

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Quality Enhancement Working Group

**Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Enhancement Working Group
held on Thursday 1 May 2008**

Present: Professor Karen O'Brien (Chair); Dr Seán Allan, Ms Sue Bennett, Mr Antony Brewerton, Mr Manus Conaghan, Mr John Dale, Dr Amanda Dowd, Dr Ken Flint, Ms Gill Frigerio, Dr Neil Johnson, Dr David Lamburn, Dr Paul O'Hare, Mr Peter Ptashko, Mr Sean Russell, Dr Martin Skinner

Apologies: Mr José Arroyo, Professor Christina Hughes, Professor Jackie Labbé, Professor Anthony McFarlane, Dr Fergus McKay, Professor Carol Rutter, Dr Paul Taylor

In attendance: Ms Jenny Bradfield, Dr Julian Moss; Dr Jane Kidd (for items 35-38/07-08), Dr Alexandra Cristea (for item 35/07-08)

30/07-08 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Group held on Thursday 21 February 2008 be approved.

31/07-08 Matters arising

(a) Times Higher Education awards (minute 24(b)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That criteria have been published for the eighteen categories in the Times Higher Education Awards 2008 listed in paper QEWG 13/07-08, noting that the deadline for submissions is 12 June 2008, and also noting that the process in the following categories is based on national surveys rather than nominations:

- Best Student Experience
- Outstanding Support for Overseas Students

CONSIDERED:

Ideas for possible nominees for the following categories in the THE Awards 2008, criteria for which are included in paper QEWG 13/07-08:

- Excellence and Innovation in the Arts
- Widening Participation Initiative of the Year
- Outstanding ICT Initiative of the Year
- Outstanding Employer Engagement Initiative
- Outstanding Support for Disabled Students

- Entrepreneurial University of the Year
- University of the Year

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary discuss with the relevant colleagues a range of possible nominations identified at the meeting.

- (b) Employability Strategy (minute 24(c)/07-08 and AQSC minute 75(g)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That at its meeting on 27 February 2008 the Academic Quality and Standards Committee recommended to the Senate that the proposed Employability Strategy for the University be approved as set out in paper QEWG 2/07-08 (revised 2).

32/07-08 Chair's business

Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence (minute 28/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That funding had been secured to allow three additional candidates to be put through to the second (final) stage of the Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence competition for 2008, the additional finalists being selected following the Group's earlier ranking of candidates.

33/07-08 QAA Institutional Audit preparations

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Chair concerning the ongoing preparations for Institutional Audit, including the drafting of the briefing paper.

RESOLVED:

That a number of points be noted:

- That the preliminary meeting with Dr Gillian King, Deputy Director (Reviews), who was coordinating the University's Audit, had taken place on 29 April 2008, and had been productive;
- That the focuses of the Audit would include PGR provision, University-level processes to enhance the student learning experience, and collaborative provision;
- That Audit trails would be based in departments which had recently undergone a Strategic Departmental Review.

34/07-08 Joint and multidisciplinary degrees

CONSIDERED:

Proposed guidance for academic departments on the management of joint degrees and methods of enhancing the experience of joint degree students, paper QEWG 40/07-08, noting:

- (a) That the term “joint degrees” was here intended to cover courses delivered by more than one department, which may be termed, *inter alia*, joint degrees, multi-disciplinary degrees, “and” degrees or “with” degrees.
- (b) That the term “joint degrees” was here intended to cover only courses taught wholly by the University and not collaborative courses with external partner organisations.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That a number of other issues be noted, including the importance of joint degree student representation on Student-Staff Liaison Committees,
- (d) That paper QEWG 40/07-08 and full notes of the discussion be passed to Mr Stephen Lamb, Senior Tutor, to inform his developmental work on the personal tutor system;
- (e) That the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office investigate support mechanisms in place at other universities for joint degree students;
- (f) That the Teaching Quality section of the Academic Office investigate with appropriate colleagues what data may be available to carry out analyses of student satisfaction and degree results to compare joint degree students with those on single-subject courses;

RECOMMENDED (to the Board of Undergraduate Studies):

That the Board consider Proposed guidance for academic departments on the management of joint degrees and methods of enhancing the experience of joint degree students, paper QEWG 40/07-08, with a view to developing the draft guidance further.

