

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Wednesday 2 March 2011

Present: Professor A Caesar (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Professor S Hand, Professor J Labbe, Mr S Lamb, Dr P O'Hare, Dr J Robinson, Mr S Ruston, Mr D Stevens

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor C Hughes, Professor N Johnson, Professor T Jones, Dr D Lamburn, Professor R Leng

In attendance: Dr C Edgar, Mr R McIntyre

51/10-11 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2011, available on the Governance website, be approved.

52/10-11 Matters arising

(a) QAA: Recruitment of Reviewers and Review Secretaries for the Institutional Review Process (minutes 43(d)/10-11 and SC.292/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 10 January 2011, the Steering Committee considered correspondence from the QAA requesting nominations for Institutional Reviewers and review secretaries and resolved that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would nominate Dr Amanda Dowd, WMG, to QAA as an institutional review team member before the deadline of midday on 26 January 2011;
- (ii) That, at its last meeting on 3 February 2011, it was reported to the Committee that Dr David Lamburn, CLL, would also continue as a reviewer, having previously been nominated to the QAA within the previous institutional audit process;
- (iii) That Dr Dowd's nomination as an Institutional Reviewer had been accepted by the QAA.

(b) HEFCE Consultation on Public Information about Higher Education (minutes 44/10-11 and 28/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 8 December 2010, the Committee considered a consultation document by the HEFCE on changes to the information published by institutions on courses of study

(paper AQSC 34/10-11) and resolved that a small working group be convened, chaired by the Chair of the Committee and to include members from AQSC, Student Admissions and Recruitment, Student Careers and Skills and the Estates Office, to formulate the University's response to the consultation, noting that:

- (A) The Committee was immediately concerned about the inclusion of "average salary" in the Key Information Set, it being considered that this data was too inconsistent and would need excessive contextual information for it to be meaningful;
 - (B) That draft response would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting, prior to consideration by the Steering Committee and submission to HEFCE by the deadline of 7 March 2011;
- (ii) That a small working group, convened to consider the consultation document, met on 26 January 2011 with the following membership:
- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Professor Ann Caesar | Chair of AQSC |
| Dr J Robinson | AQSC Member |
| Miss C Thomson | Assistant Registrar (Recruitment) |
| Mrs T Gibbs | Student Careers and Skills |
| Dr C Edgar | Senior Assistant Registrar (TQ) |
| Mr R McIntyre | Assistant Registrar (TQ) |
- (iii) That, at its meeting on 3 February 2011, the Committee considered a paper setting out the University's initial draft response to the consultation (paper AQSC 37/10-11) and resolved that the response be augmented to include the further comments of the Committee [as set out in the minutes].

RECEIVED:

The final response to the consultation on public information about higher education (paper SC.309/10-11), noting that the response had also been considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2011 and that a letter of objection to the consultation process will also be drafted on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to be sent to HEFCE, copied to the Russell Group.

- (c) Academic Infrastructure Consultation (Code of Practice for Standards, Quality and Enhancement). (minute 45/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its last meeting on 3 February 2011, it was reported to the Committee that the QAA was currently consulting on proposed changes to the Academic Infrastructure, with a deadline for responses of 1 March 2011;

- (ii) That, at its last meeting on 3 February 2011, the Committee considered a discussion paper from the Assistant Secretary setting out a number of the key issues within the consultation document (paper AQSC 38/10-11), noting that the consultation document itself was attached at Annex A, and supporting information at Annex B, and resolved that an institutional response to the consultation be drafted by the Assistant Secretary in consultation with the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee, noting that:
 - (A) The reason for the proposed changes was unclear;
 - (B) The proposed document appears to address two different audiences (the public and the QAA) and may, therefore, not address each appropriately (by the use of terms that may have a different common understanding by the public but a very specific meaning in a quality and standards context, for example);
 - (C) The recognition that the Programmes Specifications (currently a requirement of QAA) were not fit for purpose be welcomed.

RECEIVED:

The response to the consultation on proposed changes to the Academic Infrastructure (paper SC.294/10-11 (Revised)), noting that the response had also been considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2011.

