Confirmed

# ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND EDUCATION

**(Wednesday 18 October 2023, 14:00-17:00, OVC Board Room, Talbot Campus)**

## Attendees

### Committee Members

Professor Keith Phalp (Chair and Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and Quality (Interim)), Dr Shelley Thompson (Deputy Chair and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Student Experience), Jules Forrest (Secretary and Head of Academic Quality), Dr Philip Ryland (Associate Dean Student Experience (ADSE) (BUBS)), Professor Sara White (Deputy Dean – Education and Professional Practice (FHSS)), Professor Ann Luce (Chair of FMC Faculty Academic Standards Committee), Dr Carly Stewart (Deputy Dean – Education and Professional Practice (FST)), Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations), Professor Zoheir Sabeur (Member of the Professoriate), Professor Katharine Cox (Member of the Professoriate), Jacky Mack (Academic Registrar), Mandi Barron (Director of Student Services), Norah Deka (Vice-President (Education) Students' Union (SUBU))

**In Attendance**

Dr Julia Taylor (Head of Doctoral College)

**Apologies**

Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion learning Innovation and Excellence (FLIE)), Jane Wakefield (Director of Marketing and Communications), Andrew Bird (Head of International Marketing and Student Recruitment), Samantha Leahy-Harland (Chief Executive, Students' Union (SUBU)),

**Observers**

Rebekah Kerslake (Academic Quality Officer and Clerk)

### Meeting Minutes

---

**1. APOLOGIES** — Information, Clerk

Apologies were noted as above.

---

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** — Information, Chair

There were no declarations of interest.

---

## 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### 3.1 Accuracy: ASEC 03 July 2023

Decision
Chair

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

### 3.2 Summary: e-ASEC 20-27 July 2023

Decision

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

### 3.3 Matters Arising/Actions Log

Discussion
Various

Actions Log

Updates on the outstanding actions were given as follows:

**03/07/23 Item 4.2 Assessment Review Progress Update** – The indicative agenda is in the process of being updated, this will be added once the plan has been finalised. Action ongoing.

**03/07/23 Item 5.2 Admissions** – an update from the Admissions Manager has been received and added to the Action Log. This action will now be marked as complete.

**03/07/23 Item 5.5.10 ARPP Update: 9A Peer Reflection on Education Practice -** The indicative agenda is in the process of being updated, this will be added once the plan has been finalised. Action ongoing.

**24/05/23 Item 4.2 OfS Condition of Registration B3** – An update has been received from PRIME and added to the Action Log. The Secretary has requested further information from PRIME. PRIME have confirmed that they will align to the B3 indicators as far as possible. This action will now be marked as complete.

**24/05/23 Item 4.5 Annual Report: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion –** This will be reviewed in light of the Terms of Reference for the Education Committee. Action ongoing.

**25/01/23 Item 4.1A Student Outcomes Data** – The indicative agenda is in the process of being updated, this will be added once the plan has been finalised. Action ongoing.

**25/01/23 Item 4.1B Student Outcomes Data -** It was confirmed that this action can be marked as complete.

### 3.4 Education Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

For Endorsement
Chair

The Education Terms of Reference were presented to the committee. Along with the updates to the Terms of Reference, there will be a move to enable more opportunities for discussion of key issues by committee members, refocusing the remit of the committee towards education and the enhancement of the student experience. The recommendation was for routine items of business to be dealt with via e-circulation to allow the committee more time for consideration and discussion of key areas of enhancement.

The committee noted that this was a positive step but emphasised the need for an additional meeting over the summer. It was agreed that an action was set to increase the number of committee meetings from a minimum of 5 to 6 per academic year.

**ACTION: An Education Committee meeting is to be scheduled for June or July 2024**

There was further discussion over the possibility of more informal meetings during the summer period. The committee debated whether meetings should continue to take place throughout the year. It was suggested that a model that had no ‘year endpoint’ may be more effective. The committee discussed whether meeting more frequently for shorter meetings would be beneficial.

The committee were informed that student representatives had been appointed and would be present at the next meeting of the committee.

It was observed that there would need to be clear guidelines and timescales for papers that would be ongoing to other committees following the Education Committee to ensure alignment.

The SU VP highlighted that there would need to be a period of transition for new VP Eds who would start in September, as they would still be new to the role and may need time to settle before they felt confident to contribute.

It was noted that where the term 'student' was used, it needed to be more explicit and differentiate between apprentices and students. The committee discussed the use of the term 'learner' instead to refer to both students and apprentices. The committee recommended that a postscript be added to clarify that when the term student was used it referred to both apprentices and students.

