Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 11am in the Principal’s Meeting Room

Present: Prof Rosemary Deem (Chair), Prof Barry Langford, Ms Francesca Baylis, Prof Margaret Collinson, Dr Amany Elbanna, Anna Sendall, Dr Sarah Wright

Secretary: Dr Phil Taylor (Secretary), Mrs Louise Watson (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies: Prof Paul Hogg, Ms Alex Borrett, Dr Laura Christie, Dr Rainer Dietmann, Ms Jane Gawthrope, Ms Kuziwakwashe Zigomo

1. CHAIR’S WELCOME
The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies. Due to the reorganisation of the Senior Management Team Prof Paul Hogg will no longer sit on the Committee. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed before the Autumn 2017 meeting.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
2.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2017.

2.2 The Committee discussed how to enhance the information in the PhD submission and completion report. Strategic Planning & Change will be asked to conduct further analysis on the available data. It was agreed that the following data might be included:
- The proportion of students submitting their thesis on time
- Three years historic data to allow for a year on year comparison of trends
- Details of students’ second supervisor in addition to principal supervisor

3. DOCTORAL SCHOOL STRATEGY
Prof Barry Langford circulated a paper outlining the following key areas of development for the Doctoral School: commitment to collaborative partnerships; improved 4 year submission rates; researcher development and subject-specific advanced training; support for students’ mental health; employability and career development; supervisor development; positive student experience; social and educational student networks; student-focussed administrative support.

The Committee discussed how the Doctoral School can effectively address these issues. It was noted that staff support for PGR students is distributed across different professional services, and may be affected by the restructuring of Registry into the Academic Services Directorate. More frequent communication between relevant staff will help to support new strategic priorities.

From September 2017 the Doctoral Hub in the International Building will become a networking and collaborative working space for research students. Quiet working space will be located in a new PGR area on the 2nd floor of the EWD Library building. The importance of encouraging research students to utilise this new space was stressed; there will be bespoke tours for PGR students once the library is open. The student representative suggested that the new library space will appeal to particular groups of research students whose work requires quiet desk space.

ACTION: Associate Dean of Doctoral School to liaise with the Director of Library Services regarding tours of the PG Reading Room in the EWD Library. Educational Development Officer to
look at embedding library tours within College PG induction.

It was agreed that a working group should be initiated from Autumn 2017 to develop the Doctoral School strategy: members are to include an experienced PG departmental administrator and student representation from all three faculties. Departments are requested to send recommendations for members to the Secretary.

**ACTION:** Secretary to coordinate a new working group in Autumn 2017 to develop the Doctoral School Strategy. Strategy to be formulated by December 2017.

4. **CURRENT PGR APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received a report on the status of applications and offers for 2017-18 entry in comparison to 2016-17. Application numbers may have been affected by the forthcoming PGR loan scheme, the general election, and technical problems with the new online application system. It is difficult to forecast how many offers will be converted as we don’t know how many other institutions candidates have applied to. It was noted that further detail would be useful to enable deeper analysis of the recruitment position, particularly:

- The percentage of applicants for RCUK scholarships
- Raw figures in addition to percentages for the departmental breakdown to give more precise information on applicants in each department
- The inclusion of recruitment targets to enable comparison of performance against targets. It was noted that PGR recruitment targets are negotiated between the Deans and HoDS, but that DoGS are not involved.

5. **PGR ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORTS**

The Committee received the 2015-16 Annual Scrutiny reports for all three Faculties. The scrutiny process includes discussion of the findings from peer review and matters arising from the departmental annual review reports. In general the process has raised less areas of concern than in previous years, which indicates an improvement in PGR provision across the College.

**ACTION:** A proposal from the Science Faculty regarding guidelines on interdisciplinary supervision is to be discussed at the Autumn 2017 meeting

The Committee confirmed that PG Student: Staff Committee meetings should be held at least three times per year: Prof Langford and Prof Normington are developing a model to enable departments in Arts and Social Sciences to meet this requirement.

Concerns have been raised about the lack of catering facilities for PG students outside term time. UG students also face this problem when staying on campus during the Easter vacation.

**ACTION:** Director of Commercial Services to be invited to the Autumn 2017 meeting of RDPC to discuss the College’s vacation catering arrangements.

6. **ANNUAL REPORTS FOR DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS**

The Board received the 2015/16 annual reports from the ESRC, AHRC TECHNE and NERC Doctoral Training Partnerships. The Committee felt that students should be named in the reports as they are being supported by public funding. The Chair noted that the reports are received by the Committee for information and to monitor progress; action is only required if major concerns are highlighted.

