

ACADEMIC STANDARDS & EDUCATION COMMITTEE (ASEC)

Wednesday, 25 January 2023, 14:00, MS Teams

Attendees

Committee Members

Professor Philip Sewell (Acting Chair and Apprenticeship Lead (Interim)), Professor Tim McIntyre-Bhatty (Deputy Vice Chancellor), Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations), Jules Forrest (Secretary and Head of Academic Quality), Professor Katharine Cox (Member of the Professoriate), Norah Deka (Vice-President (Education) Students' Union (SUBU)), Dr Carol Clark (Member of Senate), Professor Christos Gatzidis (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FST)), Samantha Leahy-Harland (Chief Executive, Students' Union (SUBU)), 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)), Dr Sara White (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FHSS)), Dr Christa van Raalte (Deputy Dean - Education and Professional Practice (FMC)), Jane Wakefield (Director of Marketing and Communications), Nicole Chee (Faculty Officer, (BUBS))

In Attendance

Professor Fred Charles (Deputy Head of Department, Creative Technology), Jack Guymmer (Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager), Dr Roya Haratian (Senior Lecturer in Electronic Science and Engineering), Dr Charlie Hargood (Principal Academic in Games Technology), Professor Nan Jiang (Deputy Head of Department, Computing and Informatics), Dr Liam Sheridan (Prime Manager Academic Planning and Insight)

Apologies

Mandi Barron (Director of Student Services), Professor Sabeur Zoheir (Member of the Professoriate)

Observers

Maxine Frampton (Academic Quality Officer and Clerk), Amanda Stevens (Head of Frontline Services, Student Services)

Meeting Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Information
Clerk

Apologies were noted as above

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Information
Chair

The following declarations of interest were declared:

The Chair declared an interest in Agenda Item 5.3 – Programme Development Proposal - MSc Robotics.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Accuracy: ASEC 19 October 2022

Decision
Chair

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

3.2 Summary: e-ASEC 13 – 20 December 2022

Decision
Chair

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

3.3 Matters Arising/Actions Log

Discussion
Various

Actions Log

6.2 (19.10.2022) Quality Standards Report 2021/22 – A paper was submitted to the Committee under agenda item 4.3 regarding English Proficiency and support for students for discussion. **Action Closed.**

5.3.4 (25.10.2022) ARPP 5B Student Engagement and Feedback – Discussions were ongoing and further work would be carried out in collaboration with Marketing & Communications. A small number of questions had been revisited to now include the services offered by Student Services. **Action Closed.**

Matters Arising

Apprenticeships Update/Ofsted Visit

The New Provider Monitoring Visit by Ofsted took place on 7 and 8 December 2022. The final report had been received and would be published on the Ofsted website within the next few days. A full inspection is expected within the next 18 months where Ofsted would review all apprenticeship provision at the University against the full breadth of the Education Inspection Framework for FE and Skills. The Head of Academic Quality thanked all colleagues who had assisted during the visit and advised that the full report would be shared with various committees in due course.

4. FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Student Outcomes Data

For Discussion
L Sheridan

The PRIME Manager, Academic Planning and Insight was invited to present the paper. The report summarised student progression and attainment in the 2021/22 academic year, with comparison, where available, to published HESA Performance Indicators. The current HESA Performance Indicators were the last to be published in the current format and it was noted the OfS measures could not be recreated as Internal Lead Indicators, therefore the University would not seek to replicate the HESA Performance Indicator definitions but would be more transparent with internal definitions.

Some highlights of the paper were noted. The continuation rate at BU had fallen by 1.3% from 89.1% for 2020/21 entrants to 87.9% for 2021/22 entrants, which had followed a fall from 91.8% for 2019/20 entrants. The proportion of undergraduate students achieving a First or Upper Second-class degree had fallen from 80.8% in 2019/20 to 78.4% in 2021/22. The proportion of full-time master's degree students gaining a master's degree had fallen from 89.2% for 2018/19 entrants to 85.8% for 2020/21 entrants, and the 2019/20 Qualified/Continued rate may still fall slightly, as 14.3% were continuing in 2022/23. The number of full-time doctoral students, finishing within four years had fallen from 35.6% for 2016/17 entry to 28.4% for 2017/18 entry.

The Committee noted that the proportion of First or Upper Second-class degrees had fallen in the last year. Faculty colleagues agreed that the additional mitigation, "No Detriment 2021/22" put in place for undergraduate students who graduated in 2021/22, may not have had a significant impact on the proportion of First and Upper Second Degrees. It was noted there had been a high number of extensions approved which could have had an impact on the number of students achieving a higher grade during the pandemic. The Committee also noted that though the 1% borderline rule was still in

operation for this cohort, assessment boards may have become more judicious in exercising this discretion if a student's profile did not support an uplift (as per regulatory guidance).

