



Governance and Quality Enhancement

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY		
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE		
Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2015		
Present:	Mr S. Brown, Professor A. de Ruyter, Professor C. Donaldson, Professor R. Emmanuel, Professor S. Hutchinson, Dr L. Gray, Professor B. Hughes, Professor K. Johnston, Professor M. Mannion (Chair), Professor J. Marshall, Dr P. Martin, Professor P. Shukla, Professor M. Steultjens (<i>vice</i> Professor J Woodburn), Professor B. Steves, Professor B. Stewart	
In attendance:	Mr M Anderson, Mr R. Ruthven, Mr. P. Woods (Secretary)	
Apologies:	Professor J Woodburn	
MINUTES		
014.152	Considered	The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2015 (REC14/40/1).
014.152	Reported	By the Secretary that the previous version of the minutes circulated had contained some errors which had now been corrected. The revised version was circulated.
014.154	Resolved	That subject to the additional Professor Emmanuel to the list of those present, the minutes be approved as a correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
014.155	Reported	By the Chair that there were no matters arising not otherwise dealt with on the agenda.
CHAIR'S REPORT		
014.156	Reported	By the Chair that there no matters to report not otherwise dealt with on the agenda.
RESEARCH STRUCTURES		
014.157	Considered	A paper outlining the research structures for the University (REC14/44/1).
014.158	Reported:	By the Chair that the proposed structure would retain Research Institutes as an umbrella but would not have staff and/or resourcing. The Associate Deans for Research would also have the Director of Research Institute title and be in overall charge of research matters within the Schools. A steering group to review Institute activity would be

		<p>chaired by the PVCR and include the ADRs and Research Centre Directors.</p> <p>Research centres would be the main vehicle for co-ordinating research activity and would also be the means through which strategic investment would be targeted. The Centres would produce a five year strategy and deliver annual reports for SMGs and the University Research Committee. The formation and/or dissolution of a Research Centre within a School would be taken by the PVCR, PVC Learning and SE and the Dean. If a centre was not within a School these decision would be by the Executive Board.</p> <p>Research Groups would be managed by the Schools but encouraged to align with a Research Centre.</p> <p>The paper outlined six potential centres allied to the Research Strategy. There would still be some flexibility in the arrangements to account for cross disciplinary activity.</p>
014.159	Discussion	<p>Members were unsure about the new distinction between Research Institutes and the Research Centres. For example was the <i>Centre for Living</i> an appropriate “centre” in the sense described in the paper given that it was conceived of as an interface.</p> <p>The Chair stated that he would clarify the particular point relating to the Centre for Living with the Dean of Health and Life Sciences.</p> <p>Some members expressed concerns about the mechanism for formation and dissolution of centres and were concerned about the future for existing research centres.</p> <p>Members also noted that some areas included in REF 2014 do not map on to this model (particularly in GSBS) and that in other Schools a paradigm shift would be required to make centres and groups align with the model.</p> <p>Members felt there was a need for greater clarity regarding funding and management decisions for the Centres.</p> <p>The Chair responded that funding would be a combination of targeted strategic investment and any School investment. Management would be overseen by ADRs and implemented by Research Centre Directors.</p> <p>Members asked if there would be a limit on research groups.</p> <p>The Chair explained that a proliferation of groups did not reflect strategic coherence although he accepted that it was probable that there would not be a perfect fit with all research groups and the overarching centres.</p> <p>The member from GCU London commented that the GCU London School was too new to have a separate centre at this stage and would have to align with Research Centres based in Glasgow.</p> <p>Members also were concerned about tracking and recording the research units (groups and/or centres) through Pure.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that some stability was required to allow the appropriate recording in Pure.</p>
014.160	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chair will modify the proposals before submission to Senate. 2. That members feedback any further comments on the proposals to the Chair. <p style="text-align: center;">(PVCR/All Members)</p>

014.161	Considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Research Outputs (REC14/49/1 - withdrawn) 2. Review of Research Impact (REC14/50/1) 3. Review of Research Income – period 9 (REC14/51/1). 4. Review of Postgraduate Research Student Numbers (REC14/51/1)
014.162	Reported	By the Secretary that the feedback received thus far on publications was incomplete so this paper would be withdrawn at this stage.
014.163	Discussion	<p>Members thought that there should be a refinement to the assessment of publications based making use of the content available in Pure to create a more specific report.</p> <p>Professor Marshall stated that it would be possible to generate a publication long list from Pure as a first step but a further review at School/Centre level would be required to define quality ratings. The process would also depend on the defined structures for reporting.</p>
014.164	Resolved	That a report is created based on content available on Pure against defined structures (Director ARD).
014.165	Discussion	<p>The data on income and the comment that the current trend was showing less volume, but higher value research projects was noted.</p> <p>Professor Steves commented that the registered PGR student numbers were deceptive in that the full session cohort for 2014-15 was not yet available. The registrations were at 98% of the 2013-14 totals.</p> <p>Nevertheless members felt that the completion rates were a cause for concern and warranted some further investigation when the full cohort data was available. Members noted the drop in international recruits which was an area for further investigation.</p> <p>The Chair stated that he felt there were some issues to address and required more thought. He informed members that early discussions about remote PhD delivery had taken place.</p>
014.166	Resolved	That the update is noted.
DIGITAL STRATEGY IN SUPPORT OF RESEARCH		
014.167	Considered	A paper summarising the digital research landscape, as represented by current or developing internal and external systems or processes (REC14/41/1).
014.168	Reported	<p>By Professor Marshall that he had developed the attached diagram to describe the various intersecting information systems which contributed to research information. He asked members if there was anything they would add to the systems already noted.</p> <p>One member queried if all relevant Library systems were represented. Professor Marshall replied that Research Online@GCU and Sci-val were included but if there were any omission he would add them.</p> <p>It was noted that the diagram highlighted what was required e.g. ethics and open access.</p> <p>Another member added that other requirements would be a portal for facilitation of remote PhDs and research collaboration and CPD portfolio software.</p>

