

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Tuesday 25 November 2009

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair); Ms S Bennett, Mr A Bradley, Professor L Bridges, Professor s Bruzzi, Professor N Johnson, Dr K Flint, Professor S Hand, Ms S Khaku, Professor C Hughes, Professor K Lamberts, Dr D Lamburn, Professor K O'Brien, Professor P O'Hare, Dr P Roberts, Professor B Rosamond

Apologies: Professor A Easton, Dr R Moseley

In attendance: Professor A Caesar (from item 25/09-10), Ms L Hayton, Ms J Hughes, Dr T Price (for item 26/09-10), Ms Y Salter-Wright (for items 27, 28 and 29/09-10)

21/09-10 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2009 be approved.

22/09-10 Matters arising

(a) Statement on undergraduate contact hours (Steering Committee minute 656(a)/08-09 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Deputy Academic Registrar, including a draft revised statement on undergraduate contact hours, paper AQSC 30/09-10.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Chair consider the points raised at the meeting and submit for the consideration of the Steering Committee a further revised version of the draft statement on undergraduate contact hours.
- (ii) That, if the Steering Committee resolves that a statement on undergraduate contact hours be published, departments should also be encouraged to publish information on other forms of non-timetabled contact.

(b) Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances (minute 84(b) 08/09 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2009 considered draft guidelines for consideration by postgraduate taught Boards of Examiners of

examination candidates notifying mitigating circumstances, paper BGS 97/08-09 (revised), and resolved:

- (A) That the guidelines be approved.
 - (B) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies be invited to consider adopting the guidelines set out in paper BGS 97/08-09 (revised) for undergraduate Boards of Examiners.
- (ii) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies at its meeting on 18 November 2009 considered the [guidelines] as set out in paper BGS 97/08-09 (revised) and resolved that the revised Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances be approved for undergraduate Boards of Examiners.

23/09-10 Chair's action

Annual Course Review report forms

REPORTED:

That since the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair, acting on its behalf, took action to approve amendments to the Annual Course Review report form as set out in paper AQSC 31/09-10.

24/09-10 Learning & Teaching Strategy

CONSIDERED:

A discussion paper drafted by the Chair concerning progress on the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2008-11, paper AQSC 29/09-10.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That initiatives within the Learning & Teaching Strategy should continue to be progressed to maintain the profile of learning and teaching at Warwick.
- (b) That the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) be encouraged to continue discussions with the University's senior management team to identify funding to support teaching and learning initiatives in 2010-11, noting that HEFCE funding for the King's-Warwick pilot project was for 2009-10 only and that funding from HEFCE beyond the pilot project may be unlikely.
- (c) That it be noted that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) intended to review the Learning and Teaching Strategy in the summer term in light of the initial outcomes of the King's-Warwick project, with a view to agreeing priorities for 2010-11.

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair and Secretary concerning proposed amendments to the Honours degree classification convention for students joining the University from autumn 2008 onwards ("the 2008 Classification Convention"), paper AQSC 25/09-10, noting that the paper would be circulated to Heads of Department following the meeting, together with the resolutions of the Committee.

(a) Additional language conventions

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposed additional language classification conventions set out in Appendix 2 of paper AQSC 25/09-10 be approved for inclusion within List A of the 2008 Classification Convention.

(b) Use of vivas in borderline cases

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

- (A) That the use of vivas in borderline cases be discontinued, noting that this would not prevent departments from arranging meetings between students and external examiners for the purposes of assuring standards, provided such meetings were not used to classify the performance of an individual student.
- (B) That the proposed amendments to section 3 and List B of the 2008 Classification be approved as set out in Appendix 2 of paper AQSC 25/09-10.

(c) Additional credit and the Seymour formula

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposed amendments to List C of the 2008 Classification Convention be approved as set out in Appendix 2 of paper AQSC 25/09-10, subject to the deletion of the explanatory note:

"[Note: this provision has been removed in light of the additional provisions added to section 2 of the 2008 Classification Convention, which apply to all students]"

and noting that, in light of the recommendations arising from the Institutional Audit in November 2008, discussions were ongoing in relation to the University's rules on entitlement to take extra credit and the application of the Seymour formula (BFS minute 33/08-09 and SFS minute 5/09-10 referred), and that any proposals concerning the 2008 Classification Convention would be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

(d) Minimum number of credits in the degree class

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposed amendments to section 2 of the 2008 Classification be approved as set out in Appendix 2 of paper AQSC 25/09-10, subject to the deletion of paragraph (d), noting that the Committee was of the view that the same requirements should apply to all students.

