

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Thursday 14 May 2009

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair); Professor J Davis, Professor A Easton, Dr K Flint, Professor C Hughes, Professor N Johnson, Professor R Lindley, Dr R Moseley, Dr P O'Hare, Dr P Roberts

Apologies: Ms S Bennett, Professor L Bridges, Professor S Bruzzi, Ms S Jones, Professor K Lamberts, Dr D Lamburn, Professor A McFarlane, Mr M Surve

In attendance: Ms G Frigerio (for item 73/08-09), Ms J Hughes, Dr J Moss

68/08-09 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 February 2009 be approved.

69/08-09 Matters arising

(a) QAA Institutional Audit (minute 38(a)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That QAA had published the final report on the University's Institutional audit:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?ukprn=10007163](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?ukprn=10007163)

RECEIVED:

Summary of the QAA Institutional Audit report, paper AQSC 52/08-09, along with the University's reponse, paper AQSC 53/08-09, which had been published by QAA alongside the report.

(b) Assessment on Warwick Manufacturing Group courses (minute 54(b)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

(i) That the Chair convened a small group to work with Warwick Manufacturing Group to review mechanisms employed on WMG overseas courses for assuring that Warwick standards of academic quality and fairness are maintained in the supervision and marking of projects/dissertations;

- (ii) That at the meeting the group and colleagues from Warwick Manufacturing Group agreed the following actions:
  - (A) That Warwick Manufacturing Group write to the supervisor involved in the individual case which had given rise to a student complaint to reiterate the importance of adhering to Warwick's standards in marking and the provision of feedback to students;
  - (B) That Warwick Manufacturing Group bring forward proposals to rebalance weightings attached to different aspects of project assessment;
  - (C) That Warwick Manufacturing Group draw up a framework with clear milestones against which to assess students' progress and project management achievements, giving clarity to supervisors and students, and providing an evidence base for moderation;
  - (D) That Warwick Manufacturing Group draw up a framework for the assessment of students' oral presentations and oral exams, including guidance on expectations that the mark for the oral exam is generally unlikely to be significantly higher than the mark for the written dissertation.
  
- (iii) That the Academic Director of Graduate Studies, Warwick Manufacturing Group, had written to the supervisor involved along the lines agreed at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (iv) That the Committee be informed of further actions taken by Warwick Manufacturing Group in due course;
  - (v) That, if possible, the Committee be informed of the Vice-Chancellor's decision concerning the student complaint which gave rise to this discussion.
- (c) Institute of Education collaborative courses (minute 60(f)/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That Dr R Moseley, Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee, and Dr A Dowd, Academic Director of Graduate Studies, Warwick Manufacturing Group, had met with Professor A Prout, Director of the Institute of Education, Ms R Collins, Business Development Director, Institute of Education, and Ms P Butson, Quality Assurance Manager, Institute of Education, to discuss the management of the Institute's overseas collaborative courses;

- (ii) That the meeting had been reassured that the Institute of Education has measures in place to manage academic quality and standards on their collaborative courses;
  - (iii) That the meeting had suggested that it may be beneficial to review the current procedure for proposing new collaborative courses, noting in particular that the current timeline, which is fixed to the dates when University committee meet, may not provide sufficient flexibility for departments in responding to opportunities; nonetheless, the meeting reiterated that departments must adhere to the current procedure, especially concerning the timing of signing contracts.
- (d) Annual Course Review (minute 55/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Chair was convening a meeting of chairs of Faculty Boards and the Board of Graduate Studies, and the Students' Union Education Officer, to consider changes to the Annual Course Review process.

70/08-09

Chair's Action

- (a) School of Engineering SDR

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action since the last meeting to approve an amended course list for consideration during the Strategic Departmental Review of the School of Engineering, paper AQSC 81/07-08 Annex C (revised).

- (b) Credit and module framework

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action since the last meeting to approve an amendment to the University Credit and Module framework to clarify that, where the module permits a choice, students must select their method of assessment by a set date/point in the module in order to ensure equity of treatment as well as enabling the efficient construction of the exam timetable, noting that the framework is published online at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/quality/categories/courseapproval/credit>

(c) Erasmus Mundus

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on the behalf of the Committeem had taken action since the last meeting to approve proposals submitted to the European Commission's competition for recognition and funding as Erasmus Mundus courses, as set out in paper CFDLSC 41/08-09.

71/08-09 Progress of Committee recommendations

REPORTED:

That the Senate at its meeting on 11 March 2009 resolved that recommendations from the Committee be approved under the following headings:

- (a) Constitution and membership
- (b) New collaborative courses

72/08-09 Chair's Business

(a) Committee secretariat

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (i) That since the last meeting of the Committee the Assistant Secretary had got married and was now Jenny Hughes;

RESOLVED:

That the Assistant Secretary be congratulated on her wedding.

- (ii) That the Secretary would be leaving the University before the next meeting of the Committee;

RESOLVED:

That the Committee thanked the Secretary for his sterling service over the past four and a half years and wished him well in his new appointment.

