

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on  
Thursday 13 May 2004.

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair); Professor A Easton, Dr E Gallafent,  
Professor A MacFarlane, Professor M Luntley, Dr S Hill, Mr R Jones,  
Professor M McCrae, Professor G Lindsay, Dr P O'Hare, Professor E  
Peile.

Apologies: Dr P Blackmore, Professor R Dyson, Professor I Lauder, Mr R Watson

In attendance: Professor T Kemp, Professor J Masson, Dr D Law and Dr G Cousin  
for item 89/03-04; Ms K Penner, Ms R Wooldridge Smith.

85/03-04 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2004 be  
approved.

86/03-04 Matters Arising

(a) PhDs in a language other than English (Minute 81/03-04  
referred)

REPORTED:

That the Committee, at its meeting on 25 February, considered  
proposed guidelines for permitting PhDs in French, German  
and Italian to be written in a language other than English and  
resolved that the Committee was unclear as to the rationale for  
seeking to amend the University Regulation as set out in paper  
AGSC 17/03-04, and that the paper be referred back for  
clarification by Dr K O'Brien.

CONSIDERED:

A response from Dr K O'Brien to the Committee's enquiries,  
paper AQSC 83/03-04.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That in the light of the additional information provided, the  
proposal from Dr O'Brien that students reading for a PhD in a  
Modern Language be permitted to write their thesis in the  
target language be approved; it being noted that this would  
require some changes to Regulation 14, Regulations  
Governing Higher Degrees, on which Professor Whitby would  
take Chair's Action.

- (b) Penalties for late submission of assessed work (Minute 83/03-04 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its meeting held on 25 February, the Committee considered the following resolutions and recommendations made by the Board of Graduate Studies on 16 February:

(A) That the Board did not support the imposition of a 4% penalty per day at postgraduate level.

(B) That it was the view of the Board, including the postgraduate student representative, that confusion would not necessarily result from the use of differing tariffs at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level, noting that courses at these two levels operated under different Regulations, examination conventions and administrative systems both centrally and at departmental level.

(C) That the penalty for late submission be set to take account of the potentially greater influence of a mark for a single piece of coursework on the qualification awarded at postgraduate level and the differing pass marks at undergraduate (pass mark of 40%) and taught postgraduate (50%) levels, noting that taking this into account an appropriate penalty at postgraduate level would appear to be approximately two thirds of the undergraduate penalty.”

(Minute 37/03-04)

- (ii) The Committee resolved that a letter be sent to Chairs of Departments setting out current University policy of awarding a mark of zero for late submission of assessed work and seeking from each department a clear response as to whether they favoured replacement of the current policy at undergraduate and postgraduate levels with:

(A) a single tariff of 4% per day at undergraduate and postgraduate levels

(B) differential undergraduate and postgraduate tariffs of 5% and 3% per day respectively

CONSIDERED:

A paper summarising departmental responses, paper AQSC 84/03-04.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That differential tariffs of 5% per day for undergraduate students and 3% per day for postgraduate students be imposed for the late submission of work where no formal extension had been granted; it being noted:

- (iii) That pieces of work with a credit value less than or equal to 2 CATS be exempt from this policy
- (iv) That departments be advised to avoid the use of Fridays as deadlines for pieces of work
- (v) That the introduction of this policy did not preclude departments continuing to use the sanction of requiring students to sit an examination in lieu of submitting a piece of work.

87/03-04 Progress of Committee Recommendations

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Senate, at its meeting held on 10 March 2004, considered a report from the meetings of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on 29 January and 25 February 2004 (S.37/03-04 {Parts 1 and 2}) and its resolutions recorded under the following items:
  - (i) Annual Course Review
  - (ii) New Postgraduate Awards
- (b) That the Senate resolved that recommendations made by the Committee recorded under the following items be approved:
  - (i) Appeals Procedures
  - (ii) University Policy on Double-Marking
  - (iii) Cooke Report/TQI: Minor amendments to External Examiner Report form
  - (iv) Part 4 Course Approval Documentation for Collaborative Provision
  - (v) Amendments to Regulation 8.9
  - (vi) Amendment to University Ordinance 7
  - (vii) Partnership with North East Worcestershire College
  - (viii) New and Revised Undergraduate Courses of Study
  - (ix) New and Revised Postgraduate Courses of Study
  - (x) Discontinuation of a Postgraduate Course of Study
  - (xi) School of Health and Social Studies

88/03-04 Chair's Business

REPORTED:

- (a) That Professor Whitby had recently visited the University of Birmingham to meet Pro Vice-Chancellors with responsibility for teaching and learning at other Russell Group universities and where it was decided to establish a regular teaching and

learning forum which might also potentially provide co-ordinated responses to national consultation exercises.

