

ACADEMIC STANDARDS & EDUCATION COMMITTEE (ASEC)

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2019

Present

Prof Michael Silk (Deputy Chair) (in the Chair)	Deputy Dean - Research & Professional Practice (FM)
Prof Tim McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Adam Child (Secretary)	Head of Academic Quality (AS)
David Foot	Market Research Manager
Lenrick Greaves	Vice-President (Education), Students' Union (SUBU)
Georgia Hill	Student Representative, Faculty of Management
Alan James	General Manager of the Students' Union (SUBU)
Elysia Jones	Senior Student Representative, Faculty of Media and Communication
Kelly Lovelock	Senior Student Representative, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences
Jacky Mack	Head of Academic Services (AS)
Prof Kevin McGhee	Deputy Dean (FST)
Prof Sam Porter	Head of Department, Social Sciences and Social Work
Dr Gelareh Roushan	Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Enhancement (FLIE)
Dr Carly Stewart	Head of Education & Professional Practice Sport (FM)
Dr Christa van Raalte	Deputy Dean - Education & Professional Practice (FMC)
Dr Sara White	Acting Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice and Associate Dean Student Experience (FHSS)
Dr Sue Eccles [item 18/148]	Deputy Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Enhancement (FLIE)
Ms Anne Quinney [item 18/151]	Education Excellence Theme Leader (FLIE)
Mr Ari Sarafoopoulos [item 18/155]	Senior Lecturer in Computer Animation, NCCA (FMC)
Dr Hongchuan Yu [item 18/155]	Principal Academic in Computer Animation, NCCA (FMC)
Prof. Jian Jun Zhang [item 18/155]	Professor of Computer Animation, NCCA (FMC)

Observers

Andy Guttridge	Academic Quality Manager (AS)
Corrina Osborne	Head of Academic Operations
Judy Smith (Clerk)	Academic Quality Officer (AS)

Apologies

Mandi Barron	Head of Student Services (SS)
Dr Lois Farquharson	Deputy Dean – Education & Professional Practice (FM)
Ann Fernandez	Director of Marketing & Communications

18/139 APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as above.

18/140 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18/141 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

18/142 Accuracy: ASEC 20th March 2019 (ASEC-18-142)

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

18/143 Accuracy: e-ASEC 15th – 23rd April 2019 (ASEC-18-143)

The minutes of the e-ASEC meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

18/144 Matters Arising/Actions Log (ASEC-18-144)

The Committee noted the updates contained in the actions log with further updates provided as stated below

18/040 - (e-ASEC) – External Examiner Nominations and Examination Teams for Research Degrees

The additional external examiner had been approved by Faculty and was now due for institutional consideration and approval.

The Chair requested that the outstanding actions be expedited over the Summer to allow for full completion of the actions log.

18/145 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DEBATE

18/146 Debate item: Reducing academic offences

The FHSS Acting Deputy Dean Education and Professional Practice and Associate Dean Student Experience led a debate considering ways the number of academic offences at BU could be reduced. HSS had achieved success at reducing the number of allegations against students and time had been spent working with Programme Leaders to identify the main causes.

Plagiarism was still the most prevalent offence and HSS had understood that this was largely due to misunderstanding of what constituted plagiarism. A message that worked with students was couching it in terms of 'stealing' another person's work and this was communicated clearly to students during induction processes. Analysis of data within HSS showed that there was a particular vulnerability around CPD programmes; students on these programmes were often new to BU and less aware of the expectations for referencing work.

In discussing the broader issue of academic offences, the Committee discussed how BU students were inducted to understand the seriousness of academic offences and the lasting impacts on academic development and employment opportunities. Academic Advisors and Programme Leaders introduced these concepts at induction but there was seen to be considerable value in a short early assignment to allow students to test their understanding using Turnitin. It was noted that this test was used in some programmes but not others and could be used more widely. This could be especially helpful to international students where there were sometimes cultural misunderstandings that could inadvertently lead to problems.

The student representatives suggested that Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leaders spent more time explaining to students how Turnitin worked. A video was available on-line and this should be emphasised across all Faculties. Students often did not know how to distinguish between direct and indirect quotations, how to list references and some thought simply interchanging words would be enough not to be committing plagiarism.

