

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Thursday 29 January 2009

- Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Easton, Dr K Flint, Professor C Hughes, Ms S Jones, Professor R Lindley, Professor T McFarlane, Dr P O'Hare, Dr P Roberts, Mr M Surve
- Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor J Davis, Professor N Johnson, Professor K Lamberts, Dr R Moseley, Dr J Moss
- In attendance: Ms J Bradfield, Dr G Carden, Director of Management Information and Planning (for item 41/08-09), Dr D Lamburn

36/08-09 Constitution and Membership

REPORTED:

- (a) That Professor Karen O'Brien, Chair of the Quality Enhancement Working Group and of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, would be on study leave in the spring and summer terms 2008-09.
- (b) That Professor Tony McFarlane would chair the Board of Undergraduate Studies in the spring and summer terms 2008-09.
- (c) That Dr David Lamburn would chair the Quality Enhancement Working Group in the spring and summer terms 2008-09.
- (d) That the Chair of the Quality Enhancement Working Group was not a member of the [Academic Quality and Standards] Committee *ex officio*.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the constitution of the Committee be amended to include the Chair of the Quality Enhancement Working Group.

37/08-09 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 November 2008 be approved.

38/08-09 Matters arising

- (a) Institutional Audit (minute 21(a)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That the University had received the first draft of the Institutional Audit report from QAA and was invited to suggest corrections of errors of fact, noting that:

- (i) the University's draft response would be considered by the Steering Committee on 9 February in advance of being submitted to QAA by the deadline of 13 February, and that any comments would need to be passed to the Teaching Quality section by 3 February;
- (ii) QAA would provide the final report on 13 March and the University would be invited to submit by 27 March a brief statement (500 words maximum) on developments since the audit visit, to accompany the final report;
- (iii) the final report and the University's statement would be published by QAA on 10 April.

CONSIDERED:

The draft report of the University's Institutional Audit with covering note from the secretariat, paper AQSC 34/08-09, together with a first draft of suggested corrections of errors of fact, paper AQSC 35/08-09 and a first draft of a possible statement to accompany the final report, paper AQSC 36/08-09.

RESOLVED:

That comments be forwarded to the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office by 3 February 2009.

- (b) Award of merit/distinction at undergraduate level (minute 30/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee at its meeting on 19 November considered paper AQSC 27/08-09 concerning the award of merit and/or distinction at non-degree undergraduate level and resolved:

- (i) That the Committee did not support the award of merit and/or distinction on non-degree courses at undergraduate level;
- (ii) That exceptions be made only for students who had enrolled on a course at another university which did allow for the award of merit and/or distinction and where the course and enrolled students had then transferred to the University of Warwick, or where the relevant department could demonstrate that a professional, statutory or regulatory body required the award of merit and/or distinction for the course to be eligible for accreditation, validation or other recognition.

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the Institute of Licensing concerning the award of the Certificate of Higher Education in Licensing Law with merit/distinction, paper AQSC 28/08-09, noting that the criteria for award of merit/distinction had previously been approved by the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

That on the basis of the letter from the Institute of Licensing, paper AQSC 28/08-09, an exception be made to allow the Certificate of Higher Education in Licensing Law to be awarded with merit/distinction.

- (c) Video conferencing (minute 108-07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at the meeting of the Committee held on 15 May 2008 it was reported that the Information Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 19 February 2008 considered a range of issues connected to distributed teaching services, and resolved that the issue of provision of distributed teaching services, such as Skype and video conferencing, be referred to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, noting that clarity was needed over:

- (A) Exactly what the requirements for any service provision were;  
(B) How important this kind of service is to the student experience.

(IPSC minute 18(d)/07-08)

and the [Academic Quality and Standards] Committee resolved that the Secretariat discuss the availability of and demand for video conferencing services with the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling).

- (ii) That the Secretariat had discussed video conferencing facilities with the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling), noting that:
- (A) There does not appear to be an obvious demand for additional video conferencing services to support teaching and learning in centrally timetabled rooms;  
(B) There is a need to focus current resources on equipping centrally timetabled rooms with other facilities that are in greater demand.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling)):

That, in order to make the most effective use of existing resources and to support those wishing to use video conferencing, further investigations be carried out to establish what video conferencing facilities are currently available across the University, including within locally timetabled rooms.

