
Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2014 at 1300 hours in the Board Room

Present:

Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair)	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Dr S Eccles (Deputy Chair)	Head of Education, Media School (MS)
Ms D Sparrowhawk (Secretary)	Academic Administration Manager (HSC)
Ms M Frampton (Clerk)	Policy and Committees Officer (AS)
Ms F Cownie	School Student Experience Champion, Media School (MS)
Dr A Diaz	Student Engagement & Co-creation Theme Leader (CEL)
Dr B Dyer	School Student Experience Champion (HSC) & Chair of Student Voice Committee
Associate Prof G Esteban	Member of the Professoriate, School of Applied Sciences (ApSci)
Mr J Gusman	Vice President (Education) of the Students' Union 2013/14 (SUBU)
Prof V Hundley	Member of the Professoriate, School of Health & Social Care (HSC)
Mr A James	General Manager of the Students' Union (SUBU)
Ms J Mack	Head of Academic Services (AS)
Dr A Main	School Student Experience Champion (DEC)
Canon Dr B Merrington	University Chaplain
Ms J Quest	Senate Representative
Prof E Rosser	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Health and Social Care (HSC)
Dr G Roushan	Associate Dean (Education) (BS) and Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum
Mr M Simpson	SU President 2013/14, Students' Union (SUBU)
Ms C Symonds	Head of Quality & Academic Partnerships (AS)
Dr X Velay	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Design, Engineering and Computing (DEC)
Prof T Zhang	Head of the Graduate School (GS)

Student Representatives:

Mr Sam Honnoraty	BU Postgraduate Taught Student
Ms Emily Rhodes	BU Undergraduate
Ms Chantelle Brown	Partner Institution Student

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from:

Ms M Barron	Head of Student Support Services (SSS)
Prof D Buhalis	Senate Member
Mr J Cooke	Students' Union Head of Representation Services (SUBU)
Dr R Hill	Associate Dean (Education), School of Applied Sciences (ApSci)
Mr S Jones	Head of Facilities Management
Ms A Lacey	Student Experience Champion (HSC)
Mr S Laird	Director of Estates
Prof J Parker	Member of the Professoriate, School of Health and Social Care (HSC)
Mr M Ridolfo	School Student Experience Champion, Business School (BS)
Dr P Ryland	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Tourism (ST)
Associate Prof C Shiel	Associate Professor in Education (ApSci)
Ms J Taylor	Educational Development & Quality Manager and Acting Academic Partnership Manager, Academic Services (AS)
Mr J Ward	Director of IT Services
Dr G Willcocks	Deputy Dean (Education), Business School (BS)

Attendees:

Mr C Annear	Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer [Agenda Item 3.2]
Ms L Byles	Senior Lecturer Education Enhancement [Agenda Item 3.3]
Mr R Hydon	Director of Operations (ST) – School of Tourism Representative
Dr A Morrison	Partnerships & International Development Manager [Agenda Item 3.1]

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings held on 25 September 2013 and 5 December 2013**

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes of 25 September 2013 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

QAA Institutional Review Action Plan

Members questioned how BU intended to share its areas of good practice with other HEIs. They were advised that following the publication of the Action Plan in November 2013 on the BU website, a case study had been put together which the Head of Quality & Academic Partnerships was taking forward and it would circulate when finalised in order to take this requirement forward.

Education and Student Experience Plans (ESEPs)

Feedback had been received from the Head of Student Support Services regarding Agenda Item 3.3 – ESEPs - as she was unable to attend the meeting. The ESEC Secretary would forward the comments on to the CEL Theme Leader for her information.

Action: DS

Members agreed that the support of placements would now be considered within School Delivery Plans.

2.2 Accuracy

The minutes of 5 December 2013 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.3 Matters Arising

Minute 3.3 – Lecturing on Wednesday Afternoons – Opt-Out Policy (originally from 27 March 2013 meeting)

The SUBU Vice President would gather information from students about whether lectures being timetabled until 6.00pm in the evening would be preferable as a possible solution to avoiding Wednesday afternoon lectures.

Complete. The SUBU President confirmed that the SUBU Research Department had worked jointly with Timetabling to establish the amount of lectures scheduled for Wednesday afternoons. SUBU will continue to monitor the frequency of these lectures with the Space Management Team and timetablers within Schools. The Chair confirmed that the Fusion Building 1 would in principle be capable of hosting up to 60% of current teaching on Talbot Campus and therefore will help minimise the pressures on timetabling and the need for Wednesday afternoon lectures. SUBU will be able to report back to the Committee following the completion of Fusion Building 1, when clear comparisons could be made.

