



Confirmed

Research Degrees Committee

Wednesday 10th March 2021

11am – 1pm

Minutes

Present Members: Professor David Bogle (Chair); Dr Helen Matthews; Ms Elizabeth Halton; Dr Sam Smidt; Ms Helen Notter; Professor Stephen Marshall; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou; Dr Benet Salway; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Mr Naheem Yaqub, Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Alan Ingram; Professor Jill Norman; Dr Andrew Stoker; Dr Patti Adank; Professor Alex Mills; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Tania Monteiro; Dr Jane Perryman; Dr Richard Bucknall.

Attendees: Ms Bella Malins (for item 4); Mr Gary Smith (for item 5); Mr Simon To (for item 6); Mr Dan Derricott (observer), and Mr Darren Payne (secretary).

Part I: Preliminary Business

18. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

18.1. Approved - the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2020.

19. Matters Arising from the Minutes

19.1. Regulations for PGR students supervising Taught students (minute 7.7, 20-21): it was noted that the Doctoral School was taking this forward, and that an update would be provided at the June 2021 meeting of RDC.

20.

20.1. It was noted that Brexit had impacted fees for EU students with UKRI now allowing international recruit up to a ~30% cap as a result. The Doctoral

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School had secured tuition fee support for up to 130 students via a paper which was approved at SMT. 103 of these awards had been allocated to programmes as of March 2021. Allocations of awards would be done annually, but the scheme was only confirmed for two years for the moment

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Part II: Matters for Discussion

20.6. **MRes-MPhil-PhD Application and Admissions Annual Report**

20.7. Received – the paper at RDC 2-01 (20-212 Tf1 0 0 1 291.65 705.22 Tm0 g0 G[])TJETQq0.0

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21. MPhil/PhD upgrade and submission data

- 21.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-02 (20-21). The Head of Student Data Services introduced the item which summarised the MPhil/PhD upgrade and submission data at UCL.

- 21.2. It was noted that submission rates by cohort of entry were: 66% in 2013/14; 63% in 2014/15; and 57% in 2015/16. However, it was noted that for this latest cohort there were still approximately a quarter of students who could potentially submit so this figure would likely level out by the end of cycle.

- 21.3. The Head of Student Data clarified that the IOE were not separated by Department in this report, but that for 2017/18 cohorts onwards, this would be split out.

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appreciated the support and availability of resources and staff. However, there had been some issues raised with value for money, lack of access to facilities, and fees & funding which had been raised by PGR students much more than Taught students.

21.10. PRES 2021 was discussed. It was raised whether holding the PRES survey during Covid-19 would mean fewer students would respond. It was also noted that this PRES would have an additional Covid-19 section.

22. Generic issues arising from Joint Examiner Reports

22.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-04 (20-21). The item summarised the generic issues raised across all Faculty's Joint Examiner Reports.

22.2. It was noted that the online experience had proven to be both positive and robust during Covid-19, which was widely seen as a good outcome given the short timespan required to implement remote working. It was highlighted that the number of student complaints had actually gone down in comparison to this time last year. This was seen as an affirmation that the online experience had overall been positive.

22.3. One concern raised was the quality of the thesis that examiners were receiving, e.g. having issues such as overly long introductions. It was raised that students have struggled to get onto thesis writing courses due to lack of capacity. The Doctoral School noted that this would be looked into as it is an issue that is raised frequently.

22.4. Self-

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- 24.4. It was highlighted that the programme had an unusual mix of taught and research elements. “Taught” elements on the programme were mostly modelled on provision by departments similar to taught students undertaking a dissertation but with it being examined by research degree regulations. The MPhilStud would therefore adopt the language of ‘Training Modules’ for compulsory elements, and ‘Research Specialisation’ for optional elements with both being delivered similar to Taught elements. RDC was generally comfortable with this given the financial consequences of declaring them to be specifically ‘Taught’ elements.
- 24.5. MPhilStud supervisor load was noted as another area this differed – current practice was that MPhilStud students do not count towards the overall Supervisor load. Load is guided by Supervisors based on their overall load beyond MPhilStud students. This could also have an impact on examiners when students then go up to the Doctorate, so this may need to be looked into further as a potential issue.
- 24.6. It was noted that the structure and how the programme is presented could be reviewed. It was suggested that potentially the MPhilStud could be a standalone programme modelled as a PhD with an integrated masters.

25. Electronic submission of final corrected thesis

- 25.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-07 (20-21). The Deputy Director (Doctoral School) introduced the item which was an update on an item which had been

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Part III: Other Business for Apprt III: