Unreserved Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 6 January 2015

Present: Dr Padman (Acting Chair), Dr Bampos, Professor Forsyth, Professor Gelsthorpe, Dr Grounds, Professor Hines, Dr McLarty, and Dr Rath-Spivack, with Dr Maxwell as Secretary and with Mr Bennett, Ms Fage, Ms Gardiner, Ms Green and Ms Watts in attendance.

Apologies: Professor Babinsky, Professor Cardwell, Professor Dixon and Dr Quinn

4250 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2014 were approved.

4251 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4252 Matters for Discussion

4252.1 Code of Practice for research Degrees: Approval of PhD registration Examination

4252.1.1 Human, Social & Political Science (HSPS) (Paper 5295)

The Board noted that Social Anthropology students were required to pass a registration exercise which consisted of three essays, the first year report and an oral examination, prior to registration as a PhD student: the form of the registration exercise was approved subject to confirmation of an appropriate pass mark for the essays.
4252.1.2 **Classics**  
(Papers 5236, 5296)

The Board recalled that, at its meeting on 7 October 2014, it had approved the form of the registration exercise for Classics PhD students, subject to confirmation of the process which would be invoked should a student fail the exercise: the Faculty’s reply had been circulated as paper 5296 and was approved by the Board.

4252.2 **Requests to be exempt from interviewing MAST applicants**  
(Paper 5297)

Although the Board noted that it did not have authority over the admissions process for MAST students, it considered the request to admit such students without interview. There was discussion regarding the high standard of the students and the proportion of fails; however, as it had no formal role in the admission of these students and the case made was strong, the Board approved their admission without interview.

4252.3 **Annual Report of the Hardship Awards**  
(Paper 5298)

Ms Gardiner, Acting Head of Fees & Funding, reminded the Board that it had previously agreed to spend-down the spendable capital of the Lundgren Fund (retaining the permanent capital) and had, therefore, raised the cap on requests to the fund from £1500 to £5000. This had led to £147000 being spent in 2013-14, compared with £59500 in the academical year 2012-13.

The Board noted that the Access to Learning Fund had been withdrawn by HEFCE and that the University had given £135000 to allow continuation of the fund through 2014-15; a request had been submitted for an administered fund to replace the Access to Learning Fund but a decision would not be made until the University-wide funding review had been completed.

There was a wide-ranging discussion, including the sums requested and granted, overlapping applications, the desirability of a single point of access to learning and hardship funds, and the inadvisability of reducing capital.

It was agreed that the cap for the Lundgren Fund should be set at £3000 for the current academical year and that the Board should reconsider whether the funds should be incorporated into a new Access to Learning Fund after the University-wide review had been completed.
4252.4 Minutes of the Graduate Funding Review Working Group
(Paper 5299)

Ms Gardiner reminded the Board that the Group was established to review graduate funding in the light of the need to establish early offers of funding for the very best graduate applicants.

It was reported that the newly introduced Vice Chancellor’s Fund would underwrite the funding for the top 180 students and that recipients would be notified of the funding directly after the award meeting. It was expected that 80 of these awards would be to students later supported by the Gates Trust and Cambridge Trust. It was hoped that the VC Award scheme would reduce the number of students who were lost to other Universities that were able to offer funding more quickly.

The Board agreed to formally establish the Graduate Funding Review Working Group as a sub-committee.

4252.5 Report on the central funding competitions 2014
(Paper 5300)

The Board noted that the Report focussed on UK students and that further reports for other groups of students would follow.

Ms Gardiner reported that the on-line portal had been beneficial to all involved and drew the Board’s attention to the following:

• 92 students met the cut-off date for applications to the Newton Doctoral Awards but only 62 of the applicants were admitted to the University;

• 18 colleges participated in the Newton/College/CHESS MPhil Pilot Scheme in 2013-14. Thirteen colleges had agreed to participate in 2014-15, one had declined and the remainder had yet to reply.

4252.6 Extraordinary meeting

It was agreed that matters would be dealt with by circulation by Professor Gelsthorpe, Dr Grounds, Dr McLarty and Dr Padman on the morning of 30 January 2015.

4252.7 Four-year PhDs
(Paper 5313)

The Board noted that the Ordinance stating that PhD courses were of four-years duration with fees payable for the first nine terms, had resulted in the University being unable to claim the fourth year of the fees available from certain training grants. To address this, the General Board’s Education Committee had agreed that PhDs would either comply with the standard 3-year model or adopt a 1+3 model (MRes or MPhil, plus 3-year PhD) and to permit fees to be collected over four years for certain courses on application to the Board.
The Board approved the required changes to the Ordinances as set out in paper 5313.

4253  Any other Business

4253.1 PGT Bursary Scheme

Ms Gardiner reported that the scheme would make 67 awards which would be matched by funds from HEFCE and the University but decisions regarding selection of applicants had yet to be made.