**Decision:** Endorsed for onward consideration to Senate

3.5 **Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference** **For Approval**
Chair

The Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference were presented to the committee.

The Secretary highlighted that there had been a discussion at the Apprenticeship Board as to whether both Executive Deans and Deputy Deans (DDs) should be included in the membership. The committee supported the inclusion of DDs in the membership. In the future, it was felt that where faculties had 'Apprenticeship Leads' these could attend in place of DDs. Consideration was given to whether the same membership structure as the Education Committee could be used where one Executive Dean will be in attendance. The committee agreed that it would remain as both Executive Dean and DD this year and the membership would be revisited next year.

It was observed that the terms of reference referred to reporting to ASEC. This would need to be amended to reflect the change to the Education Committee. A committee member highlighted that the faculty sub-committees were not listed on the terms of reference.

Consideration was given to the continued inclusion of the Director of Student Services in the membership as a key safeguarding role in the University. It was agreed it should remain with the Director of Student Services.

**Decision:** Approved

## 4. CHAIR'S ACTION

**4.1 Disaster Management CPD** **For Ratification**
Chair

MSc Disaster Management proposed to offer three units of the existing MSc to employees of South Western Ambulance Service, to allow them to exit with a PG Cert. Delivery had been requested to start in September 2023, therefore this had been approved via Chair's Action.

**Decision:** Ratified.

## 5. SU VP Report

**For Information**
SU VP Education

The SU VP Education presented the SUBU Representatives' feedback: SimOn 2022-23 Summary Report. The report covered all faculties, using the SimOn tool to inform SUBU and BU about the quality of the student experience, using the three areas of what worked well, what worked less well and what new ideas did the student have to enhance their student experience.

The data reflected key areas to work on including course content and delivery, assessment and feedback, and timetabling. Feedback highlighted that some students felt that the weekly timetable was not suitable for their needs and that teaching days and scheduling were often not working for them. The SU VP stressed the importance of faculties communicating with each other and sharing good practice to try to address some of the areas of concern.

The committee discussed the importance of community and relationships between teaching staff and students. It was recognised that in programmes that scored highly in NSS, there was a strong sense of community and evidence that the staff cared about the teaching, and they placed importance on being available to support students, creating a safe space for students to feel comfortable to ask questions at the end of a lecture or seminar.

It was acknowledged that those programmes that required a team of demonstrators for support had a positive impact on the students' learning experience and this helped to engage students. It was accepted that funding for demonstrators could be an issue, therefore there was a need to utilise staff and their skills to support students.

There was discussion regarding whether foundation year students participated in the SimOn as it was recognised that there was an issue for foundation year students around continuation and the feeling of not being part of a community.

The committee noted the importance of seeking and including the apprenticeship voice.

It was requested that SU VP Education share the new ideas that had been suggested by students, as there may be some that the faculty could action. The committee requested that an overview be provided at the next meeting showing how the SimOn feedback is used and including the SUBU priorities for this academic year.

**ACTION:** SU VP Education provide an update at next meeting regarding use of SimOn data and SUBU Priorities

---

## 6. FOR DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Faculty Update: Responding to Gen AI (Verbal Report) — For Discussion

The Chair highlighted that since the "Generative Artificial Intelligence: Recommendations to BU" report was presented at ASEC in July, things had moved on in BU and the wider sector. The Chair reminded the committee of the proposed three levels of Generative AI for coursework:

Level A – Students could use it and it was part of delivery and assessment.
Level B – Students could use it with appropriate referencing
Level C – Students could not use it and its use would be considered an Academic Offence.

The Chair emphasised that AI was an area that was constantly evolving and that there was a great deal of change within the sector. The Chair noted that BU was not at the point of needing to change regulations but communications and clarity of the message around Gen AI for students was critical.

The Chair and Deputy Chair commented on the speed with which this area was developing, and it was noted that since the last discussions over the summer, there had been new developments within BU. The committee noted the need to continue to communicate these developments with students and ensure that conversations were ongoing as the technology and the educational and pedagogical response, was continuing to evolve.

The committee discussed the fact that Gen AI was having an impact on all professions, not just education and that BU needed to prepare students for this.

The committee discussed how ALS staff advised students regarding Gen AI. The committee was informed that there was a role within the ALS team that considers the utilisation of assistive technology and what may be appropriate software or technology to help students.

