

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Thursday 28 February 2013

Present: Professor A Caesar (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Professor S Jacka, Professor N Johnson, Professor J Labbe, Mr S Lamb, Professor R Leng, Dr J Kidd, Dr J Robinson, Dr P Taylor

Apologies: Ms A Chowcat, Mr J Entwistle, Professor N Holdsworth, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jenainati, Dr D Lamburn, Professor A Reeve, Professor S Swain, Professor P Thomas

In attendance: Mr R McIntyre, Dr L Meadows

67/12-13 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2013, previously circulated and available on the Governance website at:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/atoz/aqsc/minutes/>, be approved.

68/12-13 Chair's Action

Revisions to the Initial Teacher Education Programme (minute AQSC 60/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Committee, at its meeting on 31 January 2013, considered a paper from the Institute of Education regarding revisions to the Initial Teacher Education Programme (Paper GFSS.97/12-13), and resolved that permission be given to the Chair to take action on behalf of the Committee to approve proposals relating to the Schools Direct PGCE, noting that further details would be provided by the Institute of Education;
- (b) That the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 7 February 2013, considered a proposal from the Institute of Education to revise the delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at the University of Warwick, as part of a collaborative arrangement to deliver the School Direct and School Direct (Salaried) initiatives, as set out in papers GFSS 97/12-13 and CFDLSC 60-66/12-13, and resolved that the proposal from the Institute of Education to revise the delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at the University of Warwick, as part of a collaborative arrangement to deliver the School Direct and School Direct (Salaried) initiatives be approved by the Chair, subject to satisfactory information being presented by the Institute at the meeting of the Chairs of the Graduate

Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Board of Graduate Studies and the Sub-Committee scheduled to take place on 8 February 2013, noting the views of the Sub-Committee that:

- (i) The issues of principle arising from the proposal that the University collaborate with an alliance of partner schools would need to be fully considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee;
 - (ii) A robust framework for quality assurance of partner schools and external tutors would be required.
- (c) That consideration of the proposal was still on-going, but that the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve:
- (i) The issues of principle arising from the proposal that the University collaborate with an alliance of partner schools;
 - (ii) That, exceptionally, the Institute of Education be permitted to make offers to students pending final approval of the collaborative arrangements by the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee.

69/12-13 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

That, the Senate, at its meeting on 6 February 2013, resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved (draft minute S 49/12-13 referred):

Postgraduate Students Taking Undergraduate Modules;
Pass Degrees;
Collaborative Course Proposals.

70/12-13 Chair's Business

(a) National Student Survey 2013

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) setting out the latest response rates for the National Student Survey 2013 by department and providing comparative data for 2012 (paper AQSC 41/12-13, noting that this was tabled at the meeting).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That, as a result of the considerable variability in response rates across the institution at this stage of the survey, departments with a lower response rate be asked to engage their students with a view to encouraging a greater response;

- (ii) That the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) continue to work with departments to identify best practice in encouraging students to complete the survey, and share this across the institution, noting in particular the desire to maximise response rates amongst international students.

(b) QAA Institutional Review

RECEIVED:

An oral update from the Chair on the QAA Institutional Review visit, noting that the headline findings of the review team would be notified to the Vice Chancellor within two weeks of the end of the review visit, with the full report to follow a month later.

(c) Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence

REPORTED:

That there had been a large increase in the number of nominations received from staff and students for the Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence.

