

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on 21 October 2004

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair); Dr P Blackmore, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Caesar, Professor M Cooper, Professor A Easton, Professor E Gallafent, Dr S Hill, Professor G Lindsay, Mr S Lucas, Professor M Luntley, Mr K Mohaddes, Dr P O'Hare

Apologies: Professor J Dale

In attendance: Dr A Dowd (for items 4/04-05 (e) and 7/04-05 (a)), Mr J Moss, Ms R Wooldridge Smith

1/04-05 Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 22 September, the Senate considered proposed changes to the constitution of committees of the Senate and resolved that proposed amendments to the constitution of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee be approved as set out in paper S.3/04-05 (paper AQSC 1/04-05).

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Further minor amendments to the Terms of Reference as set out in paper AQSC 2/04-05;
- (b) A summary of the implications of the committee re-structuring approved by the Senate on the processing of teaching quality-related business, paper AQSC 3/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That, it be noted that AQSC would henceforth devote more attention to matters of principle and less to detailed consideration of new course proposals and reviews, responsibility for which would now reside with the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies;
- (d) That it be noted that Chairs of Faculties would now have greater responsibility, particularly for ensuring that full discussion of module and course proposals took place at sub-Faculty level;
- (e) That it be noted that while this approach would lead to a lighter touch in teaching quality assurance matters, the process would remain rigorous and effective;
- (f) That it be noted that External Examiners had already been informed that their Part A reports would be published on the HERO portal as a component of the TQI dataset and that it was expected that Chairs of Departments would respond to External Examiners' reports by 31 October annually after due consideration by departments of any issues raised in their reports.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the minor amendments to the Terms of Reference be approved as set out in paper AQSC 2/04-05.

2/04-05 Constitution & Membership

RECEIVED:

A statement of the constitution and membership of the Committee for 2004-05, paper AQSC 4/03-04, it being noted that Professor G Lindsay joined the Committee in 2000, and Professor M Luntley in 2004.

3/04-05 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2004 be approved.
- (b) That the Chair ascertain that a role description for Departmental Senior Tutors had been prepared prior to circulation to departments of the report on the Review of the Personal Tutor system.

4/04-05 Matters Arising

- (a) Harmonisation of Reading Weeks: Warwick Business School (Minute 101 b/03-04 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Warwick Business School appeared, from information provided concerning teaching surveys, to have scheduled its student study week for full-time MBA students in week 5 of the Spring Term and that the matter be raised with WBS.

- (b) Risk & Teaching Quality (Minute 93/03-04 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 13 May 2004, the Committee considered a paper setting out the actual and perceived risks associated with teaching quality and resolved that a number of corrections be made to the paper as recorded at the meeting and that the paper be sent to Professor E Peile, Medical School, for appropriate updating of the section relating to Medicine at the University.

CONSIDERED:

A revised risk register relating to teaching quality incorporating an updated section relating to Medicine, paper AQSC 20/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a new column be added to the register, noting the likelihood of each of the listed risks occurring;
 - (ii) That a number of changes be made to the paper as noted at the meeting;
 - (iii) That a list of key risks be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to permit prioritisation and consideration of appropriate management.
- (d) Annual Course Review (Minute 117/03-04 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its last meeting held on 9 June 2004, the Committee resolved that efforts be made by the Medical School to obtain the outstanding Annual Course Review report from the MA/MSc in Applied Healthcare Studies (Diabetes Care) for 2002-03 for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

CONSIDERED:

The Annual Course Review report for the MA/MSc in Applied Healthcare Studies (Diabetes Care), paper BFM 29/03-04; it being noted that:

- (i) The Medical School was aware of the need for permanent staff to pay close attention to the co-ordination and quality assurance of courses which have numerous external lecturers and took care to appoint a full-time member of Warwick staff as Course Co-ordinator;
- (iii) In accordance with the new Terms of Reference of the Committee recently approved by the Senate, individual Course Review reports would not be considered by the Committee in future.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Course Review report for the MA/MSc in Applied Healthcare Studies (Diabetes Care) be approved as set out in paper BFM 29/03-04.

