

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Academic Policy & Regulations Committee

24 April 2009

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Members present:	Professor S C Shute, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Quality & Students (in the Chair) Professor J Heath, College of Life and Environmental Sciences Mr T Marley, Vice-President (Education and Access), Guild of Students Ms C M Pike, Director of Legal Services Mr N Ross, College of Medical and Dental Sciences
Apologies	Professor K Dowden, College of Arts and Law Ms C L McCauley, Academic and Student Administration Dr C Ryan, College of Social Sciences
In attendance	Mr P A Fantom, Academic and Student Administration (minute secretary) Dr C R Twine, Academic and Student Administration
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 .

09/11 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes (APRC.09.04.01) of the meeting held on 3 February 2009 be approved.

09/12 **Matters arising**

(a) Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel (Minute 09/03 refers)

Noted:

That APRC's proposed amendments were considered by the Progress and Awards Board on 31st March 2009 and that a further report would be made to the next scheduled meeting of APRC on 21st May 2009.

(b) Code of Practice on the Freedom of Speech on Campus (Minute 09/08 refers)

Noted:

That a working group chaired by the Director of Academic Services had been established to review procedures in this area and that a report would be made to APRC in due course, as appropriate.

09/13 **Proposed Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment***Considered:*

The proposed Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment, together with a supporting paper outlining the reason for its creation and replacement of the current two sets of Assessment Protocols for undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules (APRC.09.04.02).

Resolved:

That the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment be approved for introduction in 2009/10, subject to the incorporation of the following amendments (deletions struck through, insertions underlined):

- (i) Clause 3.1.3 to read:

Principal academic units should establish a quoracy for each Board of Examiners. All meetings of Boards of Examiners should have a quoracy (defined at the start of each academic session) in addition to at least one external examiner. Only academic members of staff (including Honorary Lecturers) may be members of a Board of Examiners, with non-academic staff attending to provide administrative support. A minimum would ~~normally~~ be 3 (three) members of academic staff and an external examiner (or a consulting mechanism to the external examiner if he or she is not physically present). The external examiner must be informed of any decisions that affect progress or final results.

- (ii) Clause 3.1.11 to read:

When examining collaborative provision, ~~where possible a common Board of Examiners should be used to ensure close comparability of approach. However, where this is not possible, arrangements that are put in place should take proper account of quality issues. A~~ arrangements for Boards of Examiners should be set out in the Memoranda of Agreement covering programmes.

- (iii) An additional clause, with subsequent clauses re-numbered, to read:

For Postgraduate Research Students undertaking taught modules, the module marks will be assessed by the Board of Examiners and the final award of the qualification is normally determined when the thesis is examined. However, when a Postgraduate Research Student withdraws without submitting their thesis, but has successfully completed taught modules that provide sufficient credits for a lower taught award, this will be considered by the Board of Examiners.

- (iv) Clause 3.2.2 to be deleted and the subsequent clauses re-numbered:

~~*Boards of Examiners may not confirm module marks or make decisions on progression and award for students owing a tuition fee debt to the University.*~~

- (v) Clause 3.2.6 to read:

Where, in multi-department principal academic units, there are departmental level Board of Examiners meetings, the principal academic unit's Board of Examiners ~~or principal academic unit Committee~~ must ratify the assessment processes and take appropriate measures to review and confirm decisions/recommendations as appropriate.

- (vi) Clause 3.2.7 to read:

Where Registered Students have taken modules outside their principal academic unit or department, the Board of Examiners for the 'home' principal academic unit shall be responsible for considering the Registered Student's overall results for the programme and

~~recommendations accordingly. Mitigation arrangements, as set out in the Mitigations Guidance for Students, remain applicable and are considered by the 'home' principal academic unit.~~

(vii) Clause 3.4.2 to read:

~~No University qualification, including those made under collaborative agreements, may be awarded without participation in the assessment process by at least one examiner external to this University, who will be a full member of the relevant principal academic unit or Subject Board of Examiners. As well as attendance of meetings, participation will also include contact by correspondence, email and telephone.~~

(viii) Clause 3.4.3 to read:

~~External examiners, as full members of the relevant principal academic unit (or programme) Board of Examiners, have the right to be present at all examiners' meetings at which significant decisions are to be taken in regard to the programme with which they have been concerned, including the setting of written examination papers and projects and dissertations. They are normally required to be present at any meeting where final awards are determined for the programme(s) in which they have been involved. In cases within Regulations, External Examiners must be informed of any changes to a result, which they have previously agreed.~~

(ix) Clause 3.4.5 to read:

~~If no External Examiner(s) is/are available for a Board of Examiners, the principal academic unit should inform consult them of regarding any decisions made as soon as practicable.~~

