

# UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the Board of Graduate Studies meeting held on Thursday 12 October 2006.

Present: Prof L Bridges (Chair), Dr N Webber, Dr D Leadley, Dr D Kelly, Prof S Ghosal, Prof J Labbe, Dr A Dowd, Dr M Kooy, Prof M Thorogood, Prof R Napier, Prof Faundez, Dr N Stocks, Prof B Brewer, Dr C Bilton, Prof J Davey, C Longworth.

Apologies: Dr P Marshall, Dr C Hughes,

In attendance: Dr R Earle

01/06-07 Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

That the terms of reference of the Board are as follows:

- (a) To regulate the admission of all graduate students and, subject to the Higher Degrees Regulations, the initial conditions of registration and any change of these conditions.
- (b) To make recommendations to the Senate, after consultation with the Faculty Boards, Departments and Graduate Studies Committees, if appropriate, on all matters to do with graduate study in the University.
- (c) To make recommendations on the appropriate provision of academic resources and social facilities for graduate students in the University.
- (d) To make awards established from University funds to graduate students and to nominate students for graduate awards made by external bodies.
- (e) To advise the Senate on any general or specific strategic considerations regarding graduate study or research in the University.
- (f) To review periodically all graduate courses in the University.
- (g) To scrutinise all new postgraduate degree and course proposals and recommend approval to the Senate via the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- (h) To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on matters relating to examinations for graduate degrees.
- (i) To advise the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on the role of internal and external examiners for graduate degrees.
- (j) To report to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee annually on the issues raised in reports by external examiners.

02/06-07 Membership of the Board 2006/2007

REPORTED:

- (a) That the membership of the Board for 2006/07 is as set out in paper BGS1/06-07.
- (b) That Dr Andrew Clarke would be representing Chemistry.

03/06-07 Membership of Sub-Committees

Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee

CONSIDERED:

The election of representatives to the Graduate Awards and Nominations Sub-Committee, noting that the membership is as follows:

- (a) The Chair of the Board as the Chair.
- (b) The Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Boards of the Faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine and Social Studies.
- (c) Four members of the Board, one from each of the Faculties:
  - Faculty of Arts
  - Faculty of Medicine
  - Faculty of Science
  - Faculty of Social Studies

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following Board members be appointed to the Graduate Awards and Nominations Committee:
  - (i) Professor J Davey (Faculty of Science)
  - (ii) Dr D Kelly (Faculty of Social Studies)
  - (iii) Paul O'Hare (Faculty of Medicine)
- (b) That an Arts representative will be appointed at the next meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies.

03/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 31 May 2006 be approved.

05/06-07 Matters Arising on the Minutes

REPORTED:

That the Annual Course Reviews from the Faculty of Science from the academic year 2005/06 were still outstanding.

06/06-07 Chair's Business

(a) Study Space for Research Students

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on progress to date with improving study space for research students.

REPORTED:

- (i) That the planned refurbishment and subsequent relocation of some services within the central library will make space available for a permanent study area for postgraduate research students.
- (ii) That the Board of Graduate Studies will draw up plans and costings following notification that this space is available for this purpose.
- (iii) That the facility will be aimed primarily at providing space for students from the Faculty of Arts & Social Studies.
- (iv) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies will be bidding for 3 rooms (postgraduate research students) within the Social Studies building following the departure of WBS from 50 offices.

(b) Social Facility at Lakeside

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on proposals for a Social Facility at Lakeside.

REPORTED:

That the budget to build this facility had been drastically cutback rendering the construction unfeasible in its present form.

(c) Scholarships

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the allocation of scholarships for research students.

REPORTED:

That the new Vice-Chancellor will be funding 60 new studentships this academic year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Board of Graduate Studies will bid for more PhD scholarships particularly in light of the drive to increase numbers of postgraduate research students.
- (ii) That the Graduate School would establish how many Departmental scholarships are currently in operation.

(d) Taught postgraduate courses in the Department of Sociology

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee, at its meeting of 25 September 2006 considered information on postgraduate admissions to the University and resolved:

“That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies, with the support of the Graduate School, undertake a review of postgraduate taught

provision within the Department of Sociology with a view to pursuing the issues raised in discussion at the meeting in regard to the number of postgraduate taught courses on offer within the Department.”  
(minute 736/05-06)

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Board of Graduate Studies request that the Department conduct their own internal review and report back to the Board.
- (ii) That the Board of Graduate Studies ensure there is a sound marketing plan for all new courses in light of those which have not commenced due to lack of take-up.

07/06-07 Postgraduate Committee and Students' Union

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Education Officer on plans for the forthcoming academic year.

REPORTED:

That Faculty representatives would be elected in the week beginning 16 October 2006.

08/06-07 Research Student numbers and scholarship provision

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A paper on University Funding for Postgraduate Research Students considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 25 September 2006 (SC.486/05-06).
- (b) Proposed terms and conditions for research studentships to be advertised in 2006/2007 (paper BGS 2/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed terms and conditions set out in paper BGS 2/06-07 be approved subject to minor revisions by the Graduate School.

09/06-07 Submission Rates

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair on proposing a Review of Policy on Registration, Early Submission and Extensions for PhD Students (paper BGS 3/06-07).

