

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on
26 February 2003

Present: Professor S Bassnett (in the chair), Dr P Blackmore, Professor R Burns, Professor M Cooper, Professor R G Dyson, Dr S Hill, Professor J Jones, Professor G A Lindsay, Professor M McCrae, Professor A Mullender, Mr A Reiss.

Apologies: Professor M Whitby

In attendance: Ms C Charlton, Ms K Penner, Ms R Wooldridge Smith, Mr K Sloan (for item 38/02-03 (a)), Ms L Mazzoli (for item 43/02-03 (b)).

37/02-03 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 January 2003 be approved.

38/02-03 Matters Arising on the Minutes

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

REPORTED:

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.

CONSIDERED:

A report from Mr K Sloan, Director, Student Recruitment & Admissions Office, clarifying current procedures for assessing fitness to practice for professional qualifications awarded by the University (paper AQSC 21/02-03), it being noted;

- (i) That the Student Recruitment & Admissions Office was working to clarify the precise remits of the Fitness to Practice Committee and Committee on the Admission of Students to Courses of Study.
- (ii) That the requirement to monitor the fitness to practice of students throughout their degree and the desirability of making available appropriate exit routes for students deemed unsuitable to practice be examined by the Academic Office in consultation with the relevant academic departments.

(iii) That proposals for revisions to University Regulations governing Fitness to Practice and admission to the University be brought forward for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

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

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting held on 30 January 2003, the Committee resolved that the completeness of the list of Warwick staff currently acting as External Examiners for other HEIs be investigated with the Academic Office.

RECEIVED:

A revised list of Warwick staff acting as External Examiners for other HEIs, based on academic returns to date (paper AQSC 22/02-03).

RESOLVED:

That the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) be requested to monitor the list against incoming External Examiners.

(c) Annual Report from the SSLC Co-ordinators (Minute 31/02-03 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That at its meeting held on 30th January the Committee considered the Annual Report for 2001-02 from the SSLC Co-ordinators and resolved, *inter alia*, that an addendum be made to the Co-ordinators' report indicating the latest position with respect to SSLC arrangements in the Faculty of Medicine.

(ii) That the latest position with respect to SSLC arrangements in the Faculty of Medicine was as follows:

- (A) That the SSLC for the MBChB met on 3 February 2003
- (B) That the SSLC Co-ordinators had received names of the Convenor, Chair and Secretary
- (C) That the Co-ordinators had received Minutes for the first SSLC meeting
- (D) That the operation of the SSLC for the MBChB would continue to be monitored.

(d) Reading Weeks

CONSIDERED:

The results of a survey of all teaching departments undertaken to establish the extent and timing of reading weeks (paper AQSC 23/02-03).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the document be circulated to departments which did not schedule reading weeks in week 6, accompanied by a letter reinforcing the principle of harmonisation and the need for departments to bring local practice into line with the University position for the academic year 2003-04.
- (ii) That a letter be sent to the Dean of the Warwick Business School requesting clarification of practice on individual courses in the School and drawing to his attention the absolute requirement to ensure harmonisation of reading weeks for students enrolled on joint degrees.

39/02-03 Progress of Committee Recommendations

SSLC arrangements in partner institutions (Minute 31/02-03 (b) referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 7 February 2003 the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee considered the desirability of occasional adaptation of standard University SSLC requirements to reflect local culture in partner institutions.

CONSIDERED:

A set of principles recommended by the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee to underpin SSLC arrangements in partner institutions (paper AQSC 24/02-03).

RECOMMENDED:

That the principles proposed to underpin SSLC arrangements in partner institutions be approved, it being noted that the SSLC Co-ordinators would visit City College, Coventry and Solihull College to discuss the operation of SSLCs.

40/02-03 Chair's Business

RECEIVED:

- (a) An oral report from the Chair on the first meeting of the Quality Task Group held on Monday 17 February 2003.
- (b) A copy of the finalised questionnaire compiled by the Students' Union Market Research Unit, to inform the student submission to be made to the QAA as part of the Institutional Audit process (paper AQSC 29/02-03), it being noted that the document had been approved by the Steering Committee, that the necessary release of funds had been approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee and that an Executive Summary of the results of this survey would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee by the Students' Union Education Officer.

41/02-03 Course Specifications

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on the development of the online Course Specifications database, indicating that a memo had been circulated to Chairs of department stating that the database would be available from 3rd March, and that an exemplar Course Specification and module map created by Dr S Hill had been made available for downloading from the Course Specifications website.

CONSIDERED:

Course Specifications for the BSc Chemistry and MChem degrees (papers AQSC 25/02-03 and AQSC 26/02-03 respectively).

RESOLVED:

That the following amendments be made to the Course Specifications:

- (a) Inclusion of a reference to the Subject Benchmark Statement in the second Course Aim (BSc and MChem)
- (b) Amendment to the 4th Course Aim for the BSc Course Specification to state 'to provide opportunities to prepare for a career in research'
- (c) Adherence to the instructions in brackets in the section on Learning Outcomes: Subject-Specific/Professional Skills
- (d) Removal of feedback from the Formative Assessment category.

42/02-03 Working Group on Student Support and Guidance (Minute 47/01-02 referred)

REPORTED:

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 non-completion figures provided by the Academic Office, and resolved *inter alia* that a Working Group be established to consider recommendations for improving the provision of student support and guidance, including:

- (a) greater support and training for personal tutors
- (b) inter-cultural awareness training for staff
- (c) consideration of sources of stress amongst staff and its impact on student well-being

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a Working Group be established to consider current arrangements for student support and guidance, working in conjunction with Mr Paul Greatrix, Director of Student Services, and informed by the recent review of Student Services conducted by him, with a view to bringing forward proposals for enhancements to current provision; it being noted that liaison with the Senior Tutor's Office and the Student Recruitment & Admissions Office would also be desirable.
- (b) That the Working Group comprise the following members:

Professor Susan Bassnett (Chair)
Three departmental Directors of Undergraduate Studies (one per Faculty), one of whom should be familiar with the AWARDS scheme
Students' Union Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer

43/02-03 Academic Statistics

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The University's Academic Statistics for 2002-03 (paper AQSC 27/02-03).
- (b) An oral report from Laura Mazzoli, Academic Office, 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.
- (c) A breakdown of the codes used by the Academic Office to classify reasons for withdrawal (paper AQSC 32/02-03 [table]), it being noted that students are asked to indicate one of the reasons for withdrawal on the withdrawal form.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That concern about the data utilised in the comparison of research income of UK universities (Section 5.4) be referred to Ms Kate Hughes, Director, Research Support Services with a request for clarification of the classification of research income.
- (e) That the Academic Office investigate the possibility of further disaggregation of the 'other personal reasons' category in order to inform discussion of the reasons for non-completion, such as the course not having met student expectations, and the feasibility of enabling students to indicate the coincidence of several factors having precipitated a decision to withdraw; it being noted that the University's non-completion rates for cohorts entering the University between 1997 and 1999 had fallen to below 10%.

44/02-03 Warwick Skills Programme

CONSIDERED:

A Delivery Plan for the next phase of development of the Warwick Skills Programme, 2003-2005 (paper AQSC 28/02-03).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that a fully costed Business Plan would need to be brought forward in the current financial planning round in support of the implementation of the Delivery Plan for consideration by the appropriate University bodies.

- (b) That the document be amended to ensure clarity concerning the intention that all students be able to access the Warwick Skills Certificate and to reflect the higher rate of embedding in departments envisaged.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the Delivery Plan for the next phase of development of the Warwick Skills Programme, 2003-2005, be approved in principle and that the document be referred to the Faculty Boards for consideration in the Summer Term 2003, together with information about the successful early implementation of the Warwick Skills Certificate; it being noted that a initial pilot phase of embedding of skills was planned, feedback from which would inform wider implementation.

