

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies held on Thursday 26 April 2018

Present: Professor C Sparrow (Chair), A Baker, Professor J Burns, Dr O Davis, R Davis, E Dunford, Dr J Garde-Hansen, Dr M Gifford, Professor L Gracia, S Hattersley, Dr K Hooper, Professor K Kirwan, Dr C Lyonette, Dr J Madan, Dr D Marais, Professor E Oborn, Dr A Pinter, Dr J Pearson, Professor M Wills, Dr D Wright

Apologies: C Bisping, A Brewerton, Professor N Gane, Dr J Heron, Professor D Hewitt, W Murage, D Richards, Professor L Roberts, A Salau, Professor A Stewart, Professor M Turner, C Ziegler

In Attendance: A Higgins, L Larard, R Martyn, E Shields, L Sutcliffe

47/17-18 Minutes of the last meeting

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16 January 2018 as set out in paper BGS 31/17-18.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16 January 2018 be approved.

48/17-18 Matters Arising on the Minutes

REPORTED:

(a) Membership of the Board 2017/18 (minute BGS 35(a)/17-18 refers)

- (i) That A Brewerton would replace Dr G Marakas as the representative from the Library for the remainder of the academic year;
- (ii) That Professor J Burns would replace Professor P Roberts as representative of the Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (Arts).

(b) Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee (minute BGS 5/17-18 refers)

- (i) That the Faculty Education Committees, at their last meetings, nominated the following to serve as additional Faculty Selectors on the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee:

(A) Faculty of Arts

- (1) Professor M Beistegui;
- (2) Dr O Davis;
- (3) Dr R Varma;

(B) Faculty of Medicine

- (1) Professor M Birchwood;
- (2) Professor D Grammatopoulos;

(3) Professor C Hutchinson;

(C) Faculty of Science

(1) Professor D Leadley;

(2) Dr K Leppard;

(3) Professor S Barnes;

(D) Faculty of Social Sciences

(1) Dr O Hassan;

(2) Dr C Lambert;

(3) Dr G Longworth;

(c) Policy on Professional Development for Doctoral Researchers (minute BGS 38/17-18 refers)

That the PGR Professional Development Working Group would provide a report to the next meeting of the Board.

(d) Thesis Completion Hardship Fund (minutes BGS 41/17-18 refers)

That the Chair would present a report to a future meeting of the Board in relation to revised criteria for making awards and the possible value of awards.

49/17-18 Students' Union Update

RECEIVED:

(a) An oral report from the Postgraduate Officer.

REPORTED (by E Dunford, Postgraduate Officer):

(b) That tickets for the Postgraduate Summer Ball were on sale;

(c) That a call for papers had been launched for the inaugural Warwick Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference due to take place on 21 June;

(d) That a postgraduate-specific 'Are You OK?' day would be taking place on 8 May featuring a range of wellbeing events including a session on impostor syndrome;

(e) That the Postgraduate Officer had received a number of complaints from PGR students about Sessional Teaching Payroll which she would be discussing with the Provost.

CONSIDERED:

(f) A paper from the postgraduate student representative of the Faculty of Science on PGR student access to car parking (paper BGS 32/17-18), noting that data provided in response to Freedom of Information requests could be provided on request;

REPORTED: (by A Baker):

- (g) That the Students' Union was concerned that future car parking developments would be restricted to University staff only due to VAT issues, resulting in increased parking issues for PGR students;
- (h) That postgraduate students reported that public transport was expensive and unreliable, resulting in a greater number of students driving to campus;
- (i) That students had raised concerns as to the threatening tone of communications received from the external parking enforcement company in the event of parking fines being issued;
- (j) That the University should recognise PGR students' contribution to the teaching and research objectives of the University;
- (k) That, noting that repeated parking offences were classed as a major disciplinary offence, there was a risk that students could be penalised twice – by way of both formal parking enforcement action and the University disciplinary process;

(by the Chair):

- (l) That the Board had mixed views as to the classification of repeated breaches of parking regulations as a major disciplinary offence, noting that there was a need for some recourse for serial offenders but that it was unlikely that disciplinary action would result from low-level infringements;

(by Dr J Garde-Hansen):

