

Academic Standards and Education Committee (ASEC)

Wed 19 May 2021, 14:00 - 17:00

MS Teams

Attendees

Board members

Prof. Tim McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair and Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Jules Forrest (Secretary and Head of Academic Quality), Mandi Barron (Director of Student Services), Andrew Bird (Head of International Marketing and Student Recruitment), Chiko Bwalya (Vice-President (Education), Students' Union (SUBU)), Dr Carol Clark (Member of Senate), Prof. Christos Gatzidis (Acting Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FST)), Jacky Mack (Academic Registrar), Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence (FLIE)), Dr Shelley Thompson (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (BUBS)), Prof. Julie Turner-Cobb (Member of the Professoriate), Dr Christa van Raalte (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FMC)), Dr Sara White ((Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FHSS))

Apologies

Michelle Clark (FHSS Officer), Justin Cole (Director of Marketing and Communications), Samantha Leahy-Harland (Chief Executive, Students' Union (SUBU))

Observers

Judy Lou Smith (Academic Quality Officer and Clerk)

Meeting minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

Information

Clerk

2. Declarations of Interest

For Item 4.3 - Academic Integrity Charter - The Chair declared that he was a member of the national working group. No other declarations of interest were recorded.

Information

Chair

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1. Accuracy: ASEC 17 March 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record.

 ASEC Minutes 17.03.2021 - Unconfirmed.pdf

Decision

Chair

3.2. Accuracy: ASEC 21 April 2021 (Exceptional Meeting)

The BUBS DDE identified two corrections:

The key items were to address the two actions which are linked to current working groups. One is on the student experience from **2021/22**, putting inclusive practice at the heart of it as well as inclusive curriculum and inclusive assessment, alongside **digital fused pedagogy**. The inclusivity element should be considered, looking at race and ethnicity, to ensure that disparity in outcomes was being addressed.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record, with the amendments noted above.

Decision

Chair

3.3. Matters Arising/Actions Log

Discussion

14 - Academic Integrity Charter: To proactively communicate with students to ensure they understand the risks of engaging with essay mills - The Secretary reported that communications regarding this had been sent to students in April. The action was closed.

26 - Any Other Business: To discuss allowing students early access to reading lists - It was confirmed that the information was available and that communications to students around this needed to be clear. The action was closed.

All other Actions were closed and could be viewed on the Actions Log.

 ASEC Actions Log 2020-21.pdf

3.4. Chair's Action - For Ratification (Confidential)

Decision

Chair

The Chair noted that this was an unusual course of action, which he had only been required to take twice during his time at the university.

The Chair's Action was **ratified**.

 Chairs Action PGR Exam Panel.pdf

4. For Discussion

4.1. Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence Activity Update

Discussion

Dr Gelareh Roushan

It was reported that FLIE was continuing to support Faculties with assessment queries and proceeding to assist with different assessment types that were moved online, such as tests and exams. Assessment workflows were being considered with Faculties, particularly ESMs and PSOs.

Two key items to highlight were the revised version of the Digital Pedagogies Framework, which had been shared with Faculty colleagues, to ascertain whether there was endorsement for this to move forward. Since writing this paper, new templates for Brightspace had been created which were designed to be more user friendly for academic staff and also more visually appealing for students in terms of structuring the content in units. The Fusion Learning Conference for late June/July had been well received, both with speakers and with colleagues submitting work to be shared. Regarding the tools usage areas in the report, it would be interesting to receive feedback from Faculties as to whether the insights reports were being utilised and whether any additional information or data was required on the dashboards. FLIE was working with the Information Management team and PRIME to see how other student demographic data, which Faculties have access to through SITS, could be incorporated into the report.

The Chair commented that it was good to see targeted support versus general support for colleagues and that Faculties were engaging with FLIE.

