

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Wednesday 6 November 2013

Present: Professor C Hughes (Chair), Ms S Bennett (Director of Student Careers and Skills), Mr M Conaghan (Learning and Development Manager (Academic)), Professor C Constable (Representative of Senate (Arts)), Ms E Davies (Student Representative (Education Officer)), Ms L Gill (Student Representative (Postgraduate Officer)), Professor C Hughes (Chair of the Faculty of Social Science), Professor S Jacka (Representative of Senate (Science)), Dr J Kidd (Representative of the Chair of the Faculty of Medicine), Mr S Lamb (Senior Tutor), Dr D Lamburn (Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed-Learning Sub-Committee), Professor R Leng (Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies), Professor J Palmowski (Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies), Professor A Reeve (Representative of Senate (Social Sciences)), Dr J Robinson (SSLC Coordinator (Science and Medicine)), Dr P Taylor (Director of IATL), Ms A Thomas (Service Owner (Academic Technology)), Professor P Thomas (Chair of the Faculty of Science).

Apologies: Dr C Jenainati (SSLC Coordinator (Arts and Social Science)), Professor N Johnson (Representative of Senate (Medicine)), Professor S Swain (Chair of the Faculty of Arts).

In attendance: Dr G Carden (Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics) (for items 13/13-14 and 14/13-14), Ms K Gray (Secretary), Mr R McIntyre (Assistant Secretary).

1/13-14 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership

CONSIDERED:

The terms of reference, constitution and membership of the Committee for 2013-14 (paper AQSC 1/13-14).

RESOLVED:

That the new members of the Committee be welcomed.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the revised terms of reference, constitution and membership of the Committee for 2013-14 be approved, as set out in paper AQSC 1/13-14.

2/13-14 Freedom of Information

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 29 October 2007 considered a paper outlining how the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies to the publication of minutes of University bodies together with

the University Publication Scheme adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2003, paper SC 60/07-08, and resolved that a standard item be included on the agenda of the first meeting of each University Committee at the start of each academic year to inform new members and to remind continuing members of the University policy on the publication of minutes;

- (b) That all non-reserved minutes and agenda of the Committee are published on the University's Governance website at:  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/atoz/aqsc/minutes/>
- (c) That copies of paper SC 60/07-08 are available from the Secretary on request.

3/13-14 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

- (a) That, should any members or attendees of the Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK;
- (b) That no conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting were reported.

4/13-14 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013, circulated to members and available on the Governance website, be approved.

5/13-14 Matters arising

- (a) Review of the "50% Rule" (minutes 109(b)/12-13 and 98/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 20 May 2013, the Committee considered a paper and oral report from the Assistant Registrar (Learning and Teaching) on the "50% rule" (paper AQSC 56/12-13), and recommended (to the Senate):
  - (A) That the "50% rule", relating to the proportion of a student's total assessment across a degree programme which must be carried out under examination conditions, be discontinued, noting the view of the Committee that:

- (1) Any alterations to course regulations arising from the discontinuation of the rule should be departmental led;
    - (2) There should be no obligation for departments to reduce the number of examinations in the absence of a clear, departmental driven, academic rationale to do so;
  - (B) That a small sub-group of AQSC be convened to consider an implementation plan for discontinuing the “50% rule” and the appropriate timescales for so doing, together with the implications of discontinuing the “50% rule” in relation to:
    - (1) Ensuring that the assessment of students continues to be conducted at course level through a cohesive and strategic approach;
    - (2) Concern around the potential for increased incidences of plagiarism, and the means to mitigate against this;
    - (3) The prospect of an increased module and course approval burden on academic and administrative departments in the short term, and the means to effectively alleviate such load if necessary.
- (ii) That, at its meeting in 11 June 2013, the Committee considered arrangements for the convening of a sub-group to consider the implementation of the discontinuation of the “50% rule”, as resolved by the Committee at its [previous] meeting, and resolved
  - (A) That a small working-group be convened to consider:
    - (1) The articulation of a University “Assessment Strategy”;
    - (2) The timeline for the abolition of the “50% rule”, and the implications for departments;
    - (3) Any measures necessary to ensure that assessment can be appropriately designed to reduce opportunities for plagiarism to a minimum;
  - (B) That the working-group be Chaired by the Chair of the Committee, and include one representative from each Faculty together with a student representative.
- (iii) That the working group met on 1 July 2013 to discuss the discontinuation of the 50% rule, and its recommendations were presented to the Senate on 3 July by the Chair of AQSC, which

were approved, and has subsequently met again to develop a University assessment strategy.

