

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Thursday 20 May 2010

Present: Professor A Caesar (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Mr A Bradley, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Easton, Professor S Hand, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jenainati, Ms S Khaku, Professor K Lamberts, Dr D Lamburn, Dr R Moseley, Dr P O'Hare, Professor B Rosamond

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Dr K Flint, Professor N Johnson, Professor K O'Brien

In attendance: Ms K Gray, Ms J Hughes

69/09-10 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2010 be approved.

70/09-10 Matters arising

(a) Assessment on Warwick Manufacturing Group courses (minute 69(b)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That, at its meeting on 14 May 2009, it was reported to the Committee that:

(A) That the Chair convened a small group to work with Warwick Manufacturing Group to review mechanisms employed on WMG overseas courses for assuring that Warwick standards of academic quality and fairness are maintained in the supervision and marking of projects/dissertations;

(B) That at the meeting the group and colleagues from Warwick Manufacturing Group agreed the following actions:

- (1) That Warwick Manufacturing Group write to the supervisor involved in the individual case which had given rise to a student complaint to reiterate the importance of adhering to Warwick's standards in marking and the provision of feedback to students;
- (2) That Warwick Manufacturing Group bring forward proposals to rebalance weightings attached to different aspects of project assessment;

- (3) That Warwick Manufacturing Group draw up a framework with clear milestones against which to assess students' progress and project management achievements, giving clarity to supervisors and students, and providing an evidence base for moderation;
- (4) That Warwick Manufacturing Group draw up a framework for the assessment of students' oral presentations and oral exams, including guidance on expectations that the mark for the oral exam is generally unlikely to be significantly higher than the mark for the written dissertation.

(C) That the Academic Director of Graduate Studies, Warwick Manufacturing Group, had written to the supervisor involved along the lines agreed at the meeting.

and resolved (*inter alia*):

- (D) That the Committee be informed of further actions taken by Warwick Manufacturing Group in due course;
- (ii) That WMG has reviewed project assessment; this is now completed electronically using an excel spreadsheet. Guidance to supervisors has also been revised in line with the new spreadsheet.
- (iii) That the Department has not yet managed to identify mechanisms for tracking project progress, but the new mark sheet contains more specific criteria against which both the progress and oral can be judged.
- (iv) That these new processes were introduced as a trial in the UK last September and have been rolled out to the overseas centres this March.

RESOLVED:

That the feedback on action taken to date and the outstanding issue of tracking project progress be referred for consideration to the Collaborative Flexible and Distributive Learning Sub-Committee.

- (b) Assessment Conventions (minute 56/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 3 March 2010, the Committee considered proposals from the Assessment Conventions Working Group concerning proposed amendments to the Honours degree classification convention for students joining the University from autumn 2008 onwards, paper AQSC 44/09-10, together with an additional response received from the Department of Computer Science, paper AQSC 51/09-10, and a proposed revised version of the Seymour formula, paper AQSC 54/09-10 (tabled), noting that Science departments had been consulted on the revised formula, which,

pending further discussions, broadly maintained the status quo, including the application of the Seymour formula in cases where students have taken below the normal credit load.
and resolved:

- (A) That the Committee was of the view that the proposals concerning the minimum number of credits to be passed for a Warwick degree (as set out in paper AQSC 44/09-10), including a staged implementation for the Science Faculty, represented the most fair and robust mechanism possible for harmonising different practices across the Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Sciences.
 - (B) That the recommendation from the Assessment Conventions Working Group that Regulation 8 be amended so that a student who fails a module but passes on resit will carry forward a pass mark of 40% (rather than the original fail mark), was the most fair option under the University's current degree Regulations and examination arrangements.
 - (C) That, whilst recognising resourcing constraints for academic and administrative departments, the Committee was strongly of the view that the University should investigate the possibility of offering resits with residence to students who fail second and other intermediate year modules, noting that any proposed changes to existing arrangements could not be implemented in the short term.
 - (D) That it be noted that, if the proposed amendments to the 2008 Classification Convention were approved by the Senate, departments would be consulted in the summer term in relation to:
 - (1) the conventions to apply to joint degrees, noting that different conventions on the number of credits to be passed for a degree would apply in the Faculty of Science in respect of students joining the University in autumn 2008, 2009 and 2010;
 - (2) a number of issues connected to additional credit and the application of the Seymour formula, including: whether the Seymour formula should apply in all cases where students are permitted to take additional credit; whether the formula should be applied where students take below the normal credit load; and the ability of joint degree students to take additional credit and the application of the Seymour formula;
 - (3) proposals for University-wide progression requirements to be included within conventions for intermediate Boards of Examiners (ie Boards other than first and final year Boards), to apply to students who joined Warwick in autumn 2009 or later.
- (ii) That, at its meeting of 17 March 2010, the Senate considered proposed amendments to the 2008 honours degree classification

convention (S.25/09-10) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing), and resolved:

