

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on
12 May 2005

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Dr P Blackmore, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Easton, Dr K Flint, Professor G Lindsay, Mr S Lucas, Mr K Mohaddes, Dr P O'Hare, Professor M Luntley, Dr P Roberts.

Apologies: Professor A Caesar, Professor M Cooper, Professor E Gallafent, Professor M Harrison, Professor E Peile

In attendance: Dr J Moss

85/04-05 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2005 be approved.

86/04-05 Matters Arising

(a) National Student Survey (Minute 69(a)/04-05 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the final participation rate amongst Warwick students was 39.73%, with discipline-level responses ranging from 26.79% to 72.46% as outlined in paper AQSC 77/04-05 (copy attached);
- (ii) That Ipsos plc will feed results back to the University in early July for review in advance of their publication;
- (iii) That results will be reported publicly on the TQI website (www.tqi.ac.uk) from early September;
- (iv) That, given the twin reliability thresholds (50% response rate with a minimum of 30 responses) it is expected that results will be publicly reported only for "Education other than teacher training";
- (v) That the Secretariat in consultation with others will draft the institutional commentary which will be placed on the NSS website for the consideration of the committee at its next meeting;
- (vi) That the University had taken up with the HEFCE questions of compliance with Data Protection legislation in respect of the supply of students' contact details.

- (b) Academic Satisfaction Review 2004 (Minute 75/04-05 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A responses from Warwick Business School to the reports on the undergraduate and postgraduate student experience 2004, paper AQSC 60/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Chair write to the Business School, thanking them for their response and asking to be kept up-to-date on progress in addressing the issues raised in the response.
- (ii) That it be noted that responses from the Department of Economics and the School of Health and Social Studies remained outstanding.

87/04-05 Chair's Business

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Chair had recently attended a seminar organised by the Higher Education Academy which considered:
 - (i) The management of teaching and learning;
 - (ii) The reward and recognition of good teaching and student support;
 - (iii) The National Teaching Fellowships scheme;
 - (iv) Future direction of the HEA.
- (b) That Darren Wallis, Deputy Head of the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality, Nottingham Trent University, had been appointed Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), with effect from 1 August 2005.

88/04-05 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (a) That at its meeting held on 9 March 2005, the Senate considered a report from the meetings of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee held on 27 January and 23 February and recorded its approval of recommendations made by the Committee under the following headings:
 - (i) E-Learning Steering Group: Reporting Lines
 - (ii) Minor Amendments to Nomination and Report Forms for Research Degrees
 - (iii) External Examiners' Report Form: Part-Time and 2+2 Degrees
 - (iv) Minor Amendments to Course Approval Documentation
 - (v) Annual Course Review: Summary Reports
 - (vi) Contractual Position of Small Credit Volume Collaborations

(vii) Discontinuation of Courses of Study

- (b) That at its meeting held on 1 December 2004, the Senate resolved to approve the proposed policy for the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning, subject to a reassessment as part of the ongoing review of the Warwick Teaching Certificate (WTC) of the arrangements for evaluating prior (experiential) learning requests in relation to staff registered on the WTC, with a view to involving a member of staff from the academic department in which an AP(E)L applicant is based in the consideration of that candidate's AP(E)L application.

REPORTED:

That a Working Group was considering the future development of the WTC, including questions of AP(E)L.

89/04-05 PSRB visits: British Computer Society

REPORTED:

That the visit of the British Computer Society due to take place in April 2005 had been postponed to the summer term 2007 due to the changes being made in courses operated by the Department of Computer Science.

90/04-05 GMC accreditation visit to Warwick Medical School

REPORTED:

That the General Medical Council had confirmed informally that it would be visiting Warwick Medical School and the University of Leicester Medical School during 2005-06 as part of its statutory quality assurance procedures; it being noted that this visit would also underpin the Medical School's application for independence from the University of Leicester Medical School leading to the University being granted its own powers to award Medical degrees.

91/04-05 Warwick in Asia/Singapore

CONSIDERED:

A paper proposing an outline structure for academic courses that could be offered in Singapore, paper AQSC 79/04-05, it being noted that this structure was being developed as part of the ongoing feasibility study into the establishment of a Warwick campus in Singapore.

RESOLVED:

That a summary of the discussion be prepared by the Secretary and appended to these Minutes.

92/04-05 Costs of Training and Supervising PGR students

RECEIVED:

A summary of the HEFCE report entitled 'Costs of training and supervising postgraduate research students', paper BGS 24/04-05, and a paper analysing the HEFCE report entitled 'Postgraduate research degree programmes in English universities-costs and revenues', paper BGS 25/04-05, it being noted that the Board of Graduate Studies received these papers at its meeting held on 26 April and that the full HEFCE report was available at: www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd01_05/rd01_05.doc

93/04-05 University Policy on Medical Certificates and Self-Certification

REPORTED:

That the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting held on 4 May 2005 resolved that the Committee was concerned that there was no formal policy on student illness self-certification in the case of non-submission or late submission of assessed work, and recommended that the Academic Quality and Standards Committee develop a formal policy regarding student illness self-certification that would be circulated to Chairs of Departments and all academic staff in time for this examination period, or alternatively in time for the academic year 2005-06.

