

# Senate

Wed 23 October 2024, 14:00 - 16:30

OVC Board Room, Poole House

## Attendees

### Board members

Professor Alison Honour (Chair), Professor Keith Phalp, Dr Shelley Thompson, Professor Einar Thorsen, Professor Christos Gatzidis, Dr Lois Farquharson, Jacky Mack (Secretary), Andy Scott, Esther Isaiah, Andy Squire, Susan Varley (on behalf of Peter Wilson), Professor Richard Stafford, Dr Charlie Hargood, Dr Susan Dewhurst, Dr Rosie Read, Dr Kate Terkanian, Dr Suelen Carls, Dan Ford, Matthew Clarke, Professor Hywel Dix, Professor An Nguyen, Dr Carly Stewart, Professor Jeffery Bray, Professor Davide Parrilli, Professor Thomas Wainwright, Professor Sara White, Dan Chevalier (Committee Clerk)

Absent: Professor Anand Pandyan, Professor Sarah Bate, Professor Fred Charles, Grace Ehiosun

### In attendance

Jules Forrest (observer), Jane Wakefield (item 7), Russell Pottle (item 7)

## Meeting minutes

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

#### 3.1. Summary of E-Senate meeting held from 30 September to 7 October 2024

**Noted:** The Summary of e-Senate meeting held from 30 September to 7 October 2024 was noted. The Academic Registrar noted that the matters raised at e-Senate by BUBS and FST regarding the removal of the 1% discretionary rule would come back to Senate following consideration at Education Committee.

 [3.1 e-Senate Summary report - 30 Sept to 7 Oct 24.pdf](#)

#### 3.2. Accuracy: Minutes of 12 June 2024

**Approved:** The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

 [3.2 Senate Minutes - 12 June 2024 - unconfirmed.pdf](#)

### 4. VICE CHANCELLOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

## 4.1. Sector Update: BU2035 Update

The Chair had attended 35 staff engagement sessions since joining BU. Improving communications had been identified as a priority and to facilitate this, VC communication meetings were also being held to support visibility and regular, open communications across the University. The Chair reported that the launch of BU2035 workshops had been a success with all sessions fully booked, nine additional sessions had since been added to meet demand, and one online option. There was ongoing work to deliver a draft strategy to the University Board by the end of November 2024 that would promote key strategic priorities and include a financial plan. Appreciation and thanks for those taking part and engaging in the staff engagement sessions was noted. The Chair also confirmed the intention to make changes to the Extended University Leadership Team (EULT) and University Leadership Team (ULT) to bring these groups together to avoid tiered systems of leadership, with further changes planned to reflect the new leadership approach and strategic priorities.

The Chair intended BU to be more externally-facing, and had been leading this with attendance at various key events with strategic importance to BU. This included acting as panel member at the Great South West Conference, attending the Universities UK (UUK) Conference and the Dorset Engineering and Manufacturing Cluster (DEMC) Breakfast, and attending the launch of an Indian Partnership event in London with Birmingham City University (BCU). Other local recent engagements included a Foster Carers Awards evening, Bournemouth and Poole College events with the Faculty of Media and Communications (FMC), BU open days, and an RNLI exhibition in the Fusion centre. The VC would also be opening the Dorset COP Conference 2024, which would be held on Talbot Campus. The BU-UHD Leading for Improvement event was also highlighted, as well as this being a key strategic relationship for BU.

Recruitment had been challenging across the HE sector and BU was no exception to this. However, some competitors had taken a different approach to BU during clearing that had resulted in improved recruitment. It was reported that under-recruitment would have budget implications for BU. The Chair updated Senators on the reported plans to increase undergraduate home tuition fees and index link fees, which would bring a welcome increase in funding to universities. At BU, the international undergraduate market was following the trend across the sector and continuing to meet recruitment targets which was positive as the University moved more into the international market going forward. The Office for Students' (OfS) report on HE post-2025, and the UUK blueprint for HE were highlighted as interesting reads for Senators. The Chair also noted work in academic quality from the OfS Quality Assessment Review reports and the themes emerging from these reports which were focusing on institutions being proactive and taking action to address risks.

