

ACADEMIC STANDARDS & EDUCATION COMMITTEE (ASEC)

Thursday 7 April 2022, 14:00 – 17:00

Attendees

Board members

Professor Tim McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair and Deputy Vice-Chancellor),
Professor Philip Sewell (Deputy Chair and Head of Department, Faculty of Science and Technology (FST)),
Jules Forrest (Secretary and Head of Academic Quality), Mandi Barron (Director of Student Services),
John Bernard (Student Faculty Officer, BUBS), Chiko Bwalya (Vice-President (Education) Students' Union (SUBU)), Dr Carol Clark (Member of Senate), Professor Katharine Cox (Member of the Professoriate), Professor Christos Gatzidis (Acting Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FST)), Samantha Leahy-Harland (Chief Executive, Students' Union (SUBU)), Jacky Mack (Academic Registrar), Olubunmi Okunnu (Student Faculty Officer, FMC), Dr Christa van Raalte (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FMC)), Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence (FLIE)), Dr Shelley Thompson (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (BUBS)), Professor Julie Turner-Cobb (Member of the Professoriate), Dr Sara White (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FHSS)),
Professor Sabeur Zoheir (Member of the Professoriate)

Apologies

Andrew Bird (Head of International Marketing and Student Recruitment), Professor Carol Evans (Observer)

Observers

Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations), Georgina Fluke (Academic Quality Team Leader), Rebekah Kerslake (Academic Quality Officer and Clerk), Judy Lou Smith (Academic Quality Team Leader)

Meeting Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Information
Clerk

Apologies were noted as above.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Information
Chair

No declarations of interest were recorded.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Accuracy: ASEC 26 January 2022

Decision
Chair

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

3.2 Accuracy: e-ASEC 10 – 17 February 2022

Decision
Chair

The summary of the e-meeting was approved as an accurate record.

3.3 Matters Arising/Actions Log

Discussion
Various

4.1 B - Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21: The Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence (FLIE) reported that the Digital Pedagogies Framework was in the process of being revised and will be considered at the next ASEC meeting in May. The Faculty of Media & Communication (FMC) and the Faculty of Science & Technology (FST) reported that they would be running inclusivity sessions for staff to inform a greater awareness of inclusivity issues. The Universal Design principles will feed into the update to the Digital Pedagogies Framework. Following ASEC approval, the Digital Pedagogies Framework will be re-published.

6.2 A – Arrivals and Induction Report: The revised timing for this report has been agreed, however the action would be kept open to ensure it was not overlooked.

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

4. FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Student Outcomes Data

Discussion

The PRIME Manager (Academic Planning and Insight) presented the Student Progression and Outcomes Data. The report summarised student progression and attainment in the 2020/2021 academic year. The areas reported on included first degree non-continuation following year of entry, modelled on Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) performance indicator T3; full-time first degree final outcome, modelled on HESA performance indicator T5; undergraduate award classification; fulltime post-graduate taught final outcome; postgraduate taught award classification and postgraduate research Doctoral completion. Excluding Partner Institutions, the continuation rate at BU had fallen by 2.6% from 91.8% for 2019/20 entrants to 89.1% for 2020/21 entrants. In particular, the gap in continuation rates between students with A-levels and those with Level 3 Diplomas, including BTEC, which had narrowed from 9.1% in 2018/19 to 3.7% in 2019/20, has now widened to 5.9%.

A key factor with non-continuation rates was qualification on entry; historically qualification on entry has been the biggest predictor of success. No withdrawals before 1st December were included. The University's own internal statistics would not always mirror these statistics unless BU was using HESA methodology.

Postgraduate completion was trending at around 90% achieving a Master's degree. In terms of exit classification this had fluctuated and reduced from 84% in 2019/20 to 79% in 2020/21 gaining a Distinction or Merit.

The Committee asked how the BU Undergraduate success rate compared across the sector. At present the BU figure was 77.7% eventual completion, compared to 80% broadly across the sector.

The point was raised as to whether Covid had affected the continuation figures for 2019/20. The PRIME Manager confirmed that evidence showed that Covid had had an impact on continuation rates, such as the large number of family issues (covid-related) affecting students.

