Queen Mary
University of London

Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary October-November 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 October-November 2016 concerning: • interruptions of study; • extensions to the period of registration; • PGR SITS project update; • PhD Studentship Terms and Conditions; • concurrent registration on academic programmes.
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.

Interruption of Study

The Board has reviewed the guidance and application form for interruption of study by research students.

The Board approved at its meeting in November an application to extend a current period of interruption of study requiring approval by the Academic Registrar as the student's previous period of interruption exceeds 24 months.

Extensions to writing up period and/or maximum registration period

3. The Board has reviewed the policy on extensions to the writing up period and/or maximum period of registration for research students. Previously extensions were normally only authorised for students who had writing up status, and the Board made a distinction between approved extensions that would be considered "on time" or "late" if the thesis were submitted within the new deadline. "On time" submissions were included in the internal timely submission indicator reported in the Annual Council Stocktake. The Board's previous report to Senate set out changes to the method of calculating "on-time" thesis submission rates, and the

decision 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.

4. This has led to the following changes in the approach taken to requests for extensions to the thesis submission deadline and programme end date:

    a. the primary purpose of an application for an extension to the period of registration is to set a new thesis submission deadline for the student, supported by a clear timetable for drafting and submitting the thesis by that date;
    b. all students who are not able to submit their thesis before their thesis submission deadline or whose deadline has passed should apply for an extension.

PGR SITS project

5. 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.

6. Monitoring academic progression. The development of the functionality to record on MySIS the outcomes of progress reviews and formal assessment of academic progression has been completed and was released at the end of November. Prior to this only academic progression in the first year of study was recorded on MySIS.

7. The next project concerns the 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 to the Research Degrees Office) is being explored through the SITS PGR project.

QMUL PhD Studentship Terms and Conditions

8. The QMUL PhD Studentship Terms and Conditions do not include a clause on residency. The purpose of the studentship is to enable students to study at QMUL and to live in London or at a suitable distance from London in order to conduct their studies at QMUL. The Board has agreed to include the following clause in the Studentship Terms and Conditions:

    "The award holder's main residence should be in London or suitably near to London to be able to attend regular supervision meetings in person with their supervisory team, attend doctoral training and research events as required by their school/institute, and to use the research facilities provided by QMUL."

Concurrent registration on two programmes

9. In the light of a recent request the Board has reviewed the Academic Regulations for concurrent study on more than one academic programme. Regulation 2.25 states that:

   "A person currently registered for a qualification of QMUL may not concurrently be registered for a degree, diploma, or certificate at any other institution, except with the express permission of Senate, or its delegated authority. Similarly, a student may not be simultaneously registered for more than one QMUL programme, except with the express permission of Senate, or its delegated authority." Approval is delegated to a Head of School or Institute.

   For research students, the Board wishes to amend the regulation at the next opportunity to require that applications from research students to register for another programme must be approved by the School/Institute Director of Graduate Studies and the Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board.

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