

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

There will be a meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies at **2.00pm** on **Thursday, 10 June 2010** 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 29 April 2010 (copy attached).

2. Matters arising on the minutes

- (a) Regulation on Collaborative Courses (draft unconfirmed minutes CFDLSC 31/09-10 and CFDLSC 39/091-0 and minute 81/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (i) That, at its meeting on 29 April 2010, the Board considered a paper from the Deputy Academic Registrar detailing a draft of a proposed general Regulation on Collaborative Courses, setting out the requirements relating to the admission, registration, examination and assessment and quality assurance of provision for students enrolled on collaborative courses at all levels of study in conjunction with an external organisation (paper BGS 55/09-10), and resolved that the Board approve the proposed draft regulation in principle, but that it be considered at the next meeting of the Board following revision in line with discussion at the meeting;
- (ii) That, at its meeting on 28 May 2010, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered the draft Regulation on Collaborative Courses, as set out in paper BGS 55/09-10, and resolved the following, noting that CFDLSC considered the paper prior to the revisions discussed at the last meeting of the Board having been included:
- (A) That the [Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-] Committee was supportive of the draft Regulation on Collaborative Courses as set out in paper BGS 55/09-10, but noted that the Regulation presumed that a collaborative partner would accept the application of Warwick-specific procedures (with input from the collaborative partner) and that for jointly awarded degrees, some variation may be required, which would need to be highlighted on a case-by-

case basis, for example through a footnote to the Regulation and specific details set out in collaborative contracts and course handbooks.

- (B) That the Graduate School be asked for clarification:
- (1) On the courses intended to be covered by paragraph X.1(i) of the draft Regulation;
 - (2) As to whether it was intended that existing, bespoke Regulations for jointly awarded degrees should be replaced by the new Collaborative Courses Regulation, noting that this would require consultation with collaborative partners.
- (iii) That, at its meeting on 28 May 2010, the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee considered a draft Regulation 37.8: Regulations for the award of the LLM and Postgraduate Diploma in Law and Development jointly with Mekelle University, paper CFDLSC 126/09-10, and recommended (to the Board of Graduate Studies and Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that draft Regulation 37.8, Regulations for the award of the LLM and Postgraduate Diploma in Law and Development jointly with Mekelle University, be approved as set out in paper CFDLSC 126/09-10, noting that:
- (i) The Law School had been discussing the draft Regulation with Mekelle University for some time;
 - (ii) As part of the capacity building programme, the jointly awarded LLM and Postgraduate Diploma would only be offered to one cohort of students;
 - (iii) In the circumstances, it was the view of the Committee that draft Regulation 37.8 should be approved, rather than seeking to adopt the proposed draft general Regulation on Collaborative Courses (minute AQSC 31/09-10 referred) for the LLM and Postgraduate Diploma in Law and Development awarded jointly with Mekelle University;

TO CONSIDER:

- (iv) A revised paper from the Deputy Academic Registrar detailing a proposed general Regulation on Collaborative Courses, setting out the requirements relating to the admission, registration, examination and assessment and quality assurance of provision for students enrolled on collaborative courses at all levels of study in conjunction with an external organisation (paper BGS 55/09-10 (Revised), copy attached);
- (v) Draft Regulation 37.8: Regulations for the award of the LLM and Postgraduate Diploma in Law and Development jointly with Mekelle University (paper CFDLSC 126/09-10, copy attached).

3. Chair's Business

(a) Changes to the Secretariat of the Board

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair.

(b) PGR Funding Group

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair, noting that work will be undertaken over the Summer 2010 in order to inform planning in the new financial environment for student entry 2011.

4. Chair's Action

TO RECEIVE:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 64/09-10, copy attached).

5. Reports from the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees

TO RECEIVE:

Oral reports from the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees.

6. Postgraduate Committee and the Students' Union

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Education Officer.

7. Proposed Change to Standard Period of Registration for Full-Time PhD Students (minute 63/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 23 February 2010, the Board considered a paper from the Secretary and Chair setting out the possible impact, both positive and negative, of a move from a 3-year to a 4-year standard period of registration for full-time PhD students (paper BGS 40/09-10), and resolved that, whilst there were clear benefits in some areas to moving to a standard 4-year period of registration for full-time PhD students, there were also some considerable potential disadvantages to be worked through, and that the matter be discussed again a future meeting of the Board, noting that:

(a) It would seem likely that a new fee structure would need to be put in place if the change was to be implemented in a cost neutral way;

(b) That any structure put in place that resulted in the total fee payable being dependant on the length of registration might encourage students to apply for periods of temporary withdrawal unnecessarily in order to keep the cost

to a minimum;

- (c) That any change in registration length would need to be thought through carefully if it were not to result in a “creep” of submission times back towards the 4-year mark;
- (d) That any proposal for change should also incorporate a review of the fees charged for resubmission or, possibly, minor corrections, to ensure that these are set at levels to discourage students from purposefully submitting early in order to avoid a proportion of the fee-bearing period of registration.

