

Research Degrees Committee

7 March 2023

Confirmed Minutes

Present Members: Professor David Bogle (Chair); Hamza Ahmed; Professor Simon Banks; Dr Josephine Barnes; Professor Yasminah Beebeejaun; Professor Annie Britton; Dr Andrew Flinn; Elizabeth Halton; Professor Jane Holder; Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Dr Rebecca Lindner; Professor Tania Monteiro; Professor Jill Norman; Helen Notter; Dr Ruth Siddall Paula Speller; Professor Dave Spratt; Dr Andrew Stoker and Professor Stan Zochowski.

Attendees: Dr Richard Freeman (deputy for Professor Perryman); Bella Malins (for Minute 21); Dr Benet Salway (for Minute 23); Simon To (for Minute 27); Hannah Swallow (for Minute 28) and Matthew Redmond (Secretary).

Apologies for absence: Emma Francis; Professor Jane Perryman.

Part I: Preliminary Business

18. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 18.1. **Approved** – the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2022 (RDC Minutes 1-17, 31.10.2023) at paper RDC 2-01 (22-23).
- 18.2. It was confirmed that Dr Andrew Flinn would be acting as the member for Social and Historical Sciences during term 2 in addition to Arts and Humanities. The membership will be revised to reflect this.
- 18.3. RDC welcomed the following new member, Emma Francis, Research Students Officer.

19. Matters arising from the minutes

- 19.1. Minutes 3.1

our PRES results in this area (UCL in bottom quartile as of PRES 2021). This would include considering a 4-year PhD structure with no completing research status, registration for PhD status (rather than MPhil) at the outset, and introduction of annual or more frequent reviews to replace upgrades. The group's intention is to bring forward these matters for full consultation by RDC throughout the 2023/24 academic year.

- 22.3. It was noted that the current focus had been on PhDs, but that other types of doctoral programmes would be reviewed in due course to ensure consistency between regulations, with programme specific amendments where needed.

23. Revised Regulations on the Requirements for Award of PhD or EngD

- 23.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-04 (22-23) containing amendments to the regulations for the award of PhD or EngD. These amendments had been proposed to ensure that there was consistency between the regulations and the PhD report form provided to examiners and subsequently students.
- 23.2. The key amendments and rationale for changes were highlighted to the RDC. It was clarified that the form was designed to act as guidance to examiners and that not every item on the form needed to be marked off for the PhD to be recommended, provided examiners were satisfied the award requirements had been met overall. Work would be carried out to ensure this was clear within the form, and changes would be brought back to RDC if required.

Action: Helen Notter to take forward revisions to Joint Examiner Form.

- 23.3. It was noted that changes would be implemented from September 2023 in-line with normal practice for the introduction of new or amended regulations.
- 23.4. **Approved** – the paper at RDC 2-04 (22-23).

24. Guidance on the Award of a Posthumous PhD Degree

- 24.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-05 (22-23) containing guidance on the award of Posthumous PhDs for consideration and approval by RDC.
- 24.2. A guidance document was considered by RDC relating to ensuring any PhD award made posthumously meets expected standards. It was highlighted that if a posthumous award was required, work already submitted to supervisors could be evaluated to support consideration of whether a PhD would have been awarded. It was noted that the guidance would be more relevant where a student had already completed a thesis, as opposed to when they are in the writing-up stage of a PhD.

- 24.3. It was clarified that any taught elements of a PhD award would need to be considered by the relevant Board of Examiners, in the normal way for posthumous awards, and would not therefore come under the guidance.
- 24.4. **Approved** – the paper at RDC 2-05 (22-23).
- 24.5. Through discussion of the paper a query was raised regarding whether the examiners are permitted to confer on a thesis pre-

worse experience overall, whilst supervision was highly ranked amongst all groups reporting a positive experience overall.

- 26.3. There was agreement amongst Members that support for students with disabilities and students who require reasonable adjustments via the Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SoRA) procedures, should be considered further and that there was existing practice which could be adopted in relation to this. For example, the Student

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

29. Anonymised Suspension of Regulations report since October 2022

29.1. Received – the paper at RDC 2-09 (22-23).

30. New and Amended Programmes and Qualifications Approved by RDC Chair's Action

30.1. Received - the paper at RDC 2-10 (22-23).

31. Report on Research Degree Administration & Examination Statinaicati 2.2 ()0.3 (m)6.4 (i))R2t 1.