

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13:30, 20 MARCH 2024

Present	Professor Will Curtis	Co-Chair, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards) (Meeting Chair)
	Professor Andy Clark	Co-Chair, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Policy)
	Professor Jo Angouri	Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Internationalisation)
	Professor Dan Branch	Academic Director (Doctoral College)
	Professor David Davies	Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (Science, Engineering and Medicine)
	Dan Derricott	Director of Education Policy and Quality
	Professor Caroline Elliott	Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (Social Sciences)
	Professor Beccy Freeman	Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)
	Lee Griffin	Academic Director (Postgraduate Taught)
	Dr Jeff Jones	Co-opted member of academic staff in a quality assurance role
	Dr Helen Nolan	Representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Vaishnavi Ravi	The Vice President Postgraduate of the Students' Union
	Professor Ross Ritchie	Representative of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Dr Elena Riva	Representative of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning
	Professor Jose Rodrigo	Representative of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Holly Roffe	The Vice President Education of the Students' Union and Co-Chair of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee
	Dr Chris Rogers	Representative of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences
Dr Gavin Schwartz-Leeper	Associate Professor (Teaching Focussed), Liberal Arts	
Attending	Lauren Baker	Head of Education Quality and Partnerships, Secretary
	Dr Lynne Bayley	Senior Policy Advisor (Assessment and Regulations)
	Lauren Botham	Quality Assurance Manager (for item 068)
	Dr Sam Hardy	Director of Flexible and Online Learning (for item 071)
	Helen Hotten	Policy Advisor (Assessment and Regulations) (for item 070)
	Dr Alexa Kirkaldy	Associate Professor (Teaching Focussed) (for developmental reasons)
	Sharon Miles	Assistant Director (Student Administrative Services) (for item 070)
	Dr Nathan Morris	Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Complaints and Academic Casework) (for item 073)
	Rob Stevens	Policy Advisor (Curriculum and Partnerships), Assistant Secretary
	Rick Wallace	Associate Professor, SCAPVC (for item 067)
	Jackie Whitehouse	Head of Work-based and Professional Learning, FOLD
Ref	Item	

