<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

**Meeting of the Senate Researcher Experience Committee
to be held on 25 January 2019 at 2.00pm
in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
Convener: Dr Paddy Hadoke**

A G E N D A

1.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2018**	Enclosed

2. **Matters Arising**
2.1 Old Kirk Project
2.2 Scholarships
2.3 Senate Committee input to the planning round
2.4 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
2.5 UKCGE Supervisor accreditation pilot

3. **Conveners' Communications**
3.1 Task group on sexual violence
3.2 Policy on disclosure of intimate relationships
3.3 Postgraduate research quality assurance

For Discussion

4.	**Postgraduate research student experience**	REC 18/19 3A
5.	**Management information: submission and completion rates**	REC 18/19 3B
6.	**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)**	REC 18/19 3C – Closed
7.	**Excellence in Doctoral Research & Career Development: Progress reports June 2018**	
8.	**Service Excellence Programme – postgraduate research update**	

9. **Regulations**

9.1	PhD and MPhil criteria	REC 18/19 3D
9.2	PhD by Research Publications	REC 18/19 3E
9.3	Assessment and Degree Regulations Review	REC 18/19 3F

10. **Task groups:**

10.1	Practical operation of PhD with Integrated Study programmes – final report	REC 18/19 3G
10.2	Update on proposed work on Student Status of PhD students after the submission of the thesis	

11. **Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)**

11.1	Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update and Discussion of Contextualised Themes	REC 18/19 3H
11.2	ELIR 2020 update	REC 18/19 3I

Date of next meeting: Monday 18 March 2019, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House, Chambers Street
[All meeting dates and venues for 2018/19](#)

H/02/26/02

12. Task group on organisation and coordination of postgraduate research activities

13. External Engagement:
   13.1 League of European Research Universities (LERU)
   13.2 UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)
   13.3 Coimbra
   13.4 Network of Universities from European Capitals (UNICA)
   13.5 Universitas 21

14. Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee: 12 October 2018 meeting   REC 18/19 3J

15. Research Policy Group report

16. Any other business
   16.1 Conferences and events
   16.2 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, New Postgraduate Dean's priorities
   16.3 Conveners' meetings

Susan Hunter, Academic Services, 18 January 2019

Date of next meeting: Monday 18 March 2019, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House, Chambers Street
All meeting dates and venues for 2018/19

REC 18/19 3A

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

Postgraduate Research Student Experience

Executive Summary
Themes identified in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), internal postgraduate programme reviews and by postgraduate research (PGR) student reps, which have an effect on student experience. The paper summarises some of the past, current and planned activity in relation to PGR student experience. Paper REC 18/18 3B provides some management information, which should also give context to discussion on the PGR student experience.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objectives of Leadership in research the Committee's aim of promoting an outstanding student experience.

Action requested
For discussion to identify any targeted and meaningful further action.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
The Committee should consider how any actions identified might be implemented and communicated.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   No resources are associated with the paper which is intended to stimulate discussion.
2. **Risk assessment**
   No risk assessment is included in the paper. However, there may be reputational risks if the University does not assess impacts on the student experience.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   The paper aims to stimulate discussion and does not propose any changes to policy or practice.
4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper
Susan Hunter, Academic Services
Megan Brown, Edinburgh University Students' Association
17 January 2019

Postgraduate research (PGR) student experience

The evidence

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) themes

PRES results highlighted some themes for further exploration – [summary report available on Student Surveys wiki (EASE log in required)]:

- Teaching Experience
- Supervision
- Research Culture

The Supervision and Research Culture primary themes in PRES 2017 saw the largest decline in University level results from the last PRES. Despite an improvement on 2015, Teaching Experience results remain low.

Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) themes

The University's internal reviews (PPR) highlighted the two themes below for the academic year 2017/18. [Internal review themes report to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) Paper E, Sep 2018]:

- Supporting and developing academic staff, including postgraduate tutors and demonstrators.
- Space – provision of study and social space for students

Recommendations around supporting postgraduate tutors and demonstrators focused around career development, training and support, with a particular reference to training and support to ensure the effective use of virtual learning environments.

Internal review panels made recommendations around space in relation to a lack of dedicated space for postgraduate research students at King's Buildings, pressure on all types of accommodation, and students establishing and maintaining a sense of identity with their school.

