

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

19 May 2011

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 (until 4.00pm)
Mr Rob Hunter, Birmingham University Guild of Students
Professor A Jung, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Ms C M Pike, Legal Services
Professor N M Ross, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Professor C Ryan, College of Social Sciences
- Apologies: Professor G W Humphreys, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
Ms C L McCauley, Academic and Student Administration
- In attendance: Ms Nina Morris, Academic and Student Administration (Secretary)
Mrs L Radbourne, Academic Quality Unit (for minute 11/13)
Mrs C Evans, Research Student Administration (for item 11/14)
Ms J Luckett, Academic Quality Unit (for item 11/15)
Mrs T Milner, Assistant Director, Registry (for item 11/16)
- 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>.

11/07 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 03 February (APRC 11.05.01) be approved.

11/08 **Constitution for 2011/12**

Resolved:

That the current members of the APRC continue to serve for the academic session 2011/12.

11/09 **Matters arising on the Minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda**

- (a) Report on working group to look at Code of Practice Student Development and Support (minute 11/02 (c) refers)

Received:

An oral report from the Secretary on the proposed working group to look at the Code of Practice on Student Development and Support.

Noted:

That the working group would be postponed until the results of the Browne Review Task Group had reported to the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

- (b) Feedback on action point 11/03 (c) regarding a registered student's attempt to pass a module

Received:

An oral report from the Secretary to note that following the agreement in principle at the APRC of 03 February 2010 to a form of words to be inserted into the Regulations, the Secretary to the Committee and the Interim Director of Academic and Student Administration had liaised over the position of the form of words within the Regulations.

Resolved:

That the following amendments be inserted into the Regulations with effect from 2011/12 (additions underlined):

7.2.6 Failure in Assessment

7.2.6 (a) Subject to sub-clause 7.2.6 (b c) below, all Registered Students who fail a module, other than modules taken in the final stage of a classified honours degree programme not exempted from this clause by decision of the Senate, shall have one opportunity to retrieve the failure, either by re-assessment (i.e. re-sitting the examination and/or resubmitting coursework) or repetition. Such opportunity shall be normally provided and taken within one year of the initial failure except when, for reasons of frequency of module delivery, the Senate or a delegated authority has agreed otherwise.

7.2.6 (b) Where a student fails a module, the mark shall be capped at 1 mark below the pass mark for that module

7.2.6 (b-c) Boards of Examiners shall determine whether a Registered Student shall be reassessed in or repeat a failed module. In normal circumstances Boards of Examiners will require reassessment unless repetition of the module is specifically justified (due to the nature of the module or the Registered Student's academic circumstances).

And then referenced at 7.2.6 as follows:

7.2.6 (i) Following an attempt to retrieve failure (via reassessment, repetition or substitution) the mark used for calculating a Registered Student's weighted mean mark and progress or final degree classification shall be:

- (i) The pass mark for that module if the Registered Student passes the module.*
- (ii) The higher of the two fail marks if the Registered Student fails the module, with reference to clause 7.2.6 (b).*

- (c) Practice-based research in CAL (minute 11/04 (a) (ii) relates)

Received:

An oral report from the Secretary relating to the provision for practice-based research in the College of Arts and Law.

Resolved:

That the Secretary liaise with the Chair over a form of words to be inserted into the Regulations relating to the University's provision for practice based research.

11/10 **Amendment to Codes of Practice on Student Development and Support in Schools and Taught Programme and Module Assessment (11/03 relates)**

Received:

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, following consultation with Legal Service and Human Resources.

Resolved:

- (i) That the following amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Development and Support in Schools come into effect from 2011/12 (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

[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 part year contracts who are responsible for marking assessments should comply with the Code of Practice on the deadline for the return of student work. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible in respect of marking work during periods when they are otherwise not contracted to work, such staff should discuss this with their Head of School as soon as possible and in any event by the beginning of each term. Where it is not possible for staff on part year contracts to meet a deadline, an agreed date for the return of work should be notified to all affected students when the assessment is set.

~~This should be timely (within four week of the submission date of the assessment/piece of work) so that they can adjust their patterns of work before subsequent assessment opportunities;~~

- (ii) That the following amendments to the Code of Practice on Taught Programmes and Module Assessment come into effect from 2011/12 additions underlined, deletions struck through):

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 part year contracts who are responsible for marking assessments should comply with the Code of Practice on the deadline for the return of student work. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible in respect of marking work during periods when they are otherwise not contracted to work, such staff should discuss this with

their Head of School as soon as possible and in any event by the beginning of each term. Where it is not possible for staff on part year contracts to meet a deadline, an agreed date for the return of work should be notified to all affected students when the assessment is set.
~~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.

11/11 **Amendment to Regulation 6.1.3 (a) (viii)**

Received:

A proposal to add the award of DPharm to the list of awards included under the banner of Professional Doctorate.

