

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES
OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7 NOVEMBER 2019, SENATE HOUSE COUNCIL CHAMBER

Present	Professor Colin Sparrow	CS	Chair
	Alex Baker	AB	Co-opted student member
	Ant Brewerton	AB2	Representative from Library
	Christopher Bisping	CB	Chair, Social Science Faculty Education Committee
	Professor Jennifer Burns	JB	Chair, Arts Faculty Education Committee
	Alice Churm	AC	Co-opted student member, PG Sabbatical Officer
	Professor Jon Coaffee	JC	CDT representative, Social Science and Arts
	Dr Rebecca Freeman	RF	Dean of Students
	Dr Miriam Gifford	MG	Representative of Board of Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Sara Hattersley	SH	Representative from Organisational Development
	Dr Pietri Kaapa	PK	Representative of Board of Faculty of Arts
	Dr Clare Lyonette	CL	Representative of Board of Faculty of Social Science
	Dr Jonathan Pearson	JP	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Professor Mark Steel	MS	Representative of Board of Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Professor Martin Wills	MW	Chair, Science, Engineering and Medicine Faculty Education Committee
Dr David Wright	DW	Member of academic staff appointed by Senate	
Attending	Yasmin Amed	YA	Human Resources (item 017)
	Susan Black	SB	Doctoral College
	Yvonne Budden	YB	Library (item 019)
	Andreea Fertigan	AF	Human Resources (item 017)
	James Hutchinson	JH	Student Finance and Funding
	Laura Larard	LL	Assistant Secretary, Doctoral College
	Rhiannon Martyn	RM	Secretary, Doctoral College
	Stella Neophytou	SN	Doctoral College
Ref	Item		
001	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Dr Kurt Debattista, Professor Jo Garde-Hansen, Professor Des Hewitt, Dr Kirsty Hooper (Deputy Chair), Dr Debbi Marais, Professor Eivor Oborn, Michele Underwood</p>		
002	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>		
003	<p>Terms of reference</p> <p>The terms of reference were received and approved.</p>		
004	<p>Membership of the Board</p> <p>The membership of the Board was received and approved, noting that AB2 was the representative from the Library.</p> <p>ACTION: LL to update membership list</p>		

005	<p>Freedom of Information Act: Publication Scheme</p> <p>It was noted that minutes of meetings of the Board are published on the University website, as part of its Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</p>
006	<p>Nomination of student member on the University Research Governance and Ethics Committee</p> <p>The Board approved the nomination of Alex Baker as student member on the University Research Governance and Ethics Committee.</p>
007	<p>Nomination of Faculty Assessors for Chancellor’s International Scholarship Competition</p> <p>The Board approved the nomination of Faculty assessors as set out in paper 007-BGS071119, noting that nominations from the Faculty of Social Science remained outstanding and would be approved by Chair’s action.</p>
008	<p>Minutes of last meeting on 21 May 2019</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 were received and approved.</p>
009	<p>Matters arising from last meeting on 21 May 2019</p> <p>The matters arising were as follows:</p> <p>(a) Visiting student fees (minute 041-BGS210519 refers)</p> <p>CS reported that visiting students starting in 2019/20 would not pay academic fees – this arrangement would be reviewed at a later date. It was confirmed that normally visiting students could come to Warwick for a maximum of 12 months.</p> <p>(b) Update on Central PG Scholarships (minute 051-BGS210519 refers)</p> <p>CS reported that a total of 30 Chancellor’s International Scholarships would be available for the next academic year, noting that there were an additional five Chancellor’s scholarships compared to the last year.</p> <p>(c) Summary of events for supervisors (minute 054-BGS210519 refers)</p> <p>RM reported that several events had been held for supervisors, both disseminating information (Catalyst funded wellbeing project, IATL funded project – Super in Supervision) and to provide networking opportunities. The events were well attended. The Doctoral College was working with the Academic Development Centre to take work in this area forward.</p>
Chair’s Update	
010	<p>Chair’s Business and Actions</p> <p>The Chair reported that:</p> <p>The Doctoral College had launched in September;</p> <p>Departmental quotas for Chancellor’s International Scholarships would be announced shortly;</p> <p>The Chair had approved a proposal from the School of Engineering to introduce an MPhil/PhD in Engineering.</p>
011	<p>Deputy Chair’s Business and Actions</p> <p>The Secretary, on behalf of the Deputy Chair reported that the PGT Strategy Working Group had met twice, with representatives from each Faculty, the Students’ Union and Professional Services departments. The Group was currently gathering information and considering work that is currently being done in this area, for example extending Welcome Week to PGT students. Further updates would be provided at future meetings.</p>
Students’ Union Update	

