

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Thursday 4 February 2010

Present: Professor A Caesar (Chair); Ms S Bennett, Mr A Bradley, Professor A Bruzzi, Professor A Easton, Professor N Johnson, Dr K Flint, Ms S Khaku, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jenainati, Dr D Lamburn, Professor K O'Brien, Professor P O'Hare

Apologies: Professor L Bridges, Professor S Hand, Professor K Lamberts, Dr R Moseley, Professor B Rosamond

In attendance: Ms L Hayton, Ms J Hughes

39/09-10 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 25 November 2009 be approved.

40/08-09 Matters arising

(a) Assessment Conventions (minute 25/09-10 referred)

RECEIVED:

- (i) Proposed Amendments to the 2008 Honours Degree Classification Convention, submitted to the Senate for consideration at its meeting on 27 January 2010, paper SC.14/09-10.
- (ii) An oral report from the Chair on the outcomes of the Senate meeting of 27 January 2009.

REPORTED:

- (iii) That a meeting of the Assessment Conventions Working Group, established by the Committee, would take place on 8 February 2009 to consider further possible amendments to the 2008 Honours Degree Classification Convention, including in respect of the treatment of fail marks.
  - (iv) That, following further consultation with departments, proposals from the Assessment Conventions Working Group would be submitted for the consideration of the Committee at its meeting on 3 March.
- (b) Appeals against final degree classification: Regulation 8.12  
(minute 34/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Committee held on 25 November 2009:

- (i) It was 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)

- (ii) The Committee 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, and resolved:
  - (A) 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).
  - (B) That the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) submit for the consideration of the Committee proposed amendments to Regulation 8.12.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposed amendments to Regulation 8.12 concerning the process by which appeals against final degree classification are administered be approved, as set out in paper AQSC 37/09-10.

41/09-10

Chair's business

(a) QAA Auditor nominations

REPORTED:

That Dr David Lamburn, Director of Academic Studies, Centre for Lifelong Learning and Chair, Quality Enhancement Working Group, had been appointed as a QAA Auditor for a term of two years.

(b) Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

REPORTED:

- (i) That HEFCE funding for the University's two CETLs would cease in summer 2010;
- (ii) That the University's senior management team was considering a proposal from the Reinvention Centre and the CAPITAL Centre to establish a single CETL, an Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning, to be a parallel to the Institute of Advanced Study.

(c) Assessment Feedback workshop

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Chair and six other University representatives, including members of academic staff from each of the four Faculties, had attended a workshop on assessment feedback, hosted at Aston University and facilitated by the Assessment Standards Knowledge Exchange Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- (ii) That the group had developed a proposal for trialling new approaches at Warwick, covering both undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision, and would be involving student representatives in further discussions;
- (iii) That the group would report to a future meeting of the Committee.

42/09-10

Governance issues

(a) Review of constitution, membership and terms of reference

REPORTED:

That the Chair would be establishing a working group to consider the future role, terms of reference, constitution and membership of the Committee and its sub-committees, with a view to recommendations for 2010-11 being submitted for consideration in the summer term 2009-10, noting that the review would take account of:

- (i) the emerging recommendations of the Constitutional Advisory Group (paper S.8/08-10, the 'Harris Report') and advice from the Deputy Registrar's Office;
- (ii) discussions already underway within the e-Learning Steering Group, the Quality Enhancement Working

- Group, and the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee;
- (iii) the role and remit of other relevant University committees, including the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, and a possible new Student Experience Committee.

(b) Review of quality assurance processes

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Committee and other University committees and groups had considered on several occasions the desirability of reviewing the existing course and module approval process, and the annual course review process.
- (ii) That the recently published report of the Constitutional Advisory Group (the 'Harris Report', paper S.8/09-10) included commentary and recommendations concerning the need to review existing quality assurance processes.
- (iii) That the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at its meeting on 10 February 2010, would be considering a proposal from Professor Norman Ireland, 'An Outline Proposal for a University and Department Module Data Interface', including proposals for a central module databank, and revised mechanisms for module approval and amendment.
- (iv) That the Committee would be invited at its next meeting to prioritise quality assurance processes for review, and to consider review mechanisms.

RESOLVED:

- (v) That the Committee strongly endorsed a proposal to commence as soon as possible a review of the course and module approval process, noting that in light of resource requirements, it would not be possible to take forward a concurrent review of the annual course review process.
- (vi) That the Committee consider at its next meeting a paper outlining proposals for taking forward the review of the course and module approval process.

43/09-10 HEFCE Consultation on future arrangements for quality assurance

CONSIDERED:

HEFCE consultation document 2009/47, 'Future arrangements for quality assurance in England and Northern Ireland', paper AQSC 36/09-10, noting that:

- (a) Members of the Committee were invited to comment on the 10 consultation questions set out on pages 30-32;
- (b) The Committee's views on the consultation questions would inform a response to the consultation, to be drafted by the Teaching Quality section and submitted for the consideration of the Steering Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2010.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Committee was of the view that constructive responses to the consultation questions were more likely to be considered by HEFCE, but the University should be forthright in responding to very broad questions on issues of potential concern.
- (d) That the Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, compile a draft response to the consultation questions, informed by comments noted at the meeting.

