

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

20 May 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
Dr C Ryan, College of Social Sciences
- Apologies: Professor G W Humphreys, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
- In attendance: Mr M Davis, Academic and Student Administration (In attendance for Minute 10/14)
Ms Joanne Luckett, Academic and Student Administration (In attendance for Minute 10/18)
Mrs Elisa Parry, Academic and Student Administration (Secretary)
- 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>.

10/11 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes (APRC.10.05.01) of the meeting held on 16 February 2010 be approved.

10/12 **Terms of Reference and Membership of the Progress and Awards Board and the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel**

Considered:

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), (APRC.10.05.02).

Resolved:

- (a) That the proposed revised amendments to the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Progress and Awards Board be approved, including the following two additional clauses (deletions struck through, insertions underlined):

1.14 - To approve a request from the examiners for Registered Students who have made major corrections to their thesis to be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor

corrections to such parts of their thesis affected by the major corrections (but no other part). Where the original decision of the examiners was that the Registered student make minor corrections to their thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be permitted.

1.15 - To approve the award of an aegrotat degree, diploma or certificate, in such circumstances where a Registered Student is unable to complete the requirements of his or her programme due to serious illness, death or other significant cause.

(b) That, in order to ensure consistency with the University Regulations 7.4.7 (e), the following minor amendment be incorporated (deletions struck through, insertions underlined):

- Where the Registered student is required to make minor/major corrections, the Registered Student is permitted one opportunity to complete the corrections to the satisfaction of the examiners. The award of the degree is withheld until a 'Certificate of Correction' is provided by the internal examiner for minor corrections and by all examiners for major corrections.~~In exceptional circumstances and~~ With the approval of Senate or delegated authority, a request having been made by the examiners, a Registered Student who has made major corrections to their thesis may be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor corrections to such parts of their thesis affected by the major corrections (but no other part). Where the original decision of the examiners was that the Registered student make minor corrections to their thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be permitted.

10/13 **Matters arising**

(a) **Proposal to amend the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment in relation to student access to and the retention of scripts (Minute 10/04 refers)**

Noted:

That a working group had been convened and that its report was considered by the University Learning and Teaching Committee on 11th May 2010 and any amendments to regulations will be brought forward for APRC's attention.

10/14 **Examination Papers**

Considered:

A paper setting out the procedure by which examination papers will be made available to registered students following the May/June 2011 examination session (APRC.10.05.06).

Resolved:

That the procedure be approved as a medium term solution.

10/15 **Request for exemption from Regulations concerning the number of re-sits for a Level C module on the MBChB**

Considered:

A paper seeking an exemption to Regulations to allow students on the MBChB programme to have a third attempt at up to 20 credits of Level C Modules, (APRC.10.04.05).

Resolved:

That the MBChB programme be granted an exemption from Regulation 7.2.6 (a), with no time limit.

10/16 **Proposed amendment to Section 7 of the Regulations regarding Aegrotat Awards**

Considered:

A paper seeking an amendment to Regulations to include the opportunity for an aegrotat award for students undertaking research degrees, (APRC.10.05.05).

Resolved:

That two additional clauses be inserted as Regulation 7.4.1 (l) and 7.4.8 (g), with the other clauses in the Regulations being renumbered to follow in sequence, to read (insertions underlined, deletions struck-through):

7.4.1 (l) In exceptional circumstances, where a Registered Student is unable to complete the requirements of his or her programme due to serious illness, death or other significant cause, the Examiners of the thesis may recommend the award of an aegrotat degree, diploma or certificate. Such recommendations shall be subject to the approval of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. Degrees which are subject to fitness to practise requirements shall not be awarded as aegrotat degrees.

7.4.8 (g) Aegrotat Awards shall be listed as 'aegrotat' on the central University record and certificates.

A Registered Student who has been awarded an aegrotat qualification shall not be permitted any further opportunity to complete the requirements of his or her programme.

10/17 **Maternity Policy**

Considered:

A proposed University policy for students, (APRC.10.05.06).

Resolved:

- (a) That, following consultation with the Legal Services office and the Human Resources Office, the revised paper be submitted for Chair's approval.
- (b) That the title be amended to read 'Student Maternity Guidelines'.
- (c) That paragraph 21 be removed.
- (d) That the guidelines be reviewed in 2010/11 in conjunction with a consolidation of the general Leave of Absence procedures.

10/18 **Student Complaints Procedure**

Considered:

A paper setting out changes to the Procedure, along with the revised version, (APRC.10.05.07).

Noted:

That paragraph 18 regarding complaints against staff would be finalised in conjunction with Human Resources and Legal Services, before final approval by the Committee.

Resolved:

That, in terms of the proposed amendments, a revised Student Complaints Procedure be circulated to members by correspondence in order for approval to be given to the following changes:

- (a) That the 'informal' stage of the procedure be replaced by the following stages:
- "Issues", which would be considered within the relevant School/Department with the aim of resolving the matter informally;
 - "Head of School Review", which would be initiated if the complainant remained dissatisfied and wished to pursue the matter. At this stage the complainant would be required to fill in a form to be developed by the Academic Quality Unit.
- (b) That, following consultation with the Director of Legal Services, paragraph 22 of the procedure be re-drafted to incorporate the revised stages as detailed above.
- (c) That, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, further consideration be given to the implications of recording and monitoring 'Head of School Review' cases, in light of the Freedom of Information Act and quality assurance and enhancement requirements.
- (d) That consideration be given to how best to keep College Directors of Education and Heads of College informed of the progress and outcomes of formal complaints.

10/19 **Higher Doctorates**

Considered:

A paper seeking amendments to regulations and Codes of Practice to ensure consistency, (APRC.10.05.08).

Resolved:

- (a) That the Code of Practice on Higher Doctorates be renamed "Code of Practice on the Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates".
- (b) That clause 5.2 of the Code of Practice on the Assessment & Award of Higher Doctorates be amended to (deletions struck through):
- 5.2 The nominated assessors must be approved by the Head of College. Should an assessor not be approved, the Head of School must nominate a ~~further assessor in his or her place~~ replacement.*
- (c) That an additional clause be included, and subsequent clauses re-numbered, to read:
- 5.3 The formal letter of appointment of an assessor accompanies the higher doctorate submission when it is despatched to the examiners for assessment.*
- (d) That the following amendment to the University Regulations be approved (deletions struck through, insertions underlined):

7.6.3 Assessors

7.6.3 Normally one internal and two external assessors shall be ~~appointed~~ nominated by the ~~Senate~~, Head of School except where the candidate is a member of this University's staff, when all assessors shall be external to the University.

10/20 **Dates of meetings for the Academic Year 2009/10**

Noted:

That next meeting had been arranged to take place on Wednesday 26th May 2010 at 1.00 pm in the Beale Room, G32, Aston Webb Building.