

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday 17 October 2024 – 2.00pm to 5.00pm, Board Room, Talbot Campus

Attendees

Committee Members (9)

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)
Professor Sara White (Deputy Dean - FHSS)
Professor Ann Luce (Deputy Dean - FMC)
Dr Carly Stewart (Deputy Dean - FST)
Grace Ehiosun (SU Vice-President – Education – SUBU)
Kerry-Ann Randle (Representative for vacant Student Services Director role)
Professor Philip Sewell (Director Of Apprenticeships and Skills)
Dr Fiona Knight (Head of the Doctoral College)

In Attendance

Emma Jackson, Education Service Manager, BUBS
Jack Guymer, Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager [Agenda Item 6.4]
Dr Liam Sheridan, PRIME Manager [Agenda item 6.3]

Apologies

Professor Lois Farquharson (Executive Dean – BUBS)
Esther Isaiah (SU President - SUBU)
Dr Gelareh Roushan (Head of Fusion Learning Innovation and Enhancement (FLIE)
Dr Philip Ryland (Associate Dean Student Experience BUBS)
Professor Sabeur Zoheir (Member of the Professoriate)

Observers

Rosalind Ashcroft (Head of Academic Operations)

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: Education Committee of 26 June 2024

Decision
Chair

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

3.2 Summary: e-Education Committee – 17 to 24 May 2024

The e-Education Committee summary of 17 to 24 May 2024 was noted.

Noted

3.3 Summary: e-Education Committee – 19 to 31 July 2024

The e-Education Committee summary of 19 to 31 July 2024 was noted.

Noted

3.4 Actions Log/Matters Arising

The committee noted the completed actions and received the updates on following open actions:

26/06/2024 – Action 6.1: Chair's Business - Personal Tutoring: Personal Tutoring would be added to the December meeting agenda. **Action Closed**

26/06/2024 – Action 6.2a: PREP Plan 2024/25 and longer term: The committee noted there had been discussions to develop the current approach to Peer Review on Education Practice (PREP) to align more closely to the teaching observation model as used for apprenticeship provision. It was reported that the Head of FLIE would bring a proposal regarding PREP to the next in-person Education Committee, and any further discussion needed would take place at the December 2024 meeting. **Action Closed**

26/06/2024 – Action 6.3: Mental Health Charter: This item would be added to the January 2025 meeting agenda. **Action Closed**

26/06/2024 – Action 6.4: Academic Integrity, the use of AI within the assessment process: The Head of FLIE would be submitting a paper to the December meeting. **Action Closed**

29/05/2024 – Action 5.4: Generative Academic Integrity Quiz: The quiz had not yet been released and would be added to the December meeting's agenda for update. **Action Closed**

24/04/2024 – Action 7.2: Exceptional Circumstances Task and Finish Group Recommendations: Updates to the policy had been circulated over the summer as requested but there were mixed views on the approach for key aspects of the policy change. Therefore, to allow the necessary discussions to take place, these changes will be implemented for September 2025. The item would be added to the January 2025 meeting's agenda for approval of all proposed policy changes. **Action Closed**

20/03/2024 – Action 7.3: Assessment Design and Generative AI: This item would be added to the December meeting's agenda for discussion to understand the University's pedagogic approach from 2025. **Action Closed**

3.5 Education Committee Terms of Reference

The Education Committee Terms of Reference for the 2024/25 academic year remained unchanged. The Head of Academic Operations advised the review dates and version number at the foot of the Terms of Reference would need to be updated as this had been flagged in a recent internal audit. It was noted that the governance structure on the staff intranet would also need to be updated with up to date committee terminology.

Action 24/3.5: Head of Academic Quality

These updates were both actions from the recent internal audit report on Student Experience. The Head of Academic Quality confirmed the updates/amendments would be made as soon as possible.

The committee approved the Education Committee Terms of Reference.

Approved

3.6 Apprenticeships Board Terms of Reference

The Apprenticeships Board Terms of Reference for 2024/25 had one minor amendment to reduce the number of meetings from five meetings to four meetings per year as the level of risk was deemed to be de-escalating and Faculty Apprenticeship Oversight Group meetings were also taking place.

The committee approved the Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference.

Approved

3.7 Research Degrees Committee Terms of Reference

The Research Degrees Committee Terms of Reference for the 2024/25 academic year remained unchanged. The committee noted that, moving forward, the Terms of Reference may include an early research career staff member on the Committee and this proposal would be considered further by the Research Degrees Committee.

The Committee approved the Research Degrees Committee Terms of Reference.