 FLIE Activity Update.pdf

4.2. AMER Update 2020-21

Discussion

Jules Forrest

AMER was well-established and worked effectively, so there were no major policy changes proposed for the next academic year. Feedback had been gathered from stakeholders via a working group in May as to how to improve the end-user experience. This had included feedback regarding the action plan, enhancements to Sharepoint and additional guidance for certain areas and roles within the process. The feedback for PRIME was positive in that the data dashboard was providing the information which Faculties required to complete the process, and this was presented in a helpful format.

Improvements which were being made to AMER were embedding Student Outcomes Data consideration as part of the process and making the role of Faculty Executive clearer with regards to the monitoring and oversight of Faculty action plans. The effectiveness of the Inclusivity Health Check (IHC) was noted in terms of raising awareness across Faculties. It was proposed that the institutional theme this year, as a priority area for the University, is focusing on BAME attainment, as there remained a notable gap at BU in relation to BAME attainment, in comparison to the sector data for 2019/20. This theme would assist in focusing attention on the issue, and the inclusion of the IHC will support Programme teams and Departments considering actions and good practice in the area of BAME attainment, especially if data is limited for that programme.

 AMER Update 2020-21.pdf

4.3. Academic Integrity Charter

Discussion
Jules Forrest

The Academic Integrity Charter was published in October 2021 by the QAA. It is a set of principles guiding how universities should meet the pledge to support academic integrity. A working group consisting of representatives from Faculties, SUBU, the Library and FLIE had met and the Charter principles were discussed. The outcomes were that there was no requirement to make any changes to policies and procedures around academic misconduct. The Charter focusses on how universities create a culture and community around promoting academic integrity and this is embedded in practices, network and communications rather than policies and procedures.

The academic members of the working group welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues which had emerged in different Faculties and to consider the influence of internal and external networks around academic integrity. It was suggested that this group continues to meet in an informal manner, perhaps twice a year, to consider issues which were pertinent. The data which was used in the Academic Quality Report around AMER and misconduct was shared anonymously with that group. There was a proposal that BU hosts an Academic Integrity conference in the next academic year, being led by Steph Allen in FMC. It was noted that it would be important to continue to include students in the discussions as they evolved.

It was suggested that it would be interesting to have more information on the breakdown of academic misconduct in terms of age, gender and other relevant Access and Participation indicators. It would also be useful to consider international students, who may not have English as their first language, to see whether this had any influence on patterns in the academic misconduct data.

The paper was **endorsed**.

 Academic Integrity Charter.pdf

4.4. Ofsted Update

Discussion
Jules Forrest

It was announced in September 2020 that Ofsted would become the regulator for Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships where the university is the lead provider for an apprenticeship. This impacts programmes in the Department of Nursing in FHSS.

The paper provided an overview of preparations which were being made for Ofsted monitoring. The Academic Quality team and the team in FHSS had been reviewing the Education Inspection Framework, self-assessment plans and quality assurance reports which were expected to be in place. Consideration was being given to the appropriate governance structures and levels of oversight at FASEC, and possibly ASEC, as well as how to engage leadership and management in the oversight required, and to monitor students' progress as they progressed with their apprenticeship.

The University had liaised with FE partners' who had shared their resources, which had been very helpful. It was positive that the focus was only on one department, at present. The University would be subject to an Ofsted monitoring inspection at any point within the next two years and work in this area would remain a high priority for Academic Quality and the Department of Nursing.

It was noted that safeguarding was an area which Ofsted expected to see embedded across the provision and all relevant aspects of student and employer learning and support materials. It was noted that this was a different approach that had been typical for HE providers, and seemed to align better to FE. The FHSS DDE noted that Ofsted had been placed on the FHSS FASEC agenda as a standing item and that safeguarding was integral to programmes, staff and practitioners involved in programme delivery.

 Ofsted Update.pdf

5. For Approval/Endorsement

5.1. Assessment Regulations Review

Decision
Jules Forrest

The Chair commented that due to the development timeline for SITS, the outcome of some of these recommendations may not be implemented with immediate effect, despite the clear benefit to students. The Committee was encouraged to consider whether some of these recommendations could be implemented more quickly in order to support students.