Resolved

That the following addition be approved in principle with effect from 2011/12, pending approval of the programme through the University's Programme Approval Review Committee (addition underlined):

6.1.3 (a) (viii) *Professional Doctorate (ClinPsyD, EdD, ThD, EdPsychD, SocSciD, Foren.Psy.D, HScD, HScD(Clin), DPT, App.Ed, Child Psy.D and DPharm)*

A programme, normally of three years' duration, which integrates taught postgraduate work and/or professional practice with research within a programme of 540 credits. Registered Students are assessed by a combination of written examinations and/or project report(s), dissertation or thesis which collectively make an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication. The programme comprises no more than 180 credits of taught modules.

11/12 **Amendment to Regulation 5.1.1**

Received:

A proposal to amend the Regulations on Admission to include eligibility criteria for the awards of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) and Doctor of Medicine (MD)

Resolved

That the following amendments to the Regulations be approved with effect from 2011/12, and subsequent sections re-ordered as appropriate:

5.1.1 (h) Eligibility for admission to the DDS

(a) Two years from the date of having passed the BDS (or equivalent) a candidate will be eligible to apply for permission to register for the higher degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery.

(b) Applicants must be in possession of a degree recognised for full registration by the General Dental Council. Such candidates must be connected with the University or one of its associated hospitals as normally evidenced by the holding of a full-time, part-time or honorary University appointment.

- (c) Applicants must be able to devote half their working week for research purposes.
- (d) External Registration (when the research is being carried-out outside of Birmingham and/or its associated hospitals) is not permitted.
- (e) Applications must be made using the standard University Postgraduate online application form and must additionally include:
 - i) an outline of the research which will be the subject of the thesis;
 - ii) details of where the research will be undertaken;
 - iii) an up-to-date curriculum vitae, including the number of clinical hours the candidate will be undertaking during registration and the number of part-time hours which will be dedicated to research.

5.1.1 (i) Eligibility for admission to the MD

- (a) Two years from the date of having passed the MBChB (or equivalent) a candidate will be eligible to apply for permission to register for the higher degree of Doctor of Medicine.
- (b) Applicants must be in possession of a degree recognised for full registration by the General Medical Council. Such candidates must be connected with the University or one of its associated hospitals as normally evidenced by the holding of a full-time, part-time or honorary University appointment.
- (c) Applicants must be able to devote half their working week for research purposes.
- (d) External Registration (when the research is being carried-out outside of Birmingham and/or its associated hospitals) is not permitted.
- (e) Applications must be made using the standard University Postgraduate online application form and must additionally include:
 - i) an outline of the research which will be the subject of the thesis;
 - ii) details of where the research will be undertaken;
 - iii) an up-to-date curriculum vitae, including the number of clinical hours the candidate will be undertaking during registration and the number of part-time hours which will be dedicated to research.

11/13 **Amendments to the Student Representation System Policy**

Received:

A paper proposing amendments to the Student Representation System Policy

Resolved:

That the changes as set out in paper APRC 11.05.05 be approved, with the exception of the following, as a result of comments from the Committee (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

- (i) Figure one to be amended to indicate that Sabbatical Officers attend College Teaching and Learning Committees
- (ii) Sub-section 3.4.9 to read as follows:

3.4.9 ~~There will be clear Policies and Guiding Principles~~ supplementary information relating to ~~for~~ the SRS which will outline how the SRS functions across the University. This will be reviewed by the SRSAB at regular intervals.

(iii) Sub-section 6.2.2 to read as follows:

6.2.2 *The SLC will be responsible for*

- (a) the recruitment and election of student representatives at the programme appropriate level, in accordance with section 6.3.
- (c) providing the first point of contact for the student representatives; and providing the first point of contact for the Guild of Students in Colleges and Schools

(iv) Sub-section 6.3.8 to be repositioned to higher in Section 6.3, to highlight the significance of the Student Representative Contact Details Consent Form, and the sub-section to be amended as follows:

6.3.1 Students will be informed that, once elections have taken place, SLCs will ask student representatives to complete a Student Representative Contact Details Consent Form, which will enable SLCs to share the contact details of student representatives with the Guild of Students.

(v) Sub-section 6.5.1 (a) to read as follows

6.5.1 (a) ...Within the context of its legitimate discussions, the committee must *not* engage in the *unduly personal* discussion of:

Individual staff members
Individual students

The committee must not discuss:

Personal complaints/grievances

(vi) That guidance should be provided for Staff Liaison Contacts on how to proceed should the above topics be raised within Staff Student Committees.

(vii) That sections 4.3 and 4.4 be amended to highlight the fact that separate undergraduate and postgraduate Staff Student Committees can be established (where appropriate).

