UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Wednesday 25 November 2015 at 2pm
in Parliament Hall

Present
Professor L Milne (Vice-Principal, Proctor) (Convener); Professor P Hibbert; Professor Alan Dearle; Dr J Palmer; Dr L Goddard; Professor T Meagher; Professor N Westwood; Dr I Duncan; Professor Mark Elliot (for J Davila); Professor M Costa-Gomes; Dr N Finney; Dr G Slomp; Dr P Reynolds; Dr J Keeling; Dr I Jentzch; Professor R Dilley; Dr B Carter (For P Brown); Mr Andrew Howe (for K Donachie); Mr E McCubbin; Mrs C Morris; Mrs E Ruskuc; Mr Joe Tantillo; Dr A Yechury; Mrs N Milton; Mrs E Fearnster; Mr L Schirmacher (for item 1); Dr S Evans (for items 4);

Apologies
Professor D Woollins; Professor D Crossman; Professor J Davila; Dr M Augustine; Dr R Bavaj; Dr J Mitchell; Mr P Brown; Mr K Donachie

1. Internship Report: The Burn and Student Reading Parties

PGRC received a report from Louis Schirmacher. The Burn offers a unique opportunity to increase student engagement and satisfaction through organised student outings, but was currently not as well utilised across the University as it could be. There was a brief discussion about how different Schools make use of The Burn and members were encouraged to think about how they might use it in the future, especially for postgraduate research students.

2. Minutes of 14 October 2015 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Supervisor Training: The minute stated “It was noted that although CAPOD provided a course for new supervisors there was a need for continuing support. A request was made not to refer to this as new supervisors training as it could discourage some colleagues from attending who might otherwise benefit from attending.”. It was clarified that the training was called PGR Supervisor Training and was listed as essential for all new supervisors of postgraduate research students, but is open to all supervisors.

3. Website Update

PGRC received an update on the redevelopment of the University’s webpages, with a focus on postgraduate pages. The Digital Communications team was currently working with individual Schools to migrate local the PGT webpages to the new style with work expected to continue through to June 2016. Work on PGR content is still under design and discussion. Schools or staff members seeking additional training or support were encouraged to contact digitalteam@st-andrews.ac.uk.

4. Working Group Reports

PGRC received oral update reports from the following Working Groups.

Length of Study

A summary of key recommendations from the Length of Study Working Group was presented and discussed. The provisional recommendations from the Working Group included:
• a PhD would be broadly defined as four years’ of study (3 years plus a continuation year);
• after the continuation year, students could request up to one additional year of extension (ie five years’ maximum to complete a PhD);
• requests for extensions would be granted on a quarterly basis.

It was agreed that the Working Group consider:

• the difficulties quarterly reviews may create for overseas students applying for visas;
• linking the timing of quarterly extensions with progress review.

There was discussion about the appropriate fee levels for the continuation and extension years and it was noted that PGRC is not a body with powers to set fees. Any recommendation about fees would therefore be routed by the Proctor to the appropriate process for consideration and approval.

Progress Reviews

Preliminary recommendations from the Progress Reviews Working Group were presented and discussed. Key recommendations from the Group included:

• minor amendments to the policy to bring it in line with QAA guidelines;
• the introduction of a 4-tier review outcome chart;
• a revised MMS system that stores records by student rather than by year;
• increased guidance for Schools, students and reviewers.

Some members raised concerns about the changes to the review panel make-up and frequency of reviews for students in their extension year. The Working Group agreed to give further consideration to these concerns.

Fieldwork

Preliminary recommendations from the Fieldwork Working Group were presented and discussed. The key recommendation was for the continuation of reduced fees for students on fieldwork but that the reduced fee not be tied to part-time student status. Some PGRC members argued that students continue to engage in full-time academic work while on fieldwork. Members raised various concerns regarding the proposal and its implications for other policies and issues, including Location of Studies and students on Tier 4 visas. The Working Group was asked to give further consideration to these concerns and to consider overlap with the findings of the Length of Study and Progress Review Working Groups.

5. Papers for Information

Circulated and noted.

6. Discussion Topic

There was a discussion of PGR Tutor marking, and a concern raised by some tutors that the rate of pay was not adequate for the amount of time which they required to mark coursework. It was agreed that increased marking speed comes primarily from practice, but that some additional training and guidance could be provided for tutors. The Dean of Arts & Divinity invited Schools to share examples of good practice with him via email.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 2pm in Lower College Hall (tea/coffee available from 1:30pm).
## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
### ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Items: (25 Nov 15)</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report on The Burn and Student Reading Parties</td>
<td>• Consider ways to use The Burn more to increase PGR student engagement and satisfaction</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Update</td>
<td>• Schools seeking additional training/support with new webpages to contact digitalteam@</td>
<td>For noting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Length of Study Working Group | • Consider the difficulties quarterly reviews in extension year may create for overseas students applying for visa; consider linking the timing of quarterly extensions with progress review.  
  • Submit recommended changes to fee structure to the Proctor (route through the appropriate process for consideration and approval). | Length of Study WG |
| Progress Reviews         | • Give further consideration to the make-up of the review panel and the frequency of reviews for students in the extension year. | Progress Reviews WG |
| Fieldwork                | • Consider implications for other University policies, such as Location of Study, and other issues, such as students on Tier 4 Visas.  
  • Consider overlap with findings of the Length of Study and Progress Review Working Groups. | Fieldwork WG |
| Discussion Topic – Marking training for PGR Tutors | • Share examples of good practice with the Dean of Arts via email to deanarts@ | All DoPGs       |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Items: (14 Oct 15)</th>
<th>Actions (still pending)</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student Satisfaction Surveys | • Give thought about developing guidelines for Schools on how to communicate the value of the PRES to students and consider better ways of circulating survey link.  
  • Consider how the university might count good supervision towards promotion. | Proctor   
  Proctor                      |
| Discussion Topic – Supervisor Training | • Establish more guidance for internal and external Viva examiners | PGR Pro Dean |

Emily Feamster  
Postgraduate Administrative Officer  
30 November 2015