

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Wednesday 24 October 2007

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Professor L Bridges, Professor J Davis, Professor A Easton, Dr K Flint, Professor M Harrison, Professor K Lamberts, Professor R Lindley, Professor K O'Brien, Dr P O'Hare, Mr P Ptashko, Dr P Roberts

Apologies: Ms S Bennett, Mr J Kirby, Dr R Moseley, Professor E Peile

In attendance: Miss J Bradfield, Professor T Docherty (for item 8/07-08), Dr H Kinnear (for item 8/07-08), Dr J Moss

1/07-08 Terms of Reference, Constitution, Membership

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Committee for 2007-08 be approved as set out in paper AQSC 1/07-08, subject to minor amendments to reflect the renaming of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development to the Learning and Development Centre, and the renaming of Staff-Student Liaison Committees to Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

2/07-08 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2007 be approved.

3/07-08 Matters arising

(a) Award of Merit and Starred Distinction on taught Masters courses (minute 38/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That at the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies on 11 October 2007 it was reported:

(A) That the Secretary [of the Board] had conducted a survey of departmental practices in relation to informal merit awards, including information on the criteria currently used by departments, and had learned the following:

(1) That of the seven departments which responded to the survey, none currently awarded Merit;

(2) That only one of these seven departments expressed an interest in being able to award Merit.

(B) That the Secretary had been informed that an informal merit does not appear on a student's transcript.

(ii) That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 11 October 2007 considered current departmental practice in relation to informal merit awards, as outlined above, and resolved that the Board had no objection to the use of informal merit or starred distinctions as a means of recognising student performance within departments or for use in reference letters, noting that there was no support for award of merit and starred distinction at University level.

(BGS minute 20/07-08, unconfirmed)

(b) Summer examination timetable (minute 90(b)/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) had confirmed that examinations on taught postgraduate courses contribute to congestion in the summer examination timetable to a negligible extent.

(c) Erasmus Mundus bids (minute 74/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That the bid from the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy to the European Commission for recognition and support of the new collaborative MA in International Performance Research to be taught in collaboration with the Universities of Amsterdam and Tampere had been successful;

(ii) That the bid from the Department of Economics to the European Commission for recognition and support of the new collaborative MA in Economic Development: Growth, Institutions and History to be taught in collaboration with Lund University, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid and Sciences-Po, Paris had been unsuccessful.

4/07-08

Chair's Action

History of Art: Part-time degree

REPORTED:

That the Chair took action since the last meeting of the Committee to approve a proposal from the Department of the History of Art to introduce a part-time variant of the BA in History of Art, paper AUSC 16/06-07, it being noted that the Chair was acting in place of the Chair

of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That in future items approved by Chair's Action be reported on the agenda for meetings of the Committee, with full copies of the papers available for consultation before and at meetings but not copied for distribution to all members;
- (b) That, given that the Chairs of Boards of Faculties and the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, whose terms of reference include the approval of new courses, are included in the membership of the Committee, there was no need to reintroduce scrutiny by the Committee of course proposals except for collaborative courses or proposals which raise issues of principle.

5/07-08

Chair's Business

QAA Institutional Audit: Academic leadership

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That Professor K O'Brien, Department of English and Collaborative Literary Studies, had been appointed Senior Academic Coordinator for Audit and Enhancement, and would be serving as Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies and of the Quality Enhancement Working Group.

6/07-08

Progress of Committee recommendations

REPORTED:

That the Senate at its meeting on 4 July 2007 resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved:

- (a) Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy;
- (b) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body (PSRB) engagements;
- (c) Mark release policy;
- (d) Cheating in University tests;
- (e) New and extended collaborative courses;
- (f) Amendments to University Regulations;
- (g) HEFCE/QAA Task Group on Quality Assurance and Employer Engagement in Higher Education
- (h) Report on Periodic Review
- (i) External Examiners: Report Forms and Guidance
- (j) Warwick Medical School: MBChB Entry Requirements
- (k) Annual Course Review Report Summaries
- (l) Guidelines on the Use of Postgraduate Students for Teaching

7/07-08

Assessment Conventions and Degree Classification (minute 88(a)/06-07 referred)

RECEIVED:

Memo from the Chair to Heads of Department regarding the pilot phase for the new marking scale for undergraduate modules, paper AQSC 2/07-08, including a report on the Senate's consideration of and resolutions on assessment issues at its meeting on 4 July 2007.

