

**CONFIRMED**

**EDUCATION & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (ESEC)**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 MARCH 2018**

**Present**

Prof R Stillman (Acting Chair) Head of Department – Life and Environmental Sciences

(FST) (Deputy Chair)

Ms P Peckham (Secretary) Education Service Manager (FST)

Mr G Lillis (Clerk) Academic Quality Officer (AS)

Mr D Asaya SU President 2017/18, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Ms M Barron Head of Student Services (SS)

Mr A Child Head of Academic Quality (AS)

Ms J De Vekey Head of Insight and Policy, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Dr B Dyer Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FMC) and Chair of the Student Voice Committee

Ms B Elias SU Vice-President (Activities) 2017/18, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Dr L Farquharson Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FM)

Mr A Hancox SU Vice-President (Education) 2017/18, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Ms E Harding SU Vice-President (Community) 2017/18, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Prof D Holley Head of Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL)

Mr A James General Manager of the Students’ Union (SUBU)

Mr S Jones Head of Facilities Management

Prof V Katos Member of the Professoriate (FST)

Dr F Knight Academic Manager, Doctoral College

Ms J Mack Head of Academic Services (AS)

Dr A Main Learning Impact Leader (CEL)

Dr K McGhee Acting Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FST)

Dr M Morgan Associate Dean (Student Experience) (FMC)

Dr C L Osborne Head of Academic Operations (OVC)

Prof S Porter Member of the Professoriate (FHSS)

Prof E Rosser Acting Executive Dean and Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FHSS)

Dr G Roushan Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum

Ms C Souter-Phillips SU Vice-President (Welfare) 2017/18, Students’ Union (SUBU)

Dr S White Senate Representative (FHSS)

**In Attendance**

Mr J Guymer Academic Quality Acting Team Leader (observing)

**Student Representatives**

Chelsea Ansell Undergraduate Student

Ade Balogu Postgraduate Taught Student

Sol Brown Undergraduate Student

Robin Moran Undergraduate Student

**Apologies**

Dr K Curtis Co-opted Member of the Professoriate (FHSS)

Prof G Esteban Member of the Professoriate (FST)

Dr C Hunt Associate Dean (Student Experience) (FST)

Mr S Laird Director of Estates

Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair) Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Canon Dr B Merrington University Chaplain

Dr S Minocha Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) (OVC)

Dr P Ryland Associate Dean (Student Experience) (FM)

Dr J Taylor Academic Manager, Doctoral College

Mr J Ward Director of IT Services

17/016 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted as listed above.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY2018

**Accuracy**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, apart from the fifth paragraph of minute 17/006, where “Student Pride” should read “Black History Month”.

1. **Matters Arising/Actions Log**

All matters arising from the previous meeting were deemed to be complete, with the exception of those listed below. Please refer to the actions log for details of completed actions.

Item 4.1.10 (17 January 2018) Attendance Monitoring/Student Engagement

The Director of IT Services had intended to provide a verbal update at this meeting but was unable to attend due to a conference. He provided the following comments:

There has been no further progress on this item due to BU2025 planning work, four large IT business cases had to be prepared, and the new IT and digital enabler plans have to be developed for the Board.

**Action ongoing:** It was agreed that this item would remain open and an update would be requested from the Director of IT Services for the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

Item 3.2.4 (29 November 2017) Single Sign-On

The Director of IT Services had provided an update (ESEC-17-013) which was circulated to the Committee on 5 February and was attached to the minutes of the last meeting as Appendix 1. Feedback on the paper was requested but none was received. The Secretary noted that the paper did not include a schedule for the work to look at SITS compatibility with single sign-on.

**Action ongoing:** It was agreed that this item would remain open. The Secretary would seek clarification from the Director of IT Services on the schedule for SITS compatibility with single sign-on.

**Action: PP**

Item 3.4.6 (29 November 2017) Student Services Annual Report 2016/17

Space had been identified for a prayer room which would be suitably converted to address the lack of prayer space for Islamic students.

**Action closed.** The Head of Facilities Management reported that Estates had added this to their programme for completion by the end of the financial year. The University Chaplain had requested that the work be carried out during June/July to minimise disruption during the academic year. It was agreed that this matter did not need to return to the Committee.

