UWE Bristol | University of the West of England

Academic Board

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 in Room 2Q050/51 on Frenchay Campus.

Present: Amanda Coffey (Chair), David Barrett, Emily Boland, Suzanne Carrie, Maria Casado-Diaz, Jackie Chelin, Mark Coombs, Rachel Cowie, Bethel Ekaette, Delia Fairburn, Laura Harrison, James Hazzard, Antony Hill, Sabiha Khan, Moya Lerigo-Sampson, Kwan Mak, Harrison Marcks, Hannah Mathias, Cathy Minett-Smith, Heather Moyes, Matthew Partington (alternate for School Director of Learning and Teaching), Gerry Rice, Jackie Rogers, Lloyd Williams, Jonathan Winfield, Asia Yekeen

Apologies: Sarah Bateman, Miltos Hadjiosif, Natalia Kida, Jo Midgley, Neil Willey

In attendance: Chris Evans (items 1 to 6.3), Callum Reilly (Officer), Becky Smith (item 6.3), Ian Stratton (Secretary)

LTSEC.23.09.1	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

LTSEC.23.09.1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and briefly summarised the role of the committee. Members introduced themselves and apologies were noted.

LTSEC.23.09.1.2 No declarations of interest were received.

LTSEC.23.09.2	**DEEP DIVE PRESENTATION**

LTSEC.23.09.2.1	**Careers, employability and Graduate Outcomes Survey** *Presentation*

LTSEC.23.09.2.1.1 The Head of Careers and Enterprise (Consulting and Curriculum) gave a presentation, which provided an overview of the Careers and Enterprise service, the results of the 2020/21 Graduate Outcomes Survey and the broader importance of data and market

intelligence in graduate progression work, and three strategic priorities for the service in response: 1) work-integrated learning, 2) career management skills and 3) enterprise and entrepreneurship.

LTSEC.23.09.2.1.2   The results of the recent Graduate Outcomes Survey highlighted that UWE was slightly below the market in overall positive outcomes (80%) but that professional employment was an area of strength. The overall position was driven by a lower rate of progression into further study. It was noted that a University target of 86% graduate-level employment by 2030 had been set, and case studies illustrating progress in this area from across the Colleges were considered.

LTSEC.23.09.2.1.3   The Chair welcomed the presentation and emphasised that LTSEC was the key committee to maintain strategic oversight of graduate outcomes work.

LTSEC.23.09.2.1.4   In discussion, members commented that:

1. Improving progression to further study could be supported through financial incentives or by leveraging partnerships: for example, to support students to progress to further postgraduate study at specialist partner providers.
2. It was positive that graduate employment remains strong as this has tended to be a more difficult area for the sector to make progress in. A key consideration is whether the University can prioritise moving those students who are not progressing to graduate-level employment onto further study.

LTSEC.23.09.3   **LTSEC 2023/24 BUSINESS**

LTSEC.23.09.3.1   **LTSEC terms of reference and membership**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.01 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.3.1.1   The Chair introduced the terms of reference noting that the membership now reflected the completed transition to Schools and Colleges. It was proposed that the new Director of Student Life Services should be added to the membership to ensure accountability in this area. This was agreed.
ACTION: To add the Director of Student Life Services to the membership within the Terms of Reference and seek approval through Academic Board (**Officer to Academic Board**).

LTSEC.23.09.3.2   **LTSEC business plan**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.02 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.3.2.1   The Committee Secretary introduced the outline business plan, noting several placeholder items to prompt for updates as and when needed for specific areas. Draft agendas are available on the LTSEC SharePoint site. Members were invited to suggest further deep-dive topics for future meetings.

LTSEC.23.09.3.3   **Sub-committee terms of reference**
Papers LTSEC.23.09.03 and LTSEC.23.09.03.A were received.

LTSEC.23.09.3.3.1   It was noted that the University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee's terms of reference remain unchanged. However, the committee's membership does not currently include School-level representatives with responsibility for partnerships.
ACTION: To address the lack of partnership-related roles within the membership of UQSSC at its next meeting and report back to LTSEC for noting (**UQSSC Chair/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.09.3.3.2   It was further noted that the School Boards of Studies were intended to delegate responsibility and accountability for programmes to Schools by including all Programme Leaders within the membership. Due to large numbers of programmes in some Schools, this has proved impractical. Approval is therefore sought to allow Schools to decide on the appropriate leadership with accountability for programme performance to be invited to Boards of Studies meetings.

