



Department of Governance

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE		
Minutes of the meeting held 4 October 2017		
Present:	Professor A. Boateng, Mr C. Daisley, Dr L. Gray (Chair), Professor J. Harris, Professor D. Harrison, Professor B. Kumar, Professor O. Pahl, Dr B. Stansfield, Professor B. Steves	
In attendance:	Ms D. Dickie, Dr K. Halcro, Ms K. Roden, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
Apologies:	Professor J. Woodburn	
MINUTES		
017.000	Considered	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee held on 23 November 2016 (RDC16/12/01) .
017.001	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
Unsatisfactory Academic Performance and Progress of Research Students: Policy and Procedure (Arising on RDCM 016.078)		
017.002	Reported	Professor Steves confirmed that there was now a Graduate School newsletter which was sent to all PGR students and PGR degree supervisors.
Conference Attendance for PGRS (Arising on RDCM 016.078)		
017.003	Reported	By Professor Steves that this was ongoing and a lot of useful information had been collated. There was a complication over fees for MRes modules which still had to be negotiated and she would report back when the details had been completed.
PDDM Module (Arising on RDCM 016.085)		
017.004	Reported	By the Secretary that this was ongoing as the working group had still to be convened. He expected this would happen in the near future.

REFRESH OF EXAMINATION PROCESS AND REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES		
017.005	Considered	A draft refresh of Research Degree Examination Process and regulations (RDC17/03/01).
017.005	Reported	<p>By the Chair that the draft was an overall refresh of the examination process and regulations and included some proposed changes to the RDC forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RDC5 form included a note reminding signatories of their responsibilities regarding conflict of interest; • The RDC8 included a section on the proposed date of the viva and included timescales for the process; • Procedural detail had been removed from the regulatory text.
017.006	Discussion	<p>By the Secretary that following discussions in the Department of Governance it had been agreed it was appropriate to include the appeal process as part of the RDC Secretary role and within the remit of Department of Governance. This would maintain the independence of the process and avoid any potential conflicts of interest.</p> <p>The Chair stated that electronic submission of the thesis could be by any effective form, not necessarily by USB stick, but electronic submission was required.</p>
017.007	Resolved	That members submit any further comments and amendments to the “Examination Regulations for Research Degrees” and the related RDC forms to the Committee Secretary.
REVISION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCEDURES IN RESEARCH DEGREES		
017.008	Considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A draft revision of Academic Misconduct (Cheating and Plagiarism) procedure (RDC17/04/01). 2. Current university online similarity checking policy (APC15/16/3).
017.009	Reported	<p>By the Secretary that the changes were intended to bring the process in line with the <i>Code of Student Conduct</i> and the <i>Code of Good Practice in Research</i> as far as possible.</p> <p>Examples of types of plagiarism had been removed and it was instead intended to refer to the relevant section of the <i>Code of Student Conduct</i> so that there was consistency across the plagiarism processes.</p> <p>An appeals process had been added which was also intended to be consistent with similar processes in <i>Code of Student Conduct</i> and <i>Code of Good Practice in Research</i>.</p> <p>Further consultation would take place with colleagues in Department of Governance.</p>

		The current <i>Online Similarity Checking Policy</i> was provided for information and context given that the use of <i>Turnitin</i> is now a common source of plagiarism detection. Enhanced or required use of <i>Turnitin</i> may be something that the Committee would wish to consider.
017.010	Discussion	Members expressed some concern about managing Turnitin outcomes.
017.011	Resolved	That there is further consultation with Department of Governance colleagues regarding consistency with <i>Code of Student Conduct</i> processes (Action: Committee Secretary).
THEMATIC REVIEW		
017.012	Considered	1. The Thematic Review of Post-Graduate Research Student Experience (2017-2018) (Doc LTSC16/53/1). 2. Review of the PGR Journey (REC17/08/01).
017.013	Reported	By Professor Steves that the dialogue with AQ&D had suggested a timetable for review aiming towards the end of 2017. This appeared to be fluid. A series of working groups had met earlier in the year and had produced some outcomes which required to be factored into the review process.
017.014	Discussion	Members asked what areas would be reviewed. Professor Steves stated that it was potentially wide-ranging but normally reviews would be in areas covered by the <i>Quality Code for Higher Education</i> .
017.015	Resolved	That the update be noted.
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2017		
017.016	Considered	A report on the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2017 (REC17/03/1).
017.017	Reported	By Ms Roden that the initial report had been seen by LTSC and the University Research Committee. This version of the report included initial feedback from Schools. Feedback from SHLS was awaited. The next stage was to develop an action plan to address the outcomes of the report.
017.018	Discussion	Members found the report and the feedback helpful. They agreed that most issues applied to all Schools and a University-wide action plan would be the most appropriate response. Professor Steves stated that this could be taken forward by the Graduate School, sharing the report more widely and gathering feedback through its research networks. It was noted that some aspects were already being addressed such as transferable skills. It was further noted that there would be crossover with the <i>NSS</i> and the