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Deputy Academic Registrar detailing the outcomes of a consultation exercise with Departments and recommendations (paper BGS 40/09-10 (Revised), copy attached).

8. Review of the Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on the emerging recommendations from the review of the terms of reference and the constitution of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees (paper BGS 66/09-10, copy attached).

9. Review of Course and Module Approval Process (minute 79/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 29 April 2010 the Board considered a memo from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Chair of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, setting out recent discussions regarding a review of the course and module approval process and a consultation of stakeholders on the matter, to which members of the Board were invited to respond (papers BGS 53/09-10, AQSC 45/09-10 and BFSS 11/09-10) and resolved:

- (a) That Chairs of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees were concerned about devolution of module proposals to departments given the quality of some of the proposals coming forward, it being noted that departments had differing levels of internal scrutiny of proposals locally, with some going direct to the committee, which would expose any process of devolution to risk;
- (b) That Committee scrutiny deals with issues of internal competition, for example where proposals to offer provision in one area may not be picked up by another until they get to committee, particularly where inter-departmental consultation is not as strong as it could be, and thus devolution could lead to unhelpful internal competition in some areas which might only come to light from the point of recruitment;
- (c) That the Board’s view was that the review process should start from the premise of what course approval ought to achieve in academic terms rather

than simply facilitating information flow to support central services, noting that the existing mandate to change the process might usefully de-couple what is required in governance terms and what good committee scrutiny might require in terms of challenging emerging provision, considering the implications of inter-departmental modules, highlighting good practice, ensuring that learning outcomes match delivery and that formal documentation is translated in meaningful terms for student consumption;

- (d) That, following meetings in week 4, Faculty Graduate Studies Committees should feed back their resolutions to the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies to be communicated directly to the review group since the consultation deadline preceded Sub-Faculty meetings.

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) updating the Board on the outcomes of the consultation exercise and the proposals recommended for approval, in principle (paper BGS 67/09-10, copy attached).

10. PGT Grade Descriptors and Award of Merits (minute 66/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 17 November 2009, the Board considered a report compiled by the Assistant Secretary on issues arising from External Examiners' reports on Postgraduate Programmes for 2007-08 (paper BGS 19/09-10) and resolved (*inter alia*):
 - (i) That the Board consider the marking descriptors for PGT courses at a future meeting, with a view to recommending means of ensuring the full range of marks may be used more effectively;
 - (ii) That the Board revisit its earlier decision to not recommend the introduction of a formal merit award, and that this be considered in conjunction with point (a) above.
- (b) That, at its meeting on 23 February 2010, the Board considered a paper from the Secretary, setting out the marking descriptors for PGT courses across the Faculties, and the award of a "Merit" classification for PGT courses at other UK HEIs, as set out in paper BGS 42/09-10, and resolved that the question of whether to recommend the introduction of the award of a "Merit" classification for PGT courses, and at what level, be referred to Faculty Graduate Studies Committees for consideration at their next meetings in the Summer term.

TO CONSIDER:

A paper summarising the responses from the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees (paper BGS 68/09-10, copy attached) and therefore whether to recommend the introduction of the award of a "Merit" classification for PGT courses, and at what level.

11. English language proficiency testing and the Pearson Test of English

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office making recommendations, in consultation with the Centre for Applied Linguistics, on the acceptability of English language tests (including the new Pearson Test of English Academic) (paper BGS 69/09-10, copy attached), noting that the paper is also to be considered by the Board of Undergraduate Studies, and an oral update from the Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Admissions).

12. Administration of Postgraduate Scholarships

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) outlining proposed developments as a result of business process reviews of the administration of scholarships (paper BGS 70/09-10, copy attached);

TO RECEIVE:

Revised terms and conditions for Warwick Postgraduate Research Scholarship (WPRS) awards holders (paper BGS 71/09-10, copy attached).

13. PGT to PGR Conversion (minute 83/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 29 April 2010, the Board considered research undertaken by the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) setting out rates of progression from taught postgraduate to research courses across the institution, with a view to identifying new opportunities for recruitment to research courses, in addition to where and how we might increase conversion in these areas (paper BGS 57/09-10), and resolved:

- (a) That Directors of Graduate Studies consider PGT courses in their departments that may not be considered to be feeders to PGR study, and communicate these to the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) to inform the development of a conversion strategy to encourage greater numbers of Warwick graduates to apply for research courses;
- (b) That the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) be invited to the next meeting of the Board to discuss the paper and departmental feedback, setting the data provided in context.

TO RECEIVE:

A paper (paper BGS 72/09-10, to follow) and oral report from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Recruitment) on the research undertaken and the feedback provided by departments.