(e) Treatment of fail marks

RESOLVED:

(i) That the number of credits required for a Warwick degree should be robust, comparable with other similar institutions and broadly in line with QAA expectations.

(ii) That departments be consulted on the following proposals, and that authority be delegated to the Assessment Conventions Working Group to make final recommendations for consideration by the Senate in January, subject to the draft recommendations first being circulated to members of AQSC for comment:

(A) To be eligible for the award of an Honours degree (whether of three or four years' duration), a candidate must pass (at the 40% module pass mark) whole modules equating to at least 168 credits {70% of 240} in total in the final two credit-bearing years of the degree, including at least 80 credits taken in the final year, and achieve an overall mean of at least 40.0%.

(B) To be eligible for the award of a Pass degree, a candidate must pass (at the 40% module pass mark) whole modules equating to at least 150 credits in total in the final two credit-bearing years of the degree, including at least 50 credits taken in the final year, and achieve an overall mean of at least 35%.

(C) For part-time students, who may take modules over a number of years and for whom the concept of 'the final two credit-bearing years of the degree' is therefore not appropriate, the proposals for Honours and Pass degrees should apply as follows:

(1) To be eligible for the award of an Honours degree, a candidate must pass (at the 40% module pass mark) whole modules equating to at least 168 credits in total at FHEQ levels 5 (intermediate) and 6 (Hons level) combined, including at least 80 credits at FHEQ level 6, and

achieve an overall mean of at least 40.0%.

- (2) To be eligible for the award of a Pass degree, a candidate must pass (at the 40% module pass mark) whole modules equating to at least 150 credits in total at FHEQ levels 5 and 6 combined, including at least 50 credits at FHEQ level 6, and achieve an overall mean of at least 35.0%.

- (D) To be eligible for the award of an Integrated Masters degree, a candidate must pass (at the 40% module pass mark) whole modules equating to at least 258 credits in the final three credit-bearing years of the degree, including at least 90 credits at FHEQ level 7 (Masters level), and achieve an overall mean of at least 40.0%.

- (E) That departments within the Faculty of Science be asked to consider mechanisms to ensure that, if these proposals were to be implemented, the distribution of classification results would be broadly in line with that in previous years, noting that this may require re-design of assessments to recognise the change for many departments in the Faculty of Science from a 35% to a 40% pass mark, and/or scaling of results during a transitional period, whilst recognising that the standards required to pass a module remain unchanged.

- (F) That in light of changes in assessment practice that may be required in some departments within the Faculty of Science, and to recognise that students who joined Warwick in autumn 2008 will already be in their second year, Boards of Examiners, when considering the classification of candidates who joined Warwick in autumn 2008 or autumn 2009 only, be required to condone failed modules equating to a maximum of 30 credits in total, provided the candidate has achieved the learning outcomes for the degree, and has achieved a mark of at least 35% in any failed modules.

(f) Timing of proposed changes to 2008 Classification Convention

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

- (i) That the amendments to the 2008 Classification Convention proposed in minutes 25(a)/09-10 [additional language conventions], 25(b)/09-10 [use of vivas in borderline cases], 25(c)/09-10 [additional credit and the Seymour formula] and 25(d)/09-10 [minimum number of credits in the degree class] apply to students who joined Warwick in autumn 2008 or later.

RESOLVED:

- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Assessment Conventions Working Group to make final recommendations for consideration by the Senate on the timing of proposed amendments to the 2008 Classification Convention in relation to the treatment of fail marks (minute 25(e)/09-10 refers), subject to the draft recommendations first being circulated to members of AQSC for comment.

(g) Proposed changes to Regulation 8

That amendments to Regulation 8 to bring the re-sit provisions within Regulation 8 into line with section 4 of the 2008 Classification Convention be considered by the Working Group and submitted for approval by the Senate, noting that the provisions of section 4 of the 2008 Classification Convention were approved by the Senate in July 2008 and are more favourable to students.

(h) First year credit/beginners level language modules taken after the first year

That proposed amendments to the Credit and Module Framework, in line with the principles set out in section 2(g) of paper AQSC 25/09-10, be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

(i) Non-degree awards

- (i) That to be eligible for the award of a Foundation Degree, a student must pass at least 200 out of 240 credits attempted, noting that Foundation Degrees are awarded on a pass/fail basis.
- (ii) That departments which deliver Foundation Degrees and 120 FHEQ level 6 credit Honours top up courses be consulted on a proposal that students who complete the Honours top up course be classified on the basis of module marks contributing to the Honours top up course only.
- (iii) That the minimum number of credits that must be passed for each of the following courses be included within the examination conventions for the course and considered by Faculty Committees on an individual basis:

Certificate; Certificate of Higher Education; Diploma; Diploma of Higher Education; Advanced Diploma; Post experience Certificate; Post experience Diploma.

