

**Board of Studies
22nd Meeting**

19 September 2007, Room 118, Main Building, Aston University

Minutes

Present

Mrs Amanda Ashley, Dr Nigel Beasley, Mr Adam Cresswell, Mrs Catherine Lillie (Secretary), Mr Matthew McClelland, Dr Ann Morton (in the Chair), Mrs Alison Robinson, Mrs Joyce Tate, Mr Bob Westaway

Apologies

Mrs Sue Beech, Mrs Terry Bransbury, Mr Simon Eades, Ms Janet Flexney, Mr Hugh Jones, Mr Mike Miller, Mr William Mortimer, Ms Helen Thomas

01.22 Minutes

Confirmed: minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters arising:

- (1) (02.21) The Training Team would be asked to provide a new representative to the Board
- (2) (03.21) Guidance on the portfolio would be sent to the Programme Management Team for approval before being circulated to mentors and put on the website
- (3) (06.21) Progress on the VLE would be discussed at the next meetings of the Programme Management and Training Teams and reported to the next Board.

Action: Programme Manager

02.22 Terms of reference and membership

Received:

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

Noted:

- (1) Mr Adam Cresswell, the new participant representative for the new cohort was welcomed to the meeting
- (2) Mr Simon Eades will be contacted regarding his membership of the Board.

Action: Programme Manager

Resolved:

The terms of reference will be amended relating to non-attendance at meetings.

Action: Programme Manager

03.22 Statistical Summary

(1) **Received:** a statistical summary of recruitment, progression, and retention.

Noted:

- (1) Although there are similar numbers of participants and mentors, they are not always in the same regions. Not all of the registered mentors are active.
- (2) Targets for 2007-08 recruitment were realistic and looked to be met.
- (3) Withdrawal rates were gradually declining as steps to address lapsing participants have been taken. Withdrawal rates will continue to be monitored.
- (4) There was a good spread of participants at a range of HEIs.

Resolved:

- (1) Mentor applications will be accepted by region to ensure that mentors are appointed a participant as soon as they have received their training. Applications which are not in the required region will be kept on hold, to be offered training when there is a participant in their area.
- (2) Inactive mentors will be contacted to check their availability and interest in continuing as a mentor and offered further training where appropriate.

Action: Programme Manager

04.22 External Examiners Report**Received:**

- The External Examiner's report for 2006-07
- the draft formal response

Reported:

- (1) The External Examiner had noted the feedback from assessors is clearer and the criteria are appropriate.
- (2) Having read the new Programme Handbook the External Examiner was happy with the balance of coverage it contained and felt that it was appropriate to the participants.

Noted:

- (1) The general standard of work is still not very high with many borderline passes. The External Examiner had acknowledged that this may reflect the market the course serves.
- (2) Participants are lacking in critical analysis leaving their work descriptive and too heavily reliant on non-academic texts and in-house material.

Resolved:

The formal response to the External Examiner was approved.

Action: Programme Manager

05.22 Annual Report**Received:**

- the draft Annual Programme Evaluation for 2006-07 for OUVS
- an Action Plan

Noted:

- a response from the Equality Advisory group on disability issues had not been received. This matter would be referred to PDC.

Resolved:

- The PDC would be asked for a response on the lack of disability advice for the next meeting.
- The report was approved and will be sent to PDC for final approval and for the Executive Summary

Action: PDC / Programme Manager

06.22 Annual Participant and Mentor Monitoring

Received: the summary report of the annual participant and mentor questionnaire

Noted:

- (1) the response rate was low and will be reviewed to ensure a better percentage of returns.
- (2) participants may have been discouraged from completing the forms by initial problems with the technology.
- (3) the decision that participants on the older cohorts can't transfer to the new programme was reaffirmed. The changes made for the Programme Handbook were available to participants on the old programme in the form of guidance notes and the other significant changes covered areas such as deadlines and assignment length. Participants wishing to change cohorts would need to withdraw and then re-enrol.

Resolved:

- (1) The Programme Management Team will consider the feedback and provide a summary of outcomes to be published on the website and in *Newslink*.
- (2) The Training Team will consider any issues which need to be addressed in the training.

Action: Programme Management Team / Training Team

07.22 Assessment Extensions Policy

Received: a draft policy for extensions to assessed work

Noted:

- (1) that the introduction of deadlines for the new cohorts necessitated the introduction of a policy of dealing with extension requests and stipulating penalties for late or non-submission
- (2) that the draft had already received comments from the Programme Management Team

Resolved:

- (1) minor amendments to the policy will be made before circulation to the Board for final comment
- (2) the final draft will be approved by Chair's Action

Action: Programme Manager

08.22 Reports from Representatives

Received: a report from –

(1) **BCs representative**

Reported:

- (a) BCs had raised the following issues:
 - (i) one BC had asked how a mentor proceeds when their participant doesn't respond to attempts to make contact
 - (ii) there was a request to consider a diploma or MA to follow from the PgCert
 - (iii) there was a request to provide an undergraduate diploma (60 credits) for staff to begin their development and career pathway in university administration
- (b) In response to the BC concerns:
 - (i) mentors are encouraged to contact the AUA Office who will attempt to make contact with the participant. Guidance on this is provided in the Guide for Mentors.
 - (ii) any further developments to the course provision will be considered after the first revalidation of the new programme in 2009. There are already articulated arrangements in place to upgrade the PgCert.
 - (iii) PDC are currently considering the possible endorsement of three foundation degrees in HE administration and management. The outcomes will be reported to the Board. This feeds into the work being done by AUA as part of the Hefce LGM bid.

(2) **Participants representative (new cohort)**

Reported:

- (a) The feedback was generally positive but participants had raised the following issues:
 - (i) some participants found the PDP difficult and a lot of work to complete. There was some uncertainty on where it fitted with the rest of the programme.
 - (ii) feedback from participants on the knowledge assignments was positive but there were concerns over the availability of texts and that some of the reading lists were out of date.
 - (iii) it was felt that a further study day would be useful
 - (iv) feedback on mentors was positive. There was some concern over the lack of a tutor.
 - (v) time management was difficult for some participants but the deadlines were helping.
- (b) In response to the participant concerns:
 - (i) the training would be enhanced to emphasise the importance of the PDP in driving progress on the programme. The challenges of managing time in order to meet the deadlines would also be re-emphasised.
 - (ii) the Programme Management Team would be asked to look at the skills analyses for the 2008-09 year

- (iii) the reading lists for the new handbook had been expanded and enhanced for 2007-08. The revised lists would be circulated to 2006-07 participants and their mentors
- (iv) a joint cohort day (for PGC37 and 38) would be organised by the end of the year.

Action: Programme Manager / Programme Management Team

09.22 Programme Management Team

Received: an oral update from the Programme Management Team

Reported:

- (1) the PMT are now considering non-standard applications to the programme. The comparative statistics on numbers of applicants would be produced and reviewed later in the year.
- (2) study skills guidance for non-standard entrants would be enhanced
- (3) William Locke had reviewed and updated the programme handbook to make the reading lists more current and accessible and to revise the knowledge section on quality.

10.22 Other Business

Noted:

The Board formally thanked Matthew McClelland for his stunning and invaluable contribution to the PgCert and to the work of the Board.

11.22 Dates of next meetings

23rd meeting: 31st January 2008, Manchester

24th meeting: 29th May 2008, London