RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 17 June 2015

M I N U T E S

Present:
Professor David Bogle (Chair)
Mr David Ashton; Dr Steve

33   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see Minutes 34, 35, 37 and 38 below]*

34   UCL ACADEMIC MANUAL 2015-16
[RDC Min.25, 11.03.15]

Received:

34.1   The final proposals for the new UCL Academic Manual 2015-16, including:

   i.   At <u>RDC 3-02, (14-15)</u>, proposals for a new UCL Academic Partnerships Framework, introduced by the Academic Standards and Quality Manager.

   ii.   At <u>RDC 3-03, (14-15)</u>, proposals for a new UCL Qualifications and Credit Framework, introduced by the Director of Academic Services.

Reported:

34.2   Following approval of the proposed policy for academic partnerships by EdCom and RDC at their March 2015 meetings and the subsequent approval of the governance framework for this by EdCom at its April 2015 meeting, <u>RDC 3-02, (14-15)</u> set out the proposed governance and regulatory framework and supporting processes for   academic partnerships with other organisations which involved or contributed to the award of UCL credit and/or qualifications.

34.3   The proposed framework recognised the structure for international partnerships that had been included in the Global Engagement Strategy (see Minute 39 below).
attention was drawn to the fact that the proposed framework also recognised that UCL had a number of DTCs, and proposed that any specific arrangements within these bodies that fell under the definition of academic partnerships would be covered by the terms of the framework and would need to be developed accordingly.

34.4   sed framework, the underlying detailed procedures and proformas to support the relevant processes would be developed in consultation with colleagues across UCL. Terms of reference and membership for a cross-committee forum, which would comprise representatives of EdCom and RDC as well as of other stakeholder UCL departments, would also be developed with a view to ensuring collaboration between EdCom and RDC in scrutinising future proposals for academic partnerships. It was also noted that the terms of reference of other UCL committees would need to be amended -0.045(v)11(i)5(e)-846.07 -4(he).04ET 0 0 1 426.

programme concerned, *eg* a student had commenced a PhD at another HEI and wished to transfer to a UCL PhD programme.

Discussion:

34.7   The following main points were noted during discussion:

The sections in the UCL Academic Partnerships Framework at RDC 3-02, (14-15) pertaining to Faculty Management Framework (p11) and Procedure for approval of new academic partnership (p14) should be expanded to include reference to the procedures and committees at Faculty level that would also give oversight to academic partnerships;

The paragraph pertaining to academic partnerships and DTCs in section 6 of the Framework document at RDC 3-02, (14-15) should also preferably make reference to the other areas of UCL in addition to UCL Research Services that were involved in developing and establishing DTCs (*eg* Doctoral School, Student Administration);

It would be important in developing and establishing new DTCs to ensure that there was clarification from the outset around the administration and management of student records for PGR students who were based in DTCs, particularly in respect of students moving between institutions, through engagement with SRS. It would also be important in this context to keep under review UCL procedures and regulations around PGR student engagement monitoring;

It would be advisable to keep a watching brief over the UCL committee structures that would be responsible for   in order to ensure that there was clarity and transparency around responsibilities and reporting arrangements, and that these continued to be fit for purpose;

With reference to the list of PGR qualifications at section 1.3 of RDC 3-03 (14-15), the following qualifications were no longer offered by UCL: Doctor in Speech and Language Therapy (DSLT); Doctor of Medicine (MD);

It would be desirable for the PGR qualification descriptors at section 3.3 of RDC 3-03 (14-15) to include a separate descriptor for the MPhil award, as this was recognised as a research qualification in its own right rather than just a progression point or exit award;

Some members of RDC suggested that the section on advanced entry to research programmes at section 5.6 of RDC 3-03 (14-15) should explicitly state that i) RPL would not be permitted for advanced entry to CRS status and ii) that applicants for RPL for advanced entry to research programmes would not be considered unless they had received research supervision for a minimum amount of time, *eg* one year.

RESOLVED:

34.8   That the proposals for a new UCL Academic Partnerships Framework and a new UCL Qualifications and Credit Framework at RDC 3-02 (14-15) and RDC 3-03 (14-15) respectively be approved subject to consideration being given to the various points raised by RDC at Minute 34.7 above and further amendment of the documents as appropriate.

ACTION: Academic Services officers

35   REVIEW OF THE PGR ACADEMIC REGULATIONS 2015-16
[RDC Min.25, 11.03.15]

Received:

35.1   At <u>RDC 3-04 (14-15)</u>, proposals for the redevelopment of the PGR academic regulations during 2015-16, introduced by the Director of Academic Services.

35.2   At <u>RDC 3-05 (14-15)</u>, a report on the regulations applicable to the UCL Institute of Education for MPhil/PhD students who registered prior to 2015-16 and for those registering from 2015-16 onwards, introduced by the Director of Student Administration.

Reported:

35.3   RDC had at its previous meeting on 11 March 2015 received outline proposals for the -15 and 2015-16. The paper at <u>RDC 3-04 (14-15)</u> presented proposals for the management and coordination of the review and re-drafting of the PGR sections of the Regulations.