53/10-11 Chair's business

National Student Survey

RECEIVED:

- (a) A summary of departmental response rates to date (paper AQSC 51/10-11);
- (b) An oral report from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on progress with the NSS, noting that:
 - (i) Although the survey does not close until 30 April 2011, due to the timing of Easter, national holidays, and the Spring and Summer terms, there is very limited time for a late surge in responses so the response rate really needs to be maintained ahead of the comparative point last year;
 - (ii) Heads of Departments had received an email this week with an update on their current response rate for the survey and have been encouraged to contact Teaching Quality for support or advice if they require it.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chair would contact IATL to request that they direct students to complete the NSS before completing their current 'engagement' survey;
- (b) That the Director of Careers and Student Employability would use the 'My Advantage' system to contact final year students and encourage them to complete the NSS, noting that the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) would provide information for this communication;
- (c) That the Students' Union Education Officer would be targeting particular departments over the next two weeks to make announcements in lectures to remind students (and academic convenors) of the importance of completing the survey.

54/10-11 Update from the Students' Union

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Students' Union President and Education Officer regarding the Students' Union survey on expectations of the student experience under an increased fee regime, noting that:

- (a) Further qualitative work would be undertaken over the coming months on this topic (including questionnaires and focus groups);
- (b) Responses from the student body were strongly worded and that increased expectations were expressed around (in the areas of teaching and learning) contact hours (particularly in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences); library spaces; hidden course costs (such as text books).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the full report would be circulated to members following the meeting;
- (b) That the Chair would liaise with IATL about running a half-day session 'What is Contact?' (along the lines of the recent successful event on the nature of feedback) to involve high student participation and staff involvement to ensure that the types of contact that are most valued can be highlighted;
- (c) That members' contributions and advice would be welcomed by the Students' Union in developing the areas and wording of questions for future work.

55/10-11 Learning and Teaching Strategy (minute 43(c)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its last meeting on 3 February 2011, the Committee received an oral report from the Chair, noting that (*inter alia*) the 'Learning Dimension' (a booklet produced by the Communications Office linked to the learning strand of the Strategy) and 'Teaching and Learning Strategy' will need to be rewritten to reflect the goals of the refreshed Strategy, and resolved:

- (a) That the 'Learning Dimension' booklet be circulated by the secretariat to Committee members along with the Teaching and Learning Strategy for discussion at the next Committee meeting;
- (b) That Committee members be invited to consider where there are 'gaps' in the current Teaching and Learning Strategy and how Warwick's aims in this area can best be put forward;
- (c) That feedback from the current student body regarding the expectations they would have under an increased fee regime would be fed back to the Chair to inform current discussions.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The "Learning Dimension" (paper AQSC 42/10-11);
- (b) The current Learning and Teaching Strategy (paper AQSC 6/07-08 (revised 5)), together with a discussion paper from the Secretary (paper AQSC 43/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That a draft be prepared of the Learning and Teaching Strategy for consideration at a future meeting, noting that:

- (a) The Strategy will have two separate audiences (requiring two separate presentations of the content): external – prospective students and their supporters (parents, schools, careers advisors); internal – both academic and administrative staff (which would include a timeline and set of objectives not available to the external audience);
- (b) Timescales for finalising and publicising (or making available in the public domain) a new strategy would be influenced by the timescale for the release of the refreshed Vision 2015, the OFFA agreement regarding widening participation and outreach work, and the government White Paper on Education.

56/10-11 Student Experience/Fees

CONSIDERED:

A paper discussed initially at Steering Committee at its meeting on 1 February 2011 setting out proposed principles regarding fee levels, widening participation and enhancing the student experience to guide the setting of revised undergraduate fees (paper SC.259/10-11), noting that the paper had previously been considered in a number of forums and that the discussions had moved on since the paper was written.

57/10-11 Proposal to change name of AQSC

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Chair to consider changes to the name of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee with effect from next academic year, to

better reflect the range of business considered by the Committee and its Sub-Committees, noting the following possible ideas:

- (a) Academic Committee for Enhancement and Standards;
- (b) Committee for Academic Standards and Enhancement;
- (c) Committee for Teaching and Learning Enhancement and Standards;
- (d) Standards, Quality and Enhancement Committee;
- (e) Another name better reflecting the remit of the committee in terms of management of the student experience and enhancement activity.

