UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on Wednesday 8 December 2010

Present:          Professor A Caesar (Chair), Professor S Bruzzi, Professor S Hand, Professor
                  N Johnson, Professor J Labbe, Mr S Lamb, Dr D Lamburn, Dr P O'Hare, Dr J
                  Robinson, Mr S Ruston, Mr D Stevens

Apologies:     Ms S Bennett, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jenainati, Professor T Jones,
                  Professor K O'Brien

In attendance: Ms K Gray, Mr R McIntyre, Dr W Mitchell (for item 27/10-11).


21/10-11      Minutes of the last meeting

              RESOLVED:

              That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2010, available on the
              Governance website, be approved.

22/10-11      Matters arising

              (a)      QAA Consultation on the Operational Description for Institutional
                       Review (minutes 11(b)/10-11 and SC 129/10-11 referred)

                       REPORTED:

                       (i)      That, at its meeting on 2 November 2010, the Committee
                                considered:

                                (A)      A draft operational description from the QAA on the
                                         new Institutional Review process for Higher Education
                                         in England and Northern Ireland (paper AQSC 3/10-
                                         11);

                                (B)      A copy of the University's draft response to the
                                         consultation (paper AQSC 22/10-11)

                                and recommended (to the Steering Committee) that the
                                University's draft response be approved subject to the
                                following amendments:

                                (C)      That any interim review of the outcome of an
                                         institutional review be undertaken by peers, not QAA
                                         officers;

                                (D)      That Institutional Facilitators not be required to attend
                                         review preparation meetings at the QAA.

(ii)     That, at its meeting on 15 November 2010, Steering Committee <u>considered</u> the draft University response to the QAA consultation on the proposed successor to Institutional Audit, from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (SC.95/10-11) and <u>resolved</u> that the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) liaise with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and the Student Experience) in drafting a covering letter to the University's response to the consultation, to clarify the University's concerns regarding the proposed changes and submit the University's response prior to the deadline of 26 November 2010;

(iii)    That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) had subsequently worked with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) to draft a covering letter to the University's response to the consultation, and also to make small amendments in light of the University having received a copy of the draft response from the Russell Group.

RECEIVED:

(iv)    The final version of the University's response to the consultation, with covering letter (paper AQSC 22/10-11 (revised));

(v)     The final version of the Russell Group response to the consultation (paper AQSC 29/10-11).

(b)    <u>Key Performance Indicators (minute 16/10-11 referred)</u>

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 2 November 2010, the Committee <u>resolved</u> that the report from the Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office) and the Director of Management Information and Planning concerning key performance indicators for teaching and learning (paper AQSC 17/10-11) be noted.

RECEIVED:

The final version of key performance indicators for teaching and learning considered by Council at its meeting on 26 November 2010 (paper AQSC 17/10-11 (revised)).

23/10-11    <u>Progress of Committee Recommendations (minute 23/10-11 referred)</u>

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 14 October 2010 it was <u>reported</u> to the Council that the Pro-Chancellor had taken Chair's action on behalf of the Council to approve amendments to University Regulation 8 to reflect changes in the University's assessment conventions.

24/10-11    Chair's business

(a)    Membership of the Committee

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies would soon be leaving the University and had therefore concluded her Committee work with immediate effect.

RESOLVED:

(i)    That the Committee thank the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies for her significant contribution to the work of the Committee and the University over many years;

(ii)    That members of the Committee make known to the Chair any nominations or volunteers for the vacant position of Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, and for the associated positions of Chair of the Placement Learning and Joint Degree Coordinators annual meetings, and Chair of the HEAR Project Board.

(b)    Higher Education Academy: Future Work and Structure (minutes 8/10-11, SC.133/10-11, SC.790/09-10 and SC.729/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 2 November 2010, the Committee received the University's response to the Higher Education Academy Consultation: Future Work and Structure (paper SC.523/09-10 (revised), noting that the response was composed in consultation with members of the Committee, previous National Teaching Fellowship award winners based at Warwick and the Directors of the History and Law HEA subject-centres, and that the response had been approved by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 6 September 2010 prior to submission to the HEA.

RECEIVED:

A letter to the Vice-Chancellor from the Director of the Higher Education Academy, setting out the revised structure and priorities for the HEA from 2011 onwards (paper AQSC 30/10-11), along with an oral report from the Chair, noting that:

(i)    The matter was considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2010, where it was reported *(inter alia)* that the University would review the implications of not continuing with subscription to the HEA;

(ii)    Arising from a recommendation in Lord Browne's review, the Higher Education Academy was currently also consulting with HEIs regarding the accreditation of introductory teaching qualifications, but that a number of seemingly contradictory communications had been received and were currently under

consideration, as were a number of alternative approaches proposed by other Russell Group institutions.