35.4   A key objective of the review would be to ensure that all regulations and associated guidance notes *etc* were written clearly and plainly, and that documents and websites were designed to help staff and students to find the right information as quickly and easily as possible. It was proposed that the review should be overseen by a working group of RDC convened by the Chair of RDC; and that a second RDC working group should be established to look at the specific detail and re-wording of the regulations themselves, and to ensure that staff and students across UCL were consulted on any proposed changes. The working groups would report to RDC throughout the year, with the aim of submitting final regulations for approval to the June 2016 meeting of RDC, and publicising the new regulations to staff and students in September 2016.

35.5   The report at RDC 3-05 (14-15) set out

Discussion:

36.3   The content of the draft strategy at RDC 3-01 (14-15)

36.5   That the Chair of RDC give consideration to the comments and suggestions raised during discussion and noted at Minute 36.4 above in developing subsequent drafts of the strategy document at <u>RDC 3-01 (14-15)</u>.

ACTION: Professor David Bogle

37   UCL OVERSEAS CAMPUSES

Received:

37.1   At <u>RDC 3-06 (14-15)</u>, a data report on the profile of PGR students at UCL overseas campuses.

37.2   A report on the run-out plans for PGR students at UCL Australia from the Faculty Graduate Tutor for Engineering Sciences (filed with these Minutes as <u>RDC 3-10 (14-15)</u>).

Reported:

37.3   After 31 December 2017 UCL Australia would cease its stand-alone presence. In the meantime, UCL Australia was working closely with TEQSA to ensure that their requirements regarding changes that will impact on the ability to meet the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011 were met.

37.4   Currently there were five PGR students whose official enrolment was expected to extend beyond the end of 2017. All five students had primary supervisors who were currently full-time academic staff at UCL Australia, and all five were in the process of having discussions with the Departmental Graduate Tutor and with the Departmental Manager concerning their future studies with a view to identifying outcomes that would enable the students to complete their research degrees in a manner that was acceptable to them, that was feasible in terms of implementation and that met all necessary quality standards. A more detailed report on these plans and their implications would be submitted to RDC Autumn Term 2015 meeting.

37.5   Work was also being undertaken by the UCL Faculty of Engineering Sciences to identify areas of risk with regard t0 0 1 373.03 40

positive force in light of the encouraging number of female students who had been appointed to prominent positions following their studies.

RESOLVED:

37.7 That RDC receive at its next meeting an update report on arrangements and plans for PGR students based at UCL Australia.

ACTION: Dr Simon Banks

38 APPLICATIONS, OFFERS OF ADMISSION AND ACCEPTANCES TO MRES AND PGR PROGRAMMES
[RDC Min.21, 14-15]

Received:

38.1 At <u>RDC 3-08, (14-15)</u>, the latest PGR admissions data, introduced by the Director of Access and Admissions.

Reported:

38.2 UK PGR student applications were up 6.7% on the previous , while EU PGR student applications were up by 28.8%. However, overseas PGR student applications had decreased by 10.8%. The increase in applications across all categories was attributable in part to an expansion in MRes programmes.

38.3 The number of offers being produced for UK PGR student applications was down by 15.3%, while offers for EU PGR student applications were up by 28.8% and Overseas offers were at the same level as the previous year. Offers to MRes applicants had increased across all categories, with the largest increase in the Overseas category, with 35.7% more offers being made.

38.4 UK application acceptances to PGR programmes had fallen by 1(da)3(t)-4(a)] TJETBTb[(p1 0 0 1 163.

39.2 Council had approved the new UCL GES at <u>RDC 3-07 (14-15)</u> following its away-day meeting on 30 March 2015. The extension of   practical impact globally through partnership activities was a central principle of the GES, and joint/dual research degree

39.3 Of the five strategic drivers outlined in t
research capability around the world would be particularly relevant to PGR students. This driver was also closely linked to the driver for UCL as a world-class research powerhouse to co-create wise solutions to enduring and emerging global problems and Grand Challenges.

39.4 While the Student Mobility Task and Finish Working Group had access to data on student mobility at PGT level, data sets for PGR student mobility had still to be defined in order to determine the current level of activity and to set targets.

Discussion:

39.5 Some members of RDC queried the distinction betwee
partnerships. The Chief of Staff Chief to the Vice-Provost (International) explained that
ould be cross-faculty collaborations involving two or more
UCL   would comprise a more finite number of
longer-term cross-   and
attention and be supported by strategic funding
be approved and monitored by Council. The gov
partnerships that was in the process of being drafted for approval by UCL Council would delineate the different types of partnerships that were proposed in the GES. It was expected that joint degree programmes would feat
institutional and anchor partnerships.

39.6 Some members of RDC argued that the use of metaphorical terms such as current
funding   sea funding
had not been made clear.

39.7 RDC noted its interest in research student international mobility and encouraged OfIA to actively consider this as part of its ongoing work in the area of student mobility. It was noted that the Student Records office in SRS already had in place a process for recording and monitoring PGR student study leave activity, and that information gleaned from this could help towards the collection of data on PGR student mobility.

RESOLVED:

39.8 OfIA colleagues would liaise with the Student Records Office as appropriate and report back to a future meeting of RDC on progress.

ACTION: Chief of Staff to the Vice-Provost (International)

40 SUSPENSIONS OF REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Received:

40.1 At <u>RDC 3-09 (14-15)</u>, the anonymised report on suspension of regulations for PGR Students.

41 ANY OTHER BUSINESS