

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Wednesday 19 October 2005

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Professor L Bridges, Professor A Caesar, Mr B Duggan, Dr K Flint, Professor M Harrison, Professor G Lindsay, Professor M Luntley, Dr P O'Hare, Ms S Law, Professor E Peile, Dr T Price, Dr P Roberts, Professor M Smith

Apologies: Professor J Davis, Dr R Moseley, Ms K Stark

In attendance: Dr A Dowd (for item 3(a)/05-06), Dr J Moss, Mr D Wallis

1/05-06 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership

RECEIVED:

A statement of the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Committee, paper AQSC 1/05-06.

2/05-06 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2005 be approved, subject to the correction of the spelling of Professor H Thomas's name in minute 100(c)/04-05.

3/05-06 Matters Arising

(a) Quality Assurance in WMG (minute 105/04-05 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 8 June 2005 the Committee considered the final report of the Working Group on Quality Assurance Issues in WMG, paper AQSC 83/04-05, and resolved:

- (i) That the final report of the Working Group on Quality Assurance Issues in Warwick Manufacturing Group be approved;
- (ii) That the members of the Group be thanked for their work;
- (iii) That the colleagues from WMG who participated in the Group's work be thanked for their positive engagement with the process;
- (iv) That the high regard in which Dr Dowd's work and contribution in managing WMG's overseas programmes is held be noted;

- (v) That WMG carry out the recommendations made to them in the report, including:
- (A) That WMG bring to the first meeting of the Committee in the Autumn Term 2005 a progress report on implementing the report's recommendations along with the documents specified in Recommendations 1, 2 and 3;
 - (B) That WMG undertake a review of the balance of lecturing staff to teaching fellows on overseas programmes, and of the workload and teaching and marking schedules of teaching fellows, and reports to the Committee on these in due course, and no later than the end of the Autumn Term 2005, as set out in Recommendation 6;
 - (C) That WMG develop and bring to the Committee for its consideration a revised model of assessing projects in which industrial supervisors do not mark projects and in which projects completed at overseas centres are marked by two academic assessors, as are those completed in the UK; it being noted that the contribution of industrial supervisors is vital and appreciated, and that their input in identifying the strategic or other contribution made by a student's project to their company is extremely valuable, and their comments should be passed to the markers;
 - (D) That, in line with Recommendation 23, the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee consider whether extra meetings of the Sub-Committee could be scheduled to remove bottlenecks in the course approval process.

CONSIDERED:

- (vi) A report from Dr A Dowd outlining WMG's responses to the recommendations and requirements outlined above, paper AQSC 2/05-06;

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Response from WMG be approved;
- (B) That a written report be provided by WMG on the development of a revised module for project assessment (Recommendation 8) following further work after Examination Boards in November;

- (C) That WMG be encouraged to continue to seek to distribute the management and administration of overseas programmes to mitigate the risk inherent in relying on the contribution of the current Academic Director of Graduate Studies;
 - (D) That the Rationale for the use of Teaching Fellows in WMG's M-level provision be approved as set out in Annex 3 of paper AQSC 2/05-06.
- (vii) A decision of the Chair of CFDLSC that an extra meeting of the Sub-Committee be held at the beginning of the summer vacation if required to consider any proposals for collaborative courses that have arisen since the previous meeting.
- (b) Working Group on the Warwick Teaching Certificate (Minute 100(d)/04-05 referred)

CONSIDERED:

An update from the Acting Director of the Centre for Academic Practice on developments in the Warwick Teaching Certificate and the piloting of a new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice (PCAPP), paper AQSC 19/05-06 (tabled).

- (c) QAA China Audit (Minute 102/04-05 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the QAA had requested further information only about the BA in English Language, Translation and Cultural Studies delivered by CELTE and CTCCS in collaboration with Renmin University, Beijing;
 - (ii) That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2005 received a covering letter to the QAA and a number of documents supplying further information, paper SC 427/04-05, and resolved that they be sent to meet the QAA's deadline of 30 September.
- (d) Publication of summer examination timetable (Minute 115/04-05 referred)

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That one complaint had already been received this academic year via email about the perceived lateness of the publication of the summer examination timetable.

