

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meeting held on Wednesday 9 October 2013

Present: Professor J Palmowski (Chair), Professor R Napier (Deputy Chair), Professor R Aldrich, Dr C Bilton, Dr J Brassett, Ms J Cooper, Dr A Cristea, Dr A Dowd, Ms L Gill, Professor G Hartshorne, Dr J Kidd, Dr J Parkinson, Dr P Roberts, Professor D Steinberg, Professor M Wills.

Apologies: Dr R Dias, Dr A Phillips, Professor D Singh, Dr P Taylor, Dr J Vickery.

In attendance: Ms J Bell (for item 10/13-14), Dr R Fisher (for item 11/13-14), Dr E Hough (for item 12&19/13-14), Professor T Kiefer (for item 22/13-14), Mr A Malin (for item 11/13-14), Ms S Miles (for item 20/13-14), Mrs C O'Leary (for item 15/13-14), Ms M Ovens, Ms K Weir.

1/13-14 Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

That the terms of reference of the Board were as set out in paper BGS 1/13-14.

2/13-14 Membership of the Board 2013/2014

REPORTED:

That the membership of the Board for 2013/14 was as set out in paper BGS 2/13-14, with news on outstanding vacancies to follow, noting that Dr P Roberts rather than Professor R Earle would attend as one of the two members of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Arts.

3/13-14 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

- (a) That, should any members or attendees of the Board have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK;
- (b) That no conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting were reported.

4/13-14 Schedule of meetings of the Board

REPORTED:

That the Board would meet subsequently as follows during the academic year 2013-14:

21 November 2013 at 2pm in CMR 1.0, University House;
14 January 2014 at 9.30am in CMR 1.0, University House;
18 February 2014 at 9.30am in CMR 1.0, University House;
1 May 2014 at 9.30am in CMR 1.0, University House;
5 June 2014 at 2pm in CMR 1.0, University House.

5/13-14 Membership of Sub-Committees

Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee

CONSIDERED:

The election of representatives to the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee, noting that the formal membership was as follows:

- (a) The Chair of the Board as the Chair;
- (b) The Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees of the Boards of the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, Science and Social Sciences;
- (c) Four members of the Board, one from each of the Faculties:
 Faculty of Arts;
 Faculty of Medicine;
 Faculty of Science;
 Faculty of Social Sciences.

With the additional representation of the following Faculty Selectors (not Committee members) in determining awards to be made by the University, two from each Faculty:

- (d) Faculty of Arts;
 Faculty of Medicine;
 Faculty of Science;
 Faculty of Social Sciences.

RESOLVED:

That Faculty Graduate Studies Committees would nominate representatives at their next meetings and communicate these appointments to the Board.

6/13-14 Nomination for Membership of the Board of Undergraduate Studies

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of a representative of the Board to serve on the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

That Dr J Vickery had agreed to serve as the representative of the Board on the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

7/13-14 Nomination of student member on the University Research Ethics Committee

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of a student member of the Board to serve on the University Research Ethics Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Ms L Gill would serve as the student member of the Board on the University Research Ethics Committee.

8/13-14 Freedom of Information Act: Publication Scheme

REPORTED:

(a) That the University commits to publishing the minutes, agendas and non-reserved business of University bodies and committees on the University website, as part of its Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000;

(b) That members of the Board were reminded that minutes of Board meetings will be published in this way.

9/13-14 Minutes of the last meeting

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6 June 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6 June 2013 be approved.

10/13-14 Matters Arising on the Minutes

(a) Outcome of Scholarships Competition reform project (Minute 99/12-13 refers)

CONSIDERED:

(i) A paper from the Head of Student Finance setting out a proposal for a mechanism for the allocation of matched funding (paper BGS 3/13-14);

(ii) A proposed form for submitting applications for scholarships funding (paper BGS 4/13-14).

REPORTED:

(iii) That it was recognised that not all funding commitments for the forthcoming academic year would be known by the proposed deadline of 31 October of the current year, but that provision would be made for additional bids to be considered at a later stage.

- (iv) That matched funding from departmental sources would not be included in this process.

