

# Education, Quality & Standards Committee

Tuesday, 16th May 2023 2:15 pm

8 West 2.34 | Education, Quality & Standards Committee

## Attendees

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### Attended

Ian Blenkarn

Christopher Bonfield

Julian Chaudhuri

Nathalia Gjersoe

Marion Harney

Julia Kildyushova

Ryan Lucas

Jura Neverauskaite

Rachel Sheer

Tim Wakeley

Gregory Noakes

### Did Not Attend

Momna Hejmadi

Jane White

## 281.0 Welcome and Quorum

Purpose -

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**Minute** by Gregory Noakes

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that it was quorate.

## 282.0 Declarations of Interest

Purpose -

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**Minute** by Gregory Noakes

No members had any conflicts of interest to declare in any items of business being discussed on the agenda.

## 283.0 Marking Assessment Boycott

Purpose -

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**Minute** by Gregory Noakes

The Chair explained the purpose of the meeting which was to get the Committee's input into the mitigations paper being prepared for Senate detailing how the University would handle the marking assessment boycott. It was noted that papers had been submitted to Committee members on the day of the meeting because there had been a need to get internal senior management approval first.

The Director of Academic Registry explained that it was anticipated that most of the decision making around assessments would not be impacted by the boycott and would continue as normal. Where possible the University would rely on its normal mitigating processes. It was noted that Senate had previously delegated responsibility to award degrees to faculty boards. The purpose of this paper was to give guiding principles for the Boards to allow them to have some flexibility to adapt while still ensuring they maintain the high academic standards of the institution.

There was no intention to implement a similar approach to that taken during the pandemic as it would be better for all students that there were no doubts about the marks awarded. It was noted that there had been instances within the sector where students had graduated but had questions asked about how reliable their awards were because they hadn't been able to finish all their exams during the pandemic.

It was explained that there were three scenarios envisioned which depended upon how far marking was disrupted. Where marking could not be fully determined, or none had taken place the plan was to give interim-classifications. This would show the mark they had achieved up to the point marking could determine and any change would only be upwards from there. Alongside these interim classifications would go supporting documentation which would clearly explain this so that students could provide this to any potential employers.

For graduation there would be no impact on the experience as awards would be given as normal without reference to any detail so that only the University and the individual Student would know what they had received.

It was questioned what the rationale for interim classification and the Director of Academic Registry explained that the University shouldn't risk giving awards that it might later need to rescind. The interim was intended to help students secure jobs by being able to use it to show clearly what they had already achieved. There was a feeling that employers would be reasonable given that this was a sector wide boycott affecting all graduating students. Academic Registry would be working closely with departments who will be best placed to know where students will move on and what they will need to do this.

A question was asked about how long the boycott would go on for and it was noted that the mandate could in theory be extended. This would make it tricky to predict when the University might be able to provide full marks to students affected by the action. However, it was felt that

the aim should be to get these all returned to students by October at the latest.

It was questioned if the University would continue to provide support services to students if they hadn't received their awards by October. The Director of Education & Student Services explained that this would need to be investigated further before a definitive answer could be given as there was a question of legal liabilities that needed to be considered. They believed that the answer would likely be that yes, the University could support these students.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that students would not be able to appeal interim outcomes, only final outcomes. This would need to be clearly communicated to students as part of the supporting documents that went out with the interim classifications.

It was questioned and confirmed that the Board of Studies would be meeting more frequently, likely monthly during this time.

The Director of Academic Registry gave a brief update on the work that had begun around putting mitigations in place for Postgraduate Students who may be affected by the industrial action. The intention was to come up with something very similar to that proposed above. The other area that was still being looked at was with regards to student progression as there will be a need to find a balance between what is acceptable and what might have a negative impact on the students. It may be a case that this will be for local decision making. There was also the potential that for first year students a blanket pass might be given without issue.

A question was asked around whether thought needs to be given for how all this might affect placement students. It was agreed that this would need to be checked but noted that for this year's students this should not be an issue as any placements would already be agreed.

It was noted that industrial disruption by its nature is intended to be disruptive and as such it will always be impossible to fully mitigate.

### **Decision** by Gregory Noakes

The Committee discussed and agreed that they had no immediate concerns with the current proposal and that they supported it as a well thought out reasonable approach. They were confident the approach would maintain academic standards and quality at the University. The Committee thanked Academic Registry for all the work it had done on this.

### **Action** by Gregory Noakes

EQSC A19

Action Description - Amended report to be emailed out and Committee members to be given a further 24 hours to return any questions/comments to Academic Registry on the report before it goes to Senate.

Action Status - Done | Action Completed Date - 24 May 2023 | Assigned to - Gregory Noakes

# 284.0 Any Other Business

Purpose -

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**Minute** by Gregory Noakes

There was no other business to discuss at this point.