Approved

3.8 Faculty Education Committee Terms of Reference

The committee noted the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference that had been made following the refocusing of the remit of the Faculty Academic Standards and Education Committee towards education, the enhancement of the student experience and the Student Voice. It was noted that the committee title and Terms of Reference had been amended to Faculty Education Committee which would bring the committee in line with the changes made to the Education Committee Terms of Reference and external regulatory frameworks.

The Deputy Dean for FHSS advised that at the October 2024 FHSS Faculty Education Committee meeting a SUBU Officer attended the meeting in addition to the SU VP Education which was unexpected as the Terms of Reference referred to only Faculty Student Reps as core members. The SU VP Education advised that Faculty Officers were the main SUBU representative attending each meeting alongside two Student Reps and this should have been communicated more widely.

The Head of Academic Quality agreed the terminology with regards to SUBU Officer needed to be clarified with SUBU.

Action 3.8: Head of Academic Quality

The Committee approved the Faculty Education Committee Terms of Reference.

Approved

4. FOR RATIFICATION

4.1 Chair's Action – ARPP 3F Approval

For Ratification
Chair

The Chair had been requested to approve the changes to *ARPP 3F – Proof of Qualification and Identification: Procedure* which included details of how potential frauds were dealt with before enrolling on a chosen programme.

The Deputy Dean for FHSS advised *ARPP 3F* referred to the Student Loans Company, however the document should be amended to read 'Student Loans Company or NHS Bursary' throughout the document.

The Committee ratified the Chair's Action to approve the changes to *ARPP 3F – Proof of Qualifications and Identification: Procedure 2024/25*.

Ratified

4.2 Chair's Action – British University Vietnam (BUV) Articulation Agreement

The Chair had been requested to approve the articulation arrangement for two routes from BUV's 'Pathway to University' programmes to BU programmes due to be delivered via a subcontracted model with BUV from September 2025.

The Committee ratified the Chair's Action approval of the articulation arrangement.

Ratified

5. SUBU STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES FEEDBACK REPORT

The SU VP Education provided highlights of the welcome activities that were taking place for new and returning students. In-person welcome activities began with the BU Street Fair at Lansdowne on 22 September 2024 which had been very successful. This year SUBU were trialling events grouped within six themes, e.g. Home, Grow, Belong, Health, Money and Mind. A number of induction talks delivered by SUBU Full Time Officers and SUBU staff had taken place with over 5,300 students attending to provide tips for students starting their university journey. The Fresher's Fair took place on 28 September 2024 with around 7,500 students engaging and all 95 stands being well attended. Over 4,000 students attended events between 20 and 27 September 2024 with many events being sold out.

SimOn would be simplified this year to obtain student feedback with breakfast events taking place in December 2024 and May 2025 to share the key insights received from the student voice mechanisms, SUBU Advice casework trends, support initiatives and patterns of student engagement. Feedback received via SimOn was in line with the NSS results this year, with a significant increase in positive comments on academic support.

The Chair noted the level of participation was very impressive to see at the events held, providing information early regarding academic integrity.

The Director of Apprenticeships and Skills was pleased to see the apprenticeship data in the SimOn report was now easily identifiable and advised he would contact the Head of Student Voice and Policy to obtain access to the data.

The Committee considered the SUBU Student Representatives Feedback Report.

Considered

6. FOR DISCUSSION

6.1 Chair's Business – UG January Intake

For Discussion
Chair

The decision to pilot new January intakes, aimed at international cohorts, for a small number of undergraduate programmes had been made to increase recruitment opportunities, although it was recognised that the numbers recruited to the new January starts in 2025 were unlikely to close the current gap in recruitment targets. The model agreed for this pilot was that those undergraduate programmes that had been selected to recruit to a January start would have one semester shared with the September cohort (the standard second semester) and that would be followed by a compressed summer delivery of semester two in which students would study units typically taught in the autumn/semester one. The programmes included in the pilot are BA (Hons) Computer Animation and Visual Effects, BSc (Hons) Computer Science and the suite of BA (Hons) Business and Management programmes. The Chair thanked everyone for working hard on preparing for the pilot. It was reported that modifications were being made to the programme specifications and these would progress through the approval process shortly. The committee noted that January starts may be more popular with EU students as queries have been received from EU students at Open Days regarding January start programmes.

The committee noted the following actions to be addressed to support the new intake planned for January 2025:

- Staff across the University would need to be able to easily identify in the student record system which students had started in January 2025 and this would need to be clearly reflected in the 'Engage' app.
- SITS would need to be enabled to allow students to choose their level 5 option units at the appropriate time.
- Concerns were raised relating to with food outlet availability and regular buses being available over the summer.
- It was noted that there was still work to be done to agree arrangements for Assessment Boards for the new January cohorts.