35/07-08 Completion reports on funded projects

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Presentation by Dr Alexandra Cristea, Co-ordinator of the Intelligent and Adaptive Systems Research Group, Department of Computer Science, noting that further information is available from the group’s website:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/dcs/research/ias/>

- (b) An oral report by Dr Jane Kidd, Warwick Medical School on the TQEF and Pathfinder-funded project 'From Knowing to Performing';
- (c) Completion reports on the funded projects listed in paper QEWG 42/07-08, together with a summary of comments received from Dr K Astbury (French Studies, Chair of the Faculty of Arts IT Committee, and funding recipient), paper QEWG 48/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That completion reports on the funded projects listed in paper QEWG 42/07-08 be approved as set out in papers QEWG 14-39 and 43-48/07-08.
- (e) That the Chair prepare a summary of key points arising from the Group's consideration of the completion reports, this summary to be considered by the Group at its next meeting;
- (f) That a number of points made in discussion be noted:
 - (i) That the restrictions governing the period in which particular funding streams may be allocated and spent can sometimes militate against planning within departments, and that medium-term stability in the availability of funding streams would be welcomed;
 - (ii) That continuing attention should be paid to methods of incentivising involvement in teaching and learning enhancements;
 - (iii) That, depending on the future availability of funding, consideration be given to providing follow-on funding to some projects;
 - (iv) The importance of e-Lab's e-learning advisor team to developing e-learning at the University be reiterated, and consideration be given through the appropriate channels to the possible expansion of this team;
 - (v) That the development of the Teaching Grid as a physical space and nascent virtual community of interest be welcomed, as one method of disseminating and embedding innovative practice across the University.

36/07-08 Funding for teaching and learning projects (minute 24(a)/07-08 and AQSC minute 76(a)/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Group received at its meeting on 27 February 2008 an oral report from the Secretary, noting that discussions were continuing regarding the re-establishment of a University fund

to support departmental and Faculty teaching and learning enhancement projects;

- (b) That it was reported at the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on 27 February 2008 that the Chair [of AQSC] had been involved in positive discussions concerning the establishment of a teaching and learning enhancement fund along the lines set out in paper AQSC 36/07-08 (revised), noting that it was currently planned to issue a call for bids during the summer term.

CONSIDERED:

A paper drafted by the Chair and the Secretary in conjunction with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning and International Affairs) concerning possible criteria for a new teaching and learning enhancement fund, paper QEWG 41/07-08.

RECOMMENDED (to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Teaching & Learning and International Affairs}):

- (c) That an upper limit of £20,000 be established for awards from the new Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund;
- (d) That the guidelines and criteria make particular reference to links between research and teaching and projects which advance research-led/research-informed teaching, noting the importance of such practice in the University Strategy;
- (e) That the guidelines and criteria reinforce experience with recent funding mechanisms that small-scale or less expensive projects can be very successful;
- (f) That chairs/convenors of Faculty teaching and learning groups should play a central role in considering bids to the fund;
- (g) That proposals for projects to pilot self-standing modules likely to be of interest to students across the University be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;
- (h) That proposals for projects to explore and develop existing understandings of international perspective in the curriculum be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;
- (i) That proposals for projects developing the University's use of innovative teaching spaces be welcomed, in line with University Strategy;
- (j) That the proposed essential criterion concerning the reporting and dissemination of projects include reference to the planned database of good practice to be hosted by the Teaching Grid.

37/08-09 DIUS Immersion programme

REPORTED (by the Director of the Learning and Development Centre):

That two members of staff from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) would be spending three days at the University, 2-4 June 2008, on an immersion programme designed to deepen their understanding of the workings of a university, and that the Director of the Learning and Development Centre would contact a range of colleagues to design a full programme of activities for them.

38/07-09 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Group would be held at 2.15pm on Tuesday 27 May in the Teaching Grid, Library.

JDM/JB, 05.05.08

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