



Academic Board

## LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023.

**Present:** Amanda Coffey (Chair), Rubi Akhtar (alternate for Hannah Mathias), Rahul Aswani (alternate for Lily Diyemowei), David Barrett, Suzanne Carrie, Jackie Chelin, Rachel Cowie, Bethel Ekaette, Miltos Hadjosif, Antony Hill, Natalie Leung, Ray McDowell (alternate for Cathy Minett-Smith), Heather Moyes, Kezia Paul, Jackie Rogers, Ian Stratton (Secretary), Neil Willey, Lloyd Williams

**Apologies:** Manar Amasha, Tim Brailsford, Jacqueline Butler, Peter Clegg, Lily Diyemowei, Lindsey Ellis, Nadine Fry, Laura Harrison, Selen Kars, Hannah Mathias, Jo Midgley, Cathy Minett-Smith, Gerry Rice, Jeanette Sakel

**In attendance:** Fiona Cottrell (item 6.1), Chris Evans (items 7.1 and 7.2), Amanda Headley-White (item 2.1), Nicky Pavitt (items 5.4 and 5.5) Callum Reilly (Officer), Jen Verity (item 2.1)

### LTSEC.23.04.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

LTSEC.23.04.1.1 The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting, introducing the Head of Careers and Enterprise (Curriculum and Consulting) as a new member to represent Careers and Enterprise.

LTSEC.23.04.1.2 Apologies were noted and no declarations of interest were received.

### LTSEC.23.04.2 DEEP DIVE PRESENTATION

#### LTSEC.23.04.2.1 Learning from complaints and appeals

LTSEC.23.04.2.1.1 The Student Caseworker and Senior Student Caseworker gave a presentation on the following:

1. The role of the Student Casework Team in managing casework (complaints, academic appeals and behaviour and health referrals) and supporting other services and Colleges in the management of cases
2. Sector-wide trends: for example, students are more likely to report sexual misconduct than the general population
3. The University's position within the sector, noting that UWE Bristol referrals to OIA are below the group average
4. Key trends and themes in the casework at UWE Bristol:
  - a. Academic appeals: typically related to assessment offences or where personal circumstances apply
  - b. Complaints: often related to guidance and accessibility of information given to students, course delivery and academic support
  - c. Behaviour and Health Framework: issues including bullying and sexual misconduct
5. The range of student support and resources in place, which can cause confusion among students about where to go when there is a problem. Customer First work will seek to address this.
6. The development of a casework management system and adopting "no wrong door" and "warm hand-off" principles to ensure issues are captured at the earliest opportunity.

LTSEC. 23.04.2.1.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. The need to extract demographic trends related to Fitness to Study and Professional Suitability referrals, and to extract data on low-level issues (e.g. level 1 complaints).

**Action:** To extract and consider demographic data and data on lower-level casework to enhance reporting (**Student Casework Team**).

2. Sector-wide increase in class action being brought directly to Vice-Chancellors; the Student Casework Team at UWE is building a closer working relationship with the Vice-Chancellor's Office to reach complainants earlier
3. The need to strengthen confidence in resolving concerns locally before escalating to formal complaints (avoiding habitual escalation)
4. Thematic analysis of casework, which is to be shared initially with School and College Managers to enable them to resolve recurring issues; this should be later rolled out to other senior staff

5. The need to avoid being overly punitive and to retain as a default position that the University seeks to support students where possible to complete their studies (e.g. through action plans).

### **LTSEC.23.04.3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

#### **LTSEC.23.04.3.1 Previous minutes**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.01 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.3.1.1 Members approved the minutes of the meeting on 1 February 2023.

#### **LTSEC.23.04.3.2 Matters arising and action sheet**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.02 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.3.2.1 *LTSEC.22.09.6.3.9 (issues raised by student survey results)*  
The College Deans of Learning and Teaching (or their representatives) for each College gave a verbal update on progress addressing issues raised by the previous NSS, PTES and GOS data for members' assurance.

LTSEC.23.04.3.2.2 *College of Health, Science and Society*  
It was noted that policing, nursing and midwifery were key areas of focus; actions are in place to enhance closer partnership in policing, while work is underway to review the structure of learning and teaching on nursing and midwifery programmes. Further work is being conducted to communicate with students more proactively, applying good practice identified elsewhere.

LTSEC.23.04.3.2.3 *College of Arts, Environment and Technology*  
It was noted that one-to-one meetings had been held with every programme leader to discuss results. There was a pattern of disappointing results attributed to pandemic-related lockdowns limiting access to practicals (with results expected to improve in the post-lockdown environment). Assessment and feedback were also issues, which are to be improved by streamlining for next year. Employability is to be strengthened with the introduction of a professional practice week.