LTSEC.23.09.3.3.3   The Chair emphasised the need for consistent terms of reference that still allow for flexibility. Under the proposed change to the terms of reference, either Associate School Directors with accountability for programme clusters (or equivalent) or Programme Leaders would be eligible to attend, as determined by the Head of School (per each School's management structure).

LTSEC.23.09.3.3.4   Members welcomed the change to the membership of the School Boards of Studies and the proposal was approved.
ACTION: To amend the School Boards of Studies terms of reference to include staff accountable for the performance of all programmes in the membership (**Officer**).

LTSEC.23.09.4   **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

LTSEC.23.09.4.1   **Previous minutes**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.04 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.4.1.1   Members approved the minutes of the meeting on 7 June 2023.

LTSEC.23.09.4.2   Action sheet

LTSEC.23.09.4.2.1   It was noted that there were some outstanding actions, for which updates were to be requested.
ACTION: To request updates on actions outstanding (**Secretary**).

LTSEC.23.09.5   STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

LTSEC.23.09.5.1   Chair's report
Paper LTSEC.23.09.05 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.5.1.1   Members noted the report for information, which included a summary of matters arising and Chair's actions taken since the previous meeting, and School and College-level updates.

LTSEC.23.09.5.2   The Students' Union report
Paper LTSEC.23.09.06 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.5.2.1   The Students' Union Vice Presidents summarised the report, with highlights including:

1. Work on student rep recruitment and training
2. Further success in securing an "Excellent" rating in the Green Impact Award
3. Signposting to wellbeing services for student societies and safe sex and period products made available on accommodation grounds.

LTSEC.23.09.5.2.2   The SU Vice Presidents sought clarification on whether the University had a policy on the number of days that students could be timetabled to be on campus; this was raised in the context of minimising the cost of travelling to campus.

LTSEC.23.09.5.2.3   It was noted that there was no such policy as students' individual timetables were ultimately determined by their module choices. The wider student body has expressed mixed views on the number of days they are timetabled for. It was confirmed that work is in progress to review how students are timetabled to make best use of the on-campus experience.

LTSEC.23.09.5.2.4   It was further noted that minimising the number of days students are timetabled to be on campus was particularly problematic for professional-facing programmes with placements. It is nevertheless important to ensure that expected timetable

commitments are clearly communicated so students can make informed decisions about enrolment.

LTSEC.23.09.5.3   **Policy update tracker**

LTSEC.23.09.5.3.1   The online policy tracker was noted for information. The Chair reminded members that they may be called upon to act as critical readers for policies undergoing review.

LTSEC.23.09.6   **QUALITY, STANDARDS AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

LTSEC.23.09.6.1   **OfS B3 minimum threshold review**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.07 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.6.1.1   The Deputy Director of Planning and Business Intelligence (PBI) introduced the paper, noting that:

1. In response to the UK Government's announcement of a "crackdown" on degrees those that fail to meet minimum quality thresholds for student outcomes as set by the OfS), the BI team has conducted an analysis of UWE's portfolio. This was at programme level and accounted for level of study, mode of attendance and quality metrics (continuation, completion and progression).
2. Apprenticeships and part-time provision were not included for statistical reasons. Of the remaining programmes, 12 were identified as being "at risk" of not meeting threshold, most of which were historic or with mitigation in place.
3. Further programmes have been identified as needing review, as they were close to threshold. Work with Schools and Colleges is in progress to explore the data and any underlying performance issues more closely.

LTSEC.23.09.6.1.2   It was noted that for programmes that are consistently below the minimum thresholds set by the OfS B3 Condition of Registration, the OfS is able to take action, including to limit recruitment on those programmes. The University should categorically avoid this and not be afraid to take ownership of programme closures on its own terms, while also supporting ambitions to exceed minimum requirements.

LTSEC.23.09.6.1.3   In discussion, members commented that:

<ol start="1">
Since there is a delay in the data that the OfS has access to, any issues identified through OfS data may have already been identified and addressed internally.

ACTION: To continue monitoring programme performance and to add this to the business plan to be considered by LTSEC in June (**Deputy Director of Planning and BI, Secretary/Officer**).

