

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Thursday 29 January 2015

Present: Professor C Hughes (Chair), Ms S Bennett (Director of Student Careers and Skills), Professor A Dowd (Academic Director of the Graduate School), Professor S Jacka (Representative of Senate (Science)), Professor C Jenainati (SSLC Coordinator (Arts and Social Science)), Professor D Lamburn (Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee), Professor R Leng (Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies), Dr N Monk (Acting Director of IATL), Professor J Palmowski (Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies), Professor A Reeve (Representative of Senate (Social Sciences)), Professor L Roberts (Representative of Senate (Medicine)), Dr J Robinson (SSLC Coordinator (Science and Medicine), Professor P Thomas (Chair of the Faculty of Science), Mr A Thompson (Student Representative (Postgraduate Officer)), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Faculty of Medicine)

Apologies: Mr M Conaghan (Learning and Development Manager (Academic)), Dr C Constable (Representative of Senate (Arts)), Professor M Freely (Chair of the Faculty of Arts), Professor C Hughes (Chair of the Faculty of Social Science), Mr S Lamb (Senior Tutor), Ms M Mirza, (Student Representative (Education Officer), Ms A Thomas (Service Owner (Academic Technology))

In Attendance: Ms K Gray (Secretary), Ms C Smith (Assistant Secretary), Dr P Sutcliffe (Warwick Medical School)

44/14-15 Institutional Teaching and Learning Review

CONSIDERED:

A discussion paper on the next institutional Teaching and Learning Review by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (Paper AQSC.28/14-15).

REPORTED (by the SSLC Coordinator (Arts and Social Science)):

- (a) That departments needed to be briefed on the timing well in advance in order for staff workloads to be planned;

(by the Representative of Senate (Science)):

- (b) That the previous Review had worked well.
- (c) That spreading the Review of two periods of three days may work better.
- (d) That it was critical that departments perceived the panel members as critical friends and should not feel threatened by the process.

(by the Representative of Senate (Social Sciences)):

- (e) That the Faculty Engagements had worked well.

(f) That departments also required briefings on the issues to be covered in the self-evaluation document well in advance.

(g) That staff across the University had co-operated well in the process.

(by the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee):

(h) That the topics to be covered in the Review would need to be updated in light of the introduction of the QAA UK Quality Code, which had replaced the Academic Infrastructure.

(i) That a risk based approach should be taken to determine where it may be appropriate to undertake a lighter touch approach.

(j) That training should also be provided for those drafting self-evaluation documents;

(by the Director of Student Careers and Skills):

(k) That the inclusion of professional services supporting students' education would be welcome.

(l) That consideration could be given to whether there was a role for recent alumni.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science):

(m) That appropriate support would be required for the Faculty Engagements;

(n) That Faculties had been very involved in the Engagements but that they should be more focused in the next Review.

(o) That there should be a greater focus on postgraduate students.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Medicine):

(p) That consideration could be given to the involvement of professional advisers on panels, for instance from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

(by the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies):

(q) That there was a need to ensure that the process enabled panels to identify risks where they existed.

(by the Academic Director of the Graduate School):

(r) That often student members of panels were research students as it was difficult for taught students to miss classes to be involved.

(s) That the previous review, which had been scheduled in November, had coincided with postgraduate taught examination boards.

RECOMMENDED (to the Steering Committee):

- (t) That the format of the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR) be similar to that of 2011, but spread over more time to allow staff to be both panel members and to represent their departments;
- (u) That the date for the Review and documentary requirements be communicated to academic departments at a much earlier stage than was the case in 2011;
- (v) That the Steering Committee have oversight of the process, noting the strategic nature of the Review.
- (w) That the Committee's preference was for the Review to be held in the Spring term.
- (x) That further consultation be undertaken and that preparations be taken forward, taking into consideration comments made by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Heads of Departments be notified of the ongoing discussions.

45/14-15 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership

REPORTED:

That the Vice-Chancellor had taken action on behalf of the Senate to approve revisions to the membership of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee as set out in Paper AQSC.1/14-15 (revised 2) noting:

- That Dr N Monk had been appointed as Acting Director of IATL (*vice* Dr P Taylor)
- That Professor A Dowd had been appointed Academic Director of the Graduate School.

46/14-15 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

That, should any members or attendees of the Committee 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.

RESOLVED:

That there were no conflicts of interest to be declared.

47/14-15 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014 be approved.