Noted:

That the changes proposed to the reporting structure and Figure 1 were subject to change as a result of discussions between the PVC (Education) and Academic and Student Administration. That any changes as a result of these discussions would come forward to a future meeting.

11/14 **Changes to Regulations and Codes of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees**

Received:

A paper proposing multiple changes to the Regulations and Codes of Practice governing Postgraduate Research students (set out below as a – f).

Resolved:

- (i) That CE would liaise with Legal Services over a form of words to refer to Postgraduate Research Students which would allow compliance with the University Statutes and also ensure consistency across the legislation, and include cross reference to the University's agreed umbrella term of postgraduate researchers used to describe all those registered on postgraduate research programmes.
- (a) Amendments to Regulations 7.6.2 and Code of Practice on Higher Doctorates

Resolved:

That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix A be approved.

- (b) Amendments to Regulations 7.5.2, 7.5.3, 7.5.4, 7.5.8 and the addition of 7.5.9 and Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of PhD by Published Work

Resolved:

That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix B be approved, but that a consistent form of words should be used when referring to Published Work.

- (c) Amendments to Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students

Resolved:

- (i) That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix C be approved.
- (ii) That a comment from AJ on the lack of necessity for an independent Chair to be present in all Oral examinations be noted, and submitted to the Graduate School Management Board.
- (d) Amendments to Regulations 7.4.4, 7.4.5 and 7.4.7 and Code of Practice for Assessment of Research Degree Theses

Resolved:

That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix D be approved.

- (e) Amendment to Code of Practice for Split Location Study for Postgraduate Research Students

Resolved:

That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix E be approved.

- (f) Addition of a new Regulation 7.4.8 (d) relating to transfer from a postgraduate taught degree to a postgraduate research degree

Resolved:

That the amendments as set out in APRC 11.05.06 Appendix F be approved.

11/15 **Research Progress and Awards Sub Panel Terms of Reference and Membership***Received:*

The Terms of Reference and Membership for the Research Progress and Awards Sub Panel for 2011/12.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Terms of Reference and Membership be approved.
- (ii) That the memo which is sent to Heads of Colleges inviting them to nominate members for the Sub-Panel includes guidance as to how to ensure the appropriateness of nominees.

11/16 **Amendments to Student Concerns and Complaints Policy***Received:*

A paper proposing amendments to the Student Concerns and Complaints Policy for implementation in 2011/12.

Noted:

- (i) RH noted that the Guild broadly welcomed the amendments, as they provided greater clarity and addressed areas of concern highlighted by the Guild.
- (ii) RH raised concern from the Guild over section A1.10 – A1.15, specifically the decision as to whether a student concern/complaint is unreasonable and/or whether a student's behaviour is unacceptable being taken by the Director of Registry, and that any appeal decision is then managed by the Director of Academic Services. This was felt to be problematic because both the decision and the appeal would be managed by Academic Services. It was noted by CP that this only relates to appeals relating to unreasonable behaviour or an unreasonable complaint, not the appeal on the outcome of the complaint itself. It was further noted that there is no legal requirement for the persons responsible for making the decision and managing appeals to be located in different departments, only that the person responsible for managing the appeal should not have prior connection with the case.
- (iii) RH raised concern with the term "unreasonable" as it was felt that this could be open to interpretation. CP noted that the term as identified in the report of the OIA was "frivolous and vexatious", but that the term "unreasonable" had been used instead as it was felt that this would be easier to understand.

Resolved:

- (i) That a clearer distinction should be made between those complaints which are unreasonable, and those complaints where a student's behaviour is unreasonable.
- (ii) That an addition be made to the Code of Practice clearly setting out the opportunity for students to resubmit if the complaint was rejected on the grounds of unreasonable language/tone.
- (iii) That CP and JL liaise with the Chair and the PVC Education to clarify the person or persons responsible for managing an appeal on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour and/or an unreasonable complaint.
- (iv) That all other changes in the document be approved for implementation in 2011/12.

11/17 **Leave of Absence Working Group***Received:*

A paper proposing the formation of a Code of Practice for Leave of Absence Procedures for implementation in 2011/12.

Noted:

- (i) That this Code of Practice would formalise existing procedure, and allow full compliance with UKBA Tier 4 requirements.
- (ii) That an additional sub-category had been proposed under the “Non-medical” category with the title “Other”, and would encompass any non-medical reason for Leave of Absence that would not be included under the specifically identified sub-categories. Any reason that was categorised as “other” would need to include full details of the nature of the Leave of Absence (e.g. family bereavement, financial hardship, etc), and evidence must be provided.

