

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2012 at 1400 hours in the Boardroom

Present:

Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair)	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Experience, Education and Professional Practice)
Ms M Barron (Secretary)	Head of Student Services
Mr R Chater (Clerk)	Quality and Enhancement Officer
Ms R Dolling	Academic Administration Manager, School of Applied Sciences
Dr S Eccles	Head of Education, The Media School
Prof R Gozlan	Member of the Professoriate, School of Applied Sciences
Dr R Hill	Associate Dean (Education), School of Applied Sciences
Mr T Horner	President of the Students' Union
Mr A Ireland	Chair of Student Voice Committee
Mr A James	General Manager of the Students' Union
Ms J Jenkin	Director of Student and Academic Services
Ms K Jones	Student Union Vice President (Education)
Ms J Mack	Academic Partnerships Manager
Mr C Matthews	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Health and Social Care
Ms M Mayer	Observer nominated by the Chair of the Board
Dr K McGhee	School Student Experience Champion, School of Applied Sciences
Dr B Merrington	University Chaplain
Prof D Patton	Member of the Professoriate, The Business School
Ms J Quest	Senate Member
Mr P Ryland	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Tourism
Associate Prof C Shiel	Director of the Centre for Global Perspectives
Ms C Symonds	School Student Experience Champion, School of Tourism
Ms J Taylor	Educational Development and Quality Manager
Dr X Velay	Deputy Dean (Education), School of Design, Engineering and Computing
Prof T Zhang	Head of the Graduate School

In attendance:

Ms L Byles	Senior Lecturer, Academic Staff Development (Agenda Item 3.4 only)
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*Actions:

AI	Mr A Ireland
DD(E)s	Deputy Deans (Education)
EDQ	Educational Development and Quality
RD	Ms R Dolling
Sec	Secretary
SSECs	School Student Experience Champions
SUP	Students' Union President
TMB	Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from:

Prof D Buhalis	Senate Member
Ms F Cownie	School Student Experience Champion, The Media School
Ms J Dawson	Observer nominated by the Chair of the Board

Dr B Dyer	School Student Experience Champion, School of Health and Social Care
Ms S Leahy-Harland	Observer (Student Experience Programme Manager)
Dr A Main	School Student Experience Champion, School of Design, Engineering and Computing
Prof J Parker	Member of the Professoriate, School of Health and Social Care
Mr M Ridolfo	School Student Experience Champion, The Business School
Dr G Willcocks	Deputy Dean (Education), The Business School

Action*

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (28 March 2012)

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 *Minute 2.2.3*

ACTION: Schools to consider developing their own charters utilizing the Media School's Charter as best practice.

All Schools confirmed that they would adopt the Media School's Charter in some form.

Resolved: Senate to consider what the implications of all Schools adopting this approach would be; in particular with respect to the development of a university wide charter.

TMB/Sec

2.2.2 *Minute 2.2.3*

ACTION: Schools to retain and manage their individual response protocols.

It was confirmed that Schools had set response protocols and would continue to maintain them.

2.2.3 *Minute 2.2.5*

ACTION: It was agreed that the group produce a full report for the next meeting (May 2012).

See agenda item 3.4

2.2.4 *Minute 2.2.7*

ACTION: The Chair requested that the Student Voice Committee deliberate further and produce a report [on mid-cycle Unit feedback] with a definitive proposal for submission to the next meeting (May 2012).

Discussions on the future arrangements for mid-cycle feedback had been deferred to a future Student Voice Committee meeting.

Current arrangements for mid-cycle unit feedback are included in the Student Engagement Policy and Procedure under item 4.2.

Resolved: The matter would be deliberated further at the Student Voice Committee and recommendations submitted to the next meeting in July.

AI/Sec

2.2.5 *Minute 3.1.1*

ACTION: The Director of Estates and IT Services to review accommodation arrangements for a pilot based on six students for each of the two Schools, for a period of three to four months).

It had been proposed that from September 2013 some back to back accommodation would be held for student mobility purposes as a pilot.

Resolved: The Secretary would contact Estates to check arrangements were in hand.

Sec

2.2.6 *Minute 3.1.1*

ACTION: The Head of Student Services to draft a proposal for financial support for students who wished to use accommodation on a part year basis only, for Executive consideration, with input from the Director of the Centre for Global Perspectives, the Business School Student Experience

Champion and Deputy Dean (Education), School of Tourism.

Action*

The Director of the Centre for Global Perspectives noted that offering part year accommodation would address the issue and that no further action was needed.

2.2.7 *Minute 3.1.2*

ACTION: It was agreed that the Director of the Centre for Global Perspectives would circulate to Schools for discussion a paper summarising Erasmus staff targets and opportunities and that Schools should also note the need for the future development of bi-lateral institutional relationships to support mobility.

