



Research Degrees Committee

28 October 2021

Confirmed Minutes

Present Members: Professor David Bogle (Chair); Dr Helen Matthews; Elizabeth Halton; Dr Sam Smidt; Helen Notter; Professor Simon Banks; Naheem Yaqub, Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Alan Ingram; Professor Jill Norman; Dr Andrew Stoker; Professor Alex Mills; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Tania Monteiro; Dr Richard Bucknall; Dr Josephine Barnes; Dr Yasminah Beebeejaun; Dr Richard Freeman; meetings this Academic Year could be held in person if the members so wished.

- 1.2 It was noted that RDC will continue to report to Academic Committee.
- 1.3 It was noted that RDC constitution had not changed even though there had been an external review of the UCL committee structure last academic year.
- 1.4 It was noted that Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou had stepped down from RDC prior to this meeting. It had been confirmed that a new Academic Board representative would be elected during Academic Board's usual committee representative elections in the spring.
- 1.5 **Approved** – the Terms of Reference, Membership and Constitution 2021-22.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 2.1 **Approved** - the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2021.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- 3.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2021.

4 Chair's Business

- 4.1 The Chair updated RDC on the relationship between RDC and the Research, Innovation and Global Engagement Committee (RIGEC). While RDC had no budgetary responsibility it could endorse bids for resources, and this would be done through submitting the relevant minutes to RIGEC. The Chair of RDC would also discuss any such matters directly with the Chair of RIGEC as RIGEC reported to the new University Management Committee that was responsible overseeing the allocation of resources across UCL.
- 4.2 The Doctoral School noted that Phase 2b of allocating the final UKRI funding to support students in the pandemic was still ongoing. Standard stream of Phase 2b had been run and results were to be announced imminently. The

- 4.6 Students concerned about guidance provided by different supervisors on self-plagiarism had

Department for the programme was necessary. Developing joint and double PhDs required significant effort as, in addition to designing the programme itself, all supporting student administration processes of both institutions also needed to be looked at and the institutions had to agree how they would be managed jointly.

- 6.3 RDC discussed the requirement for this double PhD to have an article submitted for publication in a scientific journal before taking the thesis examination. The FGT for Engineering Sciences noted that this had been discussed extensively with PUC and it was a compromise between each institution's standard requirements as PUC's standard regulations stipulated that students needed to have had an article published before examination.
- 6.4 **Approved** – the double research degree proposal at RDC 1-03 (21-22).

7 Discussion paper: Upgrade requirements

- 7.1 Received - the paper at RDC 1-04 (21-22). The Deputy Director (Doctoral School) introduced the paper which set out proposed updates to the upgrade requirements.
- 7.2 It was noted that the proposed upgrade requirements would not be included in the regulations but would be considered as guidance. The proposed updates aimed to address feedback received from Faculty Research Degree Committees.
- 7.3 RDC discussed the following main points:
- 7.3.1 The roles of the Department Graduate Tutor (DGT) and principal and subsidiary supervisor needed clarity, especially the role of the DGT in the upgrade examination process.
 - 7.3.2 Faculties had different views on when the upgrade process should take place. It was agreed that the purpose of the upgrade process should be clearly articulated in the guidance for use across the institution as the timing of the upgrade process was linked to its purpose. If the purpose of the upgrade was to not assess the research per se but the student's potential and ability to complete their research project, the timing of the upgrade was not dependent on the stage of the student's research.

- 8.5 RDC agreed to recommend the continuation of the ISAD scheme going forward.

9 Updated CRS and Fee Reduction Regulations

- 9.1 Received - the paper at RDC 1-06 (21-22). The Deputy Director (Doctoral School) introduced the item which was a draft for RDC to comment on regarding Completing Research Status (CRS) and the fee reduction regulations.
- 9.2 RDC noted that the updates to the regulations were aimed to address confusion about how students' transfer to CRS took place and what the related tuition fee arrangements were.
- 9.3 RDC discussed the following main points:
- 9.3.1 Whilst it was recognised that regulations should not be written based on funding bodies' approach, it was agreed that submitting the thesis should always be possible within the advertised programme length, for example for EDI reasons.
 - 9.3.2 Moving to a unified approach to research degree length (4 years) could be an issue for some disciplines. However, the regulations would make it clear that submission early would be possible which should mitigate any issues.
 - 9.3.3 Any new regulations would be implemented from October 2022 for new students only.
- 9.4 Members of RDC were invited to send comments to the Deputy Director (Doctoral School)

12 Anonymised Suspension of Regulations Report (since November 2020)

12.1 Received - the paper at RDC 1-09 (21-22).

**13 New and Amended Programmes and Qualifications Approved by RDC
Chair's Action**

13.1 Received - the paper at RDC 1-10 (21-22).

**14 Confirmed minutes of the Academic Partnerships Review Group for
Joint and Double Research Degrees**

14.1 Received – the papers at RDC 1-11 (21-22).

Anniina Wikman

Secretary to RDC

Senior Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships)

Academic Services

22 November 2021