- (e) Partnership with Warwick Institute, South Africa (Minute 120/03-04 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 9 June, the Committee received a report on progress made by WMG towards implementing the University's exit strategy from the partnership with Warwick

Institute, South Africa, and resolved that the position be monitored over the summer vacation and that Dr A Dowd be requested to prepare a written report for the week 4 meeting of the Committee in the Autumn Term.

CONSIDERED:

A report from Dr A Dowd, Warwick Manufacturing Group, paper AQSC 19/04-05, updated orally by Dr Dowd following a visit to South Africa by Professor Lord Bhattacharyya and Ms G Kershaw, WMG Finance Officer.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That it be noted that da Vinci had now agreed to pay outstanding invoices for modules previously delivered by WMG;
- (ii) That it be noted that nineteen of the remaining fifty-one students would be considered for awards by a Board of Examiners in November and that a further twenty students had completed their taught modules and were now completing projects under the supervision of da Vinci staff;
- (iii) That, with respect to twelve students with a small number of modules still outstanding, Warwick Manufacturing Group would deliver four Warwick modules in South Africa before September 2005; da Vinci to meet the costs of staff accommodation and WMG the costs of travel;
- (iv) That students needing to complete more than four modules be offered the opportunity to travel to Warwick to complete the outstanding modules, their fees being waived to mitigate the cost of travel and accommodation in the UK;

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the remaining students continue with their studies in accordance with the appropriate course regulations but that the University not require students to travel to the UK to follow modules in cases in which the requisite number of modules had been passed and where attendance was required on further modules for which a mark need not be recorded.

5/04-05

Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

That the Senate, at its meeting on 30th June 2004 considered a report from the meetings of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee held on 13th May and 9th June and recorded its approval of recommendations made by the Committee under the following headings:

- (a) Penalties for late submission of assessed work
- (b) Amendments to University Regulations: Fitness to Practise
- (c) Amendment to Regulation 14 Governing Higher Degrees: PhDs in a language other than English

- (d) Good Practice Guide on Providing Information to Students
- (e) Working Group on Student Support & Guidance
- (f) Working Group on Post-experience Provision
- (g) Minor amendments to External Examiner Report Form
- (h) Revised Part 1 Course Approval Documentation
- (i) Amendment to University Ordinance 7
- (j) Undergraduate Student Appeals Procedures
- (k) Annual Review Reports for Research Degrees
- (l) Revisions to Periodic Review documentation
- (m) Amendments to Course Specifications Proforma
- (n) New & Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study
- (o) New & Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study
- (p) Discontinued Course of Study
- (q) New and Revised collaborative courses
- (r) Discontinuation of Partnerships
- (s) Annual Course Review
- (t) Periodic Review Reports
- (u) Proposed Tutors for the BA English Language, Translation & Cultural Studies
- (v) Proposed Tutors for the Diploma in Integrative Counselling, Solihull College

6/04-05

Chair's Business

- (a) Meeting of Russell Group Pro Vice-Chancellors

REPORTED:

That the Chair had attended a meeting of Pro-Vice-Chancellors with Teaching and Learning responsibilities from Russell Group universities where there had been discussion of the National Student Survey, research-led learning and the Tomlinson Report; it being noted that colleagues present had not supported the Tomlinson proposal that higher education institutions should play a greater role in supporting higher level learning in schools.

- (b) Launch of the Higher Education Academy

REPORTED:

That the Higher Education Academy (HEA) had been formally launched on 18 October at an event in London and that its aims included enhancing the student experience and consideration of associated resourcing issues.

- (c) Review of University Resource Allocation Model

CONSIDERED:

Potential involvement of Committee members in the anticipated review of the University's resource allocation model in relation to Teaching Quality matters.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair raise the issue with the Chair of the Academic Resourcing Committee.

