

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 12 March 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Croft,
Professor M Finn,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Professor A Caesar.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR, Director of Estates, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 404/11-12), Director of Health and Safety (for item 405/11-12).

396/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012 be approved.

397/11-12 Home Office Statement of Intent - Review of Employment Related Settlement, Tier 5 and Overseas Domestic Workers (minute 833/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A Statement of Intent from the Home Office, regarding intended changes to: Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 5 of the Points Based System; overseas domestic workers; and visitors (SC.280/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That from 6 April 2016, those applying for settlement from Tier 2 and who had entered Tier 2 under the rules in force from 6 April 2011 must be paid at least £35,000 per annum, noting that there would be exceptions to this for those in designated "PhD-level" jobs.
- (b) That the current Visitor rules would be amended to create a new category for a small number of "permitted paid engagements", restricted to those coming for one month or less.
- (c) That Tier 1 would contain a category for Exceptional Talent, for those recognised as leaders in the fields of science, engineering, humanities or the arts (or recognised to have this potential), and that the mechanisms for securing the services of such individuals through "competent bodies" such as the Royal Society would be investigated further.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That the “permitted paid engagements” route could be useful for non-UK/EU external examiners and related engagements, but that clarification should be sought regarding the new rules for work in this country when visiting for a different primary purpose.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Access, Widening Participation and Development)

- (e) That the Statement of Intent may have an impact on the Visiting Fellows scheme in the Institute of Advanced Study.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (f) That the position set out within the Statement of Intent had the potential to change, given that it had not yet received parliamentary approval.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Director of HR and Academic Registrar should investigate further the proposed Graduate Entrepreneur route, for graduates from a UK HEI who had or wanted to develop an existing viable business proposition, given the closure of the Post Study Work route.
- (b) That the International Office and HR Officer (Immigration) should issue an update to departments on recent developments in immigration policy to ensure consistency of messages to departments.

398/11-12

GTTR Consultation on a Single Admissions Process for Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training
(minute 386/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The GTTR’s consultation document on a Single Admissions Process for Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (SC.284/11-12).
- (b) The University’s draft response to the GTTR consultation on a Single Admissions Process for Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (SC.285/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the proposed rationalisation of the current process was desirable to enable parallel consideration of applications by first and second choice institutions, noting however that this would entail some increase in workload for the University.
- (b) That the University’s response noted the wish for applications to the Schools Direct programme and Teach First teacher training to be included in the revised process.
- (c) That the University’s response noted the need for careful advice and guidance to be provided to applicants to ensure that they do not apply for a route for which they are not suitable.

RESOLVED:

That, following attendance at the GTTR consultation event, any subsequent proposed amendments to the University’s response to the GTTR consultation on a Single Admissions Process for Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training, as set out in paper SC.285/11-12, be considered and approved by the Academic Registrar, prior to submission to the GTTR by the deadline of 21 March 2012.

399/11-12 Warwick Integration Summit 2012 (minute 384/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

- (a) That the University and the Students' Union, with the assistance of the Centre for Applied Linguistics, jointly hosted an Integration Summit on 8 and 9 March 2012 to examine how universities and students' unions could best work together to encourage integration between international and domestic students.
- (b) That consultative workshops were run, with 84 universities actively engaged in the Summit.
- (c) That a paper summarising the findings of the Summit would be compiled and shared with interested parties.
- (d) That he extended his thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for introducing the Summit.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Steering Committee be extended to the Students' Union and the Assistant Director (Planning & Student Experience), International Office, for their efforts in organising the Warwick Integration Summit 2012.

400/11-12 50 Forward Campaign

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That half of the £50 million target had been surpassed in the 50 Forward Campaign, with the fundraising total now at £25,281,653.

401/11-12 Postgraduate Hub

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That he had formally opened the new Postgraduate Hub in Coventry House on 7 March 2012.

402/11-12 HEFCE 'Margin' Student Places

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the HEFCE had allocated 20,000 student places for 2012-13 through the 'margin' process, and that these had been distributed almost evenly between higher education institutions and further education colleges.

403/11-12 Quarter 2 End - ARC

RECEIVED:

A report setting out the 2011/12 Q2 financial position for academic departments, including WMS and WBS, together with an oral report (SC.279/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the Income Summary Statement showed a positive favourable variance against forecast for Operating Surplus.
- (b) That the Departments of Statistics and Mathematics had performed well against forecast, as had the School of Life Sciences, noting that they were managing their deficit well.

(by the Registrar)

- (c) That the financial information available needed to be considered alongside the operational information since there were a number of vacancies in the process of being filled, a number of which would most likely be completed beyond the existing financial year.

404/11-12

Admissions and Recruitment Update

CONSIDERED:

An update on the current application figures and developments in admissions, recruitment, outreach and widening participation (SC.281/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That undergraduate applications to the 2012 intake remained down by 11% overall, as anticipated within the current climate, but that there was sufficient volume and quality of applicants to ensure that most departments would achieve their intake target.
- (b) That postgraduate taught applications were up overall by 4%, as a result of more overseas applicants.
- (c) That the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) had issued guidance stating that all institutions offering Initial Teacher training (ITT) courses must revise their 2012/13 Access Agreements to include those courses if they wished to charge more than £6,000 per annum.
- (d) That the 2013 undergraduate prospectus had been produced, with links to digital content, such as student and graduate profiles, through "quick response (QR)" codes.
- (e) That a clear set of guidelines would be provided to course selectors and the Admissions team to manage the intake at Confirmation in August.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That some departments in the Science Faculty had lowered their intake targets for postgraduate research students, with the availability of funding being a key factor.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (g) That departments in the Science Faculty which had lowered their targets for postgraduate research students had been challenged by the Academic Resourcing Committee, and that the Committee had been persuaded that the targets were realistic.
- (h) That the 19% fall in postgraduate research applications within the Science Faculty was of particular concern.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (i) That, in his opinion, while the finance pages of the 2013 undergraduate prospectus were informative, those pages concerned with access and widening participation required greater clarity for students.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (j) That it would be useful to gather intelligence over the course of the cycle regarding the financial incentives offered by other institutions to AAB+ students, and how effective they were in attracting these students.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (k) That the management of the margin around the non-AAB students did not currently present the University with a significantly different challenge to that faced in previous recruitment rounds.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's revised 2012/13 Access Agreement to OFFA to include ITT students, be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 30 March 2012.
- (b) That the effectiveness of the information pages on "Access" within the 2013 undergraduate prospectus should be reviewed as part of the preparations for the 2014 undergraduate prospectus.

405/11-12

Health and Safety update

RECEIVED:

The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2011, which has been considered and approved by the University Health and Safety Committee and the University Health and Safety Executive Committee as paper UHSC.10/11-12 Revised (SC.282/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the Health and Safety Executive Committee resolved that there should be a targeted reduction in the number of false fire alarms, particularly in residences, due to the potential disruption caused to work, study and responsiveness of emergency services.
- (b) That he had been collating better information from risk owners, and focusing on the most significant safety risks.
- (c) That there had been significant changes over the last three years in health and safety expectations, and that there was a need to capture these and communicate them more widely.
- (d) That there were new robust processes in place between HR and Heads of Departments for performance management, in order to address any stress-related health issues.

406/11-12

Varsity 2012 Events (minute 382/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

That the Varsity matches between Warwick and Coventry University continued, with Warwick leading the competition.

- 407/11-12 QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B11 – Research Degrees
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the QAA consultation on Chapter B11: Research degrees of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education would be overseen by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 23 March 2012.
- 408/11-12 QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section B5 – Student Engagement
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the QAA consultation on Chapter B5: Student engagement of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education would be overseen by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 18 April 2012.
- 409/11-12 QAA Consultation on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the QAA consultation on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education would be overseen by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 24 April 2012.
- 410/11-12 Higher Education Commission - Postgraduate Education Inquiry
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the Higher Education Commission inquiry into postgraduate education would be overseen by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Deputy Academic Registrar, and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 2 April 2012.
- 411/11-12 Ofsted Consultation on Proposals for Initial Teacher Education Inspections
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the Ofsted consultation on proposals for amended inspection arrangements of Initial Teacher Education would be overseen by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 2 May 2012.
- 412/11-12 HEFCE Consultation on Changes to Student Number Controls and Teaching Funding
- REPORTED:
- That the University's response to the HEFCE consultation on future arrangements for allocating funding for teaching in universities and colleges and implementing government policy on student number controls would be overseen by the Academic Registrar, and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 25 May 2012.