Analysis of needs of PGR students at University level

The Committee received College responses to PRES 2017 results in September 2017. It held a Heads of Graduate Schools event in February 2018 to discuss the themes of:

- Postgraduate research (PGR) space
- Building communities of PGR students
- Training peer support and teaching experience

The event's focus was to share some good practice in these areas. There were no specific actions arising from the event.

External review

The Enhancement-Led Internal Review (ELIR) is the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) quality assurance review of higher educational institutions. The University's ELIR 2015 review made a recommendation on postgraduate research (PGR) student experience:

> Postgraduate research student experience - analyse the needs and experience of postgraduate research students at school, college and University level to ensure that they are effectively supported, particularly given plans to increase research student numbers. The University should review the effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training and ensure that the University's Code of Practice is communicated effectively to all staff and research students and implemented consistently. The University should also make certain that postgraduate research students who teach are appropriately trained and supported for the role.

The key themes of the recommendation are:

- Effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training
- Effective communication of the Code of Practice
- Appropriate training and support for postgraduate research students who teach

The issues

Recurring themes

The two key recurring themes identified from the evidence above are supervisor training and support for students who teach.

Student feedback

Edinburgh University Students Association, in consultation with PGR student reps, have identified three key themes:

- PGR space
- PGR community
- Training and peer support for students who teach

Some other common themes include:
- Experience of PGR tutors and demonstrators (although this does not affect the student in their student capacity, many PGR students see their experience at Edinburgh holistically rather than split into 'student' and 'staff'). In addition to the training and peer support elements noted above, PGR tutors and demonstrators spoke about the importance of positive working conditions. This included pay conditions, office space, and fair recruitment of roles.
- Careers and professional development support (both in academia and in other careers).
- Student-supervisor relationship and expectations of this relationship. Supervisors play a crucial role in PGR students' study. A good relationship can help both the supervisors and PGR students be more efficient and positive.
- Support around student mental health.
- The induction process for new PGR students.

- Enhancing current PGR student representation mechanisms and operation.
- PGR community: Lack of PGR activity on King's Buildings campus.

How to tackle them

Summarised below are ongoing and planned activities in relation to postgraduate research student experience.

Action: The Committee is invited to discuss and identify any further targeted and meaningful actions.

- Supervisor training – Excellence in Doctoral training CPD for supervisors framework (consultation on the framework is complete and the task group final report will be submitted to the Committee's March meeting).
- Supporting and developing postgraduate tutors and demonstrators. Academic Services will evaluate the Tutors and Demonstrators Recruitment, Support and Development Policy in 2018/19. (A paper is expected for the Committee's March meeting.)
- Space
    - Committee members are also members of the Old Kirk project steering group. It is not yet clear how this project will serve students across all campuses.
    - The Committee has had past interaction with the Space Management Group to raise the profile of postgraduate research students' needs in planning.
    - Professor Tina Harrison to include provision of study and social space in the report on areas for further development identified from annual monitoring, review and reporting for University Executive. (Action from QAC Internal Review Report.)
- Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students – redeveloped to give more clarity on roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors. Academic Services plans to evaluate the Code including getting feedback on the content and the effectiveness of communicating the Code. We will consult with the PGR Supervisor network, Heads of Graduate Schools and PGR student reps.
- Service Excellence Programme PGR strand – scoping has covered appointment of supervisors and milestones, student progression reviews, thesis submission and examination. The programme board is due to confirm priorities in March 2019. Prioritised work is likely to focus on processes rather than directly on student experience, but process improvements will support enhancements to the student experience.
- Development of Principal's student experience action plan – due for publication early 2019.
- The Students' Association developed a new University-level Postgraduate Research role in 2017, to make PhD student representation at institutional-level more effective. The Association continues to evaluate their provision of postgraduate research representative structures.
- The Committee is invited to consider adding institutional questions to PRES (see Paper REC 18/19 3C) – is there anything that could be explored further in relation to the issues identified?

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
Megan Brown, Edinburgh University Students' Association
17 January 2019

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

Management Information: Submission and Completion Rates

Executive Summary

A summary of publicly available information on postgraduate research submission and completion rates. Information should inform discussions on student experience and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) institutional questions (see papers REC 18/19 3A and 3C). The summary should also be helpful for informing Committee decision-making.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of leadership in research.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

No action is associated with the paper, which is provided for information.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   No resource implications as the paper reflects on past activity.
2. **Risk assessment**

   No risk assessment is included as the paper is for information.
3. **Equality and Diversity**

   There are no equality and diversity implications attached to the paper as it reflects on past activity and is for information only. However, the trends identified in domicile by entry data may support consideration of equality and diversity for Committee decision making.
4. **Freedom of information**

   The paper is **open.**

Key words

Thesis submission, thesis completion

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
03 January 2019

Submission and Completion Rates

The paper includes extracts from the annual College quality reports and the University's student factsheets. College reports included information on PhD submissions and withdrawals for the academic year 2016/17 and reported to Senate Quality Assurance Committee in February 2018. Appendix 1 gives information on the postgraduate research student population extracted from published University student factsheets.

