

**Board of Studies
21st Meeting**

31 May 2007, Keepers Room, The University of Manchester

Minutes

Present

Dr Nigel Beasley, Mrs Sue Beech, Ms Janet Flexney, Mrs Catherine Lillie (Secretary), Mr Matthew McClelland, Mr Mike Miller, Mr William Mortimer, Dr Ann Morton (in the Chair), Mrs Alison Robinson, Mrs Joyce Tate, Ms Helen Thomas, Mr Bob Westaway

Apologies

Mrs Amanda Ashley, Mrs Terry Bransbury, Ms Marion Cartwright, Mr Simon Eades, Mr Hugh Jones

01.21 Minutes

Confirmed: minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters arising:

- (1) (01.20.4) A proposal on incentives for mentors would be circulated to the Board of Studies for comment, with a decision being taken by Chair's Action
Action: Chair / Programme Leader
- (2) (02.20) Nominations had been invited for a new participant representative to the Board. An election would be held if necessary.
Action: Secretary
- (3) (08.20) No specific proposals for bursaries and sponsorship opportunities had yet been made but the matter is ongoing. A progress report will be tabled at the next meeting.
Action: Liz Bromley

02.21 Terms of reference and membership

Received:

- the terms of reference of the Board
- the current membership of the Board

Noted:

Mr Hugh Jones had reached the end of his period of office as Trainer representative. He will be invited to stand for a second term

Action: Secretary

Resolved:

Mrs Sue Beech will stand for a second term as Director of Postgraduate Study.

03.21 Assessment**(1) Received:**

- an oral report from the last meeting of the Assessment Board
- oral reports from the assessor representatives

Reported:

- (1) The following recommendations had been made to the Open University:
 - (a) Submissions in the first instance (10):
 - Awards: 3
 - Passed major assignment element: 3
 - Referrals (portfolio): 1
 - Referrals (portfolio- CoPS assignment only): 1
 - Referrals (both): 1
 - Referrals (major assignment and CoPS only): 1
 - (b) Resubmissions (3)
 - Awards: 2
 - Fails: 1
- (2) The standard of work submitted had improved slightly overall although some of the same issues were recurring, including:
 - (a) insufficient reading and analysis;
 - (b) poor presentation and lack of proof-reading in some assignments;
 - (c) poor quality of minor assignments and Code of Professional Standards assignments in some cases.
- (3) The following positive feedback had been given:
 - (a) the External Examiner was confident that the criteria and feedback are helping to establish the threshold standards;
 - (b) some participants were tackling knowledge areas outside of their normal 'comfort zone';
 - (c) there was evidence that a wider range of sources was being used.

Resolved:

- (1) Guidance for mentors on supporting the portfolio would be produced.

Action: Programme Leader / Secretary

04.21 Annual Monitoring Report**Received:**

- the response from the OUVS on the Annual Monitoring Report and AUAs response

Reported:

Participants approaching the end of their registration period who had not submitted anything would be contacted a year prior to the end of their registration as well as nearer the time.

Resolved:

- (1) Guidance to mentors would be amended to say that they are required to contact

- the AUA office if they have not heard from their participant when expected
- (2) Data would be sought to enable the sharing of good practice / benchmarking of the programme against similar programmes elsewhere. The External Examiner would be invited to contribute to this process.

Action: Secretary / Programme Leader / Mentor Representative

05.21 Statistical Summary

Received: a statistical summary of recruitment, progression, and retention for March-April 2007.

Noted:

Mentors who do not currently have mentees would be contacted to maintain contact and establish their interest in continuing as a mentor

Resolved:

Future statistical reports would include comparative statistics, particularly for withdrawal rates and data showing participants by institution.

Action: Secretary

06.21 VLE Proposal

Received: a proposal for a VLE for the PGCert

Resolved:

- (1) aspects of the proposal would be introduced incrementally with 3-4 case studies in the first year and themed discussions launched at a later date
- (2) participation rates would be monitored and would inform future planning and content
- (3) the possibility of building participation in online discussions into the portfolio element of assessment would be investigated
- (4) the possibility of guest lectures to stimulate discussion would be explored

Action: Secretary

07.21 Annual Participant and Mentor Monitoring

Received: the Annual Participant and Mentor Monitoring questionnaires

Resolved:

- (1) the forms would be made available online during June with some minor amendments to the questions asked
- (2) the value to the participants of completing the forms would be emphasized.

Action: Secretary

08.21 Programme Revalidation

Received: a draft timetable and plan for the revalidation process

Resolved: the plan and timetable were approved, subject to minor amendments

Action: Secretary / Programme Leader

09.21 Reports from Representatives

Received: a report from –

(1) **Mentor representatives**

Reported:

- (a) Mentors had raised the following issues:
 - (i) some mentors felt there was infrequent communication from their participants and weren't sure what the 'norm' was and how this reflected on them as a mentor
 - (ii) there was some concern over progression and completion rates as mentors did not have the overall picture, so were again concerned on a personal level
 - (iii) some mentors felt that they would benefit from a specific training session on the new programme
- (b) In response to the mentor concerns:
 - (i) a report would be produced for circulation to mentors outlining general trends in progression of participants
 - (ii) refresher sessions on the new programme would be organised, where possible by region

Action: Programme Leader / Secretary

10.21 Programme Management Team

Received: the revised Terms of Reference of the Programme Management Team and an oral update

Approved: the amendment to the Terms of Reference

Reported:

The Programme Management Team were monitoring progress on the programme by looking at regular statistical updates and had also considered documents relating to formative assignments, entry criteria, a process for extensions, the VLE proposal and the revalidation timetable.

11.21 Other Business

Received: the revised admissions criteria

Resolved:

- (1) all non-standard applicants would be asked to provide a 500-750 word statement answering a set question
- (2) standard and non-standard applicants would be asked to provide a professional reference in support of their application

12.21 Dates of next meetings

22nd meeting: 19th September 2007, London

23rd meeting: 31st January 2008, Manchester