The committee discussed how Gen AI could help staff and not just students, and that there were colleagues using Gen AI for research. This raised the question that if staff could use Gen AI in their research, then it should be equally available for students. The Deputy Chair informed the committee that UET was exploring how AI could be harnessed more broadly for use across the university.

The committee recognised that there were many strands to Gen AI, from staff development to student awareness, and that all the strands needed to come together. It was agreed that there was a need to consider BU's strategic position in relation to Gen AI and agree an appropriate educational approach to the use of Gen AI in assessments, learning and teaching. A review of the current AI groups at BU will take place with the intention to align the groups on AI so that these will report to Education Committee.

**ACTION: A review of the current AI groups at BU will be undertaken and reported to Education Committee.**

### 6.1.1 Update from Faculty of Science and Technology

**For Discussion**
Dr Carly Stewart

The FST DD stated that there had been a hesitancy to use within the Faculty the statement that had been formulated around the use of Gen AI. Instead, the approach was to encourage staff to include it in their assignment brief, to access FLIE resources and to attend Gen AI staff training. The emphasis was for staff to upskill in this area. The FST DD highlighted the three levels that were included in the "Generative Artificial Intelligence: Recommendations for BU" paper, were a concise and appropriate step to ensure all assignment briefs included this approach.

### 6.1.2 Update from Business School

**For Discussion**
Dr Philip Ryland

The BUBS ADSE highlighted the two-pronged approach that BUBS had taken. Unit Leaders were provided with a statement to put in assignment briefs and to present to students in class. Staff also would attend learning sessions to help them in designing assignments. The biggest concern was the use of Gen AI or the suspected use of Gen AI in dissertations.

### 6.1.3 Update from Faculty of Media and Communication

**For Discussion**
Prof Ann Luce

The Chair of FMC FASEC reflected on the fast pace of Gen AI and reported that the Faculty needed to provide the students with clear guidance. The faculty had produced a statement regarding the use of Gen AI, compiled from FLIE resources, Library, guidance from the QAA, and the wider sector.

There was concern regarding Academic Offence Panels where students were accused of plagiarism due to ChatGPT issues and subsequently found to have no case to answer to. This may have resulted in these Level 4 students not returning to Level 5, if they felt disillusioned following the accusation.

The Chair of FMC FASEC noted that BU needed to engage with students regarding Gen AI, gauging how students were using Gen AI and how they would like to be able to use it.

### 6.1.4 Update from Faculty of Health and Social Sciences

**For Discussion**
Prof Sara White

The FHSS DD reported that following a meeting with FLIE a statement had been produced regarding the use of Gen AI. This was circulated to students, Programme Leaders, and Unit Leaders. Gen AI was used within FHSS in simulated practices, so it was recognised that students needed clear direction as to when they were allowed to use Gen AI.

The FHSS DDE noted that there was no clear direction for where students should go for advice regarding the use of Gen AI, and that there were inconsistencies in the guidance produced so far.

### 6.2 Reflections on NSS/ PTES/PRES/ Graduate Outcomes

**For Discussion**
Chair/
PVC Student Experience

The Chair and Deputy Chair presented slides to support the discussions over NSS, PTES, and Graduate Outcomes. The slides highlighted that, based on the NSS perspective, there was an improvement in student experience regarding assessment and feedback. The 2023 NSS results saw improvements in most thematic areas, but it was noted that BU was behind the sector in "teaching on my course". There were consistency issues regarding lectures, with some positive feedback, but also feedback reporting staff reading from slides.

There was a similar pattern within programmes with a lack of consistency in scores across a range of subjects. The SimOn report presented earlier demonstrated the inconsistency around elements of course content and delivery. The Chair noted that consistency was not a new problem for BU and that this was something that needed to be reflected on.

There were issues with continuation and achievement for BAME students and students who did not come via an A-Level route. The statistics highlighted that BU needed to think about learning styles and how to approach those students who come in via non-traditional routes. The committee discussed low tariffs and how they were not necessarily the issue. The committee was informed that students coming into BU above tariff from a BTEC background were withdrawing at higher rates than their peers. The committee discussed the value of understanding more about BTECs, not just how they are delivered but the student experience, to help with the transition to university. It was noted that the formative approach was more helpful to students with a BTEC background as that was their experience.

The Chair put the question to the committee, other than sharing best practice, what could be done to address inconsistencies in teaching quality. The committee discussed the role of PREP as a mechanism to help in this area. It was noted that Apprenticeships have a different approach from PREP due to OFSTED expectations and that this could have a beneficial approach to non-apprenticeship teaching. The committee agreed that PREP needed to be seen as a positive tool and not just a tick-box exercise. A committee member recommended a working group needed to review PREP and make improvements for the next academic year.