		<p><i>CROS</i> and <i>PIRLS</i> reports also. Analysis of these outcomes would be required to ensure the effectiveness of the action plan.</p> <p>Another member added that there had been poorly attended seminar series in the past and suggested that there might be value in incentivising such activity, perhaps as part of required training and development for PGRs.</p>
017.019	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That feedback from SHLS be sought. 2. That the process for progressing the action plan be discussed further (Action: K Roden/B Steves).
STUDENT PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY POLICY		
017.020	Considered	Any potential amendments to procedures or processes required as a result of University Policy approved by Senate on 24 February 2017 (S16/45/01).
017.021	Reported	<p>By Professor Steves that the policy was being presented to discuss any wider implications for research degrees.</p> <p>She asked members to note that the policy in its current format did cover PGR students and followed RCUK policy.</p>
017.022	Discussion	<p>Members identified a key difference for PGR students which would be in the work/study dimensions where they also had an employment contract.</p> <p>Professor Steves clarified that students on stipend would have payments suspended. Schools had discretion to spread stipend in such cases but normally payments would stop until the student returned to study.</p> <p>Members discussed potential further complications with Tier 4 students and whether PGR students would be eligible for maternity pay if contracted? It was agreed this was a potentially complex but that it would be dependent on the contract and a matter for People Services.</p> <p>It was suggested that benchmarking may be useful but members were largely content that RCUK policy would be cross sector best practice.</p>
017.023	Resolved	That guidance is sought from People Services on potential implications for PGR student employment (Action: Committee Secretary).
FEES BENCHMARKING		
017.024	Considered	A benchmark of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 PGR fees across Scotland and comparator universities in the UK (RDC17/07/01).
017.025	Reported	<p>By Professor Steves that previously research degree fees had been set without an evidence base for setting them. There had been consultation but no benchmarking exercise. International fees were set by the Executive Board and homes fees at the RCUK rate.</p> <p>Under CMA guidelines fees are required to be published 18 months in advance and fees now varied for different subject areas. This paper</p>

		provided a sector comparison.
017.026	Discussion	<p>One member asked if fees would vary during the lifetime of a student's programme. It was clarified that this does not happen although the current offer letter does say that fees will vary. Professor Steves stated that this would be corrected.</p> <p>Members agreed that more discussion was required surrounding bench fees and international fees, as well as international applicants' eligibility for studentships. Greater investigation of the requirements for PhDs by distance and subsequently the appropriate fee was also required.</p>
017.027	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the offer letter be amended (Action: Prof. Steves). 2. That the Finance Office clarify procedures for charging the writing up fee (Action: Committee Secretary/Prof. Steves). 3. That the recommendations be otherwise approved.
RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT to URC		
017.028	Considered	The draft RDC Annual Report to URC (RDC17/02/01).
017.029	Discussion	Members noted that there were some errors in the 2016-17 attendance.
017.030	Resolved	That the Report be approved subject to amendments in the attendance section (Action: Committee Secretary).
THREE MINUTE THESIS (3MT) REPORT		
017.031	Considered	Three Minute Thesis Report (RDC17-08-01)
017.032	Reported	By Professor Steves that feedback on the competition had been excellent and student engagement was growing year on year since beginning in 2015.
017.033	Resolved	The Committee endorses the activity and the recommendations for 2017-18 and recommends continued support for these activities in 2017/18.
GLASGOW SCIENCE FESTIVAL FOR 2016-2017		
017.034	Considered	Glasgow Science Festival Report (RDC17/09/01).
017.035	Reported	By Professor Steves that the programme had been an excellent example of public engagement by researchers and had been a great experience for the students. The intention was to grow and expand participation and include a family day.
017.036	Resolved	That the Committee endorses the Science Festival activities and recommends its continuation and expansion.
AOCB		
PGR Student Employment		
017.037	Reported	By the Chair that People Services had taken a paper to the Executive Board which had been well received but equally cautiously received. EB were

		requiring careful planning and piloting of the scheme in the first instance. This was expected to run in Trimester B.
017.038	Reported	By Professor Steves that “mandatory” training for students undertaking teaching and/or demonstrating was only being offered 2 times per year, which had limited opportunities for PGRS.
RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION & MEMBERSHIP 2016-17		
017.039	Approved	The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2017-18 (RDC17/01/01).
RESEARCH DEGREE’s Committee Chair’s Action		
017.040	Received	Outcome of a review of an examination decision (RDC17/05/01)
RESEARCH DEGREE EXAM APPROVALS & AWARDS		
017.041		A record of examinations and awards ratified since the previous meeting of RDC (RDC17/06/01).
RESEARCH PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS		
017.042	Received:	The confirmed minutes of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SEBE RPAB 25 January 2017 (RPAB/SEBE/16/75). 2. GSBS RPAB 1 March 2017 (RPAB/GSBS/16/37). 3. SHLS RPAB 29 March 2017 (SHLSRPAB/16/71).

Common/Senate/RDC/minutes/4 October2017