

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

14 February 2024

Minutes

Present: Professor Ruth Valentine (*Chair*), Sandy Alden (*vice Sally Ingram*), Lucy Backhurst, Laura Callaghan, Lulu Chen, Dr Emma Cockburn, Professor Richard Davies, Rachel Dearlove, Clair Elliot, Dr David Kennedy, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Peter Gallagher, Dr Sarah Graham, Dr Sara Marsham, Naomi Oosman-Watts, Graeme Redshaw-Boxwell, Joanne Safin Abdullah, Melissa Suddes (*vice Justin Cole*), Jill Taylor-Roe

Apologies: Justin Cole, Iain Garfield, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Andy Husband, Sally Ingram, Chirag Kumar

In attendance: Lucy Blake (*item 38*), Angela McNeill (*item 37*), Chris Heady (*item 39*), Nick Bailey (*item 39*), Clare McKeague (*item 39*), Emma McQuillan (*observer*), Janice Trewick (*Secretary*),

35. Degree Outcomes Statement

Received: UEC2324-040

Noted that:

1. The report which would be submitted to Senate for consideration and approval, provided the committee with the analysis of the degree outcomes and the regulatory statement.
2. The report highlighted that the awarding patterns had returned to those prior to the pandemic. The UUK had made a commitment to return to pre-pandemic levels by 2023, and Newcastle had met that commitment.
3. There are variations over the academic years and across academic units. The analysis had not revealed anything significant which was a result of the Marking and Assessment boycott.
4. All academic units had shown a reduction in the proportion of 1st class degrees awarded in the last academic year. One anomaly was that of Pharmacy which showed a substantial reduction on pre-pandemic levels. The school had reported that there had been no significant changes to their programmes, but that one factor might have been that the 2018-19 cohort had been noticeably smaller than usual.
5. There was concern regarding the awarding gap of international students, INTO students, minoritised ethnic students and mature students. Within these groups INTO students had fared better, however, their transition to their degree programme would be different to other students. There was anecdotal evidence that some IYO students were not feeling part of their programme and that INTO students do report feeling dis-connected from the main campus.
6. It was proposed that future reports would be split into undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, and would consider the awarding gap for all students, noting that with the Access and Participation plan only UK domiciled students were considered. In future it is proposed that the reports would also include continuation rates.

7. Previously, Faculty Education Committees have been unsure on their role when reviewing the reports. Having continuation rates would allow programme teams to review trends and patterns across programmes.

Resolved:

- a. That the statement was approved by the committee for submission to Senate for consideration.

36. Education Strategy

Received: UEC2324-041

Noted that:

8. The final draft of the Education Strategy was presented, noting that this was the outward facing document for consideration by Senate. The detailed delivery plan would be appended to the final internal version.
9. Members of the committee welcomed the document, noting that it provided clarity around the future direction. The strategy had been well received across the institution, although in some areas there was concern around some of the terminology which had been used. Feedback had also been received from Executive Board around some of the terminology, however, the committee were in agreement on the wording used within the strategy.
10. Thanks were recorded to all colleagues for the input into the development of the strategy.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee endorsed the strategy for submission to Senate.

37. Student Casework Annual Report 2022-23

Received: UEC2324-042

Noted that:

11. The annual report on student casework focused on the previous academic year. The report highlighted a number of trends, including the number of cases being progressed to the next level and ultimately going onwards to the OIA and the increasing levels of ill health across the student body.
12. The committee considered the recommendations noted in the report identified by the OIA.
13. *Recommendation a.* The committee felt that the current PEC rules were clear in regard to evidence which is accepted but noted that in some areas colleagues were creating their own policy alongside University policy. UEC noted that the existing policy is clear and this should be re-emphasised.
14. There are around 37,000 PEC applications being submitted and members were concerned about the support being provided to colleagues who process the applications. Training had been provided to colleagues earlier in the academic year. Colleagues in FMS had raised the issue of training and support for colleagues with Organisational Development.
15. *Recommendation b.* It was noted that Student Progress Service (SPS) would work with the Graduate School to include mitigating circumstances during the review of the APR process.
16. *Recommendation c.* The committee supported the approach that academic units should emphasise the seriousness of fabricating results and work with all taught students throughout the process of their dissertation.