(j) Second year re-sits

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider at a future meeting the possibility of providing students with an opportunity to re-sit failed second year modules, noting that such a proposal would require consultation with academic and administrative departments and consideration of possible amendments to University Regulation 8, and that should a recommendation be made to introduce re-sits for second year students, this was unlikely to be achievable in the short-term.

26/0910

PSRB engagements

(a) School of Engineering

CONSIDERED:

- (i) A memo from Dr T Price, Associate Dean, School of Engineering, concerning reaccreditation of BEng, MEng and MSc courses, together with a report from the Institution of Engineering and Technology and the Institute of Measurement and Control, and a response from the School, paper AQSC 23/09-10.
- (ii) A proposal from the School of Engineering concerning proposed additional classification conventions to be added to the Honours degree classification convention for students joining the University from autumn 2008 onwards, paper AQSC 24/09-10.

RESOLVED:

- (iii) That the School of Engineering be encouraged to continue to highlight to the University the expectations of the Institution of Engineering and Technology in relation to facilities for students.
- (iv) That it be noted that MSc degrees delivered by Warwick Manufacturing Group were not currently accredited and that WMG was exploring the possibility of accreditation with the Institution of Engineering and Technology.
- (v) That the additional classification conventions proposed in the table on page 2 of paper AQSC 24/09-10 be approved in principle for inclusion within List A of the Honours degree classification convention for students joining the University from autumn 2008 onwards, and that the wording of the additional conventions be considered by the Chair on behalf of the Committee.
- (vi) That the borderline criteria proposed on page 2 of paper AQSC 24/09-10 did not require approval for inclusion within List B of the 2008 Classification Convention and could be taken into account by the Board of Examiners when considering borderline cases in accordance with

the criteria set out in section 3 of the 2008 Classification Convention.

- (vii) That the proposal set out on page 3 of paper AQSC 24/09-10 concerning additional credit and the Seymour formula be considered as part of future discussions on additional credit and the Seymour formula (minute 25(c)/09-10 refers).

(b) Institute of Education

CONSIDERED:

- (i) A memo from Dr Jane Medwell, Director of Teacher Education, Institute of Education, concerning inspection of Primary Initial Teacher Training courses, together with the final report from Ofsted, and a letter confirming the upgrade to grade 1 for the quality of training and standards, papers AQSC 33a-c/09-10.
- (ii) A report on preparation for the forthcoming inspection visit by Ofsted in respect of Initial Teacher Training provision, paper AQSC 32/09-10.

RESOLVED:

- (iii) That the Institute of Education be congratulated on achieving Grade 1 (Outstanding) in the inspection of Primary Initial Teacher Training courses.

27/09-10 Strategic Departmental Review (minute 12/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee at its meeting on 3 November 2009 considered an update from the Head of Governance Support Services on the University's Strategic Departmental Review process, paper AQSC 8/09-10, and resolved:

- (a) That the Head of Governance Support Services be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the review of the SDR process, noting that the Committee wished to raise the process of appointing Review Group members and the process for considering SDR reports and departmental responses.
- (b) That 2008-09 SDR reports and departmental responses available and not yet considered by the Committee be made available to members on the Committee's electronic file store, and that a summary report prepared by the Head of Governance Support Services be circulated in advance of the next meeting.

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Head of Governance Support Services concerning the Strategic Departmental Reviews of the following departments, paper AQSC 27/09-10, noting that an electronic copy of each report and response was available on the Committee's file store:

- (c) German, papers SC 516 and 569/08-09;
- (d) History of Art, papers SC 401 and 438/08-09;
- (e) Italian, papers SC 521 and 582/08-09;
- (f) Politics and International Studies, papers SC 249 and 272/08-09;
- (g) Sociology, papers SC 409 and 462/08-09;
- (h) Warwick Business School, papers SC 2 and 42/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

- (i) the recommendations relating to teaching and learning set out in paper AQSC 27/09-10;
- (j) that the Steering Committee required departments to report on progress in implementing recommendations arising from Strategic Departmental Reviews.