- (A) That the proposed amendments to the 2008 Honours Degree Classification Convention and University Regulation 8 Governing First Degrees as set out in S.25/09-10 and below be approved:
 - (1) Additional classification conventions for the following degrees:
 - (a) BA History, Literature and Cultures of the Americas;
 - (b) LLB European Law;
 - (c) First Degrees in the School of Engineering.
 - (2) Revisions to the Convention relating to the Seymour Formula;
 - (3) Amendments to Regulation 8 to permit students to carry forward the 40 percent pass mark achieved via a resit examination.
- (B) That proposals concerning the classification conventions applicable to joint degrees, issues relating to additional credit and the Seymour formula and proposals for University-wide progression requirements to apply to students who joined Warwick in autumn 2009 or later be submitted for the consideration of the Senate in the summer term.

(unconfirmed Senate minute 65/09-10)
- (iii) That the Chair wrote to Heads of Departments on 19 April 2010 asking for responses on the following issues:
 - (A) classification conventions applicable to joint degrees;
 - (B) issues relating to additional credit and the Seymour formula;
 - (C) proposals for University-wide progression requirements to apply to students who joined Warwick in autumn 2009 or later.
- (iv) That responses would be considered at a meeting of the Assessment Conventions Working Group to be held on 7 June 2010, with a view to proposals being put forward for consideration by the Committee at its meeting to be held on 23 June 2010.
- (v) That responses had not yet been received from all departments, noting that to ensure that the classification conventions are clear for students on joint degrees involving departments in the Science Faculty and one or both of the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, departments should be strongly encouraged to submit proposals in time for the meeting of the Working Group to enable classification conventions to be approved by the end of the summer term.

RESOLVED:

That Departments be urged to provide their responses to the memo of 19 April 2010 as soon as possible in order that they can be considered by the Assessment Conventions Working Group at its meeting on 7 June 2010.

- (c) Monitoring Student Progress and Attendance (minute 11/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, its meeting on 3 November 2009, the Committee considered a report on proposed departmental monitoring structures submitted in accordance with the new Good Practice Guide on Monitoring Student Attendance and Progress, paper AQSC 20/09-10 and resolved (*inter alia*):
- (A) That the Chair continue to liaise with individual departments to approve proposed monitoring structures, and that any amendments to departmental monitoring structures proposed during the course of the year be referred to the Chair for consideration.
- (B) That departments be asked during the summer term to reflect on the first year of operation of the new monitoring system.
- (ii) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing) had taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve the monitoring points for courses of study proposed by departments.
- (iii) That a review of the implementation of the scheme would be undertaken this term, with a view to reporting the outcomes to the Committee at its next meeting. Student Records were also seeking feedback from support staff in departments on the electronic system for reporting absences.

- (d) HEFCE Consultation (minute 53/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 3 March 2010, the Committee received the draft consultation response, paper SC.213/09-10, it being noted that the draft response would be further revised to incorporate comments arising from the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 22 February and that the final version of the response would be made available to members of the [Academic Quality and Standards] Committee.

RECEIVED:

The final version of the consultation response submitted to the HEFCE (Paper SC.213/09-10 (revised)), noting that a copy of the document was available at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/externalconsultation/>)

71/09-10 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting of 17 March 2010 the Senate resolved:

- (a) That recommendations under the following headings be approved:
 - (i) Change to Regulation 37, it being noted that the Council would consider the recommendation for approval at its meeting on 19 May 2010.
 - (ii) Change to Ordinance 13, it being noted that the Council would consider the recommendation for approval at its meetings on 19 May and 14 July 2010.
 - (iii) Collaborative Course Proposals.
- (b) That proposals concerning the classification conventions applicable to joint degrees, issues relating to additional credit and the Seymour formula and proposals for University-wide progression requirements to apply to students who joined Warwick in autumn 2009 or later be submitted for the consideration of the Senate in the summer term.