The Assessment Regulations update followed a paper which had been discussed at the April ASEC meeting and had considered student outcomes, reflecting on achievement and how the regulations supported progression between levels. There were a number of areas which were identified as worth exploring further with the wider academic community. These proposals were taken to the FASEC meetings in May and this update is based on discussions and feedback from those meetings.

1. Mark profile rule – there was strong support from all Faculties to retain the mark profile rule. There was some debate as to whether it should be within 2% or 3% of the classification boundary. Students currently need 80 credits at a higher classification and to be within 3% of the boundary. There were mixed views from FASECs as to whether this figure should be 2% or 3%. It was noted that the average mark for a Level 6 student is in mid to high 60s. The modelling indicated that if the borderline rule was moved to 2%, this would increase the number of 2:1s and reduce the number of 1sts awarded. It was noted that the new sector guidance recommends 2% as the ideal threshold for any borderline policy of this nature. It was agreed that further analysis would be done by modelling the impact of changes to this borderline rule on BAME data. It was agreed that the University did not want to be in a position of making a change

which appeared marginal in the data modelling, but disadvantaged a group of students. The proposal would be brought back to the October meeting for consideration.

2. Reassessment limits - there was a mixed response from Faculties. Two Faculties were strongly in support of removing the reassessment limits, and two Faculties expressed concern about the impact that this would have on both students and staff. The data modelling indicated that this would benefit students at Level 4 if more flexibility was created. It was proposed that Academic Quality would explore more options with Faculties to make this more flexible, rather than removing reassessment limits altogether. It would need to be considered more carefully as to how it would work and whether academic staff were able to support students taking reassessments. Concerns were raised about the impact on staff time and it was noted that Programme Leaders played an important role in providing advice on reassessments. However, the Committee reflected that it is possible that student retention is impacted by students who fail over their reassessment limit, who do not return to repeat the failure. As this could add another year of studying to their degree, it was also expensive for students. The committee noted that it also tended to be students with the weaker profile who needed to resit units within a one month period and concern was expressed regarding setting expectations and pushing students in terms of their mental health.

It was reported that BUBS supported this proposal as the focus of assessment regulations was assessment for learning. This would assist with continuation and progression for students. The programme team played an important role in counselling students and setting expectations. The resubmissions should be opportunities for students to improve on previous work, which had been insufficient, rather than submitting new work.

The Chair commented that although Level 4 students had to pass a unit, the weighting did not count towards their degree outcome. It was competency-based learning and therefore the focus should be on creating a solid grounding or foundation for students. Good advice and guidance to students would always be key to supporting students with reassessments. The VP (Education) SUBU noted that student wellbeing and expectations should be considered as well as considering students' circumstances in terms of ALS and that this should be considered on a case by case basis, in the best interest of students. It was noted that some students may feel disadvantaged if the rule was changed and some students may feel disadvantaged if the rule was not changed.

The recommendation was to consider more flexibility with regards to reassessments, particularly at Level 4. A proposal to consider more flexibility, but not complete flexibility, would be presented in October for reconsideration, as this proposal had broad Committee support, but with some reservations.

3. Late submissions - this had strong support from all Faculties. Reassessment limits would be removed from the late submissions policy. This would be brought forward in the October proposal.

4. In-year retrieval - this also had strong support from Faculties. This would be giving students an opportunity to retrieve assessment earlier on in the year, while it was still fresh in their minds. The groundwork had already been prepared operationally to put this into place.

With regards to implementation of the changes being considered it was noted that if the mark profile rule was being changed, these changes would need to be phased in. However, if the borderline rule was not being changed, all of these changes could be implemented for all students for 2022/23. That would provide time to prepare the regulations, update SITS and prepare all the other operational requirements. The benefits of implementing the recommended changes all at once was that there would be no phasing in or out of regulations. There is a higher level of risk in managing students on multiple sets of regulations at Assessment Boards, in terms of tracking students to ensure they are on the correct regulations and the right decisions are being made.

