

**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**20 November 2025**

**Minutes**

Present: Professor Ruth Valentine (*Chair*), Sandy Alden (*vice Sally Ingram*), Lucy Backhurst, Yvonne Chase, Dr Emma Cockburn, Rachel Dearlove, Professor David Kennedy, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Peter Gallagher, Dr Sarah Graham, Pauline Howie, Erin Peart, Dr Sara Marsham, Graeme Redshaw-Boxwell, Jill Taylor-Roe, Gina Tindale, Dr Cees van der Land, Professor Dennis Wong

Apologies: Sally Ingram, Professor Simon Tate, Professor Chris Whitehead

In attendance: Lucy Blake (*item 21*), George Watkins, Janice Trewick (*Secretary*)

**16. Education Priorities for 2025-26**

Received: Presentations filed with the minutes

Noted that:

1. The Chair updated the committee on the key priorities for the academic year. Highlighting that the main focus would be on the education strategy as this moves towards the planning of phase 2, and the implementation of the pilot of the transformation process within selected academic units.
2. The Student Launchpad pilot would be rolled out across academic units in the academic year 2026-27. The committee would receive and review the proposal early next academic year, ahead of approval by Senate in spring 2026. Work is continuing on the other education strategy initiatives: Educator Accelerator and Newcastle Beyond.
3. Whilst implementation of the strategy is a priority across the institution, it is also important that current students receive the best educational experience. Helen St Clair Thompson had been appointed to the Dean of Students role and is leading on the student voice activities, the 'You Said, We Did' campaign and will be collaborating with NUSU on student representation.
4. Assessment and feedback also continues to be a key focus, this is due to the persistently low scores in the National Student Survey.
5. The Dean of Digital provided an update on the NU online. Noting that Executive Board had agreed in principle to the delivery of on-line programmes.
6. It had been proposed that there would be initially 20 part-time on-line Masters programmes. There would be phased approach to launching of the programmes, with initially 6 programmes launching in January 2027. The portfolio of programmes would be selected from across the institution, and most probably from existing programmes although there may be new programmes in Psychology. The selection of programmes would be led by market demand. Future plans for online delivery included CPD provision. Whilst the programmes had not yet been identified, the business case did include resources to develop the programmes. It was noted that the partner would be undertaking work to develop the online materials.

7. The online project would be managed and overseen by a project board which would be chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
8. Online programmes would be delivered in partnership with an external provider. With the procurement process commencing shortly, with the target that the partner would be onboard by February 2026.
9. There was some concern from the committee with regards to engagement with faculty teams and it was suggested that faculty teams should be included in the project to allow them to work with the programme teams on developing the online offering.
10. Whilst it was anticipated that the partner would be developing the materials colleagues across the institution may need access to recording facilities on campus which they currently do not have.
11. The committee noted that it would be crucial that there is link up between the online programmes development and implementation of the leading edge curriculum framework.
12. The Regional Provost provided an update on the development of two joint education institutes (JEI) in China. These are being developed with two partners: Central China Normal University (CCNU) and Southeast University (SEU). Both Universities are highly ranked in China and both would be building new campuses in China where the JEI would be housed.
13. The joint programmes to be offered at SEU we would be in electrical engineering whilst with CCNU these would focus on joint programmes in psychology, business and data science. The joint programmes would commence in September 2027.
14. Our own internal approvals processes must be completed by June 2026 to allow for submission to the Chinese Ministry of Education in September 2026.
15. Colleagues from CCNU had recently attended the University to take part in a CPD programme which had been developed by the SAGE Faculty. The programme was aimed at early career staff and had been a success with CCNU keen to make this a regular event.
16. The committee expressed concern regarding the number of educational priorities across the institution and the impact on a limited number of academic units involved. It was acknowledged that no staff would be teaching in China there is a lot of involvement with establishing the JEI.
17. The Chair had requested from the Director of Strategic Planning a heatmap to visualise institutional pinch points over the next few years. The committee were keen to see this at January meeting.

**Action: Ruth Valentine to discuss with Neil Gardner.**

## **17. Assurance of quality and standards 2024-25**

Received: Document UEC2526-014

Noted that:

18. The report summarises the operation of the university's framework for the management of academic quality and standards. This report demonstrates that the University is meeting regulatory requirements.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee approved the report for submission to Senate.