012	<p>Students' Union Update</p> <p>The PG Sabbatical Officer reported that:</p> <p>PG Connections events would be moving forward with a focus on social and wellbeing activities. Previous events had been well attended;</p> <p>The academic course representation election process was now online and had seen an increase in the number of votes from postgraduate students (47%).</p>
Faculty Education Committee Updates	
013	<p>Science, Engineering and Medicine</p> <p>M Wills reported that the Committee had discussed the Education Strategy Priorities, Warwick Collaborative Postgraduate Research Scholarships and the sick pay policy for funded PGR students. The Committee received evidence from the Postgraduate Certificate in Transferable Skills in Science that demonstrated improvements in employability for students completing skills training. The Committee also reported positive feedback on the Universal Admission system.</p> <p>ACTION: M Wills to share evidence provided by PGCTSS team on employability.</p>
014	<p>Social Science</p> <p>C Bisping reported that the Committee welcomed the introduction of the Doctoral College and the refocus of priorities in relation to PGR. The Committee also considered the Education Strategy Priorities.</p>
015	<p>Arts</p> <p>J Burns reported that the Committee also welcomed the launch of the Doctoral College and the PGT Strategy Working Group, discussed Education Strategy priorities, noting that the PGR priority was welcomed, and discussed Warwick core skills.</p>
Items for approval/discussion	
016	<p>BGS Priorities</p> <p>The Board received and noted the paper 016-BGS071119 (tabled). The Chair advised that Board's priorities would be considered at each meeting, noting updates between meetings.</p>
017	<p>Sessional Teaching Payroll</p> <p>A Fertigan and Y Amed provided an update on the Sessional Teaching Payroll project as set out in paper 017-BGS071119.</p> <p>AF reported that the proposal is to formalise teaching contracts for the majority, introducing terms and benefits that are comparable to those of staff members, while retaining STP for very short engagements to ensure flexibility is retained;</p> <p>Departmental workshops are scheduled for the end of November, guidance is due to be circulated in December/January with go-live planned for before May 2020;</p> <p>M Gifford commented that departmental HR colleagues are already struggling with increased workloads due to the introduction of SuccessFactors, so may not have the capacity to cope with further new processes;</p> <p>The Chair recommended that Board members disseminate information within their departments, inviting feedback.</p> <p>AF confirmed that the slides could be circulated more widely and advised that any feedback should be provided to the STP team. Student consultation would take place in Term 2.</p>
018	<p>Annual Leave Policy</p> <p>The Board considered the paper 018-BGS071119.</p>

