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Education Committee

Tuesday 5 December 2023, 14:00, OVC Board Room, Talbot Campus

Attendees

Committee Members

Professor Keith Phalp (Chair and Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Quality), Dr Shelley Thompson (Deputy Chair and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience), Jules Forrest (Secretary and Head of Academic Quality), Dr Philip Ryland (Associate Dean Student Experience (ADSE) BUBS)), Professor Sara White (Deputy Dean (FHSS)), Professor Ann Luce (Chair of FMC Faculty Academic Standards Committee), Dr Carly Stewart (Deputy Dean (FST)), Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations), Professor Katharine Cox (Member of the Professoriate), Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Enhancement (FLIE)), Dr Fiona Knight (Head of the Doctoral College), Norah Dekah (Vice-President (Education) of the Students' Union (SUBU)), Rohit Pakalapati (Business School Officer), Alex Caton-Bradley (FST Officer),

In Attendance

Ann Barnes (Access and Participation Analyst), Jack Guymer (Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager), Rebecca Oliver (Schools liaison and Marketing Manager)

Apologies

Professor Zoheir Sabeur (Member of the Professoriate), Professor Philip Sewell (Director of Apprenticeships and Skills), Mandi Barron (Director of Student Services), Jacky Mack (Academic Registrar)

Observers

Rebekah Kerslake (Clerk and Academic Quality Officer)

Meeting Minutes

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1. APOLOGIES — **Information** Clerk

Apologies were noted as above.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 **Accuracy: ASEC 18 October 2023** — **Decision** Chair

The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record, with the exception of Item 6.1.3, correction from ChatGB to ChatGPT.

Decision: Approved

3.2 **Accuracy: Summary e-ASEC 30 August – 8 September 2023** **Decision** Chair

Decision: Approved

3.3 **Accuracy: Summary e-ASEC 26 October – 3 November 2023** **Decision** Chair

Decision: Approved

3.4 **Matters Arising/Actions Log** Discussion Various

Actions Log

18.10 Item 5 – The SU VP Education confirmed that a verbal update would be given in the meeting.

18.10 Item 6.1 – This action was still ongoing and an update would be provided at the next committee in January.

18.10 Item 6.2 – The Secretary highlighted the update from the Head of FLIE in the Action Log. The committee discussed PREP and how there was ongoing work needed to enhance the procedure, with reflections being made on how effectively PREP was implemented, rather than the language of the PREP policy. It was noted that faculties wanted PREP to be meaningful procedure to drive enhancements but that it was not consistently applied in this way, and some cases it was used as a 'tick box' exercise.

ACTION: PREP to be discussed at a future Education Committee

03/07 Item 4.2 – The Secretary noted that this would be included as part of the agenda planner for the Education Committee, in agreement with the Chair.

03.07 Item 5.5.10 – The Secretary noted that this would be included as part of the agenda planner for the Education Committee, in agreement with the Chair.

24.05 Item 4.5 – The Secretary noted that this would be included as part of the agenda planner for the Education Committee, in agreement with the Chair.

25.01 Item 4.1A - The Secretary noted that this would be included as part of the agenda planner for the Education Committee, in agreement with the Chair.

4. CHAIRS ACTION

4.1 Foundation Year Title: BA (Hons) Computer Animation and Visual Effects (with Foundation Year) **For Ratification** Chair

Decision: Ratified

5. SU VP Report

For Information SU VP Education

In response to the action highlighted on the Action log, The SU VP Education notified the committee that SimOn was reported at every Faculty Academic Standards and Education Committee (FASEC), highlighting the top themes that students were raising within their faculty. The SimOn report was then presented to the Education Committee with data relating to the top themes from across all four faculties. An additional SimOn report was also presented to Student Voice and Engagement Committee (SVEC) including data from 'How's SUBU 4 you' and 'Speak Week'. SVEC reports were more in-depth, with more details on specific comments from students.

