ACADEMIC STRATEGY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (ASSEC)

APPROVED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2025-26

1. Purpose

1.1 Reporting to Academic Board, the Committee operates to:

- Ensure alignment with the University's Vision and Academic Strategies, advising on innovation(s) and regulatory readiness.
- Maintain oversight in respect of the University's taught and collaborative programme provision, academic strategies, policies, regulations and frameworks relating to learning, teaching, assessment, quality assurance and educational outcomes.
- Maintain oversight of student outcomes, success, academic support and the enhancement of the learning and teaching experience across all student groups.

2. Membership

2.1 Membership for the Committee is as follows:

Provost and Chief Academic Officer (Chair)	Professor Sara Spear
Executive Dean of Faculty (FSTHS)	Dr Jessica Hill
Executive Dean of Faculty (FABLET)	Professor Ernest Caldwell
Founding Dean of School of Medicine (SoM)	Professor Sonia Kumar
Dean of Education and Outcomes	Professor Amanda Harvey
Head of Apprenticeships	Alicia Douglas
Head of School (BLS)	Professor Karen Sanders
Head of School (SAHLS)	Dr Alexandra King
Head of School (SSEAS)	Dr Jade Salim
Head of School (STAR, Arts)	Dr Kim Salmons
Head of School (SOE)	Dr Jane Chambers
Head of School (STAR, Theology)	Dr Jeremy Pilch
Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement	Associate Professor Claire McLoughlin
Director of Admissions, International, Engagement and Recruitment	Kristen Pilbrow
Director of Marketing and Communications	Beth Hayes
Chief Operations Officer (or nominee)	Jo Blunden
Director of Strategic Planning, Registry and University Secretary	Liz Bell
Deputy Director of Strategic Planning	Andrew Whateley
Academic Registrar	Helen A'Court

| Students Union President, Education | Matilda Copley |

Membership is reviewed annually to ensure representation reflects institutional roles, EDI considerations and strategic priorities.

2.2 In attendance

Marcia Kelly, University Academic Strategy Project Manager, Committee Secretariat

Any other members of staff who will be in attendance to present a paper for an item at meeting(s).

3. Quorum

The Committee will be quorate with 50% of attendees present. Where members are unable to attend, a named nominee must be sent to the Committee Secretariat in advance to maintain quorum.

4. Terms of Reference

Academic Strategy

- In relation to academic activities, report to Academic Board oversight and developments to the University's Academic Strategies aligned to St Mary's Vision.
- Promoting a culture of innovation and creativity, consider, evaluate and recommend for approval all new or updated institutional initiatives, strategies, policies, frameworks and standard operating procedures in relation to the student learning, teaching experience.
- Receive regular reports on developments and outcomes from Committees operating in parallel to ASSEC to include the Portfolio Development Committee, Academic Partnerships Committee, as well as the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.
- Identify and escalate risk emerging from academic strategy implementation, ensuring appropriate risk management and reporting to the relevant Senior Responsible Officer for resolution.
- Maintain an overview of sector and regulatory developments to inform risk-aware academic planning.
- Ensure that EDI principles are embedded in strategic decisions relating to Academic Strategy, Education, and the Student Experience.

Academic Workload Allocation

- Receive updates from Faculties, Schools and Directorate making recommendations to support integrated Faculty Planning and ensuring balanced workloads, as well as consideration of resourcing in academic strategy decisions.
- Review the Workload Allocation Framework on an annual basis to make recommendations aligned to strategic priorities and workload implications for staff.

Student Experience, Education and Outcomes

- Receive oversight from the Education and Outcomes Committee - strategic initiatives, policies, plans and procedural developments of the academic elements relating to learning, teaching, academic professional development and student outcomes. These include those in relation to

participation in the University's response to external regulatory requirements. For example, this includes (but is not limited to) the St Mary's Access and Participation Plan (APP), as well as the Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF).

