UWE Bristol | University of the West of England

Academic Board

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 in Room 7X111, Frenchay Campus

Present:	Amanda Coffey (Chair), David Barrett, Sarah Bateman, Maria Casado-Diaz, Jackie Chelin, Mark Coombs, Rachel Cowie, Delia Fairburn, Miltos Hadjiosif, James Hazzard, Antony Hill, Sabiha Khan, Natalia Kida, Moya Lerigo-Sampson, Kwan Mak, Jo Midgley, Cathy Minett-Smith, Heather Moyes, Gerry Rice, Jackie Rogers, Rachel Vallely (alternate for Hannah Mathias), Lloyd Williams, Jonathan Winfield, Asia Yekeen
Apologies:	Georgie Benford, Emily Boland, Bethel Ekaette, Laura Harrison, Harrison Marcks, Hannah Mathias, Lucy Scott
In attendance:	Nick Biggs (item 5.5), Charlotte Evans (item 2.2), Chris Evans (items 5.1–2), Georgina Gough (item 6.1), Nicky Pavitt (item 5.6), Callum Reilly (Officer), Becky Smith (item 5.3), Ian Stratton (Secretary), Harriet Watkinson (item 2.2)

LTSEC.23.11.1	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
LTSEC.23.11.1.1	Members were welcomed to the meeting; apologies were noted.
LTSEC.23.11.1.2	No declarations of interest were received.
LTSEC.23.11.2	**PRESENTATION AND DEEP DIVE**
LTSEC.23.11.2.1	**Adobe Creative Campus (presentation)**
LTSEC.23.11.2.1.1	The Digital Learning Change Manager, Digital Assessment Lead and Inclusive Learning Lead gave a presentation on UWE Bristol being awarded Adobe Creative Campus Status.
LTSEC.23.11.2.1.2	Members heard that:

1. As an Adobe Creative Campus, there are now opportunities for all students to use the Adobe Express suite and develop their digital creativity skills. A series of student engagement events had been planned, with some already having taken place during Starting Block.
2. Work is underway within Digital Learning Services to support learning design using Adobe Express and to consider the opportunities for supporting UWE Programmes.
3. Although the focus will be on supporting student engagement with the suite of tools, staff will also have access to the suite along with wider support.
4. Adobe Creative Campus status was granted on a partnership basis and would be kept under review.

LTSEC.23.11.2.1.3   Members were invited to consider opportunities for using Adobe Express across the University. In discussion, members commented that:

1. There was an advantage to having a full suite of tools accessible from within a single platform, as it would enable students to concentrate on developing skills rather than learning multiple software packages.
2. Adobe Express could be used to promote and bring the Student Futures Manifesto to life. **[ACTION: Deputy Registrar]**
3. Students must be appropriately supported to engage with new digital technology such as Adobe Express; there is an assumption that students are mostly comfortable using digital technology, but this is not always the case.

LTSEC.23.11.2.2   Student continuation

LTSEC.23.11.2.2.1   The Registrar and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience gave a presentation, which highlighted that:

1. There is a shared understanding that greater support for students to continue their studies is needed. While the current year's continuation data were not available at the time of the meeting, the previous year's data (for 2021/22) suggested that it is unlikely that the University's non-continuation KPI target of 6% would be met or advanced significantly.

2. The OfS has recently revised its non-continuation calculation to include students still registered 15 days after their initial registration (rather than 50 days).
3. At an institutional level, our continuation rate exceeds the minimum threshold set by the OfS B conditions of registration, though there are some programme-level areas at risk.
4. Of students who withdrew in the previous year, reasons for non-continuation included personal choice, dissatisfaction with the course, change of career, and financial and medical (including mental health) reasons.
5. Male students, Black students and students with a mental health condition are more likely to discontinue their studies. Sense of belonging and "mattering" are also factors.
6. Progress in addressing continuation would be supported by UWE Programmes, Success Coaches, a refreshed Peer-Assisted Learning scheme and a "don't drop out, drop in" approach, alongside School- and programme-focused work.

LTSEC.23.11.2.2.2   In discussion, members noted that although the continuation data for OfS reporting purposes is for undergraduate UK-domiciled students, it is expected that the OfS will begin to hold universities to account for international student outcomes in due course.