The Director of Student Services requested that reference be made to declared disability and not Additional Learning Support (ALS) since not all with a declared disability take/are provided support. The PRIME Manager confirmed that he would ascertain what terminology was used across the sector and discuss with the Director of Student Services to seek appropriate resolution in reporting.

ACTION: PRIME Manager

The Academic Registrar noted that this data would be viewed through the lens of the Access and Participation Plan (APP) leading to further actions to support student outcomes; data would be presented to the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee (AEIC) at the next meeting.

ACTION: Chair of AEIC

It was queried as to whether the data needed to be reviewed separately for apprenticeships. The Head of Academic Quality reported that in future it was intended that apprenticeships would be reported on separately. The PRIME Manager agreed that going forward this was something that would be monitored.

There was discussion about the impact on outcomes of the changes introduced through ARPP 6C in 2018, particularly the move away from exams unless stipulated by a PSRB and the removal of sub-elements, as well as how assessment methods overall impacted students. It was reported that some BTEC students experienced difficulties when adapting to one larger piece of assessment rather than smaller elements broken down across the academic year. It was highlighted that as the University moved away from exam-based assessment, the continuation rate may be impacted positively. It was noted that formative feedback was key to the approach in 6C. A lack of engagement in some students with both formative and summative feedback had been observed across BU. Targeted support was raised as one solution to this.

The Committee noted that continuation rates for students on Foundation year courses was an area that should be monitored closely so that adjustments to appropriate support could be provided.

The Chair highlighted that despite the reduction in the BAME final year attainment gap in section 5.5, there were significant differences in section 3.7 of the report, Non-continuation following Year of Entry by Ethnic Origin. For 2020/21, the continuation qualifying rate for home BAME students was 82.3%, compared with 90.6% for non-BAME students, a difference of -8.3%. This compared with a difference of +0.5% and -1.6% in 2018/19 and 2019/20. It was noted that this was a significant difference compared to recent history which needed to be addressed at an institutional and at Faculty level. The University must actively do all that it can to ensure that there is a level playing field for all students, to allow them to be successful and to achieve to the best of their abilities. The issue of non-continuation of BAME students needed to be clearly addressed by the Faculty AMER action plans for investigation and action.

Action: DDEs

The Committee considered whether Covid had played a contributing factor in the differences mentioned above regarding continuation. It was noted that there had been more exams this year than previous years which may have had an impact on the continuation rates. It was discussed as to whether there was a relational issue which reflected how well students felt embedded within university life; in various Faculties, focus groups were taking place to understand and address this concern. Within FHSS the issue was compounded by the way in which BAME students sometimes appeared to experience differential treatment on placement within the Health Service and work to improve this was ongoing. Students were excited about the decolonisation of the curriculum, however, students had noted that whilst the message from BU was that this was important, they had also challenged whether enough was being done by the University. One student reported that essential change took so long to implement that many students had graduated before students saw the benefits of the change. The question was raised as to whether Bournemouth University had yet evolved policy and practice sufficiently to address all of the issues raised within the intersectional data, such as the full-time first degree outcomes of BAME students entering the University with a BTEC; it was clear that further targeted action was required from Faculties and institutionally to ensure progress would be made where the University's data indicated disparity in outcomes. This would be taken forward as per the actions above.

It was requested that an extra category be added for students living at home versus those students who were living away from home so that the data could be reviewed and appropriate action considered.

Action: PRIME Manager

4.1.1 Response from BUBS including Faculty AMER action plan

Discussion
Dr Shelley Thompson

BUBS' non-continuation rates for first degrees for the last three years had been stable, although higher than desirable. Disparities had been noted in non-continuation rates for particular groups and this would be addressed. The non-continuation rate for BAME students was particularly high in 2020-21 at 22.15% when compared with the two previous years. Overall, non-continuation was an area of emphasis for BUBS. AdvanceHE Training for staff had recently taken place on the attainment gap in assessment, and how equality and inclusivity could be better included in assessment. A detailed report and concrete actions from this would be presented in June. Academic advising work has been completed but it would be taken further. Whilst there was support being provided, it needed to be ensured that it was targeted in the right place.