7/04-05 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action since the last meeting to approve:

- (a) The proposed partnership between the University, WMG and Global EduTech Management Ltd (GEM), Suzhou, China (Minute 123/03-04 referred); it being noted that the drafting of a formal contractual agreement was currently in progress.

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from Dr A Dowd, noting that:

- (i) Recruitment had been suspended pending final approval and signing of the contract;
 - (ii) Teaching quality aspects of the provision would be covered by an addendum to the original Memorandum of Understanding which would replicate the standard proforma contract.
- (b) The dis-establishment of the Quality Task Group following consideration of the Audit report, the establishment of the Working Group on Assessment Conventions and the mainstreaming of other issues arising from the report.
 - (c) An Open Studies Certificate in Adult Literacy Training, paper BLL 24/02-03.

8/04-05 Partnerships & Distance Learning Sub-Committee of the Academic Quality & Standard Committee: Amendment to Terms of Reference and Constitution

REPORTED:

- (a) That at its meeting held on 22 September, the Senate considered proposed changes to the constitution of committees of the Senate and resolved that proposed amendments to the constitution of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee be approved as set out in paper AQSC 5/04-05.

CONSIDERED:

Further minor amendments to the Terms of Reference as set out in paper AQSC 6/04-05.

RESOLVED:

That further minor amendments to the Terms of Reference be approved as set out in paper AQSC 6/04-05.

- (b) That at its meeting held on 9 June, the Committee received a report on difficulties encountered in pursuing with colleagues in WBS issues arising from the Annual Course Review report for the Distance Learning MBA, paper GFSS 79/03-04, and resolved that the issue of the appropriate locus for consideration of distance learning provision be considered once the impact of the revisions recently approved by the Senate on the Committee system had been clarified.

CONSIDERED:

The appropriateness of amending the current constitution of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee to include an academic member of staff from WBS with responsibility for the DLMBA on a permanent basis.

RESOLVED:

That an academic member of staff from WBS with responsibility for the DLMBA be included in the membership of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee on a permanent basis.

9/04-05 Academic Satisfaction Review

CONSIDERED:

Reports arising from the Academic Satisfaction Review 2004 on the undergraduate and postgraduate student experience at Warwick, papers AQSC 7 & 8/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Review questionnaire did not address some issues on which it would be useful to have feedback from PGR students, *viz* the extent to which postgraduate research students feel part of their departments' intellectual communities and that to this end Professor Bridges, as Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies, be asked to compile a list of issues particular to postgraduate students for possible inclusion in the 2005 Review.
- (b) That further consideration be given by the group planning the 2005 Review to methods of increasing the response rate while ensuring rigour and consistency, particularly amongst the postgraduate community and in the Faculty of Medicine;
- (c) That the separate report on the faculty of Medicine be considered at the meeting of the Committee to be held on week 8 of the Autumn Term.
- (d) That responses to the review from Departments be considered in the Spring Term 2005.

10/04-05 Student Complaints

CONSIDERED:

A report on postgraduate students' complaints for the academic year 2003-04, paper AQSC 9/04-05, informed by a copy of the student complaints procedure, paper AQSC 10/04-05; it being noted that in the case of the first complaint set out in the paper (from a PhD student in Computer Science), the complaint about facilities had not been upheld.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

- (a) That the membership of complaints committees be widened as proposed in paper AQSC 9/04-05;
- (b) That it was appropriate that the Vice-Chancellor play a significant role in the consideration of revisions to institutional policy, practice or provision arising from complaints cases and that point 10 of the procedure be clarified to ensure that the role of the Vice-Chancellor was not misconstrued as one of involvement in consideration of the outcome of individual cases;
- (c) That the Complaints Procedure be clarified to indicate that complaints about administrative processes be raised with the Registrar.