College information on submission and completion by year is available in the University Business Information Suite. Access is restricted to University of Edinburgh staff.

Extracts from College Quality Reports

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)

PhD Submissions: Available data suggests that 33% of the September 2013/14 entry cohort of full-time PhD students were yet to submit by the end of their 4th year. This remains broadly consistent with the 31.5% recorded for the 2012/13 entry cohort. It is not clear if these figures take into account entrants beginning later in the academic year, but the College Postgraduate Studies Committee (CPGSC) will continue to work with individual Schools to monitor this.

PhD Withdrawals: The number of full- and part-time student withdrawals, by entry cohort, has declined year-on-year since 2013/14. Many withdrawals continue to cite personal or financial reasons for their decision, but specific reasons cannot be ascertained from this data. The Research Experience Committee is exploring this further.

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)

- PGR completion data continues to be monitored across the College. For example: The Deanery of Clinical Sciences had 58 new full-time PhD students (46 female and 27 male), 11 new part-time PhD students and 4 new MSc by Research or MPhil students. Note that the gender breakdown is no longer available for full and part-time; only an overall count is provided, but the figures for full-time students this year are a close match to those for 2015-16 (47 female and 26 male).
- Of 2013/14 entrants who were due to complete in 2016-17, 39/53 full-time PhD students submitted their thesis for examination in 2016/17. One student withdrew and the rest are continuing.
- The average number of months taken to submit was 43, which is down from 49 last year. However, the report calculates the "average months to submit" and includes months of Interruption of Studies.
- Completion data for part-time students is not easily accessible. This may be as the BI/MI suite report has changed slightly in recent years.

College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

The number of PGR withdrawals has dropped for the second consecutive year down to 24 for 2013/14 entry from 47 in 2011/12. A significant contribution to this is the drop in withdrawals from the School of Chemistry, down from 15 to 4 from 2011 to 2013, and the School of Geosciences, down from 12 to 2 for the same period. Both Schools have implemented a range of support mechanisms and changes that may have contributed to the drop in withdrawals. For example, the School of Geosciences have implemented changes to the Tutoring and Demonstrator processes, proving very popular with students. The School of Chemistry have improved the responsiveness and individual support available from the Graduate School during times of stress and created a very positive atmosphere in the School.

- As percentage figures, 7% of the 2013/14 entry population withdrew compared to 11% of the 2012/13 population and 15% of the 2011/12 population.

Completion

- The average submission in 3+1 models for 2013/14 was 43 months down from 45 months the previous year.

The 4 year degree models have an average submission of 47 months down from 48 months.

Student population

Appendix 1 shows the numbers of postgraduate research students studying full or part time, total by College and by domicile at entry. The years included are:
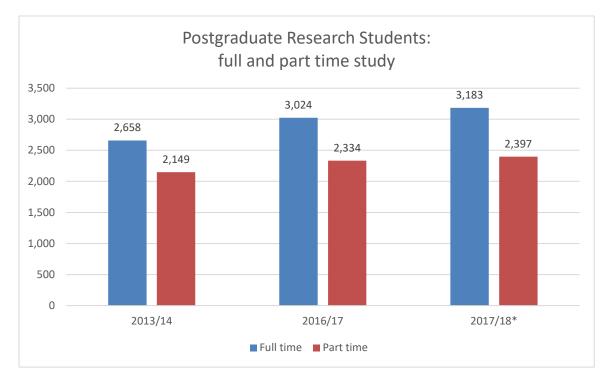
- 2013/14 – the entry cohort from the College quality reports referred to above
- 2016/17 – the final year for that cohort
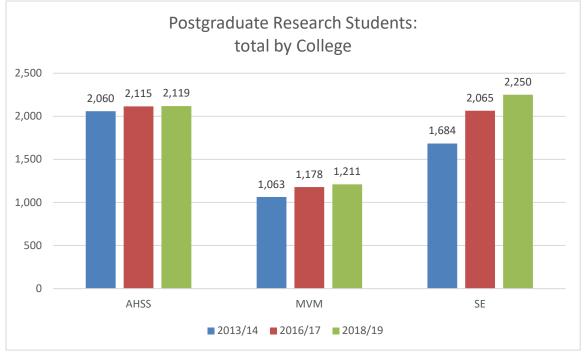- 2017/18 – the most current information