45/02-03 Report from the Board of Graduate Studies

CONSIDERED:

A report from the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies held on 10th February 2003 (paper AQSC 30/02-03), comprising its recommendations and resolutions recorded under the following items:

- (a) New Postgraduate Courses of Study
- (b) Revised Courses of Study
- (c) Change to Degree Title
- (d) Personal Tutor System
- (e) Periodic Reviews
- (f) Response to the HEFCE Consultation
- (g) SSLC Reports

(a) New Postgraduate Courses of Study

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the following proposals for new postgraduate courses be approved, subject to the approval of the fees for each course by the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

- (i) A proposal from the Department of History to introduce a new taught MA in 'Modern British History', with effect from October, as set out in paper AGSC 9/02-03.
- (ii) A proposal from the School of Health and Social Studies and School of Law to introduce a new taught MA in Social and Health Care Law and Practice and a new taught MA in Advocacy Studies, with effect from September 2003, as set out in papers GFSS 40/02-03 (revised) and GFSS 41/02-03 (revised) respectively.
- (iii) A proposal from the Department of Psychology to introduce a new MSc course entitled 'Research Methods in Psychology', as set out in paper SGS 21/02-03 (revised 2).

(iv) Revised proposals from the Centre for Primary Health Care Studies for the introduction of the following courses with effect from March 2003, noting that the partnership arrangements for the course were approved by the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee on 7 February 2003:

- (A) An MA/MSc Applied Health Studies: Implant Dentistry (paper GFSS 26/02-03 (revised)).
- (B) A Postgraduate Diploma entitled 'The Ethics and Practice of Implant Dentistry' (paper GFSS 27/02-03 (revised)).
- (C) A Postgraduate Certificate entitled 'The Principles of Implant Dentistry' (paper GFSS 28/02-03 (revised)).

(b) Revised Courses of Study

RESOLVED:

That a proposal from the Department of Economics to restructure postgraduate courses in Economics be approved as set out in paper GFSS 56/02-03; it being noted that formal proposals be brought forward in the Summer Term to include:

- (i) Clarification of the number of students applying for a PhD in Economics without first having achieved a Warwick Master's degree and the potential impact of the proposed changes on recruitment.
- (ii) Clarification of the correlation between student hours and CATS points.
- (iii) Information on whether the inclusion of a significant taught component in the first year of the course was likely to have an impact on the length of time needed to complete the PhD.

(c) Change to Degree Title

RESOLVED:

That a request from the Centre for English Language Teacher Education that doctoral students be awarded the degree of PhD with no disciplinary identifier rather than a PhD in English Language Teacher Education be not approved (paper GFSS 58/02-03).

(d) Personal Tutor System

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that that departments were already required to allocate a personal tutor to Postgraduate Taught students
- (b) That the proposal of the Board of Graduate Studies that a member of staff be appointed to conduct a similar role for

Research students be approved, it being noted that this individual should not have disciplinary responsibilities.

(e) Periodic Reviews

CONSIDERED:

- (i) The Periodic Review Report on Postgraduate Provision in the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies together with the Centre's Response (papers BGS 14/02-03 and BGS 15/02-03).
- (ii) The Periodic Review Report on Postgraduate Provision in the Centre for the Study of Women and Gender together with the Centre's response (papers BGS 16/02-03 and BGS 17/02-03).
- (iii) The Periodic Review Report on the Faculty of Arts' review of provision in the School of Theatre Studies together with the School's response (papers BFA 10/02-03 and BFA 11/02-03).

RESOLVED:

- (iv) That the following Periodic Review Reports and responses be approved, as set out below:
 - (A) Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies (papers BGS 14/02-03 and BGS 15/02-03).
 - (B) Centre for the Study of Women and Gender (papers BGS 16/02-03 and BGS 17/02-03).
- (iv) That an updated response be provided by the School of Theatre Studies indicating how the issues arising in the Periodic Review had been addressed; it being noted that the report be amended to reflect the dispensation achieved by the School to extend the 50:50 assessment model to 40:60.
- (v) That a letter be sent to the Chairs of the Board of Graduate Studies, Board of Undergraduate Studies and Boards of the Faculties indicating the responsibility of the Boards for expediting problems raised within Periodic Review reports prior to them being forwarded to AQSC.
- (vi) That the Committee supported the recommendation of the Board of Undergraduate Studies that Periodic Review Reports be drafted within 6 weeks of the date of the Review; it being noted that resources issues arising would need to be addressed centrally.
- (vii) That in the future, Periodic Reviews be accompanied by an Executive Summary of issues raised, areas for improvement and good practice.

