

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Enhancement Working Group
held on Monday 14 January 2008

Present: Professor Karen O'Brien (Chair); Mr José Arroyo, Ms Sue Bennett, Mr Antony Brewerton, Mr John Dale, Dr David Lamburn, Dr Paul O'Hare, Mr Peter Ptashko, Mr Sean Russell, Dr Martin Skinner, Dr Paul Taylor, Ms Roberta Wooldridge Smith

Apologies: Mr Manus Conaghan, Dr Amanda Dowd, Professor Jackie Labbe, Professor Anthony McFarlane, Dr Fergus McKay, Professor Carol Rutter

In attendance: Ms Jenny Bradfield, Dr Julian Moss; Ms Catherine Thomson (for item 16/07-08)

13/07-08 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 16 November 2007 be approved.

14/07-08 Matters arising

(a) Membership (minute 1/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That Mr John Dale had accepted the invitation to join the Group.

(b) Funding for teaching and learning projects

(i) Funding for projects without an e-learning focus (minute 3(a)(vi)/07-08 referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on possible teaching and learning enhancement funds for 2008-09 onwards, noting that a bid had been made for University Strategy implementation funding to reintroduce the Education Innovation Fund.

(ii) Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence

RECEIVED:

A copy of promotional material published by the Learning and Development Centre inviting nominations for the Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence 2007-08, paper QEWG 6/07-08, noting that the deadline for nominations was 8 February 2008.

(iii) Undergraduate Research Student Scheme

REPORTED:

That applications had been invited for funding under the Undergraduate Research Student Scheme 2007-08, noting that the deadline for applications was 4 February 2008.

(c) Times Higher Education Awards (minute 3(c)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That the University had not won an award in the three categories in which it had been shortlisted.

15/07-08

Chair's Business

Terms of Reference for the Quality Enhancement Working Group

CONSIDERED:

The Terms of Reference for the Group with a view to strengthening the Group's role in evaluating learning and teaching enhancement initiatives and projects.

RESOLVED:

That no change to the Terms of Reference for the Group be proposed at the current time.

16/07-08

Induction (minute 4(b)/07-08 referred)

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A report from Ms Catherine Thomson, Induction Officer, Centre for Student Development and Enterprise, on discussions between the University and the Students' Union concerning enhancements to the induction process for undergraduate students, paper QEWG 7/07-08, along with an oral presentation, noting that many of the resources and sessions would also be available for postgraduate students as well, although this was not the initial focus of the project;
- (b) The costs and benefits of proposing the introduction of a "week zero", free of teaching, at the start of the academic year.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the report from Ms Catherine Thomson, Induction Officer, Centre for Student Development and Enterprise, on discussions between the University and the Students' Union concerning enhancements to the induction process, paper QEWG 7/07-08, and the plans set out in the report be warmly welcomed;

- (d) That the plans to repeat sessions and events during the Induction week and to continue them into the weekend after the first week of term be welcomed as important in facilitating access to them for part-time students;
- (e) That Ms Thomson consider applying in a future round of TQEF funding for support for the development of the electronic version of induction material, it being noted that the year-round availability of high-quality material would be beneficial for all new students, regardless of when during the year their courses start;
- (f) That Ms Thomson continue to develop plans for evaluating the Induction project;
- (g) That the Group consider a progress report during the Autumn Term 2008.

17/07-08 Employability Strategy (minute 8/07-08 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A revised draft Employability Strategy prepared by Ms Roberta Wooldridge Smith, Director of Careers and Employability, paper QEWG 2/07-08 (revised), along with an oral report.

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

That the draft Employability Strategy be approved as set out in paper QEWG 2/07-08 (revised).

18/07-08 Teaching Staff (AQSC minute 27/07-08 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A report from Ms Sue Bennett, Director of the Learning and Development Centre, on the training and development of Teaching Fellows, part-time teachers and 'Teaching Elements', paper QEWG 8/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That the following points be noted:

- (a) That the report from Ms Sue Bennett, Director of the Learning and Development Centre, on the training and development of Teaching Fellows, part-time teachers and 'Teaching Elements', covered neither established assistant, associate and full professors, nor postgraduate research students who teach, as they are already covered by other policies;
- (b) That, as is made clear in the paper, in many cases those covered by the suggestions and possible alternative policies are experienced and expert teachers;

- (c) That any proposals developed remain proportionate to the amount of teaching carried out by different types of staff;
- (d) That the opening of the Teaching Grid may provide an opportune focus for developing the community of practice for all teachers, and that many of those covered by the paper may be in a position to share their expertise or act as mentors to others.

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

- (e) That the report from Ms Sue Bennett, Director of the Learning and Development Centre, on the training and development of Teaching Fellows, part-time teachers and 'Teaching Elements' be taken forward as set out in paper QEWG 8/07-08;
- (f) That the Chair and the Director of the Learning and Development Centre continue to work with a range of colleagues to develop proposals, including in the areas of an audit/short questionnaire for departments to establish the roles and responsibilities of Teaching Fellows, part-time teachers and others, possible models for demonstrating and recording the competencies of such colleagues, and establishing thresholds at which particular forms of assurance activity may become relevant.

19/07-08 Strategic Overview of Enhancement Activities

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair on strategic overview of enhancement activities and mechanisms for disseminating good practice.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair further enlarge the draft list of recent enhancement projects in the University and circulate it to members of the Group before the next meeting of the Group.

20/07-08 QAA Institutional Audit

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the ongoing preparations for Institutional Audit, noting that departments would shortly be sent a "healthcheck" questionnaire, and that the Chair, Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Group would be attending a briefing seminar with QAA on 15 January 2008.

21/07-08 EIF reports

CONSIDERED:

A report on the following completed Education Innovation Fund project, with a view to identifying good practice which should be widely disseminated and ideas for further development for the University:

Dr Terry Thomas, African Field Course (awarded £18,000), paper QEWG 9/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report by Dr Terry Thomas on the African Field Course be approved as set out in paper QEWG 9/07-08;
- (b) That the Chair explore ways of disseminating the results of Dr Thomas' project;
- (c) That in the drafting of guidelines for future funding streams consideration be given to the possibility of permitting continuation funding for successful projects.

22/07-08 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Group would be held on Thursday 21 February at 10.30am either in the Council Chamber, University House or in the Teaching Grid, Library.

JDM/JB, 21.01.08

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