(b) E-learning support

REPORTED (by the Chair):

- (i) That as part of the current financial planning round IT Services had raised the possibility of reconfiguring support for e-learning, especially the funding model, possibly including disbanding the e-Learning Advisor Team;

- (ii) That discussions provoked by this proposal had been helpful to IT Services in identifying priorities within services currently provided and software currently supported;
  - (iii) That IT Services were developing proposals in consultation with academic departments to achieve a balance of funding between central provision of some support and services, and departmental charging for other areas, to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources;
  - (iv) That the Director of IT Services would be writing to Heads of Department in the near future to outline further proposals in the area of e-learning support;
  - (v) That the Director of IT Services and colleagues recognise the central importance of e-learning for teaching and learning at the University;
  - (vi) That consideration would continue to be given to the most appropriate physical and organisational location for e-learning support
- (c) Life Sciences

RECEIVED:

Current draft of a paper proposing the establishment of a School of Life Sciences, paper BFS 12/08-09 (tabled), noting that this version had been considered by the Sub-Faculty of Science and the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science and would be amended before being considered by the Board of the Faculty of Science, to reiterate that any changes to existing courses or modules, or new courses or modules, would be subject to the normal approval processes.

- (d) UCU ballot on industrial action

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair in the context of the current national ballot by UCU regarding potential industrial action.

- (e) Careers and Skills Service

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That Ms Sue Bennett, Director of the Learning and Development Centre, had been appointed as Director of the newly integrated department for Careers and Student Skills.

73/08-09 Employability Strategy

CONSIDERED:

A progress report from Ms G Frigerio, Acting Director of the Careers Centre, concerning implementation of the Employability Strategy, paper AQSC 51/08-09, including discussion of the work of Careers Consultants with academic departments, the successful design and launch of Warwick Advantage, and questions of organisational structure.

RESOLVED:

That the report concerning the implementation of the Employability Strategy be approved as set out in paper AQSC 51/08-09, it being noted that:

- (a) Members of the Committee were satisfied with the service being provided by the Careers Centre;
- (b) The Annual Course Review process provides an opportunity to reflect on their engagement with the Careers Centre and the Employability Strategy;
- (c) It may be beneficial to include some statistics in future updates, to allow for year-on-year comparisons.

74/08-09 King's-Warwick project

REPORTED:

That HEFCE had awarded King's College London and Warwick £544,000 from its Strategic Development Fund to support a project concerned with the development of the undergraduate curriculum as set out in paper QEWG 26/08-09, it being noted that:

- (a) The main themes in the King's-Warwick project were aligned with priorities in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- (b) The involvement of staff and students from a range of departments was envisaged, including the Reinvention Centre, the Centre for Applied Linguistics, the Careers Centre and Centre for Student Development and Enterprise and others, and that Warwick Medical School was likely to have significant relevant expertise to contribute.

75/08-09 National Student Survey (minute 62/08-09 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That fieldwork for the National Student Survey had finished on 1 May 2009, and that the University had achieved an overall response rate of 62%, compared with a final response rate of 67% in 2008;

- (b) That final departmental response rates were as set out in paper AQSC 54/08-09.
- (c) That the overall national response rate in the 2009 survey was 62%, compared with a final response rate of 65% in 2008;
- (d) That the results of the survey would be published during the summer.

RESOLVED:

That all those involved in encouraging participation in the National Student Survey be thanked.

76/08-09

APEL

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A proposal from the Director of Academic Studies, Centre for Lifelong Learning, concerning the University Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning and the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, paper AQSC 41/08-09;
- (b) A proposal from the Institute of Education to update the relevant entries in Annex 1 of the APEL policy to reflect changed course structures on taught postgraduate courses in the Institute, paper AQSC 42/08-09;
- (c) Proposed amendments to the University's policy for the accreditation of prior learning to reflect the proposals from the Centre for Lifelong Learning and the Institute of Education, paper AQSC 59/08-09.

RESOLVED:

That proposals from the Centre for Lifelong Learning and the Institute of Education to amend the University's policy on the accreditation of prior learning be approved as set out in papers AQSC 41, 42 and 59/08-09.

77/08-09

Forthcoming PSRB engagements

CONSIDERED:

Outline report on preparations for the following PSRB engagements, due to take place during the 2008-09 academic year:

Learning and Development Centre: Higher Education Academy, paper AQSC 56/08-09.

78/08-09 UUK Note on TQ issues

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Information Note from Universities UK on a number of quality issues, paper AQSC 57/08-09;
- (b) Article by Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Essex, published in the *Times Higher Education* on 7 May 2009, along with a comment by Mr Walter Cairns, Manchester Metropolitan University School of Law, published on the *THE* website, paper AQSC 58/08-09.

REPORTED:

- (c) That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 11 May 2009 had considered the Information Note from Universities UK;
- (d) That QAA had very recently published a report of their thematic enquiry into standards and quality in English higher education institutions, available on their website:  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/standardsandquality/thematicenquiries/FinalReportApril09.pdf>

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider further publications and proposals in this area as they are published by sector bodies or others.

79/08-09 Examination arrangements

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from Professor C Hughes concerning examination invigilation for students requiring special arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Hughes raise her concerns with the Examinations section of the Academic Office in the first instance, and then, if necessary, with the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

80/08-09 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.00am on Wednesday 10 June 2009 in the Council Chamber, University House.