

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meeting held on Tuesday 14 January 2014

Present: Professor J Palmowski (Chair), Professor R Napier (Deputy Chair), Dr C Bilton, Ms J Cooper, Dr A Cristea, Dr R Dias, Professor A Dowd, Ms L Gill, Professor G Hartshorne, Professor J Hayton, Professor D Holt, Dr J Kidd, Dr P Roberts, Professor D Singh, Mr T Soykan, Professor D Steinberg, Dr P Taylor, Mr A Thompson, Professor M Wills.

Apologies: Professor R Aldrich, Dr J Brassett, Ms S Cheng, Professor S Gundle, Mr S Parr, Dr J Parkinson, Ms A Sandhu, Dr J Vickery.

In attendance: Mr A Malin (for item 34/13-14), Ms M Ovens, Mrs K Pollard.

35/13-14 Minutes of the last meeting

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 21 November 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 21 November 2013 be approved.

36/13-14 Matters arising on the minutes

(a) Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee (minutes 5/13-14 and 26(b)/13-14 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That the following had been nominated to serve as Faculty Selectors on the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee:

(A) Faculty of Arts

- (1) Professor A Fuchs;
- (2) Dr P Roberts.

(B) Faculty of Medicine

- (1) Dr A Adams;
- (2) Professor D Grammatopoulos.

(C) Faculty of Science

- (1) Professor A Troisi;
- (2) Professor V Buchanan-Wollaston.

(D) Faculty of Social Sciences

- (1) Mr P Whitehead;
- (2) TBC.

(ii) That the following members of the Board had been nominated to serve as representatives on the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee:

(A) Faculty of Arts

Dr R Dias.

(B) Faculty of Medicine

Professor G Hartshorne.

(C) Faculty of Science

Professor M Wills.

(D) Faculty of Social Sciences

Professor D Singh.

(b) Graduate School Review (minutes 12(c)/13-14 and 26(c)/13-14 referred)

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Chair of the Board entitled 'Response to the Report of the Review of the Warwick Graduate School', which was considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 2 December 2013 (paper SC 42/13-14).

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (i) That the Response to the Review of the Graduate School Report would be presented to the Senate;
- (ii) That consultation with other forums across the University, including the DGS lunch and the Postgraduate Conference, had confirmed the Board's view that the training of postgraduate research students should be a priority for the Graduate School.

RESOLVED:

- (iii) That the paper represented an accurate summary of the discussions of the Board at its last meeting;
- (iv) That, noting the potential resourcing restraints, further consideration be given as to how the roles and responsibilities of the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees and the Directors of Graduate Studies in

Departments could be clarified in order to represent a more strategic role.

- (c) Aligning policy on hard and electronic copies of theses (minutes 16/13-14 and 26(d)13/14 refer)

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That the Library is investigating potential methods for ensuring the permanence of electronic copies of theses, noting that reconsideration of the current policy on hard and electronic copies of theses would be deferred pending the outcome of this.

- (d) Late submission of research theses (minute 30/13-14 refers)

REPORTED:

That this item would be considered as part of a wider project concerning PGR student progression.

- (e) Postgraduate Recruitment (minute 31/13-14 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A copy of the final postgraduate admissions data for the 2013-14 academic year, provided by the Postgraduate Admissions Service Manager (paper BGS 34/13-14).

REPORTED (by the Postgraduate Admissions Service Manager):

- (i) That the data identified a positive picture for PGR student recruitment, with an upward trend in application and acceptance numbers for both the home/EU and overseas market;
- (ii) That PGT recruitment numbers for home/EU students had decreased significantly, noting that this had also been identified as an area of concern for Russell Group competitors;
- (iii) That the numbers for overseas PGT recruitment had remained consistent with the previous year.

REPORTED (by the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee for the Faculty of Arts):

- (iv) That the increased fees for PGT courses may be responsible for the decrease in applications from home/EU students, particularly amongst students of Arts subjects.

REPORTED (by Mr A Thompson):

- (v) That whilst interest amongst undergraduates in progressing to postgraduate study at Warwick was high, the lack of available funding represented a disincentive due to concerns

about debt and future employment prospects.

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (vi) That the University is investigating the feasibility of offering discounts on PGT courses for Warwick alumni, with a view to increasing recruitment from the undergraduate student population.