(x) Clause 3.5 to read:

Consideration of mitigating or other extraneous factors by Principal Academic Unit Boards of Examiners

(xi) Clause 3.5.1 to read:

~~Mitigations Panels shall be established to consider the possible effects of extraneous circumstances on the qualifications to be awarded to individual candidates. The Mitigations Panels should be University level panels held at principal academic unit level or at College level and their membership and procedures should be consistent with the principles of best practice contained within the University's Guidelines on Mitigations. It shall be the responsibility of the Head of College concerned to ensure that such procedures comply with basic principles of good practice including the need:~~

(xii) Clause 3.5.4 to read:

~~If circumstances occur which seem to require a change to the level of an award determined by the Board of Examiners (e.g. submission of late and unexpected medical evidence), any such change should be approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners on behalf of the Board of Examiners concerned. External examiners must be consulted on all such changes. However, if it is not possible to contact all internal external examiners in the time available, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Examiners to determine whether the change can be made on the basis of whatever consultation has been possible and to report this fact to the University Progress and Awards Board. All such changes should be forwarded to Academic Services as soon as possible, and no later than one month before the beginning of the next academic session.~~

(xiii) Clause 3.5.6 to be deleted and the subsequent clauses re-numbered:

~~Please refer to the Code of Practice on Primary Appeals Procedures for further information on these procedures.~~

(xiv) Clause 3.6.3 to read:

~~For all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, departmental, programme and principal academic unit~~ Examination Boards should consider: Mean, standard deviation and failure/pass rate for each module with corresponding figures for at least 3 and preferably 5 previous years [It is recognised that the historical comparators will need to be built up over time where the history does not exist]. For each cohort mean mark and distribution ~~of~~ across classes (1sts, 2.1's etc.), with historical comparators, there should be:

(xv) Clause 6.2 to read:

~~Registered Students will be entitled to information about their marks know be given their marks~~ for both coursework and examinations as part of their tutorial support. This is within the provisions of the Data Protection Act relating to the release of data. For more information, contact the University Data Protection Officer.

(xvi) Clause 6.3 to read:

Final lists of results, progress decisions and final awards and module marks will be published by the principal academic unit as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which they are determined. In the exceptional circumstances where a recommendation is made 'notwithstanding Regulations' and mitigating circumstances are not involved (see clause 3.2.3 above), the provisional list of results should not indicate the result, but should indicate that a decision is 'pending' the meeting of the University Progress and Awards Board

(xvii) Clause 6.4 to read:

Following the determination of marks by the Boards of Examiners, where Registered Students are continuing (i.e. they are not finalists), principal academic units will inform individual Registered Students of their module marks, which will be available via the Student Portal and, where appropriate, through progress review tutorials. Finalists may be given the marks which they have achieved in final level modules, should they require this information.

(xviii) Clause 6.5 to read:

~~It will be at the discretion of the principal academic unit as to whether or not they will release to Registered Students the marks that they obtain in each assessment (where available) of a module. However,~~ Registered Students should be given timely 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, 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.

(xix) Clause 7.2, which is to be subject to future review, to read:

Principal academic units may, at their discretion, allow Registered Students to view their examination scripts. This right may be applied to whole cohorts of students and not solely to any individual Registered Student. Viewing must take place in a strictly controlled environment with at least two members of academic staff present.

(xx) Clause 8.1.2 to read:

~~All visiting lecturers and postgraduate students involved in assessment should normally undergo a period of training, as appropriate to the duties they are required to perform. This may~~

~~include formal training provided by Academic Practice and Organisational Development for postgraduate students or training provided within principal academic units. In addition, each postgraduate student involved in undergraduate teaching should have a 'mentor', an experienced member of staff who can provide advice and support as necessary. This is in accordance with~~ Assessment arrangements within Principal Academic Units should be made in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Teaching and Academic Support of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students by Postgraduate Teaching Assistants and Undergraduates.

(xxi) Clause 8.3.4, which is to be subject to future review, to read:

All assessment that contributes to a module mark must be moderated, where moderation is defined as some form of independent academic checking in addition to the technical check of marks. Moderation may involve looking at pieces of assessed work (e.g. double marking) or it may involve analysis of marks for the cohort for that assessment. The amount of moderation may vary dependent upon the nature of the assessment, the contribution made to the module mark and the overall contribution of the assessment to the degree classification or to the achievement of the award. It is expected that there will be more rigorous moderation of the later stages of programmes.

(xxii) Clause 9.2.1 to read:

Registered Students should be made aware, in writing, at the beginning of a module, how the module is to be assessed ~~what the assessments for the module are~~, the deadlines, where and to whom assignments should be submitted, and the penalties for late submission (see below).