- (m) That the Students' Union may wish to consider alternative, technological solutions to car parking issues such as those advertising parking spaces on private land for hire in the local area;

RESOLVED:

- (n) That the Board noted concerns raised by PGR students and would support the proposals that:
  - (i) Noting that there is a VAT exemption for new-build staff-only car parks, the University should ensure that there is adequate provision for PGR students to park on campus in future;
  - (ii) University staff should be encouraged to park in staff-only car parks to free up spaces in general car parks for PGR students;
  - (iii) The Car Parking team be encouraged to consider appropriate communication mechanisms with the Students' Union to ensure that the parking needs of students are considered and decisions communicated effectively;
  - (iv) That it would be useful for the Car Parking team to publish data on car parking capacity and usage on a regular basis;
  - (v) The University approach the external parking enforcement company to discuss the language and tone of communications, noting the distress caused to students;

- (o) That the Board did not support the proposal that Regulations 23 and 25 should be revised to exclude repeated parking offences from the list of major disciplinary offences.

50/17-18

Reports from the Chairs of the Faculty Education Committees

RECEIVED:

Oral reports from the Chairs of the Faculty Education Committees.

REPORTED:

(by Prof M Wills, on behalf of the Faculty Education Committee (Science)):

- (a) That the Faculty quota of WCPRS awards had been allocated, noting that a waiting list had been created in the event that any other Faculties returned awards to the central pot for re-allocation;

(by Dr O Davis, on behalf of the Faculty Education Committee (Arts)):

- (b) That the Committee had been focusing on the strategic areas of widening participation and employability;
- (c) That the Committee had resolved that updates on the 2017 Institutional Teaching and Learning Review be considered on an annual rather than termly basis;

(by the Chair, on behalf of C Bisping, Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (Social Sciences)):

- (d) That the Committee had considered the review of personal tutoring and noted that further clarification was required in relation to the recommendation on PGR provision;
- (e) That the Committee had considered PGR Annual Course Reviews, noting that some departmental submissions had not yet been received;

(by Dr J Madan and Dr D Marais on behalf of the Faculty Education Committee (Medicine)):

- (f) That the WMS PGR supervisor training would be updated to include details of maintaining records of interactions with supervisees, early signposting of issues and potential conflicts of interest;
- (g) That the WMS Severe Weather Policy had been updated

RESOLVED:

That information on the updated WMS PGR supervision training would be provided to the Board in due course

51/17-18

PGT External Examiners' Reports

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) summarising issues raised in PGT external examiners' reports during the 2016-17 academic year (paper BGS 34/17-18).

REPORTED:

(by E Dunford, Postgraduate Officer):

- (a) That, at a recent QAA conference, the issue of grade inflation was highlighted as a wider issue, and as a result consultation or guidance may be issued on the handling of borderline cases;

(by Dr M Gifford):

- (b) That there was a perception that rules relating to the handling of borderline cases were being interpreted differently across the University;

(by the Chair):

- (c) That the contribution of external examiners was appreciated, noting the useful input on processes that can be gained from external experience;

RESOLVED:

That the paper would be considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and as part of the wider assessment review.

52/17-18

#### Co-Tutelle Agreements

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) on co-tutelle agreements (paper BGS 35/17-18).

REPORTED:

(by Dr O Davis):

- (a) That it would be desirable to continue the plurality of co-tutelle agreements and joint degrees due to the benefits in creating links with other Universities;

(by the Chair):

- (b) That the individual nature of co-tutelle agreements and the commitment required from all parties during the negotiation process means that the outcomes are likely to be successful;

(by Dr J Garde-Hansen):

- (c) That due to a lack of information and guidance, some departments may consider entering into co-tutelle agreements to be too great a risk;

(by Prof M Wills):

- (d) That there were complications in setting up formal joint degree programmes and departments may wish to consider other options such as making

arrangements for students to visit other institutions to build collaborative links.

RESOLVED:

That the current system of agreeing and arranging co-tutelles be continued in addition to institutional formal collaborative agreements.

53/17-18 PGR Action Planning

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Postgraduate Student Development Officer on themes arising from the departmental PGR action plans (paper BGS 36/17-18).

