

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 April 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Croft,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley.

Apologies: Mr L Bøe, Professor A Caesar, Professor M Finn, Professor C Hughes, Professor S Swain.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Director of HR, Director of Estates, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Undergraduate Admissions) (for item 448/11-12), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 449/11-12).

447/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2012 be approved.

448/11-12 UCAS Qualification Information Review Consultation (minute 334/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the UCAS Qualification Information Review Consultation (SC.311/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Undergraduate Admissions))

- (a) That the consultation represented a comprehensive review of qualification information, particularly the UCAS Tariff system, which was seen to be less than optimal in a number of respects including giving applicants false expectations of entry to higher education institutions.
- (b) That the University's institutional response was broadly supportive of the recommendations of the Review, noting that the removal of the Tariff system would have little impact on Warwick's existing admissions processes, which already utilise grade-based entry requirements and offers and which take a holistic approach to the consideration of applicants, for example by making use of the personal statement.
- (c) That the University was broadly supportive of the proposed introduction of Quality Information Profiles (QIP) as an admissions tool to enhance the information on, and understanding of, individual qualifications.
- (d) That the methodology for comparing academic demand (or difficulty) across qualifications, as well as a robust qualifications metric to support management information, would require careful consideration and input from stakeholders to avoid similar misuse as occurred with the Tariff system.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That reference to the International Baccalaureate within the University's response to the consultation should acknowledge that the qualification was undertaken within the UK as well as overseas.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the UCAS Qualification Information Review Consultation be approved as set out in SC.311/11-12, subject to the amendments discussed in the meeting, and should be submitted to the UCAS by the deadline of 16 April 2012.

449/11-12

QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B5 – Student Engagement (minute 408/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B5 – Student Engagement (SC.312/11-12).

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

- (a) That the QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B5 – Student Engagement was not particularly contentious, although the University's response requested consideration of the amalgamation of Indicators 2, 3 and 4, given that the issues being addressed were closely aligned.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (b) That the University's response to Q8 should be revised to remove the request that QAA issue separate guidance on good practice in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B5 – Student Engagement be approved as set out in SC.312/11-12, subject to the amendments discussed in the meeting, and be submitted to the QAA by the deadline of 18 April 2012.

450/11-12

Cabinet Office Review of Charities Act 2006 (minute 335/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Cabinet Office Review of Charities Act 2006 (SC.307/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the Cabinet Office Review of Charities Act 2006 was wide ranging, with the majority of questions not relevant to higher education institutions, and therefore the University would not be completing the survey, but that the University would respond to the call for evidence in the following areas;
 - (i) Exempt charities,
 - (ii) The effectiveness of organizational forms available to charities,
 - (iii) The definition of charity and the public benefit requirement,
 - (iv) The role of trustees.
- (b) That the University would also send a summary response to the Cabinet Office to confirm that the University considered that, overall, the regulatory arrangements for exempt charities were working effectively with the HEFCE as the principal regulator,

noting that current changes in higher education had the potential to increase areas of tension and conflicts of interest for HEFCE.

- (c) That the establishment of a statutory definition of public benefit would not be helpful for the University or the sector.
- (d) That the Pro-Chancellor and the University Treasurer had reviewed the University's summary response prior to circulation to the Steering Committee, particularly with regard to the section on the roles of trustees.

RESOLVED:

That the University's summary response to the Cabinet Office Review of Charities Act 2006 be approved as set out in Appendix C of paper SC.307/11-12, and be submitted to the Cabinet Office by the deadline of 16 April 2012.

451/11-12 HEFCE Annual Accountability Returns Requirements

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the HEFCE setting out their requirement for the submission of annual accountability information by Wednesday 20 June 2012 (SC.314/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the letter provided a clear indication of the information that the University was required to provide to the HEFCE by Wednesday 20 June 2012..

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (b) That a corporate planning statement was no longer required as part of the submission to the HEFCE.

RESOLVED:

That the financial information requested by the HEFCE as part of the annual accountability return be considered by the relevant committees, prior to the submission deadline of 20 June 2012.

452/11-12 Higher Education Commission - Postgraduate Education Inquiry (minute 428/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's submission to the Higher Education Commission Postgraduate Education Inquiry (SC.308/11-12).

453/11-12 Revised 2012/13 Access Agreement (minute 421/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Head of Widening Participation (HEFCE) and Programme Manager (OFFA) to confirm that they were satisfied with the quality of information provided in the University's revised monitoring return (SC.309/11-12).

454/11-12 UUK Consultation on a Draft Research Integrity Concordat

REPORTED:

That the University's response to the UUK Consultation on a Draft Research Integrity Concordat to help ensure that the highest standards of rigour and integrity are maintained

would be overseen by Jane Prewett, Deputy Director of Research Support Services and Head of Research Governance, and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 11 May 2012.

455/11-12

BIS Consultation on Delivery of Structural Funds, Rural Development Funds and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in England

REPORTED:

That the University's response to the BIS Consultation on Delivery of Structural Funds, Rural Development Funds and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in England on how the new round of structural funds can best be used to develop and maintain economic growth, would be overseen by the Head of Enterprise and Innovation Programmes, Research Support Services, and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 27 April 2012.

KMS/KP/steershare/minutes/201112/Apr12/16Apr12