Resolved:

- (i) That any reference to “a Leave of Absence” be replaced with “Leave of Absence”.
- (ii) That a clear definition of Leave of Absence be provided within the Code of Practice, specifically on how it differs it from “Authorised Absence”.
- (iii) That section 3.4.5 be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

3.4.5 *Any pre-existing University processes, (such as investigations into plagiarism, fitness to practise, misconduct etc) will ~~be suspended~~ normally continue for the duration of any approved Leave of Absence, and will recommence upon the students return to study.*

- (iv) That a clause be inserted into the Code of Practice highlighting the availability of the ARC for the provision of advice to students.

- (v) That section 5.2 be amended as follows:

5.2 *A Leave of Absence on appropriately evidenced medical grounds will generally be automatically authorised, however, this is on the basis that the medical evidence provided is from a UK-registered practising medical Doctor or Consultant. **The University reserves the right to consult the University Medical Officer in cases where there are any concerns over the evidence presented.***

- (vi) That once the above amendments are made, TM to consult with the Chair over approval of the final document.

11/18 **Requests for Exemption**

- (a) Exemption from Regulation 7.3.1 (d) for the Intercolated BMedSc

Received:

A request for exemption from Regulation 7.3.1 (d) for the Intercolated BMedSc in the College of MDS.

Resolved:

That the exemption be approved for as long as the programmes shall run.

- (b) Exemption from the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment for the MBChB

Received:

A request for exemption from the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment 11.13.3 for the MBChB the College of MDS in order to comply with GMC requirements.

Resolved:

That the exemption be approved for as long as the programme shall run.

- (c) Multiple exemptions for a suite of MRes programmes in LES

Received:

A request to regularise a series of programmes within the College of LES that are currently outwith regulations, in order to allow them to be assessed outside of the normal requirements for research masters programmes for the current academic session only.

Resolved:

- (i) That the exemption be approved for 2010/11.
- (ii) That the Secretary liaise with the DoE for LES in July 2011 to ensure compliance for the 2011/12 session onwards.

11/19 **Chair's Action**

Reported:

That Chair's Action was taken between February 2011 and May 2011 to approve the following:

- (a) Foundation Degree in Professional Golf Studies

Action taken to regularise a number of programme requirements/outcomes that are currently outside of Regulations, but have been in effect for a number of years. The recommendations for regularisation were considered as part of a recent collaborative review on the programme, and were fully endorsed by the Chair of the Review, Professor Peter Byers

- (b) PhD Practice Based Research Dramaturgy, PhD Practice Based Research Performance, PhD Practice Based Research Playwriting

Action taken as addendum to the exemption from Regulation 7.2.4 (b) granted at APRC of 03 February 2010 to the PhD in Practice-based research, Dramaturgy, Performance and Playwriting. This exemption now extends to the three separate proposed PhDs in CAL noted above, rather than one composite PhD for which the original exemption was granted.

- (c) PhD Applied Linguistics

Action taken to allow the PhD Applied Linguistics Sandwich and Modular programmes to be exempt from the minimum residency period of full-time research as stated in Code of Practice on Split Location Study for Postgraduate Research Students 7.1 (consultation was conducted via email with full Committee). This was granted with immediate effect.

(d) PGDip Physicians Assistant Studies

Action taken to extend the exemptions granted via Chair's Action in November 2007 for the Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Assistant Studies, in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, relating to Postgraduate Taught regulations 4.3.5(1), 4.3.5(12), 4.3.6(4), 4.3.7(2), 4.3.7(4), 4.3.7(9) and 4.3.8(1). This extension will be in operation until the current cohort completes. The extension to exemption was granted with immediate effect.

(e) Birmingham Business School part time MBA programmes

Action taken to regularise an existing exemption from Regulation 6.1.2 (g), and further extend this exemption to one new programme in the Birmingham Business School. The exemption allows all existing part-time MBA programmes and the proposed new MBA Public Service offered by Birmingham Business School to be permitted to continue utilising a 15-credit module structure indefinitely. The regularisation was with immediate effect.

(f) Minor amendment to Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment

Action taken to approve minor amendments to sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 relating to feedback to students who have failed modules in the main examination period which were previously approved through the U-L&TC and informed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's advisory group. The approval of APRC was requested in order to formalise these changes in order for implementation in the regulations. The changes were with immediate effect.

(g) Amendment to the Code of Practice Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence

Action taken to clarify two areas of potential confusion within the Code of Practice, namely sections 5.1 and 6.1, to include research student-specific terminology to two sections which refer to "Board of Examiners" and "Progress and Awards Board" (to include their research equivalents of Principal Academic Unit Progress Panel and Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, respectively). The changes were with immediate effect.

11/20 **Date of Meetings for the Academic Year 2010/11***Noted:*

That the next meeting of APRC will be held in Arts G37 on Monday 06 June 2011. That the provisional time is set at 11.30 – 1.00, however the Secretary would liaise with Committee members on the possibility of extending the length of the meeting.