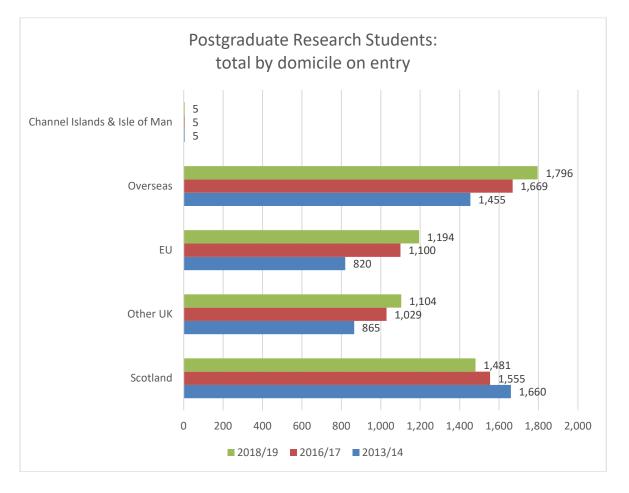Source: Governance and Strategic Planning student factsheets

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
03 January 2019

Postgraduate Research Students: full and part time study

	2013/14	2016/17	2017/18*
Full time	2,658	3,024	3,183
Part time	2,149	2,334	2,397

Legend: ■ Full time ■ Part time

Postgraduate Research Students: total by College

	AHSS	MVM	SE
2013/14	2,060	1,063	1,684
2016/17	2,115	1,178	2,065
2018/19	2,119	1,211	2,250

Legend: ■ 2013/14 ■ 2016/17 ■ 2018/19

Postgraduate Research Students: total by domicile on entry

Domicile	2018/19	2016/17	2013/14
Channel Islands & Isle of Man	5	5	5
Overseas	1,796	1,669	1,455
EU	1,194	1,100	820
Other UK	1,104	1,029	865
Scotland	1,481	1,555	1,660

Legend: ■ 2018/19 ■ 2016/17 ■ 2013/14

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Senate Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

PhD and MPhil Criteria

Executive Summary

Proposed changes to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for 2019/20. The proposed changes aim to clarify the criteria for award of PhD and MPhil degrees. Changes to regulations need approval from Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objectives of Leadership in learning and Leadership in research.

Action requested

Academic Services invites the Committee to support proposals, subject to further refinement or reformatting by Academic Services, for submission to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will submit proposals to the March 2019 Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Academic Services communicates regulation changes in the annual update on regulations and policies.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Academic Services provides resource associated with amendments to regulations as part of core business.
2. **Risk assessment**
   No risk assessment is included in the paper. However, if the regulations do not clearly communicate the criteria for degree award, there may be risks to the student experience.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   The proposed changes should not raise any implications for equality and diversity. The proposals are intended to clarify the regulations and do not include any change to practice or policy.
4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
03 January 2019

PhD and MPhil Criteria

During the review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students in 2017/18, Academic Services identified some inconsistency in the information relating to the criteria for the award of PhD and MPhil degrees between that provided in the Code, and in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. The proposals below aim to clarify and consolidate the content in the Degree Regulations. Academic Services will also review the examiner report forms for consistency once Curriculum and Student Progression Committee approves the regulations.

Proposed changes to Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20

Changes are highlighted as track changes. The key change is the addition of a statement that the PhD contains a significant amount of material worthy of publication and the removal of the same statement from the MPhil by Research regulation. This statement in the current MPhil by Research regulations appears to require more for an MPhil award than a PhD; the proposed amendments will clarify the criteria for both degrees. Adding bullet points will help to present the degree criteria clearly.

Demonstration by Thesis and Oral Exam for the Award of PhD

42. The student must ~~have~~ demonstrate~~d~~ by the presentation of a thesis and/or portfolio, ~~which presents a coherent body of work,~~ and by performance at an oral examination:~~ that the student is capable of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study,~~

- capability of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study,
- adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature,
- exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field, ~~and~~
- the ability ~~present~~to present~~ing~~ the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way~~.~~, and
- produce a thesis that
    - o represents a coherent body of work, and
    - o which contains a significant amount of material worthy of publication or public presentation.