With regards to the lower continuation rate, members suggested that further discussions should take place at a future ASEC meeting to explore BTEC versus A Level achievement and the demographic profile of the students joining the University, in particular now that a greater range of BTECs were being introduced.

Action A: The Secretary would agree with the Chair when this could be included on a future agenda as a discussion item.

The Chair suggested that moving forward the Student Outcomes Data should include apprenticeship students data if it was possible. The PRIME Manager, Academic Planning and Insight advised the apprenticeship data was not included in the data at present although it was in the underlying data and could be added if not already included.

Action B: The PRIME Manager would add apprenticeship data as a new category in the next Student Outcomes Report

The Deputy Dean for FHSS advised that it would be beneficial to see apprenticeship data as it would be helpful for discussions at FASEC and ASEC. The PRIME Manager, Academic Planning and Insight agreed to check the apprenticeship flag in the data. Members were advised that the data should be disseminated with colleagues for further consideration and used to revise the AMER Action Plans where relevant.

The Committee was concerned by the overall figures and the institutional picture of the data. It was noted that the postgraduate classification profile was quite different in comparison to previous years. The doctoral completion rate data in the report was different to the data reported at a separate meeting held earlier in the week which was also a concern.

With regards to continuation rates, the Faculty of Science and Technology reported a high number of exemptions for in-year retrieval at level 4, although the number of exemptions had decreased this year. In addition, Assessment Boards had been too strict in not allowing students to carry credit when students should have been permitted to trail a unit. The Deputy Dean for the BU Business School agreed that sometimes regulation created barriers to continuation and removing discretionary elements by Assessment Boards needed to be looked into further and to encourage more automated progression and continuation, in particular from Level 5 to Level 6 as this was an area of concern. The Academic Registrar suggested that Academic Quality review the current approach to training Chairs of Assessment Boards. The Committee agreed that in-year retrieval appeared to be beneficial to students who opted to use it, and the more opportunities available to students to improve their academic skills would in turn improve the National Student Survey (NSS) scores as well as continuation and retention rates.

The Head of Academic Quality advised that an 'In Year Retrieval data findings and revisions to carrying the rule' paper would be submitted to the April 2023 ASEC meeting.

Action C: The Secretary would submit an 'In-Year Retrieval' paper to the April ASEC meeting

4.2 Annual Report: Peer Reflection on Education Practice (PREP)

For Discussion

4.2.1 BUBS Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2021/22

Dr S Thompson

The completion rate for BUBS PREP was 85% (102 of 120) with PREP primarily being organised at department level where there were allocated pairs for observations. The paper included a summary of each department's themes and further work had been carried out on alignment of assessment and engagement. In terms of improving PREP uptake this year, a goal of 60% had been set for completion by the end of January 2023 and the results would be reported to BUBS Exec Team. Heads of Department had been advised there was a substantial amount of teaching taking place in semester two, so there would be plenty of opportunities to carry out observations. It was hoped the completion rate for next year would improve. Members of the FLIE team had facilitated a discussion regarding the benefits of the tools available to support group work and peer assessment, and this would be embedded in staff practice immediately and would be added to the AMER Action Plans this year as well as being included in staff development sessions.

4.2.2 FHSS Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2021/22

Prof S White

The completion rate for FHSS PREP was 163 out of 185 eligible staff as there had been a lot of staff movement over the last academic year. There had been some new staff starting in the Faculty which had contributed to the 100% completion rate although this would continue to be worked on. Each department had been asked to look at different themes and each theme was included in the paper and would also be included in each AMER Action Plan. PREP would also be discussed at each Faculty Exec meeting to discuss the progress being made.

4.2.3 FMC Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2021/22

Dr C van Raalte

The completion rate for FMC PREP was 66% (100 out of 152). A lot of work had been carried out in the Faculty to raise awareness of PREP and a 75% completion rate was achieved by Christmas 2022. 100% completion was achieved by one department however another department had low completion, so overall variable completion rates for the Faculty. Some work was carried out to see which areas of the Faculty were not completing their PREP and it appeared to be the professoriate and senior members of staff not taking part in PREP. It was noted that NCCA were completing PREP however it was very late which had not been useful. This would continue to be monitored and reported to each FASEC meeting.