LTSEC.23.11.2.2.3   Members were invited to propose further actions to address non-continuation. Suggestions included:

1. Taster sessions offered as part of Starting Block as an early indication of the programme content, given that early withdrawals are often related to students not feeling they are on the right programme for them.
2. Careers and Enterprise supporting early conversations where potential withdrawals related to career decisions.
3. Improving students' sense of belonging through work to improve student representation and society involvement.
4. For foundation years, facilitating connections with academic staff on students' target programmes.
5. Low-risk assessment points in the first weeks of term, given that the first assessment and the post-Christmas return to university is a key point of withdrawal. This would allow students to feel a sense of achievement.

LTSEC.23.11.2.2.4   Members were invited to share further feedback with the Registrar and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience. **[ACTION: All]**

LTSEC.23.11.3	**MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

LTSEC.23.11.3.1   **Previous minutes**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.01 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.3.1.1   Members approved the minutes of the meeting on 20 September 2023.

LTSEC.23.11.3.2   **Action sheet and matters arising**

LTSEC.23.11.3.2.1   The action sheet was noted.

LTSEC.23.11.4	**STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

LTSEC.23.11.4.1   **Chair's report**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.02 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.4.1.1   Members noted the report for information and requested that a summary of UWE Bristol responses to external developments be included within the Chair's report. **[ACTION: Secretary]**

LTSEC.23.11.4.1.2   Members also noted the approval of one item under Chair's action and were reminded that Chair's actions will be audited at the end of the academic year.

LTSEC.23.11.4.2   **The Students' Union report**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.03 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.4.2.1   The Students' Union Vice President Education summarised the report, highlighting:

1. Over 700 students having signed up as student reps; EDI School Reps are expected to be in place by January. The School Directors of Learning and Teaching were thanked for supporting the recruitment of Lead School Reps.
2. Issues raised by student feedback as part of Speak Week, included cost of living support (in particular the cost of food available on campus), communication around and mitigation of industrial action and the prominence of the University's support for trans communities.
3. The introduction of student wellbeing champions to help with signposting students to support services.

LTSEC.23.11.4.2.2   Members thanked the VP Education and welcomed the report.

LTSEC.23.11.4.2.3   In discussion, members commented on whether EDI and Sustainability School Reps should be invited to attend the School Boards of Studies, which would be a matter for individual Boards of Studies to consider.

LTSEC.23.11.4.3   **Policy update tracker**

LTSEC.23.11.4.3.1   The tracker was noted for information

LTSEC.23.11.5   **QUALITY, STANDARDS AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

LTSEC.23.11.5.1   **Degree outcomes internal preview data 2022/23**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.04 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.1.1   The Deputy Director of Planning and Business Intelligence (PBI) introduced the paper, noting:

1. A Degree Outcomes Statement is required annually to provide assurance on the consistency of degree classification and efforts to minimise grade inflation.
2. The 2022/23 internal data shows a sustained return to pre-pandemic rates of good honours (75%) and firsts (25%), indicating that there is likely to be minimal risk of grade inflation. The actual Degree Outcomes Statement would be based on market data when this becomes available, though it is expected to confirm the internal picture.
3. Some subject areas had significantly higher good honours rates than the University average, including geography, drama and philosophy, with others significantly lower, including nursing and medical technology.

LTSEC.23.11.5.1.2   In discussion, members commented that:

1. Any signs of sustained grade inflation would be cause for concern for the OfS, which could ultimately take investigative action against providers.
2. There is not necessarily a correlation between satisfaction with programmes (as measured through the NSS) and degree outcomes.
3. As the University moves toward School-level dashboard reporting, student outcomes data (including degree outcomes) would be examined holistically to identify areas with overlapping issues that would require targeted action.

LTSEC.23.11.5.2   Student survey results 2022/23
Paper LTSEC.23.11.05 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.2.1   The Deputy Director of PBI introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results, which were released over the summer, show a minor drop in overall satisfaction, with a corresponding drop in UWE Bristol's ranking; however, it remains above the market average.
2. UWE Bristol performed strongly within the resources theme; poorer scores were achieved for engagement and organisation and management.
3. The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results analysis is limited due to the low response rate of 19%. UWE Bristol is ranked 81st for overall satisfaction, having dropped 4% points, and is below the sector average. Weaker performance was noted for research culture, community and professional development, although the University performed strongly for resources.