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (a) That most departments in the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies had indicated that they would be participating in the pilot phase for the new marking scale for undergraduate modules, some using the new scale as a shadow for the existing scale, others introducing the new scale across all first-year modules;
- (b) That departments were asked to reflect on the new marking scale at the earliest opportunity in order to inform discussion of the pilot by departments and committees during the Summer Term 2008 ahead of full implementation, if so approved, with effect from 2008-09;
- (c) That work would be started by the Teaching Quality section during the remainder of the Autumn Term to model the potential impact of the new Honours degree classification scheme proposed by the Assessment Conventions Working Group and previously considered by the Committee, in order to inform discussion of the proposed scheme by departments and committees during the Summer Term 2008, ahead of full implementation, if so approved, with effect from students entering the relevant phase of courses in the academic year 2008-09.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That relevant departments inform their Student-Staff Liaison Committees of their involvement in the pilot of the new marking scale, as set out in the memo from the Chair;
- (e) That where departments are marking assessed work on both existing and new scales (as a shadow) students not be informed of their marks on the shadow scale, to avoid confusion, as set out in the memo from the Chair;
- (f) That Dr K Flint provide data to the Chair concerning student performance and results immediately before and after the introduction of the new marking scale in Biological Sciences;
- (g) That the Chair discuss the involvement of students in the evaluation of the pilot of the new marking scale with the Students' Union Deputy President & Education Officer.

8/07-08

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies: Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) report

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meetings on 1 and 8 October 2007 considered the report on the Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, and a response from the department, and resolved (inter alia):

- (a) That responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations relating to teaching and learning issues, including enhancement of the student experience, contained within the Review Report be delegated to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and that the Head of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee for discussion of the Report.
- (b) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee be requested to review and determine whether the Strategic Departmental Review of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies had addressed all the key issues relating to teaching quality assurance and enhancement and whether further review of issues relating to the quality of programmes within the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies was necessary.  
(unconfirmed minute)

CONSIDERED:

A paper prepared by the Secretary of the Steering Committee including those recommendations which related to learning and teaching issues in the report of the Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, along with resolutions of the Steering Committee referring these issues to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to follow up, paper AQSC 11/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That, in order for there to be full consideration of the report's recommendations and of any other matters relating to teaching and learning, it was necessary for the Committee to have access to the full report;
- (d) That, as recommended in Appendix C to the review report, a supplementary review of teaching provision in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies be carried out during the academic year 2007-08, based largely on the documentation prepared by the Department for the Strategic Departmental Review, to ensure that no substantial extra burden is imposed on the Department;

- (e) That it be noted that the need for the supplementary review was in no way a reflection on the Department's preparations for, or engagement with, the SDR;
- (f) That discussions with students be a central part of the supplementary review;
- (g) That a small panel be convened to carry out the supplementary review, to include one external member and two internal panel members, to be appointed following consultation between the Chair, the University Secretary's Office and the Department;
- (h) That it be noted that the Department requested that one of the two UK-based external members from the recent review serve on the panel, in order to provide continuity;
- (i) That the documentation prepared for the Strategic Departmental Review be supplemented by brief updates where relevant, including the Department's response to the SDR report and recommendations, and the National Student Survey results, which were not available at the time of the SDR;
- (j) That the output from the supplementary review be considered as an addendum to the existing SDR report;
- (k) That in the light of the resolution to carry out a supplementary review with a report encompassing the original findings of the SDR report there was no benefit to discussing the substantive findings of the report at the present meeting of the Committee;
- (l) That the updated SDR timetable be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.

