

2 April 2012

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

2 February 2012

CONFIRMED MINUTES

- Members present: Professor J S Bale, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education (in the Chair)
Professor K Dowden, Head of School, Archaeology and Antiquity, College of Arts and Law
Mr Edd Bauer, Vice-President (Education), Guild of Students
Professor A Jung, Head of School, Computer Science, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Ms C L McCauley, Assistant Director of Registry (Policy), Registry
Ms C M Pike, Director, Legal Services
Professor N M Ross, Head of Academic Innovations, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Professor C Thomas, Director of Graduate Research, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
- Apologies: Professor C Ryan, Director of Education, College of Social Sciences
- In attendance: Ms Nina Morris, Registry, (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>.

12/01 **Minutes**

Received:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2012 (APRC.12.02.01.)

Resolved:

- (i) That Minute 11/37 (and therefore the Code of Practice on Personal Tutoring and Academic Feedback) be amended as follows (received by electronic comments from Professor Ryan ahead of the meeting):
- 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 (~~normally~~ Education).*
- (ii) That the Secretary liaise with the Chair regarding minute 11/43 in order to ensure that the Regulations reflect the decision made by the Committee at the November 2011 meeting.

12/02 **Matters arising on the Minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda**

(a) APCR Constitution

Noted:

That the Chair raised the matter of how the Committee should function when a member was unable to attend. It was acknowledged that it would be unfair to ask a proxy to attend on behalf of an absent committee member, as APCR matters can span more than one committee and often require full contextual knowledge.

Resolved:

That, where a member was unable to attend a Committee, they should provide comments in advance. Should members have substantive comments, they may request that the matter be deferred to a later meeting but the decision on this would be at the discretion of the Chair.

(b) Background to Adjusted Regulations

Received:

A brief oral report from the Secretary on the background to the Adjusted Regulations.

(c) Methodology of Adjusted Regulations

Received:

A query regarding the methodology used in the adjusted regulations (referred to in minute 11/41), specifically pertaining to the definition of "weighted average"

Resolved:

That the Secretary check the definition of "weighted average" in the legislation of the University and confirm that the methodology used in the two Codes of Practice on Adjusted Regulations was in line with this definition. If it was not, further clarification within the Codes of Practice may be required.

12/03 **New Code of Practice on Placement Learning**

Received:

A Code of Practice on Placement Learning for implementation in 2012/13 (APRC 12.02.02).

Noted:

- (i) That the Secretary and the Assistant Director of Registry (Policy) review the Code of Practice with reference to the following amendments:
 - (a) That where specific individuals are named within the document, this be replaced instead with their role within the University.
 - (b) That a clause be inserted into the Code of Practice to clarify the status of the Code where students are on Leave of Absence
 - (c) That section 1.2 be amended as follows (additions underlined and emboldened, deletions struck through: "*The Code of Practice is intended to provide a **the** template for planning new placement learning...*"
 - (d) That 3.5.2 be reviewed in order to see whether it is necessary to include in the document. If it is considered that its inclusion is unnecessary, that reference to the responsibilities of the Head of School be inserted at an appropriate place within the document.
 - (e) That 3.5.11 be moved forward in the document in order to highlight that there was a reduction in the level to which Schools need to check Health and Safety requirements, providing that they are satisfied that adequate assessments had been carried out by (for example) International Relations at the point at which the placement was established.
 - (f) That section 3.5 (Health and Safety) be reviewed with a view to reducing the length and detail. The revisions should ensure that this section simply contained the principles which

must be followed, while the appendices should provide additional information.

- (g) That 3.5.3 be amended to refer to "the Risk Assessment form" rather than "a sample Risk Assessment form"
- (h) That the Risk Assessment form be amended as follows:
 - The column headings, which are currently entitled "Action necessary?" and "Action completed?", be re-titled "Record of necessary actions?" and "Date of completed actions" accordingly.
 - That additional rows be added to the form in order to allow Schools to add additional Risk Assessment actions which pertain specifically to their programme of study (where appropriate).
- (ii) That the broad principles expressed within the Code of Practice should be applied to placements of less than a year. That in the case of certain placements, for example a student elective in the College of MDS, the authoritative body with responsibility for approving the placement would need to satisfy themselves that an appropriate and proportionate amount of work had been done in order to address Health and Safety issues. It is acknowledged that the nature of the individual placement and the risk assessment consequent upon the placement mean that the Health and Safety requirements were scalable.

Resolved:

- (i) That Professor Ross would send the Director of Legal Services a copy of the health and safety paperwork that is required to be completed for the student elective within MDS.
- (ii) That once the above amendments had been made, the final draft of the Code of Practice be approved by Chair's Action for implementation in 2012/13.

12/04 **Request for amendment to University Legislation pertaining to Dual Degrees**

Received:

A paper setting out a proposal to amend the University's legislation pertaining to Dual Degrees (APRC 12.02.03).

Noted:

That this paper was for information only, as the principle of Dual Degrees had already been agreed by the University Education Committee, and the operational issues were due to be finalised by the Collaborative Provision Committee. The Committee were invited to receive the proposed amendments, and to note that, depending on the outcome of the Collaborative Provision Committee discussions, the paper would either come back to a future meeting, or be approved by Chair's Action.

12/05 **Request for amendment to the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committees**

Received:

A paper setting out a proposal to amend the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committees where a student had cheated in a supplementary examination (APRC.12.02.04).

Noted:

That the proposal within the paper arose from a recent amendment that had been approved at the November meeting of APRC.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Secretary review the wording of the amendment in context with the other sanctions available to a Misconduct Committee to ensure that the basic principle was communicated clearly.
- (ii) That consideration also be given to a situation in which a student cheats in an assessment

which takes place in the final year of an undergraduate degree (which also do not have an opportunity for reassessment).

12/06 **Time Limited Exemptions**

Received:

- (i) A request for a permanent extension to the time-limited exemption granted to the PhD with Integrated Study in Physical Science of Imaging in the Biomedical Sciences (PSIBS) (APRC.12.02.05).
- (ii) A request for a permanent extension to the time-limited exemption granted to the MRes Biomedical Research (APRC.12.02.06).

Resolved:

That both exemptions be approved on a permanent basis.

12/07 **Request for exemption for a suite of MSc Programmes in Communications, Electronics and Computing (CEC)**

Received:

A paper from CEC which requested exemption with immediate effect for a suite of programmes in CEC. The exemption pertained to the number of resits allowed for the 60 credit project, and an addition to the programme requirements (APRC.12.02.07).

Resolved:

That this exemption be granted with immediate effect.

12/08 **Request for exemption for PhD in Creative Writing**

Received:

A request in principle for an exemption to the regulations pertaining to the thesis word limit for the proposed PhD in Creative Writing, due to be submitted to the University Programme Approval Review Committee on 3 February 2012 (APRC.12.02.08).

Resolved:

That this request be approved, with the following minor amendment:

That instead, The PhD submission will usually entail:

- (a) *For prose: a creative document (50 – 80%) of either long-form prose/novel, or a collection of short-form prose/stories supported by a critical paper (20–50%) of a similar length to a critical literary PhD submission (~~around~~ **between** 80,000 to 100,000 words)*

12/09 **Chair's Actions**

Received:

A paper reporting Chairs Action taken between November 2011 and February 2012 (APRC.12.02.09).

12/10 **Date of Meetings for the Academic Year 2011/12**

Noted:

That the next meeting would be held in The Nuffield Building (Room G07) on Monday 2 April 2012 at 2.00pm