

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on 1 February 2007

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Professor L Bridges,
Professor J Davis, Mr B Duggan, Dr K Flint, Professor M Harrison,
Professor M Luntley, Dr P O'Hare, Professor E Peile, Dr T Price,
Professor M Smith, Professor S Swain (*vice* Professor A Caesar)

Apologies: Ms C Longworth, Dr R Moseley, Dr P Roberts

In attendance: Ms J Bradfield, Dr J Moss

46/06-07 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2006 be approved.

47/06-07 Matters arising

(a) Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2006 (minute 22/06-07 referred)

RESOLVED:

That the following correction be made to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2006, the addition underlined below (in "RESOLVED"):

9/06-07 Burgess Group Consultation

RECEIVED:

Consultation Paper from the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Group (the "Burgess Group") on degree classification, paper AQSC 7/06-07, along with the response agreed by the Steering Committee for submission to the Burgess Group, paper SC.28/06-07 (revised).

CONSIDERED:

A briefing paper produced by QAA summarising outcomes from Institutional Audit reports related to degree classification schemes, paper AQSC 8/06-07, also available on QAA's website at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/education/briefings/classification_20Sept06.asp

RESOLVED:

That the University move forward with proposals to harmonise degree classification conventions for first degrees across the

Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Studies, noting that the University's response to the Burgess Group's consultation ruled out the introduction of neither a Grade Point Average system nor a cohort ranking system.

- (b) Department of Physics: Institute of Physics (minute 103a/04-05 referred)

CONSIDERED:

Report from the Institute of Physics on their Accreditation Report for the Department of Physics, paper AQSC 27/06-07, along with a response from the Department of Physics, paper AQSC 28/06-07.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the commendation in the Accreditation Report from the Institute of Physics on the high quality of feedback to students on assessed work be noted;
- (ii) That, in respect of the third paragraph of page 3 of the Accreditation Report, given the quantity of Mathematics teaching required by the syllabus of the joint Mathematics and Physics degree, it was inevitable that there would be fewer opportunities for students on this course to carry out experimental work, but that the Department of Physics and the Mathematics Institute would continue to keep the balance of work on this course under review.
- (c) Course and Module Approval (minute 31/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 22 November 2006 the Committee considered a report from the Secretary outlining work on reviewing the existing course and module approval mechanisms, paper AQSC 26/06-07, and resolved, inter alia, that the Secretariat convene meetings of the Chairs of Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committees/Sub-Faculty and Faculty Graduate Studies Committees, to be chaired by Professor M Smith and Professor L Bridges respectively, to review the existing course and module approval mechanisms and report to the next meeting of the Committee; and that these meetings consider the issues highlighted in paper AQSC 26/06-07, in particular the scrutiny of proposals (paragraph 3(a) refers), and in addition, the content of the forms involved in the course and module approval system.

CONSIDERED:

A report of two meetings of Chairs of Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committees/Sub-Faculty and Faculty Graduate

Studies Committees held to discuss course and module approval mechanisms, paper AQSC 29/06-07 (tabled).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Professors Bridges and Smith be thanked for chairing the two meetings, and that those who had been present at the meetings be thanked for their valuable contributions;
- (ii) That the introduction of various methods for easing the burden on members of Faculty Committees was welcome, and that these should continue to be monitored during the current pilot phase;
- (iii) That the Teaching Quality section continue to develop proposals for a computer-based workflow model for course and module approval, while bringing forward sooner for the consideration of the Committee proposals for changes which would improve the process in the meantime;
- (iv) That, to ensure proper strategic consideration is given to the balance and range of courses offered by departments, Faculties and the University as a whole, the relevant functions of various elements of the University's quality assurance processes be clarified, including:
 - Annual Course Review within departments
 - the consideration of Annual Course Review reports by Faculty Committees and the preparation of summary reports
 - the Five-Year Planning process
 - the Strategic Departmental Review process and associated periodic reviews where applicable
- (v) That further consideration be given to the process by which Course Regulations are updated and amended, to ensure the process is clear, well understood and easily followed and that amendments and updates receive proper consideration before approval where this is required;
- (vi) That members of the Committee bring any further thoughts or suggestions to the next meeting, when this item will appear again under Matters Arising.

48/06-07 Chair's Action

Skills Working Group: Chair and Membership

REPORTED:

That the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting to approve the following changes to membership of the Skills Working Group:

- (a) Mr Ken Sloan (Director of Campus Life) to replace Dr Paul Greatrix as Chair of the Group;
- (b) Ms Sue Bennett (Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development) to replace Dr Sue Law;
- (c) Ms Rebecca Lees (Acting Senior Assistant Registrar, Graduate School, with responsibility for the Centre for Student Development and Enterprise), to replace Ms Faye Emery during her maternity leave;
- (d) Mr Evan Stewart (Language Centre) to replace Dr Bob Powell as representative of the Faculty of Arts on the recommendation of the Chair of the Board of the Faculty.

49/06-07 Chair's Business

Warwick's Future

REPORTED:

That the Chair was heavily involved in the consideration of ideas for teaching and learning developments generated through the Warwick's Future consultation process, and that he was taking forward connected discussions of the distinctiveness of a Warwick education.