LTSEC.23.09.6.2 **National Student Survey (NSS) 2023: overview**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.08 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.6.2.1 The Deputy Director of PBI introduced the paper, which presents the results of the NSS released in August, and noted that:

Due to changes in the survey questions, year-on-year comparisons are problematic. A new KPI ("Teaching on my course") has been adopted in lieu of the overall satisfaction rating, which is no longer included in the survey.
On this basis, performance was stronger than in 2021/22 but market performance has progressed faster, and UWE is thus ranked significantly lower than in the previous year.
There have nevertheless been pockets of positive performance at programme level, including programmes achieving 95% and above. Analysis has been conducted to identify the programmes having the greatest impact on the University-level KPI.

LTSEC.23.09.6.2.2 The Chair summarised that the results were disappointing given the work invested in improving performance, which should nonetheless be put into context of how students perceive programmes. It was noted that we have reaffirmed addressing NSS performance as an institutional priority.

LTSEC.23.09.6.2.3 In discussion, members commented on the need to identify programmes that are having a significant impact on the overall score (either positively or negatively) and to learn from these by sharing good practice.

LTSEC.23.09.6.3 **Programme survey plan 2023/24**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.09 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.6.3.1 The Senior Policy Adviser introduced the paper, noting that:

LTSEC had previously agreed that the programme survey would be delivered again in 2023/24 after a poor response rate in 2022/23. The 2023/24 survey launch has therefore been brought forward to November to avoid clashing with

the NSS and to enable greater opportunities to close the feedback loop within the year.

2. A review group of students and staff has been involved in redeveloping the survey. A target response rate of 50% has been agreed; this will require programme team leadership to take responsibility for successfully implementing the survey, while recognising that wider professional services support is needed to communicate it.

LTSEC.23.09.6.3.2   The Chair emphasised the importance of in-year programme surveying, above and beyond informal modular feedback mechanisms. Programme Leaders and their teams must recognise this and ensure it works effectively.
ACTION: To liaise with School Directors of Learning and Teaching to ensure effective monitoring of programme survey implementation (**Student Voice and Academic Policy team**).

LTSEC.23.09.6.3.3   In discussion, members commented on:

1. Despite existing modular feedback mechanisms working well for some Schools, this is not consistent across the University and there is a need for comparable data at an institutional level, which could be attained through the programme survey. This should be messaged as complementing and formally capturing feedback given as part of module evaluations.

2. Consideration would need to be given as to how different categories of students would engage with the programme survey and programme responses to feedback, including final-year students (those due to undergo the NSS) and apprentices.

ACTION: To follow up with the Director of Apprenticeships regarding issues with closing the feedback loop for apprentices (**Student Voice and Academic Policy team**).
ACTION: To work with College Deans of Learning and Teaching to resolve concerns about engaging with final-year students (**Student Voice and Academic Policy team**).

3. Concerns remain about the potential for the programme survey to have a detrimental effect on NSS responses for final-year students. It was noted that there is a need to engage with final-year students as part of the Outstanding Learning work and that programme teams have access to live survey data and should therefore be able to address

issues before the NSS. Care would need to be taken in communicating the results to students, to avoid influencing NSS perceptions.

LTSEC.23.09.6.3.4   The plan was endorsed, subject to further work to minimise disruption to existing feedback mechanisms.

LTSEC.23.09.6.4   Degree Classification Algorithm update
Paper LTSEC.23.09.10 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.6.4.1   The Deputy Director of Planning and BI introduced the paper, which contained further impact analysis for the new Degree Classification Algorithm, noting that minimal impact is expected in terms of percentage drops. It does not, however, account for how students are likely to act in response to the new algorithm as it has not yet come into effect. Members noted the paper for information.
ACTION: To continue reviewing and monitoring of Degree Classification Algorithm modelling and report to LTSEC in spring/summer 2024 before going live (**Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement**).

LTSEC.23.09.6.5   Tianfu College of Southwestern University of Finance and Economics SUVP Event Report
Paper LTSEC.23.09.12 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.6.5.1   The report and its recommendation that Tianfu College become an affiliated institution were noted.

LTSEC.23.09.7   EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

LTSEC.23.09.7.1   Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2024/25 to 2027/28
Paper LTSEC.23.09.13 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.7.1.1   The Deputy Director of Library, Careers and Inclusivity (EDI) summarised the update, highlighting that:

1. The APP is a regulatory requirement of the OfS based on UK-domiciled students. Universities are obliged to set out how they are working to widen access and participation in higher education across several characteristics, including ethnicity, disability and age.
2. A new plan was submitted in July 2023, with LTSEC members involved throughout its development. This is awaiting final comments and sign-off from the OfS.