## **18. Degree Outcomes report**

Received: Document UEC2526-015

Noted that:

19. The report provided a summary of the degree outcomes. It was noted that last academic year the number of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2:i had increased and that the committee would monitor this trend.
20. It was not clear if there was anything specific impacting on the increase in awards last year, although it was noted that the impact of industrial action could be a factor as to whether awards had been made with missing marks. This could be analysed further as all marks were now available.
21. The committee would continue to monitor the degrees awarded to determine if the increase seen was a temporary fluctuation.
22. That the tolerance of  $\pm$  5% had been applied when comparing current awarding patterns with the pre-Covid average with some academic units exceeding this threshold. It was acknowledged that academic units might be settling into a new normal of awarding patterns and this would be monitored through their Board of Studies.
23. The report indicates some fluctuations in awarding patterns, however, there are no significant changes. This would also suggest that admitting students with lower entry grades is not affecting the overall degree classifications. Modelling of entry grades against final degree awards would provide some useful data for colleagues. The committee would recommend that at present this is continued to be monitored.
24. Senate had noted that students are being admitted with lower grades and considered if this was impacting on the degrees awarded. The report highlights that whilst there are fluctuations in awarding patterns there are no significant changes. It was noted that modelling of entry grades and final awards would be useful.

Resolved:

- a. That the report would be submitted to Senate and shared with Faculty Education Committees.

## **19. Education Strategy Programme Board Report**

Received: Document UEC2526-016

Noted that:

25. Senate had approved the Leading Edge Curriculum (LEC) framework.
26. The overall status of the project was red. Following the last meeting of the committee the programme board had fully reviewed the risk register.
27. The issue of resources had been considered and the programme board had requested that some modelling of both academic and professional services staffing, following the voluntary severance scheme, is undertaken. This would be shared with the committee. The recruitment for the LEC fellows is progressing.
28. That resource had been made available to the project to support the ongoing need for modelling in terms of the pilot and phase 2 scheduling.

29. The Chair would be meeting regularly University transformation team which would allow for greater alignment with the University transformation and the implementation of the LEC framework across the institution.

## **20. Comparison of Turnitin and Canvas Speedgrader**

Received: Document UEC2526-017

Noted that:

30. Currently there are two centrally supported systems for online assignments: Canvas Assignments and Turnitin. Both offer comparable functionality, there are notable differences between them. At the last meeting in response to the low NSS scores around assessment and feedback that having one system and approach could improve the student experience.
31. Feedback had been gathered from students and this had not been focussed on the systems but was more related to the consistency in assessment information provided, students commented that there was no consistency in the use of Canvas, and also where students access their feedback.
32. Moving to one system, would require that there are appropriate processes in place to support the move and it was felt that the move to one system would have a big impact on colleagues.
33. Although multiple systems could be used, having a single student portal would be more beneficial. In the student launchpad work, academic advisers would require students to gather their feedback, having one portal would streamline the access for students.
34. During the programme transformation programme teams would be required to make a decision on which system that they would be using going forward.
35. LTDS would continue to work on the Canvas baseline for rolling out across the institution for next academic year, to capture the issues raised by students around consistency. More details will be provided to the committee at the meeting in January

Resolved:

- a. That the committee agreed to remain using Canvas Assignments and Turnitin.

## **21. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey report**

Received: Document UEC2526-018

Noted that:

36. The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) runs every two years for postgraduate research students. This year the survey included a new theme on research community. The report had been considered by Postgraduate Research sub-committee.
37. The response rate was 32.3% which was a decline on previous years. The overall satisfaction score was 78.2% which is comparable with previous years. Research culture and community are the lowest scoring themes and are below sector benchmarks.
38. The committee were disappointed with the low scores in research culture and community given the on-going projects in this area. It was commented that at other institutions postgraduate research students are more integrated and often seen as staff members, sharing facilities and

offices. It was noted that the model in SAGE for research students is much more integrated but this is not replicated across the institution.

39. Similarly the committee were disappointed with the scores for supervision and the committee suggested that it would be useful to hold focus groups with research students to drill down into the comments.
40. The committee felt that the results should be shared with the Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation and the Dean of Culture and Inclusivity.

Resolved:

- a. That Matthew Grenby be asked to review the findings in the report and to consider further actions to improve the experience for postgraduate research students.
- b. Professor Candy Rowe to review the findings in the report.