50/06-07 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Senate at its meeting on 6 December 2006 resolved that recommendations from the Committee under the following heading be approved:
 - (i) Careers Service: Voluntary Year Out for Work Experience;
 - (ii) MSc in Orthodontic Dentistry in collaboration with GIFT;
 - (iii) Collaborative Course Approval;
 - (iv) Collaborative Module Approval;
 - (v) Membership of Validation and Franchise Groups and Collaborative Course Management Committees;
 - (vi) Regulation 13 Governing the Continuation of Registration;
 - (vii) Regulation 14 Governing Higher Degrees Report from the Board of Undergraduate Studies;

- (viii) Proposed Amendments to University Regulations 9, 10 and 11.
- (b) That the Senate at its meeting on 6 December 2006 resolved that the recommendation from the Committee concerning the Self Certification of Student Absence be referred back to this Committee to consider a clarification;

CONSIDERED:

A further amendment to the Policy on the self-certification of student illness in the case of non-submission or late submission of assessed work to clarify that where self-certification has been accepted, departments may grant an extension to submission deadlines for assessed work, paper AQSC 21/06-07 (revised 2) (tabled);

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the Policy on the self-certification of student illness in the case of non-submission or late submission of assessed work be approved as set out in paper AQSC 21/06-07 (revised 2).

51/06-07 SSLC Coordinators Annual Report

CONSIDERED:

Reports on the operation of the SSLC System during 2004-05 prepared by the SSLC Coordinators, Mr R Cave, Dr K Flint, Ms C Longworth and Dr P Roberts:

- (a) Undergraduate Annual Report from the SSLC Coordinators, paper AQSC 30/06-07;
- (b) Postgraduate Annual Report from the SSLC Coordinators, paper AQSC 31/06-07.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Annual Reports from the SSLC Coordinators be approved as set out in papers AQSC 30 and 31/06-07 respectively;
- (d) That the general trend towards more positive reports being received from individual SSLCs be welcomed as an indication that SSLCs were resolving problems at the departmental or course level;
- (e) That the Committee be kept informed about progress on the Reading List project being carried out by the Library and the Teaching Quality team, and consider any recommendations for good practice in the formatting of reading lists and proposals for workflow solutions to ensure their timely submission;

- (f) That the Teaching Quality section survey current practice around the University in providing feedback to students on examination performance, the outcomes of this survey to inform discussion of the issue at a meeting of the Committee during Spring or Summer 2007.

52/06-07 Burgess Group Report on Credit

CONSIDERED:

'Proposals for national arrangements for the use of academic credit in higher education in England (Final report of the Burgess Group)', paper AQSC 32/06-07, along with a summary prepared by the Secretary, paper AQSC 33/06-07.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals for national arrangements for the use of academic credit in higher education in England set out in the final report of the Burgess Group, paper AQSC 32/06-07, be welcomed, it being noted that the University's existing credit and qualification framework was broadly in line with the proposals.
- (b) That the Teaching Quality section continue to monitor developments in the proposed national arrangements for the use of academic credit and bring reports and proposals to the Committee as and when necessary.

53/06-07 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2007

RECEIVED:

Call for nominations from the Higher Education Academy for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2007, paper AQSC 34/06-07.

REPORTED (by the Chair):

That three nominees had been identified and were preparing their submissions to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2007 ahead of the deadline of 14 March.

RESOLVED:

That the Centre for Academic and Professional Development consider introducing a new category of 'Distinguished Supervisor' to the Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence scheme, to enable recognition where appropriate of the contribution that the supervision of research students makes to teaching and learning excellence at the University.

54/06-07

Degree Classification Conventions and Marking Scales

CONSIDERED:

A position paper prepared by the Secretary setting out progress to date on consideration given to harmonising degree classification conventions across the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Social Studies and outlining the next steps, paper AQSC 35/06-07 (tabled).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group be reconvened to finalise proposals for introducing a new University-wide marking scale with a shared understanding of the meaning of terms, and GPA-based degree classification conventions along the following lines:
 - (i) The new marking scale to have 16-20 points, presented not in numerical or percentage terms, but using mark descriptors (e.g. exceptional First, high First, mid First, low First, high 2.1, mid 2.1, low 2.1 etc.);
 - (ii) A recognition that to avoid clustering overall degree results in the 2.1 bracket unfairly module marks on the 16-20-point scale must be converted to percentages before being averaged to decide the final classification;
 - (iii) Credit overloads to be treated consistently across all Faculties, with proposals to recognise credit overloads to be put forward by departments through course regulations or another agreed mechanism;
 - (iv) Clarity of terminology around “score”, “mark”, “result” and similar terms, in consultation with colleagues in the Academic Office working on the Mark Entry Project.
- (b) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group draw on the expertise and experience of members of the Committee, including Professor Harrison and Dr Flint;
- (c) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group prepare a concise summary of their proposals as the first stage in engaging colleagues across the University in discussions.

55/06-07

National Student Survey 2007

RECEIVED:

An update from the President of the Students' Union on the positions of a number of Students' Unions at other members of the Russell Group in respect of the National Student Survey 2007.

56/06-07 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on Wednesday 28 February 2007 in the Council Chamber.

JDM, 01.02.07
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