A committee member suggested that when talking about teaching quality, BU needed to define what 'high quality' meant, as it was subjective. How students perceive quality is not necessarily the same way teaching staff perceive it. The idea that it was about relationships and the quality of relationships was raised and the PREP format needed to be revisited with the goal of getting people engaged in meaningful practice. It was suggested that there could be more group-based activities to encourage staff to consider what 'high-quality' teaching looks like, to prompt more useful and in-depth discussions. It was noted that if BU wanted quality teaching, then making reflections on teaching and professional practice in this area accountable and rewarding would be a positive step.

There was discussion over whether academics perceived themselves as educators. The committee discussed what kind of university BU wanted to be, and whether it wanted to be one that takes education as seriously as research. It was discussed that some academics had strengths in research and others in teaching. However, the committee agreed that there needed to be a minimum level of competency.

There was a discussion over the application of the process of peer observation (PREP). FMC highlighted how it was aligning PREP with strategic aims in AMERs and that staff were being paired across the faculty e.g. a law colleague was reviewing an assessment brief for an English lecturer. Following the impact of the pandemic, FMC are looking at rebuilding that sense of community within staff and across teams, not just for students, to develop a cohesive, positive team ethos that is intended to result in an improved student experience. It was reported that within FMC there was a change in approach to PREP, with staff beginning to understand the purpose of PREP and fostering a curiosity to understand how educational practice was being innovated in other departments. The committee recognised the merits of pairing colleagues up across departments for PREP but also noted that this could be difficult to implement.

There was discussion over whether students' feedback should be included in PREP. A committee member highlighted that this often happened as staff talked to students.

The committee discussed where the accountability for PREP was held, as HoDs could only access data through the analytic dashboard which was not transparent or detailed enough to give senior managers sufficient knowledge and oversight of the PREP process for their department.

The committee discussed how Ofsted asked the question when assessing 'What does a student now know that they did not know before the teaching session?' It was agreed that it would be helpful for staff to know the profile of their class, and to know what learning background of the students taking that class to help tailor the delivery to the strengths and learning style of the cohort.

The Deputy Chair summarised that there was an appetite for re-visiting PREP and how BU uses it. It was agreed that a wider discussion on teaching quality needed to happen, clarifying the minimum standards that everyone needs to demonstrate, ensuring those minimum standards were in place, and then striving for excellence.

**ACTION: Head of FLIE to consider PREP in light of these discussions**

## 7. FOR APPROVAL/ ENDORSEMENT

### 7.1 Student Services Report - Wellbeing

**For Endorsement**
Mandi Barron

The Director of Student Services presented the report to the committee. The report highlighted the increased focus on student mental health, but it was emphasised that this was the responsibility of the whole university not just Student Services.

There was discussion over how the information in the report that related to careers and employability was aligned to the 'B' conditions and the statements of assurance provided in the Quality and Standards Report. The Director of Student Services responded that there had been several discussions with the Academic Quality team regarding the data available relating to careers and employability and whether this should be included in the Quality and Standards Report. The Student Wellbeing report did cross-reference to the Quality and Standards report assurance statement with regards to B2.3 (para 3.1 of the Wellbeing Report). The Secretary added that the data currently available (as reported in the Student Wellbeing report about access to the careers service) was not in itself sufficient to provide assurance regarding careers and employability. The Secretary advised that the OfS would refer to BU's progression to employment data to make a judgment as to the effectiveness of the careers support at BU and so that is the data set used by in the Quality and Standards report. It was recognised that there might be a requirement to identify other data sets that were relevant when providing assurance in relation to B2 and careers support, but these had not been established yet.

**Decision:** Endorse

### 7.2 Quality and Standards Report 2022/23

**For Endorsement**
Jules Forrest

The Secretary presented the Quality and Standards Report. The committee noted the detail of the report but questioned that the Faculty AMER plans had not yet been presented to ASEC. The Secretary confirmed that the report reflected on the Faculty AMER plans that had been presented to FASEC and that this year, these would be submitted to scrutiny panels as a pilot. Although the pilot was new this year, it was always the case the report reviewed the Faculty AMER plans before they were considered by ASEC as both the Faculty AMERs and the Quality and Standards report were received at the same ASEC in October. The Secretary highlighted that the Faculty AMERs were live documents that were constantly evolving and the report provided a 'snapshot' of the current Faculty AMER plans.