## **22. PGR Reasonable Adjustments policy**

Received: Document UEC2525-019

Noted that:

41. A draft policy and guidance on reasonable adjustment for doctoral and MPhil research degree programmes was presented for approval. The policy had been considered by Postgraduate Research sub-committee and consultation with stakeholders had taken place.
42. There had been an increase in the number of students who were seeking student support plans (SSP) and the policy would provide clarity on the processes for SSP for research students.
43. Following earlier discussion, there was some discussion on how research students are seen across the institution as either student or staff and it was felt that having SSP would recognise them as students. Across the Russell Group there is mixed practice with some apply staff policies and other student policies.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee approved the policy.

## **23. Report from Taught Programmes sub-committee**

Received: Document UEC2526-020

Noted that:

44. Taught Programme sub-committee had considered the external examiner reports for undergraduate programmes and it had been noted that external examiners' had raised concerns with regards to changes in staffing, and the impact that this is having on academic units and their ability to deliver programmes.
45. Executive Board are reviewing the impact on severance across the institution and that it would be helpful for this to include details of the student-staff ratio pre and post severance and that this information could be shared with academic units and the committee.

**Action: Ruth Valentine to discuss with Nigel Harkness when the data will be available in PowerBI.**

## **24. Report from Lifelong Learning and Apprenticeship committee**

Noted that:

46. The Office for Students had judged the University as good in their End Point Assessment (EPA) monitoring report (May-June 2025). The report noted that the University is delivery the EPA for the apprenticeship Level 7 Digital Solutions was in line with IfATE's principles.
47. Following the EQA (external quality assurance) monitoring check the OfS team made the following recommendations for the EPA organisation:
  - a. To provide apprentices with the written feedback on their EPAs produced by the independent assessors. This was implemented with immediate effect.
  - b. To ensure that apprentices are made aware of actions taken by the EPAO in response to their feedback. This was implemented through 'You Said We Did'.
  - c. To hold standardisation activities to share marking and grading expectations with all stakeholders to ensure that advice given to apprentices is consistent and accurate. This recommendation is in train.
  - d. To add a specific requirement for the external examiner to report on their monitoring of EPA. This recommendation is in train.
  - e. To strengthen the documentation of processes and procedures to cover all aspects of the EPA and to reduce reliance on individual team members. This recommendation is under consideration in-line with the de-funding of level 7.

## **25. Reports from sub-committees of UEC**

Received reports from:

- i. Lifelong Learning and Apprenticeship – 24 July 2025: Document UEC2526-021
- ii. Postgraduate Research – 15 October 2025: Document UEC2526-022

## **26. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Received: Document UEC2526-023

Noted that:

48. The minutes of the meeting of UEC on 1 October 2025 were approved as a correct record.

## **27. Action log**

Received: Document UEC2526-024

## **28. Report of decisions made on behalf of the committee**

Received: Document UEC2526-025

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

15 December 2025

Minutes

Present: Professor Ruth Valentine (*Chair*), Lucy Backhurst, Yvonne Chase, Rachel Dearlove, Dr Sarah Graham, Dr Paul Hubbard (*vice Dr Cockburn*), Sally Ingram, Professor David Kennedy, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Sara Marsham, Graeme Redshaw-Boxwell, Jill Taylor-Roe, Gina Tindale, and Dr Cees van der Land.

Apologies: Dr Emma Cockburn, Dr Peter Gallagher, Pauline Howie, Dr Phillip Lord, Erin Peart, George Watkins, and Professor Chris Whitehead

In attendance: Jolein De Ridder (*Secretary*)

**29. Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework**

Received: UEC2526-026

Noted that:

1. UEC were asked to approve for submission to Senate the updated version of the Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF). The original version had been approved at Senate in May 2025 with some sections missing. These were now completed, and an initial modelling of the impact of the QCPDF had also been added.
2. The main updates regarded the programme level design being more connected to the Leading Edge Curriculum requirement. There was an addition of further pedagogically required 'non-conventional' modules. Linked to optional modules, the proposal included greater flexibility for undergraduate programmes within the overall 120 credit optional envelope. For degrees featuring more than one subject, a clarification had been added about the relationship between programme naming and expected subject balance in relation to degrees with sub-specialisms, Major/Minor ('with'), Joint Honours ('and') and multidisciplinary degrees in line with sector recognised standards. This would ensure increased consistency.
3. It was emphasized that this is a living document, and other proposals for non-conventional modules that emerge from programme redesign could be added in future with approval by UEC. Regarding non-conventional modules, for example, it was raised that a 'science practical' (a module covering lab and field work) might need to be added.
4. It was raised that in section 4, on Qualifications and their credit value, some titles might need to be updated. This would have to be flagged to Taught Programmes Sub-Committee (TPSC), the keeper of the table.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee approved the framework for submission to Senate for approval.