4.2.4 FST Peer Reflection on Education Practice Report 2021/22

Prof C Gatzidis

Three departments out of six achieved a 100% completion rate and three departments achieved 87%, 86% and 83% completion rates. It was hoped the Faculty completion rates would improve on the previous year. Each department had been asked to set out their individual PREP theme at the beginning of the academic year and it was clear that each department had its own differences and challenges, therefore each department has been permitted to explore its own requirements. PREP themes and progress would remain a standing agenda item for each FASEC meeting.

A priority area for the University was around improving Assessment and Feedback, and the variation in relation to assessment design and formative feedback. Feedback from colleagues regarding how they engaged with PREP was to give some thought to PREP at programme and department level, in addition to Faculty level. The Head of FLIE reported that a piece of work had recently been started around assessment strategy and institutional data around assessment type, outcomes, characteristics, etc, and this would be further discussed within Faculties. A paper would be submitted to a future ASEC meeting which would reflect on discussions relating to Assessment and Feedback.

The Vice President Education (SUBU) asked the Head of FLIE to be included in future conversations around Assessment and Feedback. It was hoped that those staff members who engaged in sessions learnt from each another and shared practice from the sector and would also be involved in the introduction of tools for various units.

4.3 Alignment to OfS B Conditions: Proposal for assessing students' proficiency in English Language

For Discussion

Dr G Roushan/J Forrest

There were two new requirements outlined in the revised OfS B conditions in relation to English Language proficiency. Firstly, condition B1 states that each HE programme is required to support all students to develop relevant skills, which includes the technical proficiency in English language: "insofar as relevant skills includes technical proficiency in the English language". In addition to this, condition B4 states that "academic regulations should be designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course". A number of meetings had taken place with the Head of Academic Quality, Head of FLIE and Deputy Deans to give consideration to how to meet the new requirements around English language provision.

It was proposed that the Generic Assessment Criteria is updated to include direct reference to English language proficiency under the Transferable Skills section. The paper set out two options to support meeting these B condition requirements: one, via an update to the generic assessment criteria only, and the second through inclusion in learning outcomes at the programme level. Whilst the first option is a simpler proposal and relatively straightforward to implement, the second proposal would be beneficial for students in terms of transparency and students' understanding of what would be expected of them to achieve to pass a programme of study. Discussions had also taken place with the Additional Learning Support team to identify where students need support with English language and academic skills.

The Head of FLIE advised the Committee of the discussions that had taken place around the language used in ILOs and it had been noted there were many areas the language used for students was already clear, however it may not be the language used by the OfS. When reviewing the ILOs it would be a useful task to map this language across. In addition, all conditions had been revised to include that all students should be supported to succeed.

The Deputy Dean for FST advised that the SciTech was continuing to manage the implementation of the changes required for the Assessment policy 6C in 2018/19, therefore further consideration of the implications of the changes should be considered carefully. The Academic Registrar agreed with the Deputy Dean for FST and commented that as discussions had progressed, the discussions were now talking about programme and unit ILOs and it would be beneficial for the work on the implementation plan to be carefully carried out to ensure it would work for the University and discussions should take place regarding how to communicate the changes across the University.

The Deputy Dean for FMC advised that programme level ILOs would not be met if they were not included in unit level ILOs. There was also a question about ALS and ensuring this would be dealt with appropriately as students with ALS were not specifically assessed. The Head of Academic Quality advised that, in line with OfS guidance on this issue, it would be expected that reasonable adjustments would continue to be made.

The SU VP Education (SUBU) commented that a discussion had recently taken place with a lecturer who was worried about this issue as the lecturer did not want to appear to be discriminatory or rude and advised that this area should be focused on too. If the University followed the first proposal, what would the impact be on students and from a personal perspective, there was some concern about how language proficiency would be used and whether a student would remain on their programme. The Head of Academic Quality advised there were English language requirements at entry to each programme, and the requirements of B conditions were for universities to ensure that the assessment of technical proficiency in English language was being implemented across all provision, as outlined in the OfS regulatory framework.

The Senate representative referred to the Generic Assessment Criteria and suggested the wording of the Transferable Skills section should be reviewed to include the understanding of technical skills in addition to testing English proficiency for those programmes with practical elements which should be the same as a written element.

The Head of Academic Quality advised the Committee that a full proposal would be submitted to the April 2023 ASEC meeting with an implementation plan for full approval. Further work would continue with the Head of FLIE to review the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures as well as the Generic Assessment Criteria.

