

01 June 2012

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

17 May 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
Professor A Jung, Head of School, Computer Science, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Ms C M Pike, Director, Legal Services
Mr Luke Reynolds Vice-President (Welfare), Guild of Students
Professor N M Ross, Head of Academic Innovations, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Professor C Ryan, Director of Education, College of Social Sciences
Professor C Thomas, Director of Graduate Research, College of Life and Environmental Sciences
- Apologies: Ms C L McCauley, Assistant Director of Registry (Policy), Registry
- In attendance: Ms Nina Morris, Registry, (Secretary)
Ms Debbie Warren, Legal Services (to deputise for Carolyn Pike, and also for item 12/28)
Mrs Tam Milner, Assistant Director, Registry (Operations) (for item 12/22)
Dr Catherine Mills, University Graduate School Manager (for item 12/23)
Mrs Laura Radbourne, Academic Quality Officer (for item 12/27)
Charlotte Powell, Learning Spaces (for item 12/29)
Professor D Lee, Senior Tutor (for item 12/30)
- 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>.

12/20 **Minutes**

Received:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2012 (APRC.12.05.01).

Resolved:

That the minutes be approved, pending the following change to minute 12/12 (addition underlined, deletion struck through):

*Credit weighted mean mark (hereafter referred to as the weighted mean mark) of a set of modules means the sum of the products of the marks attained in each module and the credit values of the module, divided by the sum total of the credit values of the modules ~~attempted~~ **required**.*

12/21 **Comment by Chair**

The Chair noted that due to the availability of speakers to speak to the papers, the agenda would follow a different order to the version previously circulated.

12/22 **Matters arising on the Minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda**

(a) **Marks for recording on the Student Transcript**

Received:

An oral report from the Secretary pertaining to the implementation of the policy agreed in November APRC (minute 11/43 refers), and referred to in April APRC (minute 12/12 (b) refers) pertaining to the procedure to be followed where a student is permitted to retake a module for which they have already gained credit, with specific reference to the information that is displayed on the student transcript.

Noted:

That in such a situation, the Committee had already decided that where 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, and the credit gained in an earlier attempt is “wiped clean”. Therefore any information regarding the previous attempt or the mark gained should not display on the student transcript.

(b) **Code of Practice on External Examiners**

Received:

An oral report from the Chair pertaining to the Code of Practice on External Examiners which had been submitted to April APRC (minute 12/13 refers).

Noted:

That the changes suggested by the Committee had been incorporated into the document and had been subsequently been approved by Professor Karen O'Brien, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education). It was also noted that a tidying up exercise would need to follow, in order to replace reference to the current title of the Code of Practice with the new title throughout Regulations.

(c) **Professional Doctorate in Forensic and Clinical Psychology**

Noted:

That the new Professional Doctorate in Forensic and Clinical Psychology would be subject to Fitness to Practise regulations.

12/23 **Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence**

Received:

A paper from Tam Milner, Assistant Director, Registry, pertaining to amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence (APRC.12.05.05)

Noted:

- (a) That these changes were in response to increased requirements from the UK Border Agency (UKBA).
- (b) That although the number of contact points required to be missed in order to “trigger” an investigation into a non-EEA registered student’s non-attendance had been reduced to 2, this trigger would prompt an investigation at a local level initially, followed by escalation to Registry if the student continued to fail to engage with their studies. UKBA would be notified once a student had been taken through the Reasonable Diligence process and had been withdrawn from the University.

Resolved:

- (a) That the following amendment be made to the Code of Practice (amendments underlined):
 - (i) 2.1.4 (c): *where a Registered Student has been absent without authorisation from their School for more than 20 University working days, as counted from the first day of absence, and no response has been received to at least two attempts to contact the Registered Student, (one of which must be the initial stage of the Reasonable Diligence procedure, as per Section 4 below), the School should then invoke formal withdrawal proceedings as per Section 5 below.*
 - (ii) 2.1.4 (d): *Following a Student’s permanent withdrawal from their programme of study or research the Registry will write to one or all of the following as appropriate to notify them of the Registered Student’s change in status:*
 - *The Registered Student’s local education authority*
 - *The Student Loan Company*
 - *The Registered Student’s funding council (in the case of postgraduate research students)*
 - *The UK Border Agency (in the case of non-EEA students)*
 - (iii) 4.2.1 (d): *Where a Registered Student does not appear to be showing reasonable diligence towards their programme of study or research, the School should write to the Registered Student at all addresses recorded for the student in Banner to request that they attend an interview with their personal tutor, research supervisor or another academic member of staff determined by the School, in order to discuss and/or review the options available to retrieve the situation. For example, submitting Extenuating Circumstances or applying for Leave of Absence. Where a Registered Student has decided that they wish to withdraw from their programme of study or research, either temporarily or permanently, they are required to complete the relevant forms and return them to the Registry.*
- (b) That following these amendments, the Code of Practice be approved for implementation in 2012/13

12/24 **Legislation pertaining to Postgraduate Researchers**

Received:

A set of documentation prepared by Professor Brian Ford Lloyd (Director, Graduate School) and Dr. Catherine Mills (University Graduate School Manager) pertaining to changes to legislation in response to the Woolf Report (APRC.12.05.08)

Noted:

That the Graduate School had circulated a list of response to queries and comments raised by APRC on the documentation.

