

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on 24
January 2019.

Present: Professor D Lamburn (Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), (Chair), Professor J Angouri (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor A Clark (Academic Director Undergraduate Studies), Professor G Cooke (co-opted member of staff in quality assurance role), Dr W Curtis (Academic Director, Partnerships), Dr R Forman (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Arts), Dr M Gifford (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine), Dr L Hammond (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine), Dr J Heron (Representative of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning), Professor E Jones (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Social Sciences), L Kennedy (Students' Union representative), E King (Students Union representative), Dr J Lee (co-opted member of staff in quality assurance role), Dr M Leeke (Representative of the Board of Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine), Professor C Sparrow (Academic Director, Postgraduate Studies), Professor P Tissington (Academic Director, Employability) and Professor G Van der Velden (Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Learning Experience) and Chair of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee).

Apologies: Professor L Gracia (Dean of Students), Dr J Garde-Hansen (Representative of the Faculty of Arts), Professor C Hughes (Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), R Wooldridge Smith (Deputy Academic Registrar).

In attendance: K Gray (Secretary), C Gray (Assistant Secretary), S Brace-McDonnell (for item 55.18/19), D Derricott (Assistant Registrar, Monitoring and Review) (for item 53/18-19) and K Johal (Administrative Officer, Complaints Resolutions) (for item 54/18/19).

46.18/19 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

That, should any members or attendees of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK, available online from:

<http://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Code-Final.pdf>

No conflicts of interests had been declared by members of the Committee.

47.18/19 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on 22 November 2018 be approved subject to the following amendment to minute 28 (b) 18/19:

RESOLVED:

That the criteria for a major change to a module be amended to remove the following statements from the list of examples constituting a major change of a module:

- A change to courses on which the module is available
- A change to the availability of the module as core/core optional/optional

48.18/19 Matters arising

- (a) Compliance with Consumer Protection Legislation (Competition and Markets Authority) (minute 134.17/18)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting on 11 September 2018, the Committee agreed that further proposals on how to discharge its responsibility for CMA compliance would be presented to a future meeting and should be prioritized;
- (ii) That the internal compliance report from the internal audit team had been received and a management response was being prepared;
- (iii) That an update on this issue would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee on 21 February 2019;
- (b) Fitness to Practise Operational Procedures (minute 25(a)/18/19) referred

REPORTED:

- (i) That further work with the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) had been completed and revised Fitness to Practise operational procedures had been received for the Committee's approval, which were included under agenda item 54 in paper AQSC 25.18/19;
- (ii) That Fitness to Practise operational procedures for the Degree Apprenticeship in Social Work were still under discussion in CLL and would be presented for the Committee's approval at its next meeting on 21 February 2019;

- (iii) That the application of fitness to practise for new degrees in the Warwick Manufacturing Group in the area of health and wellbeing would be investigated and reported to the Committee at a future meeting;
- (c) Analysis of undergraduate external examiners' reports received for the academic year 2017/18 (minute 25 (c).18/19 referred)

REPORTED:

That follow up actions in relation to reviewing moderation guidance, induction events for external examiners and dissemination of good practice would commence shortly and progress would be reported to the Committee in due course;

- (d) PSRB Register (minute 25 (d).18/19)

REPORTED:

That a number of dates for re-engagement with PSRBs for courses in the Warwick Business School which had been outstanding had now been received and the PSRB Register would be updated accordingly;

- (e) OIA Good Practice Framework Disciplinary Procedures (minute 39.18/19 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, in light of the publication of the OIA Good Practice Framework Disciplinary Procedures, a mapping of the University's disciplinary framework to the Good Practice would be undertaken and a full review undertaken;
- (ii) That the OIA Good Practice Framework was available at:
<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/124794/oia-good-practice-framework-disciplinary-procedures.pdf>;
- (iii) That it was intended that full proposals be brought forward for discussion and consideration by the Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2019, with final approval of outcomes of the review being considered by the Senate at its meeting on 3 July 2019.

49.18/19

Chair's Business

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Office for Students (OfS) was introducing targeted reviews of registered providers, particularly in relation to concerns raised by negative indicators in metrics;
- (b) That the OfS would be carrying out random sampling of 5% of providers per year testing compliance with conditions of registration;
- (c) That, in addition, the OfS would also be concentrating its activities to focus on grade inflation, contract cheating and unconditional offers.