It was commented that there were underlying causes leading to students committing academic offences such as poor time management and a lack of planning for completing assignments. Support for study skills and time management would respond to these issues. It was noted that not all students attended the study skills presentations and the student representatives felt that this should be made mandatory and also explain the consequences of poor time management. It was suggested that a refresher course could be held at the beginning of every academic year.

There was discussion of the concerns in the sector regarding commissioning of work and use of essay banks. The Committee discussed the evidencing of such concerns through oral examination of students based on their submitted work. Academic Advisors and lecturers were often aware of significant changes in styles of writing and could therefore identify when work which had been submitted was not a student's own. The Deputy-VC noted that he was part of a sector group co-ordinated by the QAA proceeding with

work on academic integrity, with plans to introduce a Charter. Discussions had been initiated to secure agreement from essay banks allowing Turnitin to access their records and content in order to support alleviation of plagiarism.

The Chair identified that there appeared to be some inconsistencies in approaches across the Faculties but also some examples of good practice that had been shared through the discussion, such as the emphasis on study skills session and the use of tests provided through Turnitin.

18/147 Revised approach to PREP (ASEC-18-147)

Following previous discussions at ASEC, the Deputy Deans (Education & Professional Practice) had been tasked with reviewing the Peer Review of Educational Practice (PREP) process to define an approach for use during 2019/20. The Head of FLIE presented the proposals that had been written in consultation with the Deputy Deans. In current form, PREP contains two key aspects when applied at the Faculty level: a focus on critical educational themes and a peer review element; collectively these are designed to provide a collegiate approach for reviewing lectures and seminars and providing feedback. The themes from these discussions are presently captured anonymously to inform themes for future enhancement or staff development. At present, there exists no natural 'home' for such conversations to be captured; further deliberation is required with respect to how to facilitate such discussions and ensure an ongoing visibility of academic quality within Departments and Faculties. There was also discussion with respect to the development of a more explicit link to Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Review (AMER) through departments identifying themes for departmental peer review activity.

The Committee agreed that this was a positive set of developments and recognised the importance of integration between PREP and other supportive process such as AMER. The new process was expected to underpin quality and achieve greater consistency across the institution, allowing Deputy Deans to provide improved oversight of the process. Tools for capturing the outputs from the peer review activity would be an important consideration in the operationalisation of PREP.

The Chair queried to what extent students were being involved in PREP. The Committee saw the value of student understanding of PREP as a visible part of a quality culture but understood that it was not always appropriate for students to be directly involved in peer review of teaching, noting there were other touch points for students to provide feedback that were discussed during PREP. The Focussed Enhancement Review due for completion in June was an opportunity to revisit the role of the student voice in areas such as PREP.

The Deputy V-C observed that having FLIE working closely with Faculties through monthly meetings was welcome and stated his anticipation that staff regarded PREP as a supportive and constructive process that was developmental in nature. In that respect PREP served to capture good practice and was most useful if academic staff felt able to report on the outcomes. It was agreed that the implementation should enable intermediation of the outputs to ensure there were no concerns around sharing more widely within the institution. The Head of FLIE responded that there was mixed practice presently and that the message needed to be repeated that this was intended to be a constructive exercise. Training could be provided as to what a good observation should look like. It was noted that there was a difference between anonymity and confidentiality and that a systematic process was important.

The intention was to implement this approach for the 2019/20 academic year. The Secretary confirmed that the proposals in the paper meant no specific change was needed to the underlying policy for PREP. The Faculties were supportive of the amendments, as evidenced in discussions held with DDEs. The Paper would be refined based on the discussion above and submitted to the e-ASEC meeting in June.

Action 18/147: GR/LF

18/148 TeachBU (ASEC-18-148)

The Deputy Head of FLIE provided an overview of the annual report of TeachBU, which was accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2013 to allow the University to offer its own provision for supporting and recognising staff in achieving HEA (now AdvanceHE) recognition for education practice and education leadership. The levels of AdvanceHE recognition were currently Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow.

TeachBU was aimed primarily at academic staff but increasingly professional staff were being encouraged to engage. The data showed that significant progress had been made with 84% of academic staff holding a teaching qualification or Advance HE recognition which was above the sector average and BU's comparator set. Efforts were being made to work with the small number of staff still seeking recognition. The aim for the future was to embed reflective and effective educational practice and for Senior Fellows to become mentors for other staff applying for recognition. A positive challenge moving forward was for the 300+ staff members with Fellowship status to be supported in seeking Senior Fellowships. Ideas were in place as to how to achieve that objective and it was felt the time was right to promote this agenda and maintain momentum.