The SU VP Education explained that SUBU's three main KPI goals which were i) realising potential, ii) create community and iii) empowering voice. The SU VP Education reported that the Education-related priorities were recording lectures, promoting personal tutors as the key to helping students feel more comfortable, and assessment and feedback. The SU VP Education drew the committee's attention to several of the comments on SimOn relating to assessment and feedback, emphasising that there was more work to do in that area to develop assessment feedback that was effective for students. Other priorities the SU VP Education felt were important were promoting academic societies and obtaining patrons for them, and BU developing a stance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) with students being supported in using it.

The SU VP Education presented the SimOn report, stating that the data was from September to October 2023. The committee were informed that the data was slightly inflated due to both students completing the survey as well as student reps who were responding on behalf of a number of students. Despite the slight inflation of numbers, it was observed that the SimOn data had been useful, enabling a comparison with previous reports. It was observed that the 'Course resources' had fallen in the ranking of themes of what students liked at BU. With regards to the inflation of numbers, it was noted that there was training with student reps to ensure that the data was used correctly and was a true reflection of the feedback student reps received.

The issue of timetabling was emphasised, informing the committee that at the November SUBU Summit it was agreed that SUBU will lobby BU for timetables to be released 10 days before the start of the academic year. The student officer from FST reported how this had been an issue for students in FST. The committee were informed of the difficulties that the late release of timetables had caused for many students, including those who were parents or had part-time work commitments. The Chair queried whether the issue of timetables being late was across the faculties and whether it was something that needed to be discussed across BU. A committee member commented how there were other issues feeding into the timetabling problem, with problems getting contracts for PTHP in place. It was agreed that there were an interdependency of other issues feeding into timetabling challenges. The Deputy Chair reported that there was work ongoing around timetabling.

There was a query regarding how the course rep worked at foundation level as there was little data from foundation years (BU level 0) students. The SU VP Education suggested that it may be as there were less foundation level students, there would be less student reps which may impact the data. There was a proposal that bunching course reps at faculty level may help representation for Foundation year students. The committee noted the importance of monitoring the progress of foundation year students, and there was a suggestion of appointing a personal tutor who would remain with the student from foundation level onwards, to provide continuous support and stability.

The FHSS DD requested that the data be reviewed on page 19 of the Board book as the numbers for the BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing did not seem accurate.

ACTION: SU VP Education to review HSS data and clarify with HSS DD

6. <u>FOR DISCUSSION</u>

6.1 Assessment Analysis by Faculty

For Discussion

6.1.1 Business School

For Discussion
Dr P Ryland

The BUBS ADSE noted there were units which had 100% groupwork and highlighted that it would be interesting to know if there was any peer reflection or reflective element in these units and whether there was any impact on the student experience.

The committee were informed that for those units where In-Year Retrieval (IYR) was not offered, these were being reviewed to ensure there were legitimate reasons for excluding these units.

6.1.2 Faculty of Health and Social Sciences

For Discussion
Prof S White

The FHSS DD emphasised that this report reflected the data as it currently stood and that the faculty were satisfied with the data contained within the report. It was noted that there were constraints within certain programmes with regards to PSRBs and exams, and this affected overall approach to assessment in the faculty.

6.1.3 Faculty of Media and Communication

For Discussion
Prof A Luce

The Chair of FMC FASEC informed the committee that the analysis had been done for semester one only, as there was incomplete data for the second semester due to staff shortages in the programme support team. Work was currently being undertaken to finish this by 20 December 2023, and then to present the completed report to the Education Committee in January 2024.

According to the data findings, it was highlighted to the committee that Level 4 Semester one IYR required a review as it appeared there were 14 units not offering at least one option for a re-take on one point of assessment. Recent IYR analysis suggested that this would be disadvantaging BTEC students and Global Majority students.

The FMC Chair of FASEC emphasised that the Foundation Year's approach to assessment needed reviewing, including all assessment briefs, induction and delivery across the faculty.

It was noted that there was one Level 4 Law unit had two exams, but the FASEC Chair noted that this was due to be revalidated with one or both exams being removed.

The FMC Chair of FASEC informed the committee that moving forward the Faculty would take the approach that the only exams permitted would be PSRB-related, in line with University policy. The FASEC Chair remarked that an issue had been identified with the number of hidden elements of assessment. There was a similar concern from BUBS with Level 5 second semester group work that had no reflective elements at all. It was observed that FMC appeared to be significantly over-assessing in the second semester, and this approach would be reviewed.

