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Education

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 08 March 2017**
 Duration of meeting: **2:00 PM to 5:00 PM**
 Location: **S3.03, High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio (Chair)
Kirstie Ward	Academic Quality	Secretary
Ruth Gunstone	Student Services	Ex-officio
Jenny Wade	Students' Union	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning & Teaching	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Carol Pook	Society & Health	Nominated
Nic Fryer	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Ash Mistry	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Rebecca Rochon	Society & Health	Nominated
Daniel Dedman	Students' Union	Nominated

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Nominated
Ciaran O'Keeffe	Society & Health	Nominated
Ian Chisholm-Bunting	Society & Health	Nominated
Julia Williams	Society & Health	Nominated

Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Alpha Collins	Students' Union	Nominated

Welcome / Apologies for absence

- 17.01 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 17.02 Apologies for absence were received. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- 17.03 No conflicts of interest were declared by the members of the committee.

Minutes of the previous meeting (25 October 2016)

- 17.04 The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record with one amendment at minute 16.97 from 'RB' to 'Rebecca Rochon'.

Status of actions from the previous meeting

- 17.05 The Action Sheet was noted. Updates were provided as follows:
- a) (Minute 16.71) Noted to be in progress and expected to be completed following the meeting.
- Action: Chair**
- b) (Minute 16.98) Complete. The committee were informed that this had been raised at VCSG, and is to be taken forward as part of the restructured Directorate for Student Success.
- c) (Minute 16.99d) The committee noted that no update was available and it was agreed that the secretary would re-request this information.
- Action: Secretary to contact Director of Marketing and Recruitment**
- d) (Minute 16.49) It was agreed to defer the report on this action from the May meeting to the next academic year in order that the data capture would be complete and the results would be meaningful.

Matters Arising

- 17.06 In relation to the action for minute 16.98 (digital content development), whilst the committee noted the update provided, it was also discussed that developing the skills and experience within course teams, using appropriate software, should be part of a greater drive for digital fluency.
- 17.07 It was noted that the reduced central resource available was a recognised issue and demand for services exceeded core resource capability, which requires that careful planning of resource requirements should be made and then additional support in this area could then be provided, in a cost effective and timely manner.
- 17.08 The committee discussed that individuals had been purchasing software for developing digital content. It was agreed that it would be more efficient to consider investing in a site licence.

Action: Julie Irwin to investigate costings and potential for implementation of a site licence for articulate software.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

- 17.09 No Chair's actions had been taken since the last meeting.

Chair's Report to Education Committee

- 17.10 The Chair gave a verbal report to the committee. The Chair shared with the committee that the work of the transformation programme closely related to that of the committee, and it would form a major part of business to drive forward the relevant strands of the programme.

- 17.11 An aim of the transformation programme included enabling staff to work in an interdisciplinary manner, providing mechanisms to support and implement this across the University. This would include work-based learning (WBL), by providing students with the opportunity through their programme of study to gain accredited learning, but that to be effective this would require creative and effective employer interaction.
- 17.12 Another aim of the project was to share the good practice identified by provide central oversight and action planning, which in turn would enable the institution to be responsive to the changing landscape of Higher Education.
- 17.13 As part of the transformation programme the committee discussed the impact of targeted support at a sufficiently early stage to have a positive impact on the student to complete their studies successfully and noted that there had been developing understanding and use of the Fitness to Study procedures during the current academic year.
- 17.14 It was also reported to the committee that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission, and resulting metrics provided in the outcome once fully analysed would stimulate further work.

Inclusive Practice Strategy (Paper: EDU17.01)

- 17.15 It was highlighted to the committee that the sector shows increasing development of inclusive teaching and support practices, and the draft strategy presented for comment was based on the *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence* (January 2017) publication.
- 17.16 A key driver in the strategy was that what is good for those students with a disability, is beneficial to all students. Ruth Gunstone (RG) invited the committee members to share the document and encourage feedback directly to RG, for incorporation into the final version, due to be presented to Senate for approval in June 2017.
- 17.17 RG informed the committee that research had indicated that by providing the basic information of the sessions rather than discouraging attendance, it had been found to increase attendance and preparedness of students.
- 17.18 The committee discussed concerns of increasing the workload of staff, of a potential loss of flexibility and responsiveness in lesson planning, or providing too many points of information that would need accessed by students. It was agreed that the strategy would need to be supported by clear information regarding best practise and minimum requirements.
- 17.19 The committee agreed that all staff should be briefed once the policy finalised, but also that students should be made aware of requirements so there had been clear communication of the minimum expectations to all stakeholders.
- 17.20 The committee noted the request for feedback and requested that the final iteration of the strategy includes a clear implementation plan and procedures, and links to other research work in the area.

BME attainment gap (Paper: EDU17.02 and EDU17.02b)

- 17.21 The committee discussed the paper previously reviewed by Equality and Diversity Committee which provided data on the attainment gap of students that identified themselves as BME in comparison to those that identified themselves as white. The data had clearly identified differences across the institution in subject area and by mode. It was noted that analysis had not been conducted based on other potentially concerning groups such as white working class.

17.22 It was recommended that specific incorporation the aim to reduce and eliminate the attainment gap to should be included in the retention strategy, including that other groupings of potential concern

Action: Secretary to raise with the group developing the retention strategy

17.23 The committee agreed that programme teams should review data as part of routine monitoring of their programmes, in order to identify the reason for and reduce the attainment gap in areas under their control.

Action: Secretary to raise the addition of specific prompt questions within annual/ periodic monitoring activities template documents.

17.24 The committee noted that by developing a culture of inclusive practice with regards to a specific group, it supports students from all areas, and expressed the desire that that no one group was marginalised.