25/10-11     <u>Vision 2015 - 2010 Update</u>

CONSIDERED:

Those aspects of the 2010 update of the Vision 2015 Strategy relating to teaching and learning activities (paper AQSC 31/10-11), noting that the paper also included a table showing progress against objectives from the original strategy document.

RESOLVED:

(a)     That the section of the paper detailing progress against objectives should also include the restructuring of student support services;

(b)     That the proposal to further develop the role of the personal tutor was welcome, but that this should be carefully presented to recognise that much enhancement work had already taken place in this regard, noting that:

   (i)     The aim should not be to enforce uniformity across the personal tutor system in departments, rather to ensure consistency of service delivery whilst recognising legitimate disciplinary differences;

   (ii)    There needs to be a greater degree of clarity as to what students can broadly expect from their personal tutor in each department;

   (iii)   That if the importance of the personal tutor system is to be understood equally across the institution, this message will need to be reinforced strongly at the highest level;

(c)     That student mobility should be a key theme in enhancing the student experience and internationalisation, and that this should be well marketed, noting that it may be necessary to consider carefully the fee structure for students undertaking such opportunities to ensure that this is not viewed as a disincentive;

(d)     The introduction of a range of Diplomas would be a welcome addition to the Warwick offering in terms of enhancing student employability, noting that:

   (i)     This would have considerable resource implications and, if accredited, such additional learning opportunities would be subject to the University's Quality Assurance framework;

   (ii)    This would, in effect, result in an individualisation of student experience for which the personal tutor could play a valuable role in advising individual students on the range of opportunities available and providing appropriate guidance;

     (iii)     Consideration should be given as to how the University might support students to seek employment in sectors for which a certain amount of unpaid experience is an expectation and where students may not have at their disposal the necessary resources to pursue this;

     (iv)     The feasibility of utilising the vacation periods to offer further student learning opportunities should be fully explored;

(d)     An increase in distance learning provision would have substantial resource implications and that, in reviewing provision and seeking a position, the University should seek to occupy a niche in the market rather than competing directly with established providers;

(e)     That the University should seek not only to reward outstanding teaching, for example through career progression opportunities, but should also consider carefully how it can ensure consistency in quality and make known widely the value attributed to high quality teaching;

(f)     That Committee members communicate any further observations on the revised Strategy consultation to the Chair following the meeting.

26/10-11     <u>Course and Module Approval Process</u>

(a)     <u>Operational Processes for Course and Module Approval</u>

CONSIDERED:

Proposals on the operational detail of course and module approval processes (paper AQSC 32/10-11).

RESOLVED:

(i)     That a proposal to introduce a generic PGA "course" with specified learning outcomes, within which departments could deliver their own modules, be explored further;

(ii)     That, in the interim, departments be requested to report the approval of PGAs and any revisions to PGAs to Faculty Sub-Committees, following which they will be reported to the Board of Graduate Studies, AQSC and the Senate;

(iii)     That the academic element of stand-alone collaborative modules be approved at departmental level, while the collaborative element be approved by CFDLSC, as set out in the revised procedures for collaborative modules;

(iv)     That the review of the annual course review process incorporate the relationship between annual course review, the Faculty audit of departmental module approval processes and reporting on new modules and revised modules to Faculty Sub-Committees;

(v)     That further consideration be given as to how to ensure that consultations regarding new/revised modules take place

between the home department(s) and all other departments within which a given module might be available as a course component;

(vi) That proposals to revise existing courses be approved by the Chair of the relevant Faculty Graduate Studies committee, noting that the process previously approved stated that such revisions should be approved by the Chair of the Faculty Board but that this was not considered to be appropriate;

(vii) That the new module and course approval procedures be reviewed after 2 years to ensure their fitness for purpose.

(b) Faculty Audit Process

CONSIDERED:

Proposals for the operation of the Faculty Audit process (paper AQSC 33/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the Faculty Audit process, as set out in paper AQSC 33/10-11, be approved, noting that:

(i) Consideration should be given to the timing of the audit, and whether this could be linked to the timing of departments' strategic departmental review (i.e. 12 months prior) in order to feed in to the latter;

(ii) The audit process will need regular review and that this should be a function of AQSC.

27/10-11    Monash – Warwick Alliance – 12 month review report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the joint review of the Monash-Warwick partnership, noting those aspects in particular relating to teaching and learning (Paper IC 16/10-11), and an oral report from the Assistant Director (Institutional Relations), International Office, noting that the report was presented to the International Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2010.

RESOLVED:

That many aspects of the partnership are very interesting and could provide much opportunity for collaborating with the aim of enhancing the student experience, and that specific projects, some potentially involving the newly formed Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning, would be discussed at future meetings of the Committee.