### 30. **Leading Edge Curriculum Framework: Assuring the combined assessment journey**

Received: Document UEC2526-027

Noted that:

5. This was a proposal for the adoption of 'stage-gate assessment' with supervised, assured and open assessment types as part of the implementation of the Leading Edge Curriculum(LEC). It was emphasized that the paper set out high-level direction of travel and comments were welcomed. The paper was said to broaden the concept of a more secure form of assessment.
6. The LEC pilot phase (in Spring 2026) would allow to develop and refine the stage-gate approach as part of course re-design, developing further detailed policy, supportive materials and case studies of different approaches to inform phase 2 (UG) and phase 3 (PGT).
7. A very useful discussion was said to have taken place at the Students' Insights Panel, and further talks with two Academic Units in HaSS had also been fruitful. The document was said to propose a fair way of maintaining the integrity of the degree, with a focus on the process and not just the end result. While no approach would be 'cheat-proof' it was felt that layering assessment throughout the degree was a vital part of the approach.
8. The Committee also referred to further discussions regarding exploring a viva policy and what could be learned from End-Point Assessments (EPAs) as now used in apprenticeships. Further discussion about the legal implications and context would also need to be had.

**Action: Rachel Dearlove to discuss with Lucy Backhurst.**

**Action: Ruth Valentine to enquire about specialist legal advice through the PVC Russell Group.**

Resolved:

- a. That the committee approved the proposal for submission to Senate.

### 31. **Capstone Module**

Received: Document UEC2526-028

Noted that:

9. A short guidance document on capstones had been received by the Committee. This was said to be part of the Leading Edge Curriculum framework documentation, but had not been ready when previous documentation was shared with Senate. There had been outstanding questions about modelling, and concerns about additional supervisor load.
10. The current document had been revised on the basis of a productive session with the Directors of Education that had taken place on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The guidance in its current form was deemed to contain high-level expectations and key principles (i.e. the need to meet PSRB requirements), while not putting in place unhelpful constraints. There was said to be choice in the format of delivery.
11. The Guidance set out that the capstone module can be of 40 (UG) or 60 (PGT) credits in one semester, or across the semesters in the Stage (i.e. across 2 semesters in UG or up to 3 in PGT), respecting the 20-credit split. Programmes also may (rather than must) offer more than one version of a Capstone module or variations in approaches within a single module as appropriate. Capstone options are in addition to the optional modules permitted at each stage in the QCPDF.
12. It was raised at the meeting that there seemed to be a trend in students not wanting to take a (traditional) capstone. The document was said to try and capture key principles, while allowing options and alternatives to a typical dissertation.

Resolved:

- a. That the Committee approved the framework for submission to Senate.

### **32. Academic Year and Calendar**

Received: Document UEC2526-029

Noted that:

13. The Committee received a draft policy setting out the University's academic year and calendar in line with the provisions agreed by Senate. The Policy aimed at providing transparency about previously approved rules, as until now there had only been the calendar itself. The Policy was said to give guidance to colleagues designing programmes, and would sit as a staff-facing document on the Education Policy and Governance (EPG) webpages. It would be shared with colleagues through a circular too.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee approved the proposed Policy.

### **33. Any Other Business**

Noted that:

14. The Committee was informed that the Newcastle University response to the TEF consultation had been submitted, as had the Russell group response. Both had been completed by the 10<sup>th</sup> December deadline.

**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**21 January 2026**

**Minutes**

Present: Professor Ruth Valentine (*Chair*), Lucy Backhurst, Yvonne Chase, Rachel Dearlove, Dr Peter Gallagher, Dr Sarah Graham, Dr Paul Hubbard (*vice Emma Cockburn*), Pauline Howie, Hibah Hussain, Professor David Kennedy, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Chris O'Malley (*vice Sara Marsham*), Erin Peart, Graeme Redshaw-Boxwell, Dr Helen St Clair Thompson, Jill Taylor-Roe and Gina Tindale

Apologies: Dr Emma Cockburn, Sally Ingram, Dr Sara Marsham, Charu Saini, Dr Cees van der Land

