

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

There will be a meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies at 2.00pm on 30 April 2009 in the **Council Chamber**, University House.

J F Baldwin
Registrar

Note: Committee papers can be accessed at <https://files.warwick.ac.uk/bgs/browse>. Questions on items on the agenda or apologies for this meeting should be directed to the Assistant Secretary to the Board, Rory McIntyre (r.j.mcintyre@warwick.ac.uk).

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the last meeting

TO CONSIDER:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19 February 2009 (copy attached).

2. Matters arising on the Minutes

(a) Poor Supervisory Practice (minute 66(a)/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its last meeting, in response to an item raised by the Chair, the Board resolved (*inter alia*) that a proposal on models of training for supervisors of postgraduate research students be drafted by the Chair and Secretary to be considered at a future meeting of the Board, it being noted that the Board had expressed the view that:

- (i) Such training should ideally be held at department level;
- (ii) Attendance should be strongly encouraged by Heads of Department and Directors of Graduate Studies on a regular basis, potentially every other year;
- (iii) That it was most crucial to ensure attendance by very long-serving staff, who may not recently have felt a need to update themselves on University requirements, and staff having recently joined Warwick from another institution, where practice might differ.

TO CONSIDER:

A proposal by the Chair and Secretary on potential training models for supervisors of postgraduate research students (paper BGS 90/08-09, copy attached).

(b) Annual PGR Course Review Reports (minute 75/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (i) That, at its last meeting, the Board considered the composite Annual PGR Course Review Reports prepared by each of the Graduate Studies Committees of the Faculty of Arts (paper AGSC 22/08-09) and Medicine (paper BGS 89/08-09), noting that the reports from the Faculties of Science and Social-Studies would be considered at a future meeting of the Board;
- (ii) That the composite report from the Faculty of Social Studies would not be available until the next meeting of the Board, following consideration by the Graduate Studies Committee.

TO CONSIDER:

The composite Annual PGR course review reports prepared by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science (paper SGS 13/08-09.m, copy attached).

(c) Postgraduate Admissions Process Review (minute 68/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (i) That, at its last meeting, the Board received oral reports from the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees and noted that the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Arts had raised (*inter alia*) the point that some departments within the Faculty had expressed concern over recent delays in the processing of some postgraduate student applications, and that meetings to try to resolve the issue had so far proved unsuccessful;
- (ii) That the Board resolved that the Secretary would raise this point with the Director of the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office as a matter of some urgency, and that he be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to respond to concerns and speak to improvement work already ongoing in the postgraduate admissions team.

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment and a paper outlining a process review within postgraduate admissions and a proposal to increase the application fee for PG students applying to the University (paper BGS 91/08-09, copy attached).

(d) Provision of training for PhD students who teach (minutes 70/08-09 and 13/08-09 refer)

TO REPORT:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 9 October 2008, the Board considered an oral report from the Chair on a meeting with the QAA auditors as

part of the Briefing Visit, noting that one issue raised by the auditors was the practice of only requiring PhD students who teach for more than 20 hours to undergo training, and resolved that it be noted that practice varied across different departments in terms of provision of training to PhD students who teach and that a paper outlining different practices should be considered at a meeting of the Board to be held in the Spring term on the basis of a survey of Departmental practice;

- (ii) That, at its last meeting, the Board considered a paper outlining the differing practice across departments in provision of training to PhD students who teach (paper BGS 78/08-09) and the existing guidelines on the use of postgraduate students for teaching (paper BGS 86/08-09) and resolved:
 - (A) That revised guidelines be drafted by the Secretariat and considered at a meeting of the Board to be held in the Summer Term;
 - (B) That, whilst the revised guidelines should stop short of requiring all PhD students who teach to undergo the same advanced level of training, they should recommend that all doctoral-level students involved in teaching should undertake training appropriate to the specific nature of the duties undertaken.

TO CONSIDER:

Revised guidelines drafted by the Secretariat on the use of postgraduate students for teaching (paper BGS 92/08-09, copy attached).

- (e) New PhD Structures (minute 54(e)/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 15 January 2009, the Board considered a report from the Chair on the consideration in principle of proposals for new PhD structures (paper BGS 65/08-09) and resolved:

- (i) That the Board encourage departments to think flexibly about new forms of PhD and that any such proposals be judged on their individual merit;
- (ii) That the Board was content to continue to work within the current regulation indicating that work already submitted for a lower award could subsequently contribute to a piece of research for a higher award, providing the extent of previously assessed work was clear, such that the examiners could clearly identify the development to be considered.

TO CONSIDER:

A proposal from the School of Law for an accelerated route PhD programme (paper BGS 106/08-09, copy attached).

3. Chair's Business

(a) Examination advisors

TO REPORT:

That, at a meeting of the Graduate Appeals Committee held in December 2008 to consider the appeal of a PhD student from the department of Biological Sciences, the Committee recommended (to the Graduate School) (*inter alia*) that consideration be given to introducing a requirement for an examination advisor to be present during all *viva voce* examinations.

(b) PGT external examiners' fees

TO REPORT:

(i) That, following an enquiry from the School of Health and Social Studies, the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) and Assistant Registrar (Examinations) had conducted a consultation with departments over the current fee scale for external examiners;

(ii) That the Chair of the Board had, on the basis of that report, agreed that there were no grounds to revise the current external examiners' fee scale.

(c) Forthcoming Workshops

TO REPORT:

That the Graduate School is running workshops as follows during the coming term:

- (i) Conversion of students from UG to PG;
- (ii) WCPRS.

(d) Russell Group PGR Special Interest Group

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair on the first meeting of the Russell Group PGR Special Interest Group, held at Warwick on 10 March 2009.

(e) Future Options for Warwick Postgraduate Research Scholarships

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Chair setting out options for the future policy on the level of WPRS award to be made to overseas students (paper BGS 105/08-09, copy attached).

