



### Senate

<b>Paper Title</b>	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary June to September 2014.
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>note</b> the RDPEB executive summary.
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	This paper summarises business considered by RDPEB at meetings held in June to September 2014.
<b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>	
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	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.
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	
<b>Authors</b>	Mary Childs, Research Degrees Office  On behalf of Professor Jon May, Chair of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board and Director of the Doctoral College
<b>Sponsor</b>	Professor Bill Spence, Vice-Principal (Research)

## 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 from each Faculty

The secretariat is provided by the Research Degrees Office.

#### Appointment of Examiners

2. The Board considers nominations for internal and external examiners for research degrees. From June to September 2014 the Board considered examiner nominations for 107 candidates for research degrees. 13 nominations (7%) were rejected or deferred pending receipt of further information.

#### Consideration of outcomes of research degree examinations

3. The Board considers outcomes of research degree examinations and views all examiners' reports. From June to September 2014 the Board considered the outcomes of 71 examinations:

Outcome	No.	%
Pass	7	9
Pass with minor amendments	51	72
Pass with major amendments	11	15
Re-enter for the examination	2	3
Recommend for MPhil (PhD entries)	0	0
Re-enter for MPhil (PhD entries)	0	0
Fail	0	0

#### Approval of awards for research degrees

4. The Board approves awards for research degrees on behalf of Senate. From June to September 2014 the Board approved 75 awards:

<b>Award</b>	<b>N</b>
PhD	72
MPhil	2
MD(Res)	1

## Policy and other matters

### 5. Terms of Reference and Membership

The Board has approved an addition to its terms of reference to include specific reference to its role in the quality assurance of research degree programmes. It has also agreed that the Doctoral College Manager should be invited to attend the Board to enhance communication between the Board and the Doctoral College Management Group. (The Assistant Academic Registrar (Research Degrees) already attends the Doctoral College Management Group.) The revised terms of reference are annexed to this report for approval by Senate.

### 6. Professional Doctorates.

The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board and the Taught Programmes Board have approved the terms of reference and membership of their new joint Professional Doctorates Committee following the approval of the new Professional Doctorates Framework by Senate in June. The Committee will scrutinise proposals for new professional doctorate programmes and make recommendations to the two boards. SMD is preparing two proposals to be considered in early autumn and these will be used as a pilot to finalise the application process, policy and guidance.

### 7. Projects for 2014-15

The Board has considered a plan of work for the coming academic year and has decided to focus on the following three main areas.

#### (a) Review of the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees

The Board is setting up a Task and Finish Group to review the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees and associated guidance. The main areas for review include: guidance for examiners; the Research Degrees Code of Practice; the regulations and guidelines for Interruptions of Study and Extensions of Registration; the requirements for research student progression at 6-9 months and 18-24 months for full-time students (and part-time equivalents); the regulations for Associate Students; and to review the regulations and guidelines on the work that may be included in the thesis for examination and the statement of originality.

#### (b) Collaborative doctoral programmes

In the light of discussions at Senate on the appropriate awards for collaborative doctoral degrees, the Board will review the collaborative provision policy on research degrees (with the Educational Partnerships Board) with a view to moving away from the dual degree arrangement and

developing a new policy on single PhD degrees jointly awarded.  
Recommendations will be made to Senate in due course.

(c) Quality assurance processes for research degrees

In collaboration with the Doctoral College Management Group, the Board will set up a small group to take forward actions identified in the mapping of QMUL doctoral degree provision with Ch.B11 on Research Degrees of the QAA UK Quality Code. This will link with plans to develop an annual review process for research degrees.

Mary Childs  
September 2014

## Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board

The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board considers matters relating to the quality and standards of research degree programmes. It has delegated authority from Senate to approve nominations of examiners for research degree examinations, and awards of research degrees.

*The additions to the terms of reference are highlighted.*

### 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 Regulations for research degree programmes, and associated policies **and guidance**;
- To consider 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]  
*Professor Jon May (HSS Deputy Dean (PGR))*
- Deputy Deans (PGR)  
*Professor Mike Watkinson (S&E)*  
*Professor Tim Warner (SMD)*
- One further representative from each Faculty [to be appointed for a fixed term of three years]  
*Dr Paul Allen (SMD)*  
*Dr Rainer Klages (S&E)*

*Professor Joad Raymond (HSS)*

*In attendance*

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