UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meeting held on Friday 10 October 2014.

Present: Professor J Palmowski, Mrs J Cooper, Ms R Davis, Dr K Denby, Professor

A Dowd, Dr J Garde-Hanson, Ms J Humphreys, Mr S Lamb, Professor D Leadley, Dr J Pearson, Dr A Pinter, Professor G Riello, Professor L Roberts, Professor P Scott, Dr D Steeghs, Professor D Steinberg, Dr P Taylor, Mr A

Thompson, Professor M Wills.

Apologies: Mr A Brewerton, Professor J Hayton, Dr K Kirwan, Dr P McTernan, Dr Z

Newby, Dr P Roberts, Professor M Saward, Professor M Soteriou.

In attendance: Mr P Brewster (for item 10/14-15), Mrs K Eccleston (for item 16/14-15), Dr L Hough (for item 11/14-15), Mr A Malin (for item 16/14-15), Mrs G Mills (for

item 10/14-15), Mrs L Larard, Mr D Pearson, Mrs K Pollard.

1/14-15 <u>Terms of Reference</u>

REPORTED:

That the terms of reference of the Board were as set out in paper BGS 1/14-15.

2/14-15 <u>Membership of the Board 2014/2015</u>

REPORTED:

That the membership of the Board for 2014/15 was as set out in paper BGS 2/14-15.

3/14-15 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

- (a) That, should any members or attendees of the Board have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK;
- (b) That no conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting were reported.

4/14-15 Freedom of Information Act: Publication Scheme

REPORTED:

(a) That the University commits to publishing the minutes, agendas and non-reserved business of University bodies and committees on the University website, as part of its Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; (b) That members of the Board were reminded that minutes of Board meetings will be published in this way.

5/14-15 Schedule of meetings of the Board

REPORTED:

That the Board will meet subsequently as follows during the academic year 2014-15:

20 November 2014 at 9am in CMR 1.0, University House; 13 January 2015 at 9.30amin CMR 1.0, University House; 9 February 2015 at 2pm (locationTBC); 30 April 2015 at 9.30amin CMR 1.0, University House; 2 June 2015at 2pm in CMR 1.0, University House.

6/14-15 <u>Membership of Sub-Committees</u>

Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee

CONSIDERED:

The election of representatives to the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee, noting that the formal membership is as follows:

- (a) The Chair of the Board as the Chair;
- (b) The Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees of the Boards of the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, Science and Social Sciences;
- (c) Four members of the Board, one from each of the Faculties:

Faculty of Arts;

Faculty of Medicine;

Faculty of Science;

Faculty of Social Sciences.

With the additional representation of the following Faculty Selectors (not Committee members) in determining awards to be made by the University, two from each Faculty:

(d) Faculty of Arts;

Faculty of Medicine;

Faculty of Science;

Faculty of Social Sciences.

RESOLVED:

That representatives for the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee would be elected as soon as possible and reported at the next meeting of the Board.

7/14-15 Nomination for Membership of the Board of Undergraduate Studies

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of a representative of the Board to serve on the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

That Dr J Pearson had agreed to serve as the representative of the Board on the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

8/14-15 Nomination of student member on the University Research Ethics Committee

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of a student member of the Board to serve on the University Research Ethics Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Mr A Thompson had agreed to serve as the representative of the Board on the University Research Ethics Committee.

9/14-15 Minutes of the last meeting

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 5 June 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 5 June 2014 be approved.

10/14-15 Matters Arising on the Minutes

(a) <u>Best Practice for PGR Training as related to teaching/selecting PGR tutors(Minute 64/13-14 refers)</u>

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- That the report prepared in conjunction with the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies would be available at the next meeting of the Board;
- (ii) That work on the NUS Postgraduate Employment Charter was still in progress, but that this would be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

REPORTED (by the Human Resources Engagement Director and the Director of Warwick Employment Group):

(iii) That Human Resources and Warwick Employment Group were working together to develop the 'TeachHigher' service, a central portal for the management and administration of temporary academic staffing within the University, covering

both PGR students who teach and externally appointed teaching assistants;

- (iv) That the service would operate as a pilot system within four academic departments during the 14/15 academic year, with the aim of further developing and improving the service during that time before extending it across the University in the next academic year;
- (v) That 'TeachHigher' would eventually become the sole method of recruiting temporary academic staff within the University, noting its flexibility to meet both the requirements for appointing PGR students to undertake single/short-term teaching duties, and filling longer-term temporary teaching appointments, with the aspiration to operate as a commercial franchise, akin to Unitemps;
- (vi) That the service would address acknowledged concerns about the lack of transparency and fairness in the current process for recruiting PGR students to teach within departments, noting that the system would make a wider pool of talent available when considering applicants for teaching positions, without preventing departments from setting prescribed person specifications appropriate to specific roles.