RESOLVED:

- (v) That the proposal to establish a process for the allocation of matched funding for PG studentships from a single, central fund, as set out in papers BGS 3&4/13-14, be approved in respect of studentships for the 2014-15 academic year;
- (vi) That the process would provide a useful mechanism for estimating what the University's future funding commitments may be, recognising that not all bids for external funding will be successful;
- (vii) That the process would provide further information about existing match-funding commitments, but that for future years – where new commitments will be made – the process would require further refining to ensure that decisions can be made promptly and effectively;
- (viii) That departments identify any existing matched funding commitments in respect of the 2014-15 academic year when submitting applications for funding by the deadline of 31 October 2013;
- (ix) That departments should indicate where such commitments were part of a bid for external funding that had been previously approved by the University.

- (b) Review of PGR teaching (Minute 102/12-13 refers)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the establishment of a working group to address key areas identified by the review of PGR teaching.

REPORTED:

- (i) That this matter would be considered under item 11/13-14 (a).

- (c) Regulations 37.5 & 38.9: the scope of the Preliminary Review Panel in the postgraduate appeals process (Minute 105/12-13 refers)

REPORTED:

- (ii) That, at its meeting on 6 June 2013, the Board considered a proposed amendment to the wording of Regulations 37.5 and 38.9 and resolved the following:
 - (A) That the ability for the Preliminary Review Panel to make qualitative judgements about appeals at the review stage is essential to their remit as intended by the University, noting that this avoids the unnecessary use of the Graduate Appeals Committee's resources;
 - (B) That the proposed amendment to Regulations 37.5 and 38.9 is open to too much interpretation as to when the Preliminary Review Panel would exceed the scope of its brief in making a qualitative judgement.
- (ii) That the Board recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that the proposed amendment to the wording of Regulations 37.5 and 38.9 be reviewed in order to provide the Preliminary Review Panel with clearer guidance on its remit in making qualitative judgements;
- (iii) That, following the meeting of the Board on 6 June 2013, the proposed amendment to the wording of Regulations 37.5 and 38.9 was reviewed and further amended by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for consideration by the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies;
- (iv) That the Chairs of the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies took Chair's action to approve the amended wording for Regulations 37.5 and 38.9, as follows:

“Preliminary review panels will consider whether an appellant has brought his or her appeal within the terms and conditions set out in [*insert relevant regulation subsection*] above and may also consider the substance and merits of the case and whether the factors advanced by the appellant would have had relevance at the time of the examinations, in arriving their determinations.”
- (v) That this amendment was approved by Senate on 3 July 2013.

11/13-14 Progress toward Strategy Targets and Planning Business for 2013/2014

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A paper from the Chair setting out the strategic priorities of the Board over the coming year (paper BGS 5/13-14).

REPORTED (by Professor D Steinberg):

- (i) That research students requiring extensions to their

registration due to health conditions are disadvantaged by not being permitted to take periods of temporary withdrawal during their extension year, noting that as a result they are recorded by the University as 'non-submitters'.

RESOLVED:

- (ii) That the University's policy regarding temporary withdrawal for research students be considered at the next meeting of the Board, noting that there may be an advantage to monitoring progress more closely at earlier stages of students' careers, and allowing more flexibility in the extension year;
- (iii) That Working Groups be established to consider key areas of postgraduate provision across the University, as set out in paper BGS 5/13-14, noting that Chairs of Faculty Graduate Studies Committees would be asked to lead on these.

CONSIDERED:

- (b) A paper from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) and the Postgraduate Admissions Service Manager on recruitment targets (paper BGS 6/13-14);

REPORTED:

That current data indicates an upward trajectory in terms of application and offer numbers, but that this is not at the current rate expected to reach the target of doubling PGR numbers by 2015-16;

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Board remained supportive of the earlier deadline established for the PGR Scholarships Competition, noting that evidence indicates that this has resulted in a higher level of applications and a better rate of conversion;
- (ii) That it was not expected that bringing the deadline forward any further would increase the conversion rate for the best students, as they might accept an offer from Warwick pending the outcome of other applications;
- (iii) That consideration should be given to attracting to Warwick high-quality students who are in receipt of externally-funded scholarships.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) A paper from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) and the Postgraduate Admissions Service Manager on admissions processes (paper BGS 7/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the Board supported a target of a 21-day turnaround time for decisions to be reached by departments in respect of postgraduate taught student applications, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- (e) That the Chair would write to departments and take further steps to ensure implementation of the target.