RECOMMENDED (to the Head of Governance Support Services):

That the review of the SDR process take into account the views of the Committee that departmental reviews should include a stronger focus on the quality and standards of teaching and learning, and that the membership of each review panel should include individual(s) with appropriate expertise and a focus on quality and standards.

28/09-10 Proposals from Warwick Medical School regarding the MBChB degree

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies at its meeting on 3 June 2009 considered a proposal to allow MBChB students to study for higher level qualifications (paper BUGS 21/08-09), and recommended that the proposal be approved subject to its consideration by the Board of Graduate Studies (BUGS minute 29/08-09 referred).
- (b) That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 15 October 2009 considered the proposal and recommended (to the Committee) that the proposal be approved, subject to:
 - (i) Amendments of the maximum duration for the PhD under proposal 2 to 3 years (exceptionally 4 years);
 - (ii) The “explicit criteria” used to determine entry to each route being specified;
 - (iii) An assurance from Warwick Medical School that the transfers would be carefully monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis;
 - (iv) Consideration being given to the principle of students withdrawing from a graduate-entry undergraduate degree to pursue a PhD and then return to the undergraduate degree, with the associated issue relating to the currency of the first phase of undergraduate learning, it being noted that the University policy on the Accreditation of Prior Learning normally discounted credit accumulated more than 5 years prior to the proposed course entry point.

(BGS minute 15/09-10 referred)

- (c) That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 17 November 2009 considered the revised proposal and resolved that the proposal be approved, but that the timing of the proposed transfer of students to the PhD be investigated further in order to ensure that this would allow such students to be reported to HESA from the outset of the course and ensure the University obtained the maximum HEFCE QR funding to which it would be entitled, and recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that the principle of allowing students to take a break of up to 4 years from their undergraduate studies in order to undertake a postgraduate qualification be considered further.

(unconfirmed BGS minute 26(a)/09-10 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from Warwick Medical School to allow MBChB students to study for higher level qualifications, paper BUGS 21/08-09 (revised).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved, subject to:

- (d) Clarification that a student could only take a break from studying the MBChB after completing Phase 1 and before commencing Phase 2;
- (e) Further details being provided by Warwick Medical School of how students returning to complete Phase 2 of the MBChB would be supported and how the currency of their learning from Phase 1 would be tested;
- (f) Submission by Warwick Medical School of appropriate amendments to Regulation 8.10;
- (g) Confirmation from Warwick Medical School that issues concerning HESA have been resolved.

29/09-10

Risk

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office) concerning teaching and learning risks, paper AQSC 28/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider at a future meeting possible amendments to the University Risk Register and Teaching Risks, in light of discussions at the meeting relating to:

- (a) the Learning and Teaching Strategy, in particular the need to maintain the profile of teaching and learning, and the need to identify funding to support teaching and learning initiatives in 2010-11 (minute 24/09-10 refers);
- (b) the review of the SDR process and the Committee's views that departmental reviews should include a stronger focus on the quality and standards of teaching and learning, and that the membership of each review panel should include individual(s)

with appropriate expertise and a focus on quality and standards (minute 27/09-10 refers).

30/09-10 Student Complaints

RESOLVED:

That the report from the Administrative Officer (Academic Registrar's Office) concerning student academic complaints and appeals 2008-09, paper AQSC 26/09-10, be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

31/09-10 Centre for Student Careers and Skills

RESOLVED:

That an oral report from the Director of Student Careers and Skills concerning the new Centre be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

32/09-10 Masters in Teaching and Learning

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 27 October 2009, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences considered a proposal, in principle, to introduce a new course entitled "Masters in Teaching and Learning" (paper GFSS 48/09-10) and recommended that the proposal be approved.
- (b) That, at its meeting on 17 November 2009, the Board of Graduate Studies considered a proposal, in principle, to introduce a new course entitled "Masters in Teaching and Learning" (paper GFSS 48/09-10) and recommended that the proposal be not approved in principle but be referred to AQSC and CFDLSC to consider the issues of principle in the proposal.

(unconfirmed BGS minute 39(d)(iv)(B)/09-10 referred)

CONSIDERED:

The proposal, in principle, to introduce a new course entitled "Masters in Teaching and Learning", as set out in papers GFSS 48/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal first be considered by the Collaborative, Flexible and Learning Sub-Committee.

