

# UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Board of Graduate Studies

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies held on 6 October 2004.

Present: Professor Bridges (in the Chair), Professor Ansell-Pearson, Professor Chetwynd, Dr Dowd, Dr Leadley, Professor Lockwood, Dr Luddy, Professor Mann, Mr Mohaddes, Dr Parker, Professor Read, Dr Rosamond, Professor Singer, Professor Stoneman, Professor Wills, Dr Withnall,

Apologies: Dr Bilton, Professor Jackson, Professor Nudd Dr O'Hare, Professor Elias

1/04-05 Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

That the Senate at its meeting on 29 September approved the following amendments to the terms of reference of the Board of Graduate Studies (amendments underlined). 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 except in those cases where an issue of principle is raised ~~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 consider on behalf of the Senate and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee the issues raised in reports by external examiners

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the implications of the amendments (underlined above) to the terms of reference with regard to course approval.

2/04-05 Membership of the Board 2004/05

REPORTED:

That the membership of the Board for 2004/05 was as set out in Paper BGS 1/04-05, noting that the Board of the Faculty of Arts had nominated Dr M J Kooy as its second representative on the Board

3/04-05 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 was 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:	Dr M Luddy
Faculty of Medicine:	vice Professor Singer
Faculty of Science:	Dr A Dowd
Faculty of Social Studies:	vice Professor Phizacklea

RESOLVED:

That the remaining vacancies be filled outside the meeting.

4/04-05 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 3 June 2004 be approved.

5/04-05 Matters Arising on the Minutes

- a) Deadline for Master's dissertations (Minute 71/03-04 refers).

REPORTED:

That the English Department had been contacted about the deadline for Master's dissertations and that the Secretary would confirm if the deadline had been changed for the current cohort.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary will remind all departments that Master's dissertation deadlines should be set before the end of students' accommodation contracts

- b) Social facilities at Lakeside and Heronbank (minute 65/03-04 refers)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the proposed social facilities at Lakeside and Heronbank noting that an architect has been asked to draw up plans to be costed. (NB It has since been confirmed that this scheme will be considered by the Capital Projects Group shortly.)

- c) Resubmission Practices (minutes 77 and 78/03-04 refer)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on resubmission practices noting that the Graduate Studies Committees of the Boards of the Faculties would be asked to consider the proposals of the working group on resubmission practices and make recommendations to the Board.

- (d) Institute of Education Postgraduate Awards (minute 79/03-04 refers)

REPORTED:

- (i) That a revised title "Postgraduate Award in Foreign Language Teaching Pedagogy and Methodology" had been approved for the postgraduate award as set out in papers GFSS 111/03-04 and GFSS112/03-04 and approved by the Board at its meeting in June
- (ii) That fees for the Postgraduate Awards in "Learning and Information and Communications Technology" and "Postgraduate Award in Foreign Language Teaching Pedagogy and Methodology" had been approved.

(a) Welcome and Orientation Events

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on welcome receptions held for all new postgraduates, noting that the welcome reception held in University House and the induction event for research students had been well attended but that the reception for international students may need to be re-thought.

(b) Wisconsin-Madison exchange agreement

REPORTED:

That the University of Wisconsin-Madison has indicated that their funding for this agreement is under threat.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair write to the University of Wisconsin-Madison expressing the University's continued support for the exchange agreement.

7/04-05 Postgraduate Committee and Students' Union

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Education Officer on involvement by the Students Union in postgraduate inductions, plans for SSLC briefings and social activities for the forthcoming academic year.

8/04-05 Student Recruitment

RECEIVED:

Initial data on new postgraduate students enrolling for the 2004/2005 academic year (paper BGS 2/04-05)

REPORTED:

That a working group on postgraduate recruitment has been set up, by the Steering Committee, of which the Chair is a member.

9/04-05 QAA Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Degrees

CONSIDERED:

A copy of the final version of the section of the QAA Code of Practice dealing with Postgraduate Research Degree programmes, together with a covering letter from the HEFCE (paper BGS3/04-05) and a briefing paper setting out the more significant points (paper BGS/5-4-05)

RESOLVED:

(a) Use of an independent chair in viva examinations

That, as discussed at previous meetings of the Board, there was no support for the introduction of an independent Chair in viva examinations, as suggested in the QAA Code of Practice, noting that University criteria for the appointment of examiners, guidance provided on regulations and procedures for the conduct of examinations should be sufficient to satisfy the institution as to the fairness of examinations.