(xxiii) Clause 9.4.2 to read:

The following are standard University procedures, which should normally be used for the submission of assessed work that will count towards a final programme mark. It may be necessary, in circumstances where there are good academic reasons, to adopt other procedures, for example, where assessed work is to be discussed in class shortly after the deadline. In such cases the Chair of the Board of Examiners ~~relevant Head of College~~ should be notified.

(xxiv) Clause 9.5.1 to read:

It is recommended that, if no extension has been granted, or there is not sufficiently good cause for work being submitted late, then a penalty of 5 marks on the mark actually achieved should be imposed for each day the assignment is late until 0 is reached, for example, a mark of 67 would become 62 marks on day one, 57 marks on day two, and so on. Penalties The days counted should not include weekends, public and University closed days. When setting deadlines, weekends and closed days should be borne in mind to minimise student manipulation of penalties. Principal academic units who wish to adopt a different penalty should liaise with the relevant Head of College. In certain circumstances, for example, where assignments or the content are to be discussed in class shortly after the deadline, other penalties will need to be applied.

(xxv) Clause 9.7.3 to read:

The pass mark for all ~~postgraduate and undergraduate masters~~ Level M modules is normally 50 and the pass mark for ~~undergraduate~~ Level C, I and H modules is normally 40. Pass marks may alter according to specific programme requirements.

(xxvi) Clause 9.8.4 (a) to read:

In the first instance, the relative importance of the event in question should be determined. The member of staff involved (this would usually be the Personal Tutor) should establish this either through internal consultation ~~—UoB Sport would have a good idea about athletics events—~~ or

through direct contact with the organisers or other relevant bodies. As a general rule, events should be national in character as an absolute minimum. Another related keynote would be the level of prestige involved in participation: this should be significant.

(xxvi) Clause 9.8.4 (c) to read:

If the member of staff considers that the application merits further consideration, the matter should be referred either to the Head of Department/principal academic unit or the relevant Programme Director or nominee and (if any examinations are involved) to the relevant Examinations Officer for a joint decision as to whether the application should be granted in full or in part. As part of this process, the Personal Tutor should, in consultation with the student, submit with the application an indication of how missed teaching would be covered through additional study or by other means.

(xxvi) Clause 9.8.4 (d) (ii) to read:

If the examination is subsequently failed, the ~~standard course regulations~~ programme requirements should apply in respect of reassessment. Regulations should apply in respect of progression and, therefore, progression may not be possible.

(xxvii) Clause 10.1.5 to read:

Where a year of study abroad or in industry between stages 2 and 3 is included as a requirement of the programme of study to which a Registered Student has been admitted, ~~it must~~ the achievement of the learning outcomes shall be assessed and used, in a proportion stated in the programme requirements, towards the overall stage 2 contribution to the degree classification.

(xxviii) Clause 10.2.2 to read:

To pass with Distinction, a Registered Student must ~~achieve the first attempt~~ pass all modules taken as part of the programme and achieve the weighted mean marks as stated in Academic Regulation 7.3.2 (b)

(xxxix) An additional clause, with subsequent clauses re-numbered, to read:

For postgraduate research students taking taught modules as part of their research programme, the satisfactory completion and achievement of credit in those modules before being recommended for the award of the qualification for which they are registered.

(xxx) Clause 10.3.1 to read:

Where a Registered Student does not fulfil the requirements for the Postgraduate Diploma or Masters degree; the modules the Registered Student has undertaken may be ~~reassessed~~ reviewed against the module learning outcomes for a Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate to ascertain whether it meets the requirements of these awards. If a Registered Student does not fulfil the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate, the modules may be ~~reassessed~~ reviewed against the learning outcomes for a Graduate Certificate. These provisions will require that learning outcomes and assessment requirements for a related Graduate Diploma and/or Graduate Certificate have been specified in programme specifications and approved by Senate or delegated authority.

(xxxi) Clause 11.1.1 (a) to read:

The starting point of the system is the credit-weighted arithmetic mean mark for each relevant stage of study, averaged with the same mark for other relevant stages of study in a prescribed proportion, and rounded to one decimal point.

(xxxii) Clause 11.1.1 (b) to read:

When the final average falls within a prescribed band below the minimum for achieving a given classification on average alone (the 'borderline'), attention is given to the profile of the relevant marks. (This principle ensures that consideration can only be given to the median when the less successful module outcomes do not fall below an acceptable level.)

(xxxiii) Clause 11.1.1 (d) to read:

Where there is a preponderance, after credit-weighting, of marks in the class above the relevant borderline. (The purpose of the DMC system is to recognise the prevailing character of a candidate's performance on the basis of judgements of the class to which each module outcome belongs. In this way, recognition is given to the fact that a Registered Student may have more weighted module marks, which lie above the degree classification indicated by the arithmetic mean.)