33/09-10 The Procedure for Departments Responding to External Examiners Reports

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 18 November 2009, the Board of Undergraduate Studies received an oral report from the Chair on revising the procedure for departments to respond to external

examiners reports and resolved that the Chair be asked to discuss with the Academic Quality and Standards Committee the imposition of a deadline of Week 4 of the Autumn Term for submission to the Academic Office of the pro-forma responses to the External Examiners' reports, in order to ensure their availability at the Board of Undergraduate Studies Sub-Group meeting in the Autumn Term (draft unconfirmed BUGS minute 7/09-10 referred).

CONSIDERED:

The possible imposition of a deadline of Week 4 of the Autumn Term for submission to the Academic Office of the pro-forma responses to the External Examiners' reports, in order to ensure their availability at the Board of Undergraduate Studies Sub-Group meeting in the Autumn Term.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Examinations Office amend the pro-forma for departmental responses to External Examiners' reports, and associated guidance, to require submission of the response by the end of Week 4 of the Autumn Term, and notify departments of the new deadline.
- (b) That it be noted that submission of responses by the deadline would only be workable if External Examiners' reports were both submitted and forwarded to departments promptly

34/09-10

Appeals against final degree classification: Regulation 8.12

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 18 November 2009, the Board of Undergraduate Studies considered a proposal from the Academic Office regarding the process by which appeals against final degree classification under Regulation 8.12 are administered (paper BUGS 10/09-10) and recommended:

- (a) That the proposal set out in paper BUGS 10/09-10 be approved, subject to the inclusion of a requirement that, in cases where mitigating evidence presented at appeal has already been considered by Boards of Examiners, the latter should provide a written record demonstrating this, such as a minute from the Board of Examiners or from a Mitigating Circumstances Sub-committee.
- (b) That a statement be added to Regulation 8.12 referring to the provision proposed in paper BUGS 10/09-10.
(draft unconfirmed BUGS minute 8/09-10 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Academic Office regarding the process by which appeals against final degree classification under Regulation 8.12 are administered, paper BUGS 10/09-10, together with the recommendations of the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the proposal from the Academic Office regarding the process by which appeals against final degree classification under Regulation 8.12 are administered, as set out in paper BUGS 10/09-10, be approved, subject to the addition recommended by the Board of Undergraduate Studies (draft unconfirmed BUGS minute 8(a)/09-10 referred).
- (d) That the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) submit for the consideration of the Committee proposed amendments to Regulation 8.12.

35/09-10 Extension to existing collaboration

REPORTED:

That the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2009 considered a proposal from the Centre for Lifelong Learning for an extension to the existing collaboration with Loughborough College, to offer the existing Diploma and Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, paper CFDLSC 9/09-10, together with curricula vitae for relevant members of staff at Loughborough College, papers CFDLSC 12-15/09-10, resolved that the curricula vitae be approved as set out in papers CFDLSC 12-15/09-10, and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposal be approved as set out in paper CFDLSC 9/09-10.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal from the Centre for Lifelong Learning for an extension to the existing collaboration with Loughborough College, to offer the existing Diploma and Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, be approved as set out in paper CFDLSC 9/09-10.

36/09-10 New, revised and discontinued courses

(a) New undergraduate courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies at its meeting on 18 November 2009 approved the following new courses:

- BA in Humanities
- BA Teaching and Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector
- Foundation Degree in Teaching and Learning in the Lifelong Learning
- BA in Person-centred Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Foundation Degree in Person-centred Counselling and Psychotherapy

(b) New, revised and discontinued postgraduate courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 17 November 2009 approved the following courses:

New courses

- Postgraduate Award, Leadership in Child Health Services
- MSc in Economic and Psychological Science

Revised courses

- MA in Applied Social Research with a specialism in Health Studies
- MA in Applied Social Research with a specialism in Social Work
- MA in English Language Teaching (with a Specialism in English for Specific Purposes)
- MA in English Language Teaching (with a Specialism in English for Young Learners)
- MA in English Language Teaching (Studies and Methods)
- MA in English Language Teaching (with a Specialism in ICT and Multimedia)
- MA in English Language Teaching
- MA in English Language Teaching (with a Specialism in Language, Testing and Assessment)
- MA in the Teaching of Shakespeare

Change of name

- From “Postgraduate Diploma in Public Finance and Leadership” to “Warwick Postgraduate Diploma for Leaders in Public Finance”

Courses no longer recruiting

- EdD in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching

37/09-10 Membership

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee record its thanks to Dr Penny Roberts for her contribution to the work of the Committee.
- (b) That the Committee record its thanks to the Chair for his contribution to the work of the Committee and his excellent chairmanship.

38/09-10 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would held at 9am on Thursday 4 February 2010 in the Council Chamber.