RESEARCH DEGREES PROGRAMMES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 12 noon on Wednesday 13 May 2015 in Founders East 139 (FE139).

MINUTES

Present: Professor R Deem (Chair), Mr M Bazargan, Ms A Borrett, Dr L Christie, Mr A Clarke, Professor M Collinson, Dr R Dietmann, Professor J Harris, Professor P Hogg, Professor B Langford, Ms Y Liu, Ms A Sendall, Professor G Symon

With: Mr M Harries (Secretary), Mrs D Salsbury (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies: Dr S Wright

1. CHAIR’S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies received were also noted. 15/031
   Merlin Harries, Assistant Registrar (Arts and Social Science), was welcomed to his first meeting as new Secretary to the Committee.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
   2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 (M 15/001 - M 15/030) (RDPC/15/09) were confirmed as an accurate record. 15/032
   2.2 Action Points
      Min.15/014: The Student Administration Representative sought clarification on whether the December count figures for RDPC purposes should include all PGR students regardless of what stage they were in, or just students in their writing up year. It was confirmed that the December count figures for RDPC purposes should include all PGR students. The Student Administration Representative would feed this back to Strategic Planning and Change. 15/033
      Min.15/017: This item was discussed at the DoGS Forum and there was nothing further to report to this Committee. 15/034
      Min.15/017: The Academic Registrar confirmed that there is a requirement for departments to report upgrade outcomes to the centre. The Academic Administration Support Manager has been working with departments to ensure this requirement is met, and the Student Administration Representative confirmed that there had been an improvement in reporting upgrade outcomes. 15/035
      Status of remaining action points: For details of actions completed or for further progress on all other outstanding action points, please see Status Column on Action Point schedule at the end of these Minutes. 15/036

3. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
   The Committee received the membership and terms of reference (RDPC/15/10) and noted an amendment to the membership to remove the Faculty Associate Deans 15/037
(Research) whose remit no longer includes research students. The amendment to the membership will go to Academic Board in June for formal approval.

4. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF PGR PROGRAMMES 2013-14**

4.1 The Committee considered the issues raised in the reports of the annual review of PGR programmes for 2013-2014 from the three faculties, and noted examples of good practice identified (RDPC/15/11a,b,c). The Associate Dean (Doctoral School) reported that the annual reviews were conducted by a peer review process whereby departments reviewed each other. Common issues identified across the three faculties included (i) space for PGR students, which has been partly addressed by the establishment of the Doctoral Hub, and (ii) fees and funding, which has been raised at the DoGS Forum with further discussion on Fee Waivers scheduled for the next DoGS Forum meeting.

One of the issues noted for update from the Arts and Social Science 2012-13 annual review concerned communication between Heads of Departments and Directors of Graduate Studies on departmental recruitment targets (reference ARTS/PGR/13/05). The Secretary will contact the Director of Strategic Planning and Change to ascertain what is communicated to Heads of Departments, and then email a paragraph on what the process is to Committee members.

**Action:** The Secretary to contact the Director of Strategic Planning and Change to ascertain how recruitment targets are communicated to Heads of Departments, and then email a paragraph on what the process is to Committee members.

4.2 The Committee considered the following issues identified in the Arts and Social Science 2013-14 PGR annual review report to be raised at the Research Degrees Programmes Committee:

**ARTS/PGR/14/02 Fees and Funding**

The Associate Dean (Doctoral School) reported that some departments had found the process to secure TECHNE funding burdensome. However, the Chair responded that this is the same across all research councils, and the process used to be more onerous when it was run as a national competition. Departments also expressed concern about the unevenness in provision between those students that are funded and those that are not funded. The Chair responded that this was not a new issue, however, the issues raised above may be new to departments in the Arts and Social Science since the introduction of funding through TECHNE.

**ARTS/PGR/14/03 Upgrade Meetings**

The Chair emphasised that an independent member of staff must be on the upgrade panel. A student’s advisor would not be considered independent. This has been clarified in the amended ‘Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students’ and was discussed at the last meeting of the DoGS Forum. It was noted that if a panel member was not available to attend the upgrade meeting in person they could be present via videoconferencing or webcam.

**Action:** The Secretary to amend the Research Degree Regulations to clarify that upgrade meetings may be conducted with a member of the panel present via videoconference or webcam if the panel member is not able to attend in person.

**ARTS/PGR/14/04 Training**

Some students considered inSTIL training to be too time consuming and suggested that training should be scheduled as one or two intense days. However, the Committee
recognised that inSTIL is already as short as our accreditation allows. Educational Development staff are already very stretched and the programme is flexible in the scheduling of the training. Students also considered the Generic Skills Programme course to be too generic. The Educational Development Officer responded that some of the courses are faculty specific, but if anything more specific is required this can be requested.

The Chair stated that the Progress Report column in the annual review reports should be completed and returned to Directors of Graduate Studies.

**Action:** The Secretary to discuss with the Academic Registrar and the Head of Academic Quality and Policy Office the procedure for closing the feedback loop when reporting the progress on actions in annual review reports.