The Chair noted that level 7 apprenticeships had been defunded but there were ongoing discussions as to whether any may still be retained for healthcare provision. BU was working with Further Education (FE) leaders and the regional universities proactively to ensure there was collaboration between providers to deliver to different markets. It was reported that there were plans to complete mapping for local providers of levels 1-3 to understand how that could create a progression route into BU provision.


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## 5. SUBU UPDATE

The Students' Union President presented the slides submitted in the paper pack. Changes in SUBU were noted, with new sabbatical officers and a new CEO, as well as a busy period for SUBU ensuring that students transitioned smoothly into the new academic year. They had a successful welcome period including the Freshers Fair with over 8,000 students in attendance. SUBU had been delivering initiatives to support students in hardship such as free breakfasts and meals, with 100 students attending 'Supper Club'. SUBU were continuing to lobby BU for more affordable food on campus, and the President noted that there had been good progress on this and shared that this week would be focusing on halal food as part of a campaign.

The President also reported that SUBU were increasing their presence at Lansdowne. Recently, this had included an academic session on 9 October supported by the VP Education and BU Library team which 180 students attended. Other updates included activity such as 'Grow week' focusing on employability, the election of 340 Student Representatives (with five training sessions to come), the upcoming 'Speak Week' from 25 November to 1 December 2024, and work on simplifying SimOn reports. The President noted that students reported feeling overwhelmed, with an increase in students saying they wanted to leave university. SUBU was working to find ways to support students to have a good experience at BU.


The Chair reiterated the success of the Freshers Fair and noted that item 5 on the agenda, the SUBU update, was a new standing item for Senate and stressed the importance of bringing the Student Voice to Senate in a meaningful way through both Officers and the role of the CEO. The SUBU CEO reported that they were enjoying understanding SUBU's operating context at Bournemouth, and looking to explore how to work together to support a strong student experience at BU. The Chair echoed support for this collaborative approach between SUBU and BU.

 SUBU Report BU Senate 9 Oct 2024.pdf


 5 SUBU BU Senate Report Cover Sheet.pdf

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## 6. FACULTY UPDATES - KEY PRIORITIES FOR YEAR AHEAD

 6c FST Strategic Priorities 2425.pdf

 6a BUBS Strategic Priorities 2425.pdf

 6d HSS strategic Priorities 2425.pdf

 6b FMC Strategic Priorities 2425.pdf

 Faculty Updates cover sheet.pdf

### 6.1. BUBS update

The Executive Dean reported there were a number of developments underway in the Business School. The Faculty were implementing January (2025) starts for selected undergraduate programmes, developing new apprenticeship provision, and wellbeing and cultural initiatives alongside support for research. The Faculty had developed an action plan to support staff through a period of change and staff wellbeing was a core priority theme. The Chair noted the importance of staff wellbeing, and how that impact the overall student experience, and the significance of that to the BU2035 strategy.

### 6.2. FHSS update

The Deputy Dean reported that the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences (FHSS) was focussed on improving the quality of programmes and NSS scores in certain areas. The Faculty intended to continue to work closely with SUBU to address student concerns. In addition to this, the committee noted the demand for clinical placements regionally. It was reported that the NHS workforce plan was to expand nationally, but locally there was a need to consider sustaining placement numbers. The Faculty were looking at opportunities to develop BU's own in-service provision to support this including developing a University physiotherapy clinic. It was reported that research bidding had been successful in securing £2.8 million from an Insight bid, and £3.2 million from an Inspire bid. The Chair noted the Faculty were collaborating with key senior colleagues in the regional health sector to deliver this.

