

02 February 2012

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

28 November 2011

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

- Members present: Professor J S Bale, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education (in the Chair)
Professor K Dowden, College of Arts and Law
Mr Luke Reynolds, 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
Professor C Thomas, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
- Apologies: Ms C L McCauley, Academic and Student Administration
- In attendance: Ms Nina Morris, Academic and Student Administration (Secretary)
Dr C Twine, Director of Student Support and Development (for item 11/37)
Dr I Evans, Curriculum Development Officer (Shadow 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>.

11/33 **Welcome**

Noted:

The Chair welcomed all existing and new members to the first meeting of the Committee for the 2011/12 academic session.

He introduced and welcomed Professor Chris Thomas, fulfilling the role of representative from Directors of Research and Knowledge Transfer, Directors of Postgraduate Research or other appropriate member of staff as nominated by the Head of College.

He introduced and welcomed Luke Reynolds, Birmingham University Guild of Students' Vice-President (Welfare) for 2011/12.

11/34 **Proposed Terms of Reference and Membership**

Resolved:

That the proposed Terms of Reference (APRC.11.11.01) be approved for 2011/12, with one minor amendment as follows:

- (i) One representative from Directors of Research and Knowledge Transfer, Directors of Postgraduate Research or other appropriate member of staff as nominated by the Head of College: Professor Colin **Chris** Thomas

11/35 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes of 06 June 2011 (APRC.11.11.02) be approved, pending the following change:

11/22 (a) That the Guild had met with the PVC (Education and was satisfied with the proposed amendments relating to the procedure **to be followed if a Student wishes to** for appeal against a decision that **their** a student's behaviour is unacceptable **or that their** concern **or** complaint is unreasonable.

11/36 **Matters arising on the Minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda**

There were no matters arising.

11/37 **New Code of Practice on Personal Tutoring and Academic Feedback**

Received:

A paper from the Director of Student Services, outlining a new Code of Practice on Personal Tutoring and Academic Feedback (APRC.11.11.03)

Noted:

- (a) That this is a newly titled Code of Practice, but derives from the current Code of Practice on Student Development and Support
- (b) That as part of the drafting process, the proposers have sought to identify good systems that are already in place.
- (c) That it is proposed that this Code of Practice be implemented from 2012/13 in order to coincide with the new fee structure, and new student charter

Resolved:

That the following areas be reviewed by the Director of Student Services in conjunction with the University Senior Tutor, and the Chair of APRC:

- (a) Paragraph 2.3.3. There was a concern that this paragraph may be too prescriptive, and It was suggested that this paragraph include a clause to allow Schools to seek an exemption via the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), should they have an alternative system of selecting Personal Tutors which is more appropriate for their School.
- (b) Paragraph 2.3.6. There was a concern that collation of information on all assessments and feedback would be too burdensome for Schools. It was suggested that the wording of this paragraph be revisited to require only "major" or summative forms of assessment. It was though noted that some Schools have been operating this system with no problems.
- (c) Paragraph 2.3.7. Achim Jung suggested that this paragraph contains information that is not necessarily suited for inclusion in a Code of Practice. Ken Dowden stated that this level of detail is appropriate, however it should be noted that it is the University, not Schools who provide >>Progress>>. It was suggested that the wording of this paragraph should be reviewed to ensure that responsibilities are clear around the provision and utilization of these tools.
- (d) Paragraph 3.1. It was suggested that this paragraph is repetitious, and should be reviewed to see whether it is necessary to include this form of words.

- (e) Paragraph 4.4. It was suggested that the paragraph should be amended as follows:

Under 4.3.1, instances of non-compliance with the 20 working day deadline for the provision of feedback on assessment should be referred ~~by~~ to College Directors of Education for action, and reported to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education).

- (f) Paragraph 4.5. It was suggested that the paragraph should be amended as follows:

~~Under 4.4,~~ requests for exemptions to the 20 working day deadline for the provision of feedback on assessment should be submitted, in a timely manner, to the College Director of Education for endorsement and then to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (normally PVC Education) for approval.

- (g) There was a general comment that there is a need to ensure that mechanisms are in place to ensure that the proposed Code of Practice is workable at a School level.

11/38 **New Code of Practice on Placement Learning**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC, outlining a new Code of Practice on Placement Learning (APRC.11.11.04).

Noted:

- (a) That the PVC (Education) is keen to increase placement learning opportunities in Schools.
- (b) That all Schools have identified Placement Learning Co-ordinators who have provided comments on the draft Code of Practice.
- (c) The draft has been circulated to Directors of Education for further consultation
- (d) That it is proposed that this draft go to the APRC of 02 February 2012, but that at this stage, APRC members make any comments that have not already been addressed through the list of previous comments and feedback.