17.25 The committee endorsed the actions and recommendation in the paper, however expressed concern that a number of the actions rested on a member of staff due to shortly retire.

Action: Secretary to raise concern with Director of HR of the continuing need to support work in this area, however the post was developed in future.

17.26 The committee noted that the data available to all staff under the business intelligence Blackboard site and recommended to the paper to Education and Diversity Committee.

Library Usage Survey (Paper: EDU17.03)

17.27 The committee received the results of the survey which provided analysis of the use of library resources by students benchmarked against a set of comparator institutions. The data showed that the use by students, whilst increasing for electronic journals, was still comparatively lower than most comparators and not increasing.

17.28 The committee discussed the findings in the paper and noted that in order to address the concerns that further development was required within the development of curricula and course documentation. It was agreed the development of the skills required to effectively use academic literature should be core to teaching within the institution, and it was felt that contextualising development in subject fields was an important factor.

17.29 The committee endorsed the actions listed by the paper author and requested that results for the next year were brought back to committee at the same point next year to consider the impact of changes made.

17.30 The committee considered that the concerns raised regarding BME attainment gap, inclusive practice and library usage are highlighted to the transformation board to be taken forward as an integral to the Bucks curriculum.

Action: Julie Irwin to take forward concerns and actions as Bucks curriculum lead as part of the transformation project.

Academic Integrity working party update (Paper: EDU17.04)

17.31 The paper provided an update to the committee of the work that had been undertaken by the Academic Integrity working party. The working party had considered the concerns raised in the light of the data provided by the Academic Quality Directorate as part of the annual monitoring of cases considered under the Academic Misconduct policy.

17.32 It was reported that the working party wished to ensure that the consideration of academic integrity should be with the academic domain, and recognised that there were some areas in which further development was needed to ensure that this takes place. The working group sought the support of the committee in taking this forward.

17.33 The paper also outlined proposals for amendments to the Academic Misconduct policy. The committee agreed the principles for amendment of the policy in general for development and to be presented to committee for endorsement at the next meeting with the additional clarity on the delineation between poor practice and academic misconduct and those outlined below.

17.34 The committee discussed the relative merits and concerns regarding the sharing of work by former students, both those remaining in the institution and those that had completed, in order to aid those currently undertaking the assessment. There were dissenting views from the committee of the appropriateness of this type of action, and concern regarding cases of on professional programmes, where the intention was to aid the recipient in cheating was raised. It was noted that the way in which the policy was written it was not practically possible to take action against graduates or student in higher years.

17.35 The committee also noted the workload currently on Heads of School related to the policy, noting the disparities in caseloads between schools. The working party were asked to consider amending the decision-maker to appropriate staff members.

Action: Secretary to report back to Academic Integrity working party for consideration as part of the re-developed policy.

17.36 The committee also discussed the apparently limited take up of the online learning package (Epigeum), noting the issues in recording completion that had been identified and rectified. The working party were asked to consider how making it compulsory to undertake the package could be managed, including actions to be taken for those that have failed to undertake the package.

Action: Secretary to report back to the Academic Integrity working party for consideration as part of the working party's ongoing role.

17.37 The committee expressed the concern that staff may not avail themselves of a discretionary period in which to review work that was potentially plagiarised, and that staff should be reminded that this was an option available to them, as long as students were informed of the delay in marking and feedback.

Action: Secretary to report back to Academic Integrity working party and ensure included in the procedure when re-written and in guidance for staff.

17.38 The committee considered that there were opportunities as part of the personal tutorial system to address the lack of apparent take up of online learning package and library usage. It was agreed that a review of the formal of personal tutorial guidance would be beneficial.

Action: Ruth Gunstone to take forward review of the personal tutor handbook in light of the discussions in the committee.

Graduate Attributes (Paper: EDU17.05)

17.39 Key items of the paper were highlighted to the committee. The views of the committee were sought to consider how graduate attributes could be embedded into the practice of the institution as part of curriculum design and approval, in marketing and recruitment activities and materials, and within the personal tutorial system.

17.40 The committee recognised that once finalised graduate attributes should be embedded as part of the transformation project, across the design and implementation of curricula and also as part of the tutorial/pastoral support provided to students.

17.41 The committee agreed following discussion that additional development was required prior to the committee being able to endorse the paper to Senate. It was the opinion of the committee that the paper did not provide sufficient information regarding the timeframes

for implementation, the resource and requirements to map current provision, full details of the consultation and resulting actions taken in relation to this.

Action: Julie Irwin to liaise with Kath Dunn regarding redevelopment of paper with full explanation of consultation process, the reasoning for the choice of terms/attributes, how they would be expected to be used and embedded and a timeline for implementation. Paper to come back to next meeting of the committee (May 2017) clearly identifying the actions required by the committee.

UCISA Digital Capabilities survey participation (EDU17.06)

17.42 Rebecca Rochon introduced the paper provided to the committee for note of emerging themes in the responses from Bucks to the survey by UCISA on the digital capabilities of staff in Higher and Further Education. It was noted that the national results were due to be published in spring 2017, at which point a full report would be provided to the committee for discussion.

17.43 The summary findings noted areas of good practice, which whilst in themselves were effective, were not implemented across the institution. It was highlighted that by employing a strategic approach across the institution, standards would be raised and limited resources more effectively utilised. The committee noted that the benchmarked results from the survey would inform the transformation project and in targeted development of digital literacy of staff.

Any other business

17.44 The committee were informed that the Assessment group had identified that whilst formal policies, processes and procedures are in place, this is not being routinely followed across the institution. The Assessment group would be taking forward actions to rectify the issues arising from this.

Date of next meeting

17.45 The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 17 May 2017.