5. **DRAFT ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT FORM FOR PGR PROVISION**

The Committee received the amended draft Annual Review Report Form for PGR provision (RDPC/15/12), which was discussed at the meeting of the DOGs Forum held on 27 April 2015. The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) stated that annual review report forms could be copied to Research and Enterprise to provide useful records for use in future REF exercises.

**Action:** The Secretary to arrange for annual review report forms to be logged with Research and Enterprise.

6. **COLLEGE ACTIONS ARISING FROM RECENT PERIODIC DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS**

The Committee considered the College Actions on PGR issues arising from recent Periodic Departmental Reviews (RDPC/15/13). The action from the Earth Sciences Periodic Departmental Review to consider the current regulatory requirement of an independent presence at all annual reviews was discussed under item 4 of this meeting. The action from the English Periodic Departmental Review to revisit the description of the advisor role at PGR level has been completed.

7. **PGR REGULATIONS AMENDMENTS**

7.1 The Committee recommended for approval the revisions to the Research Degree Regulations on how to incorporate published work in a monograph style thesis (RDPC/15/14).

**Action:** The Secretary to submit the revisions to the Research Degree Regulations on incorporating published work in a monograph to Academic Board for approval.

7.2 The Committee recommended for approval the revisions to the Research Degree Regulations, (Appendix 2, Regulations for the Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)), to add the option to allow candidates one month to make minor typographical and editorial corrections (RDPC/15/15).

**Action:** The Secretary to submit the revision to Appendix 2 of the Research Degree Regulations to allow DClinPsy candidates one month to make minor typographical and editorial corrections to Academic Board for approval.

7.3 The Committee noted that at its meeting on 25 March 2015, Academic Board approved an amendment to the Research Degree Regulations to allow research students on maternity/adoption leave full access to College facilities during the period of interruption.
8. **OUTCOMES AVAILABLE TO EXAMINERS FOR MASTERS BY RESEARCH**
The Student Administration Representative queried the outcomes available to the examiners of Masters by Research dissertations. Appendix 1 of the Research Degree Regulations indicates that there are two possible outcomes in the first instance: (i) Pass; or (ii) Pass subject to minor corrections (within six weeks). It is only if the minor corrections are not satisfactory that the examiners can then offer a resubmission. However, in cases where it is an outright fail, the Student Administration Representative asked whether it would be reasonable to offer the examiners the option to request a resubmission the following academic year rather than having to offer minor corrections first. The Committee agreed that the outright resubmission option should be included in Appendix 1 of the Research Degree Regulations.

**Action:** The Secretary to submit the revision to Appendix 1 of the Research Degree Regulations to include the outright resubmission option to Academic Board for approval.

9. **PHD EXAMINERS REQUESTING FURTHER CHANGES TO A THESIS BEYOND THOSE IDENTIFIED IN THE INITIAL LIST OF AMENDMENTS**
The Student Administration Representative sought clarification on the regulations concerning the outcomes available to examiners of errors of substance or omission in PhD theses. She reported that where a candidate had been given a 'Pass subject to errors of substance or omission' outcome at the viva, in some cases examiners had checked the amendments made but wanted further amendments. The Committee confirmed that examiners cannot ask for new changes to a thesis beyond those identified in the initial list of amendments.

10. **DOCTOR OF MEDICINE (MD) DEGREE**
The Committee considered the proposal to offer an MD degree award (RDPC/15/16). The Committee broadly supported the proposal, subject to the paper being revised to: (i) include alternative thesis format and incorporating published work in a monograph; (ii) be consistent with the wording of the College's Research Degree Regulations. Once the revisions have been made satisfactorily the proposal will be submitted to the December 2015 meeting of the Academic Board for approval.

**Action:** The Academic Registrar to feedback the required amendments to the MD degree proposal to the paper's author and arrange for the revised version to be circulated to Committee members.

11. **RESEARCH STUDENT SUPERVISION**
The Committee received the draft proposal for the roles and responsibilities of each member of the supervisory team of a research student, which was discussed at the meetings of the DoGS Forum held on 10 February and 27 April 2015 (RDPC/15/17). The Associate Dean (Doctoral School) reported that the DoGS Forum broadly agreed to the proposal subject to some revisions. The amendments discussed at the DoGS Forum had not been made to the proposal yet, but included removing the term ‘co-supervisor’ and therefore deleting section 21 on page 7. The Committee considered that the document should also include (i) external supervisors, and (ii) a section on placements/internships under the ‘Period of Study’ heading. The Committee approved the revised ‘Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students’ subject to revisions.

**Action:** The Associate Dean (Doctoral School) to submit the final version of the ‘Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students’ to the Chair.
12. **ETHOS**
The Chair reported that some publishers will no longer publish a thesis that has been published online, in which case ETHOS’s embargo of one year is not long enough and should be increased to two years for everyone.

**Action:** (i) The Secretary to liaise with Matthew Brooke to extend the EThOS embargo to two years as standard.

**Action:** (ii) The Student Administration Representative to update the exam entry form to allow the option to restrict access to the thesis for a period of two years.

13. **RESEARCH TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS**
The Committee received a report on proposed processes for Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training (RDPC/15/18). The paper identified several areas that need consideration and outlined some possible ways forward.