Resolved:

- (a) That Dr Catherine Mills and Professor Brian Ford Lloyd consider the following amendments raised by the Committee:
 - (i) In the Code of Practice on Admission of Students, consideration be given to whether a definition of what constitutes a “formal interview” is required;
 - (ii) In the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers, consideration be given to whether the section on Assessment should be removed, as it duplicates information in the Code of Practice on Assessment of Research Degree Theses;
 - (iii) In the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers section 3.5, cross reference should be made to section 4.1.1 of the Code of Practice on Assessment of Research Degree Theses, which sets out the requirements for avoidance of a conflict of interest of the internal examiner.
 - (iv) In the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers, section 5.2.1 should be amended to remove the direct reference to section 2.8 of the Code of Practice on Plagiarism, but that the actual wording remain;
 - (v) In the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers, that section 5.2.9 contained a typographical error and should refer to 2.21, rather than 2.20;
- (b) That in addition to the above comments, the relevant legislation would be amended as agreed by the University Graduate School, following the receipt of the list of comments received from APRC.
- (c) That following these amendments, the finalised documents be sent to Professor Jeff Bale for approval via Chair’s Action.

12/25 **Code of Practice on Distance Learning**

Received:

A paper proposing a new Code of Practice on Distance Learning (APRC.12.05.02)

Noted:

That the University is keen to increase opportunity for distance learning provision, and had recently approved a pilot distance learning PhD in CAL. That a working group composed of staff with direct experience of distance learning provision across the University had met three times to consider the draft document prior to submission to APRC.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Guild of Students be added to the list of people to be notified when a student is permitted to take a distance learning mode of study;
- (b) That the following amendments to the Code of Practice be made (additions underlined, deletions struck through):
 - (i) The numbering of section 5.2 be amended.
 - (ii) Annex 1, 4.7.3 *the suitability of the chosen residency location for research must be demonstrated. Applicants will be required to ~~evince, and provide evidence,~~ demonstrate that they will be able to carry out their research where they are living. For example, they will need to demonstrate, and provide confirmation, that they will be able to access appropriate archives, data collections, and other relevant material;*
- (c) That Professor Jeff Bale liaise with Gillian Davies, Curriculum Development Unit Manager, to confirm whether section 5.1.2 applies only to Postgraduate Research Programmes
- (d) That following these changes, the Code of Practice pass into legislation for 2012/13.

12/26 **Code of Practice on the Assessment of Taught Programmes and Modules**

Received:

A paper from Sarah Letters, Academic Quality Unit Manager, pertaining to amendments to the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Taught Programmes and Modules in respect of moderation (APRC.12.05.03)

Resolved:

- (a) That the following amendments be made to the Code of Practice:
 - (i) Under the new section on Moderation, a typographical error corrected as follows (addition underlined):
*Where **double-marking** has been carried out:
 The marker and second marker / moderator/s should discuss the reasons for the marks they have awarded, and agree that the confirmed marks will be:*
 - (a) the full set of marks awarded by the first marker;*
 - (b) the full set of marks awarded by the second marker; or*
 - (c) an agreed set of alternative marks (e.g. the average or a weighted average of the two marks).*
 - (ii) Section 10.3 be revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions struck through):
10.3 Marking Practices
Principle academic units should ensure that:
 10.3.1 ~~Principal academic units should ensure that~~ All written examinations that contribute to the final award are marked anonymously, with anonymity extending to the second marker stage and to the stage at which the scripts are considered by the external examiner.
 10.3.2 Where possible, anonymous marking of assessed work ~~should be~~ is undertaken for course work, with the exception of practical assessments and projects.
 10.3.3 ~~Principal academic units should ensure that~~ A technical check of assessment marks is carried out (i.e., to ensure that simple arithmetic errors or omissions have not been made).
 10.3.4 Moderation of marks and subsequent Provisions regarding moderation, adjustment and scaling of marks are carried out according to best academic practice as set out in the appendix to this Code of Practice.
 (iii) Section 10.3.7 be revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions struck through)

through):

10.3 7: Average marks for use with the Distribution of Module Class (DMC) Scheme

should remain corrected to one decimal point. (Thus, for example 37.9, 47.9, ~~57.9~~ 56.9 and ~~65.9~~ 66.9 are insufficient average mean marks to allow a student to be considered for the Distribution of Module Class Scheme).

- (b) That Professor Jeff Bale liaise with Sarah Letters to confirm the following:
 - (i) If a module is assessed by a single examination, but which contains multiple essay questions, that this should not be considered under the method of non-blind double marking, and that it is the individual essay questions that should be considered under the method of single marking plus non-blind sampling, rather than the assessment as a whole.

