GCU
Glasgow Caledonian
University

Department of Governance

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE		
Minutes of the meeting held 8 February 2017		
Present:		Professor A. Boateng, Mr C. Daisley, Dr L. Gray (Chair), Professor J. Harris, Mr A. Mandal, Mr B. Oyemomi, Dr B. Stansfield, Professor B. Steves, Ms M. Yakova (*vice* Ms J. Broadhurst)
In attendance:		Ms D. Dickie, Dr K. Halcro, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)
Apologies:		Professor D. Harrison, Professor B. Kumar, Dr N.Lombard, Professor O. Pahl, Professor J. Woodburn
016.049	**Considered**	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee held on 23 November 2016 **(RDC16/12/01).**
MINUTES		
016.049	**Considered**	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee held on 23 November 2016 **(RDC16/12/01).**
016.050	**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 016.042)*		
016.051	**Reported**	By the Secretary that the procedure was now in operational.
RESEARCH PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS (*Arising on RDCM 016.049*)		
016.052	**Reported**	It was reported by the Secretary that the RPAB minutes had been redacted as they contained potentially personal information which was not appropriate for wider sharing. In addition to this it may be necessary to give guidance to RPAB secretaries to consider RPAB minutes in a similar way to Assessment Board minutes.
IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PG RESEARCH STUDENTS AT GCU		

016.053	Considered	A verbal update by the Chair.
016.054	Reported	By the Chair that a standard form had been created and the implementation group would be convened in the near future to consider both the form and the processes that will be required. He had reported to the University Research Committee that the deadline for completing the implementation process was October 2017 intake. Between now and then there would be consultation and an effort to ensure that everyone was aware of what is required. More creative thinking would be required as well in order to develop the portfolio.
016.055	Discussion	One member asked if the Schools were all aware that PGRS were not obliged to take a teaching role. Professor Steves stated that she believed they should be aware but it was anticipated there would be additional communication to provide clarification following consultation with stakeholders.
016.056	Resolved	That the update be noted.
PROPOSED CHANGES TO PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE FRAMEWORK		
016.057	Considered	A proposal to introduce changes to the Professional Doctorate Framework arising from the 2016 revalidation (**RDC16/14/1**).
016.058	Reported	By Dr Halcro that the 2011 revalidation of Professional Doctorate Framework proposed a thesis word count of 60,000 words to bring it into line with sectoral practice. It was approved at 2011 Revalidation, but appropriate documentation was not submitted to Higher Degrees Committee to update the regulations at that time, leading to confusion and varying practice. Current guidance is to encourage 60,000 words but if a student wishes to pursue 80,000 words this is also accepted. Following revalidation in 2016, a revised proposal was approved as part of the validation. This is that the thesis will have a 60,000 word limit, comprising a 55,000 word thesis and 5,000 word self-reflective report. This change is to: a) More clearly differentiate the Professional Doctorate thesis from its PhD counterpart, a recurring source of confusion within GCU; b) Align thesis word count, 55,000 words to sectoral practice which promotes the norm of 50,000 – 60,000 words; c) Introduce a 5,000 word self-reflective report to enable the student to demonstrate how his/her studies have impacted on him/her learning, the student's firm and his/her industry; d) To replace where possible, one of the two academic examiners with a recognised, credible practitioner. This will strengthen the fundamental feature of the professional doctoral thesis that the it should impact on practice and theory.
016.059	Discussion	Members were reminded of the current regulations, which stated: *13.1 The text of the thesis/portfolio should normally not exceed the following length (excluding ancillary data):*

- *for a PhD or Prof.D in Science, Engineering, Art and Design   40,000 words*
- *or an MPhil in Science, Engineering, Art and Design 20,000 words*
- *for a PhD or Prof.D in Arts, Social Sciences and Education   80,000 words*
- *for a MPhil in Arts, Social Sciences and Education   40,000 words*

Where the thesis/portfolio is accompanied by material in other than written form or the programme of study involves creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the written thesis/portfolio should normally be within the range:

- *for a PhD/Prof.D 30,000 - 40,000 words*
- *for an MPhil   15,000 - 20,000 words*

Members were supportive of the change being implemented. There was further discussion on the timing of this implementation and whether it should be phased for new and/or current cohorts.

Dr Halcro stated that the intention was to apply to current students not yet at the dissertation phase as it could be considered advantageous to the cohort in comparison to the current regulations.

Members thought it would be prudent to consult the affected cohort with the option of continuing under the current regulations being available.

016.060	Resolved	1. That the Committee approves the principle of the proposed changes. 2. That Dr Halcro provides a description of phased implementation and accompanying consultation for possible approval by Chair's action. (**Action: K. Halcro**) 3. That the regulations and guidelines are updated in accordance with the change once it is approved.

AOB

Conference Attendance

016.061	Reported	That there had been complaints from students regarding misleading information regarding funding for conference attendance.
016.062	Discussion	By Dr Stansfield that there were a number of factors involved in accessing funds for conference attendance and more information would be required to pin down the source of confusion. Other members agreed and thought there could be legacy issues or other rumours affecting student perception. However there should be consistency where possible, subject to any funding terms and conditions.
016.063	Resolved	That Schools provide feedback on mechanisms currently used to allocate conference attendance funds (**Action: ADRs/SPGRTs**).

Subject specific components to PhD Programmes		
016.064	**Reported**	By Professor Boateng that some HEIs had introduced subject specific modules as part of PhD programmes and he asked if there had been any plans to introduce similar models at GCU.
016.065	**Discussion**	Members were not aware of any proposed models but agreed this may be something to consider as part of the revision of the regulations. However it was important to be clear about what was being considered, i.e. credit bearing modules as part of a PhD programme or discipline specific training which is provided but is not specifically part of a programme.
RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS AND COMPLETIONS		
016.066	**Received:**	A record of Examination Arrangements and Awards approved by RDC Chair's Action (**RDC16/13/01**).
RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINATION ARRANGMENTS		
016.067	**Received**	A record of Examination Arrangements approved by RPABs/Chair's Actions (**RDC16/11/01**).
RESEARCH PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS		
016.068	**Received:**	The confirmed minutes of: 1. SEBE RPAB 9 November 2016 (**RPAB/SEBE/16/53**). 2. SHLS RPAB 22 June 2016 (**SHLS/RPAB/15/49**). 3. SHLS RPAB 14 September 2016 (**SHLSRPAB/16/22**). 4. GSBS RPAB 28 September 2016 (**RPAB/GSBS/15/67**).