RECOMMENDED (to the Steering Committee):

- (m) That future Strategic Departmental Reviews, or the element of them devoted to teaching and learning issues, be held during term-time when a range of students would be available to meet the panel;
- (n) That in future the normal presumption should be that full reports of Strategic Departmental Reviews along with the departmental response be referred to the Committee [AQSC], to allow the Committee [AQSC] to consider issues of teaching and learning in the context of the whole report and other issues raised, and that only in exceptional circumstances should any part of an SDR report be withheld from the Committee [AQSC].

9/07-08

Burgess Group Report on Degree Classification

CONSIDERED:

UUK Information note, covering letter from Professor Bob Burgess and Executive Summary of the final report from the UUK/GuildHE

Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group (the 'Burgess Group'), *Beyond the honours degree classification*, paper AQSC 3/07-08, noting that the full report was available electronically from the UUK website:

[http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/Burgess\\_final.pdf](http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/Burgess_final.pdf)

RESOLVED:

That the Committee continue to consider information regarding the future of Honours degree classifications.

10/07-08

National Student Survey 2007 results

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Briefing paper prepared by the Secretary summarising the University's results in the National Student Survey 2007, paper AQSC 4/06-07-08;
- (b) Memo from the Chair and the Students' Union Deputy President & Education Officer to Heads of Department regarding the University's results in the National Student Survey 2007, paper AQSC 5/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That all departments be strongly encouraged to reflect on the results of the National Student Survey with a view to improving the student learning experience, and that Chairs of Faculty Boards play a leading role in following up on actions taken;
- (d) That a specific question concerning departments' consideration of, and actions taken in response to, NSS results be included in Annual Course Review;
- (e) That departments and central services work together to encourage a higher response rate in the 2008 survey;
- (f) That work continues on reviewing the range of surveys in operation at the University with a view to coordinating them and avoiding survey fatigue;
- (g) That consideration be given to mechanisms for encouraging the sharing of good practice in providing feedback to students on assessed work.

11/07-08

University Strategy; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The University Strategy;
- (b) An oral report from the Chair on the implementation of those sections of the University Strategy concerned with Learning, Teaching and Assessment;

- (c) A draft of the University's new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy, paper AQSC 6/07-08, noting that this draft would also be sent to Heads of Department and Faculty Boards for consultation.

RESOLVED:

That members of the Committee send comments on the draft of the University's new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy to the Secretariat for incorporation into a further draft to be prepared before the next meeting of the Committee.

12/07-08

QAA Institutional Audit

REPORTED

That the University's next QAA Institutional Audit is to take place during the Autumn Term 2008.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A report from the Secretary outlining the timescale of and preparations for Institutional Audit, paper AQSC 7/07-08;
- (b) An oral report from the Chair on academic leadership arrangements ahead of Institutional Audit, noting that Professor K O'Brien, newly appointed as Senior Academic Coordinator for Audit and Enhancement, would be leading preparations with the Quality Enhancement Working Group as a main locus for monitoring preparations.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Audit methodology's particular focus on enhancement, collaborative provision and postgraduate research provision be noted;
- (d) That Professor O'Brien attend the next meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies to discuss Audit preparations;
- (e) That the Chair continue discussions with the Academic Registrar and other colleagues as appropriate concerning the level of administrative support for Audit preparations.

13/07-08

Regulation Changes: Fitness to Practice

CONSIDERED:

Proposed changes to Regulations 34 (for the Determination of Fitness to Practise), 6.3 (Governing Admission to Courses of Study), 13.2 (Governing the Continuation of Registration) and 33 (Governing Temporary Withdrawal from the University) to include new Postgraduate Diplomas in Social Work within Fitness to Practice provisions, paper AQSC 8/07-08.



RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That proposed changes to Regulations 34 (for the Determination of Fitness to Practise), 6.3 (Governing Admission to Courses of Study), 13.2 (Governing the Continuation of Registration) and 33 (Governing Temporary Withdrawal from the University) to include new Postgraduate Diplomas in Social Work within Fitness to Practice provisions be approved as set out in paper AQSC 8/07-08.

14/07-08 Learning and Development Centre

RESOLVED:

That a report from Ms Sue Bennett, Director of the Learning and Development Centre (LDC), on the remit and activities of the Learning and Development Centre (formerly the Centre for Academic and Professional Development), paper AQSC 12/07-08, be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

15/07-08 Transfers of PGR students from other universities

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 11 October 2007 considered proposed amendments to procedures relating to the transfer of students to the University of Warwick from other universities, paper BGS 10/06-07, and resolved that the proposed amendments be approved subject to the inclusion of the stipulation that students should normally secure the agreement of their original university before their transfer to Warwick.

(BGS minute 21/07-08, unconfirmed)

CONSIDERED:

Proposed amendments to procedures relating to the transfer of students to the University of Warwick from other universities, paper BGS 10/07-08 (revised).

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That proposed amendments to procedures relating to the transfer of students to the University of Warwick from other universities be approved as set out in paper BGS 10/07-08 (revised).

16/07-08 Amendments to Regulation 6 on Admission to the University

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 11 October 2007 considered a proposal to amend Regulation 6 Governing Admission to the University, paper BGS 12/07-08, and recommended that the proposal be approved.

(BGS minute 24/07-08, unconfirmed)

CONSIDERED:

Proposal to amend Regulation 6 Governing Admission to the University, paper BGS 12/07-08.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposal to amend Regulation 6 Governing Admission to the University be approved as set out in paper BGS 12/07-08.

17/07-08

PhD qualification rates

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 11 October 2007 considered a table using data from HEFCE Publication 2007/29 showing Research Degree Qualification Rates for UK universities, paper BGS 16/07-08, noting that the HEFCE "Qualification Rate" is derived from the number of qualifiers divided by the total population, calculated over a seven year period, with more information available in HEFCE publication 2007/29 at [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07\\_29/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_29/), and resolved that the Graduate School carry out some analysis of withdrawals from research degrees to ascertain whether this was also a contributing factor to the qualification rate.

(BGS minute 10(f)/07-08, unconfirmed)

18/07-08

Centre for Lifelong Learning: Ofsted

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Report from Ofsted on their inspection of teacher training for further education/the lifelong learning sector provided by the Centre for Lifelong Learning including in collaboration with City College Coventry, Evesham and Malvern Hills College, Henley College Coventry, North East Worcestershire College, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, and Stratford-upon-Avon College, paper AQSC 9/07-08, along with a response from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, paper AQSC 10/07-08;
- (b) Any good practice identified in the Ofsted report which could be more widely shared across the University to enhance the student learning experience.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Centre for Lifelong Learning and other colleagues involved in delivering and supporting courses of teacher training for further education/the lifelong learning sector be congratulated on the positive Ofsted report;
- (d) That the use of ICT in these courses be commended and considered an example of good practice.

19/07-08 Teaching Quality website

REPORTED:

That the Teaching Quality website ([www.warwick.ac.uk/go/quality](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/quality)) had been reorganised and now included over seventy frequently asked questions.

20/07-08 New and amended courses

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 11 October 2007 the Board of Graduate Studies approved the following new and restructured postgraduate courses:

- (a) Diploma in English Language and Engineering Management;
- (b) Postgraduate Award in Developing Leaders in Healthcare Education;
- (c) Postgraduate Award in Palliative Care in Long-Term Conditions (renamed; previously Postgraduate Award in Palliative Care in Non-Cancer Patients);
- (d) MSc in Systems Biology;
- (e) MPhil/PhD in Health Care;
- (f) MPhil/PhD in Nursing;
- (g) PhD in Economics (restructured).

21/07-08 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.45am on Wednesday 21 November 2007 in the Council Chamber, University House.