

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee  
held on Wednesday 25 October 2006

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

Apologies: Dr S Law, Professor E Peile, Dr P Roberts

In attendance: Dr J Moss; Mr S Russell, Acting Director of the Careers Service (for item 3a/06-07); Ms Y Salter Wright, Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance) (for item 8/06-07)

1/06-07 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership

RECEIVED:

Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Committee for 2006-07, paper AQSC 1/06-07.

2/06-07 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 June 2006 be approved, noting that minutes for all meetings since October 2002 are available on the Governance website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/insite/info/gov/atoz/aqsc/minutes/>

3/06-07 Matters arising

(a) Careers Service: Voluntary Year Out for Work Experience  
(Minute 102a/05-06 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee at its meeting on 7 June considered:

- (i) Amended proposals and form for students wishing to take a Year Out for Work Experience, paper AQSC 109/05-06, alongside the proposal considered by the Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2006, paper BGS 9/05-06 (revised);
- (ii) The concerns of the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts;
- (iii) The proposal that further and more detailed guidance is given to Heads of Departments to ensure that the examination of the proposed scheme is applied rigorously;

- (iv) The advantages of the proposed Voluntary Year Out for Work Experience over the existing procedures for Temporary Withdrawal;

and resolved:

- (v) That the clarification provided by the Director of the Careers Service answered the concerns raised by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts;
- (vi) That the proposal would enable students to retain access to university facilities and hopefully eliminate perceived negative associations connected to the suspension of registration through Temporary Withdrawal;
- (vii) That the Committee supported the proposal subject to clarification on a number of issues and questions including:
  - (A) Any restrictions on the type and nature of work that International students can undertake during their stay in the UK;
  - (B) Criteria to inform Heads of the Departments of the appropriate types of work that can be approved for both Home and International Students?
  - (C) The extent of the University's responsibility to ensure quality of the work experience and other criteria, such as health and safety if participating students remain registered students of the University;
  - (D) Given that the year's work experience is to be an enhancement of skills and / or knowledge, a process to ensure that this happens, for example an end of year report.
- (viii) That the Chair be given authority to approve applications from students ad honorarium as they arose subject to liaison with staff and student, to prevent stalling the proposal, whilst the Director of the Careers Service clarifies the proposal for further consideration at the next meeting of the committee.

CONSIDERED:

A revised proposal to allow students to take a voluntary year out for work experience, including a proposed new regulation, prepared by Ms R Wooldridge Smith, Director of the Careers Service and Mr S Russell, Acting Director of the Careers Service, paper AQSC 2/06-07.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the proposal to introduce a new Regulation to allow undergraduate students on courses without an intercalated year to take a voluntary year out for work experience be approved, along with associated Guidelines for Heads of Department, application form and report form, as set out in paper AQSC 2/06-07, subject to minor amendments noted at the meeting.

- (b) CLL: BACP accreditation (Minute 104d/05-06 referred)

CONSIDERED:

The report from the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy on their accreditation of the Centre for Lifelong Learning's Diploma in Person-Centred (Rogerian) Counselling and Psychotherapy, paper AQSC 3/06-07.

RESOLVED:

That the Centre for Lifelong Learning be congratulated on the positive report from the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy on their accreditation of the Centre's Diploma in Person-Centred (Rogerian) Counselling and Psychotherapy, it being noted that BACP Accredited Course status had been backdated to include the cohort which completed the course in 2005, and that progress on the other recommendations was in hand.

- (c) Self-Certification of Student Absence (minute 33/05-06 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2005 considered a revised policy on Self-Certification of Absence, paper AQSC 31/05-06, and resolved that the Assistant Secretary discuss the application of the current Regulation with the Assistant Registrar in the Exams Office.
- (ii) That, contrary to the current Regulation 12, students submit medical certificates covering periods of significant assessment to their Head of Department, not the Registrar.