71/12-13 Report on Student Academic Complaints and Appeals: Spring Term 2012/13

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Deputy Academic Registrar and the Administrative Officer (Academic Registrar's Office) on academic appeals and complaints by students during the Spring Term 2012/13 (paper AQSC 42/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to amend the Student Academic Complaints Procedure, as set out in section 2(b) or paper AQSC 42/12-13, not be approved in the proposed form, noting that the committee recognised the need to make the amendments to ensure alignment with the relevant chapter of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, but that further clarification may be required to ensure that:
 - (i) It is clear to complainants whether there is any deadline within which they might appeal the decision to route their complaint through the Academic Complaints Procedure;
 - (ii) There is no unintended implication in the wording of the proposed amendment that such an appeal might initiate a separate parallel complaints process, and that the options to mitigate against this concern by providing greater clarity about the routing of complaints be fully explored.
- (b) That guidance might be made available for staff and students about the routing of complaints, particularly those received from postgraduate students which are ultimately routed through the

Graduate School, to ensure that all complaints can be dealt with in a timely manner.

72/12-13 Harmonisation of the First Year Boards of Examiners' Conventions (draft unconfirmed minute BUGS 30/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Undergraduate Studies Committees of the respective Faculty Boards, at their meetings of 30th January 2013, considered the harmonised conventions drafted by the Chair of the First Year Boards of Examiners' Working Group;
- (b) That in light of comments received from the Undergraduate Studies Committees of the Faculty Boards and a written report from the Sub-Faculty of Science, the First Year Boards of Examiners' Working Group met again on 15th February 2013 and considered a further draft of the harmonised conventions;
- (c) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, the Board of Undergraduate Studies considered the revised draft of the First Year Boards of Examiners' Conventions (paper BUGS 18/12-13) and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposed First Year Boards of Examiners' Conventions, as set out in paper BUGS 18/12-13, be approved, it being noted that:
 - (i) The new conventions would apply to first-year students first enrolling with the University in the academic year 2013/14, and that the existing conventions would apply to students first enrolling on the first-year of their course before then;
 - (ii) That departments be asked to identify "required core modules" in good time for both their first-year entrants in the Autumn Term 2013 and for the First-Year Boards;

CONSIDERED:

The revised draft of the First Year Boards of Examiners' Conventions (paper BUGS 18/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revisions to the First Year Boards of Examiners' Conventions, as set out in paper BUGS 18/12-13, be approved by the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, subject to:

- (a) Consideration of minor amendments to the Conventions to clarify the differences in procedure expected at June or September Boards of Examiners' meetings;
- (b) Further consideration of the date of introduction of the policy, and how this might impact on students on a period of temporary withdrawal or who are resitting without residence at the point of introduction;

- (c) Further discussion of the Conventions with the Centre for Lifelong Learning to discuss the implications for students on part-time degrees.

73/12-13 Undergraduate Degree Classification Conventions (minute 125/11-12 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Committee, at its meeting on 20 June 2012, considered a proposal “in principle” to amend the Undergraduate Degree Classification Conventions (paper AQSC 105/11-12) and recommended (to the Senate) that the proposed “in principle” amendments [to the conventions] be approved, noting that further work would need to be undertaken on the detail of the implementation;
- (b) That the Senate, at its meeting on 4 July 2012, resolved that the proposed ‘in principle’ amendments to the Undergraduate Assessment Conventions as set out in Paper AQSC.105/11-12 be approved subject to further amendments being made in the light of comments received and wider consultation, noting that further work would need to be undertaken on the detail of the implementation;
- (c) That the Sub-Faculty of Science, at its meeting on 30 January 2013, resolved that, given the extensive consultation with Departments on replacement to the “Seymour” formula, a paper [setting out the proposals] would now be produced to go forward to the Board of Undergraduate Studies;
- (d) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, the Board of Undergraduate Studies considered a note from the Sub-Faculty of Science (paper BUGS 21/12-13) concerning the proposed replacement for the “Seymour” Formula in the Faculty of Science, and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposal be approved, noting that the second method of calculation of a candidate’s mean mark should be amended to read “The arithmetic mean of the subset of whole modules, weighted according to their credit weighting, which minimally satisfies the course regulations and results in the highest mark” [amendment underlined];

CONSIDERED:

Proposed amendments to the Undergraduate Degree Classification Conventions (paper AQSC 43/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed amendments to the Undergraduate Degree Classification Conventions, as set out in paper AQSC 43/12-13, be approved in principle and form the basis of a wider consultation with the other Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committees in the coming term, noting the views of the Committee that:

- (a) It will be necessary to clarify whether the marks for “failed” modules taken as additional credit should be discounted from the calculation of the average where permitted under the proposed convention; *and*
- (b) If fail marks are to be discounted from the calculation of the average as outlined in (a) above, that further analysis be undertaken to ensure that there are no unintended consequences arising from the proposed amendments.

