CONFIRMED

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

18 October 2016

MINUTES

Present: Professor David Bogle (Chair),
Dr Simon Banks, Dr Elvira Bramon, Mr Ben Colvill, Mr Mark Crawford, Professor Kirsten Harvey, Dr Sally Leevers, Ms Helen Notter, Professor Martin Oliver, Mr Derfel Owen, Dr Hynek Pikhart, Dr Benet Salway, Dr Ruth Siddall, Dr David Spratt, Professor Kaila Srai, Dr Andrew Stoker,

In attendance: Dr Elsa Arcaute (vice Dr Stephen Marshall), Mr Rik Ganly-Thomas (vice Dr Virginia Mantouvalou), Ms Bella Malins for item 5, Professor Tania Monteiro (vice Dr Caroline Essex), Dr Sam Smidt (vice Professor Dilly Fung), Mr Simon To for item 7, Ms Lizzie Vinton (Secretary)

Apologies received from: Dr Virginia Mantouvalou, Dr Caroline Essex, Professor Dilly Fung, Dr Stephen Marshall, Professor Joy Sleeman, Professor Anthony Smith

However RDC noted that the data contrasted with the recent round of Faculty Strategic Plans which appeared to be aiming for modest growth, and agreed that this divergence needed further investigation.

4.4 RDC noted that the highly specialised nature of studentships often made marketing more complex, particularly because PGR applicants tended to contact Departments directly about available studentships. However it was also recognised that studentships only covered a proportion of UCL PGR places, and that non-studentship places would also benefit from more targeted marketing. RDC suggested that it might be beneficial to collate Departmental data to analyse enquiry-to-application ratios for both student groups.

4.5 **Agreed:** The Director of Access and Admissions agreed to work with individual Faculties to investigate these issues further and report back to RDC.

Action: Director of Access and Admissions, Faculty Graduate Tutors

5 INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS 2015-16

5.1 **Received:**

6.5 **Agreed:** RDC requested that the development plan include targeted actions to address the particular issues of recruiting PGR StARs at all levels.

Action: UCLU Representation and Campaigns Manager

6.6 RDC asked for a detailed breakdown of PGR StARs across faculties and departments, and of PGR StARs attendance at SSCCs, to assist the committee in identifying gaps, promoting the scheme and encouraging recruitment of Faculty and Departmental StARs in particular.

Action: UCLU Representation and Campaigns Manager

7 ANNUAL REPORT ON MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF FACULTY COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR PGR STUDENT PROVISION 2015-16

7.1 **Received:** The report at RDC 1-04 (16-17).

7.2 The report provided an overview of the operation of Faculty committees responsible for the oversight of PGR provision and a summary of the issues most commonly discussed. The committee noted that there appeared to be strong links between the matters discussed at RDC and local committees, including PGTA working hours, the Dilemma Game, the RDC Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, and diversity in the PGR student body.

7.3 The report suggested that the Faculty Teaching Committee Terms of Reference might be reviewed to more specifically refer to PGR committees, their membership and the specific items that they should cover in their agendas. It also asked RDC to consider whether there was adequate coverage of PGR issues where committees covered both taught and research student matters. Whilst the majority of Faculties now operated separate committees, the minutes of combined committees suggested that taught issues tended to dominate agendas, and that PGR students might be better represented by a separate committee. Those who had recently created separate committees had found it beneficial, that it had increased engagement from StARs and helped to address PGR-specific issues more thoroughly. It was however recognised that separate meetings would not be viable in faculties with limited PGR numbers.

7.4 **Agreed:** All faculties would be required to have a separate PGR Faculty Research Degrees Committee, with the exception of Laws where it was recognised that the numbers of PGR students would not make this viable. Separate terms of reference should be drawn up, and committees should include a broad representation of PGR students.

Action: Director of Academic Services

8 UCLU PGTA REPORT

8.1 **Received:** The report at RDC 1-08 (16-17)

Australia, and that clear plans were in place for every student