(unconfirmed minute)

72/09-10 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That the Chair has taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve a response to the QAA consultation paper on the Evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure, the deadline for which was 7 May 2010 (Paper AQSC.69/09-10(revised)).

73/09-10 Review of Constitution and Terms of Reference

CONSIDERED:

A report on the meeting of the Working Group to consider the role, terms of reference and constitution of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and its sub-committees held on 10 May 2010, as set out in Paper AQSC.58/09-10, it being noted that the intention was to allow the Committee to address issues it was not currently focusing on whilst retaining a rigorous quality assurance framework, recognising that detailed scrutiny of the proposals, reviews and reports would still need to be undertaken.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the SSLC Handbook be revised to recommend that departments report to SSLCs on the outcomes of the NSS and the actions taken in response to issues raised in the NSS.
- (b) That the revised terms of reference of eLSG be approved as set out in EL.4/09-10 (revised).

- (c) That mechanisms for streamlining the handling of AQSC's business continue to be identified.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

- (d) That further consideration be given to including the Senior Tutor as a member of one of the student focused committees, subject to his agreement.
- (e) That departments be permitted to see and respond to External Examiners' comments before reports are considered by the senior management of the University.
- (f) That consideration of External Examiners' reports, Annual Review reports, periodic review reports and SSLC reports be devolved to the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the Board of Graduate Studies, together with responsibility for intervening in departments where there were issues of concern. Serious issues of concern would also be raised with AQSC, although it was noted that the definition of what constituted a serious issue would be determined initially as cases arose.
- (g) That requests for variations to the APL policy should be considered by the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the Board of Graduate Studies and reported to AQSC only where there was an issue of principle.
- (h) That the constitution of the Board of Undergraduate Studies be reviewed to ensure that the membership adequately reflected the increased level of responsibility it would hold, including having greater involvement in enhancement activities.
- (i) That the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies would attend Faculty Sub-Committees on request and would work closely with those committees on quality assurance matters.
- (j) That AQSC's responsibility for the oversight of the implementation of the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy be reflected in its Terms of Reference.
- (k) That AQSC have more specific responsibility for reflecting on the range of teaching provision offered by the University.
- (l) That the role of Quality Enhancement Working Group in relation to the Student Experience Committee and in particular to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Teaching would need to be considered further. This might include, for instance, amalgamating the QEWG into an IATL Steering Group.
- (m) That the level of risk associated with collaborative provision warranted the retention of the Collaborative Flexible and Distributive Learning Committee with its specific responsibility for overseeing this area of provision, although its precise remit would need to be redefined, noting that it currently had oversight of, for instance, part-time degrees.
- (n) That the draft revised terms of reference for the Committee be approved.

CONSIDERED:

A report on departmental responses to the consultation on course and module approval processes as set out in Paper AQSC.59/09-10).

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the following proposals be approved in principle, noting that there would be further consultation with the Faculty Boards and the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, that in principle approval would be sought from the Steering Committee and that consideration would be given by the Committee to further detailed proposals at its next meeting.

Module Approval

- (a) That the approval of new modules and amendments to modules be devolved to academic departments for the academic year 2010/11, with data being provided directly to administrative departments for the setting up of modules.
- (b) That Departments be requested to report approvals of all new modules to the Faculty Board Sub-Committees.
- (c) That Faculty Sub-Committees undertake systematic sampling of proposals to monitor for any quality concerns and undertake internal audits of quality assurance processes and the quality of approved module proposals. Issues of concern would be raised with the Department by the Faculty Sub-Committee, being escalated to the Faculty Chair as appropriate.
- (d) That the form for new and revised modules be amended to separate the information required for academic approval and for administrative purposes. This should be complemented by a checklist of issues departments should be addressing in scrutinising proposals.
- (e) That any concerns related to the late or inaccurate submission of information to administrative departments be addressed by the Academic Registrar.
- (f) That the responsibilities of the 'home' department for joint degrees as set out in the draft 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide' be amended to include appropriate consultation with partner departments on any changes to modules.
- (g) That the proposal form for new modules include a statement on the minimum number of student registrations the module would require in order to run.
- (h) That the end of the Easter vacation be set as the deadline both for the approval of new and revised modules and the submission of data to administrative departments to enable the setting up of new modules. Exceptions would only be accepted when modules were being proposed by new staff joining the University after this deadline and

where modules had to be amended due to unforeseen changes in student numbers. It was noted that this may be problematic for some department but should not be insurmountable and would be beneficial to students selecting their modules in the summer term for the following year.