74/12-13 Update: Institutional Teaching and Learning Review

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) updating on actions taken to date in response to the recommendations to the Committee arising from the 2011 Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (paper AQSC 44/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, and that a further update be made available next academic year.

75/12-13 Higher Education Review: A More Risk-Based Approach to the Quality Assurance of Higher Education in England (minutes 42/12-13 and 5(c)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 20 June 2012, the Committee considered:
 - (i) The HEFCE consultation on the introduction of a more risk-based approach to quality assurance in higher education in England (excluding Annexes) (paper AQSC 85/11-12);
 - (ii) A draft University response to the consultation document by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) and an oral report on issues arising from a consultation event held on 18 June 2012 (paper AQSC 109/11-12);

and resolved that comments on the University response be provided to the Secretary, noting that the Steering Committee would approve a final response

- (b) That at its meeting on 23 July 2012, the Steering Committee resolved that the draft University response to the HEFCE consultation on improving quality assurance in higher education as set out in SC 422/11-12 be revised in light of discussion at the meeting, prior to submission by the deadline of 31 July 2012 (minute SC 599/11-12 referred);
- (c) That, at its meeting on 30 October 2013, it was reported to the Committee that the revised consultation response was submitted to

the HEFCE as set out in paper SC 422/11-12 (revised), and that the outcome of the consultation had been released on 25 October 2012 and would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;

- (d) That, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, the Committee received the HEFCE report a Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance: outcomes and next steps 2012/27 (paper AQSC 32/12-13).

CONSIDERED:

A QAA consultation document on a new process of “Higher Education Review”, in response to the HEFCE consultation and report, as follows:

- (e) Background to the Consultation Document (paper AQSC 45/12-13);
- (f) Higher Education Review – A Handbook for Higher Education Providers (draft for consultation) (paper AQSC 46/12-13);
- (g) HEFCE’s invitation to the QAA to implement a more risk-based approach to the quality assurance of higher education in England (paper AQSC 47/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (h) That the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) was due to attend a round-table discussion event on the proposed Higher Education Review process;
- (i) That a draft response to the consultation be prepared by the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office, taking into account the views of the Committee noted at the meeting.

76/12-13 Draft Policy on Setting of Examination and Assignment Questions

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 17 May 2012, the Committee considered a report from the Warwick Business School on an issue relating to DLMBA examinations (Paper AQSC.75/11-12) and resolved:

- (a) That the measures put in place by the Warwick Business School to prevent a similar incident occurring again were satisfactory.
- (b) That guidance be provided at University level on the setting of examination questions.

CONSIDERED:

A draft policy on the setting of examination and assignment questions (paper AQSC 38/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a formal policy on the setting of examination and assignment questions not be adopted, noting that:
 - (i) Prohibiting the re-use of examination and assessment questions *verbatim* uniformly would not be feasible in certain disciplines, particularly the Sciences and Medicine;
 - (ii) It would not be desirable to adopt a similar policy to cover both examination and assessment questions, given the differences between the two;
 - (iii) It would not be viable to expect external peer reviewers to check for the risk of re-use of examination questions;
 - (iv) The introduction of a formal policy was likely to introduce for departments more challenges than it promised to solve;
- (b) That guidance be prepared for circulation to academic departments, alerting them to the key points to be aware of from the original case to ensure that similar issues can be avoided in future.