17. *Recommendation d.* The committee supported SPS working with People Services to review the alignment of colleague disciplinary processes and student complaints processes.
18. *Recommendation e.* The committee noted that communications with PGR students around extended/transferred MPhil programmes would be clarified.
19. *Recommendation f.* The committee supported the appointment of an independent chair of BoE or PEC, to review cases following an appeal. Further discussions are required to establish the process for appointing the independent chair.
20. *Recommendation g.* The committee noted that the move to digital SSP would make the task of updating SSP easier, there are around 4,500-5,000 plans in place across the institution.
21. Compared with the sector, that the number of cases processed are comparable. Across the sector institutions are dealing with the same challenges and the volumes of cases.
22. Thanks were recorded to all colleagues involved with student case work.

38. Survey Update

Received: Document UEC2324-043

Noted that:

23. 'Feedback February' was now underway and all three surveys (NSS, NES, PTES) all live. Resources had been provided to academic units, and this year, students would be able to access the survey via a QR code and DPD's have access to the instructor portal within Evasys for monitoring their response rates.
24. The response rates will be communicated weekly and early response rates are disappointingly low: NSS 10%, NES 2% and PTES 4%.
25. It was queried whether the resources and communications were being received by the most appropriate colleagues in academic units and it was suggested that communications could be co-ordinated via the Deans, given the differences in working practices across the faculties.
26. Early feedback from colleagues across the institution had been varied. Whilst supportive of 'Feedback February' there was concern around conflicting priorities around promotion of the surveys, with DPD's focusing their attentions on NSS.
27. There was confusion around the survey timeline and how long surveys were open for; which students were included in the NES survey; and whether the academic unit contact details were correct. There had not been sufficient time for colleagues to plan the campaigns within their own programmes.
28. Feedback from students found that the link in Canvas for NES is not directing them to the survey and that the survey was found to be too long and therefore they were not completing it.
Action: LTDS to review Canvas and the links for surveys
29. Next academic year there would be a greater visibility on campus with a range of activities and that EPGS working with Student Life, would look to provide more incentives for students to complete the survey.
30. It was agreed that the PVC Educations would send an email to colleagues to highlight the importance of all surveys and to ask colleagues to promote surveys and encourage students to complete as soon as possible.
Action: PVC Education

39. Review of In-session programmes

Received: Document UEC2324-044

Noted that:

31. The proposal is to adapt the delivery of the University's in-sessional programme which is delivered by INTO Newcastle. This change was a result of the findings from the English Language support project.
32. Changes would be made during a pilot year in 2024-25. Modules would be converted into a suite of stand-alone sessions to cover the existing content but to also widen the offer. Sessions would be available throughout the year and at different times, to give students the flexibility to attend at their choosing.
33. The committee were very supportive of the proposal, although they agreed that it should be presented to the Faculty Education Committees for their feedback.
34. It was agreed that Student Life would work with INTO colleagues around the communications for the programme.

40. Minutes from the previous meeting

Received: Document UEC2324-045

35. The minutes of the meeting of UEC on 13 December 2023 were approved as a correct record.
36. That the Apprenticeship SAR 2022/23 had now been submitted to Ofsted.

41. Action Log

Received: Document UEC2324-046

42. Learner Analytics Project Update

Received: Document UEC2324-047

43. Reports from sub-committees of University Education Committee

Received minutes from the sub-committees:

- i. Competition and Markets Authority: 22 November 2023 [UEC2324-048]
- ii. Digital Education: 19 January 2024 [UEC2324-049]
- iii. Lifelong Learning and Apprenticeship: 14 September 23 [UEC2324-050]
- iv. Postgraduate Research: 7 December 2023 [UEC2324-051]
- v. Student Experience: 8 January 2024 [UEC2324-052]
- vi. Student Mobility: 23 January 2024 [UEC2324-053]
- vii. Taught Programmes: 18 January 2024 [UEC2324-054]

