Queen Mary
University of London

Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary June – September 2016
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to **note** the executive summary of business considered by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB).
Points for Senate members to note and further information	This paper summarises business considered by RDPEB at meetings held in June – September 2016.
Questions for Senate to consider	Senate is asked **to note** the report.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	RDPEB has oversight of quality and standards issues relating to research degree programmes. The quality assurance framework is key to the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	
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RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND EXAMINATIONS BOARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meetings and membership

1. The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board meets monthly. The membership comprises:
   - Director of the Doctoral College [Chair]
   - Faculty Deputy Deans for Research (PGR)
   - One additional representative (a school/institute Director of Graduate Studies) from each Faculty

   The secretariat is provided by the Research Degrees Office. The Doctoral College Manager is in attendance.

Examinations Business

2. The Board:
   - considers and approves nominations for internal and external examiners for research degrees;
   - considers and approves outcomes of research degree examinations and views all examiners' reports;
   - considers and makes decisions on applications to interrupt studies and extensions to the thesis submission deadline;
   - approves awards for research degrees on behalf of Senate.

   Decisions are recorded in the minutes of the monthly meetings of the Board.

Terms of Reference and Membership

3. At its meeting in September, the Board conducted the annual review of its terms of reference and membership. There are no changes. The terms of reference are annexed to this report.

Academic Regulations

4. The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board has completed the review of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees. The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board has put forward the final drafts to Senate for approval at this meeting.

Extensions to writing up period and/or maximum registration period and calculation of thesis submission rates

5. In exceptional circumstances where a student expects to be unable to submit their thesis by the end of their writing up period, the Board may permit an extension of the writing up period and the maximum registration period, setting a

new deadline for thesis submission. Students who submit their thesis within the authorised extension to the submission deadline have been treated internally as "on-time" thesis submission in calculating thesis submission rates for schools and institutes. However, it is becoming clear from recent grant applications and other external reporting requests that authorised extensions to the submission deadline are not always recognised by external bodies. Therefore the method of calculating "on-time" thesis submission rates has been reviewed and it has been agreed by the Board and VP-Research to treat all submissions with an extension beyond the four year (FT) or seven year (PT) deadline as late submissions in the figures calculated for the Council Annual Stocktake for the Indicator of Progress on thesis submission rates.

6. There has also been a change to the treatment of students who withdraw or are de-registered from their studies after the first year of study to include these in the base population of the calculations, again due to external bodies expecting institutions to include students who left the course after the first year of study in reporting.

7. For the 2010-11 research student cohort the QMUL "on-time" submission rate for full-time students was calculated as 93% (under the former definition).
    For the 2011-12 research student cohort the QMUL "on-time" submission rate for full-time students is calculated as 82% (under the new definition). If this calculation was repeated broadly in line with the previous method, the indicator would have been 91%.

PGR SITS project

8. The Board receives reports on the progress of the SITS project to develop workflows on MySIS to support processes operated by the Research Degrees Office and schools/institutes, replacing paper forms, and to improve access to data for students and staff. Changes to policy on research degree programmes and examinations raised by project developments are brought to the Board for discussion and decision.

9. The electronic workflow on MySIS for applications for students to transfer to writing-up status has been implemented.

10. Electronic workflows on MySIS are being developed for these processes:

    a. recording annual reviews of student progress in the second and third years of study for full-time students and equivalent for part-time students (currently only academic progression in the first year of study is recorded on MySIS);
    b. nomination of research degree examiners and examination entry.
        A proposal that research students should be able to submit their thesis electronically and that this submission should be taken as the formal examination entry (rather than the submission of the two bound paper copies) is being explored through the SITS PGR project.

Mary Childs, RDO, ARCS
Sept 2016

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Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board

Terms of Reference and Membership

2016-17

Terms of reference

- To consider and approve proposals for all new research degree programmes, including all proposals for collaborative research degree programmes;

- To consider amendments to the Academic Regulations for research degree programmes, and associated policies and guidance;

- To consider and approve nominations of internal and external examiners for all research degrees examinations;

- To monitor outcomes of research degree examinations and review examiners' reports;

- To approve awards of research degrees to individual candidates;

- To consider requests for interruptions of study and extensions to the maximum registration period/writing-up period;

- To monitor compliance with the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes within Schools and Institutes;

- To consider action to be taken following the publication of national guidance relating to research degrees, and the quality assurance and monitoring activity of external agencies such as QAA, HEFCE and research funders;

- To have oversight of the admission of students to research degree programmes.

Membership

- Director of the Doctoral College [Chair]

- Faculty Deputy Deans for Research (Research Programmes)

- One further representative from each Faculty [to be appointed for a term of two years. The appointment may be extended by one year to a maximum of three years with the approval of the Board.]

In attendance

- Assistant Academic Registrar (Research Degrees)
- Members of the Research Degrees Office
- The Doctoral College Manager