Resolved:

That the following comments be noted for consideration in the next draft:

- (a) Paragraph 1.2 be amended as follows:

The Guidance is intended to provide a template for planning new placement learning opportunities and is designed to be helpful for the management and review of existing placement learning provision. ~~It is designed to ensure that reasonable steps have been taken to protect the health and safety of students on placements, and to protect the reputation of the University of Birmingham.~~

- (b) Paragraph 1.7.3 be amended as follows:

*Intercalated years (optional and mandatory), i.e. programmes onto which students are enrolled whilst still also enrolled on their primary programme of study. Students enrolled on an intercalated programme suspend their registration on their primary programme of study. Any credit achieved on an intercalated year does not count towards the overall mark for the original programme of study, but may result in an additional **separate** qualification), or a suffix to the title of the original programme of study (i.e. BSc Physics with Year in Computer Science). ~~A key exception to this is the MBChB, whereby some students may leave the programme following their intercalated year, and therefore be solely awarded the BMedSc.~~*

- (c) That further consideration be given to whether the placements of less than a year, referred to under paragraph 1.7.4, should be removed from this document. It was noted that there is a further piece of work to be done on guidance for placements of less than a year.
- (d) Paragraph 2.2 (b) should come before 2.2 (a).

- (e) Paragraph 3.3.8 to be reviewed to ensure that a clear distinction is made between placements that are replacing study at Birmingham, and placements that are in addition to study at Birmingham.
- (f) Paragraph 3.4 to be amended as follows, to remove specific reference to pastoral support:

3.4 Placement Management

- .1 The proposal should indicate:
- Academic **and other** support available to students from the placement provider and the University;
 - ~~The pastoral support available to students from the placement provider and the University;~~
 - The name of the Placement Learning Co-ordinator
 - Monitoring and evaluation of academic quality and standards and student support and learning opportunities;
 - Induction and Preparation: see Section 5
 - Health and Safety (including disabled student facilities and access)
 - Insurance requirements
 - Visa and entry requirements for the Country

Academic and Pastoral Support Support available to students on placements

- .2 In most cases, placement students continue to be registered at Birmingham, and therefore have access to student support services available within the University.
- (g) It was suggested that sections 6.4 – 6.6, 7.1 and 7.3 – 7.4 be considered with regard to their status as clauses within a Code of Practice or whether they should comprise a separate guidance note.

11/39 Amendments to Regulations pertaining to Required Components

Received:

A paper from Professor Nick Ross relating to a clause on the inclusion of non-module required components in the Regulations for 2012/13 (APRC.11.11.05).

Resolved:

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

6.1.2 (m)

~~All requirements for an Award of the University will normally bear credit. Where exceptions are necessary (e.g. for reasons of professional accreditation) they must be specifically approved by the Senate or under delegated authority.~~

The main content of programmes at the University will be in the form of credit bearing modules. Where additional cross-modular or extra-modular requirements for progress are considered appropriate by a programme team, approval should be sought through the School and College as for modules

- (b) That any such module which Schools wish to implement must be approved via their College Programme Approval and Review Committee (or equivalent) and reported to the University Programme Approval and Review Committee.

11/40 **Amendments to Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice**

Received:

A paper from Professor Cillian Ryan relating to amendments to the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice for implementation in 2011/12 (APRC.11.11.06).

Resolved:

- (a) That the following proposed amendments to the Regulations 6.1.1 be approved with immediate effect (additions underlined):

6.1 .1 *For students on taught programmes of study, or students on research-based programmes of study, where the cheating or plagiarism takes place on a taught module taken as part of that programme:*

- (a) *the examination or assessment mark obtained to stand; or*
- (b) *the mark obtained in the examination or the assessment may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (to reflect the actual contribution of the student), including an award of zero. Should this lead to failure of the module, a further attempt at passing the module shall be permitted, with the overall module mark awarded capped at the pass mark. Any such further attempt shall be taken:*
- (i) *at the next available opportunity; or*
- (ii) *at a time specified by the Committee;*

(where the offence occurs in a supplementary exam the mark from the original assessment shall not stand)

or

- (c) *the mark obtained in the examination or the assessment may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (to reflect the actual contribution of the student), including an award of zero. Should this lead to failure of the module, no further attempts at passing the module shall be permitted **(where the offence occurs in a supplementary exam the mark from the original assessment shall not stand)**; or*
- (d) *the mark obtained in the module to be set at zero with no opportunity of re-assessment permitted **(where the offence occurs in a supplementary exam the mark from the original assessment shall not stand)**;*

- (b) That the following proposed amendments to the Regulations 6.1.1 be approved with immediate effect (additions underlined):

6.2

6.2 .1 **accept an undertaking from the student as to his/her behaviour or to engage with appropriate student support and/or remedial tuition.**

11/41 **Amendments to legislation pertaining to Undergraduate Masters**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC relating to a series of changes to University legislation pertaining to Undergraduate Masters degrees (APRC.11.11.07).

