

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 7 November 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor M Finn,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas (from item 103(b)/11-12),
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Registrar.

In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office) (from item 103/11-12), Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for items 103/11-12 and 104/11-12), Deputy Academic Registrar (for item 107/11-12), University Librarian (for item 109/11-12).

101/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2011 be approved.

102/11-12 Universities and the Regional Growth Fund (minute 623/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That there were 119 successful bids nationally in the second round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF), of which 19 were from the West Midlands region.
- (b) That the collaborative bid by four Local Enterprise Partnerships (Coventry and Warwickshire, Black Country, Birmingham and Liverpool) to the RGF to secure £25m of funding to support capital grants to SMEs in the Advanced Engineering Supply Chain was successful, noting a significant proportion of the funding was likely to go to local SMEs.

103/11-12 UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education (minute 213/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to report on the sector consultation on the UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education (UKPSF) (SC.77/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That following receipt of the letter from the HEA, the full report on the sector consultation on the UKPSF had been published, and that a paper would be brought to a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

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

- (b) That, given the sector-wide concern regarding the proposals of the HEA, the University should provide a clear response as to its opposition to particular aspects.

(by the Director of HR)

- (c) That the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice (PCAPP) enabled the delivery of professional standards as required by the UKPSF.
- (d) That the University would seek to maintain its autonomy in provision of reward and recognition, and that there was concern over the HEA's level of prescription in potentially limiting the University's ability to deliver flexible programmes.

104/11-12

Teaching Quality Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), updating the Committee on teaching and learning issues (SC.78/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience had met with departments that had shown a decline in satisfaction in the 2011 National Student Survey (NSS), and discussed underlying factors and the actions being taken to address them.
- (b) That preparation for the 2012 NSS had commenced with a view to improving response rates further.
- (c) That a generic briefing on Key Information Sets would be disseminated to departments shortly, followed by a data collection exercise of teaching and learning methods at modular level, and validation of assessment methods.
- (d) That a trial of the Warwick Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) took place during summer 2011, with approximately 200 HEARs provided to students.
- (e) That it was intended that all undergraduate students graduating in summer 2012 would receive a hard-copy HEAR, with electronic HEARs available from summer 2013.
- (f) That the University was informed in October 2011 that the reporting requirements for the QAA Mid-Cycle Review had changed, to include a full list and timetable of the department/subject areas that had been reviewed as part of internal departmental/periodic review since the previous audit.
- (g) That the forthcoming Institutional Review would be highlighted as an innovative approach to quality assurance and enhancement as part of the response to the QAA's Mid-Cycle Audit requirements.

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

- (h) That the University's catalogue of undergraduate modules was proving to be a useful tool for departments.

105/11-12 Warwick Development Events in New York

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That his thanks were extended to those involved in the success of the University's recent series of development and alumni activities in New York.

(by the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy)

- (b) That Warwick alumna, Baroness Amos, delivered the inaugural VandeLinde Lecture at BBC Worldwide in New York on 3rd November.
- (c) That members of the International Gateway for Gifted Youth (IGGY) were at the event as part of the "Junior Commission", an investigation into the future of global energy consumption, and made useful links with academic, governmental, non-governmental organisations, commercial and community groups involved in energy, climate change and sustainability.

106/11-12 Institutional Teaching and Learning Review Update (minute 82/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That some members of staff involved in the Institutional Review had indicated that they were withdrawing their engagement as members of panels in response to the UCU's position of working to contract.
- (b) That he had written to these staff members to seek clarification on their involvement in the Institutional Review, and that the University would seek to ensure that the Institutional Review was able to proceed in this context as a matter of priority.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That the Students' Union regarded the Institutional Review as a priority for the interests of Students at Warwick.
- (d) That, while the Students' Union recognised concerns giving cause to UCU's position, it did not have the mandate to endorse the proposed action during the Institutional Review given its priority and impact on the teaching experience.

107/11-12 Postgraduate Issues

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment with an overview of developments relating to postgraduate students (SC.79/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (a) That there was concern over the number of extension requests that were made by PhD students who sought time into their fifth year, without presenting exceptional circumstances.
- (b) That the Board of Graduate Studies would notify and reinforce to academic departments the expectation for PhD students to complete their work in four years and, therefore, the need for active supervision of PhD students to maximise the number of conferrals achieved.
- (c) That the progression of the postgraduate research population in the Faculty of Arts could have been hindered by the lack of available funding, rather than the quantity or quality of applications.