14. Postgraduate SSLC Annual Report (minute AQSC 46/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 4 February 2010, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee considered (*inter alia*) the Postgraduate SSLC Annual Summary

Report, as set out in paper AQSC 39/09-10, drafted by the Education Officer, Students' Union, on behalf of the SSLC coordinators, and resolved (*inter alia*):

- (a) That to function effectively, the personal tutoring system required adequate resource, noting that in some departments members of academic staff were allocated a larger number of personal tutees, which could have an impact on the availability of personal tutors;
- (b) That the Committee's views on the importance of resourcing the personal tutoring system by passed to the Constitutional Advisory Group and copied to the Senior Tutor;
- (c) That the Education Officer provide the Chair with details of the outcomes of recent student focus groups on feedback on assessed work, for consideration by the 'Aston Group' looking at approaches to assessment feedback (minute AQSC 41(b)/09-10 refers);
- (d) That the Education Officer provide a report to a future meeting of the Committee on course costs in addition to tuition fees;
- (e) That the SSLC summary reports, papers AQSC 38 and 39/09-10, be considered by the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, Faculty Boards and the Students' Union Liaison Group, and forwarded to relevant administrative and service departments;
- (f) That the Education Officer be invited to draft a short summary of issues raised in the reports and actions taken, for circulation to students.

TO CONSIDER:

The Postgraduate SSLC Annual Summary Report (paper AQSC 39/09-10, copy attached) on the operation of the SSLC system during 2008-09 for postgraduate courses.

15. PGT Annual Course Review Reports

TO CONSIDER:

The summary Annual Course Review Reports prepared by each of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees, as follows, noting that the report from the Faculty of Medicine Graduate Studies Committee is not yet available:

- (a) Arts (paper AGSC 36a/09-10, copy attached);
- (b) Science (paper SGS 93/09-10, copy attached);
- (c) Social Science (paper GFSS 315/09-10, copy attached).

16. PSRB engagements (draft unconfirmed minute AQSC 79/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 20 May 2010, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee considered:

- (a) The report by the General Social Care Council on the reaccreditation of the MA in Social Work, undertaken in May 2009 (paper AQSC 63/09-10);

- (b) The Department's Action Plan in response to the report (paper AQSC 64/09-10);

and resolved that the report and Action Plan be noted, and that the report and action plan also be referred to the Board for consideration.

TO CONSIDER:

- (c) The report by the General Social Care Council on the reaccreditation of the MA in Social Work, undertaken in May 2009 (paper AQSC 63/09-10, copy attached);
- (d) The Department's Action Plan in response to the report (paper AQSC 64/09-10, copy attached).

17. Postgraduate Research Social Facility (the "GradDeck")

TO RECEIVE:

A paper from the Director of Student Support, detailing usage of the new, recently opened "GradDeck" social facility at Lakeside (paper BGS 73/09-10, copy attached).

18. ESRC DTC Application (minutes 88/09-10, 54(d)/09-10 and 44(d)/09-10 refer)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That, at its meeting on 29 April 2010, it was reported to the Board that the University submitted its application for accreditation as an ESRC Doctoral Training Centre in March, noting that:
- (i) Only the University's institutional Case for Support was circulated to the Board;
 - (ii) Anonymised reviewer comments will be sent to the University in May for response;
 - (iii) The ESRC will notify the University of the outcome of its application for accreditation in August;
 - (iv) The ESRC will notify successful DTC applicants of the quota of awards allocated in October-December;
- (b) That, at the meeting, the Board received a copy of the University's Institutional Case for Support for the ESRC DTC Application, submitted to the ESRC in advance of the deadline of 11 March 2010 (paper BGS 62/09-10), noting that it was now likely that the outcome of the bid would not be known until November 2010;

TO RECEIVE:

A copy of the University's institutional response to comments received as part of the peer review process (paper BGS 74/09-10, copy attached).

19. Centre for Student Careers and Skills' Consultation on the Research Students Skills Programme

TO CONSIDER:

An oral update from the Head of Student Development on the ongoing consultation exercise being undertaken by the Centre for Student Careers and Skills with the purpose of exploring the realised and potential development needs of post-graduate research students at the University of Warwick.

20. Entry Requirements for Postgraduate Science Degrees (minute SGS 32/09-10 refers)

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 18 May 2010, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science considered a proposal that entry requirements for Science MSc degrees (by Research) be revised to consider applications from students with Lower Second Class degrees, as set out in paper SGS 94/09-10, and recommended (to the Board) that, for the Science Faculty only, the normal minimum entry requirement for an MSc by Research (and MRes where offered) be changed to: "a second class honours degree, or equivalent";

TO CONSIDER:

The proposal to revise minimum entry requirements for admission to MSc, by Research, degrees in the Faculty of Science (paper SGS 94/09-10, copy attached).

21. New Courses

TO CONSIDER:

A paper setting out recommendations for the approval of new courses (paper BGS 75/09-10, copy attached).

22. Revised Courses

TO CONSIDER:

A paper setting out recommendations for the approval of revisions to existing courses (paper BGS 76/09-10, copy attached).

23. Any Other Business

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