It was noted by the Committee that the Department of Sport & Event Management (SEM) and the Department of Marketing, Strategy and Innovation (MSI) were highlighted as having continuation rates issues for BAME students. SEM had been highlighted two years running but were being very active in trying to address this. MSI had put in place additional actions in their AMER and within their Inclusivity Health Check. There had been an improvement in the Department of Accounting,

Finance & Economics (AFE) who were flagged as a concern last year. It was noted that exams were required to be reinstated by PSRBs, so this may change again next year.

It was noted that the Students' Union Bournemouth University (SUBU) had a mentoring programme for black students, with 40 students applying and approximately 10-15 mentors available. It was a pilot scheme that was launched in March and was due to run to the end of May. Evaluation would be carried out at the end of the programme and feedback would be provided by the end of July. It was suggested that the scheme be broadened post-pilot and evaluation.

4.1.2 Response from FHSS including Faculty AMER action plan

Discussion
Dr Sara White

It was reported by the Deputy Dean Education for HSS that work continues to progress decolonising the curriculum. There was a new Inclusivity Lead who would be developing focus groups which would be taking place after Easter with BAME students within the Faculty. It was noted that those students who entered BU with higher points had a better overall outcome and the Faculty was looking at ways to help Foundation students bridge the gap before they started Level 4.

The Committee reflected that it was difficult to see how the actions described in the action plan related to the continuation rate data or the high proportion of 1st/2.1 outcomes. A query was raised regarding the proportion of 1st class degrees, specifically within Midwifery. The Chair emphasised that it was important for actions in the plan to appropriately reflect the clear patterns of data within the Faculty that required attention. The FHSS DDE, Academic Registrar and Head of Academic Quality would revise the submission.

Action: FHSS DDE/ Academic Registrar/ Head of Academic Quality

4.1.3 Response from FMC including Faculty AMER action plan

Discussion
Dr C Van Raalte

The FMC DDE reported that BAME attainment was an issue. . However, the numbers were so small that it was very difficult to generalise. There had previously been a concern regarding overall grade inflation for student cohorts, but that had abated. The actions in the plan were around BAME students and focusing on the decolonisation agenda; there had been engaged discussions with staff. Training with FLIE was being scheduled earlier in the year and in future the Faculty wanted to look at more subject specific work. Feedback from the Faculty highlighted issues with student engagement, both within teaching and learning and student voice.

The Chair noted that there were good observations in the narrative and that the challenge was to show how the Faculty actions were informed and further developed. The AMER needed to provide institutional reassurance with regard to clear action within Faculty and that the good intentions were being carried through. The FMC DDE and Head of Academic Quality would discuss this further and revise documentation appropriately.

Action: FMC DDE / Head of Academic Quality

4.1.4 Response from FST including Faculty AMER action plan

Discussion
Professor C Gatzidis

FST has more than 5000 students and six different departments with very different disciplines and separate challenges for each one, therefore a more localised approach had been taken. The focus for the FST AMER action plan was on departments rather than the Faculty as a whole. To allow for more in-depth discussion, the AMER had been separated into a sub-group of FASEC. In terms of data, there were successes, in particular Computing which has achieved an increased overall continuation rate. Creative Technology non-continuation rates for non-BAME students was decreasing. Examples of departmental actions included planning an inclusivity workshop and using more BAME academics for supervising BAME students. The Faculty had been piloting a new IMP this year.

The Committee discussed the importance of increasing the numbers of BAME Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) leaders. This would be flagged to Library & Learning Support colleagues by the Head of Academic Quality.

Action: Head of Academic Quality

It was observed by the Committee that there was an issue around the small size of BAME statistics when considered at departmental level. Due to the small numbers of students, there may be a danger that these students were falling through the gap and perhaps more could be done. It was noted that the small numbers may also contribute to a sense of 'not belonging'. The Head of FLIE reported that in the re-submission of the Race Equality Charter it was highlighted that there needed to be a response even if student numbers were small.