The Chair commented that it was important to note that if these changes were not progressed for 2021/22, we would forgo potential advantages to students if we did not invoke them at the earliest opportunity. Some of these changes may benefit current students. It was suggested that when the paper was presented in October, flexibility could be applied, as some of these proposals had been implemented on a temporary basis during the pandemic and there may be an option to continue to extend them. It was noted that that communications to both students and staff would need to be very clear.

The full proposal for 2021/22 and 2022/23 would be considered at the October meeting.

 Assessment Regulations Review.pdf

5.2. ARPP 6H Update: Academic Offences

The changes were based on experiences over the past few years as well as feedback from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) on a particular case. With regards to the changes around applying penalties, the University was expected to be transparent in explaining why a particular penalty had been applied.

The changes relating to the procedure for minor offences had been temporarily utilised since March 2020 and had now been incorporated into the policy as a permanent change. This aligned with procedural best practice as outlined in the OIA's Good Practice Framework.

A proposal was included to widen the pool of staff who could be used as for Chairs for University Academic Offences Panels (AOPs) as there was currently a limited number of people who fulfil that role, and there are short timescales to meet when setting up an UAOP.

It was noted that widening the pool of Chairs would mean it is important to monitor the outcomes of different Chairs to ensure consistency with regards to decision making.

The paper was **approved** for onward circulation to Senate.

5.3. ARPP 6F Update: Generic Assessment Criteria

Decision
Anne Quinney

This was a proposal to update the University's generic assessment criteria (6F), following updates by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 (Annex D). This had been seen as an opportunity to refresh the University's assessment criteria in Levels 3/0 to 7. It was five years since the original policy had been approved.

There were still four domains, but QAA had enhanced the content. Common language for each of the levels had been retained, so that comments should align with marks allocated.

Where BU differed from the QAA approach, BU's generic assessment criteria uses two mark bands for fail and two mark bands for firsts and this had been retained. This would be helpful in using the full range of marks. Also, feedforward statements had been retained as these were helpful for students.

It was noted that it might be difficult for certain subject areas to differentiate practical skills from transferable skills. It was noted that more work may need to be done to articulate what that might mean in different disciplines. Further interpretation could be done within Faculties to develop programme specific and assessment specific criteria.

It was noted that the electronic rubric would need to be updated, and that there was a marker in Brightspace where students could access the generic assessment criteria for their level.

There was support for the policy and for implementation in September 2021.

The paper was **approved** for onward circulation to Senate.

 ARPP 6F Update Generic Assessment Criteria.pdf

5.4. ARPP 6J Update: Exceptional Circumstances

Decision
Jules Forrest

As part of the Good Practice Framework, the OIA had produced a set of expectations around what they termed 'additional consideration', which BU refers to as 'exceptional circumstances'. The Policy and Procedure and Guidance documents had been mapped against the Good Practice Framework. As the OIA has been consulting on the 'additional consideration' guidance, this was used as a reference when the ARPP was updated last year and this guidance had been incorporated. Consequently, no changes were required to the Policy and Procedure, as the University was already aligned to the framework. This had, however, led to small adjustments to some of the guidance and supporting material underpinning the policy. The mapping document in Appendix 1 provides the details of changes required.

The Committee noted that possible grounds for appeal had been broadened by the OIA in this area, as well as other related areas such as Academic Offences, to include that students were able to appeal on the grounds of an 'unreasonable decision'. Consideration of the inclusion of this as new ground for appeal would be included in the wider review of appeals and complaints policies planned for next academic year.

Guidance for staff had been strengthened where students were submitting multiple claims for exceptional circumstances. It was noted that students should be referred to Support to Study. The Secretary and Director of Student Services would discuss this separately.