12/13-14

Chair's Business

(a) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2013

RECEIVED:

- (i) A detailed analysis of Warwick PTES 2013 results (paper BGS 8/13-14);
- (ii) Appendix 1: detailed Warwick PTES 2013 results with sector and Russell Group aggregate results benchmark (paper BGS 9/13-14);
- (iii) Appendix 2: students reporting a disability (paper BGS 10/13-14);
- (iv) Appendix 3: motivations to study at Postgraduate level (paper BGS 11/13-14).

REPORTED:

That there had been a higher response rate to the PTES survey than in previous years, reaching 33.4%.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair would arrange to meet with Heads of Departments to analyse individual results.

(b) Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2013

RECEIVED:

- (i) A detailed analysis of Warwick PRES 2013 results (paper BGS 12/13-14);
- (ii) Appendix 1: detailed Warwick PRES 2013 results with sector and Russell Group aggregate results benchmark (paper BGS 13/13-14).

RESOLVED:

That Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees consider the benefit of assigning a Personal Tutor to research students to act as an additional source of support to the supervisor, noting that

feedback will be collected at the next meeting the Board.

- (b) Graduate School update.

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Graduate School would be relocating to Senate House from the start of term two, noting that this would enable closer contact with postgraduate students through its proximity with the Postgraduate Hub;
- (ii) That further news on the outcome of the Graduate School Review would be made available to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

13/13-14 Postgraduate Forum and the Students' Union

REPORTED (by the Postgraduate Officer):

- (a) That the Postgraduate Association had been granted greater resources for this academic year and would be developing a dedicated postgraduate social space at the Students' Union;
- (b) That there had been an increase in student society membership and applications for Student Council positions amongst postgraduate students, noting that further data about participation was expected to become available shortly, which would help to identify the reasons for the increased engagement.

14/13-14 PGT Scholarships

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) proposing a mechanism for the allocation of PGT scholarships (paper BGS 14/13-14).

RESOLVED:

That the Board was supportive of a light-touch mechanism for the allocation of PGT scholarships, as proposed, and that further details of the process and numbers of expected applicants be circulated to Chairs of Graduate Studies Committees.

15/13-14 Authorised Absence

CONSIDERED:

- (b) A paper from the Head of Immigration Services (International Office) proposing the establishment of a policy allowing Tier 4 Postgraduate Taught students to take periods of 'authorised absence' (paper BGS 15/13-14);
- (b) Appendix 1: Table outlining the possible situations in which 'authorised absence' may be used (paper BGS 16/13-14);

- (c) Appendix 2: Suggested process for approving a period of 'authorised absence' (paper BGS 17/13-14);
- (d) Appendix 3: Concerns raised by Student Records about 'authorised absence' being applied to Postgraduate Taught students and responses (paper BGS 18/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the Board was supportive of the proposal to permit postgraduate taught students to be granted up to six weeks 'authorised absence' in an academic year;
- (f) That departments be asked to identify an appropriate academic colleague who would have responsibility for approving periods of authorised absence for postgraduate taught students, noting that it will be the department's responsibility to ensure that the absence will not jeopardise the student's academic progress, as a period of authorised absence would not, in itself, be considered grounds for a later extension;
- (g) That an 'authorised absence' request form be adopted for use by departments to send requests for periods of 'authorised absence' to either the Student Records team or the Graduate School, for postgraduate taught and research students respectively;
- (h) That consideration should be given to a mechanism for withdrawing students who did not return from authorised absence when expected.

