

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 6 June 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor M Finn,  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor M Taylor.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office), University Librarian (for item 666/10-11), Director of Research Support Services (for item 662/10-11), Head of Business Relations (Research Support Services) (for item 662/10-11), Deputy Academic Registrar (for item 667/10-11).

658/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2011 be approved.

659/10-11 EPSRC Framework (minute 638/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the EPSRC confirming that the University would no longer be in the EPSRC Framework grouping of 12 universities (SC.472/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research)

(a) That although the decision was disappointing, the University was not precluded from regaining its place in the EPSRC Framework at some point in the future.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science)

(b) That the news reflected Warwick's relative size but that, if normalized by FTE, it may be that the University performed well in comparison with competitor institutions.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(c) That the University had asked the EPSRC for clarification on the success rate figure of 28.5% as it did not appear to be consistent with other data provided by the EPSRC.

660/10-11 HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committees (minute 637/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That Dr Paul Taylor, Co-Director of IATL, had been nominated for membership on the HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committee for Teaching, Quality and the Student Experience.

661/10-11 Wolfson Neurology Initiative Research Proposal (minute 551/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

That the University's research proposal for a Wolfson Institute of Neurotechnology had not been successful.

662/10-11 Technology and Innovation Centres

RECEIVED:

A summary of the Government's response to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee's Second report of Session 2010-12 on Technology and Innovation Centres (TICs) (SC.465/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Business Relations (Research Support Services))

(a) That a total of six TICs would be established in the first phase of the programme, noting that the following three had already been established:

- (i) High Value Manufacturing, in which WMG is a partner
- (ii) Cell therapy
- (iii) Offshore energy

(b) That the remaining three TICs would be selected from the following ten candidate areas:

- (i) Complex systems
- (ii) Digital media / creative industries
- (iii) Future cities
- (iv) Future internet systems
- (v) Photonics
- (vi) Resource efficiency
- (vii) Sensor systems
- (viii) Smart grids and distributions
- (ix) Space
- (x) Transport systems and integration

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

(c) That to date the University had been focused on the Coventry and Warwickshire region when exploring bids for TICs, and consideration needed to be given to whether engagement should be with the broader West Midlands area.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(d) That there remained considerable uncertainty about how TICs would operate in practice, for example how the 'hubs' would connect with the 'spokes'.

(by the Finance Director)

(e) That it was proposed that the Technology Strategy Board would create a company to undertake contracting, but beyond this future arrangements remained unclear.

663/10-11 Tier 4 English Language Visa Requirements

RECEIVED:

An email from the Chief Executive of Universities UK, with a letter from the Minister for Immigration regarding recent developments in the UKBA's Tier 4 English Language visa requirements (SC.478/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Access, Widening Participation and Development)

(a) That she would discuss with the Academic Registrar some issues arising from the paper that had been raised at the recent meeting of the International Committee.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

(b) That it was unclear what provision there would be for international students with disabilities in undertaking the English Language tests.

664/10-11 Mainstream ITT Funding and Allocations 2011-12

RECEIVED:

An email from the Head of ITT Funding Delivery at the TDA, confirming the University's funding and allocations for mainstream ITT provision for 2011/12 (SC.474/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar confirm whether the funding and allocations for mainstream ITT provision for 2011/12 as set out in paper SC.474/10-11 were in line with current planning assumptions.

665/10-11 Funding Announcement on Postgraduate Professional Development Programmes

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Director of Funding and Market Management at the TDA, with provisional allocations of places for postgraduate professional development programmes (SC.466/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar confirm whether the provisional allocations of places for postgraduate professional development programmes as set out in paper SC.466/10-11 were in line with current planning assumptions.

666/10-11 Library Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the University Librarian, highlighting progress on initiatives and planned developments (SC.464/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the University Librarian)

(a) That the remodeled Modern Records Centre was now open.

(b) That the Library was in the early stages of consideration of potential new approaches to course reading provision, noting that it was a complex area and a substantive project may be required to address this.

- (c) That it was difficult to have an accurate understanding of how Warwick compared to other institutions in this area, although the International Student Barometer and National Student Survey provided some useful feedback data.
- (d) That the experience of students in terms of the amount and cost of expected course reading varied considerably between disciplines, and that departmental practices in this regard also differed at module level.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and the Student Experience)

- (e) That it was important to ensure that the information provided to students was clear and up to date, and that although differences between disciplines were unavoidable, there should be consistency across departments in terms of how expectations are communicated to students.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That consideration should be given to the facilitation by the University of a market for second-hand core textbooks.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (g) That the Students' Union organised an annual second-hand book sale which had a typical annual revenue in the region of £40,000.