The Chair confirmed that when teaching space becomes available within Fusion Building 1, the need for temporary buildings will be minimised and BU hope to remove them completely.

Minute 3.3 – Academic Advisor Role (originally from 20 September 2013 meeting)

The Committee suggested that a Sub-Group of SVC be formed to discuss Personal Tutoring/Academic Advisor roles in depth.

Complete. This item was listed on the agenda for discussion.

Agenda Item 3.3 – Mid Cycle Feedback (originally from 20 September 2013 meeting)

Mid-cycle feedback had reinforced good practice. An example of this within ApSci had resulted in good reports from students over the past two years. It was proposed that mid-cycle feedback should be followed up by SVC and they could provide some co-ordinating functions using a consistent platform across schools.

Complete. It was noted that a sub-group of SVC had met regarding mid-cycle unit feedback across the University. At present this was mostly paper-based feedback as the response level was considered to be higher with both quantitative and qualitative data elicited. It was noted that in most Schools, students received electronic or verbal feedback, and most processes included the uploading of feedback summaries onto myBU by Unit Leaders, thus providing transparency for students whilst allowing for the oversight of Programme Leaders and Framework Leaders. The next phase for the sub-group would be to look at what a standardised approach might look like, the results of which would first be discussed at SVC with recommendations reported back to the ESEC meeting on 30 April 2014 or 23 September 2014 for a full discussion.

2.4 Outcomes of ESEP Meetings and Lucky 7

Schools and Professional Services were thanked for their recent reflections on ESEPs and progress towards achievement of the Lucky 7 issues around education and student experience, although coverage of the Lucky 7 would not be complete within the academic cycle. In addition to student engagement planning, much work has been carried out regarding assessment and feedback practice which had also been informed by the SUBU President's earlier paper.

2.5 Future Debate Sessions at ESEC Meetings

It had been suggested by the Director of CEL that ESEC consider the addition of a debate session on future agendas which would be led by members. Members agreed that it was an appropriate forum for debates around education, learning and the wider student experience and would enable good practice, innovation and excellence in education to be shared. Debate sessions would be limited to half an hour. Members were requested to provide the ESEC Secretary with any suggestions for future debate topics.

3 **PART 1: FOR DISCUSSION**

3.1 Student Experience: BU International Mobility of Students Update

An overview was provided of the mobility programmes in which BU participates, and also information on funding which had supported and increased outgoing student international mobility. A recent survey by the British Council had identified that the main barrier which prevented UK students from international mobility, was mainly due to cost. However, many grants were available within BU, such as the Global Horizons Fund, which had proved to be very successful with large numbers of applications being received. During the first year of operation, the Global Horizons Fund received 350 applications, of which 149 students were successful and received funding. The funds allowed students to undertake a relevant international activity of their choice and for any duration, with volunteering being the most popular option. Students are required to articulate how their application would benefit their own learning to ensure that these activities are also relevant to their individual programme of study.

Erasmus-funded work placements across BU had remained fairly constant and a slight increase in numbers was expected during 2013/14 and 2014/15 due to the number of new partners that have been approved for student exchange.

The new Santander funding scheme had recently been formalised and launched in Autumn 2013, with the most popular destinations for students being USA, China, South America and Singapore. This funding scheme had been launched on the student portal and enhanced information and options were now available by School. Feedback received so far was very positive.

The following recommendations were reported:

Recommendation 1 - BU should consider establishing two annual Assessment Boards which would allow incoming students to receive their official marks from BU shortly after their departure, should they only attend Semester 1. Some discussion ensued regarding how this might be achieved.

Members questioned whether specific External Examiners could be appointed to focus solely on the work of the incoming students across each of the Schools. It was felt that this may be difficult to resolve.

It was also noted that BU had previously agreed that formal Assessment Boards would not take place after Semester 1 in an endeavour to better manage the number of Assessment Boards taking place. It was agreed that it would be important that any resolution be proportionate to the number of students affected (in the last academic cycle, this impacted on only 1.6% of UG students). It was agreed that the Head of Quality & Academic Partnerships would take this issue to the Quality Assurance Standing Group (QASG) for discussion and report its findings back to the Committee.