(b) Implications of the Code of Practice for University procedures

That the implications of the Code of Practice be given more detailed consideration at future meetings.

10/03-04 Supervision by part-time members of staff

CONSIDERED:

Arrangements for supervision by members of staff on a part-time contract, noting that the issue had arisen during an academic complaint.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a member of staff who is employed on a part-time basis (below 60%) should not normally be appointed as the sole supervisor.
- (b) That, should a department wish to appoint a member of staff on this type of contract as sole supervisor, they should seek permission from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies before the offer of a place is made.

11/03-04 Examination arrangements

(a) Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows

REPORTED:

That requests have been received from several departments in the Faculty of Science that the requirement that two external examiners be appointed to examine theses submitted by Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows be waived on the grounds that their status was not equivalent to that of a member of academic staff.

CONSIDERED:

Examination arrangements for Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows, noting that the appointment of two external examiners was currently a condition of their terms of employment.

RESOLVED:

That the requirement that two external examiners be appointed to examine theses submitted by Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows be removed on the grounds that Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows are treated in the same way as any other research student rather than as members of academic staff and in many cases other research students work a similar number of hours to Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows, noting that current Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellows would be entitled to have two external examiners if they so wish.

(b) Agreement of supervisor before submission

CONSIDERED:

A request received from examiners for a recently examined PhD thesis that the University adopt a system requiring the supervisor to agree to the submission of the thesis in writing from the supervisor before a student is allowed to submit, to reduce the likelihood of minor errors.

RESOLVED:

That the current policy whereby responsibility for the decision to submit rests with the student continue, noting that it was the view of the Board that supervisors were not expected to proof read the final draft of the thesis for minor errors.

12/04-05 Academic Satisfaction Review

RECEIVED:

A copy of the draft Academic Satisfaction Review 'The Postgraduate Student Experience' for 2003/2004 (paper BGS4/04-05) noting the Board's disappointment that the response rate continues to be low.

13/04-05 Graduate School Programme for Research Students

RECEIVED:

A copy of the brochure for the 2004/2005 Graduate School Programme (paper BGS 6/04-05).

REPORTED:

That details of the expanded Graduate School Programme for 2004/2005 were available at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/cll/skills/postgraduate/> and that details have been circulated to students by email, noting that the induction session was well attended and positively received.

RESOLVED:

That the Graduate School considers how to improve co-ordination with the expanded programme for research students in the Arts Faculty.

14/04-05

Length of PhD theses

REPORTED:

- (a) That the University's current Regulations regarding the length of theses submitted for the degree of PhD are as follows:

"The thesis shall not exceed 70,000 words in the Faculty of Science and 80,000 words in the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies. This limit shall in the Faculty of Social Studies be inclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography and in the Faculties of Arts and Science shall be exclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography.

In the Faculty of Arts an appendix may contain material that functions as data to supplement the main argument of the thesis, and may not contain material that is essential or integral part of the thesis. An appendix may not exceed 5000 words in length unless permission to exceed this length is given by the Board of Graduate Studies." (Regulation 14, (G) (71)).

- (b) That the Department of Politics and International Studies has requested a review of the word limit for theses in the Faculty of Social Studies, noting that the current limit was felt to be unduly restrictive when compared to other institutions and the regulation governing the Faculty of Arts.
- (c) That the current Regulation does not include arrangements for the Faculty of Medicine.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Social Studies be requested to consider the current regulations governing the word limit for PhD theses in the Faculty and make recommendations to the Board.
- (b) That the Faculty of Medicine be requested to submit proposed regulations governing the word limit for theses in the Faculty to the Board, noting that a rationale should be provided if the proposed word limit exceeded the current maximum of 80,000 words.

15/04-05

Student Representation on the University Research Ethics Committee

REPORTED:

That, under the constitution of the University's new Research Ethics Committee, the Board is requested to recommend to the Council the appointment of a student representative.

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of Mr Gerard Garbutt to serve as the student representative on the University's Research Ethics Committee for the 2004/2005 academic year, noting that Mr Garbutt is currently a student in the Warwick Medical School and has previous experience of serving on ethics committees at other institutions.

RECOMMENDED (to the Council):

That Mr Gerard Garbutt be appointed to serve as the student representative on the University's Research Ethics Committee for the 2004/2005 academic year.

FE/SH/BGS agenda Oct 04  
07/10/04