667/10-11

Postgraduate Issues

RECEIVED:

A report from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Deputy Academic Registrar, to update on developments concerning postgraduate students (SC.475/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the new 4 year standard period of registration for full-time PhD students would be closely monitored to ensure that it did not have a negative impact on registration or completion rates.
- (b) That the figure of £452k funding for the provision of dedicated postgraduate student space in Coventry House was not in accordance with the estimate in the Five Year Plan and needed further review.
- (c) That the discussions around changes to the award of Scholarships had included discussion of both fees-only and maintenance-only scholarships.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That the Board of Graduate Studies would debate proposed changes to the award of Scholarships, including fees-only awards, at its meeting to be held on Thursday 9 June 2011.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Deputy Academic Registrar confirm the funding for the project to provide dedicated postgraduate student space in Coventry House.
- (b) That the distribution of scholarships by department for 2011/12 be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on 10 June 2011.

668/10-11 Medical Research Council Doctoral Training Grant Competition 2011

RECEIVED:

A report from the Professor John Davey, summarising the bid to the Medical Research Council (MRC) for a Doctoral Training Grant (SC.481/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That sixteen research organisations had been invited to bid for up to eight awards of notional studentships, a maximum of three of which would go to any one institution.
- (b) That the Medical Research Council would fund studentships with a length of 3.5 years.
- (c) That the final proposal needed to be submitted to the Medical Research Council by 14 June 2011.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That the Department of Statistics also did a significant amount of work in imaging and that consideration should be given to their involvement in the proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the Dean of the Warwick Medical School provide further clarification in the following areas:

- (a) The nature of the length and level of the study years in the Warwick proposal.
- (b) Warwick's ranking in terms of imaging in relation to the other eligible universities.
- (c) Potential avenues for industrial support for the bid.

669/10-11 QAA Mid-cycle Letter

RECEIVED:

Guidance notes from the QAA regarding the institutional review mid-cycle follow up process and suggestions for the format to be followed (SC.467/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the mid-cycle follow-up report to the QAA institutional audit was due by 12 December 2011.
- (b) That a paper concerning the review of teaching provision would be brought forward to the Steering Committee in the coming weeks.

670/10-11 Speakers for Schools

RECEIVED:

A letter from the President of Universities UK, requesting nominations for five to ten candidates to take part in the UUK "Speakers for Schools" initiative (SC.473/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy)

- (a) That the nominations could be drawn from any individuals connected to the University, including alumni and honorary graduates.

- (b) That the second initiative, entitled 'Inspiring the Future' may also be of interest to University alumni.

RESOLVED:

That proposals for nominations for the Speakers for Schools programme be forwarded to the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy for consideration by the Steering Committee at a future meeting.

671/10-11 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 15 June 2011 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, subject to revisions as agreed in the meeting.

672/10-11 Minister of State for Universities and Science

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

That a number of staff and students were supporting an initiative to secure a vote of no confidence in the Minister of State for Universities and Science, and that the Students' Union was reviewing its official position on the initiative.

673/10-11 Consultation on Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation (minute 605/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

- (a) The University's response to the European Commission's Consultation on Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation (SC.468/10-11).
- (b) The UK Government position paper and response to the European Commission's Green Paper on the Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation (SC.469/10-11).

674/10-11 JNCHES Reports

RECEIVED:

An update paper on the outcomes from the New JNCHES Working Groups, convened as a result of the 2009/10 Pay Agreement (SC.461/10-11).

675/10-11 Interim Director at OFFA

RECEIVED:

Notification of the announcement by Business Secretary Vince Cable of the appointment of Sir Graeme Davies as the interim Director for Fair Access (SC.476/10-11).

676/10-11 Evaluation of HEFCE's programme of support for Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects

RECEIVED:

The Executive Summary of the evaluation report regarding HEFCE's programme of support for Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects (SC.480/10-11).

677/10-11 HEFCE Undergraduate Medical and Dental Intake Target (minute 612/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Registrar to Mr David Noyce, Associate Director of the HEFCE, in response to a letter dated 13 April 2011, regarding the University's undergraduate medical intake target (SC.483/10-11).

JFB/GB/steersshare/minutes/201011/Jun11/6Jun11