



Department of Governance

<b>RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>Minutes of the meeting held 12 February 2020</b>		
<b>Present:</b>	Dr B. Ahmed, Professor K. Currie, Ms S. Docherty, Dr K. Halcro, Professor D. Harrison, Dr M-A. Houston, Dr L. Gray (Chair), Professor A. Klemm, Dr B. Stansfield, Professor B. Steves	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms D. Dickie, Dr G Poulter, Mr R. Walker, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Dr S. Hagan, Professor J. Harris, Professor O. Pahl	
<b>MINUTES</b>		
<b>019.031</b>	<b>Considered</b>	Minutes of the meeting of the Research Degrees Committee 2 October 2019 ( <b>RDC18/23/01</b> ).
<b>019.032</b>	<b>Resolved</b>	That the minutes be approved as correct record.
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<b>PGR Degrees Fees</b> ( <i>Arising on 19.007</i> )		
<b>019.033</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By the Director of the Graduate School that the fees had been agreed and now needed to be published to the website. Studentships continue to be linked to the UKRI rates. Global Talent Awards had also been approved.
<b>GCU London Research Training</b> ( <i>Arising on 19.008</i> )		
<b>019.034</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By Dr Ahmed that there was now a calendar of training opportunities for GCU London students up and running and so far feedback was good. It was intended to continue refreshing the opportunities in the calendar.
<b>ELIR 4</b> ( <i>Arising on 19.015</i> )		
<b>019.035</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By the Director of the Graduate School that there would be ELIR Panel meetings in March 2020. PGR is an ELIR theme so members, colleagues and students may be asked to contribute. Key elements are likely to be how the PGRT role works, School refresh and GTA training.
<b>019.036</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By Ms Docherty that the fulltime officers and a number of students had participated in a mock ELIR.

<b>PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION OF STUDIES AND EXTENSIONS</b>		
<b>019.037</b>	<b>Considered</b>	An item discussing current practice in submitting RDC3s ( <b>RDC19/11/01</b> ).
<b>019.038</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By Ms Dickie that the number of requests were increasing and it was not possible to do backdated requests. There can be a substantial time lag between students failing to complete the RDC1 within the normal 1 month timescale and an RDC3 being submitted to suspend studies. RPABs were not frequent enough to deal with requests in a timely way.
<b>019.039</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Members discussed use of chair's actions to address the timeliness issue. There were numerous, and often very valid, reasons for the requests being outwith the timescales. The most obvious solution would be to add all time to an extension at the end of the normal completion time.</p> <p>It was also suggested that RPABs could be stricter with Directors of Study in relation to the paperwork.</p> <p>Other members replied that they were not aware that retrospective applications were not allowed. There were many individual circumstances which may lead to such a request.</p> <p>It was clarified that retrospective requests were ruled out due to lack of system (ISIS) flexibility. Members felt they would welcome guidance on the issue of suspension of studies. Another member informed the Committee that there have been cases where the student has withdrawn and re-registered later, due to individual circumstances and fitness to study. This had avoided some of the restrictions associated with suspension of studies.</p>
<b>019.040</b>	<b>Resolved</b>	Consult and bring back.
<b>CHANGES TO THE PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE FRAMEWORK</b>		
<b>019.041</b>	<b>Reported</b>	By Dr Halcro there had been a proposal from GSBS to move to a DBA model outside of the Professional Doctorate framework. This proposal had implications for the Professional Doctorate model as it currently stood and the other Schools were reviewing their provision as a result.
<b>019.042</b>	<b>Reported</b>	<p>By the Director of the Graduate School that she had raised concerns about the lack of consultation as the DBA was also a research degree and RDC had quality assurance responsibilities in relation to this type of programme.</p> <p>The paper tabled described the most recent situation and a number of options being considered for future provision.</p>
<b>019.043</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Dr Halcro clarified that the DBA was currently one strand of the Professional Doctorate framework. It was understood that the proposal would also incorporate some current Masters provision. Full details of the proposal were as yet unclear as documentation had not been circulated.</p> <p>Other members agreed that there would be impact on the sustainability of the Professional Doctorate Framework as it was currently configured, as was highlighted in the tabled paper. It was thought that GSBS accounted for around 45% of the total student numbers for the professional</p>