Paper from the Interdisciplinarity Sub-Group of AQSC (minute AQSC.13(d) and 25(b)/14-15 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 30 October 2014, the Committee had considered a report from the Interdisciplinary Sub-Group of AQSC (Paper AQSC.7/14-15) and resolved:

That the report be amended in light of comments set out below and brought to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration:

- (i) That an additional recommendation regarding the need for workload models to recognize teaching undertaken on interdisciplinary modules be included;
 - (ii) That the report be redrafted to reflect issues affecting existing interdisciplinary courses, not just those offered by IATL;
 - (iii) That an enhanced focus on strategic considerations be included in the report.
- (b) That, at its meeting on 3 December 2014, it was reported to the Committee:
- (i) That the discussion at the Committee had been reported to the IATL Steering Group at its meeting on 12 November 2014.
(by the Chair):
 - (ii) That the outcomes of the discussion at the previous meeting of the Committee had been reported to and considered by the IATL Steering Group:
(by the Chair of the Interdisciplinary Sub-Group of AQSC)
 - (iii) That the Interdisciplinary Sub-Group of AQSC would bring a paper to the Committee later in the year with refined proposals for addressing barriers to the strategic development of interdisciplinary modules.
 - (iv) That, with this in mind, endorsement was sought from the Committee to progress the following developments:
 - (A) Exploring what other modules (offered by academic departments but available to students across the University) could benefit from similar arrangements to IATL modules;
 - (B) Easier facilitation of module uptake via SITS Student Records online through improved visibility of interdisciplinary modules available;
 - (C) Favourable timetabling options for interdisciplinary modules;
 - (v) That IATL facilitated informed module selection by inviting both staff and students to taster sessions.

- (vi) That interdisciplinary modules would not be made available to students where departments had not given permission for this to be done.

(by the Representative of Senate (Science))

- (vii) That departments would need to include interdisciplinary modules as available options in course regulations in order that students would not have to request to take them as unusual options;

And the Committee resolved:

- (viii) That, in the interests of auditing the current custom and practice, a list of departments who have agreed to promote and/or allow the uptake of interdisciplinary modules be collated and reported to the Committee at a later meeting;
- (ix) That the Chair be permitted to take action on behalf of the Committee to take forward recommendations in this area.

(by the Chair):

- (c) That the Acting Director of IATL had been asked to chair the Interdisciplinarity Working Group which would be reconstituted to reflect the diverse models of Interdisciplinarity across the University;

(by the Representative of Senate (Medicine)):

- (d) That interprofessional medical education was growing in importance and would influence developments in the Warwick Medical School.

49/14-15

Chair's Action

Distance Learning PGA in Career Development

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (a) That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve a request from the Warwick Business School for the introduction of a PGA in Career Development to be delivered online, as set out in Papers GFSS.57 a-d/14-15.
- (b) That the PGA had arisen from work to support widening participation at postgraduate taught level, funded by HEFCE.
- (c) That it was available to support unemployed undergraduate graduates and had recruited well initially.
- (d) That it would need to be evaluated and a sustainable business model developed before it could be rolled out any further.

50/14-15 Students Union Update

REPORTED (by the Postgraduate Officer of the Students' Union):

- (a) That there was a significant amount of work ongoing to improve the operation of SSLCs including an increase in the use of the SSLC portal and the redevelopment of the SSLC handbook, with the SSLC Academic Co-ordinators;
- (b) That a report had been provided to the Board of Graduate Studies on issues arising in minutes of the meetings of postgraduate taught SSLCs in the Autumn Term;
- (c) That those issues had included: international students' difficulties in understanding staff; room numbering; impact of the roadworks on buses.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies):

- (d) That it had been reported to the Board of Graduate Studies that there had been a significant increase in the number of departments seeking bespoke English language support for their international students.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Medicine):

- (e) That the Capital Space and Amenities Group had discussed room numbering and building names at a recent meeting.

51/14-15 HEFCE Discussion Document on the Future of Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONSIDERED:

A discussion document on the Future of Quality Assessment in Higher Education published by the HEFCE (Paper AQSC.29/14-15).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's response make clear the importance of the external examiner system to the UK's quality assurance framework;
- (b) That the operation of the QAA review process lacked credibility arising from a lack of trust in established providers.

52/14-15 Education Report to Steering Committee

RECEIVED

The Education Report considered by Steering Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2015 (Paper SC.58/14-15).

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (a) That the review of Directors of Student Engagement would focus on how best practice might be shared;
- (b) That significant reductions in the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) would impact on the University as alternative support for students would need to be identified;
- (c) That equality would be a standing item on the Committee's agenda in future, noting that reporting on related issues would also need to be made to the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- (d) That the launch of the Warwick International Higher Education Academy would commence with a 'soft' launch at Faculty Showcases and a full launch in the summer term.
- (e) That NSS 2015 would commence on Monday 9 February and a briefing event for staff in academic departments had been held in December.
- (f) That the Warwick Student Survey would take place at the same time as the NSS.

by the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee:

- (g) That improved monitoring of the admission and achievement of students with protected characteristics was required.

53/14-15

Feedback to Students on Dissertations and Examinations

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out proposals on feedback to students on dissertations and examinations (Paper AQSC.30/14-15).

