



Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary June – September 2020
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 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • terms of reference and membership; • guidance to examiners on taking account of the disruption caused by Covid-19 in examining a thesis; • new programme approval; • COVID-19 funding extensions for research students in the final year of funding.
Questions for Senate to consider	Senate is asked to note the report.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Mary Strategy 2030 • Queen Mary Academic Regulations • Queen Mary Code of Practice for Research Degrees Programmes • UK Quality Code for Higher Education <p>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.</p>
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	
Authors	Mary Childs, Research Degrees Office
Sponsor	Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) Professor Adrian Armstrong, Director of the Doctoral College and Chair of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board

RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND EXAMINATIONS BOARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June – September 2020

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 reviews 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.

The Board approved the terms of reference without amendment.

The terms of reference are annexed to this report.

Guidance to examiners on taking account of the disruption caused by Covid-19 in examining a thesis

4. The Board has approved guidance to examiners on how to take account of the disruption caused by Covid-19 in their approach to examining a thesis for the awards of PhD, MPhil, MD(Res) and DClintDent. The text will be included on RDO webpages, sent to schools/institutes for dissemination to supervisors and students, and incorporated into the Research Degrees Guidance to Examiners sent out with the thesis for examination, and noted in the Code of Practice.
5. A checkbox will be added to the Outcome of Examination Form to enable the examiners to confirm that they have taken into account the disruption caused by Covid-19 in their approach to examining the thesis.
6. The policy will apply to all QMUL postgraduate research students until further notice. It is anticipated that it will continue at least until all students who enrolled before March 2020 – when UK universities and other research facilities began a period of closure, and when research travel was not possible – submit their theses. It will be reviewed annually.

New programme approval

DClintDent in Oral Surgery

7. The Board approved the Part 2 programme proposal for the new DClintDent pathway in Oral Surgery on the recommendation of the Professional Doctorates Committee, and with the approval of the Taught Programmes Board. The programme commences in Sept 2020.

DClintDent in Endodontics

8. The Board approved the Part 1 and 2 programme proposal for the new DClintDent pathway in Endodontics on the recommendation of the Professional Doctorates Committee, and with the approval of the Taught Programmes Board. The programme commences in Sept 2020.

Doctor of Engineering (EngD) in Data Centric Engineering

9. The Board approved the Part 2 programme proposal for the new award of Doctor of Engineering in Data Centric Engineering. The programme commences in January 2021. It will be delivered by the EPSRC funded Centre for Doctoral Training in Data Centric Engineering in the Faculty of Science and Engineering. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/dce/>

COVID-19 funding extensions for research students in the final year of funding

10. Queen Mary has made additional financial assistance available to funded research students (students who are in receipt of studentship funding for living costs / stipends) in the final year of their studentship who have been substantially affected by the Covid-19 situation. Students who met certain criteria were invited to request funding. The Board, with supplemented membership, conducted the assessment of funding extensions applications due to Covid-19 disruption to study and was able to make about 130 awards. SET approved the budget of £500k. Funding is paid at the end of the studentship.



Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board

Terms of Reference and Membership

2020-21

Terms of reference

- To consider and approve proposals for all new research degree programmes, including all proposals for collaborative research degree programmes;
- To consider and approve proposals for the withdrawal of 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, the Office for Students, UK Research and Innovation, and research funders;

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

Membership

- Director of the Doctoral College [Chair]
- *Professor Adrian Armstrong (HSS Deputy Dean for Research (PGR))*
[two year term of office as Director, commencing 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2022]
Professor Armstrong standing down in December 2020 when he takes up the role of HSS Dean for Research. New Director of the Doctoral College will chair the Board.
- Faculty Deputy Deans for Research (PGR)
Dr Eram Rizvi (S&E) (ends July 2021)
Dr Paul Allen (SMD) (ends September 2020)
New SMD Deputy Dean for Research will join the Board.
- One further representative from each Faculty

Professor Paul Chapple, William Harvey Research Institute (SMD) [term of office 2019-20 and 2020-21]

Dr Alessandra Bonfiglioli, School of Economics and Finance (HSS) [term of office 2019-20 and 2020-21]

Dr Greg Chass, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences (S&E) [term of office 2020-21 and 2021-22]

[Faculty representatives are 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. The Faculty representative should not be from the same school or institute as the Faculty Deputy Dean for Research (PGR). The Faculty representative is usually one of the Directors of Graduate Studies from amongst the schools or institutes of the Faculty concerned.]

In attendance

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

Mary Childs
RDO

Approved by the Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board
September 2020