UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
held on 15 May 2008

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Professor L Bridges,
               Professor J Davis, Professor A Easton, Dr K Flint, Professor
               M Harrison, Professor K Lamberts, Professor R Lindley, Dr P O'Hare,
               Mr P Ptashko, Dr P Roberts

Apologies: Mr J Kirby, Dr R Moseley, Professor K O'Brien, Professor E Peile

In attendance: Ms J Bradfield, Dr J Moss

100/07-08   Minutes of the previous meeting

             RESOLVED:

             That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27 February
             2008 be approved.

101/07-08   Matters arising

             (a)   Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy
                    (minute 75(a)/07-08 referred)

                    REPORTED:

                    That Heads of Department were invited to send views on the
                    draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement
                    Strategy to the Secretariat by Monday 14 April.

                    CONSIDERED:

                    A paper collating responses to the draft Learning, Teaching
                    and Assessment Enhancement Strategy, paper AQSC 62/07-
                    08.

                    RESOLVED:

                    (i)   That a revised version of the draft Learning, Teaching
                           and Assessment Enhancement Strategy be considered
                           at the next meeting of the Committee.

                    (ii)   That the section of the draft Learning, Teaching and
                           Assessment Enhancement Strategy concerning contact
                           hours emphasise that initial work in this area is
                           intended to be exploratory, with the aim of investigating
                           current practice.

(b)   Assessment Conventions Working Group (minute 75(j)/07-08 referred)

RECEIVED:

(i)   Notes from the meeting of the Assessment Conventions Working Group held on 28 April 2008, paper AQSC 59/07-08;

(ii)   Proposals from the Assessment Conventions Working Group concerning the mark scale for undergraduate modules and Honours degree classification conventions, paper AQSC 60/07-08, noting that the proposals had been considered by Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committees and the Sub-Faculty of Science, and would in turn be considered by Faculty Boards and the Board of Undergraduate Studies before being considered at the next meeting of this Committee.

(c)   QAA Institutional Audit (minute 75(e)/07-08) referred

REPORTED:

That the Teaching Quality section were leading a series of information seminars on the upcoming Institutional Audit for interested colleagues.

CONSIDERED:

Letter from QAA following the preliminary meeting ahead of Institutional Audit held on 29 April 2008 between Dr Gillian King, Deputy Director (Audit), QAA and various members of the University, paper AQSC 63/07-08.

(d)   Students' Union Education Consultation (minute 63/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

(i)   That the Committee at its meeting on 1 February 2008 considered the Students' Union Education Strategy consultation document, paper AQSC 31/07-08, and resolved that, in the light of the absence of the Education Officer, the Students' Union Education Strategy consultation document, paper AQSC 31/07-08, be considered again at a future meeting of the Committee, it being noted that the Students' Union was currently discussing a draft of their Education Strategy.

(ii)   That the Students' Union had approved its Education Strategy as set out in paper AQSC 61/07-08.

CONSIDERED:

(iii)   An oral report from Mr Peter Ptashko, Education Officer & Deputy President, Students' Union, on the consultation process and plans to disseminate the Students' Union Education Strategy, it being noted that the Strategy was intended to be a continually evolving document.

(iv)   Students' Union Education Strategy, paper AQSC 61/07-08.

RESOLVED:

(v)   That the Students' Union Education Strategy be welcomed.

(vi)   That Mr P Ptashko be invited to consider a number of points suggested by the Committee and noted at the meeting.

(e)   Use of module feedback within departments (minute 76(b)/07-08 referred)

CONSIDERED:

Draft guidance for departments on the use of module feedback results, paper AQSC 70/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That Ms H Hutchings, Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), consult with Heads of Department on current uses of module feedback results, that a revised version of paper AQSC 70/07-08 be considered at a future meeting of the Committee, and that the revised paper incorporate recommendations and further guidance on the possible uses departments may wish to make of module feedback results.

102/07-08   Chair's Action

(a)   Strategic Departmental Review

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action since the last meeting to approve the lists of courses to be covered by the Strategic Departmental Reviews in the Departments of History and Biological Sciences.

(b)   Course specifications

REPORTED:

That the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken action since the last meeting to approve a proposal prepared by the Secretariat for taking forward work on the University's course specifications database, paper AQSC 64/07-08.

