

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on
30 January 2003

Present: Professor S Bassnett (in the chair), Dr P Blackmore, Professor M Cooper,
Professor A Easton, Dr S Hill, Professor G A Lindsay, Professor M McCrae,
Professor A Mullender, Professor A Reeve, Professor M Whitby, Mr G Jones,
Mr A Reiss.

Apologies: Professor R Burns, Professor R G Dyson, Professor J Jones.

In attendance: Ms K Penner, Ms R Wooldridge Smith

23/02-03 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 November 2002 be approved, it being noted that apologies for the meeting had been sent by Professor M Cooper and Professor M Whitby.

24/02-03 Matters Arising on the Minutes

(a) Fitness to Practice (Minute 60/01-02 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting held on 12th June 2002, the Committee considered the remit of the LWMS Fitness to Practice Committee and resolved *inter alia* that clarification be sought from the Admissions Office on current procedures for assessing fitness to practice for other professional qualifications awarded by the University.
- (ii) That the newly-created Student Recruitment & Admissions Office was working to clarify the current procedures for assessing fitness to practice for other professional qualifications awarded by the University and a paper would be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee on 26 February 2003.

(b) Personal Tutors for Postgraduate Students (Minute 9/02-03 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting on 24th October 2002, the Committee considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies held on 29th May 2002 (Minute 48/02-03) that the University introduce a requirement for departments to appoint personal tutors for

students enrolled on postgraduate courses and resolved that Professor Bassnett, Professor McCrae and Mr Reiss present a report on the matter at a future meeting of the Committee

- (ii) That a draft report would be prepared by Professors Bassnett and McCrae and Mr Reiss for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 February, it being noted that the Graduate School was undertaking a survey of current practice with respect to taught postgraduate students, the results of which would be reported to the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 10th February 2003.

- (c) Law Society/Bar Council Consultation on QA arrangements for 'Qualifying Degrees in Law' (Minute 5/02-03 (a) referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Committee held on 24th October 2002 it was reported that a draft response had been prepared by the University to the above consultation and the Committee resolved that it would be of interest to receive information on responses from other HEIs, in particular to the proposals that the professional bodies should provide training for External Examiners, which was related to current proposals from QAA and UUK to which the University had expressed its strong opposition.

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) indicating that the Chair of the Law School had collected over 70 responses to the Consultation from other HEIs which had been overwhelmingly negative.

- (d) Plagiarism (Minute 17/02-03 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Working Group of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on Plagiarism would be meeting in the next 2-3 weeks to consider whether the University should subscribe to a computerised plagiarism detection service, any necessary changes to the University mechanisms and Regulations currently in place, and the measures currently taken at departmental level to warn students about the nature of plagiarism and its consequences.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Working Group should make a report to the second meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in the Summer Term, at the latest, in order that recommendations could be implemented during the 2003-04 academic year.

25/02-03 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (a) Post-Experience Certificate in Engineering Business Management in Chinese

- (i) That the Senate, at its meeting on 4 December 2002 considered a report from the meetings of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee held on 24 October and 20 November 2002 and resolved that the Steering Committee examine the issue of principle raised by the proposal in regard to delivery of programmes in a language other than English with a view to a clear policy being developed on this aspect of University provision (Minute 26/02-03).
- (ii) That the Steering Committee, at its meeting held on 20th January 2003 considered the issue of the delivery of qualifications in a language other than English and resolved that the Pro Vice-Chancellors bring forward proposals for a University-wide policy on delivery of programmes outside the UK in a language other than English for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

(b) Reading Weeks

REPORTED:

That the Senate, at its meeting on 4 December 2002 resolved:

- (i) That academic departments be reminded that University best practice was to schedule reading weeks in week 6 of each term.
- (ii) That a survey be undertaken of all University departments to establish the extent and timing of reading weeks for all University degree courses.

26/02-03 Chair's Business

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on Institutional Audit training conducted at Warwick on 7-9 January 2003 by the QAA, it being noted that the Chair had subsequently written to Peter Williams, Chief Executive of the QAA, raising a number of issues concerning the training.

RESOLVED:

That in view of the Vice-Chancellor's position as Chair of a Group established by the Department for Education and Skills to take forward regulatory reform within Higher Education Professor Bassnett write formally to the Vice-Chancellor setting out her concerns.

27/02-03 Course Specifications

REPORTED:

- (a) That a briefing meeting on Course Specifications had been held for Chairs of departments and Directors of Undergraduate Studies on 9th January and that the on-line Course Specifications database would be available via Insite by mid-February.

- (b) That the Guidelines for the completion of Course Specifications were recently circulated to departments and published on Insite (paper AQSC 14/02-03).
- (c) That the Faculty of Social Studies Course Specifications Working Group had raised several issues at its first meeting, *viz*;
 - (i) The publication of an exemplar Course Specification on Insite
 - (ii) The usefulness of a module mapping document presented by Dr S Hill (paper AQSC 20/02-03, tabled)
 - (iii) The absence of involvement of External Examiners in assessing level 1 work
 - (iv) The availability of some options at Warwick across years 2 and 3 of a degree course which might potentially lead to difficulties in making a distinction between level 'I' (Intermediate) and level 'H' (Bachelors with Honours).

RESOLVED:

- (d) That an exemplar Course Specification published by the QAA be transferred to a Warwick Course Specification form and published on the Teaching Quality website;
- (e) That Dr S Hill's module mapping document be appended to the Guidance Notes on Course Specifications in downloadable format and that the web-based Course Specification form include a facility for a completed module map to be uploaded as an optional annexe to the Course Specification for each course
- (f) That the issues concerning the assessment of work at level 1 and the availability of options across levels 2 and 3 be referred to the Quality Task Group.

