



Senate

Paper Title	Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board Executive Summary December 2022 – February 2023
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 2022 – February 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• preliminary proposal for PhD dual awards;• interruption of studies - guidance on research activity while on interruption.
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• OfS regulations and policies <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	For information.
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RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND EXAMINATIONS BOARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 2022 – February 2023

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 Postgraduate Research
 - 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.

Proposal for PhD dual awards

3. The Board has received a proposal that Queen Mary should offer Dual-Award PhD Programmes. The proposal is in the context of working with international partners to provide access to world class research facilities and collaborations that would support Queen Mary's plans to enhance the development of world class researchers and its international research network.
4. The Board is exploring the proposal. A paper would be presented to Senate for approval if the proposal is recommended.

Interruption of studies - guidance on research activity while on interruption

5. The Board has reviewed its guidance on research activity while a research student is on interruption of studies, in particular the guidance that "students may continue to work personally on their research during interruptions of study". This guidance had been introduced to indicate to students that they could work on their studies in their own time while on interruption. However, queries to RDO had indicated that students and staff are sometimes unclear about the extent to which they may continue supervision of the student's research and it can be difficult for a supervisor to establish clear guidelines on supervision activity during the interruption.
6. The Board has approved changes to the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes concerning interruptions to:
 - remove the statement that students may work personally on their research during interruptions of study; and
 - provide guidance concerning supervision activity and the submission of materials for formal assessment, such as annual progression and thesis submission during an interruption as follows:

“Students may not conduct major work towards completion of their studies while on interruption of studies. They may not submit material for assessments or the thesis for examination. Supervisors are not required to hold supervision meetings or to comment on draft chapters of the thesis while a student is on interruption”.

These changes will be included in the 2023-24 edition of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

Other business

7. The Board has received and noted these papers considered by the Education Quality and Standards Board in November 2023:
 - Supporting Students' Fitness to Study policy
 - Office for Students Condition of Registration B3 (Student Outcomes)

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