(f) Erasmus Mundus Grand Committee

TO REPORT:

That, at an ad hoc meeting on 20 April 2009, the Chairs of those

committees normally involved in considering proposals for new collaborative courses, convened to collectively consider under Chair's action the proposals which are to be submitted to the European Commission's competition for recognition and funding as Erasmus Mundus courses. The "Erasmus Mundus Grand Committee" made recommendations as set out in the attached minutes (copy attached).

4. Chair's Action

TO RECEIVE:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 93/08-09, copy attached).

5. Postgraduate Committee and Students' Union

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Education Officer.

7. Template for PGT and PGR exchange programmes

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Assistant Director, International Office, setting out proposals for a template for PGT and PGR exchange programmes (paper BGS 95/08-09, copy attached).

8. Summer Programme and MSc in Research Skills for Science (minutes 45/08-09 and IC 5/08-09 refer)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 13 November 2008, the Board received an oral report from the Assistant Director (Student Recruitment) in the International Office in light of a recommendation to the Graduate School that consideration be given to the construction of a one-year foundation programme for postgraduate students in order to tap potential markets for postgraduate students where undergraduate education provision does not provide an adequate base for postgraduate level studies in an English-speaking country;
- (b) That the Board resolved that investigation begin into the development of a postgraduate foundation programme, noting that it was the view of the Board that any such programme should not compete with any existing provision for Masters students at Departmental level and that initiatives planned over the summer vacation take into account both the availability of staff and appropriate accommodation;

TO CONSIDER:

A paper (BGS 96/08-09, copy attached) from the Assistant Director (Student Recruitment) in the International Office, and oral report from the Director of MOAC, on progress made with the proposed postgraduate foundation programme.

9. Guidelines for consideration by Boards of Examiners of examination candidates notifying mitigating circumstances (minutes 36/08-09, 103/07-08, BUGS 9(h)/07-08, BUGS 28/07-08 and BFS35/07-08 refer)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 14 November 2007, resolved that the Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies Committee be asked to draft a protocol for Boards of Examiners to follow when considering special cases and mitigating evidence from students, for consideration by the Board in due course;
- (b) That the Board of the Faculty of Science, at its meeting on 13 February 2008, considered draft Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances, as set out in paper BFS 7/07-08, and recommended that the draft guidelines be approved subject to the following conditions:
- (i) Amendment of paragraph 3 to make clear that external examiners do not have to attend the pre-meeting, although they will be consulted;
 - (ii) Clarification of the role of the Personal Tutor;
 - (iii) That the draft guidelines should also be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies, with respect to postgraduate examinations.
- (c) That the Board of Undergraduate Studies, at its meeting on 4 June 2008, recommended (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that the revised Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances be approved;
- (d) That the Board, at its meeting on 7 June 2008, considered draft guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances (paper BGS 67/07-08) together with Faculty and Departmental responses to the draft Guidelines (paper BUGS 14/07-08), and resolved:
- (i) That the draft Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances be not approved for postgraduate taught students but that the Board reconsider the Guidelines at its next meeting;
 - (ii) That it be noted that concern was expressed that mitigating circumstances should be disclosed to, or further discussed at, a meeting of the full Board of Examiners, as this might deter students from bringing forward their full mitigating circumstances in certain cases;
- (e) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, at its meeting on 12 June 2008, considered the Proposed Guidelines for Consideration of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances, paper AQSC 87/07-08, together with the resolutions of the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the Board of Graduate Studies, and resolved that the proposed guidelines be further considered in the Autumn Term 2008 following reconsideration by the Board of Graduate Studies;
- (f) That the Board, at its meeting on 13 November 2008, considered the University Guidelines for Consideration by Undergraduate Boards of

Examiners of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances (paper AQSC 87/07-08), noting that the Board was invited to consider how this may be applied to Postgraduate Taught courses, and resolved:

- (i) That the Board did not approve of the application of the guidelines to Postgraduate Taught courses;
- (ii) That proposed guidelines for Postgraduate Taught Boards of Examiners be drafted and considered at a future meeting of the Board.

TO CONSIDER:

Draft guidelines for consideration by postgraduate taught Board of Examiners of examination candidates notifying mitigating circumstances (paper BGS 97/08-09, copy attached).

10. PG Decliner Survey Report

TO CONSIDER:

A paper (BGS 98/08-09, copy attached) and oral report from the Marketing Analysis Manager, Student Admissions and Recruitment Office, on the findings of a survey of students who had declined to accept the offer of a place at Warwick in 2008.

11. e-Portfolios

TO CONSIDER:

A paper (BGS 99/08-09, copy attached) and oral report from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Student Development) and e-Portfolio Coordinator, Centre for Student Development and Enterprise, on work undertaken to increase the uptake of e-Portfolios by postgraduate research students.

12. PGR Focus Groups

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Secretary on the recommendations arising from focus groups held with Postgraduate research students during the Spring term (paper BGS 100/08-09, copy attached).

13. Graduate School Charter

TO CONSIDER:

A draft proposal from the Secretary, arising from focus groups undertaken with PGR students, for a "Graduate School Charter" for PG students, setting out the range of services provided by the Graduate School and a mission statement (paper BGS 101/08-09, copy attached).

14. PGR Prizes

TO CONSIDER:

A proposal from the Secretary, arising from focus groups undertaken with PGR students, to introduce an annual prize, for the most successful research students, and the most successful research, each year (paper BGS 102/08-09, copy attached).

15. Graduate School Newsletter

TO RECEIVE:

A copy of the Graduate School newsletter, recently circulated to Directors of Graduate Studies (paper BGS 103/08-09, copy attached).

16. Any Other Business

HRWS/RM 27.04.09