5. FOR APPROVAL

5.1 Approval of Academic Regulations

For Approval

5.1.1 Policy Update to 4C – Panel Members Programme Approval, Review and Closure Procedure to formalise the requirement for student panel members at programme approval and review

J Guymer

The Committee was requested to approve the minor amendments to ARPP 4C which were in response to an action identified in the Quality and Standards Report 2021/22 to formalise the requirement for student panel members at programme approval and review events, in response to condition B2 of the Office for Students' regulatory framework relating to student engagement. University students had formed part of the programme review panels since 2019/20 following a pilot in 2017/18 and 2018/19. The inclusion of student panel members at programme approval events would be in line with sector practice at programme approval events. The Committee was requested to approve the minor amendments to ARPP 4C.

Approved: The Committee approved the amendments to ARPP 4C - Panel Members Programme Approval, Review and Closure Procedure.

5.2 External Examiner Nominations and Examination Teams for Research Degrees

J Forrest

A member of the Professoriate advised that Yasser Mahmood was no longer able to act as External Examiner and a replacement was in the process of being sought.

The Deputy Dean for BUBS noticed there was a gender balance issue with a concentration of women on panels that were seen to be the domain of women and this should be considered further moving forward.

Approved: The Committee approved the External Examiner Nominations and Examination Teams for Research Degrees.

5.3 Programme Development Proposals

Dr C van Raalte

5.3.1 Programme Development Proposal: Change of programme title – BA (Hons) Television Production to BA (Hons) Film and TV Production

Market research had indicated that programmes with 'Film' in the title were more attractive to prospective applications, and therefore it was proposed to change the programme title to BA (Hons) Film and TV Production. In addition, the term 'Television' was now seen as outdated and should be changed to 'TV'. The proposed title would provide applicants with a better indication of the programme content and would allow the programme to appear higher in search engines. The change of programme title had been discussed at length within the Faculty and it had been agreed the new title would future-proof the programme.

Approved: The Committee approved the change of programme title from BA (Hons) Television Production to BA (Hons) Film and TV Production.

5.3.2 Programme Development Proposal: MSc Robotics

Dr R Haratian

The market for Robotics/Mechatronics programmes was a niche market, however the demand had increased year-on-year and was anticipated to grow further. BU overseas offices anticipated that MSc Robotics would be popular with undergraduate Engineering graduates. The programme would enable the University to retain many of its current graduates who may go on to study at the University's competitors.

Members noted there was efficiency in the programme design through utilising units from other programmes, however it was important to make students feel part of a community and a sense of identity as a cohort. Members queried the focus on Robotics and whether there was a balance in economy of scale and subject specificity. The Committee suggested the programme team should revisit the units and the structure of the programme and to ensure the programme had efficient specialism and a good level of focus on Robotics.

Approved: The programme development proposal was approved by the Committee with the further consideration of the programme title and reviewing the specific units for the programme.

5.3.3 Programme Development Proposal: MSc Games Design and Development

Dr C Hargood

The new programme had been developed for Games graduates from both technical and creative backgrounds and the programme would address requests from existing students for such a programme and also provide a Games Master's programme to the University portfolio of programmes. In addition, some of the new units could be shared with other Master's programmes across the University.

A CAS Exemption Request Form had also been submitted to the Committee for approval specifically for a semester two unit, 'Advanced Studio Project' which would be a 40-credit unit over semester one and two as the project involved a lot of group work on a substantial project with potential industry involvement. Spreading the unit over two semesters would allow the programme to offer elective units in two semesters rather than just one semester. The CAS Exemption Request also requests to have a September start only as if students arrived in January, they would arrive in the middle of the project and resourcing would become complex.

Members queried whether the programme would be expensive to deliver for a small cohort as there were a high number of electives. Dr Hargood advised that there were a lot of electives to respond to the diversity of students. The Deputy Dean for FST advised the programme had been discussed at a FASEC meeting and it would be possible to phase in some of electives. It was suggested a possible compromise would be to allow the programme to commence in September 2023 with a limited elective offering. It was noted there was a strong demand for this Master's programme and students were emailing on a weekly basis to request the programme.

Approved: The programme development proposal was approved by the Committee.

Approved: The CAS Exemption Request was approved by the Committee.

5.3.4 Programme Development Proposal: MSc Human Centred Artificial Intelligence Cluster

Prof N Jiang

The proposal was to develop two programmes in response to the growing market demand in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence and was also in response to the OfS funding call for the conversion courses in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence to address the shortage of specialists in the UK. A pathway programme titled MSc Human Centred Artificial Intelligence for Creative Industries was proposed as the OfS had announced a scholarship funding call in order to increase the workforce and gender imbalance for the sector. It was proposed that the programme would start in September 2023. There would be three new units for the MSc Human Centred Artificial Intelligence programme and two new units for the MSc Human Centred Artificial Intelligence for Creative Industries programme. It was noted that all students would enrol on the MSc programme and would be able to exit with a PG Dip or PG Cert.