**Partners**
Currently the Dean signs off on the College being the lead partner, but for cross faculty bids all Deans, including the Dean (Doctoral School), should be involved.

**Bids**
Currently bids are handled by the Dean for single faculty bids, and all the Deans for multi faculty bids. It was agreed that bids should be reported to the Research Degrees Programmes Committee for information, but should not require formal sign-off by the Committee since this would cause delays and complications.

**Oversight of DTPs/CDTs**
It was noted that the Research Degrees Programmes Committee has oversight of DTPs/CDTs as stated in the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

**Finance**
It was agreed that the Finance Office are responsible for Finance issues.

**QA**
It was agreed that the Research Degrees Programmes Committee and the Academic Quality and Policy Office are responsible for quality assurance.

**Match Funding**
It was agreed that the Planning and Resources Committee is responsible for matched funding issues.

**Student Selection**
It was agreed that the consortium should oversee the student selection process.

**Equality**
The Committee was asked to consider where the responsibility for equality issues should lie for further discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

**Action:** All members to consider where the responsibility for equality issues in DTPs/CDTs should lie for further discussion at the next meeting.

14. **UPGRADE PANELS**
The role of independent members in upgrade panels was discussed under item 4 of this meeting.
15. **QAA CONSULTATION ON DOCTORAL CHARACTERISTICS**

15.1 The Committee noted the College’s response to the QAA Consultation (RDPC/15/19).


**STANDING ITEMS**

16. **DIRECTORS OF GRADUATE STUDIES FORUM**
The Committee received the notes of the meetings of the DOGs Forum held on 10 February and 27 April 2015 (RDPC/15/20a,b).

17. **STUDENT ISSUES**
There were no issues to report.

18. **TRAINING**

18.1 The Committee noted the change of name of the Generic Skills Programme to Researcher Development Programme (RDPC/15/21).

18.2 The Committee received a revised PGR training log discussed at the meeting of the DOGs Forum held on 27 April 2015. The Committee congratulated PhD student Lauren Edwards from the School of Biological Sciences for designing the revised training log (RDPC/15/22).

19. **DOCTORAL SCHOOL**
There were no issues to report.

20. **FACULTY RESEARCH ISSUES**
The Committee received the minutes from the meetings of the Research Committee and Faculty Research Committees held in the spring term (RDPC/15/23a,b,c,d,e).

21. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**
The Committee noted the dates of meetings for the 2015-16 academic year:
- Thursday 19 November 2015 at 2pm in Room FE139;
- Tuesday 16 February 2016 at 2pm in Room FE139;
- Thursday 12 May 2016 at 2pm in Room FE139.

Debby Salsbury, Academic Development Officer
Merlin Harries, Assistant Registrar
May 2015

see also Schedule of Action points on pages below
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>15/039</td>
<td>Secretary to contact the Director of Strategic Planning and Change to ascertain how recruitment targets are communicated to Heads of Departments, and then email a paragraph on what the process is to Committee members.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>15/042</td>
<td>Secretary to amend the Research Degree Regulations to clarify that upgrades meetings may be conducted with a member of the panel present via videoconference or webcam if the panel member is not able to attend in person.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>15/052</td>
<td>Academic Registrar to feedback the required amendments to the MD degree proposal to the paper's author and arrange for the revised version to be circulated to Committee members.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>15/053</td>
<td>Associate Dean (Doctoral School) to submit the final version of the 'Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students' to the Chair.</td>
<td>Associate Dean (Doctoral School)</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>15/054</td>
<td>(i) Secretary to liaise with Matthew Brooke to extend the EThOS embargo to two years as standard.</td>
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<td>The College’s E-theses submission policy already allows students to apply a 2-year embargo without the need for justification or approval. The students apply the embargo themselves when uploading the thesis to Pure.</td>
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<th>12</th>
<th>15/054</th>
<th>(ii) Student Administration Representative to update the exam entry form to allow the option to restrict access to the thesis for a period of two years.</th>
<th>Student Administration Representative</th>
<th>Complete</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>The entry form already allows the student to request access restriction for 2 years.</td>
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| 13 | 15/063 | All members to consider where the responsibility for equality issues in DTPs/CDTs should lie for further discussion at the next meeting. | All members |  |

### Actions from meeting on 29 January 2015

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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15/014</td>
<td>Student Administration Representative to liaise with SDU to provide the December count figures to include students in their writing up year.</td>
<td>Student Administration Representative</td>
<td>Ongoing. The criteria of the December count is set externally but the Student Administration manager is liaising with Data Management so that a report can be created to include the details of the December count plus writing up students.</td>
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### Actions from meeting on 16 January 2013

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<td>4</td>
<td>12/47</td>
<td>Academic Registrar will report back on the discussions taking place on how reporting of upgrade outcomes to the centre can be established, to enable an accurate central record of student progress to be maintained and so that students who fail are informed of the process for appeal.</td>
<td>Academic Registrar</td>
<td>Ongoing. The Academic Registrar is working with the Academic Administration Support Manager to address this.</td>
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