The Academic Registrar confirmed an Operational Group would be meeting to work through the various actions that needed discussion and agreement to support the new January cohorts.

The Deputy Dean for FST queried whether there would be a minimum number of students needed for a programme to commence a new undergraduate in January 2025. It was confirmed there was no minimum number required and a January start undergraduate programme could go ahead with only one student for this pilot. The committee expressed concern with regards to the impact on the student experience if small numbers were recruited to the January start cohorts.

6.2 NSS/PRES/PTES/Graduate Outcomes

For Discussion
PVC Student Experience

The committee received a report for the PVC Student Experience. It was noted that discussions had taken place regarding Teaching and Learning following prior Education Committee discussions suggesting a group be tasked with exploring the use of teaching observation to support teaching quality. The group would also work on clearly defining the areas for development regarding education practice, which was a priority as part of Teaching and Learning initiatives.

It was reported that work had already taken place regarding support for Brightspace, and further reflections on how AMER Action Plans were completed was also being considered via the AMER Review panels.

6.3 B3 Report

For Discussion
PRIME Manager

The committee received a report from the PRIME manager. To support compliance with external regulatory requirements, and the monitoring of Condition B3, the Office for Students (OfS) would review providers' performance against three measures of student outcomes: Continuation (after one year; 2 years for part-time students); Completion (after four years; 6 years for part-time students) and Progression (to managerial/professional employment or further study). Each of the measures were then split by a range of factors e.g. age on entry, ethnicity, year and subject to which the OfS had set minimum thresholds for each level and mode of study across the three measures.

In previous cycles, the OfS had set prioritisation criteria used to select providers to assess in relation to their compliance with B3. However, the committee noted that to date, the criteria for 2024 had not yet been set.

Of the 1,105 indicators, the University had 45 (4.1%) which was below the threshold and was an increase on the 41 (3.6%) below the threshold in the previous year's dataset. Of the 45 indicators below threshold there was one overall indicator below the threshold: Progression, UG and PG components. The most recent year in the split indicators did show performance has improved to above threshold.

With regards to Completion, several split indicators for UG with PG components were below the threshold and had a proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution above 75%. These rates were impacted by low rates at AECC which had fallen away in later years as the population tailed off and would therefore result in improvements to the metrics moving forward. The part-time PG completion data for age, deprivation and year was below threshold, although as the numbers were very small, so this would be an area to monitor.

With regards to Progression, the data showed BU performance as above threshold for all overall indicators within the progression measure. The University was above the OfS threshold except for 'UG with PG components' which related to integrated master's provision, and although it fell below the threshold by 0.8% it was below the 75% statistical confidence threshold set by the OfS. The full-time first-degree progression population accounted for 78% of the students used in the B3 metric.

6.4 Quality and Standards Report

For Endorsement
Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager

The Quality and Standards report provided assurance regarding compliance to the OfS Conditions of Registration relating to quality and standards known as B Conditions. This year's report had focused on assessing the impact of actions identified in 2023/24 AMER actions by reviewing current data against action planned last year. It was noted that the AMER Review Panels would review a sample of Programme Action Plans taking a risk-based approach in October 2024. The National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) data was used for the first time in last year's report to assess compliance with Condition B2, aligning with the OfS's approach to monitoring. The review of NSS and PTES data has been incorporated into the report for Conditions B1, B2 and B4 and an analysis of data had been included in the Doctoral College's Annual Report.

Overall, the data suggested that the University met the requirements for quality and standards as set out in the B Conditions. However, the committee noted that there were areas of risk relating to NSS and PTES data where the University had fallen below the OfS benchmarks across all themes, although the 2024 PTES data had presented a stronger picture with BU performing above the sector average in two themes ('Resources' and 'Skills Development'), but a decline in all but one question ('Teaching and Learning'). In response, an action had been identified for AMER Review panel members to consider NSS and PTES data as part of their assessment of Faculty and Programme AMER Action Plans for 2024/25. Academic Offences has shown an overall reduction in case numbers, although the committee noted the continuing trend with PGT overseas, males, and students from a global majority background (Asian, Black or Mixed ethnicities) who are consistently overrepresented in academic offences cases over consecutive years. An action had been identified to address this.

The report was recognised for its thoroughness and alignment with the OfS's quality and standards conditions. There was discussion about its purpose and exclusion of other metrics previously reported, such as detailed data on professional recognition and programmes closed shortly after approval. Although these metrics were

part of previous versions, these were no longer deemed effective measures of compliance with BU's regulatory requirements, with the focus shifting to metrics generated by processes, such as NSS and Student Outcomes Data. Moving forward, it was considered important to consider how all data relating to quality processes is reported.