Action: Secretary/Director of Student Services

The paper was **approved**.

 ARPP 6J Update - Exceptional Circumstances.pdf

5.5. ARPP 8A Update: Code of Practice for Research Degrees

Decision
Dr Fiona Knight

The proposed amendments outlined in the paper were discussed and approved at the Research and Development Committee (RDC) meeting held on 27 April 2021. Prior to this, a sector analysis was undertaken by a sub-group of RDC, who met specifically to review these sections to identify appropriate changes which were required to bring this policy in line with sector best practice and to ensure improved quality assurance, support and assessment of research degrees at BU.

ASEC was asked to approve changes to the criteria for External Examiners as follows: Where there were two External Examiners, they would both be required to have examined at least once at the appropriate level but, if not, the Faculty should provide a detailed rationale to their appointment.

The paper was **approved**.

 ARPP 8A Update Code of Practice.pdf

5.6. Partner Review Outcomes and UK Partner Update

Decision
Jules Forrest

Kingston Maurward College Initial Report
Wiltshire College Initial Report

Kingston Maurward College and Wiltshire College had both been subject to a partner review in 2020/21. The partner review process requires that partners undergo a review the year before their agreements are due to expire. The due

diligence recommended both Colleges for consideration for renewal as no issues had been identified. No issues with academic standards or quality had been identified with either partner.

It was noted that the University Leadership Team (ULT) had the responsibility of these contracts. A similar paper would be submitted to ULT broadly outlining the partner review and any financial, reputational or strategic risks.

The outcomes of the reviews were **approved**.

An update on Guernsey Training Agency (GTA) noted that GTA was continuing with the off-campus delivery model and that they would have a partner review in the next few months.

 Partner Review Outcomes and UK Partner Update.pdf

5.7. External Examiner Appointments and Examination Teams for Research Degrees

The paper was **approved**.

 External Examiner Appointments and Examination Teams.pdf

Decision
Jules Forrest

5.8. Programme Development

5.8.1. Programme Approval and Review 2021/22

Many Programme Approval and Review events had been deferred due to the pandemic. Health checks had been conducted on deferred events. Meetings with DDEs would be held in September 2021 regarding approval of new provision and deferring any programme reviews which were not urgently required.

Academic Quality plan to conduct a review next year to look at the programme approval and review process and other processes which linked into it, such as Annual Monitoring, Modifications and Focused Enhancement Review, to consider whether the university should continue on the cycle of reviews every six years. Reviewing this would identify benefits in moving to annual monitoring health checks every year, where the curriculum could be changed as and when needed, rather than at set times.

The paper proposed the approach that the University continue to manage programme approval and review on a risk basis for another year, and considering the deferral of low risk reviews, in order to manage capacity and resource within Faculty teams.

The proposal was **approved**.

 Programme Approval and Review Proposal for 2021-22.pdf

Decision
Jules Forrest

5.8.2. Programme Development Proposal - MA Film and Television in FMC

This programme development proposal was for a Masters in Film and Television. The Masters framework was productive and made up of programmes which represented the industry standard specialism. These programmes worked together to create a production hub which worked and recruited well. The programmes had a good reputation and a recently revalidated programme for an MA in Production Management had identified where there was a gap in the framework. This was not a pre-production department which simply showed craft skill, but it also created spaces for critical thinkers about craft and addressed industry and the various forms it was in.

The BA Film programme not only created 'makers', but 'maker-thinkers' who were critical about their practice and moved into non-production led areas. This idea had been adopted for the Masters in Film and Television as it has production within it and common perceptions underpinning the programme. It also requires students to be critical and reflect on the shape of their own practice, the shape of industry and contains intriguing nudges towards being critical of current production. It encourages the use of students' media skills set and energies for good for social impact. The framing of the proposal aligns well within the institutional strategic direction. The department has an interesting research culture in practice-based and practice-led research. This was a space where students could branch into Doctoral studies and a scholarly programme team could reflect on this MA level in a critical form.

