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RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 15 October 2014

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Steven Bloch;
Dr Donna Brown; Ms Mariana Ceccotti; Mr Ben Colvill; Professor Alison Diduck;
Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Dilly Fung; Dr Stephen Marshall; Ms Helen Notter; Dr Blandine Poulet;
Dr Benet Salway; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Joy Sleeman; Dr Dave Spratt

Reported:

- 3B.3 The Director of CALT reported that there had been a good level of attendance among PGTAs for the UCL Arena One scheme which had started in September 2014, and that participants had provided some constructive feedback. The fact that the Arena One scheme would involve the coming together of PGTAs from different disciplines and backgrounds in regular group sessions would help to provide a framework going forward for keeping UCL informed of the experiences of PGTAs and for flagging any generic issues.

Discussion:

- 3B.4 With reference to the summary at [RDC 1-02 \(14-15\)](#), RDC agreed that it would be important for FGTs to continue to investigate and address any instances where PGTAs were not being paid by UCL departments, with reference if necessary to the recently revised details of the UCL PGTA Scheme, at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/post_grad_ta_scheme.php.
- 3B.5 While it was noted that the IQR process remained one of the main mechanisms for flagging any issues relating to the PGR student experience, this only took place quinquennially. While some members of RDC queried whether the AM process could be used to pick up any issues relating to the PGR student experience, it was noted that this process only currently related to taught programme provision. However, it was understood that the AM process was due to be reviewed by Academic Services during 2014-15, and it was agreed in light of this that the suggestion of this process being widened to encompass PGR programme provision might be considered as part

Reported:

- 5.2 While no substantive generic issues in relation to PGR programmes and the research training environment had been raised in the 2012-13 round of IQRs, a number of recommendations of IQR teams had once again pertained to PGTA training and teaching opportunities. It was hoped that the recent advent of the CALT Arena One scheme would help to address some of the issues in this area that were flagged annually through the IQR process.
- 5.3 The use and application of the Research Student log had also featured among some of the recommendations made by some IQR teams. It was noted that Doctoral School and ISD colleagues were currently in the process of exploring ways of making the Research Student log more flexible so that it could be used across different research degree programmes without the need to create specially tailored versions to accommodate the needs of specific programmes.
- 5.4 The Chair thanked all RDC members who had served on IQR panels during 2012-13 and the latest academic session. The need to ensure that appropriate coverage was given by the IQR process to the PGR student environment remained an important concern.
- 6 ANNUAL REPORT ON MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF FACULTY COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING PGR STUDENT PROVISION

Received:

- 6.1 The report at RDC 1-04 (14-15), introduced by the RDC Secretary.

Discussion :

- 6.2 While the report at RDC 1-04 (14-15) had not identified any generic issues arising from PGR student matters that had been considered by Faculty committees, some members noted that the Joint Faculty Research Students Committee for Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences had raised concerns around the timeframe for submission of PhDs and the fact that owing to time constraints, some PhD theses were being submitted regardless of whether or not they were completed. RDC noted that the scrutiny given by Research Councils to institutional PhD submission rates had contributed to this issue, but that it would be important for both faculties to continue to monitor the situation with a view to determining whether any other factors, eg student work commitments outside their studies, needed to be taken into account.

Action: Dr Joy Sleeman/Dr Benet Sald

Reported:

- 7.2 The numbers of UCL PhD, MD(Res) and EngD awards, research degree submissions and examiner nominations during the 2012-13 reporting period had all increased