- (b) That Professor Whitby had recently visited the University of Central Lancashire's teaching development unit, established to provide facilities for staff to broaden their expertise in a number of areas including e-Learning.

89/03-04 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

That Professor Whitby, acting on behalf of the Committee, had taken Chair's Action to approve the proposal from the School of Health and Social Studies to introduce a new MA in Social Work with effect from October 2004, about which the Committee had voiced a number of concerns at its meeting on 25 February, following clarification from the Chair of the School of Health & Social Studies, see paper AQSC 100/03-04, concerning the points raised about the course by the General Social Care Council.

90/03-04 Institutional Audit

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 24 March, the Quality Task Group considered the letter from the QAA of 12 March setting out the main findings of the Audit and resolved:

- (a) That, with respect to the recommendations relating to assessment conventions, it be noted:
  - (i) That the Board of the Faculty of Science had already established a Working Group to consider scaling of marks and the use of the Seymour Formula, which would consult with students in the Faculty.
  - (ii) That, depending on the outcome of the Working Group's deliberations, consideration be given to alternative means of recognising additional credit gained by students in any faculty.
  - (iii) That it would be useful to model the effect of translating the achievement of final year students in the Faculty of Science in summer 2004 by using the harmonised examination conventions applied to students in the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies
  - (iv) That a relatively small proportion of students in the Faculty of Science habitually sought Seymour credit and that the effect typically ranged from -1% to +2%
- (b) That Professor Easton provide a brief summary of the operation of the Seymour Formula for the next meeting of the AQSC.

- (c) That efforts be made to ensure that the Institute of Education was aware of the requirement to implement the approved harmonised examination conventions from summer 2004.
- (d) That consideration be given in preparations for any bid for GMC recognition of courses in medicine to the assessment regime for the MBChB in order to ensure appropriate alignment of examination conventions.
- (e) That, with respect to the recommendation relating to external input into new course development, consideration be given to the inclusion of a further section in the Part 1 course proposal form strongly encouraging departments to seek input from an external peer other than an External Examiner during the process of bringing forward new courses.
- (f) That, with respect to the recommendation relating to the treatment of accreditation reports, consideration be given to holding an annual meeting of staff in departments responsible for liaising with professional and statutory bodies, to share experiences arising from exercises held during the year and good practice, with a view to any recommendations arising being forwarded to the AQSC as required.

CONSIDERED:

- (g) The draft QAA report on the Institutional Audit 2004, paper AQSC 85/03-04.
- (h) A brief summary of the operation of the Seymour Formula drafted by Professor Easton, paper AQSC 86/03-04.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That it be noted that the use of the Seymour Formula in the Faculty of Science enabled the most able students to gain additional credit for voluntarily broadening their curricula which the Committee believed ought to be a goal of the University for all students
- (j) That 'grade drift' was avoided through a requirement for there to be significant evidence of performance at the higher level for students gaining Seymour credit to be capable of thus improving their final degree classification
- (k) That the requirement for the University to be able to demonstrate the comparability of its standards across all disciplines lay at the heart of the recommendation relating to assessment conventions and that an alternative to moving away from two sets of different final undergraduate degree classification conventions would be to give consideration to mechanisms which would facilitate judgements about comparability.

- (l) That a Working Group of the Committee be established, comprising the individuals listed below, to take forward discussions relating to assessment conventions which would maintain contact with the existing Working Group in the Faculty of Science and consider relevant comments made recently by External Examiners:

Professor M Whitby (Chair)  
Professor A Easton  
Professor T Kemp  
Professor J Masson  
Dr S Hill  
Ms R Wooldridge Smith

- (m) That the Part 1 course approval form be amended by the insertion of a new requirement for departments to comment on external input into new course development
- (n) That a paper setting out the recommendations arising from PSB exercises conducted henceforth be considered by the Committee at the first available opportunity following the publication of reports, together with a commentary and action plan from the department, where appropriate.

