

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

03 February 2011

CONFIRMED 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
Professor G W Humphreys, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
Mr Rob Hunter, 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
Professor N M Ross, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Professor C Ryan, College of Social Sciences

Apologies: None

In attendance: Ms Nina Morris, 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>.

11/01 **Minutes**

Resolved:

- (a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 October 2010 (APRC.11.02.01) be approved.
- (b) That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2010 (APRC.11.02.02) be approved.

11/02 **Matters arising on the Minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda**

- (a) Report on minor amendment made to Student Complaints and Concerns Policy (Minute 10/37 refers)

Received

An oral report from the Secretary relating to a minor amendment to the Student Complaints and Concerns Policy.

Noted

That the amendments to the Policy as regards mediation were as follows:

- 3.6 *If all parties are agreeable, mediation may be attempted at the informal stage as well as at the formal stage of the Procedure. If this is the case, referral will be*

*made to one of the team of University mediators, who are members of staff experienced in dealing with student problems and trained and qualified in mediation (see paragraphs 5.1 – 5.8 below). **If mediation is attempted at the informal stage, it will not normally be repeated at the formal stage unless the parties consider that it would be advantageous.***

Resolved

- (i) That these amendments stand for the Student Concerns and Complaints Policy from 2011/12.
- (ii) That issues raised around the stages of the Policy, and the potential for elevating an issue through lower stages of the Policy, if appropriate, be transmitted to the Student Complaints Officer for consideration in any further revision of the Policy.

(b) Report on the PSIBS exemption request (Minute 10/39 (b) refers)

Received

An oral report from the Secretary relating to a minor amendment to the exemption for the Integrated Study in Physical Science of Imaging in the Biomedical Sciences (PSIBS) programme.

Noted

That the exemption for the PSIBS programme will stand as follows:

(Students on the PSIBS Programme should...)

*Have gained at least **60** credits at Level M in modules taken as part of the taught component of the programme; and
Have gained credit in dissertation components with a total credit value of **90** credits at level M taken during the course of the programme and
Have gained a weighted mean mark of at least 50 in the taught component of the programme; and have achieved a mark of 40 or more in all taught modules.*

(c) Working Group on Code of Practice on Student Development and Support

Received

An oral report from the Secretary relating to a working group that has been established by Dr Chris Twine to consider amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Development and Support in order to establish the scope and range of student support and development functions delivered by Schools, particularly in light of the Browne Review.

Noted

That this working group would include College, Corporate Services, and Guild representation.

Resolved

That all changes to this Code of Practice should be circulated to the appropriate forums outside of APRC to allow greater consultation.

(d) Report on proposals for following up time-sensitive exemptions with effect from 2011/12

Received

An oral proposal from the Secretary relating to the procedure for monitoring time-sensitive exemptions with effect from 2011/12.

Resolved

- (i) That time-sensitive exemptions become a standing item on the penultimate APRC meeting of each year, with effect from 2011/12.
- (ii) That the Secretary should liaise with Schools, as appropriate, in advance of the penultimate APRC meeting to include Schools' responses.

11/03 **Amendment to Regulations**

- (a) A clarification to the Code of Practice on Student Development and Support in Schools and the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment

Considered

A clarification to the Code of Practice on Student Development and Support in Schools 3.2.2 and the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment 7.1 relating to the four-week assessment feedback period.

Resolved

- (i) That the following amendments to the Codes of Practice be approved as follows with effect from 2011/12 (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

Code of Practice on Student Development and Support (3.2.2 (c))

[All students should:]

be informed of the timescale for feedback arrangements. This should be timely (i.e. within four weeks (20 working days) of the submission date of the assessment/piece of work, including periods when the University is not in session, but excluding University closed days) so that they can adjust their patterns of work before subsequent assessment opportunities; Staff on term-time only contracts who are responsible for marking assessments should wherever possible comply with the Code of Practice on the deadline for the return of student work, and discuss in advance with their Head of School when any assessment deadline is unlikely to be met. When it is not possible for term-time only staff to meet a deadline, an agreed date for the return of work should be notified to all students.

Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment (7.1)

Registered Students should be given timely and relevant feedback on assessments, particularly those undertaken during a module and used to inform the Registered Student's learning (e.g. coursework). In accordance with the Code of Practice for Student Development and Support in Principal Academic Units, Registered Students should be informed of the timescale for feedback arrangements. This should be timely (i.e. within four weeks (20 working days) of the submission date of the assessment/piece of work, including periods when the University is not in session, but excluding University closed days) so that they can adjust their patterns of work before subsequent assessment opportunities; Staff on term-time only contracts who are responsible for marking assessments should wherever possible comply with the Code of Practice on the deadline for the return of student work, and discuss in advance with their Head of School when any assessment deadline is unlikely to be met. When it is not possible for term-time only staff to meet a deadline, an agreed date for the return of work should be notified to all students.

~~and this should normally be within four weeks of the submission date of the assignment/piece of work so that patterns of work can be adjusted before subsequent assessment opportunities.~~ Principal academic units may wish to provide this feedback in ways other than by provision of actual marks. Where marks are provided in advance of confirmation by the Board of Examiners, it should be emphasised that these marks remain provisional.

- (ii) That CP check the wording of the contracts of term-time only members of staff to clarify whether they include a form of words to state that part-time members of staff must comply with the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice and report back to the Committee.
- (b) A paper outlining proposed amendments to the Regulations with reference to institutions or organisations offering programmes leading to University of Birmingham awards

Considered

A paper outlining proposed amendments to Regulations 6.4.1, 6.4.3 and 6.4.4 with reference to institutions or organisations offering programmes leading to University of Birmingham awards and appeals within collaborative agreements.

Resolved

That the following proposed amendments to the Regulations be approved (additions underlined, deletions struck through)

6.4.1 *Collaborative arrangements for institutions or organisations offering programmes of study leading to awards of the University or dual or joint awards with other institutions or organisations are subject to ~~these~~ Regulations **5 - 8**, but may be subject to separate programme regulations approved by Senate or its delegated authority. In the event of conflict between ~~these~~ Regulations **5 - 8** and the separate programme regulations, the separate programme regulations applicable to the collaborative arrangements shall apply. Such institutions or organisations shall not be involved in establishing Regulations for the University of Birmingham, but will be kept informed of any changes.*

6.4.3 ~~Those institutions or organisations offering programmes leading to University Awards must ensure their regulations are broadly comparable to those of the University. Senate or its delegated authority will determine whether such regulations are comparable to those of the University.~~

~~6.4.4~~

6.4.3 Registered Students on programmes leading to University Awards have the right to make one final appeal to the University on the grounds of procedural or administrative irregularity in the operation and implementation of the programme regulations on the part of institutions or organisations concerned. Such an appeal may only be undertaken after the appeal procedure of the institution or organisation offering the programme of study has been exhausted and providing that this does not conflict with any formalised agreement already in place between the University of Birmingham and the collaborative institution.

- (c) Paper discussing amendments to Regulations relating to a registered student's attempt to retrieve failure for a module

Considered

Paper discussing amendments to Regulation 7.2.6 (i) relating to a registered student's attempt to retrieve failure for a module in a specific instance.

Resolved:

- (i) That a form of words be inserted into the appropriate place within the Regulations as follows:

Where a student fails a module, the mark is always capped at 1 mark below the pass mark for that module.

- (ii) That the Secretary liaise with the Interim Director of Academic Services as regards to where in the Regulations this form of words should be inserted, and circulate a draft to the Committee in advance of the next APRC for consideration.

- (d) Proposed amendment to Regulations and the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee to enable cross-College membership on College Misconduct Committees

Considered

Proposed amendment to Regulation 8.3.5 and the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee to enable cross-College membership on College Misconduct Committees when determining allegations of misconduct involving two or more students registered within two or more Colleges.

Resolved:

- (i) That the following proposed amendments to the Regulations and the Code of Practice be approved (additions underlined, deletions struck through)

Regulations

- 8.3.5 *If the student denies the allegation, or does not wish the matter to be dealt with as a summary offence, or the Investigating Officer deems the offence more serious than a summary offence, the Investigating Officer shall report the alleged offence in writing to the Head of College for consideration by the College Misconduct Committee or College Fitness to Practise Committee. In relation to alleged offences involving two or more Registered Students registered within two or more Colleges, if the Investigating Officer believes that it would be more appropriate for all the alleged offences to be heard by a single Misconduct Committee, the Investigating Officer may report the alleged offences in writing to the Director of Academic Services who will decide to which College Misconduct Committee the alleged offences should be referred, normally the Misconduct Committee of the College within which the majority of students involved are registered; this shall not apply to a Registered Student following a fitness to practise programme who must in every instance be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College within which the Registered Student is registered.*

Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise

- 2.1.4 *The Chair will then appoint two members of staff from the College Misconduct Committee pool. None of the members of the Committee shall have previously*

been involved with the case(s). **In relation to discipline cases involving two or more Registered Students registered within two or more Colleges which the Director of Academic Services has decided should be heard by a single College Misconduct Committee, the Chair of that Committee will in consultation with the Director of Academic Services then appoint two members of Academic Staff from the College Misconduct Committee pools of those Colleges within which the Registered Students involved are registered, to reflect as closely as possible the College membership of those students.**

- 3.1 Where the student has denied the allegation, or does not wish the matter to be dealt with as a summary offence, or the Investigating Officer (as defined by Regulations Section 8, Student Conduct, 3.1) deems the offence more serious than a summary offence, the Investigating Officer shall report the alleged offence in writing to the Head of College for consideration by the College Misconduct Committee or College Fitness to Practise Committee. **In relation to alleged offences involving two or more Registered Students registered within two or more Colleges, if the Investigating Officer believes that it would be more appropriate for all the alleged offences to be heard by a single Misconduct Committee, the Investigating Officer may report the alleged offences in writing to the Director of Academic Services who will decide to which College Misconduct Committee the alleged offences should be referred, normally the Misconduct Committee of the College within which the majority of Registered Students involved are registered; this shall not apply to a student following a fitness to practise programme who must in every instance be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College within which the Registered Student is registered.**
- A.2 ~~If a student who is referred to a Misconduct Committee is a Registered Student in a College, the Misconduct Committee shall be that of the College within which the student is registered unless the allegation is made against two or more students registered within more than one College. In those circumstances the Investigating Officer in consultation with the Director of Academic Services may refer all such students to the Misconduct Committee of the College he or she considers to be most appropriate, normally the College within which the majority of students involved in the incident are registered, except that a student following a Fitness to Practise programme must be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College within which the student is registered.~~ **If a Registered Student who is referred to a Misconduct Committee is a Registered Student in a College, the Misconduct Committee shall be that of the College within which the Registered Student is registered, unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Director of Academic Services has decided that the Registered Student be referred to the Misconduct Committee of another College (for example, in the interests of natural justice or where there may be a potential conflict of interest) in accordance with Student Conduct Regulation 8.3.5 and paragraph 3.1 above.**
- (ii) That CP investigates the potential for conducting a review of the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committees.

11/04 **Requests for Exemption**

- (a) A paper requesting exemption from Regulation relating to the thesis length for the PhD in the proposed PhD in Practice-based Research – Playwriting, Directing and Dramaturgy

Considered

A paper requesting exemption from Regulation 7.2.4 (b) relating to the thesis length for the PhD in the proposed PhD in Practice-based Research – Playwriting, Directing and Dramaturgy.

Resolved

- (i) That the requested exemption be approved.
 - (ii) That the Secretary liaise with the School regarding a form of words summarizing the University's provision for the Practice Based Assessments and report back to the Committee.
- (b) A paper requesting exemption from 2011/12 Regulation for current students on the degree of MD (Minute 10/38 (c) refers).

Considered

A paper requesting exemption from 2011/12 Regulation 6.2.3 (a) for current students on the degree of MD for implementation in 2011/12 (Minute 10/38 (c) refers).

Resolved

That the requested exemption be approved.

11/05 **Chair's Action**

Reported

That Chair's Action was taken between October 2010 and February 2011 to approve:

- (a) A request for exemption from Regulation 7.3.1 (b) for the Birmingham Law School.
- (b) A request for exemption from Regulation 6.4.4 relating to students who are registered at University College Birmingham (UCB) on programmes of study leading to an award of the University of Birmingham (UoB).
- (c) An amendment to Regulation 6.1.3 (a) (viii) and 6.2.3 (a) in order to regularise a situation that has been in operation since the inception of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).
- (d) An amendment to the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice.

11/06 **Date of Meetings for the Academic Year 2010/11**

Noted

That the next meeting of APRC will be held in The Beale Room (Committee Room 1), G32, Aston Webb on Thursday 19 May 2011 at 2.30 pm.