

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

There will be a meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies at 1 pm on Wednesday 31 May 2006 in R 0.12, Ramphal Building, Central Campus.

C E Charlton
University Secretary

Note: Questions on agendum items or apologies for this meeting should be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the Committee, Samuel Cole on extension 22755.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes

TO CONSIDER:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27 April 2006 (copy attached).

2. Chair's Business

a) Postgraduate Research Accommodation

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report on developments since last report.

b) E-Submission of PhD theses

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair on the possibility of submitting theses electronically.

c) Income from students 2006-07

TO RECEIVE:

A report indicating the income received by the University classified by student type and broken down by Department (paper BGS 37/05-06).

d) A Strategic Review of Postgraduate Research Student Numbers

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair.

e) Involvement of Probationary Staff in Supervision

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair.

3. Reports from the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees

TO RECEIVE:

Oral reports from the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees of the Faculties.

4. Postgraduate Committee

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair of the Postgraduate Committee.

5. Outline proposals for new courses of Study

TO RECEIVE:

A report from the 'pre-meeting' of the Board of Graduate Studies (Core) held on Tuesday 23 May 2006 (paper BGS 39/05-06, copy attached)

6. Annual Course Reviews

a) Faculty of Social Studies

TO REPORT:

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies recommended that the issue regarding office and/or work space for postgraduate research students should be referred to the Board of Graduate Studies.

TO RECEIVE:

- i) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Taught Courses 2004/05: Summary Report (paper GFSS 322/05-06, copy attached)
- ii) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Research Courses 2004/05 (paper GFSS 321/05-06, copy attached)

b) Faculty of Arts

TO RECEIVE:

- i) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Taught Courses 2004/05: Summary Report (paper AQSC 11/05-06, copy attached)
- ii) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Research Courses 2004/05: Summary Report (AQSC 12/05-06, copy attached)

c) Faculty of Science

TO RECEIVE:

- i) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Taught Courses 2004/05: Departmental Reports for WMG, Statistics and Psychology (SGS 93/05-06, copy attached)
- ii) The Annual Review of Postgraduate Research Courses 2004/05: Departmental Reports for Physics, Psychology and Warwick HRI (SGS 94/05-06, copy attached)

7. Scholarships

a) Scholarships Review Group

TO CONSIDER:

A report outlining the findings of the Scholarships Review Group

b) Faculty Graduate Studies Committee responses to questions posed in 'Future University Support for Postgraduate Research Students' (paper BGS 35/05-06)

TO REPORT:

i) Faculty of Science

That in response to the questions posed in Appendix 2 of paper BGS.35/05-06 the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science resolved that:

- A) (Question 1) The University of Warwick should maintain a central scheme of financial support for postgraduate research students
- B) Departments should not bear the cost of student fee waivers any more than they do currently;
- C) The central scheme should be expanded, but not at additional cost to departments;
- D) A proportionate charge to departments seems reasonable, but this could be based on fee income rather than student numbers;
- E) All departments, including those with fully devolved budgets, should be included in the scheme. However, Warwick HRI noted that they would see little benefit from the scheme, as they have no undergraduate population to which to market the scheme.
- F) (Question 2) Option c (a flexible scheme) was preferred on the whole. However, some departments would rather keep WPRF and TRTF completely separate.

- G) (Question 3) Some departments would support TRTF using departmental funds. However, most departments in the Faculty of Science would probably not benefit from providing teaching in this way, as they provide what they need using PhD students on an *ad hoc* basis;
- H) There was no support for paying an enhanced maintenance;
- I) The remaining value of WPRF funds following transfers should be retained to support additional central awards in future years.
- J) (Question 4) The University scheme should be administered centrally but delivered by Faculty.

ii) Faculty of Arts

TO REPORT:

- A) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Arts recommended that the financial support for postgraduate students be decentralised to the Faculty to allow:
 - 1) The Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship funds to be spread more widely;
 - 2) The development of bursaries for MA students;
 - 3) A greater level of control of the timetable of scholarship deadlines, to enable scholarship offers to be made earlier in the academic year;
 - 4) More effective targeting of MA and PhD advertisements.
- B) That competitor analysis be carried out to provide further information on scholarships awarded at peer institutions;
- C) That the Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship stipend be reduced to come into line with that of the Research Councils;
- D) That the requirement for students with a Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship to work for 110 hours each year be changed to so that a work commitment is voluntary;
- E) That questions 3 and 4 posed in Appendix 2 of paper BGS 35/05-06 be further considered if the financial

support for postgraduate students becomes decentralised to the Faculties.

iii) Faculty of Medicine

TO REPORT:

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Medicine recommended that the administration of the Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowships, as referred to in paper BGS35/05-06, be devolved to Faculty level in order that Boards of Graduate Studies make their own decisions regarding the award of Fellowships, thereby providing increased flexibility and the possibility of variations in the structure of the awards.

iv) Faculty of Social Studies

TO REPORT:

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies recommended:

- A) That the University should retain central funding support;
- B) That the University should consider funding research students on a revised version of the Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship such that three years of full scholarship was available but with no work commitment. The rate should be same as the level of research council support;
- C) That the administration of the scheme be along the lines proposed under 3(c) of paper BGS.35/05-06 it being noted that that the selection of candidates should be undertaken at faculty level;
- D) That the proposal to permit the funding to be used for a mixture of taught and research students (at faculty discretion) be supported.