44. Report on decisions made on behalf of University Education Committee

Received: Document UEC2324-055

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

18 April 2024

Minutes

Present: Professor Ruth Valentine (*Chair*), Sandy Alden (vice Sally Ingram), Lucy Backhurst, Laura Callaghan, Dr Emma Cockburn, Rachel Dearlove, Clair Elliot, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Peter Gallagher, Dr Sarah Graham, Chirag Kumar, Dr Sara Marsham, Naomi Oosman-Watts, Graeme Redshaw-Boxwell, Melissa Suddes (*vice Justin Cole*), Jill Taylor-Roe

Apologies: Lulu Chen, Justin Cole, Professor Richard Davies, Iain Garfield, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Andy Husband, Sally Ingram, Dr David Kennedy

In attendance: Janice Trewick (*Secretary*),

45. Access and Participation Plan

Received: UEC2324-056 and Presentation filed with minutes

Noted that:

1. The submission of an Access and Participation Plan (APP) is a regulatory requirement of the condition of registration by the Office for Students (OfS). The APP sets out how institutions will improve equality of opportunity for students from disadvantage backgrounds to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. The successful submission of an APP is required for institutions to charge Home fees above the fee cap.
2. The current APP covers the period 2020-21 to 2024-25. The new APP will cover 2025-26 to 2028-29, although the plan may be approved for a shorter period by OfS, and this would be either due to their confidence in the plan or due to renewal dates across the sector.
3. In 2023 the OfS published a revised approach to the submission of plans with some institutions taking part in 'wave 1' and all other in 'wave 2'. The submission deadline for Newcastle 31 May 2024.
4. The APP sets out the risks to equality of opportunity which had been identified by the institution, intervention strategies/actions that the institution plans to take, plans on how to evaluate the work undertaken and the investment the institution is making. The APP had been developed by the APP Working Group, which reports to the committee.
5. The final draft was presented to the committee who were asked to comment. Following feedback the APP would be finalised ahead of submission for approval at Senate and Council. There would also be a student submission submitted with the APP.
6. It was proposed that the APP Working Group would become the APP Monitoring Group and that group would have responsibility for the on-going monitoring of the plan and reporting to UEC on the progress.
7. The committee noted that the plan is well-written and aligns clearly with the education strategy which brings together the various elements in a coherent manner. There were some minor comments made on some of the wording which would be addressed by the APP Working Group prior to submission to Senate.
8. The committee noted that the issue of resourcing was still to be finalised, however, they were satisfied that this would be addressed by the PVC Education and Academic Registrar ahead of the 2024-25 academic year.

9. The committee wished recorded its thanks to all those who had been involved with the preparation and submission of the APP.

Resolved:

- a. That the committee endorsed the draft and noted areas of the APP which would be updated prior to submission to Senate.
- b. That the committee approved the governance arrangements and the transformation of the APP Working Group into the APP Monitoring Group.

46. Term and Semester dates for 2025-26

Received: UEC2324-057

Noted that:

10. The committee noted the academic dates for 2025-26.

47. PGR Supervisor Development Programme

Received: UEC2324-058

48. Research Scholarship Scheme

Received: Document UEC2324-059

49. Reports from sub-committees of University Education Committee

Received minutes from the sub-committees:

- i. Digital Education: 18 March 2024 [UEC2324-060]
- ii. Lifelong Learning and Apprenticeship: 25 January 2024 [UEC2324-062]
- iii. Taught Programmes: 4 March 2024 [UEC2324-061]

Noted that:

11. On behalf of UEC, the Taught Programme sub-committee had approved the educational partnership with The Poetry School for the MA Writing Poetry.

50. Minutes from the previous meeting

Received: Document UEC2324-063

12. The minutes of the meeting of UEC on 14 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

51. Action Log

Received: Document UEC2324-064

52. Report on decisions made on behalf of University Education Committee

Received: Document UEC2324-065