Completed.

2.2.8 *Minute 3.2*

ACTION: It was agreed to collate how Schools deal with lost assignments at present with the aim of the Committee ensuring parity.

See agenda item 3.1.

2.2.9 *Minute 3.2*

ACTION: It was agreed that the group consider the above proposal [for assignment receipting] and analyse the risks in order to produce a report with a definitive proposal for the implementation of electronic copy submission for automated receipting, highlighting any problems, with alternative solutions and risks, for submission to the next meeting (May 2012)

Issue discussed under item 3.1.

2.2.10 *Minute 3.3*

ACTION: the University Board to be notified of the findings of the [Appeals and Complaints] report and its consideration by the Committee.

Report had been referred to the Clerk of the Board

2.2.11 *Minute 7.1*

ACTION: It was agreed that some changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference would enhance the effectiveness of the Committee. The changes would be recommended to Senate for approval.

The amended Terms of Reference had been submitted to Senate for formal approval

3. Items for discussion

3.1 Assignment Receipting Options

3.1.1 The Head of Student Services summarised the contents of the paper. Options for receipting of hard copy assignments had been presented to the previous meeting. The Committee had requested a more detailed proposal for a simple, and resource light, receipting option where students wished it.

3.1.2 The Paper proposed that for most assignment submissions where a receipting process is not already provided, students be allowed the option of emailing an electronic copy in addition to the required hard-copy. They would receive an automated response which would serve as a receipt.

Certain provisos would apply, including: that email submission would be for receipting purposes only and the hard copy submission would still be required by the deadline; electronic copies submitted after the deadline would not be accepted; Schools would not retain the electronic copies; and the email box would only be checked in instances where the hard copy goes missing. It was noted that receipting would not be possible for certain types of assignment where email submission is not appropriate e.g. large artefacts.

3.1.3 The Committee discussed the proposal. The Head of Student Services confirmed that she had been assured that the IT infrastructure could accommodate this approach. Members expressed that it would be imperative to make clear in assessment submission instructions and in the email receipt message that the electronic copy is not a substitute for the hard copy (where a hard copy is

required) and that the auto-receipt is not confirmation that the hard copy has been received.

3.1.4 Members asked for clarification of the process for dealing with instances where a hard copy is claimed to be missing but the student had chosen not to submit an electronic copy via the email box for a receipt. It was agreed that current practice most Schools conducted for these circumstances, as outlined in the paper, should be followed. It was also agreed that Schools carefully monitor missing assignment claims over and above present levels, since any significant increase might suggest that the system was being abused.

Action*

3.1.5 **Resolved:** It was agreed that all Schools follow the proposed assignment receipting process for the 2012-13 academic year. Performance of the process to be monitored by Schools and to be reviewed by the Committee in the summer of 2013.

DD(E)s/RD

3.2 Assessment Strategy Review

3.2.1 The Committee asked how Schools reviewed the effectiveness of assessment strategies within programmes and units and monitored the impact on student experience. DD(E)s shared their experiences and it emerged that practices were similar across Schools; this included: reviewing Independent Marking Plans (IMPs) to reduce bunching of assignments and ensuring an appropriate range of assessment methods. Some Schools also conducted peer review of assignment briefs, with input from external examiners, in preparation for the start of the forthcoming academic year. Good practice was shared including the introduction of standard assignment briefs and assessment feedback forms. DEC noted that the School was encouraging more online assessment handling and marking.

3.2.2 Indicative Assessment Workload

3.2.2.1 The Committee discussed a proposal emerging from the Common Academic Structure (CAS) Working Group to revise the current indicative assessment workload at BU from 5,000 words (or equivalent) for a 20 credit unit, to 4,000-5,000 words as from 2013-14. The intention was to allow greater flexibility with assessment design.

3.2.2.2 Some members felt that this change may send mixed messages to the student body and that some students may perceive this negatively. However, the EDQ Manager noted that there was already a degree of variation between assessment requirements as the current word count was a guide and needed interpretation with regards to equivalency for non-written assessment.

3.2.2.3 It was noted that there may be instances where tutors needed the discretion to set assessment that would require a lower word limit to address intended learning outcomes, such as requiring students to present a succinct and coherent argument within a restricted word limit. It was argued that such assessments would involve the same number of hours to complete as a longer piece. It was noted that the current information on assessment workload also provided indicators on the number of hours required by students to complete an assessment in addition to the indicative word count.