LTSEC.23.04.3.2.4 *College of Business and Law*  
It was noted that assessment feedback and student voice were the primary areas of focus identified in the NSS. In response, College staff have been using Transforming Assessment tools to support feedback and using Mentimeter with students to strengthen the

student voice. An action plan is in place for each programme, with a six-month collaborative NSS review exercise planned.

### **LTSEC.23.04.3.3**

#### **Chair's actions**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.03 was received.*

LTSEC.23.4.3.3.1

Members noted the approval of proposals to extend provision at the National Economics University, Vietnam.

### **LTSEC.23.04.4**

#### **STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

### **LTSEC.23.04.4.1**

#### **Chair's report**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.04 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.4.1.1

Members noted the report for information.

### **LTSEC.23.04.4.2**

#### **The Students' Union report**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.05 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.4.2.1

The Students' Union Vice Presidents summarised the report, highlighting:

1. Recruitment, training and social events for student representatives
2. Increased turnout in this year's SU leadership race, with the new Presidents-Elect ready for a July handover
3. Attendance at the NUS National Conference, which considered a motion from the SU on FE funding
4. Welfare work, including mental health workshops
5. Work with the EDI Team on introducing pronouns on ID cards
6. Society and cultural events, including Women's History Month, UWE's Got Talent, Sport Swap Shop, charity events organised by the Islamic society and a forthcoming TEDx UWE event.

LTSEC.23.04.4.2.2

In discussion, members commented on the feasibility of introducing pronouns in Microsoft Teams; this is already possible in Blackboard but it was noted that the functionality does not yet exist in Teams.

### **LTSEC.23.04.5**

#### **QUALITY, STANDARDS AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

### **LTSEC.23.04.5.1**

#### **Student Protection Plan 2023**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.06 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.5.1.1 The Deputy Director (Policy Development and Student Experience) Student and Academic Services introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The plan is a requirement of OfS Conditions of Registration, related to students' ability to complete their programme.
2. New OfS guidance is still forthcoming, hence the University has been proactive in revising its plan. Other universities' plans have been consulted in the development of the revised version.
3. The plan is a regulator-facing document, though reference documents and guidance for students have been linked.
4. New risks have been added, including cyber-security, industrial action and closure of the entire University; each major risk now includes a rating and mitigation outline.
5. It recognises that postgraduate researchers and apprentices (among others) may be affected by different threats.

LTSEC.23.04.5.1.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. The risk of losing supervisors for postgraduate research students being rated as "moderate", which is not proportionate to more potentially high-impact risks that are rated as low or very low with mitigation in place.

**Action:** To reassess the risk rating of postgraduate research supervisors moving to a different institution prior to approval of the plan (**Deputy Director (PDSE) SAS**).

2. The overall likelihood versus the residual risk of industrial action disrupting a student's studies.
3. For apprentices, the need to distinguish between risks relating to employers (including closure) and those relating to subcontracting partners.

**Action:** To suggest revised wording of risk relating to apprentices prior to approval (**Director of Apprenticeships/Deputy Director (PDSE) SAS**).

LTSEC.23.04.5.1.3 Members agreed that the plan, with any amendments proposed as discussed, would be approved by Chair's action.

**LTSEC.23.04.5.2 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.07 was received.*

- LTSEC.23.04.5.2.1 The Deputy Director (PDSE) SAS introduced the paper, noting that:
1. The document has been revised based on the outcome of the December 2022 Ofsted inspection and has already been reviewed by Apprenticeship Board and UQSSC.
  2. Increased robustness of data means that the document is more data-driven, rather than relying on in-depth case studies.
  3. Areas of improvement include ongoing engagement of employers in programme enhancement, with a recent community of practice event focused on this.
  4. School Boards of Studies will have some responsibility for monitoring apprenticeship programmes, along with the College Apprenticeship Steering Groups (overseen by Apprenticeship Board). LTSEC will need to consider the effectiveness of this approach next academic year.

**Action:** To include apprenticeships oversight in the LTSEC business plan for 2023/24 (**Secretary/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.04.5.2.2 The document was approved.

**LTSEC.23.04.5.3 Collaborative Provision Review: proposed updates to role descriptors**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.08 was received.*

- LTSEC.23.04.5.3.1 The Deputy Directory (PDSE) SAS introduced the paper, noting that:
1. The role descriptors have been redeveloped following work on compliance with OfS B Conditions for collaborative provision. A PwC audit of related risk identified that further clarification of these roles was required.
  2. The role descriptors have been clarified to account for the variable scope of partnerships (e.g. some University-wide, with others only involving a single School or College).

LTSEC.23.04.5.3.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. Limiting the terms of office for roles, noting that this was not discussed as part of the review exercise. Regular reviews of role holders could address this and will be fed back into the Task and Finish Group.