LTSEC.23.11.5.2.2   In discussion, members commented that:

1. The results and low response rate for PRES indicate that there is work needed to engage PGR students in the University's research community (with research culture falling within the remit of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee). The PGR student experience nevertheless remains a responsibility for LTSEC.
2. The Doctoral Academy Sub-Committee (DASC) would ultimately be responsible for enhancing the PGR student voice, with assurance of this provided to LTSEC.
3. Some positive progress was noted in the recruitment of PGR student reps; this would be further considered as part of the review of student representation taking place.

LTSEC.23.11.5.3   NSS/PTES survey implementation update
Verbal update

LTSEC.23.11.5.3.1   The Senior Policy Adviser gave a verbal update, noting that:

1. The National Student Survey (NSS) will launch nationally on 8 January 2024; within UWE Bristol, the internal launch is scheduled to take place on 5 February to coincide with the start of Teaching Block 2.

2. This will be a soft launch led by Programme Leaders and followed by fieldwork (conducted by Ipsos) from 8 February, with reminders scheduled for 15 and 26 February. Targeted follow-up emails and telephone calls to non-completers would also be included within the fieldwork.
3. In terms of the questions, there are minor revisions to questions on preparation and support for students' future careers. Incentives for completion, including prize draws, would be the same as before.
4. Implementation strategies for PTES and the Programme Survey strategy would soon be made available.

ACTION: To circulate paper updating on PTES and Programme Survey (**Senior Policy Adviser**).

LTSEC.23.11.5.4   **Student Futures Manifesto**

LTSEC.23.11.5.4.1   Members noted the now-published Student Futures Manifesto ("the ten").

LTSEC.23.11.5.5   **Interim review of assessment offences**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.07 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.5.1   Revised Assessment Offences Policy
The Senior Policy Adviser introduced the paper, noting:

1. The policy has been reviewed to bring it in line with the Policy Governance Framework and has been rebranded as the Academic Conduct Policy to reflect its purpose to promote good academic conduct among students, rather than the management of offences.
2. Student consultation indicated that students felt the existing policy was largely fair but required further clarification around the process and communication, which has now been addressed in the revised version.

LTSEC.23.11.5.5.2   In discussion, members noted that it is not yet possible to determine instances of students committing assessment offences using generative AI, but that this could be addressed through tools in development, including Turnitin. It was also noted that there is not yet a mechanism to confirm students' engagement with academic conduct support provided in response to first offences.

LTSEC.23.11.5.5.3   Members approved the revised policy.

ACTION: To publish the Academic Conduct Policy on the University website (**Secretary**).

LTSEC.23.11.5.5.4   Wider work on assessment offences
The Academic Registrar gave an update on the outcomes of a working group to consider issues with increased numbers of students committing assessment offences. The work can be divided into four areas, and once implemented can inform further policy reviews:

1. Support for academic staff, including on assessment design to promote and encourage good academic practice, and to identify students at risk of engaging in assessment offences.
2. Support for students, including appropriately timed communications to encourage good academic conduct.
3. Process improvements and other opportunities to streamline the management of offences.
4. Policy developments, including the adoption of a "speed awareness" approach and proportionate penalties to address low-level or first offences.

LTSEC.23.11.5.6   Postgraduate Degree Classification Algorithm: proposal for change
Paper LTSEC.23.11.08 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.6.1   The Student Voice and Academic Policy Team Manager introduced a proposal to amend the Academic Regulations to include all 180 credits of a standard PGT programme within the degree classification algorithm, noting that it was good practice to ensure a consistent approach aligned with the rest of the sector. Academic staff, the Business Intelligence team and students had been consulted over the proposal.

LTSEC.23.11.5.6.2   Members endorsed the proposal to be submitted for Academic Board's approval.

LTSEC.23.11.5.7   UWE principles for using generative AI within learning, teaching and assessment
Paper LTSEC.23.11.09 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.7.1   The Deputy Director of Library, Careers and Inclusivity introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The principles have been co-developed by a community of practice on AI, led by the Senior Learning Technologist and

the Digital Assessment Lead, and would return to the University Ethics and Integrity Committee for endorsement.

2. The principles are aligned with UWE Values and aim to support students' AI literacy, including by giving all students meaningful opportunities to engage with AI. The principles also recognise the value of AI skills in future-proofing students' careers.

