

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meeting held on Tuesday 18 January 2011.

Present: Professor J Labbe (Chair), Dr C Bilton, Professor K Butcher, Mrs J Cooper, Dr A Dowd, Professor F Griffiths, Ms Y Kay, Dr D Leadley, Mr D Maynard, Professor R Napier, Professor J Neelands, Mr S Ruston, Ms A Stewart, Dr P Taylor, Dr J Vickery.

Apologies: Dr R Earle, Ms S Ekeocha, Professor N Johnson, Professor J Swan.

In attendance: Mr D Dean for item 36(c)/10-11, Dr J Gardner, Mr A Higgins, Mr M Mik.

34/10-11 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 18 November 2010 be approved, noting that item 20(j)/10-11 had been amended since the circulation of the minutes as follows (insertions underlined, deletions ~~struck through~~):

'RESOLVED:

That the departments be invited to identify ~~the appropriate level~~ their exam conventions for the award of a Merit at Master's level and report back to Faculty Graduate Studies Committees and subsequently to BGS to maintain coordination and consistency ~~at Faculty level~~, noting that there are number of collaborative programmes involving several departments.'

35/10-11 Matters arising on the minutes

- (a) Membership of the Board 2010/2011 (minutes 20/10-11 and 2/10-11 referred).

REPORTED:

- (i) That Professor R Napier would serve as the Deputy Chair of the Board;
- (ii) That the Students' Union Postgraduate elections had not reach necessary quorum and the following postgraduate student had been co-opted at the Students Union Council meeting in November 2010, subject to approval of the Board of the Faculty of Arts:

Ms Y Kay

- (b) Membership of Sub-Committees (minutes 20(b)/10-11 and 4/10-11 referred).

Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee

REPORTED:

That the Faculty of Medicine had nominated the following to serve as Faculty scorers on the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee:

Professor D Grammatopoulos
Dr T Pawlikowska

- (c) Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Block Grant Partnership Awards for academic year 2011/12 and beyond (minutes 20(c)/10-11 and 9(b)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Chair had written to the AHRC protesting the disadvantage changes to the Research Training and Support Grant presented for funded students;
 - (ii) That the AHRC had responded justifying their actions, and maintaining students had not been disadvantaged;
 - (iii) That, in terms of BGP awards, preliminary internal consultations by the Faculty of Arts suggested preference for maintaining the full value of awards if less money was to be allocated, over maintaining the number of awards at lower value.
- (d) Research Students Skills Provision and Training (minutes 20(f)/10-11 and 9(d)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That the working group had met and discussions were ongoing and that depending on their progress, a proposal would be presented to the Board at its meeting on 24 February 2011 or 5 May 2011.

- (e) New 4-year Standard Period of Registration for Full-Time PhD Students (minutes 20(g)/10-11, 9(g)/10-11, 101/09-10 and 63/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Student Staff Liaison Committees had been invited to comment on the proposed change from a 3 to 4-year period of registration, noting:
 - (A) That there had been general support of the change;
 - (B) That some concern was felt with regard to fees and funding implications of the change;
 - (C) That clear communication would be needed with students, prospective students, and staff.

- (ii) That Graduate Studies Committees were invited to discuss a fee for late submission of the thesis at their next meetings and report back to the Board at its February 2011 meeting;
 - (iii) That part-time PhD registration period should be extended to 7 years, noting that full implications of this change were yet to be considered;
 - (iv) That the expectation remained unchanged for full-time students to aim to complete within three years;
 - (v) That fees would only be charged for three years of full-time registration, noting that University funding would also continue to be offered on a three-year basis only;
 - (vi) That exceptions would be in place for external funding bodies which fund for longer periods;
 - (vii) That operational aspects of the proposed change of standard period of registration for PhD students were being discussed (PG Admissions, Management Information and Planning, Graduate School) and that a further progress meeting would be held towards the end of January 2011 and a further report would be made to the Board at its next meeting.
- (f) Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals (minutes 20(h)/10-11 and 10(c)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the 2011 Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals (paper BGS 26/10-11) was now open for both 'Action 1A: Erasmus Mundus Master Courses (EMMC)' and 'Action 1B: Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates (EMJD)', noting that the University preferred Action 1B;
 - (ii) That although the deadline was 29 April 2011, the Commission's deadline for submission of the 'Summary Sheet' of a proposed application was 31 March 2011. The Graduate School would contact departments shortly regarding the administrative support and proposed timetable for submission of applications within the University.
- (g) Extension Charge for Students Resubmitting a PGT Project or Dissertation (minutes 20(i)/10-11, 16/10-11, 95/09-10 and 93/09-10 referred).