Action: CS

Recommendation 2 - BU should consider implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as a replacement to the currently used Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) to ensure easy transfer of credit to and from home and host institutions and providing a mark rather than just pass or fail. This topic was discussed by the Committee.

The Chair requested further clarification regarding the implementation of ECTS, particularly around providing a percentage mark instead of 'pass/fail'. The Head of Academic Services advised that the issue had been considered several years ago but they would revisit it on behalf of Academic Services and feed back to this Committee.

Action: JM

Recommendation 3 – review of accommodation options for students. It was noted that this had been a topic of discussion for a considerable time and although there was still further work to do to resolve outstanding issues, this was now moving forward.

In the absence of the Head of Student Support Services, the ESEC Secretary read the comments received regarding international mobility funding for Widening Participation (WP) students and accommodation for exchange students and the difficulties encountered.

It was noted that staff development sessions were available to Schools in order to raise awareness and to provide staff with information and knowledge of how the international mobility system operates.

The Head of Academic Services advised that active participation and engagement of all relevant staff in relation to international development and exchange should be encouraged and supported. The issue should also be considered and included as part of the upcoming delivery planning and budget-setting processes.

3.2 Appeals and Complaints Annual Report

A review of student appeals and complaints received in 2013 was given. Mitigating circumstances continued to be the main grounds cited for appeals due to late submission of work. BU was now able to deal with these issues earlier at School or University level due to robust procedures being in place.

Fewer appeals had been received in 2013 across the University, but there had been a slight increase in those cases which proceeded to the second stage, possibly due to the improved communications with students regarding the procedures.

Complaints submitted by BU students to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (i.e. after they have already been through the appropriate School and BU processes) decreased from 6 in 2011/12 to 5 in 2013. It was noted that although the OIA had improved their handling times for complaints, there was still a slight backlog. They have recently introduced a triage-type approach for initial consideration of each case in order to help address this.

During the 2013 reporting period, 42 complaints were received by the Central Appeals & Complaints Team; a reduction from 48 complaints received in the previous period. An increase from 6 to 10 complaints progressed to the second stage. It was noted that the reasons for the complaints were varied and not always related directly to study, e.g. financial and accommodation issues were the focus of some complaints. Very few complaints had been received from Partners, as they have their own policies and procedures in place for dealing with issues.

Overall, although BU had not seen large increases in appeals and complaints, some were much more complex in nature and can take longer to reach resolution. This may be particularly problematic after resit Assessment Boards during September as a slower resolution can impact on affected students' re-enrolment. Thanks were expressed to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer for continued efforts with appeals/complaints.

The Committee also acknowledged the valuable assistance provided by SUBU Advice to students regarding appeals and complaints, which often helped to reduce the need for escalation to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer.

It was noted that when responding Members agreed that the terminology used within the formal responses to students regarding their appeal or complaint should be written in plain English and simplified wherever possible. Members were reminded to advise all staff on the importance of accurate appeals and complaints record-keeping within the Student Record System.

The Committee requested that 'Table 5 – Grounds of Appeal' information be simplified for the 2014 report.

Action: CA

It was agreed that generally, the report showed there were no systemic failures in this area and it provided reassurance for the University that many issues were being dealt with appropriately from the outset, thus not requiring further escalation.

3.3 Higher Education Academy (HEA) Update

3.3.1 HEA Annual Institutional Report 2012/13

The HEA Annual Institutional Report which summarised BU's engagement with the HEA over the last year was presented to the Committee. The number of HEA Fellowships had risen from 29.66% to 33.7%. The University was now working towards a figure of 100% of staff having either a recognised teaching qualification and/or HEA Fellowship recognition by 2018. It was noted that if the number of teaching staff with a teaching qualification were taken into consideration, the figure of 33.7% would increase to at least 50%.

BU will be taking proactive steps to support and encourage academics to apply for HEA National Teaching Fellowships and CEL will provide guidance and workshops to help with the application process. It was noted that the HEA also provide research and other grants to support a range of education and learning initiatives, which BU staff should be encouraged to apply for.

Reports had recently been produced regarding the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) which would be distributed by Prof Zhang.

Action: TZ

It was noted that responses to PTES by BU students were low (10.74%) and it was important to try to increase student participation in order to obtain more reliable information. Members agreed that further work and increased communication was required in order to promote PTES and PRES to students.