The committee discussed the progression metric, which was below the OfS benchmark for UG programmes with PG components. It was considered that this issue could be linked to integrated master's programmes in engineering where students historically enrolled for the full degree to access funding but exited upon completion of the UG part. It was recommended that the university be aware of this impact when considering proposals for new integrated master's degrees.

During the meeting, the Deputy Dean for FHSS raised a query about the data, noting that the numbers were lower than expected. It was explained post-meeting that the reporting period ran from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024, which likely accounted for the discrepancy. This was the reporting period used each year to enable analysis and report completion by September.

The committee also reflected on the presentation of the annual monitoring section in the report. The approach was noted to align with that of an external audit, evaluating the impact of actions against identified targets based on key performance data. While actions identified by faculties aimed to address data findings, some were noted to be nuanced and required more time to implement. Overall, the perspective provided in the report was considered helpful and interesting. Although the report highlighted improvements made by FHSS, particularly in relation to NSS scores, the Deputy Dean felt the evaluation did not fully reflect the faculty's progress.

The Chair thanked the Academic Quality Policy and Project Manager for submitting the thorough report.

The Committee endorsed the Quality and Standards report 2023/24 for onward consideration at Senate, Student Experience, Quality and Standards Committee and the University Board.

Endorsed

6.5 AMER Review Panels

For Discussion
Chair

The Chair reported that AMER review panels were scheduled to take place at the end of October. A sample of programme actions plans from across Faculties have been identified taking a risk-based approach. An analysis of key data metrics (B3 and NSS) had been used to identify the programmes that had the highest impact in terms of numbers, and those furthest away from a B3 threshold. Other areas of potential risk include partner provision and Foundation Years so these have been included in the sample too.

The Deputy Dean for FST compared the experience of working across Faculties and noted the significant differentials in in Staff: Student Ratio (SSR) between certain large programmes which had an impact on the student experience. The Chair noted there were inequities in SSR across the University and reported that there was an intention to address the SSRs through different mechanisms including via the portfolio review being undertaken by UET.

6.6 Self-Assessment Report for Apprenticeship Provision

For Endorsement
Director of Apprenticeships & Skills

The committee received the annual Self-Assessment Report for Apprenticeship provision which identifies areas of good practice and areas for improvement in the next year based on an evaluation of available data for 2023/24. The committee noted the grading of 'good' given to the themes relating to Behaviour and Attitudes and Leadership and Management in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) in light of the recent Ofsted judgement of 'outstanding' across all themes. It was reported that this had been an area of discussion between the PVC Student Experience and link Board member who provided scrutiny of the SAR prior to consideration at Apprenticeship Board and Education Committee. It was agreed that the 'good' judgement would be retained despite the Ofsted judgement as it reflected the institutional intention to make improvements in these areas.

The Committee endorsed Self-Assessment Report for onward approval by Senate.

Endorsed

6.7 Doctoral College Annual Report 2023/24

For Discussion
Head of Doctoral College

The Committee received the Doctoral College Annual Report 2023/24 which had been considered and endorsed by the University's Research Degree Committee. The report provided an overview of demographics and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2024 (PRES). It was noted that work was ongoing to more closely align the PGR annual monitoring process with the process for taught provision, AMER, which had the benefit of delivering a metrics, risk-based approach that supported meeting the relevant ongoing conditions of registration, the B conditions.

The committee noted that the PRES results for 2023/24 were strong and the recruitment to PGR programmes was increasing it was reported that the number of students applying to PGR degrees had tripled in number and increased by 58.7% on the previous year.

The Chair advised that work would continue to review the patterns of withdrawals and extensions and noted the impact on PGR completion rates. The Committee acknowledged the need to convey to PGRs and supervisors that the quality of a PhD was also judged by its timely completion.

The Committee endorsed Doctoral College Annual Report 2023/24 for onward approval by Senate.

Endorsed

6.8 Annual Report on Student Services, Student Welfare and Wellbeing

For Endorsement
Head of Wellbeing

The Committee received the Annual Report on Student Services, Student Welfare and Wellbeing. It was reported that the Student Support Services had seen a very challenging year in respect of leadership and with staff leaving the University. It was reported that the demand for student support services, in particular around mental health, continued to grow, and that not being able to deliver the support services required carried a risk of non-compliance, as well as potentially impacting student satisfaction, the student experience and student retention and completion rates. A mandatory Safeguarding and Wellbeing training matrix had been developed for all staff and would be implemented from the 2024/25 academic year. It was reported that throughout the year there had been much positive work carried out regarding student support, careers, accommodation, and disability services.