(b) PGR Scholarships Competition

REPORTED (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School)):

- (i) That the deadline for the receipt of applications for this year's competition would be 12 January 2015;
- (ii) That the Graduate School had consulted with the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees and agreed that the time frame for applicants to upload additional documents in support of applications be reduced from two weeks after the main application deadline to one week, noting that the final deadline would therefore be 19 January 2015.

11/14-15 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2014

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair and the Postgraduate Student Development Officer (Graduate School) on the results of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2014, submitted to Senate (paper S.2/14-15).

REPORTED:

- (i) That the response rate for the PTES survey had been 36%, representing an increase from the previous year;
- (ii) That 84% of students had indicated an overall satisfaction with their course of study, exceeding the sector and Russell Group averages;

- (iii) That noted areas requiring improvement were contact time, assessment and feedback, and English language support, for which all satisfaction appeared to have decreased, although comparison with earlier surveys was difficult due to significant redesign of the survey in 2014;
- (iv) That engagement with departments regarding the results of the survey and steps for improvement would be coordinated with those of the NSS survey due to close correlations between results in each, noting that departments had already been provided with a breakdown of their PTES results and would be providing action plans in response to this by 17 October 2014.

RESOLVED:

- (v) That the Graduate School would circulate a more detailed breakdown of the PTES results to departments;
- (vi) That improvement in the provision of English language support would be taken forward as a priority area, due to the high numbers of international students admitted to the University;
- (vii) That consideration would be given to the timing of the launch of the survey, noting that doing so early in the cycle may not give students sufficient time to comment meaningfully on their experience, whilst a later date could impact negatively on response rates;
- (viii) That the Board did not support the release of details of nonrespondents to departments to enable a more targeted approach, but that the current approach of contacting all students throughout the survey period be maintained.

12/14-15 Progress toward Strategy Targets and Planning Business for 2014/2015

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair setting out the strategic priorities of the Board over the coming year (paper BGS 4/14-15).

REPORTED (by Dr J Pearson):

That there was some concern regarding reduced opportunities for Home and EU students to receive full studentships in the Sciences as a result of reform to the PGR Scholarships Competition.

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That it was important to note that the overall scholarships budget had not been cut for 14/15, noting that the University has taken necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of match funding commitments.

RESOLVED:

That the Board was supportive of consulting with postgraduate students regarding the University's plans for improving its transferrable skills provision.

13/14-15 Chair's Business

RECEIVED:

(a) Response to the Graduate School Review, considered by Senate in July 2014 (paper S.62/13-14)

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (i) That the University is committed to ensuring that thesis submission is achieved within the four year PhD registration period, noting that there is no expectation that the examination process be completed within this time, which was noted in the paper in error;
- (ii) That declining submission rates threaten the University's success in securing continuing research council funding, making it vital that the expectations regarding submission be understood clearly within departments and communicated effectively to students.

RESOLVED:

That the Graduate School would re-issue guidance to departments outlining the University's expectations regarding submission within the four year registration period.

(b) Postgraduate Welcome Week

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That the Postgraduate Welcome Week had been a successful event, with high demand for the activities and events on offer.

14/14-15 Supervisory loads for research students

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) regarding the monitoring of supervisory loads by departments (paper BGS 5/14-15).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Graduate School would circulate a reminder to Directors of Graduate Studies regarding the availability of the University Dashboards as a means of accessing departmental data pertaining to the supervision of PGR students;
- (b) That assessment of supervisory loads be incorporated into the departmental Annual Course Review process, noting that this would provide an effective means of assessing how load is being managed

and whether any problems are arising as a result, without requiring an additional exercise to be undertaken to achieve this purpose.

15/14-15 <u>Absence of supervisors</u>

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) regarding action to take in the absence of absent PGR supervisors (paper BGS 6/14-15).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Board approved the proposed statement for how to manage the absence of PGR supervisors for inclusion within all student handbooks, as set out in paper BGS 6/14-15, noting that this includes the alternative wording for the final paragraph as drafted by Professor Napier;
- (b) That the statement also be adopted in respect of supervisory arrangements for postgraduate taught students undertaking supervised dissertation projects;
- (c) That the Graduate School would circulate the statement to departments.

16/14-15 <u>Postgraduate Admissions reference requirements</u>

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (University Admissions) outlining potential amendments to the current policy on academic reference requirements for postgraduate taught and research student admissions (paper BGS 7/14-15).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That two references would continue to be required from applicants to postgraduate research programmes, noting that this enables considered decisions to be made about an applicant's suitability for this type of study;
- (b) That one reference would be required as standard from applicants to postgraduate taught programmes, noting that departments should establish the most appropriate source of this in the circumstances, whether this be academic or employment-related;
- (c) That, where appropriate, departments can elect to require a second reference for students applying to postgraduate taught programmes,
- (d) That transcripts be required from all applicants to postgraduate taught programmes;
- (e) That references provided via email be accepted, providing these derive from an email account connected with an official organisation.