MPhil by Research

45. The thesis must not exceed a maximum of 60,000 words. There is no minimum word count.

-The student must ~~have~~ demonstrate~~d~~ by the presentation of a thesis and/or portfolio ~~containing a significant amount of material worthy of publication or public presentation,~~ and by performance at an oral examination: ~~that the student is capable of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study,~~

- capability of pursuing original research contributing to knowledge or understanding in the field of study,
- adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature,
- exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field, ~~and~~
- the ability to- present~~ing~~ the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way, and
- produce a thesis that represents a coherent body of work.

Proposed changes to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Regulation 28 Format of thesis

Students are responsible for ensuring that the submitted thesis is presented in a clear, accessible and consistent format. The thesis must include full and adequate references, make clear the intentions of the work, its background, methods and conclusions and be understandable to a scholar in the same field.

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
03 January 2019

REC 18/19 3E

PhD by Research Publications

Executive Summary

Proposed changes to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2019/20 to strengthen the PhD by Research Publications regulations. Includes addition of study period, clarity on submission requirements and allowing submission of creative works for the degree. Changes to regulations need approval from Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. The paper proposes one change to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees to clarify that corrections can only be made to the critical review.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objectives of Leadership in learning and Leadership in research.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to consider and support proposals, subject to further refinement or reformatting by Academic Services, for submission to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will submitted proposals to the March 2019 Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Academic Services communicates regulation changes in the annual update on regulations and policies.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   The paper does not propose any change in policy or practice and resources associated with PhD by Research Publications are expected to be met from within existing resources. Any resource associated with amendments to regulations is provided by Academic Services core business.
2. **Risk assessment**
   No risk assessment is included in the paper. However, if the regulations do not clearly communicate the criteria for degree assessment and award, there may be risks to the student experience.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   No implications for equality and diversity are anticipated from the proposed changes. The proposals are intended to clarify the regulations and do not include any change to practice or policy.
4. **Freedom of information:** The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
18 January 2019

PhD by Research Publications

Proposed changes to Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20

The paper proposes changes to clearly present the criteria for the award and for consistency with PhD degree criteria. A study period of 12 months, which reflects current practice, is included and changes clarify that creative works can be included in the degree submission. Changes are highlighted below.

In addition, the Committee is asked to consider two questions in relation to regulation 46.

- If the PhD by Research Publications is intended to provide a route for members of staff who do not have a PhD, then should reference to graduates of at least five years' standing be removed?
- The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science questions the appropriateness of the ten year timescale for published material. This is considered to be a short timescale for completing the required six refereed journal articles or research papers. Would it be appropriate to remove the 10 year limit?

PhD (by Research Publications)

46.   Applicants must be either graduates of the University of Edinburgh of at least five years' standing; or members of staff of the University of Edinburgh or of an Associated Institution of not less than three years' standing. Permission to register will not be granted to applicants who are in a position to submit a PhD thesis for examination or who already possess a doctoral degree. Applicants must have been active postgraduate researchers in their field of expertise for a minimum of five years, and they must not submit material published more than ten years prior to the date of registration for the degree.

47.   Applicants must apply to the relevant College for approval of their candidature. Applicants are required to submit a list of their published or creative work, together with a statement (including the theme, critical review and summary of the work) and their CV. If College approves registration, it will appoint an adviser to assist the applicant with the format of their submission and to guide them on the selection, coherence and quality of the portfolio of research work, the abstract and critical review. The portfolio submitted for the PhD by Research Publications must demonstrate a substantial and coherent body of work which would have taken the equivalent of three years of full-time study to accomplish. The portfolio must demonstrate original research and make a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study, and is presented in a critical and scholarly way.

48.
In order to qualify for the award of PhD (by Research Publications) the student must demonstrate by the presentation of a portfolio of published or creative works and by performance at an oral examination:

- capability of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study,

- adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature,
- exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field, and
- the ability to present the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way.

The portfolio submitted for the PhD by Research Publications must present a coherent and substantial body of work, which would have taken the equivalent of three years of full-time study to complete. ~~Applicants must apply to the relevant College for approval of their candidature. Applicants are required to submit their published work, together with a 500-word abstract, their CV and a self-critical review of all their submitted work. If College approves registration, it will appoint an adviser to assist the applicant with the format of their submission and to guide them on the selection, coherence and quality of the portfolio of research work, the abstract and critical review~~

49.   Students must submit their portfolio within 12 months of registration for the degree. The submission for assessment will include; the portfolio of published or creative work, an abstract and a self-critical review of all their submitted work. The portfolio of published or creative work ~~work~~ must consist of either one or two books or submissions, or at least six refereed journal articles or research papers, which are already in the public domain. The total submission, including the critical review should not exceed 100,000 words.

