Queen Mary
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Senate

Paper Title	**Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary June to September 2015 & 2015/16 Terms of Reference**
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to **note** the RDPEB executive summary and **approve** its Terms of Reference.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	This paper summarises business considered by RDPEB at meetings held in June to September 2015.
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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Sponsor	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 (a school/institute Director of Graduate Studies) from each Faculty

   The secretariat is provided by the Research Degrees Office.

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 to extend the writing-up period;
   - 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 August, the Board conducted the annual review of its terms of reference and membership.
   a. On the terms of reference the Board agreed to amend "to consider nominations of internal and external examiners" to include the approval of nominations. Revised text to read:
      "to consider *and approve* nominations of internal and external examiners for all research degree examinations".
   b. On membership, the Board discussed the administrative burden on the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) from each faculty joining the Board for three years. It was suggested that to reduce the load on individuals and to make the business of the Board and its decision-making processes more transparent to all DGSs, a more frequent rotation of DGS membership on the Board might established. This is under discussion.

    c. The revised terms of reference are annexed to this report for approval by Senate.

    d. A recommendation on changes to membership will be brought to a future meeting of Senate.

Suspension of Regulations

4. The Board approved a request to suspend regulations to permit a student in SBCS to attend their viva via skype under clearly prescribed conditions due to difficulties in obtaining a visa to travel to the UK. In the review of the Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes a proposal to change the regulations to permit the conduct of the viva remotely is under discussion.

Requests for changes to examination requirements

5. The Board approved the following requests:

(a) from the School of Geography, to provide for flexibility in the format of the presentation of a thesis for examination, requests to be considered by the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research;

(b) from the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, to provide for a practice-based route for the presentation of the thesis and other materials in the form of original film, video or new media for the examination of candidates in Film Studies. This follows the precedent set by the provision in the Academic Regulations for the examination of candidates in the field of Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies.

    These changes are set out in the paper on the Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

6. The Board approved three requests for an examiner to attend the viva examination via Skype in cases put forward by Blizard, EECS and CCLS.

Policy and other matters

7. **Associate Research Students maximum registration period**

(a) The Board has noted that there are an increasing number of requests for exceptions to be made to the twelve month associate student maximum registration period. These mainly arise from externally funded doctoral training collaborations for which QMUL is the secondary institution for student supervision, such as RCUK funded Doctoral Training Centres, Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates, and strategic research partnerships for which a QMUL staff member might act as a second supervisor for the duration of a student's degree. Some of these programmes are of four years' duration. The Board agreed that the standard maximum registration period for associate students should be retained as twelve months, and a new regulation drafted to provide for four-year registration for students on funded schemes or strategic partnerships.

These changes are set out in the paper on the Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

(b) The Board approved an extension of associate student status for a student in the William Harvey Research Institute by 4 months to a total duration of 16 months.

8. **Review of the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees for 2015-16**

The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board is reviewing the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees. It is planned to bring the draft Code of Practice for Research Degrees to Senate in December after consultation on the changes with schools and institutes, with proposals for associated changes to the Academic Regulations.

Mary Childs, RDO, ARCS
October 2015

Queen Mary
University of London

Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board

Terms of Reference and Membership

Terms of reference

[change to third bullet point shown in *italics*]

- 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]
  Professor Jon May (HSS Deputy Dean for Research (PGR))
  [two year term of office as Director: 2014-15 and 2015-16]

- Faculty Deputy Deans for Research (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) [term of office 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17]
Dr Simon Dixon EECS (S&E) [term of office 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18]
To be appointed (HSS) [term of office 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18]

In attendance

- Assistant Academic Registrar (Research Degrees)

- Members of the Research Degrees Office

- The Doctoral College Manager

Mary Childs
August 2015