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Learning and Teaching), setting out the recommendations of the working group and the draft University Assessment Strategy (paper AQSC 2/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (iv) That the work to finalise the draft University Assessment Strategy be completed prior to asking departments to undertake work to develop their own local assessment strategies;
- (v) That the current deadline for departments to complete local assessment strategies be extended (deadline to be confirmed), whilst the minor amendments to the draft University assessment strategy are completed;
- (vi) That the Assessment Strategy Working Group be reconvened as soon as possible, in order to further develop the guidance material to support departments in developing their own local assessment strategies;
- (vii) That departments be reminded that the "50% rule" no longer applies to first and intermediate year students, in line with the recommendation of the Committee approved by the Senate at its meeting on 3 July 2013;

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the Draft University Assessment Strategy be approved, subject to the revisions discussed at the meeting.

- (b) QAA Action Plan

REPORTED:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 11 June 2013, the Committee considered the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) final report of the Institutional Review of the University of Warwick concluding in February 2013, together with a cover paper and oral report from the Lead Academic Co-ordinator for the QAA Review (paper AQSC 67/12-13), and resolved that the Chair take action following the meeting, on behalf of the Committee, to approve the University action plan, to be prepared by the Lead Academic Co-ordinator in consultation with relevant stakeholders and submitted to the QAA in response to the recommendations set out in the review report;
- (ii) That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had subsequently taken action to approve the University action

plan, prepared by the Lead Academic Co-ordinator in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

RECEIVED:

The University action plan, submitted to the QAA in response to the recommendations set out in the review report (paper AQSC 3/13-14).

- (c) Feedback on Exams and Dissertations (minute 25(d)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, the Committee considered a revised draft Policy and Guidance on the Timing of Feedback on Assessment (paper AQSC 12/12-13 (revised)), and resolved:

- (i) That the revised Policy and Guidance be approved subject to further review of the provisions relating to the marking of assignments linked to examinations.
- (ii) That, while the principle that the policy apply to extended pieces of work such as dissertations and research projects be endorsed, further consideration would be required on how this would be applied in practice.
- (iii) That any further amendments to the Policy in light of the resolutions set out in (a) and (b) above be approved by the Chair on behalf of the Committee.

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Assistant Registrars (Learning and Teaching) to amend the University Policy on the Timing of the Provision of Feedback to Students on Assessed work (paper AQSC 4/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposed revisions to the University Policy on the Timing of the Provision of Feedback to Students on Assessed work not be approved, but be redrafted and recirculated to take account of the views of the Committee that:
  - (A) At a minimum, generic or group feedback on examinations should be required by all departments, although not within the 20 University working day period;
  - (B) Feedback on dissertations and/or extended projects should be required by all departments, but not prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners nor within the 20 University working day period.
- (ii) That, as students are entitled under data protection legislation to have sight of their own exam scripts after the examination,

departments must ensure that any student who makes a request for access is entitled to do so free of charge.

(d) Away "Day" (minutes 109(a)/12-13 and 91(c)/12-13 referred)

RECEIVED:

Notes from the AQSC Away "Day" which took place on 9 July 2013 (paper AQSC 5/13-14).

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Secretary setting out the proposed operation of AQSC, including Sub-Groups to extend the Committee's remit to cover the totality of the student experience (paper AQSC 6/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the structure of the proposed Sub-Groups of the Committee be approved, with the exception of the Student Recruitment and Marketing Group which would be discussed further outside of the meeting;
- (ii) That the Chair of each Sub-Group consider, for their own Groups, terms of reference, membership and key objectives for the forthcoming academic year, and that this detail be collated and compiled for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee;
- (iii) That the proposal to disestablish the E-Learning Steering Group, with a view to reconstituting an E-Learning Sub-Group as set out in the paper, be endorsed.

(e) Moderation Working Group (minute 9/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 30 October 2012, the Committee considered a paper on Strategic Priorities for the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for 2012/13 (paper AQSC 6/12-13), and resolved (*inter alia*) that a group be formed to support the development of guidance on moderation, to be led by the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies.

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, setting out proposed Guidance on Moderation, arising from discussions of the Moderation Working Group (paper AQSC 7/13-14).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That members of the Committee communicate any comments on the Guidance directly to the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies;

- (ii) That the Committee endorse the draft guidance to be used as the basis for a wider consultation with Faculty Sub-Committees at their meetings in Spring 2014.

6/13-14

Chair's Action

(a) PGT Examination Conventions

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve revised examination conventions for the PGCE suite of programmes, as set out in paper AQSC 83/12-13, noting that the proposed conventions are an exemption from the new harmonised PGT conventions approved by the Committee during the previous academic year;
- (ii) That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve revised examination conventions for PGT programmes in Statistics, as set out in paper AQSC 84/12-13, noting that the proposed conventions are an exemption to apply for one academic year from the new harmonised PGT conventions approved by the Committee during the previous academic year.