**Action:** To raise the issue of limiting terms of office for partnership roles with the Collaborative Provision Task and Finish Group (**Director of Apprenticeships**).

2. The need for caution over single points of failure if, for example, a Partnership Lead leaves the University.

LTSEC.23.04.5.3.3 The updated role descriptors were approved.

**LTSEC.23.04.5.4 Assessment and Feedback Policy**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.09 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.5.4.1 The Student Voice and Academic Policy Team Manager introduced the paper, noting that:

1. Though there are no changes to the policy, there have been changes to the operational guide.
2. The policy will be further reviewed in 2024 as scheduled under the Policy Governance Framework cycle.

LTSEC.23.04.5.4.2 Members noted the existing policy for information.

**LTSEC.23.04.5.5 Action update for Student Voice Partnership Project**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.10 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.5.5.1 The paper was noted for information.

**LTSEC.23.04.5.6 Confirmation of research project (RD1) review**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.11 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.5.6.1 The Director of Graduate School introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The existing academic regulations for research degrees currently treat RD1 ("project registration") as an assessment point.
2. This is not in line with the sector and is particularly unsuited to professional doctorates, as it creates the potential for successfully assessed project proposals to be refused.
3. Changes to the academic regulations are therefore proposed, including redefining RD1 as "confirmation of research project"; RD1 would no longer be used as an assessment point.
4. RD1 would instead be used to confirm the scope of research, research governance procedures, the candidate's development needs analysis and the supervisory team.

- LTSEC.23.04.5.6.2 In discussion, members commented on:
1. The problem under the existing regulations with projects developed by professional doctoral candidates having already been assessed; this can lead to conflicting assessment outcomes.
  2. The need to retain RD1 in some form and to retain scrutiny of PGR research more broadly.
  3. Recognition that research confirmed under RD1 is expected to develop and may not exactly match project outlines developed as part of any professional doctorate module.
- LTSEC.23.04.5.6.3 The proposed changes, including changes to the academic regulations, were endorsed for approval by Academic Board.  
**Action:** To submit proposed amendments to academic regulations for postgraduate research to Academic Board for approval (**Director of Graduate School**).
- LTSEC.23.04.5.7 UWE supervisor eligibility: review of UK HEI completion requirement**  
*Paper LTSEC.23.04.12 was received.*
- LTSEC.23.04.5.7.1 The Director of Graduate School introduced the paper, noting:
1. The current policy on research supervisor eligibility: that eligible PGR supervisors at UWE Bristol should have supervised to completion either within the University or at another UK institution.
  2. Given the current plans to grow PGR numbers and the work to support this, the proposal seeks to expand eligibility to include those who have supervised at institutions outside of the UK.
  3. This would not remove opportunities to review the suitability of research supervisors.
- LTSEC.23.04.5.7.2 Members endorsed the proposed change for approval by Academic Board.  
**Action:** To submit proposed amendments to academic regulations for postgraduate research to Academic Board for approval (**Director of Graduate School**).
- LTSEC.23.04.5.8 Policy update tracker**  
*Paper LTSEC.23.04.13 was received.*
- LTSEC.23.04.5.8.1 The paper was noted for information.



## LTSEC.23.04.6

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

### LTSEC.23.04.6.1

#### **Access and Participation Plan (APP) update**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.14 was received.*

#### LTSEC.23.04.6.1.1

The Data and Impact Lead (Library, Careers and Inclusivity) summarised the update, highlighting:

1. OfS approval of the University's request to be a "pioneer provider" for the new APP
2. The expectation for providers to develop better evaluation and to publish results of it
3. New data with sector benchmarks (including on completion) enabled through OfS dashboard updates, mostly showing UWE Bristol performing above sector
4. Development of the University's theories of change (a requirement of the new APP), with staff engagement and consultation on these scheduled for April and June, and the use of a risk-based approach to identify key issues
5. The timeline for completion of the APP, a draft of which is to be presented to LTSEC later this year; the remaining theory of change on raising school attainment is to be developed by this time.

**Action:** To include the draft APP on the LTSEC business plan for the June meeting of LTSEC (**Secretary/Officer**).

#### LTSEC.23.04.6.1.2

In discussion, members commended the current progress and commented on:

1. Positive interventions aligned to specific measures target for improvement
2. The potential for institutional-level datasets to mask specific areas of weakness, which could prevent interventions from being targeted appropriately
3. The continued need to use existing tools effectively (e.g. Inclusive Practice Toolkit).

### LTSEC.23.04.6.2

#### **UWE Bristol EDI policy refresh**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.15 was received.*

#### LTSEC.23.04.6.2.1

The Deputy Director of LCI (EDI) introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The policy has been revised to improve comprehension and signposting, and to align with new governance structures.