The FHSS DD requested that the data in Action 5.1 (pg27 of the report) be corrected to show 100% completed AMER plans and not 97%. The FHSS queried the data in Table 15, pg. 29 of the report and asked for further clarification as to why only half of the reports had been received by Faculty-Level-Partner.

**ACTION A: Secretary to liaise with FHSS DDE re: data queries**

The Chair of FMC FASEC asked whether there was a document available to demonstrate the mapping of data and processes against the B conditions. The Secretary confirmed mapping had been done and this could be shared.

**ACTION B: Secretary to share mapping document with FMC**

There was discussion over whether for future AMERs, an additional box for Student Voice could be added. This request would be reviewed in light of the addition of the new drop-down category to capture specific Student Voice actions in programme AMER plans.

**ACTION C: Secretary to discuss with FMC FASEC Chair**

The committee were informed that there had been a delay in receiving partner AMER plans due to changes in personnel.

**Decision:** Endorsed

### 7.3 Doctoral College Annual Report

For Approval
Dr J Taylor

The Head of the Doctoral College presented the report, highlighting the headlines. The Head of the Doctoral College noted that there were trends for PGR in the statistics that had declined in the last three years. It was noted that the reasons for this included the ongoing impact of the covid pandemic. The committee was informed that from 2023/ 24 onwards the Doctoral College Report would evolve to align more closely with reporting that was in place for UG and PGT, in preparation for REF 2028 and to meet the OfS Quality and Standards Conditions.

The committee asked whether there were new actions regarding the impact on completion rates. The Head of the Doctoral College reported that there were ongoing actions in continuation and that the requirement to improve completion rates was embedded in all relevant actions. There was discussion over what an appropriate completion rate was for PGR students. The committee was informed that there were different approaches across the sector with regard to the completion rate for PGR students. It was noted that BU measured this differently, stemming from the original KPI in 2018. The committee discussed the different factors impacting PGR student completion rates, including how some may deliberately delay completing for multiple reasons.

The committee asked whether this report still should be presented to this committee as there were No Deputy Deans Research to provide a response to some of these key questions. The Chair confirmed that, in alignment with the B conditions, the quality and standards in relation to PGR awards, and the PGR student experience, was part of the remit of the committee. It was agreed that for future reports, the relevant Faculty roles could be invited to the meeting to consider the report.

**Decision:** Endorsed

### 7.4 Self-Assessment Report: Apprenticeship Provision

For Endorsement
Prof P Sewell

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was presented to the committee highlighting that this was undertaken annually with reference to Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework which provided a benchmark against which apprenticeship performance could be measured.

The committee recognised that this demonstrated the amount of work that had gone on throughout the past year.

A committee member questioned whether KPIs 13/14/15 reported in table 3 on page 25 of the report would ever be achievable given that there would always be staff recruited who needed safeguarding training, etc. The Director of Apprenticeship and Skills responded that this was the figure HR had provided, but that it was being audited in preparation for the full inspection due by Ofsted.

It was highlighted to the committee that as an institution, it was still difficult to get the data required for this report.

**Decision:** Endorsed

### 7.5 Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence (FLIE) Annual Report

For Approval
Dr Geli Roushan

The committee requested that the report be presented to the next Education Committee meeting in December. It was requested that more information be provided to understand how FLIE's plan for this year aligns to current strategic priorities eg priority working groups. It was felt there needed to be more clarification on what work had been completed by others for this.

**Decision:** To be presented at Education Committee in December

## 8. FOR NOTE

### 8.1 Annual Report on Accuracy of Public Information (Consumer Protection Compliance) for Academic Year 2022-2023

**For Note**
Jane Wakefield

The Paper was noted.

### 8.2 ARPP Review/ Update Schedule

**For Note**
Jules Forrest

The Paper was noted

### 8.3 BUBS FASEC Minutes 20/09/23

**For Note**
Dr Philip Ryland

The Paper was noted

### 8.4 FHSS FASEC Minutes 20/09/23

**For Note**
Prof Sara White

The Paper was noted

### 8.5 FMC FASEC Minutes 04/05/23 & 21/09/23

**For Note**
Prof Ann Luce

The Paper was noted

### 8.6 FST FASEC Minutes 04/05/23

**For Note**
Dr Carly Stewart

The Paper was noted

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business

## 10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

*Tuesday 5 December 2023, 14:00 -17:00, OVC Board Room*