RESOLVED:

That the policy previously agreed to publish the provisional examination timetable at the end of the Spring Term from 2006 on a trial basis was a significant advance in addressing student concerns in this area, and that the effect of this earlier publication be reviewed during summer 2006.

4/05-06 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

That the Senate at its meeting held on 29 June 2005 considered a report from the meetings of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee held on 12 May and 8 June and recorded its approval of recommendations made by the Committee under the following headings:

- (a) Academic Satisfaction Review 2005
- (b) Examination arrangements for Postgraduate Research Students
- (c) Word Limit for PhD Theses in the Faculty of Social Studies
- (d) Policy on Resubmission for Taught Postgraduate Degrees
- (e) Amendments to Regulation 8.10 Governing the MBChB Degree
- (f) Minimising Time Taken for Approval of New Courses
- (g) Approval Processes for Small Credit Volume Certified CPD Courses
- (h) New and Revised Collaborative Courses

5/05-06 Chair's Business

- (a) Meeting of Russell Group Pro-Vice-Chancellors

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the recent meeting of Pro-Vice-Chancellors with responsibility for Teaching and Learning at Russell Group institutions, noting that discussions had been led by Professor R Burgess on degree classification and credit; by Professor P Ramsden, Higher Education Academy, on accredited programmes for staff development, the National Teaching Fellowship scheme and future enhancement themes; and by Mr A Wilson, Director General for Higher Education at the DfES on challenges for the future including international developments and post-qualification admissions.

- (b) CETLs

RECEIVED:

An update from the Chair on the progress of the Centres for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, noting that:

- (i) The Reinvention Centre had been formally launched on 12 October and its work with Oxford Brookes University was progressing well;
 - (ii) The Capital Centre would be formally launched in January 2006, with its work at Warwick and at the Royal Shakespeare Company already under way.
 - (iii) HEFCE was to allocate additional funds to the CETLs in proportion to their capital spending plans, such that the Capital Centre would be eligible for a further ~£350,000, and the Reinvention Centre a further ~£140,000, subject to the approval of an application to draw down the monies.
- (c) Vice-Chancellor's Education Innovation Fund

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 17 October 2005 had recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that an Education Innovation Fund be set up to distribute £1million over the academic years 2005-06 and 2006-07 to support innovative teaching and learning support projects proposed by academic, learning support or administrative departments or the Students' Union, it being noted that the maximum size of an award would normally be £50,000.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That potential bidders and assessors of bids be aware of other sources of funding for projects, including TQEF & Professional Standards funding for e-learning projects, funding available through the Reinvention Centre for undergraduate research-based learning, and Roberts money for PG initiatives, and bid for these first;
- (ii) That if the proposal is approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee criteria for awards and a light-touch application procedure be developed and advertised by the Chair;
- (iii) That colleagues with ideas for projects discuss them with the Chair at the earliest opportunity;
- (iv) That the proposed deadline for the first round of bids on 12 December 2005 be noted.

6/05-06

QAA Institutional Audit: Progress Report

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2005 considered a follow-up progress report to the Quality Assurance

Agency one year after the Institutional Audit and approved it as set out in paper SC 425/04-05 (part).

7/05-06

Periodic Review and Departmental Review

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 3 October resolved that the processes of Periodic Review and Departmental Review be merged as set out in paper SC 13/05-06.
- (b) That the four Departmental Reviews planned for this term (CELTE, Classics & Ancient History, Economics, Physics) would proceed as Departmental Reviews, with subsequent reviews this academic year to be run as combined Periodic and Departmental Reviews, in line with a schedule to be finalised in consultation with the University Secretary but based on that outlined in paper AQSC 3/05-06.

RESOLVED:

That the combined review of the Medical School be scheduled for 2006-07.

- (c) That the Teaching Quality team would work with the University Secretary's Office to draw up guidelines for combined reviews, to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.