(xxxiv) Clause 11.1.1 (e) to read:

A limited measure of failure to gain credit is allowable subject to achieving additional credits in or above the higher class.

(xxxv) Clause 11.2.1 to read:

In accordance with Regulation 7.3.1 (d), where candidates are eligible for the award of a classified first degree, the class will be determined initially on the basis of the weighted arithmetic mean (to take account of the credit rating of a module) using the weighting between stages:

*70+ = 1st;
60-69 = 2i;
50-59 = 2ii;
40-49 = 3rd.*

(xxxvi) Clause 11.2.2 to read:

For the purposes of determining the degree classification obtained, the mean should be calculated to one decimal place. In determining class on the basis of weighted arithmetic mean, numbers of .5 and above will be rounded up to the nearest integer. For example, 59.5 would become 60, whereas 59.4 would be subject to consideration under the DMC—distribution of module class scheme.

(xxxvii) Clause 11.3.3 to be deleted and the subsequent clauses re-numbered:

~~*Example: So, for instance, in the case of a Modern Languages degree, the second and third year credits are half weighted and the 120 credits in each year are divided by 2 to give 60 units, whereas the final year is triple weighted and the 120 credits are multiplied by 3 to 360 units. A 20 credit module in this programme will therefore count 10 units in years 2 and 3, but 60 units in year 4.*~~

(xxxviii) Clause 11.3.5 (c) to read:

*The candidate has a weighted arithmetic mean in the ranges as follows:
≥ 66.0 and ≤ 69.5 - for consideration for a 1st
≥ 57.0 and ≤ 59.5 - for consideration for a 2i
≥ 48.0 and ≤ 49.5 - for consideration for a 2ii
≥ 38.0 and ≤ 39.5 - for consideration for a 3rd*

(xxxxix) Clause 11.4.1 to read:

As explained above, the Distribution of module classes (DMC) system makes use of the class band in which each module mark falls. The candidate will achieve ~~a higher class~~, one class higher than indicated by the arithmetic mean, if the following conditions are met:

(xxxx) Clause 11.4.3 (a) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range between~~ between 66.00 and 69.45, inclusive should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 240 units in class I, with not less than 80 units in class 2i and they have no fails.

(xxxix) Clause 11.4.3 (b) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark falls ~~between~~ in the following ranges should be awarded a higher class of degree if they meet the following requirements:

(xxxixii) Clause 11.4.3 (b) (i) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range of at least between~~ between 57.00 and less than 59.45 inclusive, should be awarded a 2i class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2i class or above, but have at least 40 units in 1st class.

(xxxixiii) Clause 11.4.3 (b) (ii) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range of at least between~~ between 48.00 and less than 49.45 inclusive, should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2ii class or above, but have at least 40 units in the 2i class or above.

(xxxixiv) An additional clause, with subsequent clauses re-numbered, to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 38.00 and 39.45 inclusive, should be awarded a 3rd class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 3rd class or above, but have at least 40 units in the 2ii class or above.

(xxxixv) Clause 11.4.5 (a) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range of between~~ between 66.00 and 69.45, inclusive, should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 300 units in class I, with not less than 100 units in class 2i and have no fails.

(xxxixvi) Clause 11.4.5 (b) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~between~~ in the following ranges should be awarded a higher class of degree if they meet the following requirements: A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range of at least between~~ between 57.0 and 59.45 less than inclusive, should be awarded a 2i class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2i range, but have at least 50 units in 1st class.

(xxxixvii) Clause 11.4.5 (c) to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies ~~in the range of at least between~~ between 48.0 and less than 49.45, inclusive should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2ii range, but have at least 50 units in the 2i class or above.

(xxxixviii) An additional sub-clause, with subsequent clauses re-numbered, to read:

A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 38.00 and 39.45 inclusive,

should be awarded a 3rd class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 3rd class or above, but have at least 50 units in the 2ii class or above.

(xxxxviii) Clause 12 to read:

AP(E)L Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

(xxxxxix) Clause 12.3 to read:

Progression should be determined as for other students, and AP(E)L modules should be considered as equivalent to other modules. For example, an undergraduate student who received AP(E)L for 20 credits would be required to achieve an additional 80 credits for progression. (Registered Students take 120 credits and need 100 credits to proceed.) An undergraduate Registered Student who received AP(E)L for 40 credits would be required to achieve an additional 60 credits for progression.

09/14 **Dates of meetings for the Academic Year 2008/09**

Noted:

That next meeting would be held in Committee Room 1 (G32, Aston Webb) on Thursday 21 May 2009 at 2.30 pm