91/03-04 Academic Satisfaction Review 2004

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Education Officer, paper AQSC 87/03-04.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted:

- (a) That the response rate to the 2004 Review had not been high, and had been particularly disappointing in Medicine and postgraduate provision across the institution and that, as a result, an additional investment would be made to establish focus groups, as in 2003, to obtain further student feedback.
- (b) That, in spite of the Committee's reservations concerning response rates, the Review remained a more comprehensive means of gathering student feedback than existed at many other institutions.

92/03-04 Annual Course Review

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 26 April 2004, the Board of Graduate Studies considered summaries of Annual Course Review reports for taught postgraduate courses in the Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Studies (papers BGS 32/03-04, BGS 33/03-04 and BGS 34/03-04 respectively) and resolved that the summaries be approved.

CONSIDERED:

Summaries of Annual Course Review reports for taught postgraduate courses:

- (a) Faculty of Arts, paper BGS 32/03-04.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a letter be sent from the Chair of the Committee to the Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies seeking feedback on his department's failure to meet the deadline for submission of an Annual Course Review report for postgraduate provision for the second year running.
- (ii) That the ownership of room H244 be ascertained since this would affect potential sources of investment to address equipment issues reported
- (iii) That it be noted that it appeared that postgraduate applications to the Department of History of Art had reached steady state and that this might lead the department to increase its international student population.

- (b) Faculty of Science, paper BGS 33/03-04.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that clarification had been received from the Department of Mathematics concerning the relatively high number of extensions granted to students on the MSc in Financial Mathematics; that adequate reassurance had been received from the department and that the situation would continue to be closely monitored.

- (c) Faculty of Social Studies, paper BGS 34/03-04.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That it be noted that no indication had been provided of departmental reports not submitted and that this be checked with the Faculty Secretariat
- (ii) That there appeared to be several outstanding items from the previous year's report for the Warwick Business School and that these be pursued with the School by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies.
- (iii) That the Committee was aware that following the report of the Plagiarism Working Group in the Autumn Term 2004, updated guidance for departments on this issue was now available and that this guidance be sent to the Department of Economics.

93/04-05 Risk and Teaching Quality

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out the actual and perceived risks associated with teaching quality, paper AQSC 88/03-04.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the section relating to the Medical School be forwarded to Professor Piele for appropriate revisions to be made
- (b) That the section entitled 'Overseas provision' be re-titled 'Collaborative Provision' and disaggregated into issues affecting UK and overseas provision.
- (c) That the effectiveness of controls over the potential risk arising from a poor collaborative audit or review of collaborative provision be revised from 2 to 4.
- (d) That the effectiveness of controls over the potential risk arising from the use of underqualified staff be revised from 3 to 4 and that the probationary monitoring procedures be added to the list of controls.
- (e) That the effectiveness of controls over the potential risk arising from work overload for academic staff be revised from 0 to 3 owing to the use of departmental workload models.
- (f) That Professor Whitby take Chair's Action to approve a revised draft of the paper in due course.

94/03-04 Periodic Review

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 12 December 2003, the Quality Enhancement Working Group considered a paper from the Centre for Academic Practice on Evaluating Students' Learning in Warwick's research-led environment (paper QEWG 2/03-04) and recommended *inter alia* that the requirement for Periodic Reviews to include a section on curriculum development include asking panels to investigate research-led teaching and research-based learning within the department; it being noted that this should include posing a question about research-based learning to the group of student representatives, most appropriately graduate students themselves involved in teaching in the department and receiving formal preparation for this role.

CONSIDERED:

A copy of the Information Pack on the Review of Courses of Study amended to take account of the Group's recommendation, paper AQSC 89/03-04.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the revisions to the Information Pack on the Review of Courses of Study adding investigation of research-led teaching and research-based learning within departments to the requirements of the Periodic Review process be approved as set out in paper AQSC 89/03-04.