8. Periodic Review of Chemistry

TO RECEIVE:

A report from the Periodic Review Panel of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Postgraduate Degrees of the Department Chemistry (paper BFS 14(a)/05-06, copy attached)

9. QAA Report on Research Degree Provision at the University

TO RECEIVE:

QAA Special Review of Research Degree Programmes 2005-06 (paper BGS 36/05-06, copy attached)

10. Submission & Qualification Rates

TO REPORT:

Responses from the Graduate Studies Committees of the Faculties to paper BGS 24/05-06 addressing the issue of PhD submission rates:

a) Faculty of Science

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science recommended:

- i) That departments would probably not raise objections to introducing an MPhil to PhD upgrade process. However, the important principle is for good monitoring procedures and some kind of checking point, not necessarily an upgrade.
- ii) That advertising literature would need to be looked at carefully, to make clear that MPhil registration is part of a programme leading to PhD.
- iii) That the situation for international students would need to be considered, to ensure they get funding for the full period even if registered initially for an MPhil.
- iv) That there may be issues with collaborative programmes, making MPhil registration difficult, and that this issue might make Science distinct from other disciplines.
- v) That the details within paper BGS.24/05-06 will need to be looked at carefully, as a three year full-time registration period is no longer standard.
- vi) That Science departments would prefer an approach based on financial incentives for timely completion, rather than fines for late submission.

b) Faculty of Social Studies

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies recommended that, whilst the Committee recognised that PhD submission rates in the Faculty needed improving, paper BGS 24/05-06 be referred back to the Board of Graduate Studies, it being noted that:

- i) The paper did not appear to take into account the changing nature of the PhD, especially in terms of the inclusion of taught elements and generic skills training, and the effects that these

might have on students being able to submit within a standard three-year period of registration;

- ii) Whilst the Committee recognised that the production of the PhD thesis was the most important aspect to a student's registration it was not the sole reason. Research students should often be regarded as the academics of the future and thus obtaining appropriate teaching experience was also a key objective.
- iii) That the proposal that prospective full-time research students be expected to complete 1,800 hours of research per academic year was too ambitious especially given the comments made under (d) above.
- iv) That the Committee did not support the proposal for individual supervisors to be rewarded financially. Consideration should, instead, be given as to whether the appropriate department be rewarded in some way, it being recognised that other individuals in the department other than the supervisor will have influenced the date of the student's submission.
- v) That the Committee did support an increase in the standard extension fee.
- vi) That it was the view of the Committee that the Graduate School should be given stronger authority with regard to monitoring students' progress with respect to his/her expected submission date and withdrawing students who offer no explanation as to why they are not likely to meet that date.
- vii) That the Board of Graduate Studies should consider the additional overheads and related problems involved with supervising part-time students before recommending a growth in this area.

c) Faculty of Arts

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Arts, at its meeting on 10th May 2006, discussed submission and qualification rates, considered paper BGS 24/05-06 and recommended (to the Board of Graduate Studies via the Board of the Faculty of Arts):

- i) That the Board of Graduate Studies progress proposal 1, noting that the Graduate School Office would need to act expeditiously to update student records;
- ii) That the Board of Graduate Studies modify proposal 2, to enable annual progress reviews to take place in departmental supervisors' meetings, not necessarily involving the Graduate School;
- iii) That the Board of Graduate Studies progress proposal 3;

- iv) That the Board of Graduate Studies reconsider proposal 4, noting that this was not supported by the Committee because:
 - A) A charge of £100 per month of additional extension beyond the initial 6-month extension period could worsen the situation of students who may not have made a timely submission because they were in employment in order to finance their studies;
 - B) A financial incentive for timely submissions could encourage incomplete and inadequate submissions.

11. Graduate School Programme

TO CONSIDER:

A report from Dr Rachel Hardy, Graduate Skills Manager outlining recent activities and plans for 2006/07 (paper BGS 38/05-06)

12. Guidelines for Students Studying Away from Campus

TO CONSIDER:

A Report on Guidelines for Students Studying Away from Campus (paper BGS 40/05-06, to follow)

13. Warwick Accommodation & Postgraduate Student Placements

TO REPORT:

That some postgraduate students at the University go on placement as part of their course during the summer months. This can cause conflict with Warwick Accommodation because students are locked in to a contract. Some students have had success in negotiating their way out of the contracts yet some have had to pay accommodation fees when they have not been resident.

TO RECEIVE:

A report from the Campus Life Committee on Placement Students and Accommodation (paper to follow)

14. Any Other Business