CONSIDERED:

Amendments to Regulation 12 (1) (a) to require students to submit medical certificates covering periods of significant assessment to their Head of Department, not the Registrar, paper AQSC 20/06-07, and a University policy on

circumstances in which self-certification be permitted, paper AQSC 21/06-07.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That Regulation 12 'Procedure to be adopted in the Event of Absence for Medical Reasons from a University Examination for First Degrees' be amended as set out in paper AQSC 20/06-07, and that the proposed '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, subject to the addition of a clause requiring students to self-certificate within three days of their return to University after an illness covered by the policy.

4/06-07 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Committee since the previous meeting to recommend to the Steering Committee that a proposal from Warwick Manufacturing Group to contribute to an MSc in Major Project Management to be offered by the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, paper SC 487/05-06 be approved, it being noted that the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee took action on behalf of the Sub-Committee to recommend that the proposal be approved.

5/06-07 Chair's Business

(a) Centre for Academic and Professional Development

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Centre for Academic Practice had been renamed the Centre for Academic and Professional Development;
- (ii) That Ms Sue Bennett had been appointed the new Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development;
- (iii) That Dr Sue Law would be moving to Coventry University as Professor of Education and Director of Research in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE).

RESOLVED:

That Dr Law be thanked for her significant contribution to learning and teaching issues in the University.

(b) Education Innovation Fund

REPORTED:

That it remained unclear how much money would be allocated to the Education Innovation Fund during 2006-07.

(c) QAA Institutional Auditors

REPORTED:

That the Chair had been appointed as a QAA Institutional Auditor.

6/06-07 University Complaints Procedure

REPORTED:

That a revised University Complaints procedure had been launched, paper AQSC 04/06-07, along with a website: [www2.warwick.ac.uk/institute/info/gov/complaintsandfeedback](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/institute/info/gov/complaintsandfeedback).

7/06-07 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2006

REPORTED:

That David Morley had been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in the 2006 competition.

RESOLVED:

That members of the Committee put forward suggestions for potential nominees for the scheme in 2007 to the Chair.

8/06-07 Risk

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The executive summary of a report 'Managing Academic Risk – Final Report of the HEFCE Good Management Practice Project on Quality Risk Management in Higher Education', paper AQSC 5/06-07, noting that the full report was available from the Secretariat on request;
- (b) A paper prepared by Ms Y Salter Wright, Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance) on the University's approach to risk management, paper SC 489/05-06 (part);
- (c) The University's register of risks related to learning and teaching, paper AQSC 6/06-07, with the likelihood and impact of risks now expressed using the 'traffic light' system.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That a number of additional risks be added to the register, including staff-student ratios, administrative load and workload, poor ratings in external student surveys, and estates/facilities development not keeping pace with pedagogical developments;
- (e) That a number of additional controls be added to the register;
- (f) That a number of the scores recorded on the register be amended;
- (g) That the Secretary circulate a revised version of the risk register before the next meeting of the Committee.

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](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.

10/06-07 HERRG Concordat

CONSIDERED:

The Higher Education Concordat commissioned by the Higher Education Regulation Review Group, paper AQSC 9/06-07.

11/06-07 National Student Survey 2006

REPORTED:

- (a) That the University's final response rate in the National Student Survey 2006 was ~15%, down from ~40% in 2005.

- (b) That nationally the response rate in the National Student Survey 2006 was ~56%, down from ~60% in 2005, and that a number of Russell Group institutions fell below the 50% publication/reliability threshold.
- (c) That the University's unpublished results are now available on the password-protected Ipsos MORI dissemination site and that, as last year, access details will be made available to Heads of Departments.

CONSIDERED:

A paper prepared by the Secretary summarising trends in the University's unpublished results, paper AQSC 10/06-07.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the results did not indicate that wider participation in the survey would have improved the University's standing in any league table.

12/06-07

National Student Survey 2007

REPORTED:

That the President and Deputy President & Education Officer of the Students' Union were to meet representatives of Ipsos MORI along with officers of the Oxford and Cambridge Students' Unions to discuss the methodology of the National Student Survey.