### **6.3. FMC update**

The Executive Dean reported that the Faculty were promoting a new film festival at Poole Lighthouse this year and would also be reporting on the US election as a way to facilitate cross-Faculty collaboration. The Faculty of Media and Communications (FMC) were exploring new markets for growth including offering a January (2025) start for an undergraduate degree in Computer Animation and would be delivering a level 7 apprenticeship from September 2025. The Faculty would be continuing the focus on education and quality. It was also reported that the International Summer School was a highlight of the summer period and the Faculty planned to pilot a three-strand summer school for international students. There had also been re-development of the multimedia space, and this was featured and positively received at the recent Open Day.

### **6.4. FST update**

The Executive Dean reported that the Faculty intended to make improvements across all NSS, PRES, PTES and Student Outcomes metrics. The Faculty also wanted to hit recruitment targets for the next cycle. It was noted that currently, the FST PGT targets had been exceeded by approximately 30 students, and the Faculty were on course to meet the January 2025 targets. The Faculty were developing two new apprenticeships in biomedical science and cybersecurity and were looking to strengthen existing and international partnerships with new collaborations in different models. The Faculty had four funded Innovate Knowledge Transfer partnerships which they would like to expand to a total of ten. An increase in PGR completions this year was also reported.

The SUBU President queried whether there was a gap in the FST plans which did not reference the role of the student voice. The Executive Dean acknowledged that this may have been an oversight but that the role of student voice featured prominently in the FST Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Review (AMER) plans that were shared at the Education Committee.

The Head of Research, Development and Support (RDS) reported that research income was in advance of targets for the year. It was noted that income might have looked higher in-year due to delays in onboarding from the previous year. This was noted to have potentially led to the current in-year position looking more positive. This was not a new or unknown issue for this year, however, and so previous datasets would have likely also have been affected.

The Chair noted that the focus on identifying new markets was in line with the institutional approach and cited the three undergraduate programmes due to be delivered in a new January 2025 intake. The Chair thanked colleagues for pivoting so quickly to enable BU to attract new markets. It was reported that another intake for May 2025 was being explored and this would be tactically important for recruitment in September 2025.

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## **7. FOR DISCUSSION**

## 7.1. Recruitment Update

The PVC Education and Quality reported that recruitment was unlikely to increase significantly for the current cycle. BU was considering ways to reduce the gap created by under-recruitment by introducing multiple entry points in-year but it was noted that the University was unlikely to close the UG recruitment shortfall of 700 students. It was reported that January targets for PGT were also unlikely to be met.

The PVC Education and Quality noted plans to change the approach to periodic review to become risk-based and metrics-focused in the future. It was reported that clear justifications for what BU's portfolio should look like were important to ensure a good quality offering, especially with aims to diversify into more partnership provision. It was reported that the University must consider factors such as course costing, quality control, market share, and BU's sector position. BU must focus on resourcing areas where there was potential for growth and there should be an awareness of the OfS 'B' conditions with consideration of NSS results where these impacted league tables and the student experience. At BU, only 12 courses were costed to be delivered at less than £9,250, with the majority being costed at over £10,000 and some as high as £30,000. Course size had a significant impact on outcomes. At BU, 12 courses represented 50% of the total undergraduate student population from the 70-course portfolio so these courses could have a huge impact on data from any shifts in survey responses or outcomes. Some postgraduate programmes had less than ten students and it was noted that viability to deliver and maintain a programme should also be part of the consideration. Other determining factors to take into account for portfolio development included areas of growth which were predominantly international where it was noted that initial numbers were modest but had potential to be scaled, as well as in-country markets. These could include opportunities where progression was strong and reviewing provision where the impact of technological advances such as artificial intelligence (AI) was seeing salaries decrease in areas where AI could support the work.

Senate noted that some courses had cycles of recruitment that varied over time and queried whether there had been any attempts to map provision against staff research. It was noted in response to this that the subject breadth of the portfolio at BU was an issue as it required lot of resource to deliver. Whilst it was noted that strength in research supported international recruitment, there were other areas where viability would need to be carefully considered.