REPORTED:

That following discussion at their next meetings on departmental practice regarding supervision of students resubmitting PGT Projects or Dissertations, Graduate Studies Committees would report to the

Board on 24 February 2011, with a view to the Board formulating best practice guidance for the University.

- (h) Membership of the European University Association – Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) (minute 27/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That the University application for membership of the European University Association – Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) had been accepted.

- (i) Nominations to the UK Council of Graduate Education (UKCGE) Executive Committee (minute 28/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That Dr T Barnes (WMG) had been nominated for the vacant posts on the Executive Committee of the UKCGE, noting that she was co-opted last year.

- (j) PGT Grade Descriptors and Award of Merits (minutes 20(i)/10-11, 104/09-10 and 60/09-10 referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the implementation of the Award of Merit.

REPORTED:

- (i) That departments would have to put arrangements in place before the end of the academic year in order for the award of Merit to be implemented from 2011/12;
- (ii) That although there would be differences between departments and between courses within departments, it was expected that there would be no obvious outliers;
- (iii) That the Faculty of Science had an agreed formula for the award of distinction within the Faculty;
- (iv) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences undertook preliminary review of exam conventions and would discuss the matter further at its next meeting in order to introduce a degree of harmonisation;
- (v) That the award of Merit would be introduced with effect from 2011/12 and current student cohorts would not be eligible for the award;
- (vi) That following scrutiny at Faculty Graduate Studies Committees, the Board would receive amended examination

conventions for all courses to ensure consistency across Faculties.

36/10-11

Chair's Business

(a) University Strategy Refresh

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the University Strategy refresh discussions.

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Board regretted the lack of opportunity to contribute to the consultation process as it took place in between its meetings and did not allow the Board to discuss the document;
- (ii) That the Chair reported concerns on behalf of the Board through other fora;
- (iii) That the final version of the document would be presented to the Senate at its meeting on 26 January 2011;
- (iv) That the main aspects of the Strategy Refresh in the postgraduate area included:
 - (A) Maintained aspiration to double the number of postgraduate research students;
 - (B) More innovative use of funding for postgraduate taught and research students to facilitate doubling of PGR numbers, noting that the Board's Working Party on PGR Funding would address this point;
 - (D) Introduction of a range of diplomas for postgraduate students to enhance their employability skills.

(b) Postgraduate Student Enrolment Data 2010/11 (minute 21(a)/10-11 referred).

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Secretary on postgraduate student enrolment data from *Academic Statistics 2010/11*.

(c) Consolidated Information on Funding and University Scholarships (minute 21(b)/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships)

on the University scholarships portal.

REPORTED:

That the Board thanked the Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships) and the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) for their work on the Portal.

(d) PGR Funding Working Party (minute 21(c)/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the PGR Funding Working Party would have the following membership:

Professor J Labbe (Chair)
Mr A Bounds
Dr R Earle
Professor R Napier
Professor J Neelands

- (ii) That the group would meet before Reading Week;
(iii) That the Chair would request a range of financial models to inform discussions.

(e) Expanding the Range of WCPRS

REPORTED:

That the Chair would be visiting Boards of the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences to discuss WCPRS and how to increase the faculties' involvement in collaborative funding.

(f) Directors of Graduate Studies' Lunch

REPORTED:

That the Spring term meeting for Directors of Graduate Studies would take place on Wednesday 9 March 2011 at 12.30 in the Council Chamber.

(g) New Dedicated Postgraduate Space

REPORTED:

- (i) That a new dedicated postgraduate space would be created in the Coventry House and was intended to be in use from the next academic year;
(ii) That the Chair invited Board members to put forward ideas for possible use of this space, noting this was intended for both postgraduate taught and research students;
(iii) That this was to be predominantly an academic space;

- (iv) That the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning offered its expertise in the creative use of space.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That student input on this issue was crucial and the Board welcomed a proposal from the Education Officer to undertake a consultation on this issue;
- (ii) That viewings of the space would be beneficial for Board members and wider postgraduate community to inform specific discussions of the use of the space, noting that if viewings were not possible, information packs would be made available to provide necessary information.

37/10-11 Postgraduate Forum and the Students' Union

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Education Officer on behalf of the PG Forum Coordinators.

REPORTED:

- (a) That the PG Forum work was ongoing in bringing postgraduate research students to the Students' Union and helping to shift the focus towards more inclusive provision;
- (b) That the Students' Union was in consultation with postgraduate SSLCs over PG provision and would feed back to the Board;
- (c) That the Union was planning to organise fairs targeted specifically at postgraduate students, recognising different expectations and noting that timings for these events would take into account the variety of entry points at postgraduate level.