RESOLVED:

That, following the proposed audit of existing video conferencing facilities, the Committee consider making a recommendation to the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group, in consultation with the Information Policy and Strategy Committee.

39/08-09

Chair's Action

- (a) Centre for Lifelong Learning: change in collaborative course

REPORTED:

That the Chair took action on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting to approve a proposal from the Centre for Lifelong Learning to amend the basis on which North Warwickshire and Hinckley College operates three Open Studies Diplomas for Subject Specialist Teachers of Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL to a validation.

- (b) Philosophy: new module

REPORTED:

That the Chair took action on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting to approve a proposal from the Department of Philosophy to introduce a new module, PH326 [provisional] Wittgenstein, the *Philosophical Investigations*, paper AQSC 29/08-09.

40/08-09

Progress of Committee recommendations

REPORTED:

That the Senate at its meeting on 3 December 2008:

- (a) resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved:

- (i) Framework for HE Qualifications and Credit Framework for England.
- (ii) University Regulation 11: Amendments to Associated Guidance.
- (iii) Annual Postgraduate Course Review and Module Approval.
- (iv) Revisions to the Guidelines for the Supervision and Monitoring for Research Degree Students and Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research.
- (v) Admissions: Policy on Feedback to Applicants.
- (vi) New collaborative courses.

- (b) recommended (to the Council) that the revision to Regulation 6 on Admission to Courses of Study be approved as set out in BUGS 6/08-09 (revised) subject to the following amendment:

Regulation 6.3 (deletions struck through and additions underlined)

(...)

A request for a candidate to be admitted where the total load of all courses pursued by the candidate exceeds one full-time equivalent load, including study at other higher education institutions ~~to more than one course of study~~ at any one time outside of these exemptions shall be considered by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies for postgraduate students and the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies for undergraduate students.

41/08-09 Academic Statistics (minute 130/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2008 considered Academic Statistics 2007-08, paper AQSC 86/07-08, noting that all the tables included in the printed version, along with a range of additional tables, are available

online:[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/ourservices/planning/academic\\_statistics](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/ourservices/planning/academic_statistics) and resolved that at a meeting during the Autumn Term 2008 the Committee reconsider its methods of engagement with Academic Statistics.

RECEIVED:

The Academic Statistics Yearbook 2008-09, paper AQSC 30/08-09, noting that the Yearbook and Academic Statistics Online are available at:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/ourservices/planning/businessinformation/>

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from Dr Giles Carden, Director of Management Information and Planning, Academic Registrar's Office, noting that the Yearbook had been produced for members of Council as a summary of the University's performance and was not intended to give detailed information on learning and teaching issues or departmental data.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Yearbook be welcomed as a clear and concise summary of the University's overall performance.
- (b) That the Committee consider at a future meeting the most effective mechanisms to enable the Committee, Faculties and Departments to engage with more detailed data on learning and teaching issues, including admissions/progression from entry scores; completion rates; degree results; and funding status of students; noting that:
  - (i) further discussions should be linked to consideration of the Annual Course Review process;
  - (ii) provision of additional data was likely to have resource implications.

RECOMMENDED (to the Director of Management Information and Planning):

That further consideration be given to the representation of National Student Survey data, including the most effective method of illustrating year-on-year data, and options for providing information on sector-wide results.

42/08-09 Learning and Teaching Strategy: implementation (minute 4(c)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Committee held on 28 October 2008 it was reported:

- (a) That at its meeting on 2 July 2008 the Senate resolved that the Learning and Teaching Strategy as set out in S.51/07-08 {Part 1} be approved.
- (b) That the new Learning and Teaching Strategy along with a draft implementation plan would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee, following meetings between the Chair and Chairs of the Faculty Boards.

