

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on Monday 20 May 2013

Present: Professor C Hughes (Chair), Ms S Bennett, Ms A Chowcat, Mr J Entwistle, Professor N Holdsworth, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jenainati, Professor N Johnson, Professor J Labbe, Mr S Lamb, Professor R Leng, Dr J Kidd, Professor A Reeve, Dr J Robinson, Dr P Taylor.

Apologies: Professor S Jacka, Dr D Lamburn, Professor S Swain, Professor P Thomas.

In attendance: Mr M Conaghan (for item 100/12-13), Ms R Cooper (for item 98/12-13), Ms K Gray, Mr R McIntyre, Dr M Mik (for items 94/12-13, 96/12-13 and 97/12-13), Dr J Taylor (for item 95/12-13), Mr S Williams (for item 102/12-13), Ms R Wooldridge Smith (for item 89/12-13)

88/12-13 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2013, previously circulated and available on the Governance website at: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/atoz/aqsc/minutes/>, be approved.

89/12-13 Matters arising

Report on Student Academic Complaints and Appeals: Spring Term 2012/13 (minute 71/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 28 February 2013, the Committee considered a report from the Deputy Academic Registrar and the Administrative Officer (Academic Registrar's Office) on academic appeals and complaints by students during the Spring Term 2012/13 (paper AQSC 42/12-13), and resolved (*inter alia*) that the proposal to amend the Student Academic Complaints Procedure, as set out in section 2(b) of paper AQSC 42/12-13, not be approved in the proposed form, noting that the Committee recognised the need to make the amendments to ensure alignment with the relevant chapter of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, but that further clarification may be required to ensure that:

- (i) It is clear to complainants whether there is any deadline within which they might appeal the decision to route their complaint through the Academic Complaints Procedure;
- (ii) There is no unintended implication in the wording of the proposed amendment that such an appeal might initiate a separate parallel complaints process, and that the options to mitigate against this concern by providing greater clarity about the routing of complaints be fully explored.

CONSIDERED:

A revised proposal to amend the Student Academic Complaints Procedure (paper AQSC 51/12-13), together with an oral report from the Deputy Academic Registrar.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposal to amend the Student Academic Complaints Procedure, as set out in paper AQSC 51/12-13, be approved.

90/12-13

Chair's Action

PGCE (School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT))

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Committee, acting on its behalf, had taken action to approve, in principle, a proposal from the Institute of Education to introduce a new course entitled PGCE Secondary (SCITT) in collaboration with Ninestiles School, Birmingham, as set out in paper AQSC 52/12-13, and to approve:

- (a) The issue of principle arising from the proposal that the University collaborate with an alliance of partner schools;
- (b) That, exceptionally, the Institute of Education be permitted to make offers to students pending final approval of the collaborative arrangements by the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee.

91/12-13

Chair's Business

- (a) Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence

REPORTED:

That the winners of the 2013 Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence (WATE) had now been announced, as:

Christine Smith (LDC)
Antony Brewerton (Library)
Robin Naylor (Economics)
Louise Gracia (WBS)
Ashley Roberts (WBS).

- (b) Committee Membership

REPORTED:

- (i) That Professor Ann Caesar had taken up a new position as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing) and would therefore no longer take the Chair of the Committee;

- (ii) That the Students' Union Education Officer would be leaving his Sabbatical post early in order to take up a new position external to the University.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee extend its thanks and appreciation to Professor Caesar and to the Students' Union Education Officer for their service.

- (c) Away "Day"

REPORTED:

That the Chair wished to hold an Away "Day" before the Summer vacation to discuss the strategic priorities for the Committee over the coming year, and its terms of reference, and that members of the Committee would be contacted in due course to arrange a suitable date.

92/12-13 Update from the Students' Union

REPORTED (by the Students' Union Education Officer):

That the results of the Students' Union survey on student contact hours were currently being analysed and would be published soon.

93/12-13 QAA Institutional Review

CONSIDERED:

A letter to the University from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), setting out the draft findings of the Institutional Review process concluding in February 2013 (paper AQSC 53/12-13), together with an oral report from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).

RESOLVED:

That the final report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, together with a timeline of any follow-up action that might be required.

94/12-13 Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions (minute BGS 74/12-13 and draft minute BGS 85(b)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 19 February 2013, the Board of Graduate Studies considered revised Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions (paper BGS 57/12-13) and recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) the revised Requirements for Taught Postgraduate Awards be adopted with effect from 2013/2014 for new PGT entrants, noting the following:
 - (i) That the wording at point 3 (a) of the requirements be amended to state:

'Students who do not attain the minimum pass mark on a module are eligible for re-examination on one occasion providing that they have not failed more than one third of the taught element of the course',

rather than

'Students who do not attain the minimum pass mark on a module are eligible for re-examination on one occasion providing that a pass mark has been attained in at least at least one third of the taught element of the course'

- (ii) That the requirements be amended to include reference to the University policy relating to remedying failure as a result of the imposition of late penalties or as a result of a finding of plagiarism;
 - (iii) That the existing University policy on remedying failure at PGT level would be superseded by the revised requirements, noting that this therefore would cease to exist as a separate policy.
- (b) That, at its meeting on 2 May 2013, it was reported to the Board of Graduate Studies that following the meeting of the Board on 19 February 2013, the Working Group established by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to review the assessment conventions for taught postgraduate students indicated that the amended wording for 3(a) did not reflect their recommendations, and that members were subsequently invited to vote between the wording [contained in (a)(i) above] and an alternative form of wording, noting that the outcome of the vote indicated that the majority of Board members would prefer the adoption of the following wording:

'Students on taught postgraduate degrees should normally be allowed one opportunity to remedy failure in initial assessment in modules that equate with no more than one half of the total credits awarded in the taught element of the course'

CONSIDERED:

Revised Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions (paper AQSC 54/12-13).

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions be approved as set out in Paper AQSC 54/12-13, subject to a minor amendment being made to the accompanying guidance.

95/12-13

Regulation 8 Appeals: Scope of preliminary review panels (minute 50(a)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, it was reported to the Committee:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 22 November 2012, the Board of Undergraduate Studies considered a proposed amendment to Regulation 8.12, in the light of the interpretation of paragraph (3) of the Regulation made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (paper BUGS 10/12-13) and recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that it be approved.

(by Professor Johnson):

- (ii) That previous advice from the OIA appears to have contradicted the proposed amendment relating to the ability of the preliminary review panel to consider the merits of the case.

- (b) That, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, the Committee considered a proposed amendment to Regulation 8.12, in the light of the interpretation of paragraph (3) of the Regulation made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (paper BUGS 10/12-13) and resolved that further consideration be given to the proposed amendment of Regulation 8.12 in light of Professor Johnson's comments.

- (c) That, at its meeting on 31 January 2013, it was reported to the Committee:

(by the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies)

That Preliminary Review Panels made a judgement on the relevance of the case as well as whether there was additional evidence presented which had not been made available to the Exam Board and that the amendments were intended to reflect this.

- (d) That, at its meeting on 31 January 2013, the Committee considered a proposed amendment to Regulation 8.12, in the light of the interpretation of paragraph (3) of the Regulation made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (paper BUGS 10/12-13), and resolved:

- (i) That the draft amendment to Regulation 8.12 be amended as follows:

- (A) To clarify that the Preliminary Review Panel considers the relevance of the additional evidence rather than the merits of the case.

- (B) To clarify further the phrase 'at the time of the examination'.

- (ii) That the revised Regulation be considered by the University Senior Tutor prior to approval.

(by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality)):

- (e) That the proposed amendment was intended to clarify the current role and operation of the Preliminary Review Panel rather to introduce a variation to its role.

CONSIDERED:

A proposed amendment to Regulation 8.12, in the light of the interpretation of paragraph (3) of the Regulation made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (paper BUGS 10/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (f) That Regulation 37 Governing Taught Postgraduate Courses be amended to ensure that the remit of the Preliminary Review Panel for appeals relating to postgraduate taught courses be aligned to the amended version of Regulation 8.12.
- (g) That proposed amendments to institutional policies and regulations applying to taught courses should be aligned across undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, as appropriate, to ensure consistency in approaches.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposed amendments to Regulation 8.12 be approved with immediate effect.

96/12-13 Contact Hours (minute 123/11-12 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 20 June 2012, the Committee considered (*inter alia*) the report of the Faculty Engagement of the Faculty of Arts (paper TLR.96/11-12) and the report of the Faculty Engagement of the Faculty of Social Sciences (paper TLR.98/11-12) [arising from the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review 2011] and resolved (*inter alia*) that:

In relation to Recommendation 11.2(b)(ii) from the Faculty of Arts and Recommendation 13.3(b)(iv) from the Faculty of Social Sciences, following discussions with academic departments on contact hours, further policy and guidance be developed.

CONSIDERED:

A paper and oral report from the Assistant Registrar (Learning and Teaching) on contact hours (paper AQSC 55/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a Working Group be convened, as set out in the paper, with the following aims:
 - (i) To develop guidance for academic departments on appropriate contact hours at University/discipline level and at different levels of study;
 - (ii) To draft a University definition of 'contact hours';

- (iii) To propose appropriate mechanisms of dissemination information on contact hours to prospective and current students and staff.
- (b) That the remit of the Working Group cover both undergraduate and postgraduate level study;
- (c) That the membership of the Working Group be confirmed following the meeting, noting the view of the Committee that it would be beneficial for membership to be drawn from those members of academic departments with considerable operational experience;
- (d) That the working group also be asked to report back to AQSC on the feasibility and desirability, or otherwise, of developing a University Policy on Contact Hours, setting minimum expectations for courses at either University or discipline level and level of study.

97/12-13 HEPI 2013 Student Academic Experience Survey

CONSIDERED:

The full report of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) 2013 Student Academic Experience Survey (paper AQSC 65/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

98/12-13 Review of the "50% Rule"

CONSIDERED:

A paper and oral report from the Assistant Registrar (Learning and Teaching) on the "50% rule" (paper AQSC 56/12-13).

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:
 - (i) Any alterations to course regulations arising from the discontinuation of the rule should be departmental led; and
 - (ii) There should be no obligation for departments to reduce the number of examinations in the absence of a clear, departmental driven, pedagogic 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:

- (i) Ensuring that the assessment of students continues to be conducted at course level through a cohesive and strategic approach;
- (ii) Concern around the potential for increased incidences of plagiarism, and the means to mitigate against this;
- (iii) 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.

99/12-13 Module Approval Audit Process

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on the outcomes of a review of the module approval audit process (paper AQSC 57/12-13).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outcomes of the review of the module approval audit process be noted;
- (b) That the accompanying guidance for departments approving modules be amended to clarify that departmental committees should include the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of Graduate Studies or any other member of the department with overall responsibility for teaching and learning.

100/12-13 Learning and Development Centre Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Learning and Development Manager (Academic) to update the Committee on developments in support of teaching and learning being progressed by the Learning and Development Centre. (paper AQSC 59/12-13).

RESOLVED:

That members of the Committee consider how they might help to disseminate the work of LDC more widely throughout the academy with a view to increasing the number of departments working with the Centre to create contextualised training for staff.

101/-12-13 National Student Survey 2013 (minute 70(a)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 28 February 2013, the Committee received a paper from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) setting out the latest response rates for the National Student Survey 2013 by department (paper AQSC 41/12-13)

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), setting out the final response rates for the National Student Survey 2013 by department and providing comparative data for 2012 (paper AQSC 60/12-13), together with an oral report.

102/12-13 International Student Barometer Autumn Wave 2012 Outcomes

CONSIDERED:

Outcomes of the International Student Barometer Autumn Wave Survey (paper AQSC 61/12-13), together with an oral report from the Assistant Director (Student Experience), International Office.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That departmental specific data from the survey be provided to key contacts within academic departments, together with the summary of the results and information about the survey questions;
- (b) That Chairs of Faculty be provided with the departmental specific data for departments in their respective Faculties;
- (c) That the Chair of the Committee continue to liaise with the Strategic Planning and Analytics (SPA) team in the Deputy Registrar's Office, with a view to implementing standard reports of education data to be provided to departments, to include the results of surveys such as the International Student Barometer and the National Student Survey.

103/12-13 Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning Evaluation Report 2012 (paper AQSC 62/12-13).
- (b) The report from the Student Engagement survey administered by IATL at Warwick in 2011 (paper AQSC 63/12-13), together with an oral report from the Director of IATL.

RESOLVED:

That the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning proceed to participate in the next iteration of the Student Engagement survey, noting the views of the Committee that:

- (c) The timing of the survey should be carefully considered to ensure that it does not clash with other surveys taking place across the institution;
- (d) The availability of comparator data from other institutions would be key to maximising utility for the institution as a result of our involvement in the survey.

Higher Education Review: A More Risk-Based Approach to the Quality Assurance of Higher Education in England (minutes 75/12-13, 42/12-13 and 5(c)/12-13 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 20 June 2012, the Committee considered:
- (i) The HEFCE consultation on the introduction of a more risk-based approach to quality assurance in higher education in England (excluding Annexes) (paper AQSC 85/11-12);
 - (ii) A draft University response to the consultation document by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) and an oral report on issues arising from a consultation event held on 18 June 2012 (paper AQSC 109/11-12);

and resolved that comments on the University response be provided to the Secretary, noting that the Steering Committee would approve a final response

- (b) That at its meeting on 23 July 2012, the Steering Committee resolved that the draft University response to the HEFCE consultation on improving quality assurance in higher education as set out in SC 422/11-12 be revised in light of discussion at the meeting, prior to submission by the deadline of 31 July 2012 (minute SC 599/11-12 referred);
- (c) That, at its meeting on 30 October 2013, it was reported to the Committee that the revised consultation response was submitted to the HEFCE as set out in paper SC 422/11-12 (revised), and that the outcome of the consultation had been released on 25 October 2012 and would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (d) That, at its meeting on 5 December 2012, the Committee received the HEFCE report a Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance: outcomes and next steps 2012/27 (paper AQSC 32/12-13);
- (e) That, at its meeting on 28 February 2013, the Committee considered a QAA consultation document on a new process of "Higher Education Review", in response to the HEFCE consultation and report, as follows:
- (i) Background to the Consultation Document (paper AQSC 45/12-13);
 - (ii) Higher Education Review – A Handbook for Higher Education Providers (draft for consultation) (paper AQSC 46/12-13);
 - (iii) HEFCE's invitation to the QAA to implement a more risk-based approach to the quality assurance of higher education in England (paper AQSC 47/12-13).

, and resolved:

- (iv) That the Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) was due to attend a round-table discussion event on the proposed Higher Education Review process;
- (v) That a draft response to the consultation be prepared by the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office, taking into account the views of the Committee noted at the meeting.

RECEIVED:

The University's final response to the QAA consultation on a new process of "Higher Education Review", prepared by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (paper AQSC 64/12-13).

105/12-13 New Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 2 May 2013, approved the following new courses:

- MSc Data Analytics
- MSc in Integrative Bioscience
- MSc in Integrative Bioscience and Business
- PhD in Analytical Science
- Joint Warwick/Monash PhD (Health and Biomedical Sciences)

106/12-13 Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting on 2 May 2013, approved the following revised course:

- MSc Business Analytics [changed name from MSc Business Analytics and Consulting]

107/12-13 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee will be held at 10.30am on 11 June 2013 in CMR 1.0, University House.