28/10-11    HEFCE Consultation on Public Information about Higher Education

CONSIDERED:

A consultation document by the HEFCE on changes to information published by institutions on courses of study (paper AQSC 34/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That a small working group be convened, chaired by the Chair of the Committee and to include members from AQSC, Student Admissions and Recruitment, Student Careers and Skills and the Estates office, to formulate the University's response to the consultation, noting that:

(a)     The Committee was immediately concerned about the inclusion of "average salary" in the Key Information Set, it being considered that this data was too inconsistent and would need excessive contextual information for it to be meaningful;

(b)     The draft response would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting, prior to consideration by the Steering Committee and submission to HEFCE by the deadline of 7 March 2011.

29/10-11     Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2010 Results (minute BGS 26/10-11 refers)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 18 November 2010, the Board of Graduate Studies considered papers setting out the results of the PTES survey at Warwick in 2010 and a detailed breakdown of the survey at Warwick by department, and resolved:

(a)     That PTES 2010 results indicated several areas of concern (noting that these were based on a 24% response rate);

(b)     That departments analyse their results in conjunction with departmental feedback they might already have received independently;

(c)     That given the low participation rate of Warwick students in PTES 2010 and the high percentage of DL MBA students within that population, rather than a cross section of the wider University, ways to encourage the participation of a broader cross-section of PGT students be considered.

CONSIDERED:

(d)     The PTES 2010 overall results (papers BGS 19/10-11), and an overview departmental breakdown (paper BGS 20/10-11).

(e)     A report from the Higher Education Academy summarising the development, operation and findings of the second national survey in the UK of taught postgraduate students, PTES 2010 (paper BGS 21/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That further analysis of the data be undertaken to establish any differences in response between campus-based and distance-learning students, in particular related to the reported lack of awareness of the role of personal tutor.

30/10-11     Terms of Reference of AQSC's Sub-Committees

(a)     Board of Undergraduate Studies

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 17 November 2010, the Board of Undergraduate Studies recommended that the terms of reference of the Board be amended as set out below.

CONSIDERED:

The following amendments to the terms of reference for the Board of Undergraduate Studies (insertions underlined, deletions struck-through):

(a)     To consider and make recommendations to the Academic Quality Standards Committee on issues relating to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching across all undergraduate provision;

(b)     To make recommendations to the Senate, after consultation with academic departments and the Faculty Boards, on all matters affecting undergraduate study in the University including strategic considerations;

(c)     To scrutinise all new undergraduate course proposals and report to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on consideration of such proposals;

(d)     To consider the Faculty Summary Reports of the Annual Course Review reports, teaching and learning-related sections of Strategic Departmental Reviews (together with relevant departmental responses) and the Undergraduate Student-Staff Liaison Committee Annual Report and liaise with departments regarding any issues of concern;

(e)     To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on matters relating to examinations in undergraduate courses;

(f)     To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on the role of internal and external examiners for undergraduate degrees;

(g)     To report to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee annually on the issues raised in reports by External Examiners;

(h)     To consider submissions from the Faculty Boards for non-standard examination methods, including seen papers, open-book examinations and reading times, and to make

recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee;

(i)     To exercise delegated powers on behalf of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in approving, on personal grounds, minor variations in the arrangements for the sitting of undergraduate examinations by individual students;

(j)     To consider all matters affecting admissions practices and policy and make recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee where appropriate;

(k)     To consider requests for variations to the University's Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) policy for individual students.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the revised terms of reference for the Board of Undergraduate Studies, as set out in the minutes, be approved.

(b)     Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 11 November 2010, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered revised terms of reference, constitution and membership of the Committee for 2010-11, paper CFDLSC 1/10-11, and resolved that that the revised terms of reference be approved, noting:

(i)     That the QAA is understood to be publishing amplifications to part B of section 2 of the code of practice [relating to courses incorporating elements of flexible and distributed-learning] in the forthcoming academic year and that it may therefore be necessary to further review the terms of reference, in particular in relation to the approval of distance-learning provision, in light of these in Autumn 2011;

(ii)    The view of the Sub-Committee that the approval of courses involving distance-learning elements should ideally remain with CFDLSC in order to ensure uniformity of provision across the institution

CONSIDERED:

The following amendments to the terms of reference for the Collaborative, Flexible and Distribute Learning Sub-Committee (insertions underlined, deletions struck-through):

(a)     To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on University policy on validated and franchised provision, joint awards in partnership with other Higher Education institutions, provision involving a consortium of providers, or any other

collaborative arrangement leading to the award of a University qualification;

(b)     To advise on the management of part-time Undergraduate Degree and 2+2 Degree courses;

(c)     To consider from a lifelong learning perspective proposals for new Foundation Degree, Part-time Undergraduate Degree and 2+2 Degree courses, it being noted that academic approval for new courses is the responsibility of the Undergraduate Studies Committee/Sub-Faculty of the appropriate Faculty Board(s);

(d)(b)  To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on University policy on provision involving distance learning, distance delivery or delivery falling within its remit;

(e)(c)  Following scrutiny of their academic content by the relevant Faculty committees, to scrutinise the rationale for and strength of the partnership or distance learning arrangements for new or restructured courses or modules involving collaborative provision, distance learning or distance delivery and to make recommendations to one or more of the following bodies as appropriate:

(i)     The Board of Graduate Studies for provision leading to a postgraduate award;
(ii)    The Board of Undergraduate Studies for provision leading to an undergraduate award.

