



Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary June – September 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 June – September 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • terms of reference and membership; • new programme approval; • suspension of Regulations for continuation of the exceptional oral examinations viva policy due to Covid-19 and for flexibility in the requirements for transfer to writing up status; • Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) project for 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	Professor Tim Warner, Dean for Postgraduate Research 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 2021

Meetings and membership

1. The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board meets monthly. The membership comprises:
 - Dean for Postgraduate Research [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 and membership with minor amendments to:

- clarify that the Board is a sub-board of Senate, providing regular reports to Senate;
- clarify the quorum for the meeting is one third of the Board's members [following the quorum for the Education Quality and Standards Board]; and
- update membership.
The Chair is the Dean for Postgraduate Research, a new role created in response

to the SUMS Consulting report “Research Support Review: Queen Mary University of London” November 2019. The Dean is also the Director of the Doctoral College. Previously the role of Chair of the Board rotated between the Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research.

The terms of reference and membership are annexed to this report.

New programme approval

DClinDent in Minimally Invasive Dentistry

DClinDent in Clinical Oral Microbiology

4. The Board approved the Part 2 programme proposals for these new DClinDent pathways on the recommendation of the Professional Doctorates Committee, and with the approval of the Taught Programmes Board.

The DClinDent in Clinical Oral Microbiology commences in September 2021.

The DClinDent in Minimally Invasive Dentistry is expected to commence in September 2022.

New PhD field of study and award title of Health Data in Practice, Institute of Populations Health Sciences

5. The Board approved the new field of study and award title of Health Data in Practice for the doctoral training programme funded by the Wellcome Trust. The first year is the MRes in Health Data in Practice. Successful MRes students transfer onto the PhD programme for their research studies and award.

Suspension of Regulations for continuation of exceptional oral examinations viva policy due to Covid-19 and transfer to writing up status

6. The Board has approved suspension of the Academic Regulations to suspend the standard in person viva requirements for the 2021-22 academic year ending on 31 July 2022, subject to review through the year. This is to permit vivas to be held online or in person on campus while Covid-19 related precautionary measures are in place. The standard regulations require specific approval of the arrangements for each online viva and attendance of an examiner or the student by video-link.
7. The Research Degrees Board has agreed to continue the exception, due to Covid-19 related issues, that in the 2021-22 academic year a student may submit their thesis for examination by email to the Research Degrees Office at researchdegrees@qmul.ac.uk. The two bound copies are not required. An electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to the examiners.
8. The Board will review the Regulations on oral examinations for research degrees and thesis submission this year to consider making permanent changes in the light of the generally positive experience of online examinations in the last 18 months or so.
9. The Board has approved suspension of the Academic Regulations for the academic year 2021-22 to provide schools and institutes with the flexibility to waive the requirement

that a student must have completed all experimental work or collection of material related to their thesis before applying to transfer to writing-up status where the delay in research progress has been due to the impact of Covid-19 on a student's research studies. Extensions to the period of registration for disruption to studies due to Covid-19 have extended the duration of writing-up status. This policy will be reviewed in 2021-22 for the 2022-23 academic year.

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

10. The Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) development of MySIS functionality to support research degrees examinations processes went live from August 2021.
11. An examiner portal has been developed in MySIS for nominated examiners to accept the invitation to examine, amend their contact details, and to view details of the candidate's viva, and provide access to examination guidance. Examiners can upload examiner reports and record examination outcomes and thesis corrections deadlines on MySIS. Students and their supervisory teams can track the progress of their examination and view the examination outcome and reports online on MySIS.
12. The first users will be examiners whose nominations were approved at the August 2021 Board meeting. The paper based process will continue in parallel for students' whose examiners were nominated before August 2021.

Mary Childs
Research Degrees Office, ARCS



Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board

Terms of Reference and Membership

2021-22

The Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board is a sub-board of Senate.

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;
- To provide regular reports to Senate, including recommendations for further action where appropriate.

- The quorum for the meeting is one third of the Board's members.

Membership

- Dean for Postgraduate Research [Chair]

Professor Tim Warner (ends March 2024)

- Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research

Dr Akram Alomainy EECS (S&E) (ends July 2024)

Professor Paul Chapple WHRI (SMD) (ends October 2023)

Dr Costanza Russo CCLS (HSS) (ends January 2024)

- One further representative from each Faculty

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

Dr Rhodri Hayward, School of History (HSS) [term of office 2021-22 and 2022-23]

Dr Sarah Martin, Barts Cancer Institute (SMD) [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. 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 at its meeting on 15 September 2021