(by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (d) That a series of meetings was to be held in the Spring Term 2012 between departments and the Chair and Secretary to the Board of Graduate Studies to discuss departmental recruitment strategies for postgraduate research students, and plans for growth.
- (e) That the number of postgraduate student complaint and appeals cases had increased significantly, placing further pressure on the Graduate School team, noting that it was her view that this was also occurring at other institutions.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (f) That there was an increasing trend in students engaging with the appeals processes, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level, but evidence showed that the number of successful appeals had not proportionately risen.
- (g) That parking rates for postgraduate research students had been discussed at the Board of Graduate Studies and the Students' Union Liaison Group, although no decision had been taken to revise the present position until the outcome of the overall review of the car parking permit and payment arrangements had been completed.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (h) That improvements were seen in the number of postgraduate research students within the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Social Sciences.

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

- (i) That the increase in the number of extension requests that were made by students, who sought time into their fifth year without presenting exceptional circumstances, may, in part, reflect the current job market and therefore incentives may be required to ensure that students complete within four years.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (j) That the Students' Union strategy identified support for postgraduate students as a key priority area, with a number of activities having been initiated, and that the postgraduate representative structures and communications were being reviewed.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

- (k) That the £300,000 investment in postgraduate research scholarship sourced from HEIF funding was available for one cohort only.
- (l) That HEIF funded studentships (which accounted for ten of the fourteen WCPRS studentships for 2011) must be used for matched funding by industry or business.

108/11-12

UCAS Admissions Process Review

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, together with the Executive Summary of the UCAS Admissions Process Review (SC.72/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That, as a result of its review of the current admissions system, UCAS had proposed a post-qualifications undergraduate admissions system to try to address the

inaccuracy of predictive grades and improve opportunities for students from non-traditional backgrounds entering higher education.

- (b) That a phased approach was proposed, with significant changes to the current process for 2014, followed by full implementation by 2016.
- (c) That the proposed changes would potentially require the timing of A-Level results and University term dates to be moved.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive of UCAS, was visiting the University in November 2012 and would meet with members of the Admissions Team.
- (e) That the proposals could exacerbate the already identified difficulty of getting high quality information, advice and guidance at the relevant time to those students who need it most.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (f) That, while there was appreciation for the potential challenges that a new process would present, consideration should be given to the benefits of any new application process for students.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (g) That a robust response to the proposals set out by UCAS should acknowledge the alternative routes that could be taken to amend the current applications process.

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

- (h) That the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office and Widening Participation Team had concerns that the proposed revised system could further disadvantage Widening Participation students, given, for instance the reduction in time within which students would have to make financial decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office conduct an internal consultation to inform the University's response to the UCAS Admissions Process Review, to be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline on 20 January 2012.

109/11-12

Research Data Management

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the rationale for a University Research Data Management Policy, together with proposed wording (SC.82/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the University Librarian)

- (a) That the rationale for a University Research Data Management Policy was discussed by the Information Policy and Strategy Committee and Research Committee.
- (b) That the development of such a policy demonstrated to research councils that appropriate steps were in place.
- (c) That pilot studies for the adoption and implementation of the policy would encompass a range of data content and format generated across disciplines.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing)

- (d) That the Research Committee had indicated that a “light touch” approach to Research Data Management was welcomed.
- (e) That the second reading of the Protection of Freedoms Bill was scheduled in the House of Lords for Tuesday 8 November 2011, and that any implications, such as the length of time publicly funded research could be exempt from Freedom of Information, would be reported to the Steering Committee.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That the academic community would need to be made aware of the increasing requirements of funders for research data to be published and publicly accessible.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (g) That the ease of identifying “research data” would vary by discipline.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University Research Data Management Policy be approved, as outlined in SC.82/11-12.
- (b) That a Working Group be established to be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, led by a senior academic, to consider and progress initial implementation of the agreed policy and related initiatives alongside development of a profile for the anticipated costs involved with adoption of the policy across the University.
- (c) That, given Monash University's extensive work in relation to research data management, focussed discussions in relation to publication of research data be undertaken as part of the Warwick-Monash deepening relationship.

