

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 25 February 2013

Present: Deputy-Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor S Croft  
Professor Christina Hughes,  
Professor Christopher Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor J Palmowski,  
Professor S Swain,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Professor L Young.

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Mr N Swain, Professor M Taylor, Professor P Thomas.

In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Group Finance Director, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Deputy Academic Registrar (for item 248/12-13), Assistant Registrar (Warwick Graduate School) (for item 249/12-13), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 250/12-13), Director of Research Support Services (for item 251/12-13).

237/12-13 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2013 be approved.

238/12-13 HEFCE Final Grant Adjustments Report for 2012/13

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University had received the HEFCE Final Grant Adjustments Report for 2012/13, arising from recruitment against the student number control and medical and dental intake targets.
- (b) That the report confirmed that Warwick would not be subject to any grant adjustment in relation to under-recruitment against target.

239/12-13 Scholarships for Indian Students

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Vice-Chancellor had announced a package of 16 new scholarships for Indian students during a visit to India, further enhancing Warwick's ties with the country.
- (b) That the scholarships would be offered for taught masters degrees across a number of departments including Law, Politics and International Studies, WMG, Warwick Business School, the Department of Economics and the School of Life Sciences.

240/12-13 My Warwick Journey

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That Student Careers and Skills had launched a new website dedicated to first year undergraduates, providing information and advice on succeeding in studies, thinking about careers, and gaining work experience
- (b) That the initiative aimed to encourage and enable students to develop employability skills through both the academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities, and to enhance understanding of how their academic, personal, and professional skills could support their employability.

241/12-13 Go Green Week 2013

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That Go Green Week, the largest nation-wide, student-led environmental campaign, had taken place on campus between Monday 18 and Friday 22 February 2013.
- (b) That the week aimed to raise environmental awareness and encourage participation in action against climate change.
- (c) That events held during the week included a talk from Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green party, walks, films, workshops and opportunities to find out what steps the University and the Students' Union were taking to become more environmentally friendly.

242/12-13 Education Update

CONSIDRED:

A report from the Deputy Academic Registrar updating the Steering Committee on matters relating to Education (SC.150/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That at its meeting on 20 June 2012, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) recommended to the Steering Committee that a review of exams scheduling in the summer term be instigated.
- (b) That the approval of further Undergraduate Open Days for 21 and 22 June 2013 had required the release of large examination venues for a longer period of time to avoid the simultaneous scheduling of examinations and recruitment events.
- (c) That a number of departments were calling for the start date of undergraduate examinations to be brought forward in order to reduce exam congestion for students and to increase the period available for marking and moderation prior to the meetings of the Boards of Examiners.
- (d) That the reduction in teaching hours prior to the examination period had previously led to deterioration in the relationship between departments and student cohorts, and given that contact time was subject to increasing scrutiny, the consequence of reducing this further would require wider consideration.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That it would be beneficial for the review to consider the use of all three terms.

(by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

- (f) That this review should correspond with the review of the academic timetable.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed review into the use of the summer term be approved as set out in paper SC.150/12-13, subject to the inclusion of the autumn and spring terms on the review programme.

243/12-13 Warwick Graduate School Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Assistant Registrar (Warwick Graduate School) updating the Steering Committee on matters relating to postgraduate study (SC.145/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Assistant Registrar (Warwick Graduate School))

- (a) That over 5000 visits to the Postgraduate Hub were recorded in October and November 2012, with postgraduate taught students accounting for the majority of users.
- (b) That the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) had been launched on 6 February 2013 and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) would open on 5 March 2013.
- (c) That a target for an increase in participation of over 5% had been set for both surveys.
- (d) That there had been a drop of approximately 300 applications to the combined Postgraduate Research scholarships competition, noting that the competition had operated on an accelerated timetable in 2013.
- (e) That the quality of the nominees for the combined scholarships was exceptionally strong.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (f) That the reform of scholarship provision currently being considered by a working group of the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) should be mindful of the forthcoming review of the Graduate School.
- (g) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research should be consulted on any recommendations made by the BGS Working Group.

(by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (h) That the BGS working group established to consider minimum entry requirements for postgraduate taught study should ensure consultation with departments which relied heavily on the taught postgraduate market.