060	<p>Chair's welcome and introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting.</p>
061	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Professor David Davies, Will Ellis, Professor Lorenzo Frigerio, Dr Jeff Jones, Professor Georgia Kremmyda, Dr David Lees, Professor Pat Tissington, Dr Jane Webb, Dr Tim White and Professor Phil Young.</p> <p>Holly Roffe left the meeting at 2.30pm. Professor Beccy Freeman and Dr Lynne Bayley left the meeting at 3.00pm.</p> <p>Dan Derricott and Dr Elena Riva left the meeting at 3.30pm.</p> <p>Dr Gavin Schwartz-Leeper attended the meeting <i>in lieu</i> of Dr David Lees.</p>
062	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>
063	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 07 February 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2024 (063-AQSC200324) were approved.</p>
064	<p>Matters arising from meeting held on 07 February 2024</p> <p>It was noted that the management of the seven actions approved in the last meeting on the UG External Examiner Report Analysis item (053-AQSC070224) had been assigned to EPQ and were in progress, alongside the Internal Audit of External Examiners which had commenced.</p>
065	<p>Chairs' Business</p> <p>The Chair encouraged all members to actively engage in the committee conversation and activity and were advised to reconnect with the Chair or Secretariat to discuss any changing needs they had that would support access and participation in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair also asked members to feed back to the Academic Governance Review by following the guidance email that was circulated along with the meeting papers.</p>
066	<p>Students' Union Update</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report from the Vice President Education of the Students' Union and Co-Chair of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee and the Vice President Postgraduate of the Students' Union, and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that Spring Officer Elections had taken place with a full-time officer start date of August 1st 2024, with manifestos available on the SU website. • Further elections were taking place in Term 3 for Vice President Postgraduate.
Substantive Items	
067	<p>Request to move Film and TV exams in person</p> <p>The Committee received the report (067-AQSC070224, Public) from the Associate Professor, SCAPVC, and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department were requesting a return to in person examinations for three Level 4 modules and three Level 5 modules in Term 3 2023/24. • The rationale for the request was that in-person examinations were deemed to be more suitable than online examinations for meeting the learning outcomes in the modules and the department's view was that in person exams better ensured the academic integrity of the assessments. • Students had already been informed that examinations would move to in person in January 2024 by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the module leaders and had received a skills session about in-person examinations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The changes were approved by the department in November 2023 but there was a breakdown communication between departments about the approval route to move to in person examinations. <p>Committee members challenged the notion that learning outcomes were better met using in person examinations and encouraged the department to explore more diverse methods of assessment in future years, where key critical and theoretical concepts could be assessed without any concern of academic integrity not being maintained.</p> <p>The Committee advised that there was a clear widening of awarding gaps where departments had returned to face-to-face examinations, which was something for the department to consider when deciding the assessment methods going forward. As students had already been informed that there were in-person examinations in these modules for academic year 23/24, the Committee were receptive to the change for this year only.</p> <p>DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the request for this year, with a stipulation for the department to consider different methods of assessment for future years.</p> <p>ACTION 1: MMA to produce a template for in-person examination requests, including an equality impact assessment.</p> <p>ACTION 2: For SCAPVC to ensure that students taking these modules from other departments receive the same level of in-person examination preparation and support as the home students.</p>
068	<p>Updates to the Curriculum and Partnerships Approval Policy to ensure CMA compliance</p> <p>The Committee received the report (068-AQSC200324, Public) from the Quality Assurance Manager, Education Policy and Quality, and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Curriculum and Partnerships Approval Policy was approved by the Senate in June 2023. The Policy brought together existing policies and refreshed positions to better align to sector standards. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) released updated guidance whilst the policy was progressing through committees in 2023. To ensure a considered approach to the updated guidance, the policy was not reviewed mid-committee cycle, but it was acknowledged that changes were needed to address the update at a later stage. The following areas had been strengthened or introduced following the CMA guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information used by an applicant deciding on a course and provider (classified as ‘material information’) was still accurate upon enrolment through to when the student exited the University. Express agreement to make changes to material information following publication was needed throughout the recruitment cycle from when information was published to when students left the University. The use of generic statements to notify applicants or offer holders that aspects of a course may change may have been seen as unlawful. Material information included exact details on how the course would be delivered, i.e., the mix of in-person and online learning. It was confirmed that the updates strengthened the University’s position in terms of providing an excellent student experience and provided clarity for colleagues on what would be expected of them when the policy was introduced. <p>The Committee discussed the impact on optional modules, and it was confirmed that the approach was from a core module perspective as they directly link to course level learning outcomes.</p> <p>It was confirmed that further development was being undertaken in terms of the level of student consultation required: whether the nature of the change required the University to inform students, discuss with students</p>