RESOLVED:

That the current name of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee be retained.

58/10-11

Personal Tutoring

CONSIDERED:

A discussion paper from the Senior Tutor on the current position of the personal tutor system and proposals to achieve enhanced consistency of guidelines' implementation (paper AQSC 45/10-11), noting that:

- (a) The opportunity to discuss the issue of the personal tutoring system at the AQSC was welcomed by the University Senior Tutor;
- (b) The Departments of Physics and Philosophy were missing from the list of websites consulted but that they would be included in any communication regarding this issue;
- (c) A formal evaluation will be undertaken of the personal tutoring system next term to provide an independent view on the current system and to allow for plans to be made for any enhancement of the system (as referenced during the refreshing of the Vision 2015);
- (d) A template personal development plan is available for adoption by departments as part of the personal tutoring meetings;
- (e) The level of interest in this topic demonstrated through surveys and/or informal feedback was not reflected in the items raised by students at SSLC meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Students' Union Education Officer would remind academic convenors, at the briefing session held during the summer vacation, of the need to discuss the practice and policy of student tutoring arrangements (not individual instances) at SSLCs;
- (b) That the University Senior Tutor would circulate the website search findings to Departmental Senior Tutors along with guidance (and/or a template document or webpage content) on the information expected to be covered (and maintained as up-to-date) on departmental websites.

59/10-11 What is Feedback?

REPORTED:

- (a) That an event called “What is Feedback?” took place on 27 January 2011 in the Teaching Grid, organised jointly by the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning, the Students’ Union and the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office;
- (b) That the event was intended to foster debate involving both staff and students about how feedback and assessment could be improved across the University, and included a number of presentations and sessions from both internal and external speakers;
- (c) That the event was well received with 65 attendees throughout the half-day event and that, at the conclusion of the day, all participants were asked to share at least one action that they were personally going to take away from the day, and to identify one area where they felt the University could do more to improve student satisfaction in this area.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A paper from the Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning listing the individual (anonymised) and University actions mentioned at the “What is Feedback?” event (paper AQSC 46/10-11);
- (b) The University “Good Practice Guide on Providing Feedback to Students on Assessment”, (paper AQSC 47/10-11) approved by the Committee in January 2004, with a view to seeking the Committee’s input into refreshing the content in line with the consideration of the Learning and Teaching and University Strategies, the outcomes of the “What is Feedback?” event, and the changing national picture with regard to good practice in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning be asked to identify ten key features of good feedback (and a contact point for further more detailed information) that would then be circulated to departments to inform local practices, noting that the list would need to encompass all types of assignment (not only essays).

60/10-11 Student Academic Complaints and Appeals 2009-10

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Administrative Officer (Academic Registrar’s Office) concerning student academic complaints and appeals 2009-10 (paper AQSC 48/10-11), noting that:

- (a) It would be helpful for appeals and complaints to be separately identified within the statistics provided;

- (b) The report makes reference (in item 2(h)) to a high number of complainants having not followed the first step of the complaints procedure (of making a complaint 'initially in writing to the person responsible for the action which has given rise to the complaint') and being asked to do so when they first write to the Vice-Chancellor or Academic Registrar;
- (c) A further report was expected at a future meeting to cover undergraduate student cases considered through the second formal stage of the Academic Complaints Procedure;
- (d) The number of enquiries to the Students' Union relating to academic matters had significantly increased.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies would contact the Academic Registrar's Office for clarification on the issue raised in section 5 with respect to postgraduate taught student appeals on the grounds of poor supervision;
- (b) That the role of the AQSC in the Student Academic Complaints Procedure is considered to be in oversight of the process and consideration of any precedent or policy change that may be suggested to them as a result of individual cases or following consideration of an annual report.

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Registrar)

That the current policy (as quote in Annex 1 of paper AQSC 48/10-11) be augmented in item 4 to provide guidance as to the circumstances under which the University would consider it 'not appropriate' to raise a complaint 'initially in writing to the person responsible for the action which has given rise to the complaint' to allay the concern of the Committee that students may find this initial step difficult by providing helpful advice on this step.