244/12-13 Admissions, Recruitment and International Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment updating the Steering Committee on undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment and applications to the 2013 academic year (SC.151/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That whilst overall application numbers were down by 3.6% compared with the equivalent point in the previous cycle, approximately 425 more conditional offers had been made.
- (b) That the project to move undergraduate admissions to a fully paperless system had successfully entered the pilot phase, with phase two scheduled to go live in September 2013.
- (c) That contingencies were in place to ensure continuity should the implementation of phase two be affected by unforeseen issues.
- (d) That overall, applications to postgraduate programmes had increased compared to the same point in the previous cycle, although Home/EU applications for postgraduate taught courses had declined by approximately 9%.
- (e) That the PGCE accounted for a proportion of the home/EU decline, however, the Warwick Business School had also experienced a drop in applicant numbers.
- (f) That an external consultant had been appointed to consider the University's undergraduate admissions process, with a view to optimising applicant numbers and conversion rates.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (g) That it was important for the University to consider its recruitment strategies to ensure that all potential sources of high-calibre applicant were being targeted.
- (h) That the priority for the remainder of the admissions cycle would be to enhance applicant conversion and ensure a high quality student intake from the available applicant pool.

(by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

- (i) That the MB ChB would be admitting students with arts and humanities degrees for the first time in 2013.
- (j) That the School had worked closely with St George's University of London in implementing this change, due to its experience and success in extending its postgraduate Medicine programmes to graduates with non-Science degrees.

245/12-13 Response to the HEFCE Consultation on the Proposed Implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat from 2013/14

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE consultation on the proposed implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat from 2013/14 (SC.154/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (a) That the draft response accepted compliance with the Concordat, but noted concern over the potential additional cost of any further reporting and compliance procedures introduced to oversee its implementation.
- (b) That the University's response was consistent with that put forward by the Russell Group.

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (c) That further expansion of the use of the Financial Memorandum for compliance might have implications for both banking covenants and external audit processes.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (d) That the Annual Monitoring Statement would be a more appropriate form of compliance.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the HEFCE consultation on the proposed implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat be approved as set out in paper SC.154/12-13, subject to the changes noted at the meeting.

246/12-13

Institutional Teaching and Learning Review 2011/12

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining progress made against recommendations arising from the departmental reviews undertaken during the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR) of 2011/12 (SC.152/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the paper highlighted the significant amount of development resulting from the ITLR; most notably the introduction of a standard feedback deadline, the rollout of virtual learning environments to facilitate feedback provision and personal tutoring, and revised resource allocation to support the delivery of joint degrees.

RESOLVED:

That a further update be provided to the Committee relating to outstanding recommendations arising from the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review in 2014.

247/12-13

Centre for Quantitative Methods: Bid for Funding

CONSIDERED:

An application for funding from the Nuffield Foundation, the ESRC and HEFCE to establish a Centre for Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (SC.153/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences)

- (a) That the introduction of a Quantitative Methods programme offered a crucial opportunity for the University to enhance its national and international reputation in the Social Sciences.

- (b) That demonstration of strategic investment by the University in support of the Centre was critical for the bid to succeed, noting the high-level competition from institutions with stronger track records in the field.

(by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

- (c) That clinical trials activity in the Medical School and a proposed major research project in conjunction with the Warwick Business School demonstrated University commitment to quantitative methods, and could potentially be incorporated in to the case for support.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That there were further initiatives in the Faculty of Science with an Analytics focus which could also be included to strengthen the application.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That the opening paragraph of the application should be revised to convey the University-wide relevance of the proposed Centre.
- (f) That the provision of Easter schools should be emphasised in the bid, noting that their potential to broaden the appeal of quantitative methods to students whose degrees did not cover the subject was positive.
- (g) That the proposed liaison with the International Gateway for Gifted Youth (IGGY) should be highlighted to illustrate the University's commitment to engaging younger students with the discipline.

RESOLVED:

That the application for funding to establish a Centre for Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences be approved as set out in paper SC.153/12-13, subject to the amendments recommended by the Committee.

KS/CS/Steering/Minutes/2012-2013/25-02-2013