38/10-11 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2011

REPORTED:

- (i) That the University would participate in PTES 2011, noting that no other nation-wide survey of PGT experience was currently available and that the University survey data would be protected and unavailable to third parties, which is why the results could not be used for marketing purposes;
- (ii) That broadly same institutional questions would be used in 2011 as in 2010 to maintain comparability with surveys carried out in previous years.

39/10-11 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2011

REPORTED:

- (i) That the University would participate in PRES 2011, noting that no other nation-wide survey of PGR experience was currently available and that the University survey data would be protected and unavailable to third parties, which is why the results could not be used for marketing purposes;
- (ii) That broadly same institutional questions would be used in 2011 as in 2009 to maintain comparability with surveys carried out in previous years, noting that a new question would be introduced to obtain information on students' employment outside of term-time.

40/10-11 Visiting Postgraduate Research Students

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Fees Working Group had confirmed that the quota of student months would only apply to non-paying students, i.e. those visiting Warwick for 10 weeks or less, noting that visiting PGR students would normally be expected to be in residence over the period of a scheduled term;
- (b) That the Fees Working Group had also agreed that students coming from the University's five strategic partners would not count toward the quota.

RESOLVED:

That Board members were to inform the Chair of any exceptions to the ten-week term-linked rule that require consideration, e.g. where a ten-week long course does not follow term dates.

41/10-11 Transferring Postgraduate Research Students

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the appropriate limit for authorising transfers of postgraduate research students to the University from other HEIs.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That for students wishing to transfer more than half-way through their period of study (e.g. 18 months), departments should make a special case and preferably interview the applicant;
- (ii) That students wishing to transfer before 18 months of their period of study has elapsed should be subject to the department's upgrade/progression procedures.

42/10-11 2010 PGR Decliner Survey

CONSIDERED:

A report compiled by the Project Office (Postgraduate Recruitment) on the results of the 2010 PGR Decliner Survey (paper BGS 27/10-11).

43/10-11 Reports from External Examiners

CONSIDERED:

A report compiled by the Assistant Secretary to the Board on issues arising from External Examiners' reports on Postgraduate Programmes for 2008-09 (paper BGS 29/10-11).

REPORTED:

- (i) That a report on issues arising from External Examiners' reports on Postgraduate Programmes for 2009-10 was to be presented to the Board in the Summer term;
- (ii) That the issue of assessment deadlines crowded together as reported by External Examiners was also discussed by SSLCs and that careful consideration was to be given to this issue following receipt of the report on 2009-10 External Examiners' reports;
- (iii) That the issue of penalties for late submission turning a pass into a fail would be considered if raised again in 2009-10 External Examiners' reports.

44/10-11 PhD Project Advertising

RECEIVED:

Information on PhD project advertising packages offered by SARO/Graduate School (paper BGS 33/10-11).

45/10-11 Graduate School Newsletter

RECEIVED:

The Autumn 2010 newsletter issued by the Graduate School since the last meeting of the Board (paper BGS 30/10-11).

46/10-11 Revised Course Proposal

MSc in Finance

CONSIDERED:

A request from Warwick Business School for an in principle approval of a revised course 'MSc in Finance' (paper BGS 31/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved in principle, subject to a confirmation from WBS that consultations had taken place with other departments with regard to existing postgraduate courses, namely the MSc in Economic and Psychological Science and the MSc in Behavioural and Economic Science.

47/10-11 ESRC DTC Application (minutes 20(d)/10-11, 9/10-11, 112/09-10, 88/09-10,

54(d)/09-10 and 44(d)/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That the University had been informed that its ESRC DTC application had been successful.

48/10-11 WMG Awarded the EPSRC Industrial Doctorate Centre

REPORTED:

That WMG had been awarded one of five new EPSRC Industrial Doctorate Centres. WMG centre would focus on High Value, Low Environmental Impact Manufacturing.

49/10-11 AHRC Research Training Support Grant

REPORTED:

- (a) That AHRC Research Training Support Grant had been allocated to all but two applicants, noting that the AHRC had reduced RTSG allocations at a short notice;
- (b) That given the budgetary limitations only fieldwork would be supported in future years, noting that students would be redirected to other sources to fund conference attendance.

50/10-11 Campus Bus Service

REPORTED:

That the Students' Union were in discussion with bus service providers, the University and local councils to address an issue raised repeatedly by University students, undergraduate and postgraduate, of the sub-optimal situation of public transport to and from the Campus.

51/10-11 Parking Fees for PGR Students

REPORTED:

That the Students' Union noted that charging PGR students the equivalent parking fee levied on Grade 6 and above members of staff was not fair.

52/10-11 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Board would be on **Thursday, 24 February 2011** in the **Council Chamber**.

AH/MM 01.02.11