2. The policy also goes beyond legal requirements, including positive action and anti-racism.
3. Evidencing that EDI issues are being considered in decision-making will be a key consideration for committees.

LTSEC.23.04.6.2.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. Equality analyses (supported by the EDI Team) as part of the decision-making process and training currently in development for committees across the governance structure to consider the impact of EDI issues
2. The need to review the role of Dignity at Work Advisors and their relationship with Report + Support and Speak Up.

LTSEC.23.04.6.2.3 Members were invited to send any comments on the draft policy or the development approach to the Deputy Director of LCI (EDI).  
**Action:** To note any comments received from LTSEC regarding the EDI policy refresh and present an amended draft of the policy as necessary (**Deputy Director LCI (EDI)**).

## **LTSEC.23.04.7 TRANSFORMING FUTURES 2030 LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY**

**LTSEC.23.04.7.1 Non-continuation for 2021/22**  
*Paper LTSEC.23.04.16 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.7.1.1 The Deputy Director of Planning and Business Intelligence (PBI) introduced the paper, noting:

1. A 1.2 percentage point rise in the non-continuation rate for the 2021/22 cohort (compared with the previous cohort)
2. Level 1 non-continuation accounting for the most significant negative impact on the overall rate
3. Significant increases in non-continuation for some departments; some programmes have a non-continuation rate of over 20% (despite progress in reducing non-continuation in some areas)
4. Potential demographic factors contributing to disparity in non-continuation rates, with work by PBI to analyse the role of EDI issues.

LTSEC.23.04.7.1.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. To need for a programmatic approach (for poorly performing programmes) to understand where and why

students are not continuing and to consider this alongside OfS dashboard data

2. The role of culture and belonging as potential factors, alongside programmatic issues
3. UWE performance against benchmarks for continuation versus completion and the need to understand why completion rates suggest greater cause for concern
4. The role of LTSEC to scrutinise non-continuation progress; work in this area must focus on why students are leaving and identify areas for targeted action.

**Action:** To include non-continuation work as a priority area of focus for LTSEC in the plan for 2023/24 (**Secretary**).

## **LTSEC.23.04.7.2 Postgraduate NSS 2022**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.17 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.7.2.1 The Deputy Director of PBI introduced the paper, noting:

1. The pilot survey postgraduate "NSS" survey conducted by OfS, which ran concurrently with PTES
2. The difficulty in making direct comparisons: for example, the postgraduate NSS included questions on motivation for study, which are not included in PTES.
3. Higher response rate and higher overall satisfaction among UWE Bristol students in relation to the new survey compared with PTES
4. Except for ACE, higher satisfaction across all faculties in the new survey compared with PTES
5. The lack of publicly available market data to provide benchmarks; providers in the pilot only have access to their own survey data.

LTSEC.23.04.7.2.2 In discussion, members commented on:

1. Better performance in the postgraduate NSS potentially being driven by the fact that it is a new survey
2. The need to analyse trends more closely, particularly in conjunction with the International Student Barometer and in relation to TNE provision, as well as variation between full- and part-time modes of attendance.

## **LTSEC.23.04.8 ASSURANCE REPORTING**

### **LTSEC.23.04.8.1 Degree Outcomes Statement 2023**

*Paper LTSEC.23.04.18 was received.*

LTSEC.23.04.8.1.1

The Deputy Director (PDSE) SAS introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The statement provides assurance on how degrees are classified and awarded, including responding to concerns about grade inflation.
2. The previous interim statement published in December 2022 only included internal data (from 2021/22) and specifically responded to UUK's commitment to return to pre-pandemic award profiles. The full statement now accounts for market data.
3. Progress has been made in good honours rates (which are now lower than in 2018/19) and in some awarding gaps.
4. Unexpected student outcomes data is not yet available and is expected at the end of April.
5. Following LTSEC, the Degree Outcomes Statement will be shared with Academic Board to note.

LTSEC.23.04.8.1.2

In discussion, members commented on:

1. Conflicting emphasis within the sector on unexplained outcomes (i.e. students performing better than they should be expected to) and educational gain (i.e. that universities should support students to improve)
2. The need to examine the distribution of good honours rates, identifying where disparity lies (e.g. between programmes)
3. The potential impact of apprenticeships on rates of good honours, for example where apprentices tend to outperform non-apprentices.

**LTSEC.23.04.9**

**SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTING**

**LTSEC.23.04.9.1**

**University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee**

*Papers LTSEC.23.04.20 and LTSEC.23.04.21 were received.*

LTSEC.23.04.9.1.1

The minutes and summary report were noted for information.

**LTSEC.23.04.10**

**DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)**

LTSEC.23.04.10.1

Next meeting date for academic year 2022/23:

- Wednesday 7 June 2023