110/11-12

Public Engagement with Research

CONSIDERED:

The Research Council UK's call for proposals for “Public Engagement with Research: CATALYSTS” (SC.83/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

- (a) That matched funding for the bid would be sourced through existing expenditure, for example, HEIF.
- (b) That he would be the Principle Investigator and leader of the project, with Professor Richard Aldrich as the University's “strategic champion”.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine) respond on behalf of the University to the Research Council UK's call for proposals for “Public Engagement with Research: CATALYSTS”, prior to the submission deadline of 17 November 2011.

111/11-12 Monitoring Return Guidance for the Widening Participation Assessments

CONSIDERED:

The Executive Summary of HEFCE guidance to completing the annual monitoring form for access agreements and widening participation strategic assessments (SC.85/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That, following the survey undertaken by the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office relating to departmental activity, the University should be in a good position to be able to report on the University's Widening Participation activities and associated expenditure.

RESOLVED:

That a report on the HEFCE guidance to completing the annual monitoring form for access agreements and widening participation strategic assessments be considered by the Steering Committee, together with current activity in Widening Participation, at its meeting on 12 December 2011.

112/11-12 Ofsted Consultation on Changes to the Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education

CONSIDERED:

A letter from Jean Humphreys, Interim Director of Education and Care at Ofsted, announcing the launch of a full public consultation on proposed revisions to the framework for inspection of initial teacher education (SC.86/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That Ofsted was reviewing its framework for inspection of initial teacher education in the light of increased movement to school based training.
- (b) That proposals included the reduction of the inspection notice period from 8 to 3 weeks.

RESOLVED:

That the Institute of Education in liaison with the Centre for Lifelong Learning draft a response to Ofsted's public consultation on proposed revisions to the framework for inspection of initial teacher education, for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 31 January 2012.

113/11-12 UUK Policy Briefing on Student Finance: Changes to Payment of Tuition Fee Loans and Grants and Attendance Processing

RECEIVED:

A UUK policy briefing assessing changes to the payment and processing of tuition fee loans and grants in 2012/13 (SC.94/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That institutions would receive tuition fee income for Home/EU full-time and part-time students in instalments that mirror the student's liability for a loan, with 25% in term one, 25% in term two and 50% in term 3.

- (b) That, to receive instalments of tuition fee income, institutions would need to provide positive confirmation of attendance at the beginning of each term, and that departments would need to be engaged in this process.
- (c) That the University already had a process process for monitoring attendance which met UKBA requirements and had been applied across all students.
- (d) That clarification of payment expectation would be included in communications with students.
(by the Academic Registrar)
- (e) That termly attendance monitoring would not replace the requirement for 10 contact points as required by the UKBA, and so the University's current process would be reviewed in the light of the new Student Loan Company requirements.
- (f) That there were initial concerns about the impact on the University's cash flow, but that modelling based on the new guidance had been undertaken and it was not currently deemed to make a significant impact.

114/11-12 Appointments to Committees of the Senate

RESOLVED:

Board of Undergraduate Studies

That the appointment of Dr Rachel Moseley (Department of Film and Television Studies) as one of the two full-time members of the academic staff from the Faculty of Arts appointed by the Senate to the Board of Undergraduate Studies, be approved on behalf of the Senate, as a replacement for Dr Alastair Phillips.

115/11-12 REF 2014 Maternity Leave

RECEIVED:

An announcement from the HEFCE to confirm that researchers may reduce the number of outputs in a submission to the REF 2014 by one, for each period of maternity leave taken during the REF period (SC.89/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the University welcomed the revision to the REF 2014 guidelines regarding Maternity leave in the light of the feedback submitted as part of the consultation process.

116/11-12 UUK Response To BIS Technical Consultation (minute 58/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

The UUK's response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' Technical consultation on the new regulatory framework for the Higher Education sector (SC.87/11-12).

117/11-12 HEFCE Response To BIS Technical Consultation (minute 58/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

The HEFCE's response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' Technical consultation on the new regulatory framework for the Higher Education sector (SC.88/11-12).

118/11-12 HEFCE Student Number Controls for 2012/13 (minute 62/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

A UUK analytical briefing on HEFCE's document "Student number controls for 2012-13" (SC.95/11-12).

119/11-12 UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B7: External examining

RECEIVED:

A chapter of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education comprising a series of Indicators which higher education providers have agreed reflect sound practice, and through which institutions can demonstrate that they are meeting the relevant Expectations regarding external examining (SC.96/11-12).

NO/KP/steersshare/minutes/201112/Nov11/7 Nov11