Action: TZ

3.3.2 HEA UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) Accreditation

The UKPSF is a national framework to support, develop and recognise excellence in Higher Education. Successful engagement with the dimensions of the framework can lead to recognition as an Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principle Fellow of the HEA.

BU has recently been accredited by the HEA to award fellowship status to its own academic and teaching staff successfully applying through a new CPD route, in addition to the existing route via the PG Cert Education Practice. The CPD route would be rolled out between January and September 2014 and the first cohort of applicants was expected to complete by the beginning of the next academic year so that they could then become a part of the wider roll-out, acting as mentors and application panel members.

The Head of Education (MS) and the Senior Lecturer Education Enhancement had briefed all School Executives on the UKPSF and the new '*teach@BU*' recognition. It was noted this recent HEA accreditation was an important demonstration of BU's commitment to education and an excellent student learning experience, as well as providing a valuable way for individual staff to demonstrate and be recognised for their own achievements education practice and leadership.

The Head of Education (MS) would circulate a paper published by the HEA titled 'Promoting Teaching: Making Evidence Count' which contains a useful framework for evidencing effective and excellent education practice.

Action: SE

3.3.3 HEA Engagement Survey Pilot

The Chair of SVC gave an overview of the HEA National Survey for Student Engagement Survey pilot, which BU had been invited to take part in. The survey measures the quality and quantity of individual student effort and engagement. It was anticipated the survey would be deployed to Level C students, Level I students and students at Partner institutions, but would not include Level H students as they would be taking part in the National Student Survey (NSS).

For the purposes of the pilot, the total number of students involved was expected to be approximately 7,750 and the survey would be completed online through Bristol Online Survey. The survey would remain open for three weeks in May/June 2014 and provide data regarding students who were still within the learning environment, unlike the NSS which captured data from students as they were leaving the learning environment at Level H.

3.4 Academic Advisor Research Feedback

A paper written by Mark Ridolfo was tabled by the Chair of SVC, which provided information on the system of Academic Advisor/Personal Tutor support provided by each School. It confirmed that all Schools support students pastorally and academically via a wide range of mechanisms which are considered to best meet the needs of those students. It was noted that DEC and ST did not have Academic Advisors/Personal Tutors per se but did offer robust support to their students.

It was agreed that there were many 'ports of call' for students who needed academic assistance, and BU now has an opportunity to clarify what is meant by academic advice and how best to ensure that it is provided for and readily available to all students. It was also recognised that it is important to understand and manage students' expectations in terms of academic advice or personal tutoring so that they are clear about what they can expect and from whom.

It was felt that the Committee needed to see further evaluation of the information gathered, conclusions and recommendations once this paper had been discussed at SVC. MR to report this to next ESEC meeting.

Action: MR

It was felt that there needed for clarity on Job Descriptions for Framework Leaders and Programme Co-ordinators. However, this would be discussed at SVC and reported back to the Committee in due course.

3.5 University Level Student Experience Issues

A summary of cross-University issues raised at Schools' Student Experience Forums was presented to the Committee. It was noted that many concerned Estates issues and the Committee recommended that an Estates' representative attend key SVC meetings.

The paper which listed these issues will be forwarded to the Estates ESEC representative following the meeting and a request to ensure Estates representation at SVC moving forward will be made.

Action: Clerk

3.6 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum (TELSF) Update

The Chair of TELSf reiterated the need for an improvement in the service received from IT. She has been liaising with IT to move the TEL agenda forward, particularly around VLE and ongoing issues raised. Some work is being done by IT on costs associated with the VLE. This information would be passed on to the TELSf when finalised.

The TELSf had been working closely with a Senior Learning Technologist within Library & Learning Support (LLS) in order to provide School-specific workshops and training. An analysis of user requirements was required from all Schools and Professional Services staff, would be involved in future analysis of user requirements regarding the VLE platform, from a student perspective.

4 PART 2: FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT

4.1 There were no items for approval and endorsement.

5 PART 3: FOR NOTE

5.1 Dignity, Diversity & Equality Executive Summary 2012/13

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.2 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Framework (launched September 2013)

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.3 Chaplaincy Annual Report

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.4 SUBU President's Report

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.5 Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL) Update and CEL Strategy

The Committee **noted** the report.

6 REPORTING COMMITTEES

6.1 Student Voice Committee Minutes of 11 December 2013 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were **noted**.

6.2 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum (TELSF) Minutes of 9 January 2014 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were **noted**.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 There was no other business.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 26th March 2014, 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the Board Room