

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

BOARD OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Undergraduate Studies held on Wednesday 1st June 2005.

Present: Professor M Whitby (in the Chair), Dr P Ferdinand, Dr S Gardner, Dr G Martin, Professor A McFarlane, Mr K Mohaddes, Dr M Neary, Professor L Paterson, Dr J Robinson, Professor J Treglown,

Apologies: Dr T Drewello.

In Attendance: Dr J Taylor, Mr B Duggan, Mrs R Wooldridge-Smith (for item under minute 31(b)/04-05).

28-29/04-05 Reserved Items

Please see separate minutes for academic members of the Board only.

30/04-05. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2005 be approved.

31/04-05 Matters Arising on the Minutes

(a) Progress of Board Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Senate, at its meeting on 9th March 2005, had received the reports and approved the recommendations of the Board under the following minutes:

16(c) / 04-05 New Courses of Study
and 26/04-05

27/04-05 Discontinued Courses of Study

- (ii) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, at its meeting on 23 February 2005, had approved the recommendations of the Board under the following minute:

24/04-05 Undergraduate Annual Course Review

- (b) Timetabled Careers Advice for First-year Undergraduates (minute 8(g)/04-05 refers).

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director and Deputy Director of the Careers Service (paper BUGS 39/04-05), together with an oral report from the Director.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Board recognised the need for departments to accept a higher profile for issues relating to student employability and supported the work of the Careers Service in arranging careers advisers' access to timetabled lecture slots, for at least 20 minutes if a full hour could not be released, it being noted that recent Wednesday term starts had caused temporary difficulties with such access in some cases;
- (ii) That the Careers Service be encouraged to investigate arranging careers advisers' access to seminars where possible as an alternative to lecture slots;
- (iii) That the Board supported proposal of the Careers Service that it should systematically gather and ensure the appropriate publication of information on individual departments' views on whether and when students on their courses should be permitted to take time out from their course to undertake a work placement, it being noted that factors such as a student's academic attainment and the study-relatedness of the proposed work experience would be relevant factors that departments may wish to take account of;
- (iv) That the Careers Service be asked to investigate:
 - (A) available research on student work experience
 - (B) other universities' policies in relation to student work placements
 - (C) the student demand for work experienceand to disseminate the results of these investigations to academic departments;
- (v) That the Careers Service be encouraged to consider an appropriate terminology for student work-based experience or learning which:
 - (A) was distinct from the current label of "temporary withdrawal" often currently used to cover such activity but the perceived pejorative overtones of which may possibly deter some students from exploiting opportunities;

(B) was distinct from the more formalised provision of “intercalated years” in current degree curricula,

with a view to such work-based experience or learning being potentially available to students in all departments;

- (vi) That the Careers Service be asked to raise at the Placement Co-ordinators’ Annual Forum in July the proposal that academic departments should share information on the extent of support provided by them to students on formal intercalated years out, with a view to clarifying what is expected of departments in this regard;
- (vii) That the Director of the Careers Service be asked to take forward a review of SITS coding of students on work placements and associated nomenclature, in consultation with the relevant officers in the Academic Office Planning and Finance Sections and Undergraduate Office, in order to achieve the most consistent and appropriate coding conventions in the light of the aim referred to under (v) above;
- (viii) That in principle the Board would support the retention of IT and Library access rights by students undertaking work experience and that the Director of the Careers Service be asked to pursue this issue with IT Services, the Library and the Planning Section of the Academic Office and to consider any necessary amendment to Regulation 33 in the light of these discussions.

(c) Publication of the Summer Examination Timetable (minute 23/04-05 refers).

RECEIVED:

Copies of memoranda from the Chair of the Board to Chairs of Departments in the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies and in the Faculty of Science following the last meeting of the Board (paper BUGS 40/04-05);

CONSIDERED:

Responses from departments to the memoranda referred to above (paper BUGS 41/04-05).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Board recognised there would be a strong minority disadvantage in terms of constrained student option choice in the Faculty of Science as a result of implementing the Students’ Union proposal for earlier examination timetable publication and, in the light of the opposition expressed on this basis by the School of Engineering, the Mathematics Institute and the Departments of Computer Science and Statistics, and

the concerns also expressed by the Departments of Biological Sciences and Physics, the Warwick Business School and the Academic Office, the Students' Union proposal be not approved, without further discussions with students in the affected departments;

- (ii) That, as an alternative means of providing students with earlier information about examination dates, the Academic Office would make available to student access via the Office website the provisional May/June examination timetable currently circulated to academic departments for their comment at the end of the Spring Term, it being noted that, while this was subject to change, under current conditions many students were likely to find their examination dates unchanged or little changed between the provisional and final versions of the timetable;
- (iii) That the posting of the provisional timetable as under (ii) above be accompanied by a statement on the Academic Office website emphasizing:
 - (A) that the dates of individual papers were subject to change and were not guaranteed in any way;
 - (B) that no requests from students to change examination dates in the provisional timetable would be considered;
 - (C) that the University would accept no responsibility for any personal arrangements any student may make on the basis of the provisional dates;
- (iv) That student access to the provisional May/June examination timetable as under (ii) above be introduced on a trial basis in 2005/6 for a period of up to three years.

32/04-05 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Board, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of the Senate Steering Committee, had approved a request from the School of Engineering to permit September resits for the School's second-year undergraduate students for 2005 only, on the basis of changes arising from revision of the Engineering curriculum, as set out in paper BUGS 42/04-05.
- (b) That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Board, had approved a proposal from the Department of English that the seen examination paper EN3010 Shakespeare and Selected Dramatists of his Time be released to candidates 4 hours and 40 minutes before the start of the examination session.