8/05-06

TQI and National Student Survey

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2005 considered an overview paper on the TQI website including institutional commentaries on HESA data on the site and the National Student Survey, and an article written by the Students' Union Education Officer on the National Student Survey, paper SC 426/04-05.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Warwick Results of the NSS published on the TQI website, paper AQSC 4/05-06;
- (b) An oral report from Mr B Duggan, Education Officer and Deputy President, Students' Union, on discussions within the Aldwych Group on the 2006 National Student Survey;
- (c) An oral report from the Chair on reaction amongst Pro-Vice-Chancellors of other Russell Group institutions to the NSS 2005 results, noting that a number of other institutions were unhappy with the survey and were considering whether to encourage participation in future years.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the Committee consider more detailed unpublished results of the NSS 2005 when available in due course;
- (e) That the sceptical position of a number of Russell Group institutions, particularly in the light of strong concerns over the survey's methodology and a paper prepared by Professor H Goldstein, recently of the Institute of Education, University of London, be noted;
- (e) That Ms K Stark and Mr B Duggan provide a report on further discussions amongst Aldwych Group Students' Unions for the next meeting of the Committee;
- (f) That the Committee further consider the University's position with regard to encouraging participation in the 2006 National Student Survey at its next meeting.

9/05-06

Academic Satisfaction Review 2005

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Academic Satisfaction Review 'The Student Experience' – Postgraduate Research Students, Research Report, paper AQSC 5/05-06, it being noted that the Board of Graduate Studies had considered the report at its meeting on 6 October 2005.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a number of issues of concern be noted, including the availability of facilities and study space, it being noted that the Graduate School had completed a separate survey on this issue and was reviewing University policy;
 - (ii) That it be noted that the QAA audit of PGR provision was upcoming, and that the Secretary and Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) would attend a QAA briefing event on 20 October;
 - (iii) That the recent launch of the Graduate School portal (www.warwick.ac.uk/go/gsp/) be welcomed;
- (b) Academic Satisfaction Review 'The Student Experience' – Postgraduate Taught Supervision and Feedback, Research Report, paper AQSC 6/05-06.

RESOLVED:

That the appearance of feedback on assessments and supervision during the summer vacation as significant issues be noted.

- (c) An oral update from Professor E Peile on continuing follow-up work to the Review in the Medical School, it being noted that a further survey of MBChB students was to be carried out later in October, to assess the impact of recent changes to student support and administration structures in the Medical School.

10/05-06

Report from the Assessment Conventions Working Group

REPORTED:

That the Assessment Conventions Working Group was delaying producing detailed proposals until the outcome of the second stage of the Burgess Working Group were clear, expected to be during 2006.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A consultation document from the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement (the 'Burgess Group'), 'The UK Honours Degree: Provision of Information'; paper AQSC 7/05-06;

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the University's response to the consultation broadly welcome the proposal to abolish degree classifications and make a number of more detailed points noted at the meeting;
 - (ii) That the Chair work with Professors A Caesar and M Luntley and Mr D Wallis to draft a paper for distribution to Heads of Department in the Faculty of Arts setting out the rationale for moving towards a revised marking scale;
 - (iii) That consideration be given in due course to the implementation of any new system for assessing and recording student achievement on the MBChB programme;
- (b) A proposal that the degree classification no longer be recorded on the degree certificate, but only on the transcript.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Mr B Duggan consult the student body on the proposal, informed by examples of degree certificates and transcripts;
 - (ii) That consideration of issues around the information to be included on University transcripts be taken forward by the Chair and the Secretary with Dr Paul Greatrix.
- (c) A consultation document from the Measuring and Recording Students' Achievement (the 'Burgess Group'), 'Proposals for National Credit Arrangements for the use of Credit in Higher Education in England', paper AQSC 8/05-06.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Committee broadly welcomed the proposals, while mindful of the importance of institutional autonomy;
- (ii) That further investigations be carried out into the implications of the proposals to set down guidelines for the amount of credits gained at particular levels in qualifying for an award.

11/05-06 Review of the National Quality Assurance Framework

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 22 August 2005 received the report on the outcomes of Phase One of the joint HEFCE/Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP)/UUK Quality Assurance Framework Review.

