

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 22 August 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor M Finn,  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Professor P Winstanley (until item 848/10-11),  
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor S Bruzzi, Professor A Caesar, Professor K Lamberts.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Deputy Director of HR (for item 833/10-11), Deputy Academic Registrar (for items 843/10-11 to 844/10-11), Professor Brian Thomas (School of Life Sciences) (for item 844/10-11).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor welcomed Mr Leo Bøe to his first meeting of the Committee as President of the Students' Union.

831/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2011 be approved, subject to minor revisions.

832/10-11 REF 2014: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (minute 793/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

- (a) A joint statement on impact by HEFCE, RCUK and UUK (SC.590/10-11).
- (b) A letter from Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive of HEFCE, in response to the Vice Chancellor's letter of concern dated 13 July 2011, regarding the assessment of impact of new academic units' research in the REF (SC.591/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the letter from Sir Alan Langlands confirmed there would be no changes made to the method of assessment of impact in the REF, despite the concerns raised.

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

- (b) That there would be further opportunity to raise concerns regarding the assessment of impact of new academic units' research in the REF during the consultation period.

833/10-11 Government Consultation on Employment-related Settlement and Tier 5 (minute 713/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The University's draft response to the Government Consultation on Employment-related Settlement and Tier 5 (SC.594/10-11).

- (b) The UUK's comment on the Government Consultation on Employment-related Settlement and Tier 5 (SC.595/10-11)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Director of HR)

- (a) That the University's draft response to the Government Consultation on Employment-related Settlement and Tier 5 outlined concerns regarding the inhibitive nature of the proposals to recruitment of the best academic staff.
- (b) That there were concerns that reinforcing the temporary nature of the Tier 2 route would dissuade world class individuals from wanting to come to the UK.
- (c) That there were potentially significant cost implications arising from the proposals for employers who would be the migrant's sponsor.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the response to Question 22 would be strengthened prior to submission, with references made to all the University's current initiatives that attract migrant staff.
- (b) That the University's response to the Government Consultation on Employment-related Settlement and Tier 5 be submitted to the UUK by 26 August 2011, and to the UKBA by the submission deadline of 9 September 2011.

834/10-11 Forensic Sciences Service (minute 809/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer and Business Engagement (designate))

- (a) That the University had begun discussion with the FSS R&D division in Solihull to consider the possibility of establishing a new Warwick Centre for Forensic Science Research.
- (b) That following further discussion and analysis of risks and funding issues, it had been decided not to pursue the project further.
- (c) That this decision had been communicated by email to the FSS R&D division in Solihull.

835/10-11 Efficiency 2011-15: Ensuring Excellence with Impact (minute 642/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Director of research Support Services had emailed David Parfrey, Finance Director of BBSRC and Chair of the RCUK Wakeham Implementation Group on 11 Aug 2011, to suggest that efficiency policies with regard to requests for capital equipment should be applied consistently across all Research Councils.
- (b) That David Parfrey had responded to confirm it was the intention to have common practice across all Research Councils, but that an absolute funding level for Councils on the middle tier of assets had not been set because of Councils' varying capital availability.

836/10-11 Admissions Update

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That, following the release of A-Level results on Thursday 18 August, the University was above the minimum contracted number of Home/EU admissions, but within the

control number, with manageable overshoots in the departments of History and English and Comparative Literary Studies.

- (b) That a more significant overshoot was evident within the School of Life Sciences, but that work was ongoing with departments to establish the impact.
- (c) That there was a small overshoot against target for overseas undergraduate student numbers.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That action had been taken in the School of Life Sciences following an overshoot last year, to reduce the number of offers made and increase the level of A level tariff required.
- (e) That there was a higher number of postgraduate applications for accommodation than expected, predominantly from late international applicants to postgraduate taught courses, but that off-campus accommodation options were being sourced where possible.

837/10-11 Review of Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience (minute 806/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That invitations had been sent to potential external review panel members with some acceptances received already.
- (b) That invitations had been sent to both academic and administrative colleagues to request assistance with the Institutional Review process.
- (c) That the Steering Committee would be kept updated with progress.

838/10-11 HEIF Allocations

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That decisions had been confirmed on the allocation of HEIF funding and these would be communicated shortly to individual departments.
- (b) That the impact fund would be launched in September alongside more general HEIF publicity.

839/10-11 Pay Negotiations

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the UCU ballot on the Higher Education pay offer would close on 14 September 2011.
- (b) That Unison had invoked the dispute procedure with UCEA on the basis that the proposed pay increase did not reflect the rise in cost of living.
- (c) That GMB were currently consulting and are recommending a rejection of the pay offer.

