

WSU Education Council Minutes

22/11/2023 at 9:30 (EE 1057)

Members	Staff Invited to Attend
<p>Chair: Al Linforth (<i>Students' Union President</i>)</p> <p>Department Reps: Alice Mills-Adams (<i>Social Work & the Community</i>) Brad Law (<i>Film, Media & Theatre</i>) Caysee Webster-Miles (<i>Law</i>) Connor Hay (<i>Computing</i>) Elliot Atkinson (<i>English, Media & Culture</i>) Hannah Harrison (<i>Health & Wellbeing</i>) Kate Phillips (<i>Art & Design</i>) Katherine Stone (<i>Paramedic Science</i>) Kristine Kaye Mendoza (<i>Education & Inclusion</i>) Oliver Nightingale (<i>Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Nutritional Therapy</i>) Swathi Suresh (<i>Pre-registration Nursing</i>) Vimal Vinay (<i>Nursing Associates and Apprentices</i>)</p> <p>Apologies: Ellie Harris (<i>Primary Education</i>) Harry Mellor (<i>History, Politics & Sociology</i>) Jack Edwards (<i>Biological Science</i>) Jo Roberson (<i>Sport, management and Outdoor Education</i>) Samantha Ayetey (<i>Performance Health and wellbeing</i>) Sarah Stanley (<i>Secondary & Post Compulsory</i>)</p>	<p>Antonia Rossiter-Eaglesfield (<i>Director of Representation and Membership Services - Chair's Aide</i>)</p> <p>Vic Presdee (<i>Student Voice Assistant - Minuting Secretary</i>)</p>

	ITEM	Timings	Owner
1.	Welcome & Introductions		AL
2.	Apologies		AL
3.	Declaration of interest		AL
4.	Minutes of previous meeting		AL
5.	Matters arising		AL
Reporting Items			
6.	Student Council Update		AL
7.	Policies Update		AL
8.	VP Education Officer Update		AL
Approval Items			
9.	Policy Proposals -Student choice for examinations -Continuing Recording Lectures		AL
Discussion Items			

10.	Timetabling - Donuts for discussion members		AL
11.	PAT's		AL
Any Other Business			
12.	Student Council elections (additional EC positions)		AL/VP
13.	General Feedback		ALL
14.	Leadership Elections		AL
15.	All student meeting		AL
16.	AOB - Pizza with PVC		AL
Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 8th February			

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introduction

AL welcomed all members to the second Education Council of the year.

2. Apologies

Seb James, Ellie Harris, Harry Mellor, Jack Edwards, Jo Roberson, Samantha Ayettey, Sarah Stanley, sent apologies ahead of the meeting.

3. Declaration of interest

AL explained what a Declaration of Interest is to attendees. CWM declared that they had submitted the two policies to be discussed at this meeting. There were no further declarations.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Education Council reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting and took a vote to approve:

For - 12

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

The minutes from Education Council on October 3rd 2023 were approved.

5. Matters arising

Due to SJ absence, and most actions being assigned to them, action updates were brief.

ACTION 01: SJ to reach out to Judith Keen to feedback comments around lecture capture.	COMPLETED
ACTION 02: VP to ensure feedback is shared with SU staff responsible for facilities/spaces and SMT.	COMPLETED

ACTION 03: SJ to share calendar with Department Reps and ensure his office hours are widely publicised with students	Carried for SJ return
ACTION 04: VP to ensure feedback on WW is shared with SMT to be included in Welcome Week debrief discussions.	COMPLETED
ACTION 05: SJ email Nicola Monohan to introduce CWM	COMPLETED
ACTION 06: VP to update website with current Rep details including emails	COMPLETED
ACTION 07: SJ to find who oversees buildings regarding the closed door	<p>SJ has been told that the door in question can be opened for disabled students, but students fed back that to ask for the door to be opened they would have to enter the building.</p> <p>ACTION: AL to email estates/ facilities around 'closed disabled access door' at Jenny Lind</p>
ACTION 08: SJ to share this feedback around student parents who can't find care and may end up leaving to AL, to feed into their CoL campaign and link VV with Mature, Student Parents & Carers Network.	Action carried and transferred to AL
ACTION 09: SJ to give VV email of Mature, Parents and Carers Network chair.	Action carried and transferred to AL
ACTION 10: SJ to put VV in contact with Sally Moyle	Action carried and transferred to AL
ACTION 11: SJ feedback to RC, and try and get into next Chartwell meeting	<p>The meeting in question has now happened, AL will ask RC to share any feedback/response from the meeting</p> <p>ACTION: AL to ask RC about any feedback/response from the last Chartwell meeting</p>
ACTION 12: SJ to raise the issue from the individual student with Aspergers (raised with CH) with TJ directly.	Action carried and transferred to AL
ACTION 13: SJ to feed back to TJ regarding academic issues and joint honours timetabling concerns.	This feedback has now been passed on to TJ. Completed.
ACTION 14: SJ to meet Simon Hardy alongside AJ to discuss humanities location move and future communication.	Carried for SJ return

ACTION 15: SJ to address heads of department stepping down in meeting with Simon Hardy.	Carried for SJ return
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6. Student Council Update

AL provided a verbal update on what happened at the last student council.