7. **PGR EXAMINER APPOINTMENTS**

The Committee received a report on the appointment of Research Degree examiners between 1st Jan and 31st March 2017. The Chair noted that it would be valuable to include a breakdown of external examiners by host institution to assess trends in appointments.
ACTION: Student Administration representative to include a breakdown by host institution into the PGR Examiner Appointments report.

8. PGR EXAMINATION OUTCOMES
The Committee received a report on approved Research Degree viva and thesis examination outcomes between 1st Jan and 31st March 2017. It was felt that more data was required on cases of 18 month resubmission, including details of what had gone wrong and issues identified for development. It was suggested that in such cases supervisors might be asked to provide a written report summarising the reasons for the outcome. It was also agreed that comparative data over at least two years was needed.

ACTION: Student Administration representative to look at the presentation and analysis of the data in the PGR Examination Outcomes report, particularly with regard to cases of 18 months resubmission and historical comparative data.

9. PGR DEGREES AWARDED
The Committee received a report on MPhil and PhD awards conferred between 1st Jan and 31st March 2017.

Standing Items
10. STUDENT ISSUES
There were no student issues to consider.

11. DIRECTORS OF GRADUATE STUDIES FORUM
There were no confirmed minutes to be received at this meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 04 May 2017 will be brought to the next meeting.

12. DOCTORAL SCHOOL
There were no further issues relating to the Doctoral School to discuss. The Committee were reminded that the Doctoral School Annual Conference will take place on June 6th 2017 in the Boilerhouse Lecture Theatre.

13. FACULTY RESEARCH ISSUES
The Committee noted that Faculty Research Committees should be discussing research students, but that few issues were being forwarded to RDPC for discussion. It was agreed that the FRCs should be asked to provide a report on research students to inform a strategic discussion at College level.

14. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2017-18
Thursday 26th October 2017 at 14:00 in the Large Boardroom
Tuesday 20 February 2018 at 14:00 in the PMR
Thursday 10 May 2018 at 14:00 in the PMR

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
A question was raised concerning how long audio recordings of vivas should be kept by the College for the purposes of supporting investigations into potential appeals. It was confirmed that the current policy is to keep recordings for two months from the date of the viva. The Chair proposed this should be extended until the student has graduated to cover any delays with the submission or investigation of appeals.
## ACTIONS

### ACTIONS FROM MEETING HELD ON 10TH MAY 2017

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<th>Minute</th>
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<tr>
<td>17/34</td>
<td>Associate Dean of Doctoral School to liaise with the Director of Library Services regarding tours of the PG Reading Room in the EWD Library. Educational Development Officer to look at embedding library tours within College PG induction.</td>
<td>Prof Barry Langford and Laura Christie</td>
<td>To be established in Autumn term – discuss membership with Rosemary and Barry</td>
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<td>17/36</td>
<td>Secretary to coordinate a new working group in Autumn 2017 to develop the Doctoral School Strategy. Strategy to be formulated by December 2017.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>To be established in Autumn term – discuss membership with Rosemary and Barry</td>
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<td>17/39</td>
<td>A proposal from the Science Faculty regarding guidelines on interdisciplinary supervision is to be discussed at the Autumn 2017 meeting.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Put on agenda for Oct meeting</td>
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<td>17/42</td>
<td>Director of Commercial Services to be invited to the Autumn 2017 meeting of RDPC to discuss the College’s vacation catering arrangements.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Do we still want this as an item for Oct meeting</td>
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<td>17/45</td>
<td>Student Administration representative to include a breakdown by host institution into the PGR Examiner Appointments report.</td>
<td>Student Administration</td>
<td>Discussed with Alex Borrett – she can do this</td>
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<td>17/47</td>
<td>Student Administration representative to look at the presentation and analysis of the data in the PGR Examination Outcomes report, particularly with regard to cases of 18 months resubmission and historical comparative data.</td>
<td>Student Administration</td>
<td>Proposal to move towards one annual report with historical comparative figures (as opposed to the raw numbers each term)</td>
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### ACTIONS FROM MEETING HELD ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

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<td>16/209</td>
<td>DoGS to ensure that feedback on the PSES is an agenda item on departmental PGR SSCs and to confirm this with the Head of the Doctoral School along with feedback on any issues raised.</td>
<td>All DoGS</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td>16/214</td>
<td>Secretary to look into enhancing the information provided in the PhD submission report.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Data management to supply data with analysis</td>
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<td>16/219</td>
<td>Strategic Planning &amp; Change to consider including target figures and comparative historical data in future reports on PhD recruitment data and to clarify if Masters by Research students are included in the PGR or PGT data.</td>
<td>Strategic Planning &amp; Change</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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