17/14-15 Amendment to Regulation 11 on the Procedure to be Adopted in the Event of Suspected Cheating in a University Test

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Administrative Officer (Graduate School) outlining an amendment to Regulation 11 to refer explicitly to further guidance for departments on plagiarism investigations contained within the Senate Examination and Degree Conventions (paper BGS 8/14-15).

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

That the proposal to amend Regulation 11 be approved, as set out in paper BGS 8/14-15.

18/14-15 Reports from External Examiners

RECEIVED:

A report from the Chair summarising External Examiners' reports on Postgraduate Programmes for 2012-13 (paper BGS 9/14-15).

19/14-15 OIA Annual Letter

RECEIVED:

The OIA's Annual Letter, outlining the number of complaints and appeals considered by the OIA in the last year (paper BGS 10/14-15).

REPORTED:

That the University had responded to higher than average complaints being considered by the OIA through a newly implemented Complaints Procedure and the appointment of a designated Complaints Resolution Officer.

20/14-15 Chair's Action

RECEIVED:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 11/14-15), as follows:

(a) Faculty of Social Sciences

(i) Centre for Lifelong Learning

Postgraduate Awards

RFPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve a request from the Centre for Lifelong Learning for its admissions requirements to be relaxed for Postgraduate Awards in the Careers Studies Unit, requiring just one reference that can be either academic or work

place/client based, alongside a variety of other methods to assess suitability for the awards.

(ii) Warwick Business School

MSc Business Analytics

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve a request from the Business School to amend the published IELTS requirement for the MSc Business Analytics course to bring this in line with other equivalent courses and current practice, which is to require a score of 7.5 but enabling a score of 7 to be considered at the School's discretion without making an exceptional request.

(b) Faculty of Science

(i) Chemistry

PgA in Molecular Analytical Science

REPORTED:

- (A) That, at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Board resolved that a proposal from the Department of Chemistry to introduce a new PgA in Molecular Analytical Science, as set out in SGS.36/13-14, be approved, subject to formal sign-off by the course leader and Head of Department;
- (B) That sign-off has been received and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve the proposal to introduce a new PgA in Molecular Analytical Science.

(ii) Warwick Manufacturing Group

(A) MSc in Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing

REPORTED:

- (1) That, at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Board approved a proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group for a new collaborative MSc in Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing and variation of existing EngD (Int), as set out in papers SGS.37(a-e)/13-14;
- (2) That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve an amendment to the course to remove the option for a Postgraduate Award and replace one of the modules.

(B) MSc in Service Management & Design

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve an amendment to the course to allow a PG Diploma as an entry qualification.

(C) PgA in Innovation Business Leadership

REPORTED:

- (1) That, at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Board resolved that a proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group to introduce a new PgA in Innovation Business Leadership, as set out in papers SGS.39(a-b)/13-14, be approved, subject to receipt of a further external evaluation, noting that the one supplied is from a member of Warwick staff, and formal sign-off by the course leader and Head of Department;
- (2) That further external evaluation and sign-off has been received and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve the proposal to introduce a new PgA in Innovation Business Leadership.

(D) MSc in International Trade: Strategy and Operations

REPORTED:

- (1) That, at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Board resolved that a proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group to introduce a new MSc in International Trade: Strategy and Operations, as set out in papers SGS.38(a-d)/13-14, be approved, subject to:
 - (i) Confirmation of the proposed start date for full-time students;
 - (ii) Receipt of positive external evaluation of the course:
 - (iii) Confirmation that Warwick Business School and the Department of Economics have been consulted regarding the title of the course;
 - (iv) Formal sign-off by the course leader and Head of Department.
- (2) That the conditions have been satisfied and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve the proposal to introduce a

new MSc in International Trade: Strategy and Operations.

21/14-15 Postgraduate Forum and the Students' Union

REPORTED (by the Postgraduate Officer):

- (a) That a survey on space and facilities for postgraduate students had achieved a good response rate, the results of which would be made available for the next meeting of the Board;
- (b) That postgraduate representatives for the Board would be appointed at the forthcoming Students' Union elections;
- (c) That The Graduate provided designated space in the Students' Union for events tailored towards postgraduate students, with opening hours of 9am 11pm;
- (d) That the housing situation for postgraduate students had improved from the previous academic year, noting the work that had been carried out by the Graduate School and Warwick Accommodation to achieve this, although some students were still without housing at the present time and departments may see some applications for mitigating circumstances as a result.

DP/KP

Records & Finance/BGS/2014-15/2014.10.10/BGS MINUTES October 14