77/12-13 Feedback Turnaround Times

CONSIDERED:

An update on the timing of the provision of feedback to students on assessed work (paper AQSC 48/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the guidance be updated to provide clearer information regarding the University's policy on electronic coursework submission and subsequent feedback;
- (b) That the policy and guidance be recirculated to departments for clarification ahead of the next census date in April 2013.

78/12-13 Assessment and Feedback Practices (minutes 12/12-13 and 98/11-12 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 17 May 2012, the Committee considered a report from the AQSC Sub-Group established to consider the outcomes of the Institutional Review of Teaching and Learning departmental meetings (paper AQSC 68/11-12) and the recommendations contained therein, and resolved (*inter alia*) that the following recommendation of the Sub-Group relating to the 50% Examination Rule be approved:

That departments be consulted on current practice to inform a review of the regulation with a view to identifying departmental approaches to assessment methods and any exemptions to the regulation;

- (b) That, at its meeting on 30 October 2012, the Committee considered a draft policy on the timing of feedback on assessment (paper AQSC 12/12-13) and resolved (*inter alia*) that the Committee supported in principle the provision of feedback on examinations and dissertations in the Policy but that further consideration be given to how this might be achieved and therefore how these elements might be reflected in the draft Policy;

RECEIVED:

A copy of a survey, sent to departments from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (Quality and Standards), seeking further information on departmental practice in relation to the 50% examination rule, feedback on examinations and dissertations and moderation of marks, with a view to informing future policy development in these areas (paper AQSC 49/12-13).

79/12-13 QAA: New Subject Benchmark Statement for Honours degrees in Counselling and Psychotherapy

RECEIVED:

A new subject benchmark statement from the QAA for Honours degrees in Counselling and Psychotherapy (paper AQSC 50/12-13), noting that this would also be communicated to the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

80/12-13 Pass Degrees (minutes BUGS 29/12-13 and AQSC 37/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Committee, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, considered a paper by the QAA Academic Lead Coordinator and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on pass degrees (paper AQC 31/12-13) and resolved:
- (i) That the proposed course of action and timescales as set out in paper AQSC 31/12-13 be approved;
 - (ii) That the amended course approval form for ordinary degrees be approved as set out in Annex A of paper AQSC 31/12-13;
- (b) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, considered an oral report from the Chair on the outcome of the meeting of the sub-committee of the Board, held on 14th February 2013, to consider the course proposals and course specifications for Pass degree variants of Honours degrees required by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, and resolved that the Board ratified the approval of the course proposals and course specifications for Pass degree variants by the sub-committee, noting

that dialogue was continuing with some departments to make good a small number of omissions in the documentation submitted.

81/12-13 New Undergraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved the following new courses:

- BA in Modern Languages
- BA in English and Hispanic Studies
- BA in German and Sociology
- BA in German and Theatre Studies
- BA in German and Film Studies
- BA in Language, Culture and Communication

82/12-13 Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved the following revised course:

- Warwick MBChB

83/12-13 Discontinued Undergraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved a proposal to discontinue the following undergraduate courses:

- BEng Systems Engineering
- MEng Systems Engineering

84/12-13 New Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved the following new courses:

- MA Educational Innovation (Early Years)
- MA for Research in Italian Studies
- MA for Research in German Studies
- MA for Research in Hispanic Studies

85/12-13 Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

(a) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies that the Chair had taken action, on behalf of the Board, to approved the following revised course:

- LLM in International Development Law and Human Rights

(b) That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved the following revised courses:

- PGCE (Primary): All Variants
- PGCE (Early Years)
- PhD in Finance
- MSc Health Sciences (Plastic Surgery)
- MA for Research in Film and Television Studies

86/12-13 Discontinued Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, approved a proposal to discontinue the following postgraduate courses:

- PGCE (Secondary): English
- PGCE (Secondary): Drama

87/12-13 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee will be held at 9.00am on 16 May 2013 in CMR 1.0, University House.