- 840/10-11 Coventry Enterprise Zone
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership had submitted a proposal to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills to create an Enterprise Zone in the Coventry area, but that this had been unsuccessful.
- 841/10-11 Regional Growth Fund
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That 492 bids requesting £3.3bn would compete for a share of £950 million from the second round of the £1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund, with 105 bids received from the West Midlands.
- 842/10-11 Consultation on the Draft Student Fees - Scotland 2011 (minute 781/10-11 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That, as the University was not directly affected by the level of student fees in Scotland, it was decided that no direct response would be made to the consultation on student fees in Scotland by the submission deadline of 2 September 2011.
- 843/10-11 National Student Survey Institutional Results (minute 693/10-11 refers)
- CONSIDERED:
- An outline of the University's headline results in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2011 (SC.606/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)
- (a) That overall satisfaction across the whole University in the NSS 2011 was 88%, a marginal decrease against the 2010 figure of 89%.
- (b) That the University's overall results in assessment and feedback only increased by 1% to 62% since 2010, despite the efforts made last year and notwithstanding some significant improvements in departmental results, and continued to be below the sector average (68%).
- (c) That detailed analysis of the qualitative feedback from the NSS would be undertaken between departments and the Teaching Quality team.
- (by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Access, Widening Participation and Development)
- (d) That it was important to ensure that postgraduate tutors were fully aware of the University's policy and priority placed on good feedback and assessment practices, to enable further steps to be taken to improve feedback.
- (e) That Heads of Departments should be advised about the trends and statistical significance of the survey outcomes.
- RESOLVED:
- (a) That the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience liaise with departments that had shown significant falls in satisfaction in the NSS results.

- (b) That a report on the analysis and discussion with those departments be considered by the Steering Committee within 4 to 6 weeks, to provide contextual information for the Institutional Review.

844/10-11

Draft Response to the QAA Consultation on External Examining

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the QAA Consultation on External Examining (SC.597/10-11).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft response to the QAA Consultation on External Examining be reviewed to ensure that the tone was appropriate whilst retaining the strength of the University's concerns
- (b) That each point within the draft response to the QAA Consultation on External Examining on which there is a lack of agreement with the principle proposed is reviewed with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience to ensure that this is in line with University practice.
- (c) That a revision of the "General comments" section be moved to the beginning of the University's response to the QAA Consultation on External Examining, to question how the draft complemented the proposed "light touch" arrangements proposed for the QAA in the future.

845/10-11

Life Sciences Doctoral Training Bid

CONSIDERED:

A request for support from the School of Life Sciences for an application to BBSRC for a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) (SC.596/10-11).

REPORTED: (by Professor Brian Thomas (School of Life Sciences))

- (a) That all future PhD studentships awarded by BBSRC would be appended to a DTP, and it was proposed that the University apply as a consortium with the University of Birmingham and the University of Leicester.
- (b) That requests for administration or management support of the DTPs in the BBSRC application were not permitted, and so the University was requested to provide financial support for the administration of the consortium, and use of space to host the DTP students for training.
- (c) That, as lead partner, the University would need to provide access to suitable residential accommodation for all students (including those based with partner institutions) for at least the first term during initial student training.
- (d) That University approval for assigning matched studentships was requested, as already agreed by the partner institutions.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That the estimate of BBSRC income be reviewed further to check the underlying assumptions.
- (f) That further detailed work remained to be undertaken to collate and analyse the data from both the University and consortium institutions to be included in the bid.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences)

- (g) That the contribution of partner institutions and internal departments should be clarified in light of the requested administrative support from the University.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the request for support from the School of Life Sciences for an application to BBSRC for a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) be considered by the Academic Resourcing Committee.
- (b) That the final draft bid be considered by the Steering Committee in advance of the submission date of 15 September 2011.

846/10-11

Capital Research Projects – UUK Request for Information

CONSIDERED:

A request for information from UUK regarding capital research projects (SC.620/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That it appeared that the Government may have identified the availability of more capital funding than originally anticipated, and had requested UUK to gather information on large-scale research projects that were close to completion but had stalled due to a lack of available capital funding.

RESOLVED:

That the University respond to the request for information from UUK regarding capital research projects by the submission deadline of 22 August 2011, highlighting specific large capital projects with the reasons they were put on hold.

847/10-11

Higher Education White Paper - BIS Technical Consultation document

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The consultation document from BIS on the technical aspects of the proposals set out in the White Paper "Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System" (SC.617/10-11).
- (b) A UUK policy briefing, with a summary and initial analysis of the Technical Consultation published by BIS (SC.618/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the consultation document proposed a new strengthened role for HEFCE as the lead regulator for higher education, with a single funding framework, a role as the champion of the student interest, and as the provider for the designation for student support and HEFCE teaching grant.
- (b) That reforms to the criteria for Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs) and University Title (UT) were also proposed, with powers attributed to HEFCE to withdraw DAPs and impose fines on institutions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's Senior Officers discuss the BIS Technical Consultation document, and inform the Steering Committee of pressure points and any issues that may arise.

- (b) That, following further discussion, a response would be submitted to the BIS Technical Consultation prior to the submission deadline of 27 October 2011.

848/10-11 Fees Working Group report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Assistant Secretary to the Fees Working Group, proposing potential scenarios for the setting of international tuition fees (SC.598/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That considerations included the impact of fee rises on the diversity of the broader student cohort, and the University's strategy in longer-term positioning of its fee levels within the upper tier of the market.
- (b) That the Fees Working Group proposed four scenarios for the level of international fees in 2012/13, with consideration to be given to ensure that any uplift in fees would not create barriers to access.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That there was no indication within the report of how the increased fees would translate into improved provision for students.
- (d) That he would welcome consideration of a scenario that maintains the current fee level.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That the current financial models for resource allocation did not facilitate transparency of how fee income was used to improve arrangements and teaching of students.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (f) That he endorsed the view that the University should ensure that fee and bursary arrangements enabled a more diverse student body, particularly to enable excellent students from poorer backgrounds to access Warwick.