(f) Response to HEFCE Consultation

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supported the draft response to the HEFCE Consultation on Improving standards in Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (paper BGS 19/02-03) and view of the Board of Graduate Studies that the elaboration of an agreement on learning outcomes between each student and the University was not desirable.

(g) SSLC Reports

REPORTED:

That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 30 January considered the Annual Report from the SSLC Co-ordinators and recommended that the Board of Graduate Studies consider 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.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the July deadline for the submission of postgraduate SSLC reports be retained, noting that the Board of Graduate Studies did not support bringing forward the deadline date as this would remove the opportunity for taught postgraduate SSLCs to comment in Annual Reports on the period of study between May and September which included the dissertation.
- (ii) That the necessity of submitting reports which have been reviewed by student representatives on the SSLC be strongly reinforced in departments.

RECOMMENDED:

That departments be reminded that it was good practice to invite SSLC representatives to staff meetings to discuss SSLC business and that copies of the Minutes should be circulated to subject librarians where they were not in attendance.

46/02-03 New Undergraduate Courses of Study

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the following proposals for new undergraduate courses be approved:

- (a) A proposal from the Departments of Italian and Classics to establish a BA in Italian and Classics with effect from October 2004, as set out in paper AUSC 46/02-03.

- (b) A proposal from the Department of Chemistry to establish a new MChem in Chemical Biology with Intercalated Year with effect from October 2003, as set out in paper SFS 20/02-03.
- (c) A proposal from the Department of Chemistry to establish a new BSc in BioMedical Chemistry with Intercalated Year with effect from October 2003, as set out in paper SFS 21/02-03.
- (d) A proposal from the Department of Computer Science to establish a new MEng in Computer Science with Intercalated Year with effect from October 2003, as set out in paper SFS 52/02-03.
- (e) A proposal from the Departments of Philosophy, PAIS and Economics to establish a new BA/BSc in Philosophy, Politics and Economics with effect from October 2004 (paper UFSS 34/02-03), subject to a review of the first year workload as reflected in the proposed CATS allocation.

47/02-03 Undergraduate & Postgraduate Annual Course Review Reports 2001-02

(a)..... Faculty of Arts

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meetings held on 13th November 2002 and 12th January 2003, the Board of the Faculty of Arts considered undergraduate Annual Course Review Reports from the following departments and centres (paper BFA 7/02-03):

Classics and Ancient History
 School of Comparative American Studies
 English and Comparative Literary Studies
 Film and Television Studies
 French Studies
 German Studies
 History
 History of Art (paper BFA 20/02-03)
 Italian
 Theatre Studies

- (ii) That at its meeting held on 12th January 2003 the Board of the Faculty of Arts considered postgraduate Annual Course Review Reports from the following departments and centres (paper BFA 22/02-03):

Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies
 English and Comparative Literary Studies
 Film and Television Studies
 History
 History of Art
 Italian
 Centre for the Study of the Renaissance
 School of Theatre Studies

- (iii) That no substantive issues requiring referral to the Committee were raised in the above reviews.

(b) Faculty of Science

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting held on 5 February 2003 the Board of the Faculty of Science considered 2001-02 Annual Course Review Reports for **undergraduate and postgraduate** courses delivered by the following Departments and Schools within the Faculty of Science (paper BFS 7-23/02-03):

Biological Sciences
Chemistry
School of Engineering
Mathematics
Physics
Psychology
Statistics

- (ii) That no substantive issues requiring referral to the Committee were raised in the above reviews.

(c) Faculty of Social Studies

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meetings held on 6th November 2002 and 12th February 2003, the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies considered **undergraduate** Annual Review reports from the following departments and centres (papers UFSS 21 & 38/02-03):

Education
Sociology
Warwick Business School
Women & Gender
Economics
Philosophy

- (ii) That at its meeting held on 12th February 2003 the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies considered **postgraduate** Annual Review reports from the following departments and centres (paper GFSS 59/02-03):

Economics
Institute of Education
Warwick Business School
PAIS
Sociology
Women and Gender

- (iii) That the only substantive issue raised by the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies related to the high number of students resitting examinations for the MSc Management

Science & Operational Research and the non-completion rates for the course in general.