103/07-08   Chair's Business

Towards a Curriculum Review

REPORTED:

(a)   That the Chair was considering possible options for a curriculum review, connected with the University Strategy and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy.

(b)   That the contexts for such a review would include:
- the University Strategy
- the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy
- the previous Undergraduate Curriculum Review
- student feedback and surveys, including SSLC reports, the Academic Satisfaction Review, the National Student Survey, the International Student Barometer, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

(c)   That issues to be reviewed might include:
- curriculum structures, including standard module size, number of modules per year, with a view to the possibility of increasing flexibility within current structures, as a precursor to sustaining a high-quality student experience of distinction;
- the goals in the University Strategy of offering additional stand-alone modules and investigating international perspectives in current and future curricula;
- the implementation of other projects outlined in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy;
- how the University should build on and embed the work of the Reinvention and CAPITAL Centres;
- how curriculum developments relate to or include the estate (e.g. learning spaces), technology-enhanced learning, library and other resources.

(d)   That the initiation of any such Curriculum Review would need to address a range of issues, including:
- who would lead and be involved in the review
- the expected time period for the review
- what external expertise it might be appropriate to involve

104/07-08   Progress of Committee recommendations

REPORTED:

(a)   That the Senate at its meeting on 12 March 2008 <u>resolved</u> that recommendations from the Committee under the following headings be approved:

   (i)   Teaching Staff
   (ii)   Employability Strategy
   (iii) Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees
   (iv)   Postnominals
   (v)   Amendment to Regulation 15 for Higher Doctorates
   (vi)   Proposed amendment to Regulations governing the MBChB and BMedSci
   (vii) Centre for Lifelong Learning: External Examiners
   (viii) Course approval documentation for collaborative courses: format of CVs of teaching staff based at partner institutions
   (ix)   New collaborative courses
                        (draft unconfirmed Senate minute 57/07-08)

(b)   That the Senate, at its meeting on 12 March 2008, <u>considered</u> a recommendation from the Committee that proposed amendments to the module approval form designed to capture more detail of the expected student effort, in addition to contact hours, be approved as set out in paper AQSC 39/07-08 (revised), and <u>resolved</u> that further consultation take place relating to the proposed amendments to the module approval form and that any revisions to the form be re-considered at the next meeting of the AQSC prior to further consideration by the Senate.
                        (draft unconfirmed Senate minute 57/07-08)

CONSIDERED:

A process for taking forward work on the module proposal form and issues connected with contact hours.

RESOLVED:

(c)   That, following further consideration, the Committee was of the view that the current requirement within the module approval for details of contact hours was appropriate, and that the form should <u>not</u> be amended to require further information on the expected student effort;

(d)   That it be noted that work connected to the implementation of the draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy was likely to include an exploratory investigation of current practice within departments in terms of contact hours provided to students (minute 101(a)/07-08 refers);

(e)   That the Secretariat draft a statement on the expected student effort required to obtain credit towards a University award, the

different methods of teaching and learning utilised across the University and the reasons for differences between contact hours within different subject disciplines, to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee, it being noted that such a statement would be useful for communicating with students and other interested audiences.

105/07-08   Review of Course approval and review processes for postgraduate courses

REPORTED:

(a)   That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 1 May 2008 received a discussion paper on the revision of Annual Postgraduate Course Review and Postgraduate Course and Module Approval, paper BGS 54/07-08 and considered the proposal to revise Annual Postgraduate Course Review and Postgraduate Course and Module Approval.

(b)   That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 1 May 2008 recommended that the proposal to revise Annual Postgraduate Course Review and Postgraduate Course and Module Approval be approved in principle, noting that the following in particular required further thought:

(i)   How to ensure that Departments consult one another, when necessary, regarding new or revised modules, to avoid undesirable overlap in provision;
(ii)   How best to ensure that Departments report new or revised modules to the University if the power to approve revisions to modules is delegated to Departments;
(iii) That the timetable allow for greater flexibility in the approval of shorter professional postgraduate courses to respond to market factors;
(iv)   What practical use is made of programme reviews and how the proposed revised Annual Postgraduate Course Review links in to Strategic and Periodic Reviews, as well as to the Student Staff Liaison Committee Reports;
(v)   The meshing of the proposed framework and schedule with Annual Undergraduate Course Review and Approval and their combined implications for the committee system.

(unconfirmed BGS minute 84/07-08)

CONSIDERED:

Paper prepared by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies concerning course approval and review processes, paper BGS 54/07-08, it being noted:

(c)   That details of the current processes were available from the Teaching Quality website:
www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/quality/categories/courseapproval/
www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/quality/categories/review/

(d) That Section 7 of the QAA *Code of practice* covered Programme design, approval, monitoring and review and was available from the QAA website: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section7/default.asp

RESOLVED:

(e) That the Committee was broadly in favour of the principles underpinning the paper prepared by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies concerning course approval and review processes, paper BGS 54/07-08, subject to the points noted at the meeting and noting in particular that any delegation of responsibilities currently exercised by a University committee would need to ensure that consistency and fairness are maintained, and that any such delegation would need to be subject to a clear process for monitoring, and intervention where necessary;

(f) That paper BGS 54/07-08 be considered by the Board of Undergraduate Studies;

(g) That a revised version of paper BGS 54/07-08 be considered at a future meeting of the Committee, following consideration by the Board of Undergraduate Studies and further consideration by the Board of Graduate Studies.

106/07-08 <u>Review of Regulation 14 Governing Higher Degrees</u>

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 1 May 2008 <u>considered</u> a cover sheet summarising main amendments proposed to Regulation 14, paper BGS 60/07-08 along with proposed amendments to Regulation 14, paper BGS 57/07-08, and <u>resolved</u> that the proposed amendments to Regulation 14, as set out in paper 57/07-08, be revised in line with discussion at the meeting and reconsidered at the next meeting of the Board.

(unconfirmed BGS minute 85/07-08)

CONSIDERED:

A cover sheet summarising the main amendments proposed to Regulation 14, paper BGS 60/07-08 along with proposed amendments to Regulation 14, paper BGS 57/07-08.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the proposed amendments relating to Section K (Provisions applying to Collaborative Higher Degree Programmes) be considered by the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee.

(b) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies consult with Heads of Department on the proposed amendments.

(c) That a revised version of paper BGS 57/07-08 be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

107/07-08 Reports from the Quality Enhancement Working Group and the e-Learning Steering Group: Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (AQSC minute 76(a)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

(a) That the Quality Enhancement Working Group at its meeting on 1 May 2008 considered a paper prepared by the Chair [of AQSC] and Secretary concerning the new Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund, paper QEWG 41/07-08 and recommended:

(i) That an upper limit of £20,000 be established for awards from the new Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund;

(ii) That the guidelines and criteria make particular reference to links between research and teaching and projects which advance research-led/research-informed teaching, noting the importance of such practice in the University Strategy;

(iii) That the guidelines and criteria reinforce experience with recent funding mechanisms that small-scale or less expensive projects can be very successful;

(iv) That chairs/convenors of Faculty teaching and learning groups should play a central role in considering bids to the fund;

(v) That proposals for projects to pilot self-standing modules likely to be of interest to students across the University be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;

(vi) That proposals for projects to explore and develop existing understandings of international perspective in the curriculum be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;

(vii) That proposals for projects developing the University's use of innovative teaching spaces be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;

(viii) That the proposed essential criterion concerning the reporting and dissemination of projects include reference to the planned database of good practice to be hosted by the Teaching Grid.

(unconfirmed QEWG minute 36/07-08)

(b)   That the e-Learning Steering Group at its meeting on 9 May 2008 <u>considered</u> paper QEWG 41/07-08, and <u>recommended</u> to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Teaching & Learning and International Affairs}):

That, in addition to the recommendations of 1 May 2008 of the Quality Enhancement Working Group concerning possible criteria for a new teaching and learning enhancement fund set out in paper QEWG 41/07-08 (QEWG minute 36/07-08 referred), the following be considered:

(i)   That the proposed essential criterion concerning the reporting and dissemination of projects include a requirement that project outputs are disseminated outside of the applicant's department to the wider University, for example through the planned database of good practice to be hosted by the Teaching Grid, or through seminars or other events organised in conjunction with the Teaching Grid or others within the University.

(ii)   That the proposed desirable criteria include projects which evaluate the pedagogic benefits of different methods of teaching and learning, including e-learning/technology enhanced learning.

(iii)   That the guidelines or application documentation for the fund encourage applicants to identify clearly the issue(s) they intend to address or explore through the project and to set out how they propose to do so.

(iv)   That the guidelines or application documentation for the fund encourage applicants to consider within the project evaluation report the extent to which the project provided a solution to the issue(s) identified in the original application, or the success of the project in exploring the issue(s) identified.

(v)   That the Group supported proposals for a lighter-touch single-round process for smaller bids.

(draft unconfirmed eLSG minute)

RESOLVED:

That, rather than allocating a proportion of the new teaching and learning enhancement fund to each Faculty Teaching and Learning Forum, they be invited to submit bids to the fund.

108/07-08   <u>Report from the Information Policy and Strategy Committee</u>

REPORTED:

That the Information Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 19 February 2008 considered a range of issues connected to

distributed teaching services, and <u>resolved</u> that the issue of provision of distributed teaching services, such as Skype and video conferencing, be referred to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, noting that clarity was needed over:

(a)   Exactly what the requirements for any service provision were;
(b)   How important this kind of service is to the student experience.

<div align="right">(IPSC minute 18(d)/07-08)</div>

RESOLVED:

That the Secretariat discuss the availability of and demand for video conferencing services with the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Central Timetabling).

109/07-08   <u>Assessment issues</u>

REPORTED:

That a paper prepared by the Secretariat in conjunction with the Assistant Registrar (Student Records) and the Project Officer, Electronic Mark Entry project, Academic Office, concerning a range of issues related to the collection of marks for assessed work and examinations, paper AQSC 65/07-08, would be considered by the Chair in the first instance.

110/07-08   <u>QAA Outcomes from Institutional Audit papers</u>

CONSIDERED:

(a)   Two final papers published by QAA in the first series of *Outcomes from institutional audit*: 'Series 1: Closing Overview', paper AQSC 67/07-08 (included in first circulation), and 'Series 1 summaries', paper AQSC 68/07-08 (included in first circulation), also available from the QAA website: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/outcomes/

(b)   Further contextual information prepared by the Secretariat, paper AQSC 69/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That, within the context of the continual review of the University's quality systems, consideration be given to relevant points raised in papers AQSC 67-69/07-08, in particular the positive contribution that can be made to institutional processes by securely managed delegated/devolved arrangements, bearing in mind the need to ensure consistency and fairness to students.

111/07-08   <u>New and revised courses</u>

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 1 May 2008 <u>resolved</u> to approve the following new and revised courses:

(a) New courses

    (i)   MA Comparative and Cultural Media Studies
    (ii)   MSc Lingual Orthodontics
    (iii) PGCert Applied Education and Training
    (iv) PGCert Mathematics Subject Leadership

(b) Revised courses

    (i)   MSc Engineering courses (Biomedical Engineering, Mechanical Systems, Electronic Systems, Electronic Systems with Communications, Electronic Systems with Sensor Technology, Engineering Systems, Energy and Power Electronic Systems)
    (ii)   Name change, from PhD Medical Education to PhD Clinical Education

112/07-08   HEFCE funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications

REPORTED (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies):

That Government proposals to phase out HEFCE funding for students studying for a qualification which is equivalent to, or at a lower level than, a qualification that they have already achieved would impact on students currently studying an intergrated masters course who wish to go on to study another masters-level course, and that the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies was discussing a range of related issues with relevant colleauges.

113/07-08   Changes to immigration rules

REPORTED (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies):

That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies was conducting a review of a number of University Regulations to ensure that they are compatible with forthcoming changes to immigration rules affecting overseas students and would report to a future meeting of the Committee.

114/07-08   DIUS Immersion programme

REPORTED (by the Director of the Learning and Development Centre):

That two members of staff from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) would be spending three days at the University, 2-4 June 2008, on an immersion programme designed to deepen their understanding of the workings of a university, and that the Director of the Learning and Development Centre would contact a range of colleagues to design a full programme of activities for them.

115/07-08   <u>Next meeting</u>

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee will be held at 9.00am on Thursday 12 June 2008 in the Council Chamber, noting that this is one day later than the date originally published in the University Committee Timetable.

JDM/JB, 20.05.08
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