6.1.4 Faculty of Science and Technology

For Discussion
Dr C Stewart

The FST DD noted the tight timeframe for completing this report and reported that the data needed to be examined further to ensure accuracy.

It was reported that the overall percentage of Level 4 students not being offered IYR was a concern. The DD would investigate this further to see if the data was accurate. The Chair highlighted that the message across BU had been that there had to be a strong rationale for not offering IYR.

The Chair reminded the committee that this exercise to review assessment approaches at a faculty level was to help identify any issues that might impact the student experience, or continuation, and then enable them to be addressed.

The committee discussed assessment overall and the fact that there appeared to be hidden assessments being uncovered. There was discussion over the impact the changes to 6C had on the general approach to assessment. The committee discussed how the introduction of the 6C changes had partly been intended to help lower the assessment workload for students and staff. Committee members noted that there were colleagues who, in making the relevant changes regarding 6C, had then felt the need to further expand the remaining one piece of assessment, making it even more substantial. The FST student rep highlighted that some students struggled to understand assignment briefs. The Chair of FMC FASEC highlighted how within the faculty staff were asked to review assignment briefs from other departments to ensure clarity of brief. The Deputy Chair noted that student reviewers, perhaps utilising student reps, could also support clarity of briefs. There was concern that the units with one piece of assessment made students feel overwhelmed that everything rested on one single assessment. A committee member noted that some students preferred multiple elements as it avoids the risk of failure due to a single element. The Chair noted that this should be discussed further at a future Education Committee, allowing more time to look more in depth at assessment and ensure everyone was approaching this from the same place and looking at how faculties can learn from each other.

ACTION: Secretary to add to the Education Committee agenda planner

6.2 Access and Participation Plan: Developing the new plan and assuring delivery of the existing plan.

For Discussion
A Barnes

The Secretary commenced the presentation by highlighting that BU was required to develop and have approved by the OfS, a new Access and Participation Plan (APP) to meet the new priorities published in 2022. The committee were informed that BU was a 'phase 2 institution' and that the plan had to be developed and submitted for approval by the summer 2024.

The committee were informed that the plan would cover undergraduate, home fee region students only and was focused on improving equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access higher education. It was noted that not only did BU have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure the plan was in place, but it was also a regulatory requirement that had associated risks if BU failed to deliver on the existing APP, or to get the new APP approved by OfS. The committee were advised that there were new priorities to be included in the new plan, including a new approach and increased level of detail in the plan. The plan should underpin BU's overarching approach to an inclusive student experience and expectations for quality and standards as aligned to the 'B' conditions.

The Access and Participation Analysist highlighted to the committee the size of the task, noting that there was a significant shift in approach and language, specifically the need to identify 'Equality of Opportunity Risks' (EOR), and the need to provide an intervention strategy, with a 'Theory of Change' (TOC) and evaluation plan for every objective identified in the APP. There was an increased priority on pre-16 attainment raising and partnerships with schools which would have to be addressed in the new APP. It was emphasised that the existing APP could not simply be re-written, a fresh approach was required. The committee were reminded that by embracing the new APP with the 'whole institution' approach this had the potential to deliver benefits for the student experience, which would impact the entire student population, not just those covered by the APP.

The next steps in producing the APP were to consult at all levels, raise awareness and gather information to understand the EORs. It was highlighted the importance of mapping existing activity to the new APP objectives, and to plan new activity where needed. It was important to collate all elements into the draft APP by April 2024. The Chair emphasised the importance of raising awareness, noting that there were several interventions that have been undertaken and it was important to include these as part of the APP. It would be helpful for the committee members to feed this message back to their faculties. Feedback from the wider university was vital to the success and effectiveness of the APP.

It was recognised that previously the APP would have been reviewed and approved by Access, Excellence and Impact Committee (AEIC). It was commented that whilst there will be an informal group that would be leading the development of the new plan, the APP will be overseen by Education Committee as there needed to be clear and joined up connection across the whole of BU, factoring the APP into all relevant workstreams. It was noted that the APP would be key to bringing together into one channel work relating to APP initiatives that were currently sitting in different areas around the university.