95/03-04 Warwick Skills Programme

REPORTED:

- (a) That at its meeting held on 20 April, the Budget Sub-Group of the Finance & General Purposes Committee considered a bid for funding for the Warwick Skills Programme for 2004-05 (paper SWG 9/03-04) and voiced broad support for the proposal.
- (b) That at its meeting on 9 March 2004, the Skills Working Group considered a paper setting out Key Skills in course specifications, paper SWG 4/03-04 (revised 2) and recommended to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee:

That the proforma for course specifications be revised to include a section for departments to set out how students are enabled to engage with personal development planning; it being noted that it was not the intention to require departments to make changes retrospectively to individual specifications already approved, but that a mechanism be provided for enabling completion of the section at a departmental level, by the Skills team following meetings with departmental staff concerning the implementation of PDP.

(Minute 9/03-04)

CONSIDERED:

A revised proforma for course specifications, paper AQSC 90/03-04.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate):

That the amendments to the course specification proforma be approved as set out in paper 90/03-04 and that a link also be provided to the skills website.

96/03-04 Consideration of New Course Proposals

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A memorandum sent to the Chair of the Committee by Professors L Bridges and J Masson, School of Law, concerning University procedures for considering new course

proposals which include teaching outside the discipline of the proposing department, paper AQSC 91/03-04 (copy attached).

- (b) The following recommendations from the Board of Graduate Studies from its meeting of 26 April:
  - (i) That, as outlined in the Course Approval Checklist for Department or School Boards in the Course Approval Pack, departments intending to offer modules that fell within the area of expertise from a different department be requested to consult the department concerned.
  - (ii) That, as part of this consultation, departments be expected to make available a copy of the module proposal and obtain written confirmation that there were no objections to the module, for submission to the Faculty together with the module proposal.

(Minute 63/03-04 (unconfirmed))

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Part 1 course proposal form be amended to require departments introducing new courses intended to include teaching in areas outside their own subject expertise to liaise with departments possessing subject expertise.
- (d) That Chairs of Departments with appropriate subject expertise be requested to sign off such proposals to indicate that discussions had taken place and that appropriate measures had been put in place to safeguard the quality of the teaching undertaken.

97/03-04 Working Group on the Length of the Teaching Year

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Working Group established by the Committee at the request of the Steering Committee to consider the length of the teaching year submitted a report to the meeting of the Steering Committee (paper SC. 178/03-04, (copy attached)) held on 26 April which resolved:
  - (i) That the University re-affirm its commitment to providing at undergraduate level an educational and learning experience of thirty weeks duration in each academic year.
  - (ii) That the Working Group be asked to investigate further current teaching patterns in academic departments with a view to bringing forward a report for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

(Minute 368/03-04 (unconfirmed))

- (b) That during the course of the Group's discussions it had become apparent that reading weeks in the Warwick Business School remained to be harmonised, and that the issue be revisited at the next meeting of the Academic Quality & Standards Committee.

CONSIDER:

An update from the Students' Union Education Officer on the issue of harmonisation of reading weeks in the Warwick Business School; paper AQSC 92/03-04 (copy attached)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that the Secretary had provided Professor Whitby with additional information relating to departmental teaching patterns and that a further report would be made to the Steering Committee in due course.
- (b) That a letter be sent by the Chair of the Committee to the Dean of the Warwick Business School inviting him or his representative to attend the week 8 meeting of the Committee to discuss the timing of reading weeks in the School.

98/03-04 New Draft Subject Benchmark Statements

REPORTED:

- (a) That the QAA has recently circulated six draft Benchmark Statements in the following healthcare disciplines:
  - (i) Arts therapies, paper AQSC 93/03-04.
  - (ii) Audiology, paper AQSC 94/03-04.
  - (iii) Clinical science, paper AQSC 95/03-04.
  - (iv) Operating department practice, paper AQSC 96/03-04.
  - (v) Paramedic science, paper AQSC 97/03-04.
  - (vi) Clinical Psychology, paper AQSC 98/03-04.
- (b) That following circulation of the Benchmarks listed at (a) (i) – (ii) to the Medical School, and of the Benchmark for Clinical Psychology to the Department of Psychology, for comment, confirmation had been received that neither department had strong views it wishes to communicate to the QAA about the draft documents.

99/03-04 Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 9.30am on Wednesday 9 June 2004 in the Council Chamber, University House.