7. Policy Update

AL provided a verbal update on live policy, including policy passed at last Student Council. No significant updates were highlighted.

8. Vice President Education Update

Due to SJ absence, this update was deferred to next Education Council.

9. Policy Proposals

Student choice for examinations

AL provided a summary of the policy paper before passing over to the motion proposer (CWM) to answer any queries.

EA had one law exam in journalism that had the option to take it online as someone with a RAP. CWM explained that the goal of the policy is to extend this 'paper or online' choice to all students, especially as most other things are already having an electronic option or availability.

KS raised that all the exams on her course are already online, so giving written choice may feel like a step back.

KP asked for clarification on what is an unseen exam. CWM explained this.

ON raised that some courses are solely online while some are solely paper, so should the policy be school/course specific to account for this. EA asked for clarification on differences across schools. ON explained their thoughts that due to the different course sizes and logistics around that, there is a concern over how far the policy would go before the university felt it would be too complex to implement. If we (Education Council) formulate ideas now, it could give the policy a better chance in succeeding.

AMA added that if an exam still takes place in the same hall, size shouldn't be too much of an issue.

CWM also mentioned that students with a RAP currently go to first point.

ON agreed that if everyone taking an exam would be in the same building, this should be fine.

KS pointed out that with some reasonable adjustments students have different exam lengths so this could become too difficult to add into the current structure, covering different groups and leaving exams or assessments at different times/ too much disruption.

CWM added that if the policy passed, then reasonable adjustments should be considered by the university, and that even now students already must stay in an exam room while others leave if they have extra time (disruption risk).

BL raised that it is only unseen examinations mentioned, and should consideration be given to seen examinations, should this choice apply to these too. CWM proposed asking this in a bigger consultation with students.

HH added that it is surprising that with the university's drive towards sustainability that written work is still happening across large courses. Suggested that should a sustainability argument be added to the policy as well.

KS asked what software people use for online exams.

EA raised the issue of cheating, especially on personal laptops. KS responded that there should be an element of trust, although in person lecturer could see students' screens.

Moved to a vote.

For - 0

Amendments to CWM - 8

Amendment to SC - 3

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

The policy will return to CWM to rewrite considering amendments/discussions and present to the following Education Council.

Continuing Recording Lectures

AL provided a summary of the policy.

AL spoke about recent OFS findings that criticised another university for not recording lectures, giving this proposal extra context and suggesting it could be a good inclusion to the policy.

AL also suggested an amendment to the policy to include more student groups that could be negatively impacted by a lack of lecture recording (such as disabled students and students with

caring responsibilities) and to also reference how student populations are changing across the sector and Worcester's own high percentage of mature and commuter students.

AL passed over to the motion proposer (CWM) to answer any queries.

KS shared that the answer their department gets whenever this issue is raised is that the facilities are not available to record lectures, and lecturers don't want students to not come in if they know material will be made available online. However, some students on her course have been spending £100+ on parking/childcare a week for lectures that could have easily been online, and in the current economic climate that money adds up.

HH added this has also been raised within her department many times last year, with the answer being that under university policy they can't record. However, in instances where lecturers have been hit with many issues students also face (e.g., train strikes, childcare emergencies etc.) lectures were swiftly moved online. It feels as though feelings around online learning 'only go one way' with the university.

VV shared that nursing try to record lectures, but technical issues often cause problems. Lecturers are also not informed to record lectures.

CWM responded that if the policy was introduced across the university, the university should then have a standardised system for recording lectures which should also be part of inductions. Lecturers would be instructed by the university to record but also the university would be able to explain how and why they should action this.

CH expressed frustration that he and many students are confused at how during Covid-19 recording lectures was fine/comparable learning, but now it's an issue and the learning 'wouldn't be the same quality'. They are also confused at how recording lectures is not a selling point for the university especially with the number of mature and commuter students.

EA argued that students also pay to use resources and facilities, and if you're in person for things such as seminars you can be included in discussions. EA raised the question about the usefulness of recording lectures if students need equipment that is not available to them at home (such as art or lab supplies).