REPORTED (by the SSLC Coordinator (Arts and Social Science)):

- (a) That the provision of cohort feedback in humanities disciplines was difficult given the nature of assessments
- (b) That analysis of the spread of marks was undertaken.

(by the Representative of Senate (Science)):

- (c) That, given the size of student cohorts in some disciplines the offer of individual feedback was not feasible.

(by the Postgraduate Officer):

- (d) That students were keen to understand the reasons for their performance in examinations.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the provision of individual feedback should not obviate the need for cohort feedback, which provided a different perspective on students' performance.
- (f) That feedback on overall individual performance be made available to students, noting that this could be provided by personal tutors.
- (g) That feedback be provided by the Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Studies Committee on what types of cohort examination feedback would be feasible.
- (h) That the 20 day feedback rule would not apply where formative work was submitted late with no explanation or extension granted.

54/14-15 Learning and Teaching Strategy Action Plan

REPORTED (by the Secretary):

- (a) That the Committee had in previous years received an updated Action Plan annually on progress against objectives in the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- (b) That work was currently ongoing to map actions against Goal One of the updated University Strategy and, in light of this, the Learning and Teaching Strategy Action Plan had not been updated.

55/14-15 Collaborative Courses

MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada and the University of Warwick

REPORTED:

- (a) That at its meeting on 23 May 2014 the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies to introduce a new Double MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada, based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the University of Warwick, Department of Politics and International Studies, as set out in the following papers:
 - (i) Collaborative Risk Assessment (paper CFDLSC 116/13-14);
 - (ii) "Part 1" Course approval form (paper GFSS 85(a)/13-14);
 - (iii) "Part 4" Course approval form (paper CFDLSC 117/13-14);

And resolved:

That the proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies to introduce a new Double MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada, based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the University of Warwick, Department of

Politics and International Studies, be approved by the Chair following the meeting, subject to:

- (iv) Correction of the course titles on p7 of the “Part 1” course approval form;
 - (v) Confirmation of the length and format of the dissertation module;
 - (vi) Confirmation of receipt of a satisfactory report from an external advisor on the proposed collaborative arrangement;
 - (vii) Receipt of appropriate “due diligence” documentation in support of the collaboration.
- (b) That at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Board of Graduate Studies considered the proposal to introduce a new Double MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada, based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the University of Warwick, Department of Politics and International Relations, as set out in papers GFSS.85a-b/13-14.

And resolved:

That the proposal be approved, subject to the following, noting that a number of the conditions have already been satisfied but that the remainder would need to be met in order for the proposal to be fully approved:

- (i) Confirmation that existing students will transfer onto the course;
 - (ii) Receipt of the external examiner’s report;
 - (iii) Clarification of the entry requirements for the course, in particular whether all students would need to satisfy the GMAT requirements;
 - (iv) Clarification regarding which institution’s regulations would apply where a student fails the dissertation element;
 - (v) Confirmation that the dissertation length will be increased to a minimum of 18,000 words;
 - (vi) Clarification as to whether the proposed modules will be introduced as new modules, or align with existing PAIS modules, noting the similarity with the latter.
- (c) That outstanding conditions have now been addressed satisfactorily and that the Chairs of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies have taken action on behalf of their committees respectively to recommend the proposed collaboration to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for approval and to approve the course.

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies to introduce a new Double MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada, based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs

and the University of Warwick, Department of Politics and International Studies, as set out in the following papers:

- (d) Collaborative Risk Assessment (paper CFDLSC 116/13-14 (revised));
- (e) "Part 1" Course approval form (paper GFSS 85(a)/13-14 (revised));
- (f) "Part 4" Course approval form (paper CFDLSC 117/13-14;

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That a proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies to introduce a new Double MA in Global Governance at the University of Waterloo, Canada, based at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the University of Warwick, Department of Politics and International Studies, be approved as set out in the following papers:

- (d) Collaborative Risk Assessment (paper CFDLSC 116/13-14 (revised));
- (e) "Part 1" Course approval form (paper GFSS 85(a)/13-14 (revised));
- (f) "Part 4" Course approval form (paper CFDLSC 117/13-14;

56/14-15 New Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 13 January 2015 that the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Board to approve the following new courses:

- PgA Career Development
- MA in Politics and International Studies: Big Data and Quantitative Methods
- MSc in Healthcare Operations Management
- MSc in Medical Biotechnology and Business Management

57/14-15 Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 13 January 2015 that the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Board to approve the following revisions to courses:

- PGCE Variants
- MA/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Career Coaching and Coaching Studies (CDCS)
- MSc Integrative Bioscience
- MSc Integrative Bioscience and Business

58/-14-15 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Monday 23 February 2015 at 3.00pm in room CMR 1.0, University House.