It was noted that Additional Learning Support, Library and Learning Support and Academic Quality were some of the areas of the University that could engage with TeachBU due to links between their work and student learning. Workshops were run throughout the year and the Deputy Head of FLIE offered to meet with interested services to discuss this further.

The Head of Department, Social Sciences and Social Work, thanked the Deputy Head of FLIE for her efforts with departments and asked what support was available for PGR students undertaking teaching activity. It was noted that a task and finish group was exploring this area and that currently PGRs have access to a 'bootcamp' which explained and encouraged Associate Fellowship applications so that students left BU with experience and recognition of teaching skills.

The Deputy-VC queried the proposal to retain a cross-Faculty institutional lead noting that resourcing decisions were not within the remit of the Committee. It was understood that this was a resourcing issue for discussion at an appropriate executive level; however plans were in place to continue to provide institutional leadership for TeachBU regardless of the outcomes of those discussions.

The General Manager of the Students' Union (SUBU) commended BU and its work on this in order to improve teaching. It was noted that this was an important KPI which had been retained following the launch of BU2025. The Committee agreed and noted, with reference to the earlier discussion on PREP, that this signalled an academic community interested in reflective practice that should be positively inclined to PREP.

18/149 **FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT**

18/150 **Updates to ARPPs associated with Curriculum Management - 4A and 4B (ASEC-18-150)**

In introducing the paper, the Academic Quality Manager noted that a stakeholder consultation and review of the programme approval and review processes suggested that whilst the current approach to approval of new programmes for development was broadly fit for purpose, there was scope for refinement of various operational aspects and some potential adjustments to policy, which were proposed for recommendation to Senate.

1. An amendment to the approval process for new programme developments was proposed to substitute approval at Faculty Academic Board for approval at Faculty Academic Standards and Education Committee. FASEC approval would occur after approval had been given by the Faculty Executive. Faculty stages would be followed by consideration at ASEC.

The Committee **endorsed** this amendment for consideration at Senate.

2. A change to the policy had been proposed to allow new programmes to be promoted from the date of the external panel event provided that the panel granted conditional approval. At present, promotion of programmes only commences once full approval and conditions having been met. Data from the previous two academic years showed that 75% of approvals which went to ASEC went to market and 100% of programmes that were considered at a panel event were eventually fully approved. It was expected that this change would provide an additional 4 – 8 weeks of promotional time prior to applications opening and it was confirmed that applications would only open through UCAS once final approval was received. It was confirmed that BU would not be changing the approach to collecting expressions of interest on the webpage prior to opening of applications.

It was clarified that point 1.4.2 referred to CMA guidance rather than legislation. In discussing this change the Committee noted the value in determining fee and entry requirements at an early stage to

support promotional activity. Academic Quality was changing forms and supporting guidance to facilitate this and discussions were being held with the Head of Admissions to ensure Faculties submitted requests for exceptions to standard admissions requirements earlier. The Committee agreed that the proposed changes supported promotional activity without risking the secure nature of the information subsequently published about fully approved programmes.

The Committee **endorsed** this amendment for consideration at Senate.

3. A further proposal was to reduce the proportion of explicit student consent required to implement changes to published programme information from 75% to 50% of all affected students, with an additional 'explicit refusal threshold' which would require feedback from students to be considered in the event that 10% or more of students explicitly objected. This proposal had emanated from the experience of implementing the 6C policy where there was a need for flexibility to enhance courses as well as allowing sufficient protections for students. An issue identified concerned the level of engagement with students on consultation for changes where the 75% threshold was unrealistically high, especially for larger cohorts. Legal Services had advised Academic Quality regarding the details of the Student Agreement and the reasonableness of the proposals in contractual terms.

The Head of Academic Services noted that the modifications process was referenced in the Student Protection Plan (SPP) and should the amendment be approved the SPP would require amendment. The Head of Academic Quality noted that the OfS had not indicated what process was to be followed to submit changes but an annual update to the SPP was anticipated. The Secretary was to determine the route for submitting a revised SPP to the OfS.