HH shared that she believes students in the main commute to lectures and then go home. She agreed it felt as though the university were missing a business opportunity by not promoting that they record lectures.

BL added that students pay their fees for an experience and for taught content, not simply a PowerPoint presentation uploaded online. Recording is great as you can still catch up and hear context and discussion, but that it should be up to those in charge of the course where they think it is appropriate to record.

CWM raised that attendance has been mentioned by lecturers, as well as worries that students will leave early if they can access recordings. He feels there may need to be some sort of compromise. AMA added to CWM's point that this is what the attendance policy is there to address.

HH also added that recorded lectures aren't being raised by students as a way to have a choice of university or home learning; they are being asked for as a failsafe/back up if people cannot attend. CWM agreed.

ON proposed an amendment that acknowledged that not all lectures can be recorded (such as practical lectures which need to be in person for appropriate learning). ON proposed that the policy should state that lecturers/course leaders can decide what will and won't be recorded, but that they need to commit to this from the start of the year, so students are made aware. CWM agreed that the policy should include asking the university to commit to setting expectations around recorded lectures for students from day one depending on their course, and then follow this expectation throughout the year.

ON also added that courses like healthcare have some lectures that are easier to do online and can gain more engagement especially in bigger groups. People are more confident online. However, he does also believe this can be very course specific. HH agreed.

Moved to a vote.

For - 0

For to CWM to take away for amendments - 4

For to pass the policy, with amendments suggested in the debate - 7

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

10. Timetabling

AL explained how TJ is keen to tackle issues around timetabling and that the university is exploring the idea of a more condensed timetable (e.g. 3 full on days). The University want to create a forum for student consultation on timetabling. **ACTION:** VP will share more details on this forum, such as dates and timings, when we have received this information from the university.

AL then asked councillors if they had any feedback on the idea of a condensed timetable.

KS thought that a more condensed timetable was a good idea, as her course currently has a lot of half days that are awkward for commuters.

SS said her course had already been condensed in a more drastic way, being shortened from 4 years to 3, and had worries that any attempts to further condense timetables such as hers could cause issues both in terms of academics and students' personal lives as there were already students struggling in the current state. AL encouraged SS to come and voice the nursing perspective to the university in the upcoming forum.

EA thought the changes could be beneficial, especially to dual honours students as due to the nature of these courses students often have large gaps between lectures (such as 4hrs). This can often cause students to feel as though they are on two separate courses for one degree.

WV fed back that it would be good if the university could work towards having teaching consistent across days.

11. PATs

KS shared that their cohort's issue regarding PATs is lack of communication or poor introduce at the start of the year. KS confirmed it can be hard to book meetings with PATs, especially when they have lecturing responsibilities and have multiple students they support (KS said their PAT has 38 students to support). EA has a similar issue in English, Media and Culture, students.

KS also raised that some PATs may teach a course, but only 3rd years students so other students may not feel confident enough to reach out/may have years before being taught by them.

ON said that their own course has been redesigned and they can see a difference in DDS and PATs since the changes, citing there are definite improvements. The process of revalidation seems to have led to some noticeable improvement.

12. Student Council Delegates

AL introduced the new positions following policy passed at Student Council and asked any students interested in filling these positions to put themselves forward.

CH and KS, having been previously elected by education council as Representative for Collage of Education, Culture & Society and Representative for Collage of Health & Science, were automatically transferred to the positions of Representative for Worcester Business School and Representative for Allied Health and Community.

Candidates:

Representative for School of Arts

- Kate Phillips

Representative for Institute of Education

- Kristine Kaye Mendoza

Representative for School of Humanities

- Elliot Atkinson

- Caysee Webster-Miles

Representative for Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery

- Vimal Vinay

- Swathi Suresh



A secret ballot was taken in council as the meeting was quorate and the appointed positions were as follows:

- 1x Representative for School of Arts - **Kate Phillips**
- 1x Representative for Institute of Education - **Kristine Mendoza**
- 1x Representative for School of Humanities - **Elliot Atkinson**
- 1x Representative for Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery - **Swathi Suresh**

The following positions remain unfilled:

- 1x Representative for School of Science and the Environment
- 1x Representative for School of Psychology
- 1x Representative for School of Sport and Exercise Science
- 1x Representative for Three Counties Medical School

ACTION: ARE to ensure newly elected Student Councillors are sent future invitations & papers and are updated on Worcester Students' Union website.