50.18/19 Students' Union Update

RECEIVED:

An oral update report from the Students' Union Officers on current activities.

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Students' Union had been contacted by a number of students expressing concern over the proposal emerging from the Review of Assessment to remove the choice of method of assessment at the level of the module;
- (b) That students registered on joint Honours degrees courses had raised concerns about gaps in provision on these courses; that there was a need for more consultation on this topic with students and the sabbatical officers would in due course bring further details on the issues to the Committee;
- (c) That the Students' Union had developed a Student Transforming Education Programme which would launch on 8 February 2019 and was intended to support students in contributing to transforming policy;
- (d) That initiatives were underway to enable student faculty representatives to become more effective;
- (e) That the Postgraduate Officer had been working with the Academic Director of Employability on employability issues and that a number of workshops would be offered at the upcoming Futures Festival;
- (f) That the Students' Union was working with the Postgraduate Executive and the Provost on the Sessional Teaching Project Framework.

51.18/19 Review of Assessment Group

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out progress of the Review of Assessment Group and its work conducted in the four sub-groups and recommendations to be made to the Committee at its next meeting on 21 February 2019 and Senate on 13 March 2019 as set out in AQSC 21.18/19.

REPORTED:

(by the Chair):

- (a) That emerging proposals from the Review of Assessment were currently being consulted on through the Faculty Education Committee meetings in January 2019 and the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee in February 2019;

- (b) That during the first consultation event with the Faculty Education Committee in the Faculty of Arts, the key issues of concern were identified as the proposal to remove student choice of method of assessment at the level of the module and the proposal to extend the reassessment period to two weeks and to move it to early/mid-August from the beginning of September, as this would adversely affect the work/life balance of University staff;

Assessment Strategies:

(by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Learning Experience):

- (c) That this proposal needed to be seen in the context of diversification of assessment, which would enable students to demonstrate achievements using a variety of assessment methods;
- (d) That there would still be exceptions available where negotiated assessment methods could form part of the module assessment where a good pedagogical case was made;
- (e) That student choice of the method of assessment at the level of the module was still available in a limited number of departments and would not affect current students or applicants;

(by the Education Officer, Students' Union):

- (f) That this was an issue of significant concern to students;

(by Dr J Lee):

- (g) That the School of Modern Languages and Cultures currently offered student choice of method of assessment at the level of the module;
- (h) That assessment methods in the School were currently being reviewed with a view to introducing more diverse methods of assessment and students had received new forms of assessment positively so far;
- (i) That effective communication with students was needed to explain how diversity of assessment could be put into practice;

(by the Director of IATL):

- (j) That the use of the word 'choice' may be contributing to difficulties;
- (k) That working with students on a co-created solution may be possible;

(by the Academic Director, Undergraduate Studies):

Mitigating Circumstances/Reasonable Adjustments:

- (l) That the Group dealing with mitigating circumstances and reasonable adjustments had discussed a draft policy on deferral of examinations;
- (m) That discussions at the last meeting had focused on a revised policy on self-certification which was currently being consulted upon;

- (n) That work to develop a mitigating circumstances portal to be used across the University to record mitigating circumstances, extensions, self-certifications and deferral of examinations continued under the Student Personalised Information Programme;

(by the Chair):

Progression, remedying failure and timing of examinations:

- (o) That proposals for progression requirements for Integrated Masters students for progression from year 2 to year 3 and year 3 to year 4 were not yet finalised;
- (p) That currently some departments offered a January examination period but this was not consistent across the University;
- (q) That the proposal to implement a standard January examination period for all departments may lead to discussions about the structure of the academic year but the latter would be a subject to separate consultation;

(by the Chair):

Examination Board Procedures:

- (r) That further work needed to be carried out to set the policy parameters underpinning the proposed IT examination board system to be used across the University before work on a specification of the proposed system could begin;
- (s) That the group was considering whether a borderline category should be introduced for postgraduate taught degrees for the awards of Distinction and Merit;

RESOLVED:

- (t) That further discussions be held on the proposal to remove student choice of method of assessment at the level of the module before a final recommendation on the matter be determined;
- (u) That a meeting with the Education Officer (Students' Union), Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Learning Experience), Academic Director (Undergraduate), Dr Lee and a representative from the Faculty of Social Sciences would be held in due course to resolve this issue;

RECOMMENDED to the Senate:

- (v) That the final policy on deferral of examinations be approved as set out in AQSC 21.18/19, (referenced as MCRA 2 (revised 3) 18/19), subject to minor amendments agreed in the meeting and approved by Chair's Action;

52.18/19 UKSCQA Consultation on Degree Classification Algorithms

RECEIVED:

- (a) The consultation on degree classifications conducted by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) as set out in AQSC 22.18/19;

CONSIDERED:

- (b) The draft University response to the consultation as set out in AQSC 23.18/19;

REPORTED (by the Secretary):

- (c) That the report set out a range of reasons why the number of good honours degrees awarded by UK HEI institutions had increased over the last ten years;
- (d) That reasons for the uplift of grades were difficult to quantify and might include enhancement activities, student study behaviour, classification practices, curriculum development and assessment practices;
- (e) That grade uplift at the University of Warwick over the last ten years had been minimal and that the University was confident that the classification of its degrees awarded were robust;
- (f) That the UKSCQA proposed that a UK wide statement of intent be made to maintain public confidence in academic standards, protect the value of qualifications and prevent potential grade inflation;
- (g) That the statement was proposed to include a review of institutional evidence on degree outcomes and an articulation of the design and rationale for degree algorithms, assessment criteria and marking scales, quality assurance processes (including benchmarking and role of external examiners) and support and professional development for external examiners and academic staff;
- (h) That members of the Committee should provide comments in relation to the draft consultation response to the Secretary by Wednesday 30 January 2019.

53.18/19 QAA Quality Code and Advice and Guidance

REPORTED:

- (a) That the QAA had published advice and guidance on the new Quality Code which could be found at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance>
- (b) That the Teaching Quality team would develop a process for mapping the University's policies and practices requirements against the Quality Code and identifying areas for review and development;

54.18/19 Teaching Excellence Group Meetings Autumn 2018

CONSIDERED:

An initial report on the findings arising from the meetings of the Teaching Excellence Group held in autumn 2018 as set out in AQSC 24.18/19;

REPORTED:

(by the Assistant Registrar (Monitoring and Review)):

- (a) That a total of 63 TEG meetings had taken place in the autumn term 2018 across the University which this included separate meetings with students;
- (b) That the majority of the final reports for each meeting were still in the process of being finalised;
- (c) That the report set out the ten most prominent themes emerging from the meetings;
- (d) That the report would be considered at the meetings of the Faculty Education Committees in January 2019;

(by the Chair):

- (e) That the TEG process needed to take account of the ITLR follow up and formally record this;

(by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Learning Experience)):

- (f) That themes should be identified for each year for consideration via the TEG process, rather than focusing on too many issues in one meeting.

55.18/19 Fitness to Practise Procedures – Centre for Lifelong Learning

CONSIDERED:

The Fitness to Practise Operational procedures for courses offered in the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) as set out in AQSC 25.18/19;

REPORTED:

(by the Administrative Officer (Complaints Resolution)):

- (a) That the Warwick Medical School and Centre for Teacher Education had developed operational Fitness to Practise procedures underpinning Regulation 34;
- (b) That CLL had also developed operational Fitness to Practise procedures for its courses;
- (c) That the operational Fitness to Practise procedures for the Degree Apprenticeship in Social Work were still outstanding and would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in February 2019;

(by the Chair):

- (d) That it was not clear why the departmental level professional group for the FE Initial Teacher Training Course did not include practitioners;
- (e) That terminology describing the departmental level professional groups considering initial cases of Fitness to Practise should be reviewed to ensure it was clear to students that these groups were intended to support students when initially dealing with Fitness to Practise concerns;
- (f) That in due course the three different operational procedures for Fitness to Practise should be amalgamated into one;

RESOLVED:

- (g) That the operational Fitness to Practise procedures for CLL should be approved subject to clarification of issues as set out in points (d) and (e) above;
- (h) That the process be reviewed in summer 2020 after one year of operation to ensure that the procedures were efficient.