CONSIDERED:

A recommendation from the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies that the Committee consider introducing a standard pro-forma for Annual Course Review reports.

RESOLVED:

- (iv) That a pro-forma for Annual Course Review reports be brought forward to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (v) That from 2002-03 Faculty Board Secretaries produce a composite report on Annual Course Review reports identifying best practice and areas of concern.
- (vi) That clarification be provided of the mechanism for following up with departments and reporting to the Committee areas of concern highlighted in Annual Course Review reports.
- (vii) That it be noted that it was the expectation of the Committee that areas of concern be addressed at Faculty level, unless an issue of principle was revised and that, to this end, the Committee expected to receive a report from the BFSS in the Summer Term on the issues raised in connection with the MSc Management Science & Operational Research.

(d) Partnership Courses

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 7th February 2003 the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee considered Annual Course Review Reports for the following partnership courses:

- (i) The Warwick Manufacturing Group MSc in International Technology Management (ITM); Marconi Programme (paper PDLSC 24/02-03) and resolved that the arrangements for the course be kept under review in light of the Marconi position.
- (ii) The Diploma in Person-centred Counselling delivered at Solihull College (paper PDLSC 26/02-03) and resolved that the Committee expected quality assurance to form a substantive component of the report, the absence of which, given recent difficulties, was difficult to understand and that a revised section on Quality Assurance at Solihull College be provided for the next meeting of the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee, to inform the proposed site visit (Minute 9/02-03(a)(viii)).
- (iii) The Diploma in Humanistic Counselling delivered at City College (paper PDLSC 27/02-03) and resolved that a site visit be conducted during the Summer Term 2003 at City College to

address the concern noted in the External Examiner's report about the level of resources available; it being noted that the University's Counselling Co-ordinator would provide a formal report on any progress to the Committee for its next meeting, after the appointment of a successor to the College's most recent Course Co-ordinator, addressing issues of concern.

(e) Board of Lifelong Learning

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting held on the 1st November 2002, the Board of Lifelong Learning considered Annual Course Review reports for the following courses (paper BLL 5-8/02-03):

Open Studies
Foundation Degree in Community Enterprise and Development
Foundation Degree in Learning Support
Part time and 2+2 courses in Social Studies and European Studies.

- (ii) That no substantive issues requiring referral to the Committee were raised in the above reviews.

48/02-03 Disestablishment of the Centre for Research in Health, Medicine and Society

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 12 February 2003, the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies recommended that the Centre for Research in Health, Medicine and Society be disestablished.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the recommendation from the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies that the Centre for Research in Health, Medicine and Society be disestablished be approved, (paper BFSS 28/02-03).

49/02-03 Amendments to the schedule for Periodic Review

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Warwick Business School that the Periodic Review of postgraduate provision in the School be postponed until the academic year 2003-04 in light of the School's own internal review of postgraduate provision and the desirability of splitting the postgraduate review from the undergraduate review, scheduled to proceed in May 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal from the Warwick Business School that the Periodic Review of postgraduate provision in the School be postponed until the academic year 2003-04, be approved.

50/02-03 Research-based Learning Project

CONSIDERED:

A paper from Dr Glynis Cousin, Centre for Academic Practice, on the Warwick Research-based Learning Project (paper AQSC 31/02-03).

RESOLVED:

That the Research-based Learning Project be referred to a Quality Enhancement Working Group for detailed discussion; it being noted that the precise Terms of Reference and membership would be approved by Chair's Action.

51/02-03 Operation of the Committee

CONSIDERED:

The role of the Committee in the consideration of new course proposals, changes to courses and Annual Course Review reports.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a summary of the potential means of streamlining the Committee's work be considered at its next meeting, these to include;
 - (i) Publication of papers electronically via Insite
 - (ii) Sub-division of the Committee along faculty lines to consider new and revised courses and Annual Review reports for the relevant faculty
 - (iii) Use of an Executive Summary to draw out issues arising or examples of best practice contained within Annual Course Review reports.
- (b) That Annual Course Review reports be channelled through the Boards of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

52/02-03 Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on 15th May 2003.