- The critical review must summarise the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the work submitted in the portfolio. It must also critically assess how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge, indicate how the publications form a coherent body of work and what contribution the student has made to this work. The critical review must be at least 10,000 words, but not more than 25,000 words in length.
- Students must either be the sole author of the portfolio of published or creative work or must be able to demonstrate in the critical review of the submitted work that they have made a major contribution to all of the work that has been produced by more than one author.

Proposed change to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Clarification in Regulation 23 PhD by Research Publication Examiner Recommendations, that where corrections or additional work is required, examiners may only request revision of the critical review.

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
18 January 2019

Proposed change to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

Assessment and Degree Regulations Review

Executive Summary

Summary of proposed changes to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees and Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2019/20. Changes relevant to postgraduate research included and Academic Services considers that most of these changes are not controversial. The Committee is invited to discuss these, particularly giving consideration to resubmission of MSc by Research dissertation, which would be a change to current practice.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with the University Strategic Plan objectives of Leadership in learning and research.

Action requested

For discussion and to support recommendations for changes to the regulations to be submitted to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC). CSPC has approval of the regulations.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services communicate changes to regulations in the annual update on policies and regulations in June.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   There are resource implications for staff time associated with resubmission of MSc by Research dissertations. It is not anticipated that this will be overly burdensome, given that the number of students who meet the criteria for resubmission is likely to be small, and the fact that these students will be entitled to only one further supervisory meeting. Once resubmitted dissertations have been marked, they can be considered at an existing Board of Examiners meeting.

2. **Risk assessment**

   No risk assessment is included in the paper. However, there are potential risks should the University decide from 2019/20 to offer students the opportunity to resubmit MSc by Research dissertations or research projects where the student has marginally failed at the first attempt. Current or previous MSc by Research students may potentially feel aggrieved that they were not offered this opportunity. However, the practical implications of offering resubmission to students from previous cohorts on request would be prohibitive. There is, therefore, an inevitable "cliff edge" involved in the introduction of such a policy regarding resubmission. However, the stated benefits to future students of adopting this revised approach should mean that this remains both worthwhile and defensible.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
    The proposed changes should not raise any implications for equality and diversity. The proposals are intended to clarify the regulations. Academic Services will carry out an equality impact assessment on the assessment and degree regulations.

4. **Freedom of information**
    The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper
Susan Hunter, Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services
16 January 2019

Assessment and Degree Regulations Review

The annual assessment and degree regulations review seeks to ensure regulations are consistent with policy and practice. The review is not intended to be detailed nor to make major changes that would affect policy or practice. Changes are considered where necessary due to changes in policy or practice, or where an error or lack of clarity has been identified within the regulations.

Academic Services has asked Colleges to let us know whether there are any potential changes required to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations, or to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2019/20.
In addition, Academic Services has already discussed a number of issues with colleagues in Colleges and Schools. Most of the changes relevant to postgraduate research, listed below, are not considered controversial. The Committee is invited to discuss these, particularly consideration of resubmission of MSc by Research dissertation, which would be a change to practice.

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

- **22, 23 and 24 PhD, PhD by Research Publications and MPhil examiner recommendations**: clarify that students failing to meet requirements following resubmission may be considered for an exit award. Current regulations suggest that failure to meet the requirements set means students are not entitled to any award. It seems reasonable that they may still be considered for an exit award.

- **22, 23 and 24 PhD, PhD by Research Publications and MPhil examiner recommendations, 25 Thesis resubmissions**: clarify which options represent "resubmission"; Current regulations state that students may not resubmit the thesis more than once, but are not explicit which options constitute resubmission. Options d, e and h are resubmissions; options b and g are not.

- Consider resubmission of **MSc by Research dissertations**, in line with new Postgraduate Taught Masters dissertation regulation. Current regulation 54 MSc by Research degree revisions states that students cannot resubmit their research project or dissertation. The Taught Assessment regulations now permit Masters students to resubmit where they have achieved a marginal fail (45 – 49%) on first attempt or have been affected by Special Circumstances. (See appendix 1.)