It was noted that the conversion rate of applicants to enrolments had decreased. The Chair explained that BU needed to review offer rates and consider incentive schemes aimed at retaining students, such as cashback initiatives or attendance and engagement scholarships. If the University could retain 90% of students that equated to £9 million increase in finance.

The Chair gave an update on sector discussions that could mean policies such as student number caps and fee ratios for STEM and non-STEM courses being considered. It was noted that these factors were not within the University's control but would impact BU, so the University needed to maintain a sector awareness of this type of policy consideration.

**Action PVC Education and Quality:** Senators requested that the recruitment information was cascaded to colleagues in an appropriate format to help inform staff on the strategic direction and raise awareness of the challenges and recruitment intentions at BU.

## 7.2. Institutional Performance - Student Satisfaction, NSS, Subject and Course Performance

The PVC Student Experience reported that the University was behind the sector and down on last year in all measures of the NSS. It was noted that assessment turnaround time was the only metric in which BU exceeded the sector. With regards to PTES results, it was not much more positive, however, the response rate was substantially lower than the NSS, at around 11% so there was work required to focus on improving the PTES response rate. The PRES results however were more positive, and student engagement in this survey exceeded the sector average with a 45% completion rate. It was reported that an overview of the issues surfaced in the surveys included inconsistency of the student experience, pressure to 'earn and learn', and that perceptions of 'community' and 'belonging' required continuous attention. It was noted that these outcomes aligned to student voice themes observed in previous surveys.

It was reported that actions taken to address underperforming areas included the introduction of new assessment brief templates to support clearer assessment and feedback, and a new assessment support section in Brightspace to help achieve the target result of 2% above the sector average. In order to address issues raised in relation to 'Organisation and Management', the approach to programme communities in Brightspace had been refreshed to drive communications via this channel as opposed to overloading email traffic in response to student feedback that they felt 'bombarded' by emails.

The PVC Student Experience reported the ambition to achieve TEF Gold would need to be underpinned by timely improvements. It was noted that, whilst the OfS B conditions outlined the regulatory baseline for minimum standards, the TEF was about excellence and exceeding minimum requirements. It was noted that BU was currently Silver overall, but the 'Student Experience' aspect was rated Bronze. It was noted that the current academic year was already year three of the four year data set used to assess the TEF so there would need to be significant change in the next year to improve the data or improve the narrative for the submission, in order to evidence a positive trajectory. It was noted that evidence gathering needed to start now so there was a strong base for narrative building for the next TEF exercise. Senate noted there were significant institutional initiatives to prepare for the REF, but not an equivalent for the TEF. The PVC Student Experience had been reviewing TEF Gold institutional submissions to identify good practice. It was noted there needed to be an emphasis on impactful actions that could be evidenced to improve the student experience.

The PVC Student Experience provided an update on the AMER Review Panels planned for October 2024 which aimed to consider high impact programmes (those with high student numbers), programmes which were below minimum thresholds, partnerships provision, and Foundation years. It was noted that Foundation years had low continuation rates and outcomes, and there was a need to consider delivery modes to help improve this. It was noted that most staff had not taught at the Foundation-level before, so more support was needed to help staff adapt to this delivery. It was also noted that there should be consideration of future Foundation year viability to run under the future fee structure.

The Chair noted that the PGR data indicated an issue with continuation and completion. It was noted that this related to self-funded students who may have experienced financial issues and staff who had more flexibility in their deadlines which impacted completion rates. It was noted that some staff found balancing a PhD and their staff role challenging, but that it was beneficial to have staff active in research.

 [Senate Outcomes Reporting & NSS.pdf](#)

 [NSS 2024 Analysis.pdf](#)

### 7.3. Student Voice and Preparation Plans for Student Surveys

The PVC Student Experience highlighted that BU had not performed well in NSS Student Voice measures. It was reported that programmes that embedded student-staff forums, student logs and good practice in relation to student voice channels out-performed the sector and so could be used as evidence to implement good practice at BU as the impact was clear. It was noted that this evidence supported the intention to have an institutional-wide approach to student voice at BU. The PVC Student Experience reported that BU would be setting minimum response rate targets at 75% for NSS in 2025 after achieving a response rate of 72% in 2024. For the PTES, it was reported that BU would aim to achieve an increase to 25% from the 11.4% response rate in 2024.