61/10-11

Collaborative Policy (minute CFDLSC 18/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 10 February 2011, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee considered a paper from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on the amplified section 2 of the QAA Code of Practice (Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Provision) and its relation to existing University processes and procedures (paper CFDLSC 15/10-11) together with a copy of the new section (paper CFDLSC 16/10-11), and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that, whilst reviewing the University Learning and Teaching Strategy and in light of the ongoing refresh of the University Vision 2015 Strategy, the Committee consider whether it would be desirable to revisit the existing published collaborative policy with a view to more clearly articulating the criteria for selection and approval of potential collaborative partners and the underpinning strategy on collaborative provision, noting that the Sub-Committee will itself consider this question further at its next meeting;

- (b) That the recommendation had arisen as a result of a strong reinforcement in the amplified code of practice regarding the need for institutions to “determine their institutional strategy toward collaborative provision and how this relates to their mission and corporate plan”.

CONSIDERED:

The University’s existing collaborative policy (paper AQSC 49/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the Sub-Committee’s proposal to revisit the collaborative policy be welcomed.

62/10-11 Annual Course Review Reports (draft unconfirmed minute BUGS 14/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 23 February 2011, the Board of Undergraduate Studies considered (*inter alia*) a Summary Report of the Undergraduate Annual Course Review Reports submitted by Departments in the Faculty of Science for the academic year 2009/10 (paper SFS 15/10-11), and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the practice of some Boards of Examiners in Science of allowing students registered on 4-year integrated masters’ degrees to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in a higher class if the marks achieved in their fourth year of study are relatively poor, be considered with regard to the unified degree classification conventions.

CONSIDERED:

The Undergraduate Annual Course Review Reports submitted by Departments in the Faculty of Science for the academic year 2009/10 (paper SFS 15/10-11), noting that the School of Life Sciences was not included as it had not been received at the time of writing the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group be reconvened to consider (with regard to the unified degree classification conventions) the practice of some Boards of Examiners in Science of allowing students registered on 4-year integrated masters’ degrees to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in a higher class if the marks achieved in their fourth year of study are relatively poor;
- (b) That the concern of the Committee over the poor quality of chalk and blackboards be noted;

RECOMMENDED (to the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group):

That the provision and allocation (particularly with respect to the use of historical usage information in timetabling) of large- and medium-sized lecture theatres be reviewed.

63/10-11 Inclusion of Final Assessment information on Module Approval form

REPORTED:

- (a) That, as a result of a recommendation arising from the HESES audit which took place in June 2010, there is a need to collect detail on the “final assessment” in each module of study to ensure compliance;
- (b) That the “final assessment” had been identified for all existing modules, but that a mechanism is needed to collect this information during the approval of new/revised modules;

CONSIDERED:

A proposed change to the module approval form (form item 15a) to collect the required information on “final assessment” (paper AQSC 50/10-11), noting that changes to the module approval guidance notes will also be amended following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed change to the module approval form be approved, noting that the associated guidance should make clear the information required in this field as well as the approach to take if there are several possible options for assessment such that different assessments may be the chronologically last assessment.

64/10-11 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That, since the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair had taken action, acting on behalf of the Committee, to approve a recommendation that Dr J Robinson be appointed to sit on the e-Learning Steering Group on behalf of AQSC.

65/10-11 Erasmus Mundus (minute 47/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its last meeting on 3 February 2011, the Committee received the 2011 Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals (paper BGS 26/10-11), noting that (*inter alia*):

- (a) Arrangements were being made for a Grand Committee to consider expressions of interest (in the form of the ‘summary sheet’ and draft documentation) in mid-March ahead of the Commission’s deadline;
- (b) The imposed timescale for the process is short.

RECEIVED:

A timeline setting out the dates of the Erasmus Mundus Grand Committee and other key internal deadlines, also highlighting an outline of the internal process to be followed in scrutinising proposals (paper AQSC 52/10-11), noting that only one Erasmus Mundus bid is now expected, for a Joint Doctoral programme in Complexity Science.

66/10-11 QAA: Doctoral degree reference point draft (draft unconfirmed minute BGS 65/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 24 February 2011, the Board of Graduate Studies considered a QAA Consultation paper on Doctoral degree characteristics (paper BGS 41/10-11), and it was also reported that responses were expected by 28 April 2011, and that comments to inform the University's response were to be directed to the Graduate School by 8 April 2011.