Postgraduate Degree Regulations

- **8 Postgraduate Awards and Degree Programmes**: clarify that MMus is a 180-credit degree (request from School); Current regulation incorrectly lists MMus as 240 credits.

- **36b Supervision**: clarify that where supervisors who are not University staff are appointed the other supervisor must be a member of University staff; Current regulation states in paragraph b under honorary member of staff:

  > "The nomination of non-academic or honorary members of staff to act as Principal/Lead Supervisor for a stated period must be specifically approved by the College. In appropriate cases the other supervisor(s) may not need to be a member of the staff of the University, provided they assume their supervisory duties in accordance with University regulations and requirements."

  There is a need to clarify where the second supervisor need not be a member of University staff.

- **42 and 45 Grounds for the Award of PhD and MPhil Research Degrees**: clarify PhD and MPhil criteria (see Paper REC 18/19 3D);

- **53 MSc by Research Degrees only**: clarify what MSc by Research word count includes for consistency with other research degree word counts; Regulations 43 and 45 for PhD and MPhil state:

  > "The word count of the thesis includes the main text, preface material, footnotes and references but does not include material in the appendices, bibliography, abstract or lay summary."

- **62 and 63 PhD(eca) and MPhil(eca) submission by portfolio**: remove reference to PhD(eca) and MPhil(eca) as programmes no longer in use (request from College);

- Add **DVetMed** programme regulations to College specific regulations for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

Extract from Curriculum and Student Progression Committee paper submitted 31 May 2018 on Masters dissertation resubmission

Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group Report and Recommendations

Recommendation

Boards of Examiners should offer Masters students one opportunity to submit a revised version of the dissertation or research project. The Task Group recommends the following eligibility rules. CSPC are asked to note that, should they approve this change, amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations (outlined in Appendix 3) will be required for the coming Academic Year. CSPC are asked to approve these in conjunction with this recommendation:

☐ Students would have to achieve a minimum mark for the dissertation or research project to be entitled to a resubmission attempt. It is proposed that students gaining a mark of no more than 5% below the pass mark (i.e. 45% or more) at the first attempt would be entitled to a resubmission attempt. Those students entitled to resubmit would be expected to need only to make minor revisions to their dissertation or research project, rather than undertake substantial further research.

☐ Students would be given a three month timeframe as standard in which to resubmit their dissertation or research project following revisions. This should allow ample time for students to attend to minor revisions, even where they are only able to study on a part-time basis

 ☐ The Board of Examiners would decide whether or not the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a Masters degree; even where they confirm this, the original mark for the dissertation would be retained on the transcript; This avoids relative disadvantage to students who achieve a pass mark at the first attempt, and are therefore not entitled to submit a revised version in order to gain a higher mark.

☐ Students would be entitled to minimal supervision. Students would be provided with a statement from the examiners of their dissertation prior to the resubmission period beginning which outlines in which aspects the work was deficient on first submission, and will be offered one meeting with their supervisor to discuss this; Students whose work only requires minor revisions in order to achieve a pass mark are unlikely to require significant additional supervision; this also prevents adding significant additional workload to supervisors.

☐ Students would be entitled to library access during this time, but would not be expected to require access to labs etc.; This should be compatible with the fact that only minor revisions are required to the dissertation or research project, rather than additional research.

☐ Students who are granted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project would not be expected to attend the University during this time. As a result, the University's obligations as a visa sponsor would not be affected, as students would not need to be physically present during the resubmission period;

☐ It is proposed that no fee be charged for resubmission;

☐ Boards of Examiners would continue to be entitled to offer resubmission to students where this was an appropriate response to a Special Circumstances application.

Rationale

At present, Boards of Examiners may only allow resubmission of Master's Dissertations in light of Special Circumstances applications. Increasingly, however, comparator institutions (especially within the Russell Group) have moved to a position of offering resubmission of Master's dissertations as a matter of course based on specified criteria. Currently, the University of Edinburgh is one of only two Russell Group institutions that does not allow resubmission of Master's dissertations except in special circumstances. Significant numbers of External Examiners have suggested in their reports on our postgraduate taught programmes that this is an option which the University should consider.