In attendance: Chris Traynor (*item 38*), Dr Sarah May (*item 39*), George Watkins, Janice Trewick (*Secretary*)

**34. Annual Apprenticeship Self-Assessment report to Ofsted**

Received: UEC2526-030

Noted that:

1. The apprenticeship self-assessment report for the 2024-25 academic year had been prepared for submission to Ofsted. The draft report had been considered and had been recommended for submission by the Life-Long Learning and Apprenticeship sub-committee. The format of the report is similar to that of previous years, however, the format would be changed in future to comply with the inspection framework and the committee would be provided with details of the changes at a future meeting.
2. The report included evidence from academic units and identified key strengths and had also identified areas for development for the University as an apprenticeship training provider.
3. The areas which required improvement would be addressed through an improvement plan which would be monitored by the Life-Long Learning and Apprenticeship sub-committee.
4. The committee recorded its thanks to those involved with the preparation of the report.

Resolved:

- a. The committee approved the report for submission to Ofsted.

**35. Academic Advising Framework and Role Descriptors**

Received: Document UEC2526-031

Noted that:

5. As part of the Education for Life Strategy *Objective 3: Student Launchpad*, the committee received a proposal for new Framework for Academic Advising together with two role descriptors: Director of Academic Advising and Academic Adviser. The Framework defines the

University's model of student support which will integrate professional academic support within academic units together with support from Wellbeing and the Careers Service to provide a consistent, inclusive and personalised experience for all students. The Academic Advising Framework would replace the existing Personal Tutoring Framework and would be implemented from 2026/27 with the new roles replacing the Senior Tutor and Personal Tutor roles. The Framework would be rolled out for new students only in 2026/27.

6. The Framework and role descriptors presented had been co-created with students and colleagues. There had been extensive consultation throughout the development of the Framework with a range of stakeholders, committee members and students having had the opportunity to review, comment and input on both earlier and the current iteration of the documentation. It was noted that there was feedback outstanding from Heads of Academic Units.
7. The Framework outlines the overarching principles but did not specify any detailed University requirements such as the expected frequency of and durations of meetings or the expectations around the recording of meetings. These operational details would be set out in the policy document along with the implementation plan.

Resolved:

- a. The committee endorsed the Framework and the role descriptors for submitting to Senate for approval.

### **36. AI Boundaries and Guidance Recommendations**

Received: Document UEC2526-032

Noted that:

8. It had been agreed at the July 2025 meeting to establish a Task and Finish group to consider the use of AI in education. The group consisted of colleagues from across the University and they had consulted with staff and with students on the emerging recommendations.
9. The University's principles for the use of generative AI in education had been established in 2023 and since then significant progress had been made in developing AI literacy across the University. However, further clarification was required regarding the appropriate contexts and boundaries for the use of AI tools.
10. The proposed guidelines had been grouped into four sections: A Overarching principles; B The use of AI in teaching delivery and content creation; C Assessment grading and feedback; D Student support, communications and administration. The guidelines had an educational focus and it was acknowledged that there was a need for wider institutional guidance which is something that will be addressed by the University Leadership group.
11. Student representatives queried how implementation and the consistency in approach across the University would be assessed, and how compliance with the guidance would be monitored.
12. Dr Kennedy reported that it is planned that the communication and socialising of the guidance would initially be from the University's leadership group and they would be responsible for disseminating within their own units.
13. As it is only guidance there would be no mechanisms for monitoring compliance, should it become University policy then it would be possible to monitor compliance. The committee discussed that in addition to the guidance for colleagues that it would be necessary to produce student versions of the guidance to communicate with the student body the expectations for colleagues on the use of Generative AI.

14. It was also queried whether the AI training was mandatory for both colleagues and students. Dr Kennedy outlined that the current process for academic staff is to enrol on the AI for Educators course which is available on their Canvas and this helps to develop their AI literacy and skills, however, the course is not mandatory.
15. Ms Backhurst reported that the student induction course contains lots of information some of which is requirement by the OfS. The team involved with the development of the induction course are considering ways to make some elements of the training mandatory without over burdening students.
16. There was some discussion around the ethical use of AI tools and allowing students to opt out, and it was agreed that it should be made clear that students should not be expected to sign up to third party platforms. It was noted that there are University supported AI tools which are available for students. It was also proposed that some changes were required to the guidance to make it clear that colleagues and students should not upload their user names and passwords to AI tools.
17. The committee were supportive of the guidance, noting that some points required some minor clarifications and it was agreed that the guidance should be disseminated as widely as possible across the University. **(Action: David Kennedy)**

Resolved:

- a. That with some minor amendments required, the committee agreed in principle to the guidance.

