

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of Graduate Studies

There will be a meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies at 2.00pm on Thursday 13 November 2008 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 9 October 2008 (copy attached).

2. Matters arising on the minutes

- (a) Credit weightings and dissertation word lengths on Masters Programmes (minutes 107/07-08 and 8(b)/08-09 refer)

TO REPORT:

That at its meeting held on 9 October 2008, the Board considered a paper summarising departmental responses to a circular requesting information on word lengths currently required for dissertations at Warwick and items from the Association of University Administrator's forum relating to assignment lengths in other UK HEIs, paper BGS 2/08-09, and resolved:

- (i) That there appeared to be some inconsistency in correlation between word-lengths and credit weightings across Departments, some of which may point to legitimate disciplinary difference;
- (ii) That any proposed guidance should be 'light touch' and should consider the maximum word count recommended for a given number of credits and the penalties prescribed for exceeding that level;
- (iii) That a paper outlining recommendations and the *modus operandi* for dealing with overshoots on published word limits be prepared by the Graduate School Office and considered at the next meeting of the Board.

TO CONSIDER:

- (iv) A paper summarising proposed guidance on the recommended word limits for dissertations at Warwick and on dealing with overshoots on published word limits (paper BGS 39/08-09, copy attached).

(b) IAS Early Career Fellowships (minute 24/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (i) That, at its meeting held on 9 October 2008, the Board received a paper summarising the introduction of a scheme by the IAS to award Early Career Fellowships on an annual basis from 2008-2009 (paper BGS 35/08-09, previously circulated);
- (ii) That 5 ECF awards have been made and that all are within the Faculty of Science, noting that the IAS would, in future rounds, like to encourage more applications from other Faculties.

3. Chair's Business

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Chair on the following items:

- (a) Consideration of the introduction of an appeal against the failure to upgrade from Postgraduate Diploma to Masters;
- (b) Feedback on meeting with Auditors on PG students;
- (c) Definition of status of "extension" for PGR students and consequences for students and the University.

4. Chair's Action

TO RECEIVE:

A report on items approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board (paper BGS 40/08-09, 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 Students' Union

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Education Officer.

7. Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee (minute 3/08-09 refers)

(a) Membership

TO REPORT:

- (i) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies, at its meeting on 21 October 2008, nominated Professor J Neelands to be appointed as the representative for the Faculty of Social Studies to the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee;

(ii) That the Graduate Studies Committees of the Faculties, at their last meetings, nominated the following to serve as Faculty selectors on the Graduate Awards & Nominations Sub-Committee:

- (A) Arts
Dr IAR de Smet
Dr J Alexander
- (B) Medicine
Demetris Grammatopoulos
Ann Adams
- (C) Science
Professor R Napier
Dr A Clark
- (D) Social Studies
Dr R Carter
TBA

(b) Business

TO REPORT:

That, at its meeting on 5 November 2008, the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee resolved the following:

- (i) That previous ORSAS funding be not matched from within existing WPRS funding;
- (ii) That a proposal be made to ARC to allow academic departments to fund the difference between Home/EU and Overseas fees for WPRS awards holders should they wish to do so.
- (iii) That the following changes to the WPRS selection process be recommended to the Board of Graduate Studies:
 - (A) That Faculty groupings be abandoned and the following Research Council subject groupings be adopted for the consideration of WPRS applications with immediate effect:

Arts and Humanities
Social Studies
Medicine and Life Sciences
Engineering and Physical Science
 - (B) That departments continue to have a quota of applications which they can put forward for consideration, with the option of nominating a particular student to the most appropriate subject grouping, provided that no application can be put forward to more than one subject grouping;
 - (C) That WPRS awards continues to be made from a central pool and not be distributed for allocation amongst the subject groupings;
 - (D) That the selection process be amended to entail only one round of scoring, to include one departmental score for each nominated

candidate and at least three scores from non-departmental selectors in the relevant subject grouping. An average score would then be reported to the Sub-Committee for allocation of the awards across all disciplines, without a further round of scoring of individual applications;

- (E) That further consideration be given where appropriate to adopting the above procedures for the award of Research Council studentships (e.g. AHRC BGP doctoral awards).

(Minute GANC 3/08-09)

- (iv) That further interaction between all students receiving University support and donors [through DARO] be encouraged through the use of scholarship contracts, including clauses on donor events attendance and yearly reports.

(Minute GANC 4/08-09)

8. Boards of Examiners for Postgraduate Taught Courses

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

TO REPORT:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) 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:
 - (A) Amendment of paragraph 3 to make clear that external examiners do not have to attend the pre-meeting, although they will be consulted;
 - (B) Clarification of the role of the Personal Tutor;
 - (C) That the draft guidelines should also be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies, with respect to postgraduate examinations.
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) 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:

- (A) 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;
 - (B) 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;
- (v) 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.

TO CONSIDER:

- (vi) The University Guidelines for Consideration by Undergraduate Boards of Examiners of Examination Candidates Notifying Mitigating Circumstances (paper AQSC 87/07-08, copy attached), noting that the Board is invited to consider how this may be applied to Postgraduate Taught courses.
- (b) Windows on Warwick Session on “Postgraduate Taught Boards of Examiners: Policy, Procedures and Practice”

TO RECEIVE:

A copy of a presentation given by the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School) on 20 October 2008 covering procedures for Postgraduate Taught exam boards (paper BGS 53/08-09, copy attached).

9. Revisions to the Guidelines for the Supervision and Monitoring for Research Degree Students and Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research

TO CONSIDER:

- (a) A draft of guidance, to be incorporated into the “Guidelines for the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students”, on the use of second supervisors, mentors and personal tutors for PGR students (paper BGS 41/08-09, copy attached);
- (b) Draft guidance on the role of examination advisors for research degree examinations, noting that this will be incorporated into the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research as Appendix A (paper BGS 42/08-09, copy attached);
- (c) Revisions to the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research (paper BGS 55/08-09, copy attached), noting that only the relevant extract of the Guide was being circulated.