Moving to a model of allowing resubmission of Master's dissertations where students have failed marginally balances a desire to provide good students with a further opportunity to complete their degree, while avoiding overburdening supervisors with additional workload. Data provided to the Task Group from Student Systems indicated that, in the 2015/16 session, 3,542 students had submitted for an MSc or equivalent PGT level qualification. Of these 3,542 students, only 193 (5.4%) were unsuccessful in achieving their intended award. These numbers amount to one or fewer students failing the dissertation component on most programmes, with the vast majority of programmes reporting 100% pass rates. The proportion of students achieving a marginal fail in the dissertation (i.e. within 5% of the pass mark) will be even smaller than this.

Risk assessment

Should the University decide from 2018/19 to offer students the opportunity to resubmit Master's dissertations or research projects where the student has marginally failed at the first attempt, there is the potential for current or previous taught Master's students to feel aggrieved that they were not offered this opportunity. The practical implications of offering resubmission to students from previous cohorts on request would be prohibitive. There is, therefore, an inevitable "cliff edge" involved in the introduction of such a policy regarding resubmission. However, the stated benefits to future students of adopting this revised approach should mean that this remains both worthwhile and defensible.

Resource Implications

There are resource implications for staff time should CSPC choose to allow the resubmission of Master's dissertations. It is not anticipated that this will be overly burdensome, given that the number of students who meet the criteria for resubmission is likely to be small (as the data above demonstrate), and the fact that these students will be entitled to only one further supervisory meeting. Once resubmitted dissertations have been marked, they can be considered at an existing Board of Examiners meeting following Semester 1 or 2.

There are minor resource implications for Student Systems in supporting resubmission of dissertations or research projects on the student record, but Student Systems have confirmed that these are manageable within existing resources. Academic Services would

work with Student Systems to provide guidance to Schools regarding the process of recording resubmission of Master's dissertations/research projects within the student record.

Equality and Diversity implications

The 2017 EDMARC Student report evidenced that BME students and those students who had a disclosed disability were less likely to achieve an exit award at Postgraduate Taught level. Allowing for resubmission of Master's dissertations or research projects has the potential to enable those students who would not previously have achieved an exit award to now achieve one.

The proposals allow a three month period for resubmission following minor revisions, which should be more than sufficient for students with caring or employment commitments. Additionally, the fact that it is proposed that no fee be attracted for resubmission will mean that an individual's financial situation will not act as a barrier.

REC 18/19 3G

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

Task Group: The practical operation of
PhD with Integrated Study programmes – Final report

Executive Summary

The paper comprises the task group's final report. It includes a proposed framework for new programmes and practical guidance for Schools on the structure and academic framework for PhD with Integrated Study programmes. The guidance covers:

- how to set out mandatory taught and training components in Degree Programme Tables and to reflect students' attainment of them in EUCLID;
- approaches to redeeming student failure on mandatory taught and research training components (for example, resits or credit on aggregate);
- approaches to monitoring students' progression in relation to mandatory taught elements;
- approaches to exit awards.

The proposed guidance aims to support Schools when they are establishing new PhD with Integrated Study programmes. Once Schools have established this approach for new programmes it may then be beneficial for them to review practice in relation to existing PhD with Integrated Study programmes.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objective of Leadership in Learning and the Committee's aim of promoting an outstanding student experience.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to consider the proposed guidance for approval subject to further refinement or reformatting by Academic Services.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

If agreed, Academic Services will disseminate the guidance to Colleges and Schools currently operating PhD with Integrated Study Programmes.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   The guidance will assist Schools to make more effective use of their resources, by removing the need for them to come up with solutions for practical issues. There may be some resource implications for Schools that

choose to adopt the proposed structure and academic framework for existing PhD with Integrated Study programmes.

2. **Risk assessment**

   No risk assessment is included as the proposal reflects existing regulations and policies and aims to support existing practice. However, there may be risk attached if clearly defined progress monitoring and assessment procedures for postgraduate research students as set out in the expectations of the UK Quality Code are not in place. If the University does not clearly communicate students' assessment information, it could be in breach of Competition and Market Authority guidance.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   No equality and diversity implications are identified as the guidance is associated with existing practice and policy, and does not introduce any new policy. However, all equality groups would benefit from ensuring consistency and accessibility of information regarding the requirements of PhD with Integrated Study programmes.

4. **Freedom of information**

   The paper is **open.**

Originator of the paper
Professor Neil Mulholland, Susan Hunter and Dr Adam Bunni
07 January 2019

The practical operation of PhD with Integrated Study Programmes: proposed framework for new programmes

Background

Following consultation with the Colleges in early 2018, Colleges reported that PhD with Integrated Study programmes are providing good student experience. This includes positive cohort experience and strengthening links with