### 37. Education Programme Strategy Board report

Received: Document UEC2526-033

Noted that:

18. The Chair reported that Senate had approved the Leading Edge Curriculum (LEC) Framework section relating to Capstone modules, and had approved the proposal for 'stage-gate assessments'.
19. Whilst module optionality had been approved in principle by Senate, it was agreed that following the pilot of the re-designed programmes, Senate would receive further details on how programmes appeared before and after implementation of the LEC. This would provide reassurance that, while the LEC Framework ensures consistency across programmes there is scope for appropriate individualisation within programmes.
20. A business case would be submitted to FSMBG for the Educator Accelerator project.
21. The committee recorded it thanks to all colleagues who had been involved to date in developing the LEC Framework.

### 38. Graduate Outcomes and Graduate Exit Survey

Received: Document UEC2526-034

Noted that:

22. The paper provided an update on the latest results from the Graduate Outcomes and Graduate Exit surveys and outlined how these results inform league table positions and TEF progression indicators. The paper had been presented at Student Experience and Wellbeing sub-committee

and shared with Faculty Education committees and more specific details shared with academic units as part of the local Employability and Enterprise action plans.

23. The TEF progression indicator compares the University's percentage of graduates with a "positive outcome" against an OfS benchmark which reflects the institution's student mix and demographics. During the TEF 2023 assessment, the University was judged to be 0.9% below its benchmark, which was broadly aligned with expectations. Following the recent update of the data by OfS, which included four years' worth of data up to 2021–22, the University's performance had improved and was now 0.4% below benchmark.
24. At the time of the last TEF at subject level there were 10 subjects which were deemed to be materially below the benchmark. Considering the data more recently, whilst the mix had changed slightly there were still 10 subject areas which are below the benchmark.
25. There was some discussions around how institutional data compared regionally and whether there was more work which could be done to work in partnership with regional employers to develop opportunities for students. As part of the LEC Framework the encounters with industry, would help to develop and build opportunities for students. The committee discussed how the data is shared externally, and how other institutions were sharing and publicising their data.
26. Within HASS colleagues had been working more closely with the team from Careers and whilst it was too early in the process to see change they would like to continue working together until the LEC had been fully embedded across programmes.
27. The Academic Advising Framework would provide students with opportunities to build their personal story from the start of their University journey and help them gain confidence in recognising and articulating the skills which they have developed during their studies.
28. The committee agreed that the data was helpful and did provide some reassurances. It was agreed that it would be useful to see some more details from the outputs and impacts from work done in this areas, and to present to the committee some opportunities to take things forward .
29. It was agreed that Chris Traynor would bring some suggestions to a future meeting. (**Action: Chris Traynor**)

### 39. Report on Formal Student Casework

Received: Document UEC2526-035

Noted that:

30. The annual report on formal student case work for the academic year 2024-25 was received. The report included data on the number of academic appeals, complaints, academic misconduct, disciplinary, PEC submissions, support to study and fitness to practice cases.
31. The number of formal cases had increased by around 40% on the previous academic year. The most significant increase had been seen in student complaints which had risen by 39%, this increase was in part attributed to the periods of industrial action during the previous academic year.
32. From the data it was clear that there had been a downward trend in the number of misconduct cases, with the suggestion being that this could be a switch from the more traditional plagiarism cases and that students are using Generative AI tools more to proof-read their work. The training being provided to Chairs of Boards of Examiners will focus on academic misconduct.

