



Department of Governance

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE		
Minutes of the meeting held 10 June 2020		
Present:	Dr B. Ahmed, Professor K. Currie, Mr C. Glover, Dr S. Hagan, Dr K. Halcro, Professor J. Harris, Professor D. Harrison, Dr M-A. Houston, Dr L. Gray (Chair), Professor A. Klemm, Dr C. MacRae, Ms T. Nyariki, Professor O. Pahl, Dr B. Stansfield, Professor B. Steves	
In attendance:	Ms M. Daly, Ms D. Dickie, Mr I. MacKay, Ms C. McDonald, Dr G Poulter, Ms L. Waugh, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
MINUTES		
019.086	Considered	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee 12 February 2020 (RDC19/16/01).
019.087	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
Online examinations (arising on 019.071)		
019.088	Reported	By the Chair that online examinations had been working well, without any major issues.
Deferred Entries (arising on 019.078)		
019.089	Reported	By the Senior Registry Officer (RPG) that there had been no deferrals at this stage. The text advising new students to have a dialogue with the Director of Studies about current arrangements was part of the new entrants' correspondence.
COVID-19-RELATED DISRUPTION TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AT GCU: SURVEY OF STUDENTS AND ACTION PLANNING		
019.090	Considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A report on Covid-19 related disruption to Postgraduate Research at GCU: Survey of Students and action planning. (S19/59/1). 2. A briefing paper by the Director of the Graduate School on current issues including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Extensions of time/funding

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Areas raised in PGRS survey 3) PGR representation 4) Communications and listening issues 5) PGR employment issues and GCU PGRS Employment Policy <p>(RDC19/28/01)</p>
019.091	Reported	<p>By the Director of the Graduate School that the papers provided a current summary of the position for PGR students, updates to FAQs, the position in relation to potential extensions and the key outcomes from the recent survey of PGR students. Other mechanisms for gathering student feedback (e.g. PGR networks, regular meetings with PGR representative and the DoGs and PVCR).</p> <p>At the moment all PGRS were awaiting greater clarity on their position and their plans depended on greater certainty. Decisions by the Scottish Funding Council would provide greater clarity particularly in relation to funding extensions.</p> <p>A process for time extensions was being developed with the aim to be as fair as possible. Funding extensions would follow pending SFC announcements and Executive Boards decisions.</p> <p>Communications in general were seen as vitally important and the Director Graduate School and PVCR's fortnightly meetings with PGR representatives had been useful.</p>
019.092	Discussion	<p>A members asked if there was a timeline for a return to laboratories or laboratory access. Professor Steves replied that there was no timeline for this at the moment but that the steering group looking at safe return to campus had research representation and would be looking at the needs of different groups and matching this against the Scottish Government phased plan.</p>
019.093	Resolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Professor Steves be thanked for the update and ongoing work. 2. That any items requiring RDC approval ahead of the next scheduled meeting may be considered via circulation.
REVIEW OF THE REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES		
019.094	Considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A proposal to review the current regulations for the Award of Research Degrees and establish a subgroup of RDC for the process (RDC19/26/01). 2. Proposed regulations for the award of aegrotat and posthumous research degrees (RDC19/27/01).
019.095	Reported	<p>By the Chair that he proposed a review of the regulations and establishing a subgroup to do this. The subgroup would comprise Chair RDC, Director of Graduate School and the SPGRs.</p> <p>The second item for consideration was to define regulations for the award of aegrotat degrees and posthumous degrees. An aegrotat degree is awarded to student who is unlikely to be able to complete their studies but who, in the opinion of their supervisors, was also like to have successfully completed the degree. The paper provides some suggestions</p>

		as to how this would work. The Chair informed members that HEIs have differing ways of approaching this issue including some only awarding aegrotats in cases of terminal illness while others were less specific.
019.096	Discussion	Members discussed their understanding of aegrotat processes used elsewhere and felt that most regulations stated that the award should be almost complete. In the example given in the paper 50% was given and this was too low. Members also suggested that it should first be signed off by the supervisory team and then adjudicated by a third party examiner. There were grey areas around how much effort the supervisors would be allowed to put in. Good judgement would be required. The Chair clarified that the final approval would be by the RDC Chair and ultimately Senate.
019.097	Resolved	That the Chair draft regulations based on the above discussion and any further feedback from members.
LIVE ISSUES		
Remote Supervision		
019.098	Reported	By Professor Pahl that he had been asked by the Dean in SCEBE to prepare good practice guidance and/or training for remote supervision. He asked if there would be any developments University-wide
019.099	Discussion	Professor Steves replied that this was intended and also remote training for PGR students who will be teaching. Professor Pahl stated that he would be happy to share practice developed in SCEBE.
Extensions of time and funding		
019.100	Reported	By Professor Steves that a process had been drafted and, with the agreement of the Executive Board, the general direction of travel was agreed. However, there were funding implications and the funding to be allocated by the SFC was not yet known. This would impact on the scope of the process but EB were supportive and PGR students were a priority.
Remote working and available guidance		
019.101	Discussion	Members discussed resources available to support remote working. It was noted that there were resources available both internally and externally. Members cited the UKGCE resources as particularly useful. Professor Steves also referred to internal resources including work being done in SHLS on ethics and remote working.
Casual Hours and PGR Student employment		
019.102	Discussion	It was noted that while there may be opportunities for additional casual hours, this was not yet clear as 2020-21 budgets were not finalised. Members agreed that it was important that all PGR employment was managed and agreed with the Director of Studies and supervisors. Student hardship should be monitored and relevant signposting to available hardship funds.

RESEARCH DEGREE EXAM APPROVALS & AWARDS		
019.103	Received	A record of examinations and awards ratified since the previous meeting of RDC (RDC19/25/01).
UPDATED LIST OF PGRS REPRESENTATIVES		
019.104	Received	An updated list of PGR Student representatives (RDC19-19-01).
RPAB MINUTES		
019.015	Received	<p>The confirmed minutes of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSBS RPAB 18 December 2019 (RPAB/GSBS/19/25) 2. SCEBE RPAB 13 November 2019 (RPAB/SEBE/19.044) 3. SHLS RPAB 13 September 2019 (SHLSRPB/19/20) 4. SHLS RPAB 20 November 2019 (SHLSRPB/19/43) 5. SHLS RPAB 29 January 2020 (SHLSRPB/19/60)

Common/Senate/RDC/minutes/10June2020