RECEIVED:

The QAA Consultation paper on Doctoral degree characteristics (paper BGS 41/10-11).

67/10-11 New and Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study (draft unconfirmed minute BUGS 6/10-11 and 9/10-11 referred)

New courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 23 February 2011, approved the following new course:

BSc Accounting and Finance (Undergraduate Partnership Programme)

68/10-11 New and Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study (draft unconfirmed minutes BGS 57/10-11, BGS 66/10-11 and BGS 67/10-11 referred)

(a) New courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 24 February 2011 approved the following new courses:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Language Testing and Assessment;
- Postgraduate Award in Challenges of Careers Work in Higher Education;
- Postgraduate Award in Career Development Theories: Integrating Theory and Practice;
- Postgraduate Award in Learning from Work Experience;
- Postgraduate Award in The Recruitment Process.

(b) Revised courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 24 February 2011 approved the following revised courses:

- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Finance and Leadership;
- MA in Creative and Media Enterprises;
- MA in International Cultural Policy and Management;
- MA in Global Media and Communication;
- MSc in Complexity Science;
- MSc in Financial Mathematics;
- Masters in Public Management (Commissioning).

(c) Change of Title

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 24 February 2011 approved the following change of title:

LLM in Law and Development [from LLM in Development Law and Legal Education].

69/10-11 Collaborative course proposals

(a) Warwick Manufacturing Group collaboration with SIM/SIMTech (minute CFDLSC 24(b)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 10 February 2011, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group to extend the existing collaboration with SIM/SIMTech (paper SGS 69/10-11), and resolved that the proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group to extend the existing collaboration with SIM/SIM Tech to include the MSc in Supply Chain and Logistics Management, as set out in paper SGS 69/10-11, be approved, noting that the partner institutions had been made aware of the resulting increased supervision requirements.

(b) Postgraduate Award in Leading Operations and Process Management in the Service Sector (minute CFDLSC 24(d)/10-11 and draft unconfirmed minute BGS 69/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 10 February 2011, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Warwick Business School to introduce a new Distance Learning Postgraduate Award in "Leading Operations and Process Management in the Service Sector", and resolved

that the proposal from the Warwick Business School to introduce a new Distance Learning Postgraduate Award in “Leading Operations and Process Management in the Service Sector”, as set out in papers GFSS 87a-d/10-11, GFSS 88/10-11, GFSS 89/10-11, GFSS 90/10-11 and GFSS 91/10-11, be approved by the Chair (noting that financial approval had not yet been granted), upon receipt of:

- (A) A satisfactory external advisor’s assessment of the proposed course;
 - (B) Confirmation of who within WBS will undertake the role of second-marker;
 - (C) Confirmation of the measures taken to ensure that delivery of the course can be safeguarded, in light of the very high percentage of the course being delivered by a single, external member of staff;
- (ii) That, subsequent to the meeting, the additional information requested had been received, and that the Chair of the Sub-Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve the new Distance Learning Postgraduate Award in “Leading Operations and Process Management in the Service Sector”;
- (iii) That it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 24 February 2011, that the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at its meeting on 1 February 2011, approved the proposal to introduce a new course entitled “PGA in Leading Operations and Process Management in the Service Sector”, as set out in papers GFSS 87a-d/10-11.
- (c) Lean Sigma (Intermediate) [Title change] (minute CFDLSC 25(a)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 10 February 2011, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group to change the title of the existing module, delivered collaboratively with Barclays Wealth, Lean Sigma (Green Belt) to Lean Sigma (Intermediate) (paper SGS 58/10-11), noting that the module was originally approved at the meeting of the Sub-Committee which took place on 28 May 2010, and resolved that the proposal be approved.

- (d) Independent Study (Teach On) (minute CFDLSC 25(b)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 10 February 2011, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Institute of Education to introduce a new module, in collaboration with Teach First, entitled “Independent Study (Teach On)” (paper GFSS 77/10-11), noting that the proposed module is a variant of an

existing collaborative module, and resolved that the proposal be approved.

70/10-11 Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.00am on Wednesday, 19 May 2011 in the Council Chamber, University House.

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