Action 18/150a: Secretary

In discussing the 10% explicit refusal threshold the Committee felt that this was an unnecessary addition given that all student feedback should be considered on its merits regardless of the level of explicit disagreement. Faculty engagement with the qualitative feedback received from students during final approval was a preferred approach. Deputy Deans noted the typical consultation procedure was to review feedback at FASEC, but there was generally not much qualitative data to discuss as the questions to students were closed questions. The Chair noted that if there was any dissent from students, the proposals needed to revert to FASEC and students' feedback should be discussed. It was also important to determine the reasons behind student engagement being so low.

ASEC supported the amendment to the student consent threshold from 75% to 50% but asked that the 10% explicit refusal threshold be reviewed and removed from the final proposal.

The Committee **approved** the amendment for consideration at Senate, subject to the above amendment being made.

4. The deadline for FASEC consideration of programme modifications was currently 30 November for delivery commencing the following September. In order to allow greater flexibility and responsiveness to student feedback and other internal and external drivers, it was proposed to extend the deadline to the end of March for levels of programmes (diets) without optional units and to retain a 30 November deadline for programmes with optional units (or the addition of optional units to programmes). Support and commitment from Faculties would be required in support of these changes as submissions beyond this later deadline could not be guaranteed. It was suggested that a report be presented this time next year to see if the amendments had been successful.

It was noted that a diet referred to a level within a programme and the change opened up greater flexibility for around 75% of diets taught at the University. The Deputy V-C noted that this high proportion of eligible diets was likely due to PGT provision and programmes at undergraduate level that had less optionality. It was anticipated that programmes would have greater optionality once the Fusion Based Learning principles were fully implemented.

It was noted that there were modifications made that did not affect curriculum build and so greater flexibility could be offered by allowing these types of modifications to be approved before the later deadline in March. This was to be clarified in the final version of the policy to enable this greater flexibility.

Action 18/150b: AG/Secretary

The Committee noted the current timeline for curriculum build and queried whether further progress could be made to become more responsive to modifications. The Head of Academic Services noted that enhancements had been made that improved the efficiency of curriculum build which would be evaluated once the current cycle was complete. Where there were further opportunities to improve efficiency these were being explored but there was also a potential impact on other systems such as timetabling where certain lead-in times were required.

The Committee **endorsed** the amendment for consideration at Senate, subject to an amendment to clarify what types of modifications could be approved for the March deadline.

5. The Committee also **endorsed** the proposal to embed the content of *4H - Evaluation, Monitoring and Modification of Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes: Procedure* within the 4A and 4B documents for consideration at Senate.

18/151 **Level 3 Generic Assessment Criteria (ASEC-18-151)**

The Education Excellence Theme Leader reported that following approval of the Foundation Year Certificate for delivery at Wiltshire College, the Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL) (now FLIE) was asked to develop Level 3 Generic Assessment Criteria. The amendments were an extension of the existing Generic Assessment Criteria (6F) which had been developed following extensive consultation three years ago. In addition to addressing Level 3 criteria, it aligned statements within assignments to marking bands and contained a standard language for describing grade levels, as well as adhering to Equality Analysis Procedures.

The Committee **endorsed** the paper for consideration at Senate.

18/152 **GTA Partnership Renewal (Stage 2) (ASEC-18-152)**

Approval was sought for the Guernsey Training Agency University Centre partnership renewal which was being processed for another year to allow for one more cohort. As Higher Education awards in Guernsey were currently under review, there was not currently a rationale for extending this partnership for more than one further cohort and allowing these students to complete their studies. The supporting contract had already been extended for a year and the last extension included reference to a requirement from Legal Services that a new contract was established to cover subsequent arrangements.

The Committee queried the extent to which it was necessary to extend the contract now when the current agreement expired at the end of the 2019/20 academic year. There was a possibility of conducting the partner review in 2019/20 to inform the drafting of the contract renewal.

Clarification would be sought from the FM DDE and Academic Quality with the proposal reverted back to the Committee at the next e-meeting.

Action 18/152: LF/AC

18/153 **CAS Exemption - MBA Programme (ASEC-18-153)**

The MBA Programme in the Faculty of Management had been CAS exempt for an extended period of time and through the previous review cycle. The full-time MBA programme was currently being reviewed and a new structure and content were being developed to significantly enhance the MBA offering in the UK and international markets. The nature of the structure of the MBA programme was such that it would not function well if it had a January intake. The risks were highlighted in the paper. The core units were taught in the first semester and optional units in the second semester. The programme was 12 months in duration with the dissertation being completed in the summer.