	<p>DECISION: The Board approved the recommendations that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Board adopts the UKRI recommended maximum of eight weeks annual leave in the year (including public holidays), pro rata for part-time students, and subject to Tier 4 requirements as relevant; (b) Departments will be required to make their own arrangements, as appropriate, for recording and monitoring annual leave. Departmental PGR handbooks should advertise the entitlement to annual leave and describe any required departmental processes; (c) The agreed policy would be incorporated into an overarching absence policy which would also include maternity and sickness leave (to be considered at a future meeting of the Board).
019	<p>Changing Funder Requirements Regarding Assessment of Research</p> <p>Y Budden reported that the proposed changes set out in paper 019-BGS071119 were in response to requirements from funders (Wellcome Trust, UKRI) around the way in which we use metrics in assessing research, recruitment procedures, academic probation and promotion. The Wellcome Trust had advised that institutions need to adopt one of the two options presented by January 2021. UKRI were currently reviewing their policies in this area with a consultation expected in due course.</p> <p>YB reported that the changes would likely impact on postgraduate students in relation to the advice supervisors give in relation to venue of publication. It is expected that there will be a benefit to early career researchers in that publication venue would no longer be a prominent part of recruitment processes.</p> <p>The proposals had been considered by Research Committee and would be taken to upcoming Faculty Board meetings.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board resolved to endorse the proposal that principles of the Leiden Manifesto (tailored to Warwick requirements) be adopted in the first instance, noting that it may be necessary to sign up to DORA, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, should that be required as part of the outcome of the UKRI Open Access Review.</p>
020	<p>PGR Submission Rates</p> <p>The Board received paper 020-BGS071119, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It would be useful to receive data on examination outcomes; (b) The rate of first year withdrawals was fairly consistent, but the reasons for the withdrawals were not clear or held in an easily accessible format at a University level. <p>ACTION: LL to provide data on examination outcomes to the February meeting of the Board</p> <p>ACTION: CS to contact academic departments to seek information on the reason for withdrawals during the first year of study.</p>
021	<p>Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Results 2019</p> <p>S Neophytou presented paper 021-BGS071119, reporting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The response rate of 48% demonstrated Warwick’s highest response rate and was significantly higher than the sector average (32%); (b) Warwick achieved improvements in every area of the survey compared to 2018 and was placed in the top quarter nationally for seven out of the eight scales; (c) Areas identified for improvement were assessment criteria, sense of community and English language needs; (d) Departments have been submitting action plans to Education, Policy and Quality for consideration in Teaching Excellence Group meetings.

	<p>ACTION: SN to provide further information on responses relating to students with caring responsibilities, ethnicity and value for money</p>
022	<p>Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) Results 2019</p> <p>S Neophytou presented paper 022-BGS071119, reporting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The response rate of 35% was disappointing compared to previous years; (b) Results were generally positive , with Warwick placed in the second quarter nationally in relation to overall satisfaction; (c) A higher than sector-average proportion of students made reference to welfare, pastoral care and student mental health services, and as such this would be a priority going forward; (d) Departments have been submitting action plans to the Doctoral College – areas of good practice and any cross-faculty issues will be shared with departments <p>CS reported that the Board’s previous concerns in relation to availability of English language support had been referred to the Education Executive.</p> <p>ACTION: CS to add availability of language support for enrolled students to BGS priorities for this academic year</p>
023	<p>Scholarship and Funding Data (Diversity)</p> <p>The Board noted paper 023-BGS071119.</p>
024	<p>PGR Hardship and REF Completion Funds</p> <p>The Board noted paper 024-BGS071119.</p>
025	<p>Postgraduate Student Numbers</p> <p>The Board received paper 025-BGS071119 and noted that there was a general appetite to increase PGR student numbers, but additional funding would be required to support this.</p> <p>ACTION: CS to discuss a University-level target with the Provost</p>
026	<p>Length of PhD Registration and Funding Period</p> <p>The Board received paper 023-BGS071119 and noted the discrepancy between funded period and registration period for funded students. There is a need for transparency and managing student’s expectations as to the length of study. It was noted that in some disciplines it is not unusual for the direction of research to change, meaning that additional time is often required.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board endorsed the proposal that, when nominating students for Chancellor’s International Scholarships, departments should be asked to undertake that the research project will be designed and supervised in such a way that students are able to submit their thesis within the funded period, or else given an indication of how additional funding would be found to support the student towards the end of their submission period.</p>
027	<p>Reasonable Adjustment in Marking/Examination – PGR</p> <p>It was reported that the Doctoral College had received a query from a department as to whether it would be appropriate to inform examiners of a PGR student’s Specific Learning Difficulties in a similar way to the 'specific learning difference marking stickers' that are commonly used at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level.</p> <p>The Board considered that, in many cases, any such difficulties could be mitigated by way of granting extensions and/or employing the use of proofreading services prior to thesis examination. It was also noted that supervisors may notify examiners of a student’s difficulties in advance of the examination.</p> <p>ACTION: CS to discuss with Disability Services.</p>

Items received/approved without discussion	
028	List of course proposals approved during 2018/19
Other	
029	Any other business There was no other business.
Next meeting: Thursday 6 February 2020, 09.30-11.30, Council Chamber, Senate House	