11/04-05 QAA Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A copy of the revised section of the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degree programmes, together with a covering letter from the HEFCE, paper BGS 3/04-05;
- (b) A briefing paper setting out significant issues arising, paper BGS 5/04-05; it being noted that at its meeting held on 6 October, the Board of Graduate Studies considered the revised Code and resolved:

- (i) Use of an independent chair in viva examinations

That, as discussed at previous meetings of the Board, there was no support for the introduction of an independent Chair in viva examinations as suggested in the QAA Code of Practice, noting that University criteria for the appointment of examiners, guidance provided on regulations and procedures for the conduct of examinations should be sufficient to satisfy the institution as to the fairness of examinations.

(ii) Implications of the Code of Practice for University procedures

That the implications of the Code of Practice be given more detailed consideration at future meetings.

Minute 9/04-05

RESOLVED:

- (c) That it be noted that a paper-based survey of the University's compliance with the Code of Practice would be carried out by the QAA in 2005-06;
- (d) That the Board of Graduate Studies carry out a review of the implementation by departments of the University's *Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students* during 2004-05;
- (e) That it be noted that the Committee endorsed the course of action proposed by the Board of Graduate Studies in ensuring appropriate engagement with the new Code as well as the Board's view that the process of external examination of postgraduate research students would not be enhanced by the introduction of an independent chair for viva examinations.
- (f) That Departments be asked to review their practice to ensure any issues of concern were detected through internal mechanisms, such as annual review meetings.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the report form completed by examiners of postgraduate research students be amended to include a section where issues of concern or examples of good practice identified at departmental or institutional level could be noted and that reports be made available to supervisors in addition to the student and the examiners.

12/04-05

HEFCE National Student Survey

CONSIDERED:

A report from the HEFCE on the recent consultation on the proposed National Student Survey and guidance on action required of institutions, paper AQSC 11/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's Academic Satisfaction Review be completed in early January annually from 2005 onwards and that the University choose the last available start date in the Spring Term for the National Survey in order to avoid overlap, potential confusion arising from promotional activity and minimise student survey fatigue;

- (b) That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) be nominated as the main contact for HEFCE in respect of the National Survey and that the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Operations and Planning) lead the data handling aspects of the University's compliance with the Survey's requirements;
- (c) That the Students' Union be invited to consider the Survey's potential usefulness to putative applicants and its participation in promotional activities for the Survey for report back to the Committee;
- (d) That efforts be made to obtain further information on the Australian experience of a national student survey, on which the HEFCE NSS was based.
- (e) That a report be provided for the Steering Committee on the Survey.

13/04-05

QAA Consultation on a Statement of Common Purpose for Subject Benchmarks

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A draft Statement of Common Purpose for Subject Benchmarks for the Health and Social Care Professions, paper AQSC 12/04-05;
- (b) A response to the document from the Medical School, paper AQSC 13/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That it be noted that a response from the school of Health & Social Studies on behalf of Social Work provision was still outstanding;
- (d) That the Chair and Secretary draft a response to the Consultation for approval by the Steering Committee.

14/04-05

Report from the Working Group on the Accreditation of Prior Learning

CONSIDERED:

- (a) An oral report from Dr S Hill, Chair of the Working Group on the Accreditation of Prior Learning, established following the Review of the Foundation Degree in Community Enterprise & Development and subsequent proposed revision to the University's policy on APL by the Board of Graduate Studies;
- (b) A proposed policy on the Accreditation of Prior Learning arising from the Group's work, paper AQSC 14/04-05;
- (c) A proposed application form to be used by candidates seeking approval for credit transfer, paper AQSC 15/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the Committee consider the draft policy at its next meeting following revision as set out below:
 - (i) That up to 75% of the total credit value of the Warwick Teaching Certificate be granted as AP(E)L where candidates are appropriately qualified (section 2c);
 - (ii) That the procedure for using credit gained on a Postgraduate Award or Certificate in 'trading up' to a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree (section 2e) be clarified with the Graduate School;
 - (iii) That "the Undergraduate Office" be replaced with "the Undergraduate Section of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Office" in sections 3a and 3f;
 - (iv) That appropriate cross-referencing be provided to the University's policy on direct entry to year 2 (of a three-year degree) or to year 3 (of a four-year Undergraduate Master's degree) in line with information provided to candidates in the University's Course Directory;
- (e) That minor amendments be made to the proposed Application Form prior to reconsideration in week 8.