(f)(d)  To establish and monitor appropriate mechanisms for the continued quality assurance of awards involving collaborative provision, distance learning or distance delivery falling within its remit;

(g)(e)  To promote best practice in the operation and quality management of collaborative, distance learning or distance delivered provision across University departments and schools;

(h)(f)  To consider the reports of External Examiners for validated and franchised awards and to follow through any issues of concern raised by the Boards of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies in connection with these or the other courses within its remit.

RESOLVED:

That the revised terms of reference for the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee, as set out in the minutes, be approved.

(c)     Quality Enhancement Working Group

REPORTED:

(i)     That, at its meeting on 2 November 2010, the Committee
        considered proposals for governance arrangements for quality
        enhancement activities (paper AQSC 15/10-11) and resolved:

        (A)     That the principle of the disestablishment of the Quality
                Enhancement Working Group be approved, with those
                areas of its responsibilities relating to that of IATL being
                transferred to the IATL Steering Group, noting that this
                proposal would need to be subject to consultation with
                members of QEWG.

        (B)     That those aspects of the QEWG's responsibilities
                which do not lie within the scope of activity of IATL be
                overseen by AQSC.

(ii)    That the members of QEWG in 2009/10 had been consulted on
        the future of the Group and had agreed with the proposal that
        the Group be disestablished provided that appropriate
        alternative fora be identified for discussions on quality
        enhancement issues.

RESOLVED:

That the disestablishment of the Quality Enhancement Working Group
be approved.

31/10-11     Higher Education Achievement Report

CONSIDERED:

A report on the meeting of the Higher Education Achievement Report Project
Board held on 23 November 2010 (paper AQSC 35/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the HEAR Project Board be approved, noting
that it had now been agreed that the Teaching Quality section of the
Academic Office would manage the project.

32/10-11     Collaborative Course Proposals

Hong Kong VTC and Interact Learning

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 11 November 2010, the Collaborative, Flexible and
Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a proposal from Warwick
Manufacturing Group for a variation of the collaboration with Hong Kong VTC
as set out in paper CFDLSC 5/10-11, and recommended (to the Academic
Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposal be approved.

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group for a variation of the
collaboration with Hong Kong VTC (paper CFDLSC 5/10-11).

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group for a variation of the collaboration with Hong Kong VTC (paper CFDLSC 5/10-11) be approved.

33/10-11    New and Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study (draft unconfirmed minute BUGS 6/10-11 and 9/10-11 referred)

(a)    New courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 17 November 2010, approved the following new courses:

- BA History of Art (with Intercalated Year);
- BA German and History;
- BA English Literature (with Intercalated Year).

34/10-11    New and Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study (draft unconfirmed minutes BGS 22/10-11, BGS 29/10-11 and BGS 30/10-11 referred)

(a)    New courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 18 November 2010 approved the following new courses:

- MSc in Innovation and Entrepreneurship;
- MSc in Intercultural Communication for Business and Professions;
- Certificate in Management (Sports Management);
- MSc in Accounting and Finance.

(b)    Revised courses

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 18 November 2010 approved the following revised courses:

- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Finance and Leadership;
- Master of Business Administration (by Distance Learning);
- LLM in Development Law and Legal Education.

(c)    Change of Title

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 18 November 2010 approved the following changes of title:

- MA in International Cultural Policy and Management [from MA in European Cultural Policy and Management]

35/10-11     <u>QAA: Consultation on a New Subject Benchmark Statement for Masters Degrees In Computing; And Revised Subject Benchmark Statement for Engineering</u>

RECEIVED:

A communication from the QAA (paper AQSC 36/10-11) outlining:

(a)     The draft subject benchmark statement for Masters Degrees in Computing, noting that input to the University's response had been requested from the Department of Computer Science and the Centre for Scientific Computing;

(b)     Revisions to the subject benchmark statement for Engineering.

36/10-11     <u>Secretariat of the Committee</u>

REPORTED:

That the Secretary to the Committee had taken up a secondment opportunity for 9 months as the Acting Head of Governance.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary be thanked for her contribution to the work of the Committee.

37/10-11     <u>Next meeting</u>

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.00am on Thursday, 3 February 2011 in the Council Chamber, University House.

KG/RM, 14.12.10
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