13. General Feedback

Transportation for Nursing Students

SS gave an update on how she has taken this issue to the head of school, who had a meeting around this issue, but it's still on-going. The issue is surrounding train strikes and floods impacting travel to placements and ultimately impacting their hours due to no fault of the student. This is having a mental, physical and practical effect on students.

AL mention that this was raised in fees, scholarships and bursaries committee. **ACTION:** AL will continue to raise this with the University.

KS also had this discussion in paramedics and confirmed it's not having as big an impact but still causing students to struggle. CoL is having an impact too, bigger than just Worcester. AL agreed that this is also a national discussion.

Bursary

BL spoke about how arts must do work placement that is mandatory but don't get a bursary. There apparently used to be funding available to support this pre pandemic, but this is no longer available. Students are having to turn down great placements because they cannot afford travel.



AL shared that most bursaries don't come from the university, but are usually from the government, NHS or fellows. Important to keep on the radar that placement support is important for students beyond healthcare.

HH raised that not all health care students are entitled to a bursary.

VV also raised that international students do not get access to bursaries even on healthcare courses, so there is additional pressure to work alongside studying with no opportunity for relaxing.

Parking

AMA raised a general complaint that the university isn't affordable, adding that students can't afford to eat at home or at university with canteen prices. Parking is also expensive. Facilities generally are not affordable.

HH also expressed frustration at how the university recognises its need for an overflow car park, but when weather is bad the overflow parking is closed. No carparking is usually then free after dropping off children as overflow is closed due to weather. It's not fit for purpose half the year. Barriers are now up around Bredon so that parking is no longer in use.

AL shared that the council decide how many parking spaces the university can have, and the overflow isn't a carpark in the eyes of the council. Arena/riverside should be seen as overflow but that is a 5/10 min walk from St Johns so isn't always practical.

EA raised that there is often no parking as early as 9:10. Students should receive notice of when carparks are being closed. AL confirmed staff receive notification of car park closures.

ACTION: AL to raise that students don't get notification of car park closures to Communications department.

BL shared that lecturers have also been late due to lack of parking.

14. Leadership Elections

AL provided the following verbal update to councillors regarding the SU Elections.

Worcester Students' Union is a democratic organisation, which helps to ensure that the Union works for our students. This means that each year, the leadership of the SU (your Executive Officer Team) is determined by the student body through cross-campus elections. The University of Worcester has approximately 10,000 students and elected officers have responsibility for representing the interests of all these students. The following dates have been set for this year:

- Recommend a Friend will open on Monday 22nd January

- Nominations will open on Monday 5th February
- Nominations will close on Monday 19th February

15. All Student Meeting

AL provided the following verbal update to councillors regarding the All Student Meeting.

The All Student Meeting is your chance to have your say in how your Students' Union represents and supports you during your time at Worcester. This meeting will provide you with reports on the year's events and the Union's plans, as well as asking you (our members) to approve its annual accounts and the organisations the Union has formal relationships (affiliations) with. The meeting is open to any member of the Union, so any current student can attend. It's important that this meeting is attended by as many students as possible so we're asking councillors to come and spread the word about the event to all your friends and cohorts.

The meeting will be held 12:30pm-2pm on Tuesday 23rd January in Urwin Lecture Theatre.

16. AOB

- Pizza with PVC

AL confirmed the future dates for Pizza with a PVC are as follows:

- 16/01/2024, Kevin Pickess
- 21/02/2024, Rob Bonham
- 19/03/2024, Carolyn Moir
- 11/04/2024, David Green and Jane Britton

Meeting Ended.



ACTIONS

ACTION 01: SJ to share calendar with Department Reps and ensure his office hours are widely publicised with students.

ACTION 02: AL to email estates/ facilities around 'closed disabled access door' at Jenny Lind.

ACTION 03: AL to give VV email of Mature, Parents and Carers Network chair.

ACTION 04: AL to put VV in contact with Sally Moyle.

ACTION 05: AL to ask RC about any feedback/response from the last Chartwell meeting.

ACTION 06: AL to raise the issue from the individual student with Aspergers (raised with CH) with TJ directly.

ACTION 07: SJ to meet Simon Hardy alongside AJ to discuss humanities location move and future communication.

ACTION 08: SJ to address heads of department stepping down in meeting with Simon Hardy.

ACTION 09: VP will share more details on the timetabling forum, such as dates and timings, when we have received this information from the university.

ACTION 10: ARE to ensure newly elected Student Councillors are sent future invitations & papers and are updated on Worcester Students' Union website.

ACTION 11: AL will continue to raise the issue regarding rail strikes/issues with transport for Nursing placement students with the University.

ACTION 12: AL to raise that students don't get notification of car park closures to Communications department.
