

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 17 February 2014

- Present Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor Christina Hughes,  
Professor Christopher Hughes,  
Professor J Palmowski,  
Mr B Sundell,  
Professor S Swain,  
Professor P Thomas,  
Professor L Young.
- Apologies: Provost, Professor A Coats, Professor T Jones, Professor M Taylor, Professor P Winstanley
- In Attendance: Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Academic Registrar, Group Finance Director, Director of Human Resources, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Assistant Registrar (Governance), Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee (for item 156/13-14).

149/13-14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014 be approved.

150/13-14 Meeting of the Assembly

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That a meeting of the Assembly of the University took place on Tuesday 11 February 2014, offering an opportunity for staff on grades 6-9 to hear about how the University was developing and the financial choices made to support that development, particularly in the context of queries around the University's approach to pay and reward.
- (b) That meetings for staff on grades 1a-5 and postgraduate students who teach had taken place on Friday 14 February 2014.

151/13-14 National Student Survey (NSS) Launch

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had launched its NSS campaign on 10 February 2014 alongside the launch of the NSS survey itself.
- (b) That £5 'Eating at Warwick' credit was being offered to all participants.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (c) That survey completions were up by 9% compared to the same time in the previous year, noting that the rate varied across departments in view of the differing schedule of departmental NSS-related events and prompts to students.
- (d) That the University was aiming for a completion rate of 80%.

152/13-14 Warwick Ventures Incubators

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That software entrepreneurs at Warwick were being offered support to get their business off the ground through a new Software Incubator project launched by Warwick Ventures.
- (b) That the Incubator was open to staff, students or University alumni who were able to undertake a business development project and would offer access to incubator space, as well as to invaluable mentoring and business advice during the vulnerable early stages of development.

153/13-14 European Research Council Awards

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Martin Hairer and José Luis Rodrigo from the Mathematics Institute and Rachel O'Reilly and Alessandro Troisi from the Department of Chemistry had won highly prestigious European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grants.
- (b) That the awards, worth a maximum of €2.75m for up to five years, supported 'visionary research' and were granted on the basis of the scientific excellence of the researcher and their research proposal.

154/13-14 2014-15 HEFCE Grant Letter from BIS

RECEIVED:

The 2014-15 HEFCE grant letter from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (SC.90/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the grant letter from BIS, received on 10 February 2014, confirmed government funding for HEFCE and for higher education in England and set out indicative allocations for financial year 2015-16.
- (b) That the settlement would mean reductions in funding for higher education institutions in 2014-15 and again in 2015-16, beyond those accounted for by the switch to publicly funded tuition fees.
- (c) That the Government had asked HEFCE to deliver the reductions in ways which protected, as far as possible, high-cost subjects (including STEM), widening participation and small and specialist institutions.
- (d) That the ring-fenced settlement for science and research meant that recurrent funding would be maintained at £1,573 million, the same cash levels as 2013-14.
- (e) That overall, the amount of capital funding for teaching and research would increase in 2014-15 to £440 million.
- (f) That the grant letter confirmed the Government's provision of a maximum of 30,000 additional student places in academic year 2014-15 for HEFCE-funded institutions.
- (g) That the student number control would be removed entirely from 2015-16 and the Government had asked HEFCE to ensure that higher education institutions maintained the quality of the student experience in these circumstances.

- (h) That it would be essential for the University to demonstrate efficiency in terms of teaching and space use.
- (i) That HEFCE planned to publish institutional funding allocations on 27 March 2014.

(By the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (j) That the ongoing piece of work at the University to identify potential efficiency savings across the central administration was timely, in the context of further reductions expected in 2015-16.
- (k) That analysis was being carried out by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Academic Planning and Resources and Postgraduate and Transnational Education, on the nature and structure of the teaching year.
- (l) That it was anticipated that the request to deliver efficiency savings from Quality Related (QR) recurrent research funding over the period 2011-15 to be reinvested within QR, related to reinvestment over a longer period.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (m) That in view of the matched funding element of the capital investment announced for high cost subjects in 2015-16, it would be important for the University to continue to be competitive in such bids.

155/13-14 2013 UK Higher Education Survey of European Activity

CONSIDERED:

The draft response to the bi-annual UK Higher Education Survey of European Activity (SC.83/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education))

That the response had been drafted following consultation with a number of colleagues and highlighted the University's relation with wider EU frameworks.

RESOLVED:

That the draft response to the bi-annual UK Higher Education Survey of European Activity be approved as set out in paper SC.83/13-14.

156/13-14 Publication of Strengthening the Quality Assurance of UK Transnational Education: Consultation

CONSIDERED:

The draft response to the QAA Consultation on Strengthening the Quality Assurance of UK Transnational Education (SC.84/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee)

- (a) That the response was robust in nature as it was felt the evidence base for the proposed methodology was unclear.
- (b) That the proposed methodology would require collation of a new data set, potentially from HESA.

- (c) That overseas branch campus operations did not all operate on the same model and could be in different states of evolution, with the potential to grow larger than the home institution.
- (d) That issues could be faced in view of the growth in numbers of private providers with little or no prior experience of Transnational Education (TNE).
- (e) That a further two consultation events were scheduled to take place but that it was unlikely there would be further opportunities to comment on the proposals post-consultation, noting that comments could be taken into account should robust responses be received from across the sector or from specific units, for example the Russell Group.

(By the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (f) That HESA had confirmed there would not be any capacity to collect a new data set unless a current set were removed.
- (g) That it was unclear what form an institutional review of overseas branch campus operations would take.
- (h) That with the growth of overseas branch campus operations and the increasingly multinational nature of teaching provision, issues over jurisdiction could be raised.

(By the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (i) That review reports for TNE could have legal implications.
- (j) That in relation to question 7 and risk-analysis, the reference to size could usefully be expanded to note that scale of activity may not necessarily be directly proportional to risk size.

RESOLVED:

That the draft response to the QAA Consultation on Strengthening the Quality Assurance of UK Transnational Education be revised as agreed at the meeting, for approval by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and President, prior to submission.

157/13-14 Students' Union Sabbatical Officer Elections

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

That elections for the Students' Union Officers for 2014-15 would take place in the week commencing 24 February 2014.

158/13-14 Warwick Salsa Society Success

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

That the Intermediate Group of the Warwick Salsa Society had achieved first place in a recent national competition, with the Improvers Group coming second.

RESOLVED:

That the Warwick Salsa Society be congratulated on their achievement.