CONSIDERED:

The report on the outcomes of Phase One of the joint HEFCE/Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP)/UUK Quality Assurance Framework Review, paper AQSC 9/05-06.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the increasingly “lighter touch” suggested by the ending of Discipline Audit Trails in Institutional Audit, the replacement of the two judgements of “broad confidence” and “limited confidence” by “confidence”, the greater focus on enhancement and the greater awareness of risk be welcomed;
- (b) That the reduction in the number of QAA auditors on the Warwick staff be noted with concern in the context of a possible Institutional Audit as early as 2006-07.

12/05-06 PSRB engagements

- (a) PSRB register

RECEIVED:

A copy of the schedule for forthcoming Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation/validation exercises, paper AQSC 10/05-06.

CONSIDERED:

Methods for enhancing the oversight of PSRB engagements by the Committee, including a more proactive role in developing institutional awareness in advance of visits/accreditation exercises, paper AQSC 11/05-06.

RESOLVED:

That the Teaching Quality team discuss PSRB engagements with departments in advance, to identify and help resolve potential areas of concern or risk, as has happened with preparations for the GMC review in Warwick Medical School.

- (b) Chemistry (Minute 103(b)/04-05 referred)

REPORTED:

That at the meeting of the Committee on 8 June 2005 it was reported that after considering a range of documents submitted by the Department of Chemistry in January 2005 the Royal Society of Chemistry had decided to renew its accreditation of the Department of Chemistry's MChem degree courses for CChem professional status, and that as a result of the same process the Royal Society of Chemistry had recognised the Department of Chemistry's BSc degrees in Chemistry; and resolved that the Department of Chemistry be congratulated on the successful outcomes of the accreditation process by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

CONSIDERED:

Correspondence between the Department of Chemistry and the Royal Society of Chemistry relating to the accreditation exercise, paper AQSC 12/05-06.

- (c) Warwick Business School

CONSIDERED:

The report from EQUIS on the accreditation visit carried out in January 2005, paper AQSC 13/05-06.

RESOLVED:

That Warwick Business School be asked to provide an update for the Committee on progress in addressing the areas identified in the report as being "below standard", particularly in the area of executive education.

13/05-06 Higher Education Academy: Consultation on Professional Standards

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 10 October 2005 considered a consultation document from the Higher Education Academy, 'A Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Student Learning in Higher Education', paper AQSC 14/05-06, and approved a University response as set out in paper SC 29/05-06 (revised) for return to the Higher Education Academy ahead of their deadline of 20 October.

14/05-06

National Teaching Fellowships

CONSIDERED:

Methods of encouraging applications from the University for National Teaching Fellowships, in the light of a paper comparing criteria for National Teaching Fellowships against criteria for the Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence and summarising past winners, paper AQSC 15/05-06.

RESOLVED:

That further consideration be given to the National Teaching Fellowship scheme following its expected overhaul and the announcement of new criteria and application processes by the Higher Education Academy.

15/05-06

Plagiarism

REPORTED:

That the e-Learning Steering Group at its meeting on 6 May 2005 recommended that an appropriate institutional location with responsibility for developing and reviewing guidance and policy on plagiarism be identified, it being noted that the primary responsibility for educating students about plagiarism, and detecting it, lies with academic departments.

(Minute 30/04-05)

CONSIDERED:

An appropriate institutional location with responsibility for developing and reviewing guidance and policy on plagiarism.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee take on responsibility for developing and reviewing guidance and policy on plagiarism.

16/05-06

Consultation on Revisions to the Benchmarks for Engineering

CONSIDERED:

A consultation document from the QAA on revisions to the Benchmarks for Engineering, paper AQSC 16/05-06, and draft University response, paper AQSC 17/05-06, it being noted that the deadline for responses is 30 October.

RESOLVED:

That the draft response be submitted to the Steering Committee for consideration.

17/05-06

QAA Strategic Plan 2006-11

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining a consultation on the QAA draft Strategic plan 2006-11, paper AQSC 18/05-06 (tabled).

RESOLVED:

That the Teaching Quality section prepare a response to the consultation broadly welcoming the QAA's Strategic plan 2006-11 and submit it to the Steering Committee for consideration.

18/05-06

Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on Wednesday 16 November 2005 in the Council Chamber.

DW/jdm, 19.10.05

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