It was suggested that collaboration between other creative departments in other Faculties could be useful. It was confirmed that the mode of delivery would be a full-time, one year programme and that certain elements would not be suitable for online delivery. This programme would succeed as it was part of an existing framework, within a production culture. It was noted that a CAS exception would need to be requested for having no January starters. Academic Quality would be able to advise on a rationale for this to be submitted to ASEC for approval.

The programme development proposal was **approved**.

 PDP - MA Film and Television.pdf

Decision
Dr Ashley Woodfall

5.8.3. CAS Exception Request - MSc Medical Imaging with Management

The MSc Medical Imaging with Management was not a standard programme and was validated to start in September 2021. It was recruiting well and would be the first programme to utilise the MRI scanner. Due to the use of the scanner, there would be different time schedules for professionals who were joining the programme part-time for a year. As such, a CAS exception was being requested to not have January starters on the programme. Partnerships meetings were being held regularly and it was evident that partners could not offer any more staff members to facilitate a second intake. The situation would be revisited again in the future.

The CAS exception was **approved**.

 CAS Exception - MSc Medical Imaging with Management.docx.pdf

6. For Note

6.1. Partnership Activity Update

This report had not been submitted last year, however it would be a standing agenda item going forward. It was noted that no partnerships were running which were out of contract.

The termination date of the partnership with San Pablo University was queried. The Secretary would confirm if this was correct.

Action: Secretary

Monthly meetings were held between Academic Quality and the Global Engagement Team to monitor partnership arrangements.

The paper was **noted**.

Information
Jules Forrest

6.2. Annual Review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Chair commented that the University had continued to make progress against KPIs and had done well, especially considering the pandemic.

The paper was **noted**.

 Key Performance Indicators.pdf

Information
Russell Pottle

6.3. Foundation Year Intermediate Award Titles

The paper was clarifying what was not explicitly covered at the approval event regarding subject exit awards for Foundation Year Programmes. A Foundation Year student who exit at the end of the Foundation Year and does not continue to Level 4 would receive a Foundation Year certificate, as long as they have passed a minimum of 80 credits. The certificate will be subject specific: Foundation Year certificate in Business and Management or Foundation Year certificate in Life Sciences. This will be embedded into the programme specifications as an exit award. At present the subject area was not specified.

It was queried as to whether students who left with a Foundation Year certificate and returned a year or more later, would be eligible for an alumni discount. This would be considered within Marketing & Communications as to how to close that gap.

Action: AB

The paper was **approved**.

 Foundation Year Intermediate Award Titles.pdf

Information
Jules Forrest

6.4. Pending External Examiner Appointments

The paper was **noted**.

 External Examiner Appointments Pending.pdf

Information
Jules Forrest

6.5. Outcomes from recent Evaluation Events and List of Completed Evaluation Events

The paper was **noted**.

 Programme Approval and Review Outcomes.pdf

Information
Jules Forrest

6.6. BUBS FASEC Minutes

The Minutes were **noted**.

Information
Dr Shelley Thompson

 BUBS FASEC Minutes.pdf

6.7. FHSS FASEC Minutes

The Minutes were **noted**.

 FHSS FASEC Minutes.pdf

Information

Dr Sara White

6.8. FMC FASEC Minutes

The Minutes were **noted**.

 FMC FASEC Minutes.pdf

Information

Dr Christa Van Raalte

6.9. FST FASEC Minutes

The Minutes were **noted**.

 FST FASEC Minutes.pdf

Information

Prof Christos Gatzidis

7. Any Other Business

The FMC DDE requested that an e-meeting be held to approve the Programme Development Proposal for a Foundation Year in Creative Industries. The Chair agreed to this request.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

8.1. Wednesday, 13 October 2021, 14:00 - 17:00