(b) Undergraduate Progression Requirements on Intermediate Years of Study

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve revised Undergraduate Progression Requirements for Intermediate Years of Study for the Department of Chemistry, noting that the conventions approved were to apply only to progression decisions made in the department during the academic year 2012/13.

(c) Regulation 8 – Regulations for First Degrees

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to recommend (to the Senate) that a proposal to amend Regulation 8 – Regulations for First Degrees – to incorporate a new regulation for the Part-time degree of BEng in Applied Engineering be approved, as set out in paper S 14/13-14;
- (ii) That the Senate, at its meeting on 2 October 2013, had subsequently recommended (to the Council) that the proposed revisions to regulation 8 be approved.

(d) Undergraduate Harmonised Degree Conventions

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to recommend (to the Senate) that a proposal to make minor amendments to the Undergraduate Harmonised Degree Conventions, as set out in paper AQSC 85/12-13, be approved.

(e) “50% Rule” Exemption

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve an exemption from the University “50% Rule” for the Department of History, to apply to joint degree students in the department completing their studies in the academic year 2013/14.

7/13-14 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Senate, at its meeting on 12 June 2013, resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved (minute S.104/12-13 referred):

Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions;  
Regulation 8 Appeals: Scope of preliminary review panels;

- (b) That the Senate, at its meeting on 3 July 2013, resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved (minute S.134/12-13 referred):

Report on Student Academic Complaints and Appeals: Spring Term 2012/13;  
Review of the “50% Rule”;  
Regulation 8 Appeals: Scope of preliminary review panels;  
Harmonisation of the First Year Boards of Examiners’ Conventions;  
Undergraduate Degree Classification Conventions;  
Good Practice Guide on Monitoring Student Attendance and Progression;  
Revisions to Regulation 8.10;  
Collaborative Course Proposals;  
New Undergraduate Courses of Study;  
Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study;  
New Postgraduate Courses of Study;  
Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study;  
Discontinued Postgraduate Courses of Study.

8/13-14 Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-2017

REPORTED:

That, at the meeting of Senate held on 3 October 2012, a follow-up report from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee was considered containing the revised Teaching and Learning Strategy 2012-2017 (S.3/12-



13), together with a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience and it was reported (*inter alia*) that the separate Action Plan would be reviewed annually by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

CONSIDERED:

The Learning and Teaching Strategy Action Plan 2013/14 (paper AQSC 8/13-14).

RESOLVED:

That further consideration be given to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Action Plan 2013/14 at the next meeting of the Committee.

9/13-14 Final Report on the Enhancing Student Satisfaction Programme

RECEIVED:

A final report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Strategy and Change) on the Enhancing Student Satisfaction (ESS) Programme (paper ESS 8/12-13).

10/13-14 Reviewing the National Student Survey

REPORTED:

Higher education organisations and stakeholders are currently being invited to provide views and feedback on the National Student Survey (NSS) to inform a fundamental review of the NSS, commissioned by HEFCE on behalf of the UK higher education funding bodies.

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the consultation (SC 25/13-14), noting that the draft would also be considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2013.

RESOLVED:

That any comments be submitted to the Secretary, noting that the Steering Committee would approve the final version prior to submission.

11/13-14 Students Union Update

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Education Officer and the Postgraduate Officer of the Students' Union, noting that:

- (a) Annual training for 250 Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) representatives had now been completed, as had the election of postgraduate Faculty representatives;

- (b) That two new permanent appointments within the Students' Union had strengthened the education support team;
- (c) That key priorities for the Sabbatical team for the coming year included lecture capture and feedback;
- (d) That the Students' Union Education Convention is due to be held soon.

12/13-14 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

RECEIVED:

The register of University courses with accreditation, validation or other recognition by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (paper AQSC 11/13-14).

13/13-14 League Tables

RECEIVED:

A presentation on University League Tables from the Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics, paper AQSC 17/13-14.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee was strongly supportive of the need to significantly increase capital and revenue investment in order to enhance the student teaching and learning experience;
- (b) That analysis be undertaken to evaluate the number of first class degrees awarded at Warwick in comparison to other competitor institutions;
- (c) That it was of great concern to the Committee that many students held a perception of the University as being primarily committed to the satisfactory experience of its conference delegates over and above the experience of its students, where this was clearly not the case, and that the means to challenge this perception be considered carefully;
- (d) That there was a need to more fully consider how best to communicate to students actions taken by the University in response to feedback gathered through such exercises as the National Student Survey;
- (e) That the possibility of offering an incentive to students to complete the National Student Survey be explored further, with the aim of occasioning a further increase in response rates;
- (f) That the Committee should ensure that it consistently seeks to apply changes to policies, procedures and regulations at both undergraduate and postgraduate level;

- (g) That the Director of Marketing be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss approaches to successfully communicating positive messages to the student body.