There would be a student voice campaign from November 2024 to mid-January 2025 projecting the message to students that: 'we are listening'. This would build on joint SUBU communications, addressing lower satisfaction, and demonstrate how students were involved in driving improvements to student experience issues. It was reported that from mid-January 2025 to the end of year, the focus would be solely on driving enhanced student engagement.

The Chair noted that improvements would be based on an institutional approach which was joined up and linked in with SUBU. It was reported that consideration was being given to the use of incentive packages to support strong student engagement in the process.

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## 8. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

### 8.1. University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

The UHD Partnerships Programme Manager reported that 160 staff attended the leadership conference, including BU's VC, which focussed on leadership in healthcare and a plan to develop this going forward. It was noted there was also a BU-UHD event with 30 speakers, 50% from UHD staff and 50% from BU staff which evidenced the strong partnership approach. It was reported that there were intentions to hold another joint event in April 2025 with UHD, Dorset County Hospital and BU in the Fusion building with 200 expected to attend.

The Partnerships Programme Manager reported that they have 20 enquiries about doctorates each year and three of these had converted into part-time PhDs. It was noted that the Joint Steering Committee enabled effective monitoring of student progress and any retention concerns.

The Chair noted that BU-UHD was an important strategic partnership. It was reported that the VC was now a UHD Associate Non-Executive Director Board member and had attended a first board meeting. It was intended that BU could aim to align strategic objectives with the new UHD strategy which was noted to have been shared with Senate previously.

**Action:** Partnerships Programme Manager to share the new UHD strategy directly with the Chair.

The role of the independent sector such as Circle Health, Nuffield health, was discussed in relation to their place at future collaborative events where they were operating in the region, and as possible placement providers. It was noted that there were potential tensions with this, but it would be raised at the UHD Board for a view.

 8.1 BU-UHD Update.pdf

### 8.2. Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust

It was noted that BU was awaiting an update on the representative position as the Chief Medical Officer post had not yet been filled.

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## 9. FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

## 9.1. Quality and Standards Annual Report

The Head of Academic Quality presented the report, following consideration of the report at Education Committee. It was noted the report aimed to provide analysis of data outputs from quality assurance processes, to review the effectiveness of processes that support quality assurance and enhancement and to provide assurance that the University was meeting requirements as set out in the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration relating to quality and standards, the B conditions. The report drew on primary data sets used by the OfS to assess providers, such as NSS and student outcomes data, and internal data such as External Examiner feedback, AMER reports, and academic offences data.

The Chair explained the new reader roles which aimed to provide additional scrutiny of papers through Senators who were tasked with providing a summary and feedback on the paper to Senate. The readers provided a summary of the report. It was noted the report highlighted a general theme around NSS results being a concern. The readers also cautioned against over-reliance on data in relation to a decrease in academic offences equating to a lower risk in relation to academic integrity overall. The readers noted that, whilst confirmed cases of academic offences might be decreasing, there could be more cases that were currently undetected due to the use of generative AI. The report included a recommendation to re-establish the Academic Integrity Working Group to review trends identified in the academic offences data sets and consider the wider implications of detection and support for students to avoid academic offences.

The readers also noted the overall length of the report and suggested the inclusion of an auto-generated contents page. It was noted that this was a 77-page document, rich in detail, which was challenging for Senators to consider meaningfully. It was noted that this paper had also been considered at Education Committee leading to queries of potential duplication and repetition.

The Chair noted appreciation to the readers whose approach had allowed for greater consideration and scrutiny of the report and supported proactive discussions at Senate.

**Endorsed:** Senate endorsed the report for onward consideration at Student Experience, Quality and Standards Committee and endorsed the recommendation in the report to re-establish the Academic Integrity Working Group.