33/04-05 Chair's Business

Part-time variants of full-time undergraduate degrees and "reasonable adjustment" under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part 4.

REPORTED:

That, in response to a query raised with the Chair by the Senior Tutor, the Academic Office had clarified that "reasonable adjustment" in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act did not require the University formally to introduce part-time variants of all its full-time undergraduate degree courses but rather that consideration would need to be given on an individual basis to a request from an applicant for a full-time course to take the whole or part of the course on a part-time basis on the grounds of a specific disability.

34/04-05 New Courses of Study

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A proposal from the Mercia Institute of Enterprise to introduce a new course, 'PT Degree in Enterprise and the Business Environment' supplied with a covering memo (papers UFSS 65(a-d)/04-05 and papers BUGS 45/04-05 and BUGS 46/04-05 tabled at the meeting), it being noted that this proposal has been approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting on 4 May 2005.
- (b) A proposal from the Centre for Lifelong Learning for a new Open Studies Certificate/Advanced Diploma in Person-centred Supervision of Counsellors and Psychotherapists as set out in paper BUGS 43/04-05 [comprising papers UFSS 12/04-05, UFSS 13/04/05 (revised), UFSS 14/04/05 (revised), UFSS 15/04/05 (revised) and UFSS 16/04-05], it being note that this proposal has been approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting on 13 October 2004.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That, with regard to the proposed Part-time BA in Enterprise and the Business Environment, the Chair be asked to raise with the Director of the Mercia Institute of Enterprise and the Administrative Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning the question of the incorporation of Warwick Skills Certificate (WSC) modules as credit-bearing elements in the degree course, it being the understanding of members of the Board that the WSC was originally conceived as an extra-curricular provision that would not contribute credit to students' degree courses;
- (d) That, following the consultation requested under (c) above, the Chair be asked either to take Chair's action to allow the degree course proposal to go forward or to bring the matter back to the Board if he felt there were substantive issues requiring further discussion;

RECOMMENDED:

- (e) That the proposal from the Centre for Lifelong Learning for a new Open Studies Certificate/Advanced Diploma in Person-centred Supervision of Counsellors and Psychotherapists as set out in paper BUGS 43/ 04-05 [comprising papers UFSS 12/04-05, UFSS 13/04/05 (revised), UFSS 14/04/05 (revised), UFSS 15/04/05 (revised) and UFSS 16/04-05] be approved (it being noted that the originally-envisaged start date of January 2005 cited in paper UFSS 12/04-05 should be amended to January 2006).

35/04-05 Method of Assessment for Module PO206 Politics in the United Kingdom

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies for the assessment method for the module PO206 Politics in the United Kingdom to be revised to include a work placement assessment as set out in paper UFSS 82/04-05 (revised), it being noted that this proposal has been approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies at its meeting on 4 May 2005, subject to a revision of the supervisory methods in place to check student attendance on the placement.

RECOMMENDED:

That the proposal as set out in paper UFSS 82/04-05 be approved.

36/04-05 Focus Group Research with Medical Students

RECEIVED:

A report of focus group research with medical students (paper BUGS 44/04-05).

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That a new survey of medical students' views had now been conducted and would come before the Board in due course.

37/04-05 Periodic Reviews of Degrees

CONSIDERED:

Periodic reviews of undergraduate degrees in the Department of Economics, and the Centre for English Language Teacher Education and of the Part-time and 2+2 BA degrees within the Centre for Lifelong Learning (papers BFSS 31a/04-05, BFSS 32a/04-05 and BFSS33a/04-05).

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That the Periodic Review of undergraduate degrees in the Department of Economics be approved, subject to additional evidence being provided by the Department that it had allayed the concerns expressed by its SSLCs concerning Graduate Teaching Assistants;
- (b) That the Periodic Review of undergraduate degrees in the Centre for

English Language Teacher Education be approved, it being noted that it was the view of the Board that commendations such as those made by the Periodic Review Panel in this case should appear both in the HERO report summary and in Annual Course Review summaries;

- (c) That the Periodic Review of the Part-time and 2+2 BA degrees be approved, it being noted that:
- (i) the Board would wish to highlight to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee the Periodic Review report's recommendation (vi) to the University regarding a consistent approach to student non-attendance at seminars;
 - (ii) the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies had resolved to refer to the Registrar the recommendations to the University not related to the ASQC or the Senate.

38/04-05 Amendments to Regulation 8.10 Governing the MBChB Degree

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Leicester-Warwick Medical School for amendments to Regulation 8.10 (Regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MB, ChB) (4 and 5 year) (paper BUGS 47/04-05, tabled at the meeting).

RECOMMENDED:

That the proposed amendments set out in paper BUGS 47/04-05 be approved, subject to the Chair and Secretary satisfying themselves regarding all the detail of the amendments set out in the paper.

39/04-05 Proposed Restructured Bachelor's Degree Course in Philosophy and Psychology

REPORTED:

That, in his capacity as Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies, Dr Ferdinand had just been sent proposals from the Departments of Philosophy and Psychology to restructure the current BA/BSc degrees in Philosophy & Psychology and Psychology & Psychology to be effective from the academic year 2005/06.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals be circulated to members of the Board with a request that members convey any comments they may have to the Chair, with a view to the Chair taking action being taken to approve them on behalf of the Board.