CONSIDERED:

An invitation from HEFCE and Ipsos-MORI to take part in a pilot of extra questions in the National Student Survey 2007, noting that the results of any extra questions would remain confidential to the University, paper AQSC 11/06-07.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University opt in to extra sets of questions in the National Student Survey 2007 concerning Careers, Social Opportunities, Feedback from Students, the Physical Environment, Welfare Resources and Facilities, Learning Community, and Intellectual Motivation;
- (b) That members of the Committee bring any further thoughts on sets of questions to be included in the survey for Warwick students to the attention of the Board of Undergraduate Studies at its next meeting on 15 November 2006.

13/06-07

QAA Consultation on Subject Benchmark Statements

REPORTED:

(a) That QAA was carrying out a consultation on revisions to a number of Subject Benchmark Statements, with full details available on the QAA website:  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/review06.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/review06.asp)

(b) That the University would make no formal response to QAA consultation on revised Subject Benchmark Statements for the following subjects:

Architectural Technology  
Criminology  
Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies  
Geography  
Housing Studies  
Landscape Architecture  
Theology and Religious Studies

(c) That responses to QAA consultation on revised Subject Benchmark Statements for the following subjects would be submitted, noting that the Heads of relevant Departments have been invited to consider and comment on them:

Accounting  
Archaeology  
General Business Management (undergraduate)  
General Business Management (postgraduate)  
Classics and Ancient History  
Computing  
Economics  
English  
Finance  
History  
Law  
Philosophy  
Politics and International Relations

14/06-07

QAA Code of Practice

REPORTED:

That QAA had published finalised revised versions of three sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, all available on the QAA website  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/)

- (a) Section 6: Assessment of students
- (b) Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review
- (c) Section 10: Admissions to higher education



CONSIDERED:

Revised versions of three sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, each accompanied by a covering paper prepared by the Secretary summarising changes from the previous versions:

- (d) Section 6: Assessment of students, paper AQSC 12/06-07 and accompanying summary, paper AQSC 13/06-07;
- (e) Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review, paper AQSC 14/06-07 and accompanying summary, paper AQSC 15/06-07;
- (f) Section 10: Admissions to higher education, paper AQSC 16/06-07 and accompanying summary, paper AQSC 17/06-07.

15/06-07 University APEL policy

CONSIDERED:

Amendments to the policy on the accreditation of prior learning, paper AQSC 18/06-07, including to update the policy following changes in courses in Warwick Medical School, noting that the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning did not wish to take forward the proposal to extend from five to ten years the normal period of currency for applications to part-time degrees offered by the Centre for Lifelong Learning and set out in point 3 and Appendix A section 2(d) of the paper.

RESOLVED:

That amendments to the policy on the accreditation of prior learning be approved as set out in paper AQSC 18/06-07, subject to the deletion of the proposal to extend from five to ten years the period of currency for applications to part-time degrees offered by the Centre for Lifelong Learning

16/06-07 Report from the SSLC Coordinators

REPORTED:

- (a) That the new SSLC on-line Portal ([go.warwick.ac.uk/sslc](http://go.warwick.ac.uk/sslc)) would soon be launched, bringing together existing on-line sources of information and advice about the SSLC system from Students' Union and University webpages, and offering a range of functions to support SSLC convenors and representatives in their work.
- (b) That the SSLC Coordinators resolved during the summer vacation that the SSLC system now be known as the Student-Staff Liaison Committee system, to emphasise the student-led nature of the partnership, with the new title to be introduced into practice during 2006-07.

RESOLVED:

That the change in title of the SSLC system be welcomed.

17/06-07 QAA: Outcomes from Institutional Audit

REPORTED:

That QAA had published more reports in the Outcomes from Institutional Audit series, which are available on the QAA website <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/outcomes/default.asp> and had been considered by the Chair and the Secretary:

- (a) The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- (b) Specialist institutions;
- (c) Subject benchmark statements.

18/06-07 QAA Higher Quality

RECEIVED:

The latest edition of QAA's bulletin *higher quality*, dated 21 June 2006, paper AQSC 19/06-07.

19/06-07 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 22 November 2006 in the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary canvass opinion amongst members of the Committee regarding the possibility of starting the next meeting at 10am, instead of the previously advertised 9.30am.