Members requested clarity regarding the four programme titles and queried whether the PG Cert referred to the Data Science pathway and the PG Dip referred to the Human Centred Artificial Intelligence pathway. The Committee requested that the Programme Development Proposal Form be updated and clarified in Sections 1.2 and 1.7 and to use only one programme title for consistency, as if a student completed semester one or semester two, the actual content would be more Data Science related rather than related to Human Centred for Artificial Intelligence. The Programme Development Proposal Form should also show which units count towards each programme title and it may be preferable to separate the two programmes into two Programme Development Proposal Forms to make it easier for those not working in the industry to clearly understand.

Not Approved: The Programme Development Proposal was not approved; however it was agreed the requested changes would be made to the documentation and would be submitted for Chair's Action approval.

5.3.5 Programme Development Proposal: BSc (Hons) Games Development

Prof F Charles

The programme would sit between the BSc (Hons) Games Design and BSc (Hons) Games Software Engineering programmes. Following conversations with industry stakeholders, it was confirmed there was a need for such a programme which would cater for the technical side of creative/artistic elements of the Computer Games creation process/workflow. Some units would be shared with BSc (Hons) Games Design and BSc (Hons) Games Software Engineering and some units were bespoke to the programme. The programme was anticipated to start in September 2024.

Approved: The BSc (Hons) Games Development programme development proposal was approved by the Committee.

5.3.6 Programme Development Proposal: Change of Title from BSc (Hons) Games Software Engineering to BSc (Hons) Games Programming

Prof F Charles

The change of programme title reflected the actual skills and knowledge that students would acquire whilst studying the programme. Market research identified there was a crucial need to make the change of programme title as it would be in-line with other universities and had been noted at Open Days by students.

Approved: The change of title to BSc (Hons) Games Programming was approved by the Committee.

5.4 **Programme Review Deferrals**

5.4.1 Programme Review Deferral: Programmes in Rehabilitation and Sport Sciences

Prof S White

The deferral of the programme reviews was requested in order create efficient and interdisciplinary programmes across the department and to allow all five undergraduate programmes to be revalidated at the same event. In addition, more work was required by the programme teams to increase shared learning and resources and more time was needed to work on this proposal. The AMER Action Plans should be revisited to advise of the deferral of the revalidation event.

Approved: The programme deferral for the suite of Rehabilitation and Sport Sciences programmes was approved by the Committee.

5.4.2 Programme Review Deferral: NCCA Undergraduate Portfolio

Dr C van Raalte

The deferral of the NCCA programme reviews was requested due to long-standing issues which were contributing to poor results for the programmes as well as issues relating to staff recruitment. In view of the challenges, and the importance of improving performance in the NSS it was felt that adding the burden of a revalidation would be counterproductive. The

Health Check had identified some flags; however it was still felt that holding a revalidation event would not help with the issues within the suite of programmes.

Approved: The programme deferral for the suite of NCCA undergraduate programmes was approved by the Committee.

5.5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG) Nomination

J Forrest

Approved: The QAEG nomination for Dr Heidi Singleton was approved by the Committee.

6. FOR NOTE

6.1 International Mobility and Experience at BU

For Note

Noted: The report was noted by the Committee.

6.2 Pearson Institutional Review Report 2021/22

J Forrest

Noted: The Pearson Institutional Review Report 2021/22 report was noted.

6.3 Pending External Examiner Appointments

J Forrest

Noted: Outstanding External Examiner appointments were in the process of being recruited to and all Faculties had been reminded to start work to recruit External Examiners for the 2023/24 academic year.

The paper was noted by the Committee.

6.4 Outcomes from recent Evaluation Events and List of Completed Evaluation Events

J Forrest

Noted: The paper was noted by the Committee.

6.5 BUBS FASEC Minutes

Dr S Thompson

Noted: The BUBS FASEC minutes were noted by the Committee.

6.6 FHSS FASEC Minutes

Dr S White

Noted: The FHSSS FASEC minutes were noted by the Committee.

6.7 FMC FASEC Minutes

Dr C van Raalte

Noted: The FMC FASEC minutes were noted by the Committee.

6.8 FST FASEC Minutes

Prof C Gatzidis

Noted: The FST FASEC minutes were noted by the Committee.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

Thursday 5 April 2023 (2.00pm to 4.00pm)