3.2.2.4 The majority view was that there was sufficient flexibility in the existing workload definition to encourage parity in assessment workload between units without being prescriptive on word count. It was felt that very few units consisted of a single 5000 word essay and that in practice most units set a range of assessment to meet ILOs using a variety of assessment methods. Altering the current workload statement might be perceived as a reduction in the amount of work students are required to do and a lack of clarity around assessment requirements could result in increased appeals. The Committee concluded that, given the concerns mentioned above, there would be no merit in moving to a change in the indicative workload amount but that the existing wording in the academic procedure be reviewed to ensure that the current flexibility is clear.

3.2.2.5 **Resolved:** it was agreed that the indicative assessment workload would not be changed from 5,000 words. Instead EDQ would review the wording of the policy and procedure to make it more clear what flexibility was afforded to tutors in setting assessment.

EDQ

- 3.3 QAA/NUS reports on Student Experience Research 2012: Teaching and Learning; Independent Learning and Contract Hours **Action***
- 3.3.1 Two sections of the recently published QAA/NUS report were presented for consideration and information. Members discussed the reports and the following observations and comments were made:
- 3.3.2 It was noted that the findings published in the report on Teaching and Learning indicated that students valued lecturers that were experienced in their subject and that were passionate and engaging; students were not reported to put as much importance on the academic research profile of a lecturer. However, the SU President commented that research carried out by SUBU showed that, whilst this finding may be broadly reflected at BU, some students (e.g. those in the School of Applied Sciences) did value the research profiles of their lecturers.
- 3.3.3 The report identified that students regarded feedback on examinations as important and it appeared that a higher proportion of students received examinations feedback in the rest of the sector than at BU (although it was not clear what form this feedback took). It was noted that currently students can request feedback on examinations from their tutors but in practice this opportunity was rarely taken up. It was felt that students at BU hold quality and turnaround of markers feedback on coursework of much higher importance to that of receiving feedback on examinations which are traditionally held at the end of a unit/year.
- 3.3.4 The report highlighted seminars as being highly valued by students. Members felt that the aspiration for holding more seminars conflicted with recent approaches to encouraging economies of scale and it was suggested that availability of sufficient teaching time and resources no longer allowed for greater levels of seminar delivery. The Media School reported that as part of CAS they would be looking to ensure more lectures would be supported by seminars and it should be noted that the University is also investing in additional academic staffing in all Schools.
- 3.3.5 There was some concern that the University would not be able to meet the expectations of future students, for example in terms of providing personal tutorials. It was suggested that academic sessions may need to be delivered differently to free up more class time to facilitate learning and one to one contact. For example, lectures could be delivered by video which could then be followed up with more interactive sessions. The SU President concurred with the view that students found follow-up interactive seminars important as it allowed them the opportunity to ask questions regarding and cover in more depth material that had been introduced in the preceding lecture.
- 3.3.6 The University would have a better view of how BU's contact hours compared to other institutions once Key Information Set (KIS) data was made available. However, it was agreed that KIS data would not detail the nature and quality of those contact hours and the University should take the opportunity to include information about the quality of contact in its prospectuses. These issues were being addressed as part of the KIS project.
- 3.3.7 Members suggested that, given the importance that students placed on engaged and passionate lecturers who were good communicators, these skills should be considered key when appointing new staff. It was noted that in the past one School had asked candidates to deliver a ten minute lecture to students as part of the interview process and suggested that this good practice be adopted where possible. The Chair also noted that staff recruitment processes were being reviewed to ensure these issues were taken into consideration.
- 3.3.8 **Resolved:** it was agreed that the issues raised in the reports be considered by Schools and Professional Services more widely through School Academic Boards and Professional Service fora. **DD(E)s, Professional Services staff**
- 3.4 UK Professional Standards Working Group
- 3.4.1 The Head of Education, Media School (HoE, MS) summarised the paper for the Committee. The document set out a proposed framework to provide staff, at all stages in their careers, an opportunity for validating their teaching activities and recognising their expertise and experience in supporting student learning internally and externally through differing levels of HEA status. If approved and endorsed then the intention would be to roll out the framework in 2013.
- 3.4.2 The HoE, MS explained that in developing the proposed framework the working group had been

mindful of the need to ensure that robust processes be embedded to recognise the excellent teaching of BU staff and also identify where enhancements may be delivered and where staff need to improve their teaching practice. The key features of the proposed framework were outlined and a number of recommendations were brought to the committee for agreement.

Action*

3.4.3 Members were highly supportive of the proposal and endorsed the excellent opportunity that this provided to stimulate and recognise excellence in teaching and learning practice. The congruence with the points raised in the above QAA/NUS paper were also noted. Members agreed with the recommendations within the report, namely developing the existing certificated route (Route 1) and introducing a second CPD route for implementation in 2013-14. Members discussed the requirements for teaching qualifications of staff and agreed that the completion of the full PG Certificate Education Practice should be compulsory for all staff new to teaching.