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That a culture change amongst supervisors was absolutely critical to an improvement in submission rates. The Department of Physics was highlighted as an example of good practice.
- (b) That a 4<sup>th</sup> year for full-time PhD students should no longer be automatic.

- (c) That a more substantial fee should be charged during the 4<sup>th</sup> year in light of the resources the student is utilising in that period. A period of grace could be considered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That no incentive be offered to students for early completion.
- (b) That the proposals regarding submission and extension be reviewed by the Chair following the Board's discussion and recommendations as set out above.

10/06-07

Appointment of supervisors

CONSIDERED:

The current policy on the appointment of supervisors in light of the new pay and grading agreements, noting that the *Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students* state that:

“Academic Departments are responsible for:

The allocation of supervisors to research degree students, taking account of the subject expertise, skills and experience of staff and the provision of supervision throughout the period of registration, including any possible absences for study leave. Supervision will normally be provided by a designated main supervisor assisted by a team. The Department should check that the roles of the supervisors are clear to both supervisors and students.

Departments are advised to give particular care to arrangements involving an inexperienced supervisor. This applies to members of staff who are on probation and staff with little or no experience of supervising research students in a University environment (even if there is no period of probation). At least one of the supervisors should have experience of supervising a research student to successful completion. A member of staff who has retired from the University should not act as a main supervisor. When allocating supervisors and arranging review panels for research students, departments should bear in mind the need to nominate an internal examiner for the candidate.”

RESOLVED:

That honorary staff are not eligible to act as 1<sup>st</sup> supervisor.

11/06-07

Policy on use of Postgraduates for Teaching

CONSIDERED:

A proposed policy on the use of postgraduate students for teaching (paper BGS 6/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed policy be approved subject to the following amendments:

- (a) That the text *‘in exceptional circumstances, e.g.’* is removed from the final sentence of point 6.

- (b) That the text *'in all cases'* be replaced by *'where appropriate'* in the final sentence of point 7.

12/06-07 Guidelines for the Supervision of Research Students based away from the University

CONSIDERED:

Proposed Guidelines for the Supervision of Research Students based away from the University (paper BGS 7/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the guidelines would be reviewed by the Graduate School in light of comments made by the Board with regard to face-to-face contact.
- (b) That it should be made clear which students the guidelines are referring to.

13/06-07 AHRC Review of Postgraduate Funding

CONSIDERED:

A report on the review of the AHRC's postgraduate funding mechanism (paper BGS 10/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the Chair would be representing the Board at the next meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Arts to discuss this issue.

14/06-07 Consideration of examiners' reports for taught postgraduate courses

REPORTED:

That, under the current arrangements, a Working Group consisting of the Chair of the Board and the Chairs of the Graduate Studies Committees meets to consider all external examiners' reports on taught courses and departments' responses and a summary report is then prepared for consideration by the Board.

CONSIDERED:

A proposal that the Chair consider all reports and responses in the first instance and that the Working Group only be convened should there be any serious concerns that cannot be satisfactorily resolved or common themes raised by a number of examiners, noting that a summary report would continue to be prepared for the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved.

15/06-07 Amendments to University Regulations

- (a) Regulation 15 Governing Higher Doctorates

REPORTED:

That the Council, at its meeting on 5 October 2006 considered proposed amendments to the Regulations for Higher Doctorates (paper C.15/06-07), transferring responsibility for higher doctorates to the Board of Graduate Studies.

(b) Regulations Governing the Continuation of Registration

CONSIDERED:

Proposed amendments to the membership of Continuation of Registration Committees as set out in Regulation 13 Governing the Continuation of Registration (paper BGS 4/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That these amendments be approved.

(c) Appeal Regulations

CONSIDERED:

(i) Whether a candidate admitted to a Postgraduate Diploma with the possibility of upgrade to a Master's course subject to satisfactory progress should have the right of appeal against a decision not to permit an upgrade, noting that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator had suggested that the University consider this issue following consideration of a student complaint.

(ii) Whether a candidate admitted to an MPhil/PhD should have a right of appeal should they not successfully upgrade to a PhD.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the right of appeal should be allowed in both cases.

(ii) That serious consideration should be given to the abolition of admission to 'MPhil/PhD'.

16/06-07 Electronic theses

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the introduction of electronic theses, noting that this would be considered by the Information Policy Strategy Committee at its meeting in November 2006 (paper BGS 5/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the Board are willing to reconsider this in light of further information regarding the technical issues involved.

17/06-07 Statement on Admissions

CONSIDERED:

A statement on responsibility for policy and procedure relating to the admission of students to postgraduate courses (paper BGS 8/06-07).

18/06-07 Graduate School Programme

RECEIVED:

An outline of the Graduate School Programme for 2006/2007 (paper BGS 9/06-07), noting that further information was available at:  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/csde/gsp/sessions/>

19/06-07 Appointment of a student to the University Research Ethics Committee

CONSIDERED:

The appointment of a student to the University Research Ethics Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Education Officer would pursue this with the Student's Union.

20/06-07 Any Other Business

RECEIVED:

A proposal to introduce a course in Complexity Science at Warwick (BGS 11/06-07).

REPORTED:

That a proper course proposal was due to be considered at the next meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science.