

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on

8 JANUARY 2008

Present:

Mr J Anderson	Professor T Middleton
Mr J Cooper	Professor F Morgan (Chair)
Dr P Davies	Ms J Parry
Mr A E Dewberry (Secretary)	Professor N Sammells
Mr A Dyson	Professor G Smith
Mr C Ellicott	Dr A Thomas
Professor R George	Professor D Timms
Dr B Griffin (to agenda item 5)	Professor S Ward
Professor R Mears	

In attendance: Ms K Akerman, Mr J Brady, Mr D Hamilton

Unable to attend: Dr T Hill, Professor F Montgomery

07/09 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Chair welcomed Ms Katie Akerman, the University's new Head of Quality Management

07/10 MINUTES : 6 NOVEMBER 2007

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2007, which had been circulated, were received as a correct record.

07/11 MATTERS ARISING

None.

07/12 RESEARCH DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

Professor D Timms referred to Paper D320 noting the progress of the University's application for research degree awarding powers.

In a letter dated 18 December 2007, QAA had advised the Vice Chancellor that its Committee was unable to make a positive recommendation to the QAA Board and that BSU's application should rest 'in abeyance' for at least 18 months. A copy of the final report had been requested but at this stage no decision on the application had been made.

Professor Timms referred to persistent misrepresentation of the University's research strategy and additional requirements imported by QAA's Advisory Committee over and above the formal Criteria. The University had been recommended to hold further discussions with QAA officers although it was difficult to map out exactly what further action could be taken to support BSU's application.

The Board noted with concern the potential damage to the University's reputation, QAA's use of such words as 'ambivalence' and 'inconsistency' and the draft report's effect on this imminent QAA Institutional Review particularly in relation to support for PhD students.

Following discussion, the Academic Board received Paper D320.

07/13 REVIEW OF MODULAR SCHEME

Professor N Sammells referred to Paper D321 seeking the Academic Board's endorsement of a set of general principles to underpin a review of the modular scheme and to identify its future salient characteristics. The objective was to implement a new modular scheme by September 2009 although several members cautioned that a phased approach would be beneficial.

Professor R Mears, who had chaired the Vice Chancellor's working party, outlined the cost benefits of a complete re-design of every module within the scheme. He also noted that some assumptions made in the design of the original modular scheme in 1992, particularly in relation to Credit Accumulation and Transfer, had not been realised.

Some members expressed concern over the proposals for modules to be delivered in a 'long-thin' format. The Chair invited an alternative proposal to that described in para 3.7 of the report and the following amendment was put to the meeting :

In para 3.7 insert a full stop after the words, "Christmas and Easter vacations" and then add, "Further consideration to be given to the delivery of modules in 'long-thin' format and the deletion of semester one summarative assessment".

Proposed : Mr C Ellicott Seconded : Dr B Griffin

For : 3 Against : 12 Abstentions : 2

The proposed amendment having been lost, the Board considered the recommendations set out in para.4 of the paper.

Following further consideration the Academic Board :

- a) received Paper D321;
- b) endorsed *nem con* the general principles described in para 3.6;
- c) approved (For : 13 Against : 3 Abstention : 1) the salient features of a revised Modular Scheme set out in para. 3.7 including breaks in teaching only at Christmas and Easter, increased contact time for first year students, the withdrawal of semester one summarative assessment and the delivery of modules in a 'long-thin' format, and
- d) noted the Vice Chancellor's intention to establish a small working group to design a revised modular scheme consistent with the principles described in paras 3.6 and 3.7 of the report.

07/14 QAA INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT 2008 : BRIEFING PAPER

Professor D Timms referred to Paper D322 presenting the final 'Briefing Paper' submitted by the University for the forthcoming QAA Institutional Audit. The Board noted that drafts had been considered by the Board and its relevant Committee prior to submission to QAA.

The Vice Chancellor urged the Board to read the document and to let Professor Timms have comments as soon as possible.

Following consideration, the Academic Board received Paper D322.

07/15 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CURRICULUM : WORK-BASED LEARNING AND FOUNDATION DEGREES

Mr D Hamilton referred to Paper D323 informing the Board how the University is advancing its strategic developments in work-based learning and foundation degrees.

Professor R George expressed concern at the apparent lack of consultation with Heads of School. In response Mr Hamilton stressed the critical importance of all schools in the delivery of these initiatives and assured the Board that care would be taken in selecting the pilot study.

Following discussion, the Academic Board received Paper D323.

07/16 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Bath School of Art & Design School Board

The Secretary reported Chair's Action in approving a minor variation to the membership of the BSAD School Board (as a sub committee of the Academic Board) through the appointment of a postgraduate as well as an undergraduate student representative.

07/17 ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

The Academic Board formally received minutes of the following meetings which had been posted on Sharepoint:

BSAD SB	:	17 May 2007
RCS	:	21 June 2007
HD(R)C	:	17 October 2007
D&P SB	:	30 April 2007

The meeting closed at 1025 hrs.

Anthony E Dewberry
Secretary
12 February 2008