There was discussion over reflecting the language that the OfS were using in AMERs across all programmes, and identifying risk factors and developing strategies and evaluations within AMERs, using language that was also relevant to the APP.

It was agreed that this discussion would be continued at a future Education Committee.

ACTION: Secretary to add to the Education Committee agenda planner

6.3 AMER Scrutiny Panel Report

For Discussion
J Forrest

The Secretary presented the paper highlighting that there were common themes emerged from each panel, despite the membership of the panel changing. Common themes included a lack of connection between data and action, unclear or missing progress updates and issues around actions not being SMART or poorly defined.

It was noted that there were areas to improve in terms of the template and implementation of AMERs. It was suggested that the next round of AMER Scrutiny Panels be held in March/ April 2024 rather than February.

The findings of the panel highlighted that there was a lack of consistency in approach across all AMERs.

The BUBS ADSE observed that the AMERs were 'live' working documents and that the BUBS Faculty would be reviewing the Programme AMERS again in the next FASEC to review progress and actions since September.

The committee discussed the importance of communicating with Programme Leaders to ensure that they engage with the AMER process fully. The committee were informed that there was ongoing work with PRIME on the academic dashboard to help make the data more meaningful. It was felt that there needed to be a cultural shift from focusing on the NSS scores, to focus on the data that underpins the 'B' conditions. It was agreed that there had been, historically at BU, an exaggerated focus on the significance of the NSS results and some staff were reluctant to take risks because there was concern about anything that might potentially jeopardise NSS scores. It was noted that open discussions with students would be helpful, as would being clear with students regarding the finer details of changes being made and communicating that BU was open to evaluating how effective planned changes had been. It was important for students to understand that there was a process of evolution and enhancement, and that changes did not necessarily mean that staff had changed their minds. It was noted that there could be a perceived concern by staff being held accountable to the AMERs if targets were not met.

6.4 OfS Quality Assessment Reports

For Discussion
J Guymer

The Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager presented the paper informing the committee that the paper included a summary of recent quality assessments undertaken by the OfS. These were the first assessments the OfS had commissioned since taking on the role from the QAA. The assessments focused on the quality of Business and Management and Computing courses. In terms of the findings, the concerns identified could be linked to providers not adequately addressing the needs of students they recruit within the context of the 'B' conditions. The committee were informed that the paper provided details on the profile of the students recruited by each provider and headline figures on the profile of BU entrants compared to all English providers. The numbers for BU were in most cases below the average of English providers, they were not insignificant and when considering the findings of the quality assessment, it highlighted the importance of ensuring the academic needs of each cohort of student was considered when designing, approving, delivering and monitoring courses. There was a recommendation to consider the outcomes of the report as part of the current review of the programme approval and review and annual monitoring policies, as this would be where the evaluation of BU's ongoing compliance of the 'B' conditions was primarily tested.

The committee discussed the importance of understanding the specific needs of BU students when uncovering an issue within the BU demographic and when taking action to resolve it. The committee noted that this paper reinforced the need to be data driven in terms of monitoring, assessing risk, maintaining oversight and taking effective, targeted action.

6.5 TEF Panel Summary

For Discussion
J Guymer

The summary was presented to the committee. It was noted that there were overlapping themes presented here with other items on the agenda today, including approaches to assessment, AMER and the OfS' quality assessment reports. It reinforced the overview that there were areas that performed well, but that there was a general lack of consistency across BU.

A committee member noted that in the TEF report thar there was a suggestion at the language change that was reflected within the OfS and the APP, signposting the direction that the APP was going in.

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7. <u>FOR NOTE</u>

For Note

7.1 FST FASEC Minutes: 21.09.2023

For Note
Dr C Stewart

Noted

7.2 Apprenticeship Board Minutes

For Note
Prof P Sewell

Noted

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8. <u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u>

No other business

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9. <u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u>:

Wednesday 24 January 2024; 14:00-16:30, OVC Board Room