

Education Committee

Wed 20 March 2024, 14:00 - 16:00

OVC Board Room, Poole House, Talbot Campus



Attendees

Board members

Professor Keith Phalp (Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Quality, Chair),  
Dr Shelley Thompson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience, Deputy Chair), Jules Forrest (Head of Academic Quality, Secretary),  
Jacky Mack (Academic Registrar), Dr Philip Ryland (Associate Dean Student Experience BUBS), Dr Carly Stewart (Deputy Dean FST),  
Professor Ann Luce (Deputy Dean FMC), Professor Katharine Cox (Member of the Professoriate),  
Professor Sabeur Zoheir (Member of the Professoriate), Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations),  
Norah Deka (Vice-President (Education) of the Students' Union (SUBU)),  
Kerry-Ann Randle (Representative for vacant Student Services Director role),  
Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Enhancement (FLIE)), Alex Caton-Bradley (Student Representative, FST),  
Dr Fiona Knight (Head of the Doctoral College)

Observers

Anna Burgess (Academic Quality Officer, Clerk), Jack Guymmer (Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager),  
Alex Jacobs (Head Of Careers And Employability, attended for item 4.2 Graduate Attributes),  
Dr Jo Thurston (Associate Dean Student Experience FHSS and Student Voice Lead, attended for item 4.3 Student Voice)

Apologies

Professor Philip Sewell (Director Of Apprenticeships & Skills), Professor Lois Farquharson (Executive Dean, BUBS)

Meeting minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Noted as listed above.

Information

Clerk

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

Information

All

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1. Accuracy: Education Committee 22 Feb 2024

The minutes were approved as an accurate record with the exception of 5.2. It was agreed by the Head of Academic Operations and Secretary that this would be updated for the record.

For Approval

Chair

3.2. Summary: e-Education Committee Feb 2024

Decision: Approved

For Approval

Chair

### 3.3. Matters Arising/Actions Log

22/02/2024 4.0. SUBU Student Representatives Feedback Report. Members asked whether there would be a separate SiMon report for apprentices; this was being considered by SUBU and the Vice-President (Education) would provide an update at the next meeting. Action ongoing

22/02/2024 5.2a. Attendance and Engagement Update. It was noted that the student view of reading weeks was not known and the SUBU Vice President Education would ask for student opinions and feed it back to the committee. Feedback from students was that there was inconsistency in understanding regarding reading weeks so students found it hard to plan for them; some liked the idea of using it to catch up with work or to have it scheduled before their dissertation. Some international students reported that reading weeks meant they were not getting 'value for money' and felt lonely if other students went home that week. This was also reported by some of the January starters at postgraduate level. Action closed.

22/02/2024 5.2b. Attendance and Engagement Update. It was agreed that programme teams should consider the delivery requirements for each unit in light of the clarification that BU does not have reading weeks or non-teaching week. An update had been circulated to the Faculties; Action closed.

22/02/2024 5.5. Generative Artificial Intelligence: Update from Think Tank. It was agreed that the Head of Library Services would amend the current guidance to direct students to the assessment brief, to remove the student acknowledgement requirements, and to state that they needed to reference their use of Generative AI. The updated guidance was being considered by the Think Tank. Action ongoing.

24/01/2024 4.2. Student Outcomes Data. Information would be brought back to a later committee and the Chair and Secretary would arrange for a sub-group to meet to consider the approach to this data. Action ongoing.

18.10.2023 6.2. Reflections on NSS/ PTES/ PRES/ Graduate Outcomes. It was summarized that there was an appetite for re-visiting PREP and how BU uses it. Head of FLIE to consider PREP in light of these discussions. To be added to the agenda for the April or May Education Committee. The committee would decide an interim approach for 2024/25, and a formal change to the policy for future years. Action ongoing.

03.07.2023 4.2. Assessment Review Progress Update. The Secretary was asked to add this item to a future ASEC meeting and agree with the Academic Registrar on what evidence could be presented. Discussed at previous meeting, Action closed.

24.05.2023 4.5. Annual Report: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Secretary to review the agenda planner against the ASEC Terms of Reference for the next Academic Year 2023/24. Action ongoing.