37/13-14

Chair's Business

(a) Postgraduate Funding

REPORTED:

- (i) That £1.6 million had been set aside within the ARC budget for allocation to departments to cover match funding commitments, noting that the new process for considering applications for funding had been implemented and the outcome of this would be communicated once available;
- (ii) That departments are not required to bid for WCPRS studentships from the central University fund, noting that these awards will continue to be allocated to faculties under the existing process;
- (iii) That the relevant terms and conditions applicable to the allocated source of funding for studentships would be made clear to students within Scholarship offer letters issued by the Graduate School.

(b) PGR student progression

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That three key areas relating to PGR student academic progression had emerged from discussions with departments about the PRES results, as subjects that would benefit from discussion by the Board:

- (i) How to ensure that University expectations for the time-frame for completion of research degrees are met, noting the external requirements of HEFCE and Research Councils;
- (ii) Whether current policy relating to temporary withdrawal should be reconsidered, noting the difficulties it presents for students experiencing health problems during their extension year and international students sponsored under a tier 4 visa;
- (iii) How the provision of pastoral support and careers advice could be improved for PGR students, noting the scope for developing the role of Senior Tutors and Directors of Graduate Studies within departments in this regard.

REPORTED (by Professor A Dowd):

- (iv) That the role and responsibilities of staff involved in the provision of careers advice would need to be clear in order to avoid confusion, noting that link students had already been appointed by both SSLCs and the Careers Service;
- (v) That the restrictions on recognising ill-health via a period of temporary withdrawal during an extension period are considered to be counter-productive.

REPORTED (by Dr R Dias):

- (vi) That whilst Directors of Graduate Studies have oversight of PGR student progression, they do not currently play a role in the Annual Report Form process, noting that their involvement would enable them to act upon progression issues.

RESOLVED:

- (vii) That the Board was supportive of undertaking further investigation into these issues relating to PGR student academic progression, noting that specific proposals would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

38/13-14

Board of Graduate Studies Working Groups

RECEIVED:

Oral reports from the Chairs of the Working Groups regarding progress made since the last meeting of the Board:

- (a) Best Practice for PGR Training as related to teaching/selecting PGR tutors

Chair: Professor D Steinberg and Dr A Cristea

Remit: to enhance the selection, training and working conditions of PhD students as teachers.

REPORTED:

That a date had been set for the first meeting of the Working Group which will establish its terms of reference, with a second meeting to take place subsequently, noting that it expected to be able to report its recommendations in the Summer term.

- (b) Best Practice for postgraduate student admissions

Chair: Dr C Bilton

Remit: to address disparity in admissions across departments, focussing on effective admissions processes and marketing.

REPORTED:

That a sub-group in the Centre for Applied Linguistics had met to identify ideas for best practice ahead of the first meeting of the Working Group, noting that the Working Group expected to be able to report its recommendations in the Summer term.

(c) Identifying improvements for part-time students

Chair: Dr J Kidd

Remit: to consider how the postgraduate student experience can be improved for part-time students.

REPORTED:

That the Working Group was due to meet in the Spring term, noting that it expected to be able to report its recommendations in the Summer term.

(d) The Postgraduate Community

Chair: Professor J Palmowski

Remit: to enhance the provision and visibility of central services for postgraduate students.

REPORTED:

- (i) That central providers of services for postgraduate students were being consulted with a view to mapping out future roles and responsibilities for initiatives to enhance the postgraduate community;
- (ii) That work had been undertaken on improving postgraduate induction services, including holding induction events at intervals throughout the academic year to cater for students commencing courses at different times;
- (iii) That plans for a summer programme of events for postgraduate students were underway.

39/13-14

Chair's Action

RECEIVED:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 39/13-14), as follows:

Change to Regulation 38: maximum time allowed for minor corrections to a DClinPsych thesis (paper BGS 38/13-14, available online)

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to recommend to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that Regulation 38.12, governing the Degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych), be amended to specify that the period during which minor corrections may be made be extended to a maximum duration of three

months, rather than one month, in order to harmonise the DClinPsych with other research degrees awarded by the University of Warwick.

40/13-14 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Board would be on Tuesday 18 February, 9.30am, in CMR 1.0.

MO/KW 6/01/14

Records & Finance/BGS/2013-14/2014.01.14/BGS MINUTES January 14