- Receive strategic oversight of all elements impacting on and driving an outstanding student experience, successes and academic support. This includes in relation to enhancing the quality, impact, coordination and delivery of all student experience activities at the University.
- Receive from the Education and Student Outcomes Committee - oversight of progress to meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and quality indicators.
- Receive bi-annual report(s) on Apprenticeships, which includes information on delivery of existing pathways, the development of new ones, progress against key metrics (retention, performance, progression to EPA, EPA success rates, complaints etc.).
- Promote the integration of academic and professional services to enhance educational and student outcomes.
- Make recommendations on strategic initiatives that support inclusive and high-quality teaching and learning.
- Receive impact report for EDI initiatives in relation to academic activities and promote support of the university's commitments on relevant charters, strategy and plans.

Quality Assurance and Academic Standards

- Keeping to the forefront of educational practice and the OfS approach to regulating quality and standards, as well as those of external regulatory bodies - receive annual Quality Assurance report for each Faculty with oversight on key processes and outcomes from these.
- Receive Deans report with an overview of progress against actions from the annual programme review process to ensure quality enhancement and promote a culture of continuous improvement aligned to OfS expectations.
- Approve revisions to Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook as well as, the University's Academic Regulations for all taught programmes.

Student Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communication

- Monitor and evaluate the performance of student recruitment, admissions, and marketing activities aligned with University Vision and KPIs.
- Receive updates and strategic guidance on enhancing student recruitment and admissions.
- Oversee the development and implementation of marketing and communication plans to promote the University's brand and reputation.
- Receive updates on changes in the Higher Education landscape, particularly regarding international policy, promoting global engagement, and student recruitment.
- Monitor and report on annual conversion rates for programmes.

St Mary's Vision and Values

- Operate to promote a sense of community based on respect for equal opportunities and diversity in line with St Mary's Vision and Values of Inclusiveness, Generosity of Spirit, Respect and Excellence.

5. Method of Operation

Committee meetings will be held five times per academic year, lasting two hours via Microsoft Teams. The meeting dates for 2025-26 are as follows:

Meeting Date	Meeting time(s)	Papers deadline	Paper circulation
Wed 15 Oct 2025	10:30 – 12:30pm	Wed 1 Oct 2025	Wed 8 Oct 2025
Wed 10 Dec 2025	10:30 – 12:30pm	Wed 26 Nov 2025	Wed 3 Dec 2025
Wed 25 Feb 2026	10:30 – 12:30pm	Wed 11 Feb 2026	Wed 18 Feb 2026
Wed 1 Apr 2026	10:30 – 12:30pm	Wed 18 Mar 2026	Wed 25 Mar 2026
Wed 24 June 2026	9:30 – 11:30pm	Wed 10 June 2026	Wed 17 June 2026
Wed 8 July 2026	10:30 – 12:30pm	Wed 24 June 2026	Wed 1 July 2026

Receipt of authored papers for the meeting will be two weeks prior to each meeting. All papers must be accompanied by a completed coversheet and submitted to the Committee Secretariat. A standardised coversheet template is available.

To allow members adequate time to prepare for the meeting, the agenda and papers will be collated and circulated one week prior to the meeting.

Minutes from the meeting will be noted by members of the following Committees:

- Academic Board
- Portfolio Development Committee (PDC)
- Academic Partnerships Committee (APC)
- Education and Student Outcomes Committee (ESOC)
- Faculty Quality, Curriculum and Student Experience Committees (F/QCSEs)

6. Delegated Power of the Committee

N/A

7. Governance and Standing Orders

The Committee operates in accordance with the University's Governance Framework and Standing Orders of Academic Board.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are reviewed annually to reflect changes to academic governance, strategic priorities and regulatory frameworks.

- Reviewed by the Academic Strategy, Portfolio and Student Experience Committee 23.07.2025
- Approved by Academic Board 26.11.2025
- For annual review thereafter to ensure the committee is responsive to relevant internal and external changes.