CONSIDERED:

The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, paper AQSC 6/07-08 (revised 5), together with a report from the Chair and Secretariat, paper AQSC 31/08-09.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That, subject to the amendments noted at the meeting, paper AQSC 31/08-09 be approved and the projects set out in section 3 of the paper be prioritised.
- (d) That the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Quality Enhancement Working Group discuss how QEWG could encourage departments to engage with the Learning and Teaching Strategy and progress the priority projects outlined in paper AQSC 31/08-09.
- (e) That the Principles within the Learning and Teaching Strategy be revised to include appropriate statements on the University's commitment to providing feedback to students on assessed work, and support for student learning.
- (f) That, once the University's Institutional Audit report has been published by QAA, consideration be given to including, within the introduction to and/or commentary accompanying the Learning and Teaching Strategy, appropriate wording to reflect the recommendations outlined in the Institutional Audit report and the University's response.

RECOMMENDED (to the University Senior Tutor):

That consideration be given to methods to further highlight to students their obligations in relation to the Personal Tutor System, as set out in the Personal Tutor Guidelines.

43/08-09 National Student Survey 2009

REPORTED:

That the National Student Survey 2009 opened for Warwick students on 26 January and would close at the end of April, that a range of measures had been put in place to encourage students to respond to the survey, and that a report on response rates would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

44/08-09 Assessment

(a) Peer assessment and self assessment; second marking and moderation (minute 58(b)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee at its meeting held on 1 February 2008 considered:

- (i) A letter from Dr N Stewart, Department of Psychology to the Vice-Chancellor concerning second marking, paper AQSC 26/07-08;
- (ii) Extracts from the QAA *Code of practice* concerning assessment practices, paper AQSC 27/07-08;
- (iii) A background paper prepared by the Secretary setting out some examples in the area of peer assessment and self assessment, paper AQSC 22/07-08;

and resolved that the Secretary draft a document for distribution to departments including examples of good practice in peer assessment and self assessment as practised at the University for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That a paper drafted by the Secretary for possible distribution to departments, concerning second marking and moderation, and providing examples of good practice in peer assessment and self assessment as practised at the University, paper AQSC 40/08-09, be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

(b) Assessment and feedback (minutes 10(a)(v)/08-09 and 122(b)/07-08 and QEWG minute 18/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Quality Enhancement Working Group held on 27 November 2008 the Group considered a

report drafted by the Assistant Secretary concerning feedback on assessed work, paper QEWG 19/08-09, and resolved:

- (i) That the Assistant Secretary be thanked for compiling a useful digest of information on assessment;
- (ii) That Faculty Teaching and Learning Forums be invited to compile digests of current issues in assessment, including current practice in departments, and perceptions and possible misconceptions concerning University rules on assessment;
- (iii) That the Students' Union Education Officer be invited to compile a digest of student opinion on assessment.

RECEIVED:

- (iii) Copy of a memo dated 23 December 2008 from the Chair to Heads of Department, paper AQSC 32/08-09.
- (iv) Copies of leaflets produced by ASKe, paper AQSC 33/08-09.

RESOLVED:

- (v) That paper AQSC 32/08-09 was a useful digest of information related to assessment issues and should be made available on the Teaching Quality website.
  - (vi) That Departments would be asked to reflect further on assessment issues within the framework of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- (c) First Year Board of Examiners' meeting at Faculty Level (BFSS FYBE minute 10/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the First Year Board of Examiners of the Faculty of Social Studies held on 17 September 2008 the Board considered the need for a Board of Examiners to exist at Faculty-level for first year students only, noting that Faculty-level Boards of Examiners do not exist for other years of study, and resolved that the matter be referred to the [Academic Quality and Standards] Committee.

CONSIDERED:

The need for a Board of Examiners to exist at Faculty-level for first year students, noting that Faculty-level Boards of Examiners do not exist for other years of study.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That consistency of treatment of students was of paramount importance.
- (ii) That the Deputy Registrar's Office and Faculty Boards be invited to reflect on the most appropriate method of considering progression of first year students, to inform further discussion at a future meeting of the Committee.



