommended** that (from minutes 92-93):

- the CDE will identify research requirements and continue to support research activity according to the availability of funds and the CDE continues to provide a range of training and support.



External System Centre for Distance Education Advisory Sub-Committee

Thursday 15 January 2009

Draft MINUTES

PRESENT: Jonathan Morgan, Chair, Roehampton University (Academic Registrar); John Dickens, EISA (Director, Learning and Development); Chris Howorth, Royal Holloway (Deputy Dean of Faculty); Jill Russell, UCL (Senior Lecturer, CDE Fellow); Brian Sayer, EISA (Learning and Development); Ayona Silva-Fletcher, RVC (Programme Director, CDE Fellow); Steve Warburton, Kings (ICT and e-Learning Manager, CDE Fellow); Don Olcott, Chief Executive Officer of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education; Jonathan Kydd, Dean of the External System.

IN ATTENDANCE: Judith Collier, Secretary, EISA (Learning and Development)

APOLOGIES: Simon Askey, (Deputy Director, External Undergraduate Laws Programme), Roger Mills, Cambridge (Distance Education consultant)

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Confirmed:

58. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting held on 11 September 2008 (CDEAS 3/1).

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Received:

59. **CDEAS 3/2**, a report on the evaluation of the Centre for Distance Education, prepared by Jill Russell.

Noted:

60. That the Chair thanked Jill Russell for coordinating the evaluation report, and acknowledged the work of the Distance Learning Adviser, the Knowledge Manager and Fellows for the work that had been undertaken by the Centre.
61. That the discussions in the meeting would be incorporated in the final version of the report to be submitted to ESAC.
62. That the report should illustrate how the reserve funding of £1.3million was allocated and used and that a financial report and commentary are included.
63. That the report should provide some indicators as to whether small awards for research (of between £1000 and £5000) are proven to be good value for money, given that this was being proposed elsewhere as a way forward.
64. That the report should provide indicators of the extent and value of Fellows activities within their Colleges, including advocacy of the CDE and its activities.

65. That the report will contain examples of the results of initiatives, projects and involvement of CDE Fellows.
66. That an executive summary and conclusion are written for the stakeholders of the CDE, providing key information such as the context of why the CDE was set up, the type and number of activities undertaken and the resultant outputs.
67. That the report will be finalised after the CDEAS meeting and submitted to the 20 February ESAC meeting.
68. That there is no fixed view on keeping the CDE located within EISA or in a College although there is support and logic for keeping the link within the administration of the External System as this maintains an inter-collegiate and External System link.
69. That while the CDE is located within EISA, is supported by the Learning and Development Directorate, is reliant on funding from the External System and whose sub-committee is part of the governance system, so it has to report to, and be responsible to, the External System.

Resolved:

70. ***That the evaluation report will be finalised and include:***
 - ***Details of how the CDE reserve funding was used, including a financial summary***
 - ***Indicators on whether the CDE small research projects have been proven to give good value for money***
 - ***Provide indicators of the extent and value of Fellows activities within their Colleges***
 - ***More results and clarity of the CDE activities and outcomes***
 - ***An executive summary and conclusion aimed at stakeholders of the CDE***
71. ***That the evaluation report with executive summary and conclusions are submitted to the 20 February ESAC meeting.***

Received:

72. **CDEAS 3/3**, The Centre for Distance Education 2009-2012, New challenges, new communities, new direction.

Reported:

73. That the proposals were brought together by Brian Sayer after a series of consultations.
74. That the discussions in this meeting would be incorporated in the final version to be submitted to the 20 February ESAC meeting.
75. That the CDE has developed over its lifetime and is currently recognised as a facilitative and enabling body working across the Colleges, bringing together an academic group of specialists.

Noted on Fellows, Consultants and structure

76. That the Fellowship should continue to provide a pool of expertise to the work of the CDE and the External System, including providing support to projects and programmes.
77. That Fellows could be Consultants and that Consultants may apply to be Fellows but that neither automatically becomes the other and that an appointments panel is set up to process the applications of both these distinct roles.
78. That a scheme could be set up against which Fellows could be eligible to claim up to £1500 per year towards their expenses rather than a fixed honorarium or a payments scheme, and

additionally be able to apply for consultancy work for which a standard tariff would be applicable.

79. That existing Fellows and Consultants, alongside a wider call, are invited to apply for the new Fellowships.
80. That working groups be set up rather than a sub-structure of the Sub-Committee to which members of the Fellowship, the External Programme, EISA and others might belong, whose role it would be to develop proposals and carry out activities as appropriate. This would be a less formalised structure but provide greater flexibility than a formal sub-structure and would enable the CDEAS to retain significant oversight of the CDE functions.

Recommended:

81. ***That the CDE Fellowship is maintained to provide expertise and that new guidelines are drawn up which differentiate between the two roles of Fellow and Consultant although both can apply to either role.***
82. ***That an appointments panel is constituted to process the applications for Fellows and Consultants and that existing Fellows, Consultants and a wider group are invited to apply.***
83. ***That the new guidelines include details of finance including how Fellows can claim for up to £1500 for their expenses and the rates at which Consultants are paid.***
84. ***That the proposals are submitted to the 20 February ESAC meeting.***

Resolved:

85. ***That the Sub-Committee will adopt the process of creating working groups for developing proposals and other activities as deemed appropriate.***

Noted on Research, Professional Development activities and the Online Centre

86. That the role of the CDE is to identify areas where research activity would be well-received, and following on from Minute 70, the CDE agrees to support such research if funds are available to do so and according to whether low-costed research activity is deemed as value for money or not.
87. That the CDE would be recognised as a potential research partner by other Colleges and organisations, especially through the achievements of the research outputs over the last three years.
88. That whilst the CDE has the potential to attract contract research and paid consultancy, it was felt that the effort involved could prove a distraction and that significant issues of attribution in relation to Colleges would not easily be resolved.
89. That the CDE will continue to offer a range of workshops, training courses, conferences and symposia which are congruent with both the needs of the market and what is on offer through the Colleges, many of which have in-house training which might be accessible to people outside the College.
90. That the CDE evaluation process has so far indicated that formalised accredited training through the CDE is not currently desirable as opposed to the existing form of training which is very popular.
91. That the CDE is currently redeveloping its online presence using the External System online infrastructure which is fully-supported.

Recommended:

92. ***That the CDE will identify research requirements and continue to support research activity according to the availability of funds, which may be available through external partners and funding bodies.***

93. ***That the CDE continues to provide a range of training and support through a non-accredited approach.***

Received:

94. **CDEAS 3/4 tabled at the meeting, CDE Reserve funding report 13 January 2009**

Reported:

95. That the report was brought together by the Distance Learning Adviser and shows the budget and expenditure on three areas of activities over the three years.

Noted:

96. That the report shows outstanding commitments for the remaining budget of £106 500.00 for which the Centre can expect to be invoiced.

97. That a balance of £117 843.94 of unspent funds remains in the CDE budget.

Resolved:

98. ***That further work is needed to clarify the working budget of the CDE to be taken forward.***

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

99. The Chair was thanked for his work and commitment to the sub-committee during the last year.

100. In return the Chair thanked the secretary for her support.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

101. A selection of dates for the next meetings in 2009 will be circulated as soon as possible.