014.169	Resolved	That the comments are noted and incorporated as appropriate (Director ARD).
UK RESEARCH INTEGRITY OFFICE – MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL		
014.170	Considered	A proposal to consider institutional membership of UKRIO to enhance progress in relation to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (REC14/42/1).
014.171	Reported	By Professor Marshall that he had had dialogue with the CEO of UKRIO about possible membership and he felt that there were potential benefits to the University, particularly in relation to supporting the commitments outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.
014.172	Resolved	That the proposal be approved (Director ARD).
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ISSUES RELATING TO DELAYED COMPLETION FOR FUNDED STUDENTS		
014.173	Considered	A paper outlining issues related to funded PGRS and delayed completion (REC14/43/1).
014.174	Reported	<p>By Mr Brown that the issues had originally been raised in HLS but it had been suggested that it was a matter for the Committee to consider. Many PGR students had experienced difficulties in completing their programme within the normal timeframe (3 years for PhDs) for a number of different reasons. As a result a petition had been gathered University-wide, although this had only been submitted to SHLS.</p> <p>The paper attempted to distil the various factors that gave rise to the petition and these were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervisory issues 2. Ethics 3. Teaching workload/other duties 4. Equipment issues 5. NHS ethics 6. Professional accreditation issues 7. Maternity leave and long-term illness 8. Other personal <p>The paper also presented suggested a number of proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a pot of funds to allocate on a needs-basis to PhD candidates who, for various extenuating circumstances, are struggling to complete their Doctoral studies. • Established practice (extending to procedure to apply for funds) must be university wide, with a decision taken centrally to increase transparency. • Other measures without financial implications to minimise disruption to PhD completion e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More support ‘up front’ to safeguard likelihood of going ‘over time’, including consultations with supervisors ahead of start-date for those candidates needing NHS ethics or further pushing for a standardised ethics form for NHS ethics to minimise errors requiring a re-submission. ○ Teaching policy (separate working group established on this, with proposal awaiting SMG decision) to ensure students are not being unfairly given more teaching than is practical, ie. will increase likelihood of going ‘over time’.
014.175	Discussion	Professor Steultjens stated that there were specific issues related to SHLS students (such as NHS ethics approval) but it was clear that there were a number of issues affecting

		<p>PGR students across the University as a whole. Some measures were being taken to address specific issues raised in SHLS but a wider consideration of all issues was needed.</p> <p>Another member pointed out that the same issues relating to NHS ethical approval had come up in the HLS ELISR.</p> <p>Members identified some key areas to scrutinise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision • Teaching workload allocations • Ethics approval and where delays occur (internally or with external bodies) • Annual review of student progress <p>As the factors contributing to delays were various it was likely that there would be various solutions which could involve better deployment and/or organisation of current infrastructure, or more interventions at earlier stages. Members agree that a scoping of the issues was required to inform further discussion of solutions.</p>
014.176	Resolved	<p>That the Chair of the Higher Degrees Subcommittee will lead an investigation into the issues raised by the paper and the student-led petition, paying particular attention to teaching workloads and supervisory management.</p> <p>The investigation will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the range of issues contributing to postgraduate research student dissatisfaction. 2. Give students an opportunity to air their views. 3. Benchmark the University's rates of timely higher degree completions against the HE sector 4. Report back to the Committee in September 2015. <p>The Graduate School will lead with regard to a formal response to students and all communication with students during this process. (Chair HDSC/Director Graduate School)</p>
PhD BY PREVIOUS PUBLISHED WORKS		
014.177	Approved	Revised regulations and procedures for the award of Doctor of Philosophy by Previous Publication including title change to PhD by Previous Published Works (HD14/200/1) are approved and recommended to Senate (URC Secretary).
UNIVERSITY PhD STUDENTSHIPS AND PhD RESEARCH PROJECTS PORTFOLIO UPDATE		
014.178	Received	An update on University PhD Studentships and PhD Research Projects (REC14/45/1)
PRES, CROS, PIRLS RESEARCH SURVEYS UPDATE		
014.179	Received	An update on national surveys relating to postgraduate research students (REC14/46/1).
GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM AND POSTER COLLOQUIUM		
014.180	Received	Information on the Graduate School Research Symposium and Poster Colloquium (REC14/47/1).

HIGHER DEGREES SUBCOMMITTEE

014.181	Received	The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015 (HDC14/163/1).
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SCHOOL RESEARCH COMMITTEES

014.182	Received	SHLS Research Committee minutes 11 February 2015 (HLSRC14/07/01).
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AG/URC/minutes/May2015