Glasgow Caledonian University

Department of Governance

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE	
Minutes of the meeting held 2 October 2019	
Present:	Dr B. Ahmed, Professor K. Currie, Dr S. Hagan, Dr K. Halcro, Professor D. Harrison, Dr L. Gray (Chair), Professor O. Pahl, Dr B. Stansfield, Professor B. Steves
In attendance:	Ms D. Dickie, Dr G Poulter, Ms M.Daly, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)
Apologies:	Professor D. Edgar, Professor J. Harris, Dr M-A. Houston, Professor A. Klemm

MINUTES		
019.001	**Considered**	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee 12 June 2019 (**RDC18/23/01**).
019.002	**Resolved**	That the minutes be approved as correct record.

MATTERS ARISING		
Changes To The Research Degree Appeal Procedure Timescales (*Arising on 018.092)*		
019.003	**Reported**	By the Secretary that the University Research Committee had approved the changes. The proposal would now have to go to SAGE before submission to Senate.
PGR Student Representation (*Arising on 018.096*)		
019.004	**Reported**	By the Director of the Graduate School that Senate had approved the representation proposal from the Student's Association. Recruitment was ongoing.
PGR Degrees Fees (*Arising on 18.100*)		
019.005	**Reported**	By the Director of the Graduate School that the matter was ongoing in relation to the intricacy of writing up and continuation fees.
019.006	**Discussion**	Members queried if a student in continuation stage would revert to full fees if they did not complete within the continuation phase. The Director of the Graduate School said that in such cases it was likely there would be

		a request for extension of time and a decision based on whether further supervision was required.
		The matter was under discussion at Executive Board level.
019.007	**Resolved**	That the matter is revisited when there is clarity on Executive decisions.

GCU London Research Training *(Arising on 18.104)*

019.008	**Reported**	By the Director of the Graduate School that a training programme was now in place. There had been good discussions with GCUL students and staff and a complete training needs analysis had been undertaken. Access to the MRes had been resolved, via VC with developments planned for online provision.
		The DVC LT&SE had also visited and there had also been discussion with the PVCR. They had committed to covering costs incurred as a result of student/staff movement between Glasgow and London for PGR training purposes.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH GCU EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2019

019.009	**Considered**	A report on the results of the Postgraduate Research GCU Experience Survey 2019 (**RDC19/03/01**).
019.010	**Reported**	By Ms Daly that the survey was launched in May 2019. The response rate was 37% which was higher than the previous PRES response rate on 35%.
		There was a lot of detail in the paper but the headlines were that overall satisfaction was at 84%, with SCEBE showing a satisfaction rate of 88%, SHLS83% and GSBS 82%. This was also better than in 2017 PRES.
		11 themes were surveyed (outcomes are in table 2, p.3).
		Students were also asked why they chose GCU with availability of funds (37%), previous study at GCU (36%), reputation of supervisor (35%) and location (30%) the most common reasons.
		91% of respondents stated they had regular contact with their supervisory team. However with regard to supervisors' help in identification of training and development needs the satisfaction was lower (78% overall with GSBS at 70%).
		There was some variation between Schools on resources with 88% overall and the lowest scores being on *suitable work space* (76% for SCEBE).
		Research Community questions showed some variation, particularly in relation to the difference between feeling part of a community within their discipline and beyond their discipline. Within the discipline scored significantly higher in some subject areas (BIO – 90%, Ophthalmics – 82%, Building – 86%) but were much lower elsewhere (Management Studies and Sociology at 44 %). In general a proportion across all disciplines felt that feeling part of a community within their discipline was important.

| 019.011 | Discussion | Members were conscious that the outcome was, in general, much better than the results for the 2017 PRES. They asked if there were any indicators as to why.

Ms Daly stated that it was difficult to say from the data alone but with the survey planned to be more regular than PRES it would be interesting to note any trends.

Other members thought that PRES had questions students saw as not being applicable to them. Most members felt that the structure of the survey and the questions was much better than PRES.