REPORTED:

(a) That the Graduate School was aware that the completion of action plans could be a lengthy process and was keen to reduce duplication and bureaucracy and focus on adding value to the student experience;

(by Dr J Garde-Hansen):

(b) That it would be useful if the action planning templates could be aligned across all areas of study;

(by R Martyn, Secretary):

(c) That the Surveys Working Group was considering the general approach so it was likely that further developments would be announced.

RESOLVED:

That PGR action planning will be discussed with Teaching Quality to ensure that it aligns to similar TQ-led activities.

54/17-18 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

RECEIVED:

An oral report on the launch of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

REPORTED: (by L Sutcliffe, Postgraduate Student Development Officer):

That PTES had launched on 23 April 2018 and access issues reported by a small number of students were being investigated. Several departments were not planning to promote the survey to students until a later date.

55/17-18 Scholarships Update: Chancellor's International Scholarships

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships) on the allocation of Chancellor's International Scholarships (BGS 38/17-18).

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Board agreed that this was an important use of University resources and would welcome the opportunity to increase the amount of funding available;
- (b) That departments reported a significant number of high standard applications which they were not able to nominate due to the limited number of awards available;
- (c) That the Graduate School would be contacting departments to request feedback on the new consideration and allocation process which was introduced this academic year.

RESOLVED:

That the Graduate School should collect and publish information on the success stories of scholarship recipients.

56/17-18 PGR Annual Course Reviews

RECEIVED:

The summary PGR Annual Course Review Reports prepared by the Board of the Faculty of Arts (paper BFA.16/17-18).

REPORTED:

That the summary PGR Annual Course Review Reports prepared by the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Social Science would be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

(by E Dunford, Postgraduate Officer):

That there were concerns that plans for the new Humanities building did not include sufficient dedicated quiet study space for postgraduate students and the Students' Union would be taking these forward.

57/17-18 Any Other Business

58/17-18 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday 29 May 2018 at 2.00pm in CMR 1.0, University House.

59/17-18 Schedule of Meetings for 2018/19

REPORTED:

That the Committee Timetable for 2018/19 has been published, noting that meetings of the Board are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, 02 October 2018 at 9:00am in CMR 1.0, University House  
 Tuesday, 06 November 2018 at 9:00am in CMR 1.0, University House  
 Tuesday, 15 January 2019 at 9:00am in CMR 1.0, University House

Tuesday, 05 February 2019 at 9:00am in CMR 1.0, University House  
Tuesday, 30 April 2019 at 9:00am in Senate House Council Chamber  
Tuesday, 21 May 2019 at 9:00am in CMR 1.0, University House

60/17-18 Chair's Action

REPORTED:

Faculty of Social Science

Warwick Business School

(a) PhD/PgDiploma in Finance and Econometrics

- (i) That the Board, at its meeting on 30 May 2017, resolved that the proposal to revise the PhD and Postgraduate Diploma in Finance and Econometrics, as set out in papers GFSS.113(a-c)/16-17, PSC.85 and 87/16-17 be approved subject to:
  - (A) Clarification as to whether Warwick Business School intend to discontinue the PhD in Finance;
  - (B) Confirmation as to whether the proposed revisions have been considered by an SSLC.
- (ii) That the conditions had been satisfied and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf had subsequently taken action to revise the PhD and Postgraduate Diploma in Finance and Econometrics, as set out in papers GFSS.113(a-c)/16-17, PSC.85 and 87/16-17.

(b) PhD/PgDiploma in Business and Management

- (i) That the Board, at its meeting on 30 May 2017, resolved that the proposal to revise the PhD and Postgraduate Diploma in Business and Management, as set out in papers GFSS.113(a-c)/16-17, PSC.86 and 88/16-17 be approved subject to:
  - (A) Confirmation that the conditions set by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences have been met;
  - (B) Confirmation as to whether the proposed revisions have been considered by an SSLC.
- (ii) That the conditions had been satisfied and the Chair of the Board, acting on its behalf had subsequently taken action to revise the PhD and Postgraduate Diploma in Business and Management, as set out in papers GFSS.113(a-c)/16-17, PSC.86 and 88/16-17.