The DDE offered to provide a more holistic action plan from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn as to whether appropriate actions had been formed that would achieve the necessary enhancements.

ACTION: FST DDE

5. FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

5.1 Annual Report: Appeals and Complaints - 2021

Decision
Jules Forrest

The Secretary presented the Annual Report: Appeals and Complaints, which provided an overview and analysis of the University's appeals and complaints activity between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021. There had been an increase in academic appeals compared to the previous year. Looking at the five-year trend it appeared that last year's decrease was an anomaly, as appeals had returned to comparable levels in 2021 (comparing over the last five years). It was noted that there had also been an increase in PGT academic appeals this year. Exceptional Circumstances remained the most common ground for appeal. Timescales for responding to students had shown an improvement at Local Stage and at the Central Stage, though there were still a small number of cases that were not responded to within published timescale for Central Stage cases.

There had been a decrease in the number of academic complaints, both in the number of students complaining as well as the number of complaints cases (including group complaints). At Local Stage, timescales for responding to students was good, however at Central Stage it was more complex, due to the intricacy of the group complaints. Informal complaints were now being logged to enable trends or common issues to be tracked by Faculties and headed off before they became formal complaints. These had not been reported on previously as this was a new process this year. Non-academic appeals and complaints had decreased since last year. No trends had been identified within Admissions appeals and complaints and the numbers remained small. This was the second year in which financial outcomes had been reported on and the data showed a large increase in financial compensation due to several group complaints being upheld. In terms of students self-referring to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), BU was still on par with the sector average.

It was noted that BU was effectively missing published timescales with regard to a small number of complaints at central stage. It was recognised that this was partly due to the increasing number and complexity of group complaints. The question was raised as to whether there was any confidence that this would improve in the future. The Secretary confirmed that this was being considered as part of the Appeals and Complaints Review, as sector research regarding timescales indicated that BU had shorter timeframes compared to the wider sector; this is partly due to the higher number of stages contained in the BU process compared to the sector. The published timeframe for responding to complaints needed to be proportionate to the type of complaint.

Sector data regarding the overall number of complaints which had been submitted to the OIA was available on an annual basis, with the most recent data set due to be released in May 2022.

The Chair noted that minor amendments to the report were required and comments would be emailed to the Secretary. The timings on the Action Plan also required updating.

Action: Secretary

The Report was **approved** for onward consideration, with the amendments noted above.

5.2 External Examiner Appointments and Examination Teams for Research Degrees

Decision
Jules Forrest

The paper was **approved**.

5.3 Programme Development Proposals

5.3.1 Enhanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship in FHSS

Decision
Dr Sara White

There had been a national drive by the NHS to get more enhanced clinical practitioners in post. This was being funded by the Department of Health and would create opportunities to bring in more qualified practitioners. This proposal had already been approved by the Board in terms of the potential commitment for resources and was being presented to this committee for academic approval. It was noted that the tender process had been competitive and the Faculty was congratulated on being successfully awarded the tender.

It was noted that this was not an integrated degree apprenticeship. The relationship between BU academic credits and the apprenticeship standards were detailed in the PDP and the DDE confirmed that the apprenticeship skills, knowledge and behaviours would be embedded in the curriculum. It was noted that the IELTS requirements were standard across healthcare courses and set by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC). The programme development proposal was **approved**.

5.3.2 Technology Foundation Year and Engineering Foundation Year Certificates in FST

Decision
Professor P Sewell

This was the first of several programme collaborations and FST was looking to create Foundation level courses as an offering for students who did not meet standard entry requirements. Consultation was taking place in the sector regarding fees for Foundation Year programmes in the future, but the courses were still currently considered viable. In terms of market research, there was demand for Foundation level courses in engineering and creative subjects. It was noted that support would need to be put into place for these students in terms of building core skills such as Maths, computing and study skills.

The programme development proposal was **approved**.

5.4 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG) Nominations

Decision
Jules Forrest

The QAEG nominations for the following colleagues were **approved**:

Debora Almeida in FHSS
Dr Ed Bickle in FMC
Dr Megan Henesy in FMC.