LTSEC.23.11.5.7.2   Members were asked to consider the next steps needed to embed the principles once approved, noting that separate support and guidance for staff to embed the principles within learning, teaching and assessment would be forthcoming. The principles would also undergo iterative reviews to reflect the fast pace of AI developments. Members welcomed the principles and suggested a future deep dive into AI within learning, teaching and assessment.
ACTION: To consider a deep dive into AI as part of future business (**Secretary/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.11.5.8   **Items escalated from the University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee (UQSSC)**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.10 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.5.8.1   University Validation Panel terms of reference
Members endorsed the terms of reference, which have been revised to reflect new School and College structures and to establish accountability to UQSSC, rather than directly to LTSEC.
ACTION: To submit the revised UVP terms of reference to Academic Board for approval (**Officer to Academic Board**).

LTSEC.23.11.5.8.2   Apprenticeship Board terms of reference
Members considered the terms of reference, which rationalise the Board's responsibilities (to focus more on assurance rather than operational oversight), reflecting the changing apprenticeships landscape, and to amend its membership.

LTSEC.23.11.5.8.3   Members commented on whether it was necessary to include the College Deans of Learning and Teaching on the Board in addition to the College Apprenticeship Leads; the revised terms of reference were otherwise endorsed.
ACTION: To consider omission of the College Deans of Learning and Teaching from the membership of Apprenticeship Board and submit the terms of reference for approval accordingly (**Director of Apprenticeships**).

LTSEC.23.11.6	**TRANSFORMING FUTURES 2030 LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY**

LTSEC.23.11.6.1 **Education for Sustainable Development: Climate Education course**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.11 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.6.1.1 The Professor for Education in Sustainable Development introduced the paper, noting:

1. Staff and students have worked jointly to develop a Climate Education course, which was launched during Starting Block in 2023/24, and aims to complement the University's work on education for sustainable development.
2. The course is available via self-enrolment on Blackboard; the Starting Block launch provides an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the platform.
3. Approximately 200 students have engaged with the course so far; the current pilot phase provides an opportunity to rectify any issues with the course prior to the full roll-out.
4. While the non-credit-bearing course would remain open for all students, it is proposed to develop the course as two credit-bearing modules, one at level 4 and one at level 7. A range of options (from 5 to 15 credits) is being considered.

LTSEC.23.11.6.1.2 In discussion, members commented positively on the current progress and future plans, noting that students enrolled on the course have responded favourably. The credit-bearing aspect would however need further consideration of alignment with the UWE Programmes principles. A further option to explore implementing the course as a CPD module was suggested as an option to negotiate difficulties implementing for students on programmes involving PSRBs.

LTSEC.23.11.6.1.3 Members approved the proposal to develop the Climate Education module as two credit-bearing modules.
ACTION: To proceed with developing the Climate Education modules and to consider their credit values, particularly in light of UWE Programmes (**Professor for Education for Sustainable Development**).

LTSEC.23.11.7	**ASSURANCE REPORTING**

LTSEC.23.11.7.1 **Annual quality report**
Paper LTSEC.23.11.12 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.7.1.1   The Academic Registrar introduced the paper, noting that:

1. The Annual Report on Academic Quality Standards seeks to give assurance to the Board of Governors on the quality of provision and meeting (and exceeding) the baseline thresholds set by the OfS Conditions of Registration.
2. The report has also been scrutinised in detail at UQSSC, resulting in some minor adjustments to the proposed confidence ratings.
3. The report has identified two areas that have been downgraded from the previous year's report: 1) personal development, employability and graduate outcomes and 2) student partnership and the student voice.

ACTION: To consider progress in the review of student representation at a future meeting (**Secretary/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.11.7.1.2   In discussion, members agreed on the overall assessment of quality but recommended that the report be updated with a more specific action plan and endorsed the report on this basis. It was also noted that the 2022/23 assessment and award data were not yet available and would be added before submission to Academic Board.
ACTION: To revise the annual quality report action plan and to update with the latest data, circulating to LTSEC members before submission (**Academic Registrar**).

LTSEC.23.11.7.2   Strategic and tactical risks
Paper LTSEC.23.11.13 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.7.2.1   Risk descriptors for the strategic and tactical-level risks owned by LTSEC were noted for information; a deep dive on risks would be conducted in a future meeting.
ACTION: To schedule a deep dive into strategic and tactical risks owned by LTSEC (**Secretary/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.11.8   SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTING

LTSEC.23.11.8.1   UQSSC
Paper LTSEC.23.11.14 was received.

LTSEC.23.11.8.1.1   Members noted the summary report of the meeting on 23 October 2023.

DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)

Next meeting dates for academic year 2023/24:
- 14 February 2024
- 17 April 2024
- 12 June 2024.