RESOLVED:

That members of the Steering Committee consider the scenarios proposed in the Fees Working Group report on the setting of international tuition fees, and respond to the Registrar or the Senior Assistant Registrar (Management Information and Planning) prior to the next meeting of the Fees Working Group in early September.

849/10-11 QAA Consultation on Draft Guidance on Experiences of International Students

CONSIDERED:

A circular letter from the QAA, requesting responses to a consultation on draft guidance around the experiences of international students studying in higher education in the UK (SC.619/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That, at first sight, the draft guidance appeared to be overly detailed and refer to relatively straightforward and simplistic expectations, and there was a lack of clarity as to why it had been written and circulated by the QAA.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Deputy Registrar would establish the membership of the advisory group, composed of staff from higher education institutions and sector organisations, that assisted in the preparation of the draft guidance on experiences of international students.
- (b) That a University response to the QAA consultation on the draft guidance on experiences of international students be prepared by the International Office and considered at a future meeting of the Steering Committee, prior to the submission deadline of 14 October 2011.

850/10-11 HEFCE Routes into Languages Initiative

RECEIVED:

A news item from HEFCE that announced the availability of an additional £1.2 million to support the Routes into Languages initiative (SC.611/10-11).

851/10-11 HEFCE Consultation on Teaching Funding and Student Number Controls (minute 789/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE Consultation on Teaching Funding and Student Number Controls (SC.615/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That members of the Steering Committee consider the draft response to the HEFCE Consultation on Teaching Funding and Student Number Controls, and respond to the Director of Management Information and Planning prior to the submission deadline of 2 September 2011.

852/10-11 Record of Thanks

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the congratulations of the Steering Committee be extended to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on his appointment as the next Vice Chancellor of the University of Lancaster.
- (b) That the thanks of the Steering Committee be extended to Professor Stella Bruzzi and Professor Tim Jones for their work as the Chairs of the Boards of the Faculty of Arts and Science respectively.

853/10-11 QAA: Consultation on Changes to the Academic Infrastructure (minute 419/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The report "*Changes to the Academic Infrastructure: final report*" that analyses the responses to the QAA consultation and draws conclusions about the future development of the Academic Infrastructure, involving a restructure to become the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education (SC.616/10-11).

- 854/10-11 QAA “Outcomes” papers (minute 470/10-11 refers)  
RECEIVED:  
Notification from the QAA of the publication of two Outcomes from Institutional Audit papers; “Managing Academic Standards” and “Student Engagement and Support” (SC.599/10-11).
- 855/10-11 HEFCE Equality Scheme 2011-2014 (minute 819/10-11 refers)  
RECEIVED:  
The University’s response to the HEFCE Equality Scheme 2011-2014 consultation, submitted prior to the deadline of 29 July 2011 (SC.607/10-11).
- 856/10-11 Part 2 of HEFCE Financial Memorandum  
RECEIVED:  
Part 2 of the financial memorandum (funding agreement) between the HEFCE and the University for 2011/12 (SC.600/10-11).
- 857/10-11 Highly Trusted Sponsorship for Tier 4 Sponsors (minute 813/10-11 refers)  
RECEIVED:  
The University’s response to the UKBA’s proposed new criteria for Highly Trusted Sponsorship (HTS), submitted to both UUK and the UKBA directly prior to the deadline of 5 August 2011 (SC.610/10-11).
- 858/10-11 Changes to the Student Immigration System (minute 813/10-11 refers)  
RECEIVED:  
A letter from the Minister for Immigration in response to a letter of concern from the University with regard to changes to the student immigration system (SC.601/10-11).
- 859/10-11 Education Oversight Arrangements for Tier 4 Sponsors  
RECEIVED:  
An email from the UKBA with confirmation of the Education Oversight Arrangements for Tier 4 Sponsors (SC.602/10-11).
- 860/10-11 Student Visa Policy  
RECEIVED:  
A report from the Home Affairs Committee regarding the Government’s response to the Committee’s Student Visa report (SC.603/10-11).
- 861/10-11 Peer Review in Scientific Publications  
RECEIVED:  
An announcement from the Science and Technology Committee regarding peer review in scientific publications (SC.604/10-11).

862/10-11 Research Activity Survey (RAS)

RECEIVED:

Confirmation from the HEFCE of the decision to discontinue the Research Activity Survey, with data to be collected via the HESA return to inform the allocation of funding in the future (SC.605/10-11).

863/10-11 Developments in HE and Research in Europe

RECEIVED:

An E-note providing an update on current and upcoming EU initiatives, consultations and legislation relating to education and research, following a sector-wide delegation of EU officials and organisations to Brussels at the end of June 2011 (SC.614/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Aug11/22Aug11