	<p>or obtain consent from students. The student consultation guidance was due to be tabled at the next meeting of AQSC.</p> <p>DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee recommended approval to Education Committee and Senate.</p>
069	<p>Education Quality Framework and Annual Assurance Report 2022/23 – OfS B Conditions</p> <p>The Committee received the report (069-AQSC200324, Public) from the Head of Education Quality and Partnerships, and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper contained the Education Quality Framework (EQF) which articulated all assurance activity across the University and the Annual Assurance Report (AAR), which demonstrated compliance with the OfS B conditions. <p>Both reports were presented at the February meeting of AQSC for comments, which had been incorporated into the reports. This feedback included that the general principles and content of the EQF were good but that there were some resources and areas of practice that were missing, such as around PGR provision and PRES and REF, which had now been included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EQF highlighted that student co-creation featured throughout the framework but might not be evident in practice across the University, which highlighted an area for improvement in practice. • The sections related to complaints, appeals and resolution had now also been completed. • It was noted that degree apprenticeship quality assurance mechanisms needed to be more robust and better articulated. • It was confirmed that there was work ongoing in this area to be embedded into the new version of the EQF. <p>It was noted at the last meeting that the AAR highlighted areas of practice where improvements could be made, such as revalidating courses and degree apprenticeship assurance mechanisms, which would be taken forward through ongoing projects and reflected in the next annual assurance report and embedded into the EQF.</p> <p>The Annual Assurance report went on to be presented at Senate, Audit & Risk, and Council, and was used as a key tool alongside the EQF to provide insight into the University’s complete suite of assurance activities and enabled the identification areas of risk and enhancement.</p> <p>DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the Annual Assurance Report, and recommended approval to Senate the Education Quality Framework.</p>
070	<p>Amendments to Regulations and Policies for 2024/25</p> <p>The Committee received the report (070-AQSC200324, Public) from the Senior Policy Advisor (Assessment and Regulations), and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to reform academic regulations and policies was expected to take place in due course. • In the short term, there were several regulations and policies that needed to be revised or updated. • Regulation 12 and Ordinance 8 included an addition to recommend an unclassified aegrotat Master’s Degree award for PGT students. • Special Cases Committee recommended that non-academic posthumous awards were set up to allow recognition of student potential to be recognised for the benefit of the next of kin: the addition of a new Section 7 described the route for consideration and the available posthumous awards. The non-academic posthumous awards were required to be added to Ordinance 8. • Regulation 21 amendments were proposed to more accurately reflect how degrees were awarded and conferred.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update was proposed to the Degree Congregation’s dress code by the removal of gendered language. • Regulation 40 proposed revisions to reflect changes to the renaming of Regulation 11 from <i>Procedure to be Adopted in the Event of Suspected Cheating in A University Test</i> to <i>Academic Integrity</i> in October 2021. • Minor updates to Regulation 43 and right to remedy failure were proposed to permit Boards of Examiners to work more efficiently to allow meetings at alternative times during the academic year, as degree apprenticeship courses did not follow a typical academic year structure. <p>DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the regulatory changes.</p>
071	<p>Mock Quality Review and Action Plan and Institutional SAR</p> <p>The Committee received the report (071-AQSC200324, Protected) from the Director of Flexible and Online Learning Division, and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2024, the University commissioned a mock Quality Review of Degree Apprenticeship provision to help preparations for a full Ofsted inspection, which was expected to be held later in 2024. • Following the inspection, the approved Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was submitted to Ofsted. • Changes were made to the SAR prior to submission in relation to the wording around the strengths and weaknesses, in conjunction with the External Advisor, and was tailored as to how it should be presented. • The review report highlighted areas of good practice, areas for improvement and a list of actions, separated into themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding, which was deemed to need urgent action. ○ Tri-partite Progress Reviews, which was deemed to need urgent action. ○ Quality Improvement. ○ Analysis and use of data to plan future improvement. • In response to the review, two response groups were established, with the aim of driving change in the necessary areas at pace. • To guide this work, a RACI was produced which took the actions from the review report and broke them down into smaller stages with owners and timeframes. • The RACI, review report, Institutional SAR and Institutional Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) were presented to the Committee for information. <p>Comments received from WMG in advance of the meeting were addressed: it was confirmed that a guidance document on best practice for a Tripartite Progress Review had been produced and shared. It was confirmed that the QIP demonstrated good progress against Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and was being worked on alongside the RACI. Ongoing actions for improvement would be included in the new SAR in July 2024.</p> <p>QAR data for apprenticeships in the last quarter had also seen improvement against the Department for Education (DfE) benchmarks.</p>
072	<p>Degree Outcomes Statement</p> <p>The Committee received the report (072-AQSC200324, Public) from the Senior Policy Advisor (Assessment and Regulations), and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSQA expected HE providers to periodically produce a Degree Outcomes Statement (DOS) to analyse their institutional UG degree classification profile. • The University’s last updated DOS was approved by Council in 2021 and was considered through the academic governance bodies and was approved by Council and the Institutional External Examiner. • 128 out of 134 Higher Education Institutions published one.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The updated statement referred to trends in award classifications, sector comparison and provided a narrative around assessment and marking practices, governance, teaching and learning factors, algorithms and future plans. • The purpose of the statement was to demonstrate that the University was carefully monitoring the standard of the awards and to monitor potential grade inflation. • It was recommended that this statement should be presented alongside the Annual Assurance Report and Education Quality Framework and further updates of the statement should follow a regular pattern. • The next DOS was due to include more information on awarding gaps and to reference APP and ESE Strategy. <p>DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee recommended approval to Senate following language refinements.</p> <p>ACTION: Refinements to language to be made before the paper is submitted to Senate.</p>
073	<p>Consideration of potential amendments to Regulation 42: Governing Academic Appeals</p> <p>The Committee received the report (073-AQSC200324, Protected) from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Complaints & Academic Casework), and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University had identified a historical anomaly within Regulation 42: Governing Academic Appeals that resulted in differential treatment for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. • Undergraduate students could appeal their degree classification whereas taught postgraduate students could not. • This paper was presented following a complaint from a PGT student about being unable to appeal their classification. <p>The Committee confirmed that this historical anomaly should be addressed by proposing an amendment to Regulation 42 to harmonise the approach for academic appeals for all taught students going forward at the next available opportunity.</p> <p>It was suggested that the format for submission of appeals was also amended to be consistent, with reasonable adjustments and accessibility being considered.</p> <p>It was confirmed that ‘classification’ for the MBChB should be amended to ‘with honours’. The Committee agreed that departments receiving a notification that a student appeal has been rejected would be very helpful.</p> <p>ACTION: For an updated Regulation 42 proposal to be tabled at AQSC in May 2024 for approval.</p>
074	<p>Industrial Action: Policy Impact and Reflection</p> <p>The Committee received the report (074-AQSC200324, Public) from the Senior Policy Advisor (Assessment and Regulations), and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 22/23 academic year, industrial action took place in the form of strike days in terms 1 and 2, and a marking and assessment boycott (MAB) in term 3. • Regulation 41 <i>Governing the Management of the Impact upon the University’s Academic Business of Force Majeure</i> was invoked. • An evaluation of the impact of the policy interpretation on progression and classification was carried out to provide assurance that the academic standards were maintained in the MAB response, and identified whether there were any undesirable outcomes that should be avoided in the event of any further force majeure situations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that the overall number and percentage of Awards in each classification made institutionally following review was similar to the last pre-pandemic year of 18/19 and there was no evidence of grade inflation as a result of MAB. • Approximately 10% of students were promoted to a higher classification on review and ~ 1% retained a protected classification (or were granted a higher classification under mitigating circumstances policy) • Out of the ~4,500 students who progressed under force majeure, 150 (3.3%) were awarded a compensated pass for modules that they failed and were not offered reassessment for. • Most students with a compensated pass met normal credit requirements for progression even without the credits awarded for the compensated pass modules. • Permanently missing (PM) were used as an indicator grade for 474 component marks. Of these, 468 received permission from AQSC for synchronous assessments that did not take place due to strike action or tutor / supervisor assessments that it was not possible to recover due to staff no longer being employed by the University. • It was confirmed that several External Examiners had been dissatisfied with the MAB process and that the forthcoming Institutional Audit should explore how to best use their input in the future. • It was recommended that Regulation 41 be revised to hold a set of available adjustments and outcomes that could stand up in response to any given force majeure situation, noting that not all adjustments and outcomes would stand up in any given situation. • The adjustments and outcomes used during Covid-19 and industrial action should be mapped out against available outcomes as exemplars of force majeure responses. <p>ACTION: For the Institutional Audit process to explore how the voice of External Examiners is used in the decision-making process.</p>
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Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion

075	<p>Chair's Actions</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the report (075-AQSC200324, Public)</p>
076	<p>Increase of Upload Window for Online Examinations</p> <p>The Committee received and approved the report (076-AQSC200324, Public)</p>
077	<p>Update to Degree Apprenticeships Admissions Statement</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the report (077-AQSC200324, Public)</p>
078	<p>PSRB Update</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the report (078-AQSC200324, Protected)</p>

Next meeting:

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
[2023-2024]			
067 Request to move Film and TV exams in person	DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the request for this year, with a stipulation for the department to consider different methods of assessment for future years.		
067 Request to move Film	ACTION 1: MMA to produce a template for in-person examination requests, including an equality impact assessment.	MMA Team, September 2024	In Progress

and TV exams in person			
067 Request to move Film and TV exams in person	ACTION 2: For SCAPVC to ensure that students taking these modules from other departments receive the same level of in-person examination preparation and support as the home students.	Rick Wallace, April 2024	In Progress
068 Updates to the Curriculum and Partnerships Approval Policy to ensure CMA compliance	DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee recommended approval to Education Committee and Senate.		
069 Education Quality Framework and Annual Assurance Report 2022/23 – OfS B Conditions	DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the Annual Assurance Report, and recommended approval to Senate the Education Quality Framework.		
070 Amendments to Regulations and Policies for 2024/25	DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved the regulatory changes.		
072 Degree Outcomes Statement	DECISION: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee recommended approval to Senate following language refinements.		
072 Degree Outcomes Statement	ACTION: Refinements to language to be made before the paper is submitted to Senate.	Kim Robinson, March 2024	Completed
073 Consideration of potential amendments to Regulation 42: Governing Academic Appeals	ACTION: For an updated Regulation 42 proposal to be tabled at AQSC in May 2024 for approval.	Dr Nathan Morris, April 2024	Completed

074 Industrial Action: Policy Impact and Reflection	ACTION: For the Institutional Audit process to explore how the voice of External Examiners is used in the decision-making process.	Lauren Baker, End of Term 3	In Progress
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