3. Seven targets have been identified through data analysis, with local target setting to be undertaken by the School Boards of Studies. There is a question over whether to do this with programmes or subjects; programme-level targets may be too granular for Schools with small numbers of programmes, but subject-level targets would make accountability for meeting targets more difficult.

4. There is a need to develop further impact planning and evaluation of interventions; a target of one Type 3 (causal) evaluation per strand of the plan has been set.

LTSEC.23.09.7.1.2   In discussion, members commented on the need to avoid losing oversight if subject-level targets are set, particularly for Schools with many programmes. Further work will need to be carried out to ensure programme or subject targets are meaningful and to ensure the impact of interventions can be evidenced.
ACTION: To request a future update to LTSEC on interventions and impact for further discussion (**Secretary**).

LTSEC.23.09.7.1.3   The Chair noted that was the final meeting for the Deputy Director of LCI (EDI); members thanked her particularly for her work on the APP and wished her well in her new role at the Office for Students.

LTSEC.23.09.8   TRANSFORMING FUTURES 2030 LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

LTSEC.23.09.8.1   UWE Programmes update
Verbal update

LTSEC.23.09.8.1.1   The Chair gave a verbal update, noting that there was a suite of work being scoped on how we ensure a consistently high-quality and coherent programmatic experience for students and for developing the University's USP on what a UWE programme should be. This will also include reducing complexity and non-viable programmes. A more detailed update will be scheduled for discussion at a future LTSEC.

ASSURANCE REPORTING

LTSEC.23.09.9.1   Casework Annual Report 2022/23
Paper LTSEC.23.09.14 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.9.1.1   The Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement introduced the paper, noting:

1. The previous report for 2021/22 was received at LTSEC in June 2023. The new report for 2022/23 is being presented in a timelier manner and in a new format, as part of a wider change in processes to allow the University to respond more rapidly to issues raised by casework.
2. The data show that potential issues can be mitigated by early interventions, minimising those in need of escalation as formal casework.
3. There was a reduction in cases raised through the Behaviour and Health Framework, particularly Fitness to Study and Professional Suitability policies. There was an increase in reports of sexual harassment and misconduct cases, which may reflect enhanced reporting mechanisms and confidence to report.
4. There was nonetheless an increase in stage 2 complaints in response to industrial action. Though the numbers remain small, some complaints are starting to be raised in relation to Competition and Markets Authority compliance regarding the accuracy and availability of information provided to students about their programmes.
5. The Student Casework team is developing more regular reporting, with updates due to return throughout the year, including data on Office of Independent Adjudicator outcomes; reporting on academic appeals data will follow the assessment cycle rather than being reported at the end of the year.

LTSEC.23.09.9.1.2   The Chair noted the progress made in enhancing casework reporting and no significant concerns were noted. In discussion, members commented on the value of interrogating Report and Support reports categorised as "Other" since this comprised the largest category.
ACTION: To disaggregate "Other" Report and Support reports in a future casework update to LTSEC (**Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement**).

LTSEC.23.09.9.1.3   Members endorsed the report for submission to Academic Board.
ACTION: To submit the report to Academic Board for approval (**Officer**).

LTSEC.23.09.10   **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTING**

LTSEC.23.09.10.1   **University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee**
Paper LTSEC.23.09.15 was received.

LTSEC.23.09.10.1.1   The outgoing Chair of UQSSC introduced the summary report from the UQSSC meeting on 5 June 2023, noting that the quality of Partnership Lead reports had been much improved through UQSSC's review exercise and that exemplary practice in partnerships had been noted; the process would continue in 2023/24.

LTSEC.23.09.10.1.2   It was separately noted that the School Boards of Studies would be subject to an end-of-year review to assure LTSEC of their effectiveness.
ACTION: To ensure performance of School Boards of Studies is reviewed by the end of the academic year and to add this to the business plan for LTSEC (**Secretary/Academic Registrar)**.

LTSEC.23.09.11   **DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)**

LTSEC.23.09.11.1   Next meeting dates for academic year 2023/24:
- 15 November 2023
- 14 February 2024
- 17 April 2024
- 12 June 2024