

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 13 February 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor M Finn,  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor P Thomas,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Professor S Croft, Professor S Swain, Professor P Winstanley.

In Attendance: Registrar, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Assistant Registrar (Risk, Continuity and Information Security), Assistant Director (Planning & Student Experience) (International Office) (for item 311/11-12), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 312/11-12), HR Advisor (Equality & Diversity) (for item 313/11-12).

308/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2012 be approved.

309/11-12 Office of Fair Access (minute 299/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That no decision had been finalised with regards to the appointment of the new Head of the Office of Fair Access and that an announcement was expected within the next week.

310/11-12 UUK Submission to Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Freedom of Information Act

RECEIVED:

The UUK submission to inform the post-legislative scrutiny of the Freedom of Information Act (SC.222/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That the number of requests received by the University under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 had increased significantly over the past three years (92 in 2008 to 148 in 2010) and that this trend was anticipated to continue.

(by the Registrar)

(b) That the status of pre-publication research was a key focus of the HE sector submissions to the post-legislative scrutiny process, particularly in light of the pre-publication research exemption in place in Scotland.

311/11-12

Immigration and Visa Update

CONSIDERED:

An article from the Times Higher Education entitled 'British Council Director calls for 'urgent review' of visa policy' (SC.230/11-12), together with an oral report from the Assistant Director (Planning & Student Experience) (International Office) on the current impact of the visa policy on the University.

REPORTED: (by the Assistant Director (Planning & Student Experience) (International Office))

- (a) That the Government Statement of Intent with regard to the changes to the visa policy due to be introduced by April 2012 was to be published imminently.
- (b) That the University had not experienced the drop in applications from India for October 2011 entry which other institutions had reported but that this would need to be very carefully monitored for October 2012 entry.
- (c) That the University continued to wait to be notified as to whether its application for Highly Trusted Sponsor (HTS) status had been successful but that the International Office had learnt that a decision timeframe of over 6 months was common for comparable institutions.
- (d) That the Academic Registrar had presented an update on the visa policy to Heads of Department and Centres at recent Boards of the Faculties meetings.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That the visa policy posed a real threat to the business of the University and that the University should seek to mitigate the impact of this on its activities.
- (f) That the recent internal audit on student attendance monitoring was a positive step in demonstrating that Warwick was systematic in implementing UKBA requirements, noting that some areas for improvement in departments that were in the process of being implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Registrar review the process and activities relating to the visa policy currently being undertaken at the University to identify if anything else could be done to mitigate the impact on the University.
- (b) That the Assistant Director (Planning & Student Experience) ensure that examples of best practice with regards to student attendance monitoring be circulated to Chairs of the Faculties for dissemination to Heads of Departments.

312/11-12

Teaching Quality Update Report

RECEIVED:

An update report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) including developments in the following areas: National Student Survey; UK Quality Code; Student Charter; QAA Institutional Review; Review of Personal Tutoring; Key Information Sets; HEAR; Assignment Management and Feedback Project (SC.228/11-12).

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

- (a) That the University's response rate to the National Student Survey was higher in comparison to the same point last year and that the University had until the end of the Spring Term 2011 to raise awareness and encourage eligible students to participate.
- (b) That the University would be responding to the new UK Quality Code through the consultation process as each new or revised chapter was released and would be reviewing its internal regulations and procedures against these chapters to ensure alignment.

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

- (c) That it was important that the University sought to mitigate the perception of students as consumers by adopting a full 'partnership' approach as a response to the requirement to consider the introduction of a student charter.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (d) That the University was currently reviewing the recently launched 'The Partnership' webpages of the University of Leeds which sought to represent the mutual expectations of all members of the University of Leeds community.

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

- (e) That the Assignment Management and Feedback project was progressing well and that she would be looking for opportunities, in partnership with the Students' Union, to promote the project amongst the student body.

313/11-12

HEFCE Equality and Diversity Scheme

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee and the Director of Human Resources setting out the main themes and aims included in the recently published HEFCE Equality and Diversity Scheme 2012-14 (SC.223/11-12), together with an oral report from the HR Advisor (Equality and Diversity).

REPORTED: (by the HR Advisor (Equality and Diversity))

- (a) That the University's Equality Objectives were strongly aligned with the themes presented in the HEFCE Equality and Diversity Scheme and that work was being undertaken to determine how the objectives would be met.
- (b) That the HEFCE Equality and Diversity Scheme was a 'living document' which would evolve as HEFCE transitioned to its new role in mid-2013.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee and the HR Advisor (Equality and Diversity) bring any significant changes to the HEFCE Equality and Diversity Scheme to the attention of the Steering Committee.

314/11-12 Revised Emergency Planning Policy and Plan

CONSIDERED:

Proposed revisions to the University Emergency Planning Policy and Plan including a suggested dissemination route for the University's emergency management arrangements to the University community (SC.221/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Corporate Governance)

- (a) That the University Emergency Planning Policy and Plan had undergone significant revision since the Steering Committee last reviewed the documents in October 2010 and that the amendments sought to reflect the clearer structure and greater detail around roles and responsibilities of individuals engaged in the major incident management processes now in place.
- (b) That work was underway to ensure that the strategic Gold Team and operational Bronze Team received specific training.
- (c) That the University's ability to manage major incidents on campus had been brought to the fore through its role as an Olympics football training venue and that this necessitated raising awareness of University emergency management processes amongst staff.
- (d) That all members of staff would be issued with a short 'z-card' providing key information on what to do, who to contact and how the University would respond in the case of a major incident.

(by the Registrar)

- (e) That it was vital that emergency planning and business continuity became part of the fabric of the University through awareness raising, testing and exercises.

RESOLVED:

That the revised University Emergency Planning Policy and Plan as set out in SC.221/11-12 be approved, noting that further work would be undertaken to embed the structures and related concepts, such as business continuity, within the University and its activities.

315/11-12 AHRC BGP2 Bid

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies setting out the present status of a collaborative AHRC Block Grant Partnership 2 bid led by the University (SC.225/11-12).

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

- (a) That feedback from the consortium partners on the present draft of the bid was due by 15 February 2011.
- (b) That the consortium partners had decided on a common institutional commitment to match at least 25 percent of the overall grant, noting however that the AHRC was pressing for 'significant' institutional support which might result in a higher institutional commitment needing to be considered.

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

- (c) That the University was part of a strong consortium and that Warwick's unique contribution and presence in the consortium should be strengthened within the bid

documentation, emphasising the distinctiveness and advantages of its non-London base in particular.

(by the Registrar)

- (d) That the approximate full financial exposure of the bid for the University should be understood in order to include this within the University Financial Plan from 2014/15, it being noted that the AHRC figures did not include inflation which would need to be factored into the University's planning.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft bid be distributed to Liese Perrin, Research Development Manager in Research Support Services for her review.
- (b) That Warwick's unique contribution and presence in the consortium be strengthened within the bid documentation drawing on the discussion at the meeting.
- (c) That exploratory work be undertaken to assess whether it would be possible to cover elements of the matched funding from within existing schemes.
- (d) That members of the Steering Committee send any comments on the present draft to the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies by 15 February 2012.

316/11-12

Integration Summit 2012

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

- (a) That the Students' Union, the Centre for Applied Linguistics and the International Office were running an Integration Summit 2012 on 8-9 March 2012.
- (b) That the event would examine how universities and students' unions could best work together to encourage integration between international and domestic students and embed a global perspective in all their students.

Note: the website for the Integration Summit 2012 can be accessed at:  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/intsummit2012/>

KMS/KP/steersshare/minutes/201112/Feb12/13Feb12