3.4.4 **Approved:** the Committee approved the recommendations in the report: the overall approach, routes 1 and 2; the requirements of the taught PgCert (60 credits) for academic staff new to HE; the CPD approach.

4 Approval and endorsement

4.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedures

4.1.1 The Head of Student Services summarised the paper for the Committee. A review of the responsibilities of the University Board had highlighted a responsibility for the Board to have oversight of any complaints raised specifically about the Students' Union (SUBU). The Student Complaints Policy and Procedures needed to be amended to reflect this and therefore, section 6.11 had been inserted that covered a procedure for dealing with complaints about SUBU. The new section also addressed instances where a student had chosen not to join SUBU.

4.1.2 **Endorsed:** the change to the procedure section of the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures was endorsed.

4.2 Student Engagement Policy and Procedure

4.2.1 The EDQ Manager summarised the paper for the Committee. The draft Policy and Procedure represented a body of work that had been undertaken over the past few months by the Student Voice Committee (SVC). It had discussed and updated aspects covering student representation and participation in feedback; the Student Engagement Survey (SES); external surveys such as NSS, PTES and PRES; the School Student Experience Champion (SSEC) role and formalising School Student Experience Forums.

4.2.2 The EDQ Manager noted that work had been undertaken to propose a definition of the SSEC role for endorsement by the Committee. It was acknowledged that some people were uncomfortable with the current title for that role; however, a more appropriate alternative to the word 'Champion' was yet to be suggested and agreed.

4.2.3 The EDQ Manager explained that the QAA distinguishes between student engagement with learning and teaching and student engagement with representation and feedback. In light of this members were asked how they wished to define 'engagement' at BU and for their views on whether the proposed title of the document was appropriate.

4.2.4 Members were in support of the document, commenting that it was very useful to introduce it at the current time even if, as it was acknowledged, that some future development would be required in the light of further information (for example, the new chapter of the QA code on teaching and learning). Members also appreciated that it provided some commonality, but also flexibility in its approach. It was suggested that the title of the new Policy and Procedure could refer to 'student participation in Quality Assurance' rather than 'engagement'. However, it was agreed to keep the title, as it had been originally proposed, with the proviso that the opening statement reflect the interpretation.

4.2.5 **Endorsed:** subject to incorporation of the above changes, the procedures section of the Student Engagement Policy and Procedures was endorsed.

5. For note

Action*

The following reports were received and noted:

5.1 Students' Union President's Report

5.1.1 The first item in the report was redacted due to the potential for an individual student to be identified.

5.1.2 **Resolved:** a revised paper to be submitted for the record.

SUP

5.1.3 The Committee noted SUBU's disappointment that discussions regarding potential relocation of the Union on the Talbot campus to a more prominent location, had been unsuccessful. Members concurred with the view that the Union needed to be in a more visible and accessible location for students on the ground floor.

5.1.4 The report highlighted issues of some international students struggling with English language and greatly challenged by the cultural shift to UK academic culture, in particular the requirement for citing references. The report requested more support and information be given to international students both pre and post arrival and suggested a number of measures the University could seek to improve.

5.1.5 The Head of the Graduate School reported that she was leading a working group on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and some focus groups had already been conducted which identified a range of issues that specifically affected international students. Steps are already being taken to address these issues including those relating to pre and post arrival information and clarification of academic requirements around referencing. The Head of the Graduate School emphasised that in addressing challenges associated with English language, whilst it would be necessary to ensure that students come with the appropriate level, it would also be imperative to continue language support for students following entry and this would form an integral part of the strategy being developed.

5.1.6 A concern was raised regarding a proposal the University was currently exploring for an international pathways partnership to provide pre-sessional programmes. It was noted that this proposal was currently being considered through Academic Standards Committee.

5.2 Institutional Review Progress Report

5.2.1 The contents of the report were noted.

5.3 Fusion Seminar and Conference Series

5.3.1 The contents of the report were noted.

5.4 BU Student Development Award

5.4 The Director of Student and Academic Services reported that the award had been highly successful during the past year. She wished to thank colleagues who had been involved with the award and thanked SUBU for their support. The award would be further developed and expanded for the forthcoming academic year. A fuller report containing an evaluation of the award to-date and recommendations for future developments would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee for its consideration.

6. Reporting Committees

The following reports were received and noted:

6.1 Student Voice Committee minutes.

6.1.1 The contents of the report were noted.

6.2 E-Learning Enhancement Forum minutes.

6.2.1 The contents of the report were noted.

6.3 Student Experience Programme status report.

6.3.1 The Committee noted the contents of the report and noted the additional information provided regarding the progress of the GROW@BU pilot.

7. Any other business

7.1 No other business was raised.

8. Date of next meeting

25 July 2012, 1400-1600, The Board Room.