6. FOR NOTE

6.1 Pending External Examiner Appointments

Information
Jules Forrest

The paper was **noted**.

6.2 Assessment Update: Planning for 2022/23

Information
Dr Geli Roushan

The Head of FLIE had recently met with DDEs to discuss assessment plans for 2022/23. The key assessment issues that have emerged were managing student expectations, progression statistics and the need to avoid assessment bunching. Summative and formative assessment had been discussed. It was highlighted in an earlier paper that students were not completing formative assessments as they were not contributing to summative marks. However, work was ongoing with Faculties to help avoid over-assessing students. There had been discussions regarding assessment design and the principles of ARPP 6C.

Discussions had been held regarding In-Year Retrieval and whether it had proved beneficial. It was felt that In-Year Retrieval was a good tool but had limited application. It was noted that In-Year Retrieval has had an impact on assessment in terms of bunching of assessments, which could result in students feeling overwhelmed.

The Chair noted that, in the future, there may be a need to review the academic calendar, but an intermediate solution was required sooner.

6.3 Faculty Peer Reflection on Education Practice (PREP) Reports 2020/21

6.3.1 BUBS Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2020/21

Information
Dr Shelley Thompson

The BUBS DDE reported that although the PREP form allowed themes to be discussed, it did not accommodate reflection on specific actions which needed to be taken. This was being recorded at Department Committee meetings. It was noted that 96% of BUBS staff had completed PREP.

The Head of FLIE noted that peer observation work was very collegiate and was not about quantitative measures.

The paper was **noted**.

6.3.2 FHSS Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2020/21

Information
Dr Sara White

Within FHSS, there were several fractional staff members, such as GP contracts, who would not be participating in PREP, however they were still included in the percentage of staff which did not create a realistic picture of completion rates. The FHSS DDE was working with the Head of FLIE to ensure the data was correct.

The paper was **noted**.

6.3.3 FMC Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2020/21

Information
Dr C Van Raalte

The FMC DDE reported that engagement across the Faculty had improved this year. Heads of Departments (HoDs) had done a great deal of work to improve engagement. It was reiterated that it was difficult to obtain useable data from peer observations.

The Committee noted that there were large variations between departments in terms of engagement. This was acknowledged and was being addressed. It was highlighted that it had been made clear from a Faculty position that this was an important process, however there had been misconceptions regarding the process in the FMC Faculty with some staff viewing PREP as a managerial exercise. Further work was ongoing in the Faculty to address these perceptions and promote effective engagement.

The paper was **noted**.

6.3.4 FST Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2020/21

Information
Professor C Gatzidis

The FST DDE reported that in 2020/21 174 out of 214 staff had completed PREP. More work is needed to be done on how these completion rates were reported and the aim was to obtain 100% completion. It was noted that it was difficult to gauge how many people per department had completed PREP. It would be beneficial to have a reporting tool, as ultimately it would improve outcomes and focus.

The paper was **noted**.

6.4 Faculty AMER Action Plans

6.4.1 BUBS AMER Action Plan

Information
Dr Shelley Thompson

This was discussed under agenda item 4.1.1

6.4.2 FHSS AMER Action Plan

Information
Dr Sara White

This was discussed under agenda item 4.1.2

6.4.3 FMC AMER Action Plan

Information
Dr C Van Raalte

This was discussed under agenda item 4.1.3

6.4.4 FST AMER Action Plan

Information
Professor C Gatzidis

This was discussed under agenda item 4.1.4

6.5 BUBS FASEC Minutes: 2 February 2022 - Confirmed

Information
Dr Shelley Thompson

The minutes were **noted**.

6.6 FHSS FASEC Minutes: 3 February 2022 - Confirmed

Information
Dr Sara White

The minutes were **noted**.

6.7 FMC FASEC Minutes: 3 February 2022 - Unconfirmed

Information
Dr C Van Raalte

The minutes were **noted**.

The minutes were **noted**.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to discuss.

8. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 25 May 2022, 14:00 - 17:00, MS Teams