33. The number of students who were taking their cases to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) continued to rise. Although there had not been the same increase in the number of cases which were then subsequently justified or partly justified by the OIA.
34. The use of AI by students to formalise their appeals had also increase and in a number of cases students were also engaging the services of solicitors. It was highlighted to the committee that there are a growing number of complex legal cases which required expert legal advice.
35. The increase in the number of cases and complexities was putting pressure on the small casework team, as well as on the limited number of appeal adjudicators across the University. It was commented that students had nothing to lose by putting in an appeal, The University are keen to work more closely with the Students' Union to support students who are going through an appeal process.
36. The OIA requires that all HE providers demonstrate changes to regulation, policy and procedures based on examples from case. There were three recommendations contained within the report which are from recent cases.
37. The first recommendation is to review the University's Attendance and Engagement Monitoring and Review of Academic Progress Procedures. The purpose of this is to ensure that appropriate safeguarding mechanisms are in place and that academic units apply a consistent approach to prevent cases of students being suspended without good reason. This review is currently underway.
38. The second recommendation proposes that a preliminary investigation should be conducted before any formal student disciplinary investigations. This step will help to establish whether there is a *prima facie* case of misconduct. This recommendation has now been implemented.
39. The third recommendation focuses on providing students with clear guidance on how to request a review of Student Support Plans. This guidance will be captured as part of the Support to Study process.
40. The committee agreed with the proposed solutions to the recommendations.
41. The Director of Estates would be keen to have a better understanding of cases and trends relating to anti-social behaviour. **(Action: Erin Peart and Sarah May)**
42. It was noted that data for the Faculty of Medical Sciences was missing from the report and that an updated version of the report would be circulated to committee members. The updated report would also be circulated to Faculty Education committees for consideration. **(Action: Sarah May/Janice Trewick)**
43. The Casework team would be updating and circulating the guides for academic units. The committee felt that the student facing guidance could be made clearer and to include expectations around what decisions and powers both the Personal Extenuating Circumstances committee and Boards of Examiners have and how they operate within the University Regulations.
44. The committee noted their concerns with the increase in the number of cases and associated workload for the team involved. There was also concern with the lack of an IT system to manage casework, having an appropriate system would ensure that the processes are robust and secure and support the timely resolution of cases. The committee have requested that these matters should be raised at Senate when the Casework report is considered. **(Action: Ruth Valentine/Sarah May)**
45. The committee recorded its thanks to everyone involved with casework.

Resolved:

- a. That an updated report and the matters raised by the committee would be considered by Senate.

#### **40. Access and Participation Plan**

Received: Documents UEC2526-036a UEC2526-036b

Noted that:

46. The committee received two reports in relation to the Access and Participation Plan, one which set out the summary of the progress towards the targets with the other an assessment of performance review. The committee has responsibility to Senate to monitor the educational provision in terms of complying with the expectations of the OfS B conditions in supporting all students to succeed.
47. The committee discussed the data noting that there are some areas recorded as green and that there is often a lag with some of the data. There was concern that one area which is not showing any signs of improvement for the University is that for mature students (those over 21), which could indicate that the offer for those students is not appealing.
48. The data is being monitored by the APP working group and the committee were satisfied to receive future update on progress. The committee did request that in future reports had a common scale for numbers and percentages for ease of reading.

#### **41. Degree Programme Director role descriptor**

Received: Document UEC2526-037

Noted that:

49. The committee received a revised role descriptor for the Degree Programme Director for consideration. A review of the role descriptor had been undertaken to ensure that the role is appropriate and includes requirements set out in the Education for Life strategy. Consultation had taken place with existing Degree Programme Directors, Heads of Academic units and Deputy Directors of Faculty Operations.
50. Following feedback received from EDI colleagues with regards to the Director of Education role description, the language and terminology in both role descriptors would be updated to reflect the comments noted. It was noted that the changes related only to the wording and that the content and purpose of the roles would remain unchanged.

Resolved:

- a. The committee approved, noting the amendments to terminology, the revised job descriptor for the Degree Programme Director.

#### **42. Any Other Business**

Noted that:

51. The University has received formal notification that it meets the current requirements for the designation of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses commencing in the 2026/27 academic year. This confirms the designation of specified programmes of initial school teacher training delivered by, or on behalf of, the University that lead to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).



**43. Reports from sub-committees of UEC**

Received reports from:

- i. Digital Education – 9 September 2025 [UEC2526-038]
- ii. Lifelong Learning and Apprenticeship – 8 October 2025 [UEC2526-039]
- iii. Student Experience and Wellbeing – 11 November 2025 [UEC2526-040]
- iv. Student Mobility – 10 November 2025 [UEC2526-041]

**44. Minutes of the previous meetings**

Received: Documents UEC2526-042 and UEC2526-043

Noted that:

52. The minutes of the meeting of UEC on 20 November and 15 December 2025 were approved as a correct record.

**45. Action Log**

Received: Document UEC2526-044

**46. Report of decisions made on behalf of the committee**

Received: Document UEC2526-045