16/13-14

Aligning policy on hard and electronic copies of theses

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair regarding the alignment of policy on hard and electronic copies of theses (paper BGS 19/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Board was supportive of the proposal to revisit the policy on access to the hard and electronic copies of theses, noting that commercial confidentiality and third-party copyright issues should in principle be grounds for agreeing an embargo without requiring the approval of the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies;
- (b) That a standard option should exist which includes some level of embargo of the hard copy.
- (c) That guidelines about the likely grounds for a non-standard level of embargo being approved should be made available via the Graduate School;
- (d) That a revised paper proposing an embargo policy should be developed and brought to the November meeting of the Board.

17/13-14

Early submission of theses

REPORTED:

- (a) That where a postgraduate research student wishes to submit their thesis before their original end date, the current process requires them to complete a form which is signed by both their supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies, before being considered for final approval by the Chair of the Board;
- (b) That by signing the relevant form, students acknowledge that early submission of their thesis will not release them from their liability to pay the full course fees due;
- (c) That the Board was asked to consider whether this final stage of approval by the Chair was necessary, given the scrutiny already applied by the student's supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

That applications for the early submission of research theses would no longer require the scrutiny and approval of the Chair of the Board, provided that the application has the support of the student's supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

18/13-14

Allocation of supervisors to Postgraduate Taught students

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) identifying best practice for Postgraduate supervision allocation (paper BGS 20/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the wording outlining best practice for the allocation of supervisors of postgraduate taught student dissertations, as contained in paper BGS 20/13-14 and set out below, be circulated for the attention of departments for inclusion in their student handbooks, noting that some adjustments may be required (e.g. any local terminology for *Dissertation Advisor*):

"The Dissertation Advisor

Following submission of a provisional dissertation topic, you will be allocated a member of staff who will act as dissertation advisor.

The advisor assists with the formulation of the title and dissertation plan. Dissertation advisors are spread evenly across all academic staff in [*department*] so that you will share your advisor with only a few other students.

It is Department policy that any member of staff is capable of

advising on any MA/MSc dissertation no matter what the topic. This is because the design and completion of an MA/MSc dissertation requires a mixture of skills that are both generic and specific. Reallocation of advisor is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Dissertation advisors do not read drafts or offer specific suggestions on reading. They advise on the "overall structure" of the dissertation.

Your dissertation advisor may not be available throughout the whole Summer Vacation so we advise that you find out when and how to contact them if you require assistance at this time."

- (b) That the Graduate School circulate some guidance to departments on what would be considered 'exceptional circumstances' for the purposes of considering requests for the reallocation of supervisors.

19/13-14 Continuation of Registration Committees

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Postgraduate Student Development Officer (Graduate School) proposing amendments to Regulation 36 Governing Student Registration, Attendance and Progress, relating to the provisions for the administration of Continuation of Registration Committees (paper BGS 21/13-14).

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

That the proposed amendment to the wording of Regulation 36 Governing Student Registration, Attendance and Progress, as set out in paper BGS 21/13-14, be approved.

20/13-14 Access to University facilities for temporarily withdrawn/resit students

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Student Records) proposing an amendment to Regulation 36.1.7 allowing students who are temporarily withdrawn or undertaking resit examinations to retain access to University IT and library facilities (paper BGS 22/13-14).

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

That the proposed amendment to the wording of Regulation 36.1.7 allowing students who are temporarily withdrawn or undertaking resit examinations to retain access to University IT and library facilities, as set out in paper BGS 22/13-14, be approved.

21/13-14 Monash/Warwick Join PhD

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) outlining a potential change to Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students

registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD (paper BGS 23/13-14).

REPORTED:

That the decision to discontinue a student's registration on the PhD and transfer them to either an MPhil or appropriate Masters degree by Research would be made via a joint end of first year review process, involving colleagues from both institutions.

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

That the proposal to amend Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD only, as set out in paper BGS 23/13-14, be approved, noting

- (i) That it was expected to be unlikely that the provision would be invoked, since the students on this programme are expected to be of high quality;
- (ii) That the change was required in order to meet Australian regulatory requirements.

22/13-14

New course proposal

Warwick Business School

MSc in Human Resource Management & Employment Relations

CONSIDERED:

A proposal to restructure the 'MA in Industrial Relations & Managing Human Resources' course and re-name this 'MSc in Human Resource Management & Employment Relations', and to introduce a part-time variant to the course, as set out in paper BGS 24/13-14.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved in principle, noting that the part-time variant of the course would only proceed subject to approval of Warwick Business School's London Business Plan proposal.