Members discussed the research community outcomes. In particular it was noted that some subject areas did significantly better than others. Also noted was the discrepancy between how important it was to students (86%) and how they actually felt (64%). However members with experience of previous PRES surveys noted that 64% was quite a high score on this question. |
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| 019.012 | Resolved | That the survey outcomes be noted. |

ELIR 4 – UPDATE

| 019.013 | Considered | 1. An update in relation to the draft reflective analysis and specifically the section on the PGR student experience (**RDC19/04/01**).
2.Draft ELIR Quality Code mapping for Research Degrees (**RDC19/05/01**). |
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| 019.014 | Reported | By the Director of the Graduate School that this was the fourth iteration of ELIR. A draft reflective analysis had been written and was being scrutinised at the moment. This was the extract of the section on research degrees and it had already been circulated to research networks with some feedback having been received. Any feedback on this section could be made via the RDC secretary. |
| 019.015 | Resolved | That the extract be noted. |

RESEARCH STUDENT EXPERIENCE ACTION PLAN (REAP)

019.016	Considered	An updated REAP (**RDC19/09/01**)
019.017	Reported	By the Director of the Graduate School that the REAP was intended to provide a summary of Research Student Experience Action Planning that arises from Committees, Policy review, Thematic review, Graduate School and School Action planning. It would allow tracking of items and communications and actions. As members were aware, there had been a number of reviews – thematic reviews, audits, ELIR – over the past few years, as well as action plans arising from PGR surveys and the REAP attempted to draw all of this together in one place. The Graduate School plan was also included as a factor in PGR student experience.

The document presented was a draft but would feed into ELIR.

It was suggested that the Graduate School would have an overview for communications as well as general oversight through RDC. |

| 019.018 | Discussion | A member asked if the entry related to the teaching block accommodation was relevant given the refurbishment was completed at least 2 years ago. If necessary it could be recorded, in a more general sense, that there had been improvements to the research environment and there were ongoing planned improvements.

It was also queried why REF environment was included.   It was suggested that for REF narratives there needed to be a record of what has been improved although this could possibly be recorded as improvements to the research environment without specific reference to REF.

Another member commended the document but asked if there could be a prioritisation of actions. Other members agreed and thought alignment with Research Strategy kpis may be the most relevant way of prioritising.

The Director GS replied that it highlighted the volume of work expected of PGR-related staff and with the partnership model we have it also takes a lot of co-ordination. The REAP would mark achievements and allow us to see what was left to do. |
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| 019.019 | Resolved | That the revised REAP be structured to reflect priorities. (**Action: Director GS**) |

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW 2018/19

019.020	Considered	An overview report on Graduate School Researcher Development 2018/19 (**RDC19/07/01**).
019.021	Resolved	That the overview be noted.

PDP RESEARCH SKILLS FORM

019.022	Considered	A proposed update to the PDP research skills form (RDC19/08/01)
019.023	Reported	By the Director of the Graduate School that the paper was an update to the PDP form and replaced the previous key skills form. The form now aligned with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.
019.024	Discussion	Members asked if the new form was being rolled out to all students or only new registrations.

It was agreed that all new students should use the revised form and existing students could use either version. |
| 019.025 | Resolved | 1. That the updated form be approved.
2. All new students (2019-20 registration) should use the revised form.
3. Continuing students can use either existing or revised form. |

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT to URC

019.026	Approved	The Research Degrees Committee Annual Report (RDC19/02/01).

AOB		
PGR Information Systems		
019.027	**Reported**	By the Director of the Graduate School that as Artemis did not feed into Pure, Strategy and Planning had developed a workaround using ISIS to produce the HESA return. The HESA data would also form part of the REF2021 submission.
RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION & MEMBERSHIP UPDATED FOR 2019-20		
019.028	**Approved**	The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2019-20 (**RDC19/01/01**).
RESEARCH DEGREE EXAM APPROVALS & AWARDS		
019.029	**Received**	A record of examinations and awards ratified since the previous meeting of RDC (**RDC19/06/01**)
RESEARCH PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS		
019.030	**Received**	1. SHLS RPAB 10 April 2019 **(SHLSRPB/18/70)** 2. SHLS RPAB 26 June 2019 **(SHLSRPB/18/92)** 3. SCEBE RPAB 20 March 2019 (**RPAB/SEBE/18.89**)