Item 3.5.2 (29 November 2017) PTES and PRES

The Chair of the Student Voice Committee reported that the first PTES meeting had been held on 30.11.17 and was currently meeting weekly. All legal hurdles had been cleared and promotional materials approved. It was suggested that for each survey students completed, BU would donate a pound to a charity of the student’s choice. It had been reported that this worked well at other institutions as a way of incentivising students to complete the survey. The budget was sufficient to cover the cost of the donations even if all eligible students completed the survey. The survey would launch on 16 April and close on 1 June. Programme Leaders would receive a Powerpoint presentation to introduce the survey and contextualise it for their students.

**Action ongoing.**

**FOR DISCUSSION**

1. **Appeals and Complaints Annual Report**

The Head of Academic Quality explained that the purpose of the report was to answer two questions: (1) Have appeals and complaints been successfully resolved? (2) Were there any systemic issues with the appeals and complaints process? The report would be submitted to the University Board for noting. It showed academic appeals and complaints headlines and statistics along with a breakdown by Faculty. He pointed out that the report mapped to calendar years in line with the practice of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which would issue a summary statement in May. There had been an increase in both appeals and complaints but appeals were resolved more often at the local stage, which showed that the process was working. Fewer cases were referred to the OIA (approximately half the number of the previous year), and no University outcome decisions were overturned by the OIA in 2017. This provided further assurance that the appeals and complaint processes were working well. The SU Vice-President (Education) expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by Academic Quality in keeping students informed during the process.

The Acting Executive Dean and Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FHSS) noted the jump in FHSS complaints and asked whether this could be broken down by department or analysed further to determine whether self-funding had been a relevant factor. The Head of Academic Quality said further investigation was possible but it was important not to be too concerned as the jumps had been from a very low base and still constituted a very small proportion of the student body. This had remained constant at between 1 and 2 per cent of the total student number for the last 2-3 years. Further analysis had not revealed any consistent themes.

Discussion took place about the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and the need to raise awareness of it amongst the student body. The excellent work carried out by SUBU over the past year in this regard was acknowledged, and it was hoped that this would encourage students to engage earlier in the support available to them. Within FHSS, it was noted that students typically did not use the extension policy in the first instance, and ongoing work was being undertaken to address this. The Head of Student Services suggested that fitness to study procedures should be used more rigorously as a supportive rather than combative procedure. She urged another look at communications around mitigating circumstances to educate staff on what to look for and to enable students to present a robust case. Jules Forrest recently chaired a group comprising DDE’s, ADSEs and ESMs from all Faculties as well as the SU Vice-President (Education) and SUBU Advice to review the current mitigating circumstances policy. The group was also reviewing the combined form for extensions and mitigating circumstances as it was deemed confusing for students and should be separated out. The Head of Student Services requested that Student Services be represented too; this was agreed.

**Action: Head of Academic Quality to ensure Student Services are included in the discussions regarding the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.**

1. **SUBU President’s Report**

It had been agreed with the Chair prior to the meeting that this item would be removed from the agenda. The SUBU President informed the Committee that, following a fair and transparent election process, the new SUBU officers for 2018/19 had been elected and would be presented at the next meeting.

17/022 **DEBATE ITEM: Defining Teaching Quality and the Continuous Development of Teaching Competences**

This debate did not go ahead owing to the absence of the Chair.

17/023 **FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT**

**Recommendations for improvements to academic advising for 2018/19 and updated *ARPP 5D - Academic Adviser: Policy***

The paper *Recommendations to Further Improve Academic Advising,* which proposed establishing task and finish groups to further improve academic advising at BU, was approved by ESEC on 29.11.17. The groups undertook the work required and created a series of recommendations. Further work was then undertaken with the Associate Deans Student Experience (ADSEs), Deputy Deans Education & Professional Practice (DDEPPs) and the Head of Student Services to reach a final set of recommendations for ESEC. The Head of Academic Operations thanked all those who participated in the various meetings to create the recommendations. The following points emerged from the Committee’s discussion.