15/04-05 Report from the Working Group on Assessment Conventions

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Professor Whitby on the progress of the Working Group on Assessment Conventions, noting that approaches about examination conventions operating at other HEIs had been made to the Russell and '94 Groups and that an exercise was underway to identify the impact of transposing the marks of students from one set of conventions to the other to assess the validity of concerns regarding parity of treatment.

16/04-05 Periodic Review Schedule

RECEIVED:

- (a) A copy of the Periodic Review schedule for 2004-05 – 2008-09, paper AQSC 16/04-05.
- (b) A paper from Dr S Hill, Centre for Lifelong Learning, setting out a rationale for amending the University's current approach to the Periodic Review of Part-Time degree and 2+2 courses of study, paper AQSC 17/04-05.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the date for the QAA Institutional Audit be amended in the Periodic Review schedule from 2008/09 to 2009/10;

- (b) That Part-Time and 2+2 degree courses owned by academic departments be reviewed simultaneously with other courses offered by their host department;
- (c) That 'cross-departmental' degrees be reviewed by the relevant Faculty as proposed in paper AQSC 17/04-05;
- (d) That CFDLSC conduct a review of the student support aspects of all Part-Time and 2+2 provision on a quinquennial basis.

17/04-05 Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body accreditation

RECEIVED:

A copy of the schedule for forthcoming Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body accreditation exercises, paper AQSC 18/04-05; it being noted that, following the amendment to procedures made in the light of Audit recommendations, reports on accreditation exercises undertaken each year would be forwarded to the Committee together with a departmental action plan for addressing matters of concern.

18/04-05 Appointment of SSLC Co-ordinators

CONSIDERED:

Current means of appointing of SSLC Co-ordinators and succession planning.

RESOLVED:

That Dr S Hill, Academic SSLC Co-ordinator, work with the University Senior Tutor, Dr P Byrd, to identify two potential successors from amongst academic staff with experience of the system and enthusiasm for its work.

19/04-05 Department of Sociology: Restructuring of Undergraduate Degree

CONSIDERED:

A memorandum from Professor R Fine, Chair of Sociology, setting out broad proposals to restructure undergraduate degree courses taught wholly within his department, paper AQSC 21/04-05 (tabled).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chair seek assurances from the Department of Sociology that the resourcing of Specialisms had been fully considered, even for small cohorts; it being noted that advice had been received by the Committee indicating the value of retaining separate UCAS codes for admissions purposes;
- (b) That more detailed proposals be considered for approval by Chair's Action in due course, provided the above concerns were addressed.

20/04-05 Term Dates

CONSIDERED:

Difficulties likely to arise from the mid-week start of the Spring Term in 2005 and measures to mitigate the potential loss of teaching time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Students' Union Education Officer be asked to canvass student opinion on the desirability of using the first two days of the Spring Term 2005 reading week for teaching where departments so wished;
- (b) That the Chair raise the matter of mid-week start dates at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

21/04-05 e-Learning Steering Group: Reporting Lines

CONSIDERED:

A recommendation from the e-Learning Steering Group that it report jointly to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee as well as to the Information Policy and Strategy Committee.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the recommendation of the e-Learning Steering Group in favour of joint reporting to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the Information Policy and Strategy Committee be approved.

22/04-05 Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30 am on Wednesday 17 November 2004 in the Council Chamber, University House.

HRWS/JDM 28.10.04
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