(Minute 43(b)/04-05 [unconfirmed])

CONSIDERED:

- (a) University Regulation 12 'Procedure to be adopted in the Event of Absence for Medical Reasons from a University Examination for First Degrees', paper AQSC 80/04-05;
- (b) The recommendation from the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies to draft a more detailed policy on Medical Certificates and Self-Certification for student illness.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Secretary draft a more detailed policy, it being noted that:
 - (i) Any illness lasting more than a few days would require a doctor's note;
 - (ii) Departments would not excuse students from any piece of assessed work on the basis of self-certification of illness;
 - (iii) The policy would make clear that repeated self-certification by any student would be likely to lead to further investigations or requirements for doctor's note.

- (d) That, after consulting with others in the University, the Chair circulate the policy to department for inclusion in their Handbooks.

94/04-05 Proposal Form for Minor Revisions to Existing Modules

REPORTED:

That the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting held on 4 May 2005 recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that a form, drafted by the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies secretariat for the purposes of minor revisions to modules, be used in place of the current MA1-version2 form.

(Minute 31(a)/04-05 [unconfirmed])

CONSIDERED:

A draft Proposal Form for Minor Revisions to Existing Modules, prepared by the Secretariat of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, paper AQSC 81/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Proposal Form for Minor Revision to Existing Modules, paper AQSC 81/04-05, not be introduced;
- (b) That the Chair write to Chairs of Departments to remind them that minor changes to modules need no approval from outside the department.

95/04-05 Guidance on Drafting Learning Outcomes

REPORTED:

That the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting held on 4 May 2005 received a verbal report and paper (paper UFSS 115/04-05) from a representative of the Centre for Academic Practice that provided guidance on the possible learning outcomes that could be specified on the form seeking approval for new modules, and recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that the Centre for Academic Practice offer guidance on the completion of module proposal/revision forms as part of its in-house training.

(Minute 31(b)/04-05 [unconfirmed])

CONSIDERED:

The proposal from the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies that the Centre for Academic Practice offer guidance on the completion of module proposal/revision forms as part of its in-house training.

RESOLVED:

That the Centre for Academic Practice continue to offer guidance on course and module design in courses and training sessions as appropriate.

96/04-05 Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on 8 June in the Council Chamber, University House.

JDM 16.05.05
AQSC\Mins\2004-05\Min 12.05.05

Summary of discussion at the meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee held on 12 May 2005 (minute 91/04-05 refers)

Research-Teaching link

It is taken as read that research-teaching links are fundamental and must be designed in to all courses in Singapore along with opportunities for undergraduates to engage in research.

Quality Assurance

It is vital that standards and quality are maintained on the Singapore campus as in the UK, and can be demonstrated to stakeholders; thus courses offered in Singapore would be subject to the same scrutiny and review as those in the UK, including Warwick processes such as SSLCs, as well as QAA audit and review.

One University, Two Campuses: Equivalence across campuses

- More flexibility in Singapore, with the same core learning outcomes and same core modules leads to an equivalence of outcome, even with different/more options or non-Major modules
- Courses could not be **exactly** the same on the different campuses, given the three-year/four-year and term/semester differences.
- Courses could be offered in Singapore that are not currently offered in UK, e.g. Pharmacy, South East Asian Studies. Such courses could incorporate modules already taught in UK where appropriate.

Four-year undergraduate degree courses

Key question: what would be the “extras” to build up four-year degrees from standard three-year Warwick courses? (Note that in theory all three-year UG degree courses at Warwick in the UK have potential to be taken over four years with extra modules as a result of the UG Curriculum Review.)

- Might some students in Singapore take longer to achieve the same learning outcomes, if they have different prior learning experience, or if they are studying through a second language? This would appear to militate against adding substantial extra material.
- The extra year in a four-year course could be used to broaden the range of options (cf. US system, where typically a quarter of a student’s modules are from outside their Major, with a third of these from each of the Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences).
- The fourth year could be used for a Masters degree for the highest-achieving students, if they completed the four-year UG degree course in three years (by overloading credits).
 - Would we want to charge by the module or by the year?
 - Note that the Singapore Scholar Programme, aimed at elite students, has built-in breadth and should be considered as a potential rival.
<http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/aboutus/overview/index.html>

There is an unresolved tension between offering a broad four-year undergraduate degree and a more in-depth degree with research elements. Market research would need to establish whether demand exists for either or both, and to investigate whether a four-year UG degree course would remove the price advantage that a three-year Warwick degree would have over other four-year courses offered in Singapore.

Terms in UK vs Semesters in Singapore

- Issues of translating courses from one structure to the other are tricky but solvable: each year of a course would be 120 credits, so a year spent at the other campus would fit relatively easily; modules currently in, e.g. a 12 credits + 12 + 6 format in the UK across the three terms could be reshaped for Singapore, perhaps to 15 + 15, or to a 12 + 18 format.
- Departments would have to resolve such issues, but it should be possible.

Arguably Warwick currently operates in something very close to a semesterised system, with less teaching taking place in the summer term than in the other two terms. Departments are encouraged to consider the best and most appropriate use of the summer term.

Warwick: an international university.

What this means in terms of courses and syllabi should be developed within departments and interpreted in their own terms, with ideas then pooled and shared, rather than a uniform bolt-on.

PSRB accreditation issues

These would need to be carefully considered to ensure continued accreditation; note the example of Engineering, where greater flexibility was welcomed and approved.

JDM 16.05.05
AQSC\Mins\2004-05\Min 12.05.05