Resolved:

- (a) That the following proposed amendments to the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Undergraduate Masters Degrees be approved (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

1.1.1 All registered students on Undergraduate Masters programmes should normally be assessed under the standard University Academic Regulations. Adjusted Regulations should be applied if, and only if:

- ~~a. the registered student has 200 or more Stage 3 credits, but less than 100 credits at Level M; or
b. the registered student has less than 200 Stage 3 credits; and
c. the School has approval from Senate or delegated authority for the use of Adjusted Regulations.~~

a. the School has approval from Senate or delegated authority for the use of Adjusted Regulations; AND

b. (i) the registered student has 200 or more Stage 3 credits, but less than 100 credits at Level M; OR

(ii) the registered student has less than 200 Stage 3 credits.

- 3.2 *This methodology is applied if a registered student has less than 200 Stage 3 credits, **and a minimum of 70 credits at Level M AND a minimum of 70 credits at Level H,** and the School has approval from Senate or delegated authority for the use of Adjusted Regulations, then:*

.1 The weighted average is calculated, and

.2 The maximum available degree classification to be awarded is determined from the table below. (N.B. profiling does not apply.)

Weighted average	<u>Total Stage 3 credits</u>		
	180 - 190	160 - 170	140 - 150
70 or above	Class II (ii)	Class III	Pass
60 - 69	Class II (ii)	Class III	Pass
50 - 59	Class II (ii)	Class III	Pass
40 - 49	Class III	Class III	Pass
35 - 39	Pass	Pass	Pass
34 or below	*	*	*

** Lower alternative qualifications may apply according to the number of credits achieved against Levels C, I and H. This may include award of a Bachelors Degree if criteria in Appendix C of the Undergraduate Assessment Protocols are met.*

- (b) That the following proposed amendments to Regulations 7.3.1 (e) be approved (additions underlined):

7.3.1 (e) Bachelor's Degree for Registered Students on Undergraduate Masters Programmes

*On the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, a Registered Student on an undergraduate masters programme who cannot, or who fails to, satisfy the requirements for the Award of undergraduate master, may be awarded a bachelor's degree if the requirements specified for that corresponding programme and Award have been met. **There should be provision for an alternative bachelor's degree on all Undergraduate Masters programmes.***

- (c) That the following proposed amendments to the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment be approved (additions underlined):

11.13.7 Scaling of marks within a single assessment (for example, when an assessment is available at more than one level) is not permitted. The marks should not be scaled depending on the level, and should reflect the "actual" mark achieved in the assessment.

- (d) That the Secretary prepare a briefing for APRC on the background to the weighting methodology in the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Undergraduate Masters degrees

11/42 **Amendments to Regulations pertaining to Professional Doctorates**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC requesting approval in principle to add the award of Doctor of Agriculture and Food (DAgriFood) to the list of awards included under the banner of Professional Doctorate (Regulation 6.1.3 (a) (viii)) (APRC.11.11.08).

Resolved:

That the proposed amendment be approved in principle.

Noted:

That the DAgriFood still requires approval at the University Programme Approval and Review Committee.

11/43 **Amendment to the Regulations regarding failure in a module where student has previously gained credit**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC proposing an amendment to the Regulations pertaining to failure in a module that has been retaken but in which the student has already gained credit (APRC.11.11.09).

Resolved:

- (a) That the proposed amendment be rejected
- (b) That the Secretary feed back to the Student Records team the reason for this decision, and note that the Committee are of the view that if a Student accepts that they are to take a module as a first sit, for which they have already gained credit, they must also accept the consequences of this decision and the implications of subsequent failure on such an attempt.

11/44 **Amendment to the Regulations regarding failure in a module due to a failure in an internal hurdle**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC proposing a clarification within the Regulations for 2011/12 (APRC.11.11.10).

Resolved:

That the following proposed amendments to the Regulations be approved with immediate effect (additions underlined):

7.2.6 (b) Where a student fails a module due to the failure of an internal hurdle, the mark shall be capped at 1 mark below the pass mark for that module. If the student passes the module at resit stage, the mark will be capped at the pass mark, as per 7.2.6 (i)

11/45 **Progress and Awards Board Terms of Reference**

Received:

The Terms of Reference and Membership for the Progress and Awards Board (APRC.11.11.11).

Resolved:

That the Terms of Reference and Membership be approved.

11/46 **Request for Exemption for Students on one-year MPhil programmes**

Received:

A paper from the Secretary to APRC requesting exemption for students on one-year MPhil Programmes in 2012/13 (APRC.11.11.12).

Resolved:

That the exemption request be approved.

11/47 **Chair's Actions**

Received:

A paper reporting all Chairs Action taken between June and November 2011 (APRC.11.11.13)

11/48 **Date of Meetings for the Academic Year 2011/12**

Noted:

- (a) That the next meeting will be held in The Beale Room (Committee Room 1), G32, Aston Webb: 02 February 2012, 10.30 – 12.30
- (b) That, depending on business, an extraordinary meeting may need to be convened sooner. The Secretary will liaise with committee members regarding dates if this is the case.