## 4. FOR DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Chair's items

None

## 4.2. Graduate Attributes

The Head of Careers & Employability presented a summary of the work regarding BU Graduate Attributes. There had been an action relating to Graduate Attributes in the BU2025 plan and the University needed to consider how to update and embed it. BU needed to equip graduates for an evolving labour market and have the skills that employers needed. It was reported that there had been a change in understanding of graduate attributes and to a focus on personality, competencies and values and there had been a rise in non-linear careers, with graduates having to learn and relearn new and different skills. It was proposed that there needed to be a shared common language across BU and there was a need to consider life skills for students; and this was not just related to employment. The team had researched the area and created a draft BU Graduate attributes chart. The committee was asked to consider the possible models for embedding graduate attributes. The three models identified were: 1) standalone units, 2) attributes embedded within the curriculum and 3) self-managed technological solutions.

Committee members reflected that this proposal should be considered as part of the wider review of the educational experience for BU students, given that this will coincide with the development of a new University strategy and consideration of how it can align to 'Fusion learning'. It was noted that the concept aligned to the government agenda for HE and developing a skilled workforce. It was suggested that the term 'Graduate Attributes' had become dated and could be revised. It was noted that the model of integrating this into the curriculum would provide consistency as a means of implementation. However, it was also noted that programme teams already had to integrate with a number of other frameworks within the curriculum design and that this approach could lead to an increased administrative burden and overhead for Faculties and central teams.

The committee considered that a mix of the three approaches may be required. In some subjects a standalone unit worked well and a self-managed element could be linked in with the placement. Extra-curricular activities could also be reimagined to include these attributes. Committee members discussed that there were elements that were already embedded in curricula but these were not signposted to students or 'badged' as graduate attributes. It was noted that this was also linked with Student Engagement and Access and Participation work streams and could support the approach to Graduate Futures.

The committee discussed how BU would measure the success of any of the suggested models in terms of implementation and whether this work could be included as part of future TEF submissions. For example, the definitions of Educational Gain could be aligned to the concept of 'Graduate Attributes'. SUBU reported that they had collated feedback from students that indicated that graduate employability was a primary rationale in choosing to study a degree. It was questioned whether the Graduate Skills programme could be adapted to include the same language as this Graduate Attributes proposal. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and the Head of Careers & Employability would develop a roadmap proposal and present it to a future meeting.

**ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Head of Careers & Employability**

### 4.3. Student Voice update

The committee were given an update on the Student Voice project that had been taking place in 2023/24. The University had suspended student surveys this academic year and was piloting alternative ways of gaining a meaningful understanding of the Student Voice at BU. It was reported that there had been a greater insight gained into the common themes being raised by students, what the perceived barriers were regarding responding to surveys and how students wanted to be consulted. It was reported that students were happy not to be receiving as many survey requests from BU but it was noted that SUBU continued to send out survey requests. The committee were asked to consider what the next steps should be, whether a short “Supporting You” survey should be employed and whether the trial projects should be embedded.

The committee questioned whether the response rates of 4% was too low to consider it to be a representative sample. It was noted that this year’s pilot meant that the data set was limited, which could compromise its usefulness in decision-making as well as reporting on B2 compliance and providing assurance that the University was meeting its ongoing conditions of registration. Members questioned whether the “Supporting You” responses had been shared with wider stakeholders to help inform discussions and decisions. The Student Voice Lead explained that both the SiMon responses and the Student Voice project had similar themes emerging from student feedback, so it was felt that this was representative of those students that BU was not hearing from. It was reported that the low response rates illustrated the issue of students being over-surveyed, and that students preferred communication by email, but they were over-surveyed and the low response rates showed it was not an effective tool for gathering student feedback. It was noted that students did not see SUBU as a separate organisation to BU, and it was queried whether BU should be duplicating any questions that were already covered in the SiMon surveys. The committee discussed how the Student Representative processes linked to feedback channels. It was suggested that a toolkit could be created for BU staff to support staff in employing effective options for gaining feedback from students. It was suggested that the project needed to address gaining an understanding of BU students as well as compiling meaningful feedback that could be used to develop the curricula, and the broader student experience. It was noted that the sector’s University TEF submissions had now been published and it was suggested that these should be revised to benchmark the BU approach against the rest of the sector, particularly the Gold-rated TEF submissions. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Student Voice Lead would work on this and prepare a paper for a future meeting.

**ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Student Voice Lead**

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## 5. FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

## 5.1. Appeals and Complaints report

The annual Appeals and Complaints report for 2023 was included in the papers for approval. Areas of note included a reduction of cases by around 40%, making them comparable to pre-pandemic levels. This reduction was explained by recent policy changes to encourage early resolution, improved student guidance and more training for staff and case handlers.

The committee was asked to consider the over-representation of postgraduate taught students in the appeals and complaints data, which, when coupled with a trend of falling continuation and completion rates and an increase in academic offences for this group of students, necessitated the need to undertake a further analysis to provide a more detailed picture and understanding of the postgraduate student experience and where necessary take appropriate action. The committee asked whether there needed to be a clearer action for faculties to investigate what was happening with these students. It was noted that this was an item of the FASEC committee agendas and had been included in AMER plans and it was suggested that they should be linked up to provide a faculty response to the data. Deputy Deans would provide the written feedback to be added to the cover sheet for the report before it was submitted to Senate.

The data showed that the percentage of students receiving a response to their appeal or complaint within published timescales 20-day timescales had fallen in comparison to the previous year. The committee queried this decrease in response times give that there had been changes to the policy to extend the published timescale beyond the previous 15 day target. It was reported that the FMC the Deputy Dean role had been vacant and the ADSE had been covering this work alongside other roles which had caused delays in this Faculty. The new Deputy Dean was now in post and looking to improve these response times going forward.

The data also showed a rise in non-academic appeal and complaint cases, the majority of which were related to Finance issues. There had been a number of appeal cases lodged against decisions to withdraw students due to non-payment of fees. The committee noted that this had been a result in a change of policy and was not unexpected. Specific adjustments had been made for Nigerian students that had been impacted by the drop in value of their currency. A number of students had taken these appeals to the OIA and some outcomes had now been received. The OIA had not upheld the appeals and had found that BU had followed due process and had been reasonable in the response and maintained clear communications with the students.

### ACTION: Deputy Deans

Decision: Approved

## 6. FOR NOTE

### 6.1. Apprenticeship Board Minutes 07/02/2024

Decision: Noted

### To Note

Philip Sewell

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 7.1. Schools/Colleges

The University was in the process of developing stronger links with the educational leads of local schools and colleges to better understand and support the transition into Higher Education. An event had been held at BU at the end of February 2024 which was well attended by local schools and colleges. It was reported that it had been useful to hear their perspective and consider how BU could more closely with feeder institutions to develop an enhanced understanding of the challenges of transitioning from level 3 to an HE educational environment. The Pro Vice-Chancellors would be arranging a follow up meeting with the Head Teachers and would add the item to a future Education Committee meeting.

## 7.2. Update on Student Engagement framework activity

It was reported that staff workshops had taken place with faculties, professional services and SUBU. It was noted that this was an important area and consideration was being made about workable solutions to be implemented from September 2024. A proposal and framework was being developed to bring to Education Committee for approval.

## 7.3. Assessment Design and Generative AI

It was requested that BU guidance be created for assessment design in order to support academic staff to redesign assessments so that they were less vulnerable to the use of AI and less open to unfair advantage. It was noted that faculties were dealing with increasing numbers of suspected Academic Offences and the committee discussed how there had been issues with group work and dissertations being vulnerable to the unsanctioned use of AI. It was requested that a BU approach be developed to help unit leaders with their assessment design for the next academic year. This item would be added to the agenda for discussion at a future Education Committee.

**ACTION: Secretary**

## 7.4. Organisation and management of Education Committee

Members asked whether there could be a clear schedule of when reports were needed for the committee and when the e-meetings would take place. It was agreed that the agenda for the next meeting would be discussed at the end of each meeting and the meetings would be booked for 3 hours, with 2 hours scheduled for the meeting but an extra would be allowed for overrunning.

**ACTION: Secretary**

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## 8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 24 April 2024 14.00 to 16.00, OVC Boardroom