23/13-14

Chair's Action

RECEIVED:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 25/13-14), as follows:

(a) Faculty of Medicine

MSc in Medical Leadership

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 28 January 2013, the Graduate Studies

Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine recommended that a proposal requesting that the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma within this degree framework are also approved as entry qualifications, as set out in Paper GSCFM 22/12-13, be approved;

- (ii) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, the Board considered the proposal requesting that the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma within this degree framework are also approved as entry qualifications, and resolved that the proposal be approved, subject to receipt of separate learning outcomes for the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma;
- (iii) That separate learning outcomes for the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma have subsequently been received, and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve the proposal requesting that the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma within this degree framework are also approved as entry qualifications.

(b) Faculty of Arts

Centre for Cultural Policy Studies

MA Arts, Enterprise and Development

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 14 May 2013, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts recommended that a proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA Arts, Enterprise and Development', as set out in paper AGSC.69/12-13, be approved;
- (ii) That, at its meeting on 6 June 2013, the Board considered the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA Arts, Enterprise and Development', as set out in paper AGSC.69/12-13, and resolved that the proposal be approved, subject to confirmation that the proposal has been discussed with Warwick Business School;
- (iii) That Warwick Business School has confirmed that the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA Arts, Enterprise and Development' would not conflict with their existing course provision;
- (iv) That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve the introduction of the 'MA Arts, Enterprise and Development' course.

(c) Faculty of Social Sciences

(i) Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies

(A) PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies

REPORTED:

- (1) That, at its meeting on 14 May 2013, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences recommended that the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies', as set out in papers GFSS.157(a-b)/12-13, be approved, subject to the completion of the course approval form Section 11;
- (2) That, at its meeting on 6 June 2013, the Board considered the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies', as set out in papers GFSS.157(a-b)/12-13, and resolved that the proposal be approved, subject to the condition set by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences;
- (3) That the amended course approval form has been received and the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee for the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve the introduction of a new course entitled 'PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies';
- (4) That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has subsequently taken action to approve to approve the introduction of a new course entitled 'PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies'.

(B) MA Digital Media and Culture

REPORTED:

- (1) That, at its meeting on 2 May 2013, the Board considered the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA Digital Media and Culture', as set out in papers GFSS 103(a-h)/12-13, and resolved that the proposal be approved, subject to clarification of the module diet for the course and the options that will be available to students, and the receipt of signed copies of the finalised course proposal paperwork;
- (2) That clarification of the module diet for the course and the options that will be available to students and signed copies of the finalised course proposal paperwork have been received, and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve to approve the introduction of a new course entitled 'MA Digital Media and Culture'.

(ii) Centre for Lifelong Learning

MA in Coaching

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 29 January 2013, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences recommended that the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA in Coaching', as set out in papers GFSS 71(a-m)/12-13, be approved;
- (b) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, the Board considered the proposal to introduce a new course entitled 'MA in Coaching', as set out in papers GFSS 71(a-m)/12-13, and resolved that the proposal be approved, subject to clarification of the learning outcomes for the PG Diploma and PG Certificate, and confirmation that the PG Certificate and PG Diploma are awarded as a result of academic fail, rather than as a result of the student opting to exit the course early;
- (c) That clarification of the learning outcomes for the PG Diploma and PG Certificate, and confirmation that the PG Certificate and PG Diploma are awarded as a result of academic fail, rather than as a result of the student opting to exit the course early, has subsequently been received, and that the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve the introduction of a new course entitled 'MA in Coaching'.

(iii) Institute of Education

Discontinuation of PG courses

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf, has taken action to approve the discontinuation of PG courses in preparation for the creation of the Centre for Professional Education and the Centre for Education Studies.

24/13/14

Warwick Business School

MSc in Police Leadership and Management

CONSIDERED:

A request from Warwick Business School to give exemption to participants in the MSc in Police Leadership and Management from the requirement to provide references as part of their application to the programme.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved.