

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**Academic Policy & Regulations Committee**

**16 February 2010**

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

- Members present: Professor J S Bale, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning and Quality (in the Chair)  
Professor K Dowden, College of Arts and Law  
Ms B Jones, Birmingham University Guild of Students  
Professor A Jung, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Ms C L McCauley, Academic and Student Administration  
Ms C M Pike, Legal Services  
Mr N M Ross, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
- Apologies: Professor G W Humphreys, College of Life and Environmental Sciences  
Dr C Ryan, College of Social Sciences
- In attendance: Mr M Davis, Academic and Student Administration (In attendance for Minute 10/05)  
Mr P A Fantom, Academic and Student Administration (Secretary)  
Ms S A Oxley, College of Medical and Dental Sciences (In attendance for Minute 10/06)  
Dr D T Saidov, College of Arts and Law (In attendance for Minute 10/07)
- Papers The Minute Book contains copies of all written papers or reports referred to below. Agenda and papers are also available via <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/APRC.shtml>.

10/01 **Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair formally welcomed the members of the Committee to the first meeting under his chairship. He also welcomed two new members to the Committee: Professor Achim Jung of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, and Professor Glyn Humphreys of the College of Life and Environmental Sciences.

10/02 **Terms of Reference and Membership of the Progress and Awards Board and the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel**

*Considered:*

The proposed Terms of Reference and Membership of the Progress and Awards Board and the proposed revised Terms of Reference and Membership of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel (a Sub-Panel of the Progress and Awards Board) for 2009/10 (APRC.10.02.01).

*Resolved:*

- (a) That the proposed Terms of Reference and Membership of the Progress and Awards Board be approved.
- (b) That the proposed amendment to the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel be further revised to incorporate the following provisions:

- (i) Clause 1.14 to state that where the original decision of the examiners was that the student make major corrections to the thesis, the student be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor corrections to those parts of the thesis affected by the major corrections, prior to the thesis being submitted again; where the original decision of the examiners was that the student make minor corrections to the thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be allowed.
- (ii) Regulation 7.4.7 (e) to achieve consistency with the amendments to Clause 1.14.
- (c) That, following consultation with the Director of Legal Services, the Secretary submit the revised Terms of Reference and Membership of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel to the next meeting of APRC for approval.

10/03 **Minutes**

*Resolved:*

That the minutes (APRC.10.02.02) of the meeting held on 8 October 2009 be approved.

10/04 **Matters arising**

**(a) The provision of awards leading to the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Minute 09/37 refers)**

*Noted:*

That the first meeting of the working group on research master's degrees, which was to be chaired by the Director of the Graduate School, had been arranged for 24 March 2010 and that it was envisaged that a report would be made to the May 2010 meeting of APRC. In addition to the issues already outlined for consideration, it was noted that the working group would also be considering issues concerned with the assessment of the research component of MRes programmes.

**(b) Proposed amendment of the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment in relation to student access to and the retention of scripts (Minute 09/41 refers)**

*Noted:*

That two meetings of the working group considering this issue had now been held, with consultation on the general principles of providing feedback to students being undertaken, and it was envisaged that a report would be made to APRC, following consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Quality)..

10/05 **Further information regarding the proposed amendment of the Code of Practice on the Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations**

*Considered:*

A paper seeking APRC's approval to a proposed change to the Code of Practice for effect from 2010/11, to ensure consistency and minimise the risk of examination irregularities, and following on from APRC's request for further information on this matter at its last meeting (Minute 09/38 refers) (APRC.10.02.03).

*Resolved:*

- (a) That the proposed amendment to the Code of Practice on the Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations by the introduction of the new clause 6.18 be approved and incorporated, as follows:

*Registered Students must leave all question sheets and answer books provided during an examination sitting in the examination venue when the Registered Student leaves the venue.*

- (b) That a further paper on the development of a system for the early release of question papers be submitted to the next meeting of APRC.

10/06 **Request for an Exemption for the BNurs from Regulations governing progress**

*Considered:*

A paper seeking APRC's approval to proposed changes to Regulations, for immediate effect, regarding the arrangements for progression from one stage of the Bachelor of Nursing (BNurs) programme to the next stage (APRC.10.02.04).

*Resolved:*

That the BNurs programme be granted an exemption from Regulation 7.3.1 (a) (i).

10/07 **Request for an Exemption from Regulations concerning the number of credits for a Module on the LLM programme**

*Considered:*

A paper seeking APRC's approval to a request from the Birmingham Law School for an exemption from Regulations to allow the use of 15 credit modules on the LLM programme (APRC.10.02.05).

This request was made on the basis that it would provide a programme structure comparable to that in competitor institutions running similar programmes, and that it would increase flexibility and would enable the number of specialist options that could be offered to students to be extended.

However, APRC was concerned that granting this request for an exemption, which would be contrary to Regulation 6.1.2 (g), which stipulates that modules should be expressed in multiples of 10 credits up to a maximum of 60 credits, unless permitted by the Senate or under delegated authority, would incur wider equity issues across the University. Furthermore, it was considered that the matter could be resolved by the Birmingham Law School creating 20 credit modules within the Regulations.

*Resolved:*

That the Birmingham Law School's request be rejected.

10/08 **Proposed new Code of Practice on Admissions**

*Considered:*

The proposed Code of Practice on Admissions, together with a supporting paper outlining the reasons for its creation, and the replacement of the current Code of Practice on Admission of Students to the University of Birmingham and the Code of Practice on the Admission of Postgraduate Research Students (APRC.10.02.06).

*Resolved:*

- (a) That, following consultation with the Director of Legal Services, the Associate Professor of Medical Education, and the University's Disability and Learning Support Service, the Secretary submit a revised Code of Practice to the next meeting of APRC.
- (b) That the Director of Admissions be invited to attend the next meeting of APRC when this revised Code of Practice will be discussed.

10/09 **Chair's Action**

*Reported:*

That Chair's Action was taken between October 2009 and February 2010 to approve the addition of appendices for the Code of Practice on Plagiarism and the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committees, to provide procedures for programmes delivered by units within Corporate Services.

10/10 **Dates of meetings for the Academic Year 2009/10**

*Noted:*

That next meeting had been arranged to take place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010 at 2.30 pm in the Beale Room, G32, Aston Webb Building.