The Deputy Dean for FMC queried whether *ARPP 4K – Placements Policy and Procedure* would be reviewed in 2024/25. The PVC Student Experience reported that *ARPP 4K* would be reviewed this academic year with the new policy ideally to start in September 2025. It was reported that discussions had been taking place around having optional, mandatory or hybrid placements available to students, and a new approach would be reflected in the amended policy document and submitted to Education Committee for a full discussion and approval.

The PVC Student Experience advised that the sections of the report relating to the new OfS requirements and preventing sexual misconduct would require a timeline to be included as the University Board would be keen to see the timescales planned for this work. It was requested that any changes made to the report by Education Committee to the report would be shown as track changes as the report progressed to the University Executive Team (UET), Student Experience Quality and Standards Committee and the University Board.

The Committee endorsed the Annual Report on Student Services, Student Welfare and Wellbeing for onward endorsement by Senate and approval by the University Board.

Endorsed

7. FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

7.1 Student Protection Plan

For Endorsement
Head of Academic Quality

The Committee noted that the Student Protection Plan (SPP) was being submitted for the first time to Education Committee in 2024/25, and it would then progress for onward consideration by UET and the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee.

The revision to the SPP for 2024/25 includes the removal of Kingston Maurward College from the plan due to the closure of the FdA Tourism Park Management programme, and the change of location for off-campus delivery of BSc (Hons) Midwifery from St Mary's Community Health Campus, Portsmouth to Lakeside North Harbour, Portsmouth. In addition, the Finance Team had made changes to Section 1 and Section 3 of the plan. Next year, BUV would be added to the plan as a new partner once all conditions of the approval event have been met.

The Committee endorsed the Student Protection Plan for onward consideration by UET and the Audit, risk and Governance Committee.

Endorsed

8. FOR NOTE

8.1 Access and Participation Plan Update

For Note
Chair

The Chair encouraged committee members to read the Access and Participation Plan (APP) as it is relevant for other work commencing across the University. The APP had recently been submitted to the OfS and feedback was expected from the OfS within 12 weeks of 1 October 2024.

The Chair thanked the Access and Participation Analyst for their hard work on the APP and thanked all staff who had assisted with the completion of the APP. Meetings to continue the work on the APP would be arranged as soon as possible as diaries were busy.

8.2 Partner Activity Report

For Note

The Committee noted the Partner Activity Report.

Noted

8.3 Partner Review Schedule

For Note

The Committee noted the Partner Review Schedule.

Noted

8.4 Academic Regulations, Policy and Procedures Review Schedule 2024/25

For Note

The Committee noted the Academic Regulations, Policy and Procedures Review Schedule 2024/25. **Noted**

8.5 Annual Report on Accuracy of Published Information

For Note

The Committee noted the Annual Report on Accuracy of Published Information.

Noted

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Deputy Dean for FHSS queried whether Programme Specifications needed to be published on the BU website as it was noted not all HEIs published programme specifications on their websites. The query was raised as there were concerns publishing the full BU programme specification could lead to other HEIs using BU intellectual property to develop their own programmes. The Head of Academic Quality advised that there was no external requirement to publish a programme specification in full; however, BU had taken this approach partly as a response to the Consumer Marketing Authority (CMA) guidance for HE providers who are required to publish a specified amount of information regarding programme content. The full programme specification, however, was not a CMA requirement. It was noted that work was ongoing with the Marketing and Communications Department to remove Programme Specifications as soon as possible, but there needed to be a viable alternative to ensure accurate programme information was available to ensure CMA compliance. It was reported that the new BU website would not include Programme Specifications.

The Deputy Dean for FST reported that the FST Faculty Education Committee had discussed the removal of the discretionary '1% rule' as there were concerns students who did fall within the boundary were not eligible to be uplifted to the higher classification. The Head of Academic Quality had provided a response to Senate regarding this issue; this would be shared with the FST team. It was noted this issue had also been raised by the BUBS elected Senate representative.

The Deputy Dean for FST also queried whether 6C would be reconsidered. The PVC Student Experience advised this would be included in BU2035 discussions as part of the overarching education strategy. It was noted that BU2035 may allow other alternatives for assessment practice, e.g. phased assessment. Further information would be available in due course.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

e-meeting – w/c 11th November 2024 - Admincontrol
Wednesday 11 December 2024 – 2.00pm to 5.00pm - OVC Board Room