- (d) Good academic practice and plagiarism (minute 122(g)/07/08 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at the meeting of the Committee on 12 June 2008 it was reported that the Higher Education Academy and the Joint Information Systems Committee have launched the Academy JISC Academic Integrity Service, focused on 'the pedagogical and management responses needed to address academic misconduct and support institutions endeavouring to embed academic integrity in their own practice and policies', noting that more information is available at [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/academic\\_integrity](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/academic_integrity), the Committee considered executive summary of a report from the HEA/JISC AMBER project, paper AQSC 85/07-08, noting that the full report is available at [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/AMBeR\\_PartII\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/AMBeR_PartII_Full_Report.pdf), and resolved that a proposal from the Chair to initiate a project concerning good academic practice and plagiarism during the next academic year be supported.
- (ii) That Ms Emily Austin, International Student Development Manager, Centre for Student Development and Enterprise, convened a meeting on 11 December 2008 to discuss the range of resources currently available to students about good academic practice and plagiarism.

45/08-09

Students' Union Advice and Welfare Services/Student Advice Centre Annual Review (CLC minute 9/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Campus Life Committee at its meeting on 10 November 2008 received the Students' Union Advice and Welfare Services/Student Advice Centre Annual Review 2007-2008, paper CLC 6/08-09, it was reported (by the Advice and Representation Manager):

- (a) That housing enquiries represented 30% of the overall enquiries received over the 2007-2008 academic year.
- (b) That 20% of enquiries had related to immigration and 20% to education.
- (c) That the number of academic related enquiries had risen by 40% on the previous year and 116% on the 2005-2006 period.
- (d) That other major query areas related to: administration of justice, consumer issues, health and social security.
- (e) That the users of the Student Advice Centre were both undergraduate (56%) and postgraduate (46%), home (59%) and international (41%)

and resolved:

- (f) That elements of the annual report relating to academic matters would be raised at the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and channelled through Staff Student Liaison Committees.

CONSIDERED:

- (g) Relevant sections of the Students' Union Advice and Welfare Services/Student Advice Centre Annual Review, paper CLC 6/08-09, noting in particular the number of enquiries relating to academic problems noted on page 2, and the examples of enquiries listed on 4 ('Education Enquiries'), with a view to considering the desirability of conducting a review of information resources available to students in relation to academic issues.
- (h) An oral report from the Students' Union Education Officer, noting that the rise in the number of academic-related enquiries raised resourcing issues for the Student Advice Centre, and that discussions with the Academic Registrar's Office, Student Support Services and the Students' Union concerning information and support for students were ongoing.

RECOMMENDED (to the Student Advice Centre):

- (i) That the Centre discuss with the Academic Office and Student Support Services the possibility of Centre staff being invited to relevant training events provided to members of University staff.
- (j) That the Centre liaise with the Academic Office and the Senior Tutor to obtain a list of departmental Undergraduate and Postgraduate Directors of Study (or equivalent) and Senior Tutors, as a source of reference for further advice for students.
- (k) That the Centre consider further the data on academic-related enquiries to ascertain if further guidance is required for particular groups of students, or on particular academic issues.

46/08-09 PSRB engagements

CONSIDERED:

Outline report on preparations for the following PSRB engagement, due to take place during the 2008-09 academic year:

Warwick Business School: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, paper AQSC 39/08-09.

RESOLVED:

That the outline report be approved as set out in paper AQSC 39/08-09.

47/08-09 QAA: European recognition

RECEIVED:

A press release from QAA announcing that the agency has been accredited as a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) for a further five years, paper AQSC 37/08-09, noting that QAA is fully compliant in fourteen European standards and substantially compliant in the other two:

- 'Independence' – largely because the HE funding councils renew their contracts with QAA annually rather than at longer intervals;
- 'External quality assurance criteria and processes' – because QAA audit panels do not yet include student members, and because QAA allows no appeals against judgement of limited confidence.

48/08-09 Academic Registrars Council Quality Practitioners Group

RECEIVED:

A report from the Secretary on discussions at the last meeting of the Academic Registrars Council Quality Practitioners Group, paper AQSC 38/08-09.

49/08-09 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at **8.45am** on Wednesday 25 February 2009 in the Council Chamber, University House, noting that the start was earlier than previously advertised.

JB, 05.02.09  
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