44/09-10 Centre for Student Careers and Skills (minute 31/09-10 referred)

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Director of Student Careers and Skills concerning the new Centre.

45/09-10 Student Academic Complaints and Appeals 2008-09 (minute 30/09-10 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Administrative Officer (Academic Registrar's Office) concerning student academic complaints and appeals 2008-09, paper AQSC 26/09-10.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee welcomed the positive actions taken in response to recommendations made in the 2007-08 report, as set out in section 2 of paper AQSC 26/09-10.
- (b) That the Academic Office take forward the recommendation made in section 8 of the report that in the months approaching peak examination periods, information about mitigating circumstances and appeals be advertised widely on campus through the networked plasma screens and on Insite, MyWarwick, in departmental newsletters, and with signposting from related internal websites.

46/09-10 SSLC annual reports

CONSIDERED:

The following reports drafted by the Education Officer, Students' Union, on behalf of the SSLC Coordinators:

- (a) Undergraduate SSLC annual summary report, paper AQSC 38/09-10;
- (b) Postgraduate SSLC annual summary report, paper AQSC 39/09-10.

REPORTED (by the President of the Students' Union)

That the practice recently introduced by IT Services of advertising the location of available PC terminals had been welcomed by students.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That to function effectively, the personal tutoring system required adequate resource, noting that in some departments members of academic staff were allocated a larger number of personal tutees, which could have an impact on the availability of personal tutors.
- (d) That the Committee's views on the importance of resourcing the personal tutoring system by passed to the Constitutional Advisory Group and copied to the Senior Tutor.
- (e) That the Education Officer provide the Chair with details of the outcomes of recent student focus groups on feedback on assessed work, for consideration by the 'Aston Group' looking at approaches to assessment feedback (minute 41(b)/09-10 refers)
- (f) That the Education Officer provide a report to a future meeting of the Committee on course costs in addition to tuition fees.
- (g) That the SSLC summary reports, papers AQSC 38 and 39/09-10, be considered by the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, Faculty Boards and the Students' Union Liaison Group, and forwarded to relevant administrative and service departments.
- (h) That the Education Officer be invited to draft a short summary of issues raised in the reports and actions taken, for circulation to students.

47/09-10

Equality and Diversity

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary concerning the University's Single Equality Action Plan and actions relevant to the work of the Committee, paper AQSC 40/09-10.

RECOMMENDED (to the Equality and Diversity Committee):

- (a) That the status of 'concern' allocated to action 3.1.1 in the Single Equality Action Plan be amended to 'not yet started', with an appropriate commentary on progress linked to the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the King's-Warwick project.

- (b) That action 5.4 of the Single Equality Action Plan be amended to require the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, when reviewing course proposal and review processes, to consider how these processes could best encourage course leaders to consider the potential impact of course organisation and teaching on different groups of students, noting that this may include incorporating relevant questions within the approval and review forms, rather than completion of an Equality Impact Assessment to accompany every proposal.
- (c) That action 5.7 of the Single Equality Action Plan be amended to require the Students' Union and the Academic Office to provide appropriate equality and diversity training and resources for SSLC representatives.

48/09-10

Chair's action

Student Monitoring

REPORTED:

That since the last meeting of the Committee, the [former] Chair, acting on the Committee's behalf, had taken action to approve the following change to the Good Practice Guide on Monitoring Student Attendance and Progress (additions underlined, ~~deletions struck through~~):

"Where four "monitoring points" are missed, it is likely that a student's problems are such that ~~intervention from a central University support service is necessary (e.g. Senior Tutor or Disability Coordinator)~~ they should be encouraged to seek advice and support from the University Senior Tutor."

49/09-10

Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals (BGS minute 47/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies on 19 January 2010:

- (a) It was reported that the 2010 Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals (paper BGS 30/09-10) is now open under three actions:
  - (i) Action 1: Joint Programmes, including Scholarships;
  - (ii) Action 2: Partnerships with Third Country HEIs, including Scholarships;
  - (iii) Action 3: Promotion of European Higher Education;

With a deadline of 30 April 2010.

- (b) The Board considered a proposal from the Chair that, in line with the University strategy objective to double PGR students numbers and as a result of new funding arrangements for Masters courses under the scheme, Warwick submit only applications for Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates in 2010,

rather than both Doctoral and Masters courses as the previous years.

- (c) The Board resolved that the proposal from the Chair not be approved, but that guidance be issued by the Graduate School to departments as soon as possible notifying them of the revised, less favourable, funding arrangements for Erasmus Mundus Masters courses, noting that:
- (i) Many departments may have already begun putting together a bid, or have been approached by other institutions interested in forming a consortium;
  - (ii) Individual departments may have alternative reasons for constructing a bid for a Masters course that should be considered on individual merit by the relevant University committees.

50/09-10 CFDLSC Constitution, Membership, Terms of Reference (CFDLSC minute 1-09/10 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Collaborative, Flexible and Distance Learning Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 19 November 2009, resolved that the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Committee for 2009-10 be approved as set out in paper CFDLSC 2/09-10, subject to the following amendment to the constitution (deletions ~~struck through~~ and additions underlined):

~~Academic member of staff from~~ Representative from Warwick Business School ~~with responsibility for the DL MBA~~

51/09-10 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9am on Wednesday 3 March 2010 in the Council Chamber, first floor University House.