 [9.1 Quality and Standards Reports 2023-24.pdf](#)

## 9.2. Annual Report on Student Services, Student Welfare and Wellbeing

It was noted that feedback from Education Committee had been partially reflected in this report.

The readers provided an overview of the report and some feedback. It was highlighted that the Careers Service was significantly under-resourced in comparison to the sector. It was noted that a review of placements was planned this year in the context of decline in all placements, including sandwich placements. It was noted that Frontline Services had been affected by structural issues including the absence of a Director and that staff morale was being impacted. It was also noted that in Residential services, beyond level 4, BU could not guarantee appropriate accommodation which had implications for compliance with the 2010 Equality Act with regard to housing those with additional needs. It was noted that the report evidenced a strong focus on resources for mental health support. It was queried whether under-resourcing of key areas meant there was inadequate support for certain services.

The Chair reported that work was being undertaken with the interim Chief Operating Officer, and with the University Executive Team (UET) on a new structure for the Service to bring in interim roles. It was noted there was a correlation in student outcomes that reflected underinvestment in careers support which needed to be addressed. The Chair reassured Senate the issues raised within the report were being actioned by UET.

**Endorsed:** Senate endorsed the report for onward consideration at the Student Experience, Quality and Standards Committee and the University Board.

 [9.2 Annual Report on Student Services and Student Welfare 2023-24.pdf](#)

## 9.3. Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech Annual Review 2024-25

**Endorsed:** Senate endorsed the paper for onward consideration at the University Board.

 [9.3 Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech Annual Review.pdf](#)



## 9.4. Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee Terms of Reference

Minor amendments and changes to membership had been made and approved by the Committee.

**Approved:** Senate approved the Terms of Reference.

 [9.4 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee Terms of Reference-Oct24.pdf](#)

## 9.5. Education Committee Terms of Reference

The Education Committee's terms of reference were submitted for their annual review. One minor amendment was to change Faculty Academic Standards and Education Committee to Faculty Education Committee.

**Approved:** Senate approved the Terms of Reference.

 [9.5 Education Committee Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

## 9.6. Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference

It was noted that there were changes to the Chair and Vice Chair to bring the roles internally, but an external presence would be maintained. An action was noted to thank the outgoing Chair and Vice Chair for their years of valuable service. It was suggested that the terminology in the terms of reference should state that there should be a minimum of one external member to remain on the membership. The Academic Registrar queried the quoracy as this was high in comparison to other Senate committees, typically being 50%+1.

**Approved:** The Terms of Reference were approved subject to confirming the correct quoracy was stated.

**Action:** Head of RDS to review and confirm the quoracy stated in the Terms of Reference.

 [9.6 Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference - Oct 2024.pdf](#)

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## 10. FOR NOTE

### 10.1. Prevent Duty Annual Report

Noted.

 [10.1 Prevent Report and BU Prevent Policy 2024-25.pdf](#)

### 10.2. Annual Report on the Concordat to support Career Development

Noted.

 [10.2 Annual Report Research Concordat 2024 - Oct 24.pdf](#)

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## 11. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

### 11.1. Additional Education Committee minutes of 26 June 2024

Noted.

 [11.1 Additional Education Committee Minutes - 26 June 2024 - unconfirmed.pdf](#)

## 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Senators were advised of vacancies on Education Committee and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee for Senate representatives. Expressions of interest should be submitted to the Academic Registrar by the end of the following week (8 November 2024).

The Chair reported that there would be an academic governance review to define the purpose and membership of committees, the regulatory framework and partnership governance structures, aligned to the new strategy. Academic governance needed to be fit for purpose for the future. The review would commence in January 2025 to be in place for June 2025 so that the new structure was in place by September 2025 for the 2025/26 academic year.

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## 13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

**e-Senate:** Monday 29 January to Friday 2 February 2025

**Senate:** Wednesday 21 February 2025 (in-person – 2.00pm to 4.30pm - OVC Board Room)