

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
WARWICK INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION PROGRAMME
BOARD OF STUDIES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Warwick International Foundation Programme Board of Studies held on 4 July 2014.

Present: Prof. C Hughes (Chair), Dr D Britnell, Dr T McCrisken, Dr K Moffat, Dr M Skinner, Ms L Clarke, Ms S Starley, Ms A Turner, Dr M Joy, Mr D Fowers, Mr I Pemberton, Mr D Bachu, Prof. P Corvi, Prof. S Jacka, Ms J Whitehouse (from item 30/2013-14 (c))

Apologies: Mr J Kennedy Ms W Chan, Dr G Sharpling

In attendance: Ms H Johnson, Mr T Such, Ms A Durham, Dr S Liu

28/2013-14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Warwick International Foundation Programme Board of Studies held on 28 January 2014 be approved.

29/2013-14 Matters Arising on the Minutes

(a) Post-programme Scholarships (minute 15/2013-14 (iv) referred).

REPORTED: (by Mr T Such, Warwick IFP Manager)

- (i) That there is little finance available for post-programme scholarships, and if the foundation programme over-recruits for the 2014-15 academic year by more than 15 students, then money may become available for a limited number of post-programme scholarships.
- (ii) Scholarships are available for the foundation programme itself and these have served to generate increased interest, as is likely to be the case if post-programme scholarships were possible – although the lack of post-programme scholarships is unlikely to impact negatively on recruitment.

(b) IT Module Review (minute 15/2013-14 (v) referred)

REPORTED: (by Dr M Joy, Internal Moderator for IT module)

That a review of the IT module has started and involves both bringing the module up to date and also to bring it in line with the new A-Level syllabus. The module should be revised by September 2014.

(c) Access to University (minute 16/2013-14 referred)

REPORTED: (by Mr T Such)

That there is still some difficulty in gaining external access/membership to the university for college staff, although the aim is for this to be resolved and membership to be in place by September 2014.

30/2013-14 2014-15 Recruitment Cycle

RECEIVED:

An oral report and presentation from Mr T Such on the current state of recruitment for the 2014-15 academic year.

REPORTED:

- (a) That the current numbers look positive and are better than the previous recruitment cycle and although there has been some increase in diversity, with countries such as Thailand and Nigeria increasing, overall, China and Hong Kong still make up 64% of the applications.
- (b) This is the first year of recruitment since the rebranding of the programme and has included new interactions with students such as e-Newsletters, which have seen around 50% average open rate.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) Whether an in-country delivery of the programme would be an option, as the increasingly competitive market place already sees competitors including in-country delivery of foundation programmes, as well as an increasing number of international schools offering International Baccalaureate and A-Level.
- (d) Whether there are any curriculum areas that would be of significant interest to prospective students.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That an in-country delivery of the programme had already been tried in Hong Kong in previous years and that this is not an option to be reconsidered unless with a very good reason, as UK delivery of programme is what works best and adds extra value to the programme.
- (f) Rather than new curriculum areas, the best option for increasing interest in the programme would be optionality for the courses, which will be developed by Mr T Such over the next year.

31/2013-14 College End of Year Reports

(a) Stratford-upon-Avon College

RECEIVED:

An end-of-year report from Stratford-upon-Avon College about the 2013-14 academic year.

REPORTED: (by Mr D Bachu, Stratford-upon-Avon Programme Leader - International)

- (i) The results were very strong in both Business Studies and Social Science courses, including improvements in English which can be explained by improved materials, an increase in one-to-one opportunities with teachers and the differentiation/streaming.
- (ii) Extracurricular activities this year have included trips to Bath, Cadbury World and Alton Towers. There have also been opportunities for integrating with the local community through volunteering at the leisure centre and events at local church.
- (iii) The Business Enterprise activity which relates to Business Studies coursework has been the most successful to date, with students raising over £2500.
- (iv) That two foundation programme students received awards at the Stratford-upon-Avon end of year award ceremony for their excellent achievements.
- (v) The college is currently working on:
 - (A) Developing an Accounting and Finance module for the Business Studies programme.
 - (B) The introduction of the new Politics module for 2014
 - (C) Encouraging staff to all use electronic marking
 - (D) Maintaining a flexible approach to the English and Study Skills component of the course to reflect students' language ability.
 - (E) Stretching the top marks for students to include feedback on technicalities such as referencing.

- (vi) There have been the following staff changes made:
- Jackie Whitehouse – Director of Faculty International, Professional and Academic Studies
 - Dave Fowers – Head of International Department
 - Deepak Bachu – Programme Leader
 - Trista Huang – Student Administrative Coordinator
 - Birgit Ahrendt – Accommodation Officer

(b) Warwickshire College

RECEIVED:

An end-of-year report from Warwickshire College about the 2013-14 academic year (WarwickIFP 24/2013-14).