- (i) That standardisation of assessment of modules for part-year students would be difficult to achieve and should be considered further.

Course Approval

- (j) That the existing route for course approval, including collaborative courses, be retained.
- (k) That revisions to courses be approved by the Faculty Chair.
- (l) That the conversion of a module to a Postgraduate Award be approved at departmental level from 2010/11.
- (m) That course approval documentation be amended to separate information required for academic approval of proposals from information required for technical purposes, although both would need to be submitted together.
- (n) That it be recommended to the Academic Activities Sub-Committee (AASC) that business cases for new undergraduate courses be required for approval by AASC, as is currently the case for postgraduate courses.

Information Systems

- (o) That the proposal for an MDI continue to be progressed, together with proposals for an electronic workflow solution for course and module approval, noting the concerns of the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences at any delays in the implementation process. Consideration would need to be given to phased implementation of proposals and giving departments sufficient notice of the input that would be required of them.

75/09-10 Higher Education Achievement Report

CONSIDERED:

A report on the meeting of the Higher Education Achievement Report Project Board held on 10 May 2010, as set out in Paper AQSC.60/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

76/09-10 National Student Survey

CONSIDERED:

A report on response rates to the 2010 NSS survey, as set out in Paper AQSC.61/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That further discussions on how to promote the NSS to students in order to improve response rates be discussed further by the Students' Union, the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat.

77/09-10 Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 8 March 2010, the Steering Committee considered proposals from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience), the Deputy Registrar and the Academic Registrar to establish an Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (Paper SC.244/09-10) and resolved that the Committee endorse the broad rationale and principles for the creation of an Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning at Warwick, it being noted that financial case had been submitted to the Financial Plan Sub-Committee for its consideration.
- (b) That approval had now been given for the establishment of an Institute for Advanced Learning and Teaching to proceed.

78/09-10 Academic Statistics

CONSIDERED:

A report on the teaching and learning related data in Academic Statistics 2009, as set out in Paper AQSC.62/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

79/09-10 PSRB engagements

OFSTED Inspection

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Institute of Education and the Centre for Lifelong Learning had undergone an OFSTED inspection of their initial teacher training provision at Primary, Secondary, and FE levels, and of the Graduate Teacher Programme in the week commencing 10 May 2010.

- (b) That the OFSTED inspection framework had changed significantly in November 2009.
- (c) The initial findings of the panel were largely positive, noting that the categorisation of outcome should remain confidential to the institution until the publication of the report.

AACSB Accreditation

REPORTED:

That the Warwick Business School had undergone an accreditation visit from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the week commencing 3 May 2010 but details of the outcome had not yet been received.

School of Health and Social Studies

CONSIDERED:

- (d) The report by the General Social Care Council on the reaccreditation of the MA in Social Work, undertaken in May 2009 (Paper AQSC.63/09-10).
- (e) The Department's Action Plan in response to the report (Paper AQSC.64/09-10).

RESOLVED:

- (f) That the report and Action Plan be noted.
- (g) That the report and Action Plan also be referred to the Board of Graduate Studies for consideration.

80/09-10 Amendment to Regulation 12

CONSIDERED:

A proposal to amend Regulation 12, as set out in Paper AQSC.65/09-10.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the amendment be approved.