		doctorate.
019.044	Resolved	That the Chair seeks ( <b>Action: Chair RDC</b> ).
<b>RESEARCH STUDENT EXPERIENCE ACTION PLAN (REAP)</b>		
019.045	Considered	An updated REAP ( <b>RDC19/09/02</b> )
019.046	Reported	<p>By the Director of the Graduate School that the actions had now been collated into 1 table. This will better allow tracking of the status of all actions. She informed members that she thought this should be a biannual review item for RDC in order to monitor progress and intervene where necessary. It would also be useful to maintain for future reviews, such as the ELIR or any other quality assurance mechanisms. A status update column had been added and this was colour-coded.</p> <p>Completed actions were in the 2018-19 table and current/ongoing actions in the 2019-20 table.</p>
019.047	Discussion	<p>As the paper had been tabled members had been unable to scrutinize the content. Professor Steves asked members to discuss the format only at this stage. Members could take time to consider the content provide any feedback or ask questions outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Members felt that it was a useful document and asked about timing of feedback and reviews.</p> <p>Professor Steves thought there should be 2 reviews per year e.g. end of academic session plus a mid term review.</p> <p>A member asked a specific question in relation to the status of Artemis and the ability to produce letters.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the ongoing status of Artemis was a concern but that this was being examined by Information Services.</p>
019.048	Resolved	That the overview be noted.
<b>PGRS HESA NUMBERS 2018-19</b>		
019.049	Considered	The 2018-19 HESA PGRS numbers return ( <b>REC19/11/01</b> ).
019.050	Reported	By the Secretary that the report had already been to the University Research Committee. The report provided a comparison of data from 2011 through to July 2019.
019.051	Discussion	<p>A member asked if it was possible to disaggregate the data by School. Professor Steves replied that it was possible to disaggregate using the Dashboard on HESA research data. The data was categorised by REF unit of assessment but the dashboard would soon be enhanced to include subdivisions by School.</p> <p>Mr Walker informed members that the current dashboard required <i>Tableau</i> software to be downloaded but the web-based dashboard being developed would not require any additional downloads.</p>

019.052	Resolved	That the 2019-20 data be reported to the Committee when available.
<b>PROPOSED UPDATE TO CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION FORM (RDC8)</b>		
019.053	Approved	A proposed update to the RDC8 form ( <b>RDC19/13/01</b> ).
019.054	Discussion	A member asked if other members were aware of any HEIs stopping the examination process if the supervisors do not agree the candidate is ready.  Members were aware of this happening elsewhere but it was very unusual. Also it was unlikely to be successful if contested by the candidate.
<b>AOB</b>		
<b>SPGRT in GSBS</b>		
019.055	Reported	By the Director of the Graduate School that the SPGRT in GSBS was stepping down from the role. The current role profile required someone of Reader or Professor level which limited the selection and ruled out many experienced senior lecturers. According to Athena Swan analysis women candidates were more likely to follow a senior lecturer career pathway so it may also be ruling out good women candidates.
019.056	Resolved	That the role profile be updated to reflect these concerns ( <b>Action: RDC Secretary</b> ).
<b>RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION &amp; MEMBERSHIP UPDATED FOR 2019-20</b>		
019.028	Approved	<i>The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2019-20 (RDC19/01/01).</i>
<b>GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT MID-TERM REVIEW</b>		
019.053	Received	A mid-term review of researcher development activities provided by the Graduate School ( <b>RDC19/12/01</b> )
<b>RESEARCH DEGREE EXAM APPROVALS &amp; AWARDS</b>		
019.029	Received	A record of examinations and awards ratified since the previous meeting of RDC ( <b>RDC19/14/01</b> ).
<b>RESEARCH PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS</b>		
019.030	Received	1. GSBS RPAB 13 March 2019 ( <b>RPAB/GSBS/18/74</b> ) 2. GSBS RPAB 26 June 2019 ( <b>RPAB/GSBS/18/89</b> ) 3. GSBS RPAB 25 September 2019 ( <b>RPAB/GSBS/18/108</b> )