56.18/19

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) revisions for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) and the MSc Advanced Clinical Care Practice (ACCP)

CONSIDERED:

A revised application from the Warwick Medical School (WMS) for the recognition of prior learning for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) and the MSc Advanced Clinical Care Practice (ACCP) as set out in AQSC 109.17/18 (revised).

REPORTED:

- (a) That WMS currently did not offer a non-medical prescribing qualification, which was a requirement of the professional body;
- (b) That students on the ACP and ACCP courses were able to receive recognised prior learning for this qualification and on some occasions, recognised prior learning applications would be taken into account mid-course;
- (c) That currently students were allowed to receive recognised prior learning for 20 credits at level 7 in year 2, but some HEIs offered a 30 credit module at level 7;
- (d) That new students on the proposed degree apprenticeship programme would be offered this qualification as part of the course in the future;

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the proposal be revised using the standard RPL form with all sections being completed;
- (f) That subject to a suitable revised version being provided, the Chair be authorised to take action on behalf of the Committee to approve the proposal for existing students until August 2021;

57.18/19 Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) application for the BEng in Mechanical Design Manufacturing and Automation (MDMA)

CONSIDERED:

An application from the School of Engineering for the recognition of prior learning for the first year of the degree of BEng Mechanical Engineering as set out in AQSC 26.18/19

RESOLVED:

That the application for the recognition of prior learning achieved at Harbin Institute of Technology in China for the first year of the degree of the BEng Mechanical Engineering be approved.

58.18/19 Engineering IET Accreditation Action Plan

RECEIVED:

Confirmation of actions completed by the School of Engineering relating to the IET accreditation action plan as set out in AQSC 59.17/18 (revised).

REPORTED:

- (a) That this action plan represented a progress report on actions arising from the IET accreditation in February 2018;
- (b) That the progress of work in relation to continuation statistics would be reviewed by the Secretary with the Strategic Planning and Analytics office;
- (c) That the curriculum review for the MSc programmes was progressing, but there were risks to meeting timescales given other commitments and capacity within the School.

ITEMS TO REPORT AND APPROVE WITHOUT FURTHER DISCUSSION

The Chair and Secretary consider that the following items are non-controversial and/or can be accepted with a minimum of explanation. Members of the Committee may, however, ask for any of the following items to be transferred to the agenda for discussion, by contacting the Secretary in advance of the meeting, or by raising the item at the commencement of the meeting.

59.18/19 Course approvals

RECEIVED:

A list of courses approved by the University since the last report to AQSC on 15 October 2018 and as set out in document AQSC 27.18/19.

60.18/19 Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meetings available at:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/bgs/minutes>

61.18/19 Minutes of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee available at:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/sleec/minutes>

62.18/19 Minutes of the Faculty Education Committees

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Faculty Education Committees available at:

(a) Faculty of Arts:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/bfa/fec/minutes>

(b) Faculty of Science, Medicine and Engineering:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/bfsem/fec/minutes/>

(c) Faculty of Social Science:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/bfss/fec/minutes/>

63.18/19 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That since the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to approve the following:

(a) External Examiners' Handbook for Taught Provision 2018-19

Minor amendments to the External Examiners' Handbook for Taught Provision for 2018/19;

(b) Alternative Assessments

- (i) A request for an alternative assessment from WBS for module IB9S0 for a student with a visual impairment and students in the future presenting similar circumstances for the assessment to be carried out via a 100% examination as opposed to a combination of examination and group work;
- (ii) A request for an alternative assessment from WBS for module IB381 for a final year student with mental health issues to be assessed via alternative individual class contributions, e.g. submitting comments in writing about discussions after the class to be used as class contributions;
- (iii) A request for an alternative assessment from WBS for a Foundation Year student serving a precautionary suspension which prevents the student from attending classes and to substitute a group presentation with a small essay;

(c) Course Closures

- (i) A request from CLL to close the BA Social Studies [2+2] (Solihull College Partnership Only);
- (ii) A request from WMG to close the EngD Malaysia course and the EngD South Africa course.

64.18/10

Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday 21 February 2019 at 900 hours in CMR 1.0, University House.