28/02-03

Revisions to Course Approval Documentation

CONSIDERED:

Proposed revisions to the University's course approval documentation, intended to take account of the introduction of Course Specifications and to avoid unnecessary duplication of data (paper AQSC 17/02-03).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revisions be approved, it being noted that this measure had streamlined bureaucracy by eliminating the areas of information overlap incurred by the introduction of Course Specifications as part of the course approval documentation.

29/02-03 Skills Working Group

CONSIDERED:

Proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference and membership of the Skills Working Group to oversee the next phase of implementation of the Skills Strategy (paper AQSC 15/02-03).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference and membership of the Skills Working Group be approved as set out in paper AQSC 15/02-03, subject to the membership being amended to include an IT Specialist if deemed desirable by the Group.

30/02-03 Preparation for QAA Institutional Audit

REPORTED:

(a) That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action to establish a Quality Task Group with a proposed membership as indicated below, it being noted that the Group would consult with the Chairs of the Faculty Boards as appropriate.

Professor S Bassnett (Chair)
Professor J Jones
Professor J Masson
Professor T Kemp
Professor M McCrae
Professor R Dyson
Dr S Hill

(b) That the first meeting of the Quality Task Group would be held on Monday 17 February 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the membership be amended to include Mr A Reiss, Education Officer of the Students' Union.

31/02-03 Annual Report from the SSLC Co-ordinators

CONSIDERED:

The Report for the academic year 2001-02 from the SSLC Co-ordinators (paper AQSC 16/02-03).

REPORTED:

That although the attendance of Library representatives at SSLC meetings had been considered tremendously useful, a large number of undergraduate reports identified the inadequate provision of core texts as an on-going issue, it being noted that this concern would be brought to the attention of the new Librarian.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That departments formalise the invitation to SSLC representatives to attend departmental staff meetings to discuss SSLC business.
- (b) That consideration be given by the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee to the desirability of adapting standard University SSLC requirements to reflect local culture where appropriate and, where desirable, to recommend to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee a set of principles which ought to underpin SSLC arrangements made in partner institutions.
- (c) That an addendum be made to the Co-ordinators' report for the next meeting, indicating the latest position with respect to current SSLC arrangements in the Faculty of Medicine, including provision for Continuing Professional Development courses.
- (d) That the Students' Union Education Officer be afforded an opportunity to address the Accommodation Review Group periodically on matters of concern to students.

RECOMMENDED (to the Board of Graduate Studies):

That consideration be given to the high number of late and unsubmitted postgraduate Annual Reports and revisit the option of changing the deadline for submission of postgraduate Reports from mid-July to early May, in line with the undergraduate Annual Report deadline.

32/02-03

Working Group on Student Support and Guidance

REPORTED:

- (a) That at its meeting held on 16 May 2002, the Committee considered a report from the Senior Tutor and the Students' Union Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer on the demand for student support and on non-completion figures provided by the Academic Office, and resolved *inter alia* that a Working Group be established to consider the recommendations for improving the provision of student support and guidance.
- (b) That a representative from the Academic Office would attend the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 February 2002 to respond to the issues previously raised by the Committee concerning the University's approach to the collection of non-completion data and the categorisation used for reasons for leaving with the objective of reducing the usage of 'reasons unknown' and 'other personal reasons' categories.

CONSIDERED:

The establishment of a Working Group to conduct an investigation into current arrangements for student support and guidance and bring forward proposals for enhancements to current provision.

RESOLVED:

That nominations for membership of the Working Group be brought forward for the next meeting of the Committee; it being noted that the Working Group should be mindful of references made to access issues in the Government White Paper.

33/02-03 External Examining (Minute 5/02-03 (b) referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Committee held on 24 October 2002 the Committee resolved:

- (a) That it would be useful to discover which members of the University's academic staff currently carried out External Examining elsewhere
- (b) That the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice consult the Chairs of the Faculty Boards as to whether they considered it desirable to provide training in External Examining for members of the University's own academic staff who were undertaking External Examining duties elsewhere.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) A paper drafted by the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) listing those staff at Warwick currently acting as External Examiners for other HEIs (paper AQSC 18/02-03).
- (d) A report from Dr P Blackmore, Director of the Centre for Academic Practice, on the consultation with the Chairs of the Faculty Boards concerning the desirability of providing training in External Examining for members of the University's own academic staff who were undertaking External Examining duties elsewhere.

RESOLVED

- (e) That the completeness of the list be investigated with the Academic Office
- (f) That the priority should be to ensure that staff from other HEIs serving as External Examiners at Warwick be adequately supported and trained although the Committee acknowledged that training should also be offered to Warwick staff undertaking External Examining duties elsewhere.
- (g) That the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice work with the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) to develop training opportunities for incoming and outgoing External Examiners, it being noted that liaison with Faculty Chairs had indicated that it would not necessarily be advantageous to run events on a faculty basis.

34/02-03 Higher Quality 11

RECEIVED:

A copy of Higher Quality, no. 11, issued by the QAA (paper AQSC 19/02-03).

35/02-03 Student Evaluation of Teaching

CONSIDERED:

Current practices with regard to student evaluation of teaching at the University.

RESOLVED:

That it would be helpful if work could be done to share best practice in the area, through investigation of current practice, the development of a standard form and the development of student evaluation against learning outcomes; it being noted that this was an area in which it was intended that a new member of the Centre for Academic Practice undertake some work.

36/02-03 Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on 26th February 2003.