12/27 **Student Representation System Policy**

Received:

A paper from Laura Radbourne, Academic Quality Officer regarding a series of minor amendments to the Student Representation System Policy, in light of recent structural changes, and in response to comments received by key stakeholders (APRC.12.05.04)

Resolved:

- (a) That Laura Radbourne feed back to the Guild of Students a comment received from the Committee as to whether Student Representative elections could be held at the same time as Guild Sabbatical Officer elections.
- (b) That Laura Radbourne revisit the wording of Annex 1 regarding the College-level committees to ensure that it is sufficiently clear that this includes any PGR committee with the appropriate responsibility to deal with student representation issues.
- (c) That pending the change at point (b) above, the changes to the Policy be approved for implementation in the Academic Session 2012/13.

12/28 **Code of Practice on Discipline in Residences**

Received:

A paper from Student Conduct and Appeals proposing amendments to the Code of Practice on Discipline in Residences in order to bring the legislation into line with Regulation 8, which pertains to Student Conduct (APRC.12.05.06).

Resolved:

- (a) That Section 1.2 be amended as follows (additions underlined):

1.2 This Code of Practice sets out the procedure for handling alleged misconduct by Students which occurs within University Residences
- (b) That the Code of Practice be reviewed to ensure that it uses the same terminology as the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committees, particularly with regards to the student Friend, and the general principles of alleged misconduct.

Noted:

That some of the penalties to be imposed may have to be reviewed in light of the regulatory changes pertaining to the British Foundation Academy, and may return to a future APRC.

12/29 **Timetabling and Teaching Space Policy**

Received:

A paper from Carmel Clifford proposing amendments to the Timetabling and Teaching Space Policy, substantively to reflect changes to the timetabling system (APRC.12.05.07)

Resolved:

- (a) That the Policy be approved for 2012/13.
- (b) That the following points be fed back to the Implementation Team for consideration in future revisions of the Policy:
 - (i) That the Committee felt that induction events are core University business and should not be considered as a lesser priority than teaching room requirements
 - (ii) That a requirement should be included to ensure that requests for changes to space allocations (under 5.6) should be approved by a person of appropriate seniority within the School (such as the Head of School).

12/30 **Student Charter**

Received:

A number of revisions to the Student Charter. These revisions are as a result of a Task and Finish Group, and set out guiding principles for the responsibilities of the University, the Guild, and Students (APRC.12.05.09)

Resolved:

That the Student Charter be approved for 2012/13, pending the following changes being made (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

- (a) As a statement of mutual expectations and aspirations, the Student Charter provides a framework that allows ~~all students to create~~ the creation of an environment in which enquiry, research, learning and personal development can flourish.
- (b) Represent the University as responsible ambassadors through their good conduct on and off campus and ensure their actions have a positive impact on the University and the local and wider community.
- (c) The University has a responsibility to ensure all students ~~can~~:
 - Can learn within a framework that facilitates their active learning and helps them achieve the outcomes of their programme of study.
 - Can make use of appropriate learning resources and support so that they can take responsibility for their own learning, and improve their knowledge, understanding, career development, skills and competencies.
 - Will expect to have a personal tutor/supervisor, who will provide regular opportunities to discuss academic assessment, progress and personal development.
 - Can receive effective and timely feedback on their academic work.
 - Can enjoy a safe place on campus in which to work, live and study and which considers the impact of its activities on the environment and on the local community.
 - Can access professional welfare services which are designed to support all students.

- Can benefit from a range of sport and recreational opportunities on campus to improve their overall wellbeing.
 - Can obtain clear information on University fees and have access to advice and guidance about student loans, hardship funds and other student funding.
 - Can express and debate their views freely within the law.
 - Can participate in the Student Representation System.
 - Can obtain information on professional and regulatory requirements relevant to their programme of study.
- (d) Conduct business in line with ethical practices and strive to ~~continually~~ improve services in an open and transparent manner.

12/31 **Exemption from Regulations for four MSc programmes in the School of Biosciences**

Received:

A request for exemption from Regulations pertaining to four MSc programmes in the School of Biosciences (APRC 12.05.10)

Resolved:

That the request be approved with effect from 2012/13.

12/32 **Paper for discussion on the progression criteria for three MSci programmes in Biosciences**

Received:

A discussion paper on the implementation of an internal hurdle mid-way stage three for three undergraduate masters programmes in School of Biosciences (APRC 12.05.11)

Resolved:

That the request not be approved, as it is within the remit of the School to set the pass mark at the end of stage two higher than 55%. That being the case, it was considered that a mid-stage hurdle would not be necessary.

12/33 **Date of Meetings for the Academic Year 2011/12**

Noted:

- (a) That there would be an extraordinary meeting of APRC in the Law Board Room on Friday 01 June at 9.30am.
- (b) That Professors Ken Dowden and Cillian Ryan would be unable to attend and would provide any comments in advance of the meeting.