14/13-14 Student Satisfaction

RECEIVED:

- (a) A report on the outcomes of the National Student Survey 2013 considered at the meeting of the Senate held on 2 October 2013 (paper S 3/13-14);
- (b) Presentation given by the Chair at the meeting of Heads of Department which took place on 17 September 2013 (paper AQSC 13/13-14).

15/13-14 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2013

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 9 October 2013, the Board of Graduate Studies received:

- (a) A detailed analysis of Warwick PTES 2013 results (paper BGS 8/13-14);
- (b) Appendix 1: detailed Warwick PTES 2013 results with sector and Russell Group aggregate results benchmark (paper BGS 9/13-14);
- (c) Appendix 2: students reporting a disability (paper BGS 10/13-14);
- (d) Appendix 3: motivations to study at Postgraduate level (paper BGS 11/13-14);

And resolved:

That the Chair would arrange to meet with Heads of Departments to analyse individual results.

(draft unconfirmed minute BGS 12(a)/13-14 referred)

16/13-14 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2013

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 9 October 2013, the Board of Graduate Studies received:

- (a) A detailed analysis of Warwick PRES 2013 results (paper BGS 12/13-14);

- (b) Appendix 1: detailed Warwick PRES 2013 results with sector and Russell Group aggregate results benchmark (paper BGS 13/13-14);

And resolved:

That Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees consider the benefit of assigning a Personal Tutor to research students to act as an additional source of support to the supervisor, noting that feedback will be collected at the next meeting the Board.

(draft unconfirmed minute BGS 12(b)/13-14 referred)

17/13-14 Education Update (minute SC 359/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 10 June 2013, the Steering Committee received a paper updating the Committee on matters relating to Education (paper SC 219/12-13).

18/13-14 Monash/Warwick Joint PhD (draft unconfirmed minute BGS 21/13-14 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 9 October 2013, the Board of Graduate Studies considered a paper from the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) outlining a potential change to Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD (paper BGS 23/13-14), and it was reported that the decision to discontinue a student's registration on the PhD and transfer them to either an MPhil or appropriate Masters' degree by Research would be made via a joint end of first year review process, involving colleagues from both institutions, and it was recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposal to amend Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD, as set out in paper BGS 23/13-14, be approved, noting that it was expected to be unlikely that the provision would be invoked, since the students on this programme are expected to be of high quality.

CONSIDERED:

The proposal to amend Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD (paper BGS 23/13-14).

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposal to amend Regulation 38 to accommodate a probationary year for students registered on the Monash/Warwick Joint PhD be approved, as set out in paper BGS 23/13-14.

19/13-14 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) Policy

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, acting on its behalf, had taken action to recommend (to the Board of Graduate Studies), that a proposal from the Institute of Education to amend the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) policy, as set out in paper GFSS 180/12-13, be approved;
- (b) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies, acting on its behalf, had taken action to recommend (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the proposal from the Institute of Education to amend the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) policy, as set out in paper GFSS 180/12-13, be approved.

CONSIDERED:

The proposal from the Institute of Education to amend the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) policy (paper GFSS 180/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal from the Institute of Education to amend the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) policy be approved, as set out in paper GFSS 180/12-13.

20/13-14 QAA Consultations

- (a) Higher Education Review

RECEIVED:

The final version of the Higher Education Review: Handbook for Providers detailing the final version, following consultation, of the review methodology to be applied to reviews taking place in 2013/14 onwards (paper AQSC 14/13-14).

- (b) UK Quality Code Part A and Chapters B1, B6 and B8

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the QAA consultation on UK Quality Code Part A (Setting and maintaining academic standards) and Chapters B1 (Programme design and approval), B6 (Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning) and B8 (Programme monitoring and review) (paper AQSC 15/13-14).

- (c) UK Quality Code Chapter B2: Recruitment and admission to Higher Education

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the QAA consultation on UK Quality Code Chapter B2: Recruitment and admission to Higher Education (paper AQSC 16/13-14).

21/13-14 New Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 9 October 2013 that the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Board to approve the following new courses:

MSc Medical Leadership  
MA Arts Enterprise and Development  
PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies  
MA Digital Media and Culture  
MA in Coaching

22/13-14 Discontinued Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 9 October 2013 that the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Board to approve the discontinuation of PG courses in preparation for the creation of the Centre for Professional Education and the Centre for Education Studies.

23/13-14 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 4 December 2013 at 9.00am in room CMR 1.0 (formerly the Council Chamber), University House.