10. Guidance on approval of courses and the use of course specifications.

TO RECEIVE:

Information from the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office relating to the approval and publication of course specifications (paper BGS 43/08-09, copy attached) and a paper providing guidance as to appropriate vocabulary to be used in the drafting of learning outcomes at all levels in the FHEQ (paper BGS 44/08-09, copy attached).

11. Reports from External Examiners

TO CONSIDER:

- (a) A report compiled by the Secretary on issues arising from External Examiners' reports on Postgraduate Programmes for 2006-07 (paper BGS 45/08-09, copy attached);
- (b) A response from WMG on the question of turn-around times for marking raised in an External Examiners' report from 2006-07 (paper BGS 46/08-09, copy attached).

12. (International) Student Barometer 2008

TO CONSIDER:

A report on the headlines arising from the 2008 Student Barometer of home and international students (paper BGS 47/08-09, copy attached).

13. Proposed changes to University Regulation 6: Admission to the University

TO CONSIDER:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Admissions) setting out proposed changes to University Regulation 6 concerning Admission to the University (paper BGS 48/08-09, copy attached).

14. Consultation on the Review of University Regulations

TO CONSIDER:

A paper drafted by The Senior Assistant Registrar, Deputy Registrar's Office, setting out the rationale for the proposed re-writing of University regulations (paper BGS 49/08-09, copy attached).

15. Graduate School Skills Programme Report 2007-2008

TO RECEIVE:

- (a) A report from the Graduate School Skills Manager on the Graduate School Skills Programme in 2007-2008 (paper BGS 52/08-09, copy attached);
- (b) An oral report from the Graduate School Skills Manager, Dr R Hardy.

16. Framework for HE Qualifications and Credit Framework for England (minute AQSC 10/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That the Academic Quality & Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 28 October, considered:
- (i) Revised Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) (FHEQ) (paper AQSC 6/08-09, available online);
 - (ii) New Higher Education Credit Framework for England (paper AQSC 7/08-09, available online);
 - (iii) QAA statement to outline the relationship between the credit framework and the FHEQ (paper AQSC 8/08-09, available online);
- (b) That the Academic Quality & Standards Committee recommended to the Senate (inter alia) that Ordinance 13 on Degrees and Diplomas and the University Credit and Module Framework be amended to allow for the award of Graduate Diplomas, as set out in paper AQSC 5/08-09 (copy attached).

17. International Committee: Foundation Programme for Postgraduate Students (minute IC 5/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

That the International Committee, at its meeting held on 8 October 2008, considered an oral report from the Director of the International Office on the current structure of the International Office, priorities and strategy for the academic year and recommended 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.

TO RECEIVE:

An oral report from the Assistant Director (Student Recruitment) in the International Office, Mr S Hall.

18. Student Surveys (minute AQSC 10/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

That the Academic Quality & Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 28 October, recommended (to the Deputy Deputy Registrar and the Working Group on Student Surveys) that the Academic Satisfaction Review no longer be carried out, it being noted that, while extremely valuable over the years since it was first run in 2003, it had now been largely superseded by newer national surveys, including the National Student Survey, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, the imminent Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, and Student Barometer/ International Student Barometer surveys.

19. Annual Postgraduate Course Review and Course and Module Approval (minutes 14/08-09 and AQSC 11/08-09 refer)

TO REPORT:

- (a) That the Academic Quality & Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 28 October, resolved that the timing of annual course reviews be re-scheduled, with the postgraduate research review being scheduled for the end of term 1 and the taught postgraduate review for the end of term 2;
- (b) That a paper on the content of Postgraduate Taught annual course reviews will be brought forward to the next meeting of the Board.

TO CONSIDER:

- (c) Current guidance on the content of Postgraduate Research annual course reviews (paper BGS 54/08-09, copy attached);
- (d) A discussion paper, previously circulated, on the revision of the annual Postgraduate Course review process (paper BGS 54/07-08, copy attached).

20. Library Carrels

TO REPORT:

- (a) That student demand for access to library carrels has fallen this year for the first time in many years, with the number of applications received numbering 69 (usual number c. 90); this potentially being partially attributable to the opening of the Wolfson Research Exchange;
- (b) That since 69 applications for a total of 18 carrels (offering 36 shared opportunities) nonetheless remained high, levels of usage and future applications would continue to be monitored.

21. Guidelines for joint and multi-disciplinary degrees (minute AQSC 4(g)/08-09 refers)

TO REPORT:

That at its meeting held on 28 October, it was reported to the Academic Quality & Standards Committee that on 15 October 2008 the Quality Enhancement Working Group considered an oral report from the Chair on ongoing work to examine management arrangements on undergraduate courses delivered by more than one department, noting that a Working Group set up under the aegis of the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee was due to meet on 17 October 2008, and resolved (inter alia) that in due course the Board of Graduate Studies consider the reports and recommendations from the Group, and a Good Practice Guide on the management of joint and cross-departmental courses, with a view to considering whether similar guidance is needed for postgraduate courses which cross departmental boundaries.

22. New Course proposals

TO CONSIDER:

A paper setting out recommendations for the approval of new courses (paper BGS 50/08-09, copy attached).

23. Revised Course Proposals

TO CONSIDER:

A paper setting out recommendations for the approval of revisions to existing courses (paper BGS 51/08-09, copy attached).

24. Policy on Providing Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

TO CONSIDER:

A draft proposal from the Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Admissions) for a policy on providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants to the Univesity (paper BGS 57/08-09, copy attached).

25. Any Other Business