81/09-10 Quality Enhancement Working Group: Joint Degrees (draft unconfirmed QEWG minute 12/09-10(e) referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That it was reported to the Quality Enhancement Working Group at its meeting on 6 May 2010 that, at its previous meeting on 9 February 2010, the Group considered draft 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide', paper QEWG 23/08-

09 (revised 2), draft guidance on SSLC arrangements for students on joint or cross-departmental courses, paper QEWG 24/08-09, and a covering paper from the Assistant Secretary concerning feedback from departments, paper QEWG 5/09-10, and resolved:

- (i) That the draft 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide' be approved as set out in paper QEWG 23/08-09 (revised 2), subject to the amendments noted at the meeting, noting that the Group was of the view that even where responsibility for management of joint courses is divided equally between departments, one of the departments should be designated as the 'home' department to ensure that students have a clear point of contact when queries or issues need to be resolved.
 - (ii) That the draft guidance on SSLC arrangements for students on joint or cross-departmental courses be approved as set out in paper QEWG 24/08-09.
 - (iii) That the draft 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide', paper QEWG 23/08-09 (revised 2) and draft guidance on SSLC arrangements for students on joint or cross-departmental courses, paper QEWG 24/08-09, be circulated to SSLC representatives for comment, with a view to the Group considering final versions of the Good Practice Guide and SSLC guidance at its meeting in the summer term and recommending them for approval to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, for implementation at the beginning of the academic year 2010-11.
- (b) That the Quality and Enhancement Working Group considered a report from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on responses received from the SSLCs as set out in paper QEWG.9/09-10
- (c) That the Quality and Enhancement Working Group recommended to the AQSC:
- (i) That the 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide', as set out in QEWG 9/09-10 Appendix 2, be approved for implementation in 2010-11, subject to the amendment proposed in the paper being made.
 - (ii) That the 'Student-Staff Liaison Committee Arrangements for Students on Joint or Cross-Departmental Courses', as set out in QEWG 9/10-11, Appendix 3, be approved for implementation and inclusion in the SSLC Handbook for 2010-11.
 - (iii) That the Students' Union be invited to consult with students at the end of the spring term 2010-11 with a view to assessing the early impacts of the Good Practice Guide/SSLC Guidance, it being noted:
 - (A) That the results of this consultation could be considered by AQSC in the summer term 2010-11 and any recommendations discussed with Course Directors at

the annual meeting anticipated in the Good Practice Guide.

- (B) That proportionality would need to be applied in the application of the Good Practice Guide, given that the numbers of students on joint and cross-departmental courses would be low in some departments.

(Draft unconfirmed minute)

CONSIDERED:

- (d) The 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide', as set out in QEWG 9/09-10 Appendix 2, for implementation in 2010-11.
- (f) The 'Student-Staff Liaison Committee Arrangements for Students on Joint or Cross-Departmental Courses', as set out in QEWG 9/10-11, Appendix 3, for implementation and inclusion in the SSLC Handbook for 2010-11.

RESOLVED:

- (g) That the 'Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses: A Good Practice Guide' be approved for implementation in 2010-11, subject to the revision agreed in minute 73/09-10(f) being made.
- (h) That the 'Student-Staff Liaison Committee Arrangements for Students on Joint or Cross-Departmental Courses' be approved for implementation and inclusion in the SSLC Handbook for 2010-11.

82/09-10 Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy

CONSIDERED:

A proposal to permit all students transferring to the University of Warwick from the University of Reading with effect from 1 August 2010 on the Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and MA in Career Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education and the Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and MA in Management of Student Work Experience, to receive a Warwick award, as set out in Paper AQSC.70/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved.

83/09-10 New and Revised Courses

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 29 April 2010 resolved that the following new courses be approved:

- (i) MSc in Analytical Science: Methods and Instrumental Techniques
 - (ii) MSc in Mathematics and Statistics
- (b) That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 29 April 2010 resolved that the following revised courses be approved:
- (i) Masters in Medical Education
 - (ii) Diploma in Applied Management, incorporating a change in name to the Graduate Diploma in Applied Management

(Draft unconfirmed minute)

84/09-10 Erasmus Mundus

REPORTED:

That, at an ad hoc meeting on 15 March 2010, the Chairs of those committees normally involved in considering proposals for new collaborative courses, convened to collectively consider under Chair's action the proposals which were to be submitted to the European Commission's competition for recognition and funding as Erasmus Mundus courses. The "Erasmus Mundus Grand Committee" made recommendations as set out in the minutes of that Committee (Paper AQSC.66/09-10).

85/09-10 CETL final evaluation reports

RECEIVED:

- (a) The final self-evaluation report from the CAPITAL Centre (Paper AQSC.67/09-10)
- (b) The final self-evaluation report from the Reinvention Centre (Paper AQSC.68/09-10)

86/09-10 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee will be held at 9am on Wednesday 23 June 2010 in the Council Chamber.