



Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary December 2020 - February 2021
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 December 2020 - February 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 related funding extensions - Queen Mary and UKRI additional funding for research degree students; • New DCLinDent Part 1 proposals; • Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) project to support research degrees examinations.
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	
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Sponsor	Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) Professor Tim Warner, Dean for Postgraduate Research and Chair of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (with effect from March 2021)

RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND EXAMINATIONS BOARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 2020 - February 2021

Meetings and membership

1. The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board meets monthly. The membership comprises:
 - the Dean for Postgraduate Research / 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.

Covid-19 related funding extensions - Queen Mary and UKRI additional funding for research degree students

3. Queen Mary and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) are making additional financial assistance available to funded research students (students who are in receipt of studentship funding for living costs / stipends) whose funding ends between 1st April – 30th September 2021 and for currently funded students for whom personal or exceptional circumstances have made academic progress difficult during the pandemic. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, disabled students, those with long-term illness, those who are neurodivergent, or who have caring responsibilities.
4. A major aim is to provide additional support to students within these groups who have been most unable to mitigate/amend their research programme in order to submit their thesis for examination within the existing timeline.

5. This is the second phase of funding provided by Queen Mary and UKRI. The first phase was allocated in summer 2020. Phase 1 provided additional financial assistance for students whose funding was due to end between 1 March 2020 and 30 March 2020.
6. Research students with studentship funding / sponsorship for living costs may apply if they are funded by Queen Mary, UKRI, and other (non-UKRI) external sponsors who are not providing additional funding to support Covid-19 disruption to studies.
7. The Doctoral College governance plan for the allocation of the UKRI funding stream to provide additional financial support to Research Council funded students has been approved by UKRI.
8. SET has approved funding to provide additional financial support to Queen Mary funded students and those with other sponsorship, e.g. charities, international government sponsorship schemes, which are not providing additional support.
9. A single application process will be run for both funding streams. The RDPEB funding panel, with enhanced membership, will review the applications and make funding decisions, meeting on Friday 19 and Monday 22 March. The panel will be chaired by the Dean for Postgraduate Research.
10. The full details are available at <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/covid-19-faqs---pgr/> in the first FAQ.

New DClintDent Part 1 proposals

11. The Board has approved the part 1 proposals for new DClintDent programmes in
 - a. Clinical Oral Microbiology and
 - b. Minimally Invasive Dentistry (paper RDE/20/48)
12. The proposals for Clinical Oral Microbiology and Minimally Invasive Dentistry had been approved by the SMD Postgraduate Teaching and Learning Committee and at the time of consideration by the Board were subject to the business cases being submitted and approved by SMD SET.

Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) project to support research degrees examinations

13. The Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) project to develop MySIS functionality to support research degrees examinations processes is nearing completion of phase 1. This is to develop an examiner portal on MySIS for nominated examiners to accept the invitation, amend their contact details, and to view details of the candidate's viva, and provide access to examination guidance. The phase 1 development is being tested.
14. The next phases will enable examiners to report examination outcomes via MySIS, and to upload examiner reports. This will also facilitate tracking of examination progress and auto-reminders at different stages of the examination process.

15. The project is also exploring options to enable students to use an online process for submission of the thesis for examination, submission of thesis corrections post viva to examiner(s), and submission of the final copy of the thesis pre-award.
16. The project group includes a SPIP developer and the SPIP project manager, one member of PGR administrative staff from each faculty and members of the Research Degrees Offices. Other staff are invited to attend as required with updates made to the Faculty Deputy Deans for Research (with PGR responsibilities) and to PGR Administrative staff.

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