REPORTED: (by Ms A Turner and Ms L Clarke, tutors at Warwickshire college)

- (i) Students have become more integrated in to the college, joining college sports team not just for foundation students.
- (ii) Trips have taken place for all groups and have been related to the courses.
- (iii) Particular student achievements include a student being accepted to Law at London School of Economics and a student receiving a full scholarship for Law at King's College, London.
- (iv) The Maths and Economics course has seen a high calibre of students, with a success rate of 91% and an offer for one student from Cambridge University.
- (v) Applications to Oxbridge were difficult to manage this year and earlier identification of these students should be implemented to assist in this process. Mr T Such reported that the college should receive additional information from IFP Team for these students in future.
- (vi) Science and Engineering has increased substantially and this year a greater number of students selected the IT module over Economics. Additional workshops have already been scheduled for 2014/15 to assist those who struggle with mathematics component.
- (vii) The introduction of sign-in sheets for tests and examinations has been proven to work well and can be used for immigration purposes to record attendance.
- (viii) Only staff change has been the addition of Ms Susanne Cotton, the Warwick IFP manager at Warwickshire College, whose role will be vital for communication, quality and consistency.

32/2013-14 Warwick HEFP Departure Questionnaire

RECEIVED:

The results of the 2013-14 HEFP Departure Questionnaire.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) That there have been 260 responses to the questionnaire this year and the majority is very positive, although qualitative feedback more revealing.
- (b) There are themes amongst the feedback; positives include staff support and intercultural nature of the programme, whilst negatives include issues with teaching staff and teaching quality.
- (c) 11% of the respondents would not recommend the programme to a friend and this number is much higher than would be desired.
- (d) That the college should ensure that they communicate improvements to students further, as students need to be told that there has been a response to their feedback.
- (e) That the quality of the programme does not just relate to the teaching, but also to the extra-curricular activities in place to enhance students' learning and to create a sense of belonging.
- (f) Both colleges will be undertaking a self-assessment and the results of the questionnaire should feed into this – colleges would find it beneficial to receive the feedback specific to their programmes.

RESOLVED:

- (g) Colleges to both bring an Action Plan addressing the departure questionnaire to the next Board of Studies, as a result of their self-assessment processes.

33/2013-14 Admissions

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Whether the current policy of accepting AS/A-Level Candidates and International Baccalaureate candidates remains appropriate and if the offer should be raised from three C grades or AAB.
- (b) Law has a lot of students from Singapore who have not achieved these grades and this change would mean that a lot of these students would be lost.
- (c) There is currently an issue with AS/A-Level and IB candidates receiving the guaranteed offers for progression to the University of Warwick which has proved to be difficult to manage.

- (d) Some departments are happy to look at IFP results and will specify minimum attainments to ensure high quality students progress, whereas others will still consider previous studies.

RESOLVED:

- (e) The offer for AS/A-Level students should remain at grade Cs.
- (f) Guaranteed offer should be for all students and the Mathematics and Statistics departments will work to confirm with admissions tutors that students with grade A in A-Level Maths should receive the guaranteed conditional offer.

34/2013-14 Examination Results

RECEIVED:

- (a) The Minutes and recommended results of the Business Studies HEFP Examination Board.
- (b) The Minutes and recommended results of the Social Science HEFP Examination Board.
- (c) The Minutes and recommended results of the Maths & Economics HEFP Examination Board.
- (d) The Minutes and recommended results of the Science & Engineering HEFP Examination Board.
- (e) The Minutes and recommended results of the Law HEFP Examination Board.
- (f) The Minutes of the English and Study Skills Examination Board.

CONSIDERED:

- (g) Whether the boards should receive results to two decimal places or whether final, rounded grades are more appropriate.
- (h) That special circumstances should be discussed at a 'pre-board' meeting and that the exam board should receive the outcome of this earlier board in cases of extenuating circumstances.
- (i) External examiners noted that there was often limited evidence of second marking and mark changes were not always explained.

RESOLVED:

- (j) The examination board should only see marks that have already been rounded to whole numbers.
- (k) That the examination conventions should include guidelines for special circumstances.
- (l) Caution should be taken with transcripts in order to avoid mistakes and a full audit trail should be clearly visible.

35/2013-14 Examination Conventions

RECEIVED:

Draft examination conventions as drafted by the IFP Governance and Administration working party established following the meeting of the Warwick IFP Board of Studies on 28 January 2014.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) That if exam boards are only presented with whole numbers, the issue with borderline students would be resolved.
- (b) The conventions that are being employed at both colleges regarding resubmissions and late penalties.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the conventions should provide further clarity regarding issues such as resubmission procedures, late penalties, as well as the extenuating circumstances.

36/2013-14 Grade Boundaries

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Recommendations made from each Warwick IFP Examination board regarding the introduction of a new grading scale.
- (b) Whether the new grading scale should be employed and, if so, the timeframe for doing so.
- (c) Whether the grading scale was designed to reduce the number of distinctions or whether grading is already appropriate and only numerical marks would be changed.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That all examination boards are happy for the new grading scale to be implemented.
- (e) The grading guidelines should be implemented for September 2014.
- (f) That the new guidelines are not being used to limit the number of distinctions, but bring the boundaries in line with standard university boundaries, which should clarify things for admissions tutors.

37/2013-14 Programme Review

RECEIVED:

A draft timeline for the review of the Warwick IFP course in accordance with the terms on the current contractual agreement

between the University of Warwick and both Stratford-upon-Avon College and Warwickshire College.

REPORTED:

- (a) That the draft is open for discussion from both colleges and there are specific areas for update that the colleges can comment on.
- (b) An external to the University of Warwick will also be reviewing the programme.
- (c) Working Parties are scheduled to take place in November 2014 and that progress reports following these meetings would be expected at later Board meetings.

38/2013-14 Any Other Business

- (a) The Chair accepted the resignation of Ms. S Starley and thanked her for her long-standing contribution to both the course and the Board.