* In general, the Committee was enthusiastic about the proposals and impressed by the evidence base underpinning them. All recommendations in the paper were approved.
* The Head of Academic Services expressed the view that in addition to the recommendations, more explicit reference should be made in the vision and mission statement to using student demographic data in academic advising to target supporting specific groups of students where there was clear evidence of an attainment gap in order to signpost students to tailored support. Reference was made to the need to address the attainment gap as highlighted by the Office for Students, and that the work of Academic Advisers would tie in with work the University would need to do anyway in terms of its Access and Participation Plan. The Head of Academic Operations said that the topic of demographics had been debated extensively within the task and finish groups and whilst the principle was logical, it was felt that this could not be made a requirement until Academic Advisers had a report detailing the demographic data of their cohort. Several members also acknowledged that all students may be at risk so there was concern not to single out specific issues or homogenise people from one group and reiterated that this topic had been debated at length as part of the groups. The Head of Student Services said that the concept of students “at risk” might need to be expanded to encompass wellbeing in addition to academic risk (failing or dropping out).
* The Head of Academic Services said that the student summary in myHub would be a source of demographic data and all academics had access to this, although they may not all be aware of this and she could check what access was available and whether reports were possible.
* It was agreed that the wording within the vision/mission/goals statement would be updated to reflect using student demographic data to inform advising if such a report was available to Academic Advisers.
* The Head of Academic Services asked about mechanisms for obtaining student feedback on the academic advising service. The Head of Academic Operations said BU would continue to use the qualitative feedback from students obtained from the NSS, MUSE and SimOn and that implementing other models to capture student views was more complex across the sector. She reiterated that specific new measures introduced would require more consideration, time and consultation as outlined in the paper, and finally approval from the Student Voice Committee.
* The Head of Centre for Excellence in Learning suggested that “evidence based” be inserted into the fifth recommendation on page 1 to read: “To create a mandatory centrally facilitated evidence-based Academic Adviser refresher day”. This was agreed. She also suggested a celebration event. However the Head of Academic Operations confirmed that the Recognition Task & Finish Group had stated this would not be of interest or value to them, which was in keeping with the literature on this and therefore did not wish to invest resources in this. The Member of the Professoriate (FHSS) who sat on the group reiterated this, stating staff expressed a preference for concrete recognition for their academic advising work via workload planning, promotion and career progression.
* The SU Vice-President (Education) noted that no reference was made to learning analytics and as these were being introduced at BU, asked whether there was any need to include this in the policy. The Head of Academic Operations clarified that this had not been included at this stage since there was a CEL working group currently exploring the pedagogical issues around introducing student engagement metrics and this would inform any future implementation of using these, including who had access to which data and how to discuss engagement with students.
* The General Manager of the Students’ Union would like to see SUBU mentioned in the table on page 5 (point 5) to emphasise the extra-curricular activities offered by SUBU: some academics may think that SUBU was about socialising at a bar or club but it needed to be made known that it also provided advice, support and other activities. Similarly under point 6, the role of SUBU in providing co-curricular activities should be mentioned. This was agreed.
* It was important to make students aware of the academic advisers. The Deputy Chair pointed out that, within FST for example, sessions with academic advisers were timetabled in as part of the unit.
* A member asked if the policy would be available to students. The Head of Academic Operations confirmed that the policy was student- and staff-facing and appeared in the ARPP section of the web pages. In addition, the policy was referred to in programme handbooks, a webpage was being constructed for staff, and SUBU had agreed to host the staff and student responsibilities on their webpages.
* A question was asked about flexibility in how the policy was implemented at Faculty or departmental level. The Head of Academic Operations clarified that the principles in the policy were not flexible as they were an evidence-based baseline minimum, but there was flexibility within the policy for Departments and Faculties where this was possible, for instance in terms of topics for group sessions.

**APPROVED: All recommendations, updated *ARPP 5D - Academic Adviser Policy* and Equality Impact Assessment were approved, subject to the minor additions agreed above**.

**FOR NOTE**

17/024 **Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL) Update**

The Committee noted the contents of the paper. The Head of CEL pointed out that the learning technologists for the Lansdowne Campus (FHSS) were based on the fifth floor of the EBC, and those for the other three faculties were based on the ground floor of the library on Talbot Campus. CEL was sending out monthly updates on the implementation of Brightspace and the culture change work being undertaken. There had been some issues with the new system and the staff cohort was down by 25 per cent, hence the team was not yet able to deliver as fully as hoped.

**NOTED**

17/025 **Report from Task & Finish Group: Optional Placement Deadline Planning**

The Head of Facilities Management apologised that his paper was marked “draft”; this was in fact the final version and it was agreed that the clerk would remove the watermark from the set of committee papers. He explained that a group had been convened to look at the implications of setting the optional placement deadline at least two weeks prior to online registration release, in order to ensure that student record information was updated prior to student timetable release, and to recommend change processes to bring timetable release forward. However, since ESEC had already set the placement deadline as 31 August, the implications of this deadline were examined instead, and the group put together the actions needed to meet it. A high level process map was included as an appendix to draw together all the activities involved. The group concluded that, in order to change the release date of the timetable, a much deeper review of all the contributing academic processes would be required, but this would not be done before conclusion of the unified calendar project.

The Head of Academic Services pointed out that a review of the assessment process and boards would not fundamentally shift the timelines. Other institutions released their timetables earlier with similar assessment timelines, hence it was necessary to investigate how they accomplished this and to seek more creative solutions. The Secretary suggested there may be room for manoeuvre with regard to timing of assessment and reassessment boards: if consideration were given to unit boards, reassessment could be taking place after semester one. This would mean boards had less volume to process at the end of the academic year and Faculties could then schedule their reassessment boards for the early part of the window. The Head of Academic Services said this would still only amount to small margins of a week or so.

The SU Vice-President (Education), whilst accepting the reasons for the late publication of the timetable, stressed that this remained one of the main issues that students approached him about. He also noted that second semester and January starters were not mentioned. He said it would be helpful if students could be given the date when their timetable would be available. It was pointed out that this was always published on the VLE, and the Secretary would be happy to discuss where else this information might be published. On a positive note, it was fed back that students were pleased that the exam timetable had been released earlier in the current year.

The Head of Facilities Management said the challenge was striking the right balance between issuing a timetable early which would be subject to change, versus releasing a later but accurate timetable. He would be happy to work with Academic Services colleagues to look at this holistically from scratch. The technical development of the unified calendar would be complete by the end of the current academic year, and a paper on the progress of the project would be submitted to the University Executive Team and ESEC in the following two months.

17/026 **V4L Update**

The Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum gave a verbal update, with a further update paper to follow at the next ESEC meeting:

* Relationship-building activity was continuing with V4L and Brightspace providers.
* Additional dedicated support had been obtained from Brightspace to look at Turnitin requirements. A solution was expected by September 2018 for staff and students.
* Meetings were taking place with DDEPPs and ADSEs to agree principles for consistency in how content is viewed in the VLE. Academics could choose from a selection of templates to create consistency for students across units, programmes etc.
* LEAP was still available for sign-up. Very positive feedback had been received about this.
* Training and drop-in session for individuals were continuing.
* A fuller version of the benefits realisation piece would be brought back to the next meeting.
* The SU Vice-President (Education) enquired about progress on anonymous marking. The Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum said work was being undertaken to look at how this was done at other universities and she would provide a fuller response in the update for the next meeting.

**Action: GR**

**To be completed by: 27 April 2018**

**Method of circulation: paper for inclusion in committee papers**

* A review of phase 1 implementation with staff and students was underway.
* The Acting Executive Dean and Deputy Dean (Education & Professional Practice) (FHSS) expressed that there were many lessons to be shared from her Faculty’s experience of the implementation of Brightspace. The Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum would ensure that she received the communications regarding participation in the evaluation and feedback activities.

**Action: GR**

**NOTED**

**REPORTING COMMITTEES**

17/027 **Student Voice Committee Minutes**

The Student Voice Committee minutes of 10 January 2018 and 5 March 2018 were noted.

**NOTED**

17/028 **Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum (TELSF) Minutes**

The Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum minutes of 5 December 2017 were noted.

**NOTED**

17/029 **Faculty Education & Student Experience Committee Minutes**

The Faculty Education & Student Experience Committee minutes were noted as below:

* FHSS minutes of 17 January 2018 (unconfirmed)
* FM minutes of 7 March 2018 (unconfirmed)
* FMC minutes of 6 December 2017 (unconfirmed) and 28 February 2018 (unconfirmed)
* FST minutes of 27 February 2018 (unconfirmed)

**NOTED**

17/030 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Deadline for Submission of Papers**

The Deputy Chair requested that members ensure that the deadline for submission of papers was strictly adhered to.

17/031 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 9 May 2018 at 14.00-16.00 in the Board Room