In approving the proposal the Committee commented that BU was supportive of the MBA and was keen to ensure it remained a flourishing and healthy programme, noting that demand was dependent on market trends and the needs of local employers. However, the programme was distinct in terms of offering options and having an inter-disciplinary approach and remained competitive both in the UK and globally.

The Committee **approved** the CAS exemption.

18/154 **Programme Approvals**

18/155 **BSc (Hons) Virtual and Augmented Reality (ASEC-18-155)**

The Committee considered the programme development proposal for a new BSc (Hons) Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) to be delivered at the National Centre for Computer Animation in the Faculty of Media and Communications. The programme team informed the Committee that the programme aimed to build on existing strengths and create a more even balance between the art and technical aspects within the department and reflect the research activity within the department more closely. There was strong alignment with BU's strategic investment area of animation, simulation and visualisation. Market research suggested emerging interest in the UK and eight other universities were offering equivalent courses. BU's recognition for its research strengths suggested an attractive offer could be made to the market. The department also intended to offer a postgraduate course to provide an explicit progression route from the undergraduate programme.

The Committee suggested that the units could potentially be offered as CPD units as well as part of the undergraduate course. It was noted that there were six units being created to support the new programme with other units being shared with existing provision. The possibility of offering units as CPD could be considered in the detailed unit design. Noting the newness of the programme area it was suggested limiting the amount of new content to five units, plus a project which would minimise the risk for the first intake while also allowing sufficient differentiation from other programmes.

It was noted that although market research had been conducted, this was a new area which meant it was not possible to gauge how successful other universities were in terms of recruitment. However, the programme team understood that industry had identified a need for this course and that the aims were to provide students with transferable knowledge. The FMC DDE noted that the staff involved in developing this programme were not currently as engaged in teaching on programmes and allowed some mitigation of the recruitment of a small initial cohort ahead of anticipated growth. The point of viability for the programme was seen to be between 12 and 15 students to secure the student experience.

The Committee noted that the programme development was behind the usual schedule for a September 2020 delivery date and a revised schedule had been discussed with Academic Quality. It was unlikely that applications would be open for the programme at the start of the UCAS cycle; however the Faculty expressed its commitment to progressing the approval as soon as possible to allow for the maximum possible promotion time.

FST had not currently been involved in the development of the proposal as the programme was largely targeting the non-entertainment sector which differentiated it from FST's programmes. However it was suggested that BU was building its STEM offer in these related subjects and that could be emphasised over and above the specifics of which Faculty hosts the programme. The Chair noted there were other possible linkages that could be considered such as the link with healthcare and FLIE's work on ASV.

There was discussion regarding the name of the programme to ensure that the title retained currency in the long term. The proposed title was believed to communicate the programme most effectively to current students and was similar to programmes already in the market.

The Committee **approved** the proposal noting that feedback given during discussions would be considered as part of subsequent approval stages.

18/156 **QAEG Nominations (ASEC-18-156)**

The Committee **approved** the nominations.

18/157 **FOR NOTE**

18/158 **Curriculum Design Principle: Undergraduate Placements (ASEC-18-158)**

Following a debate at the October meeting of Senate and further discussion by Faculty Academic Boards in the early part of 2019, Senate had approved the curriculum design principle that all undergraduate students would normally undertake a placement experience.

The paper outlined steps that were to be taken to support the agreed principle such as reviewing the communication to students to encourage placement uptake and ensuring that students had maximum opportunity to undertake a placement within their programme of study. A gap had been identified where students with an optional long placement were not offered a short placement on occasions where they

opted not to undertake the long placement. This could be enhanced through modifications to programmes for cohorts with a September 2020 start.

It was noted that further work would be needed to fully embed placements within the programme portfolio and that while paragraph 2.5 indicated action that would be taken there was less indication of progress in other areas to support the curriculum design principle and further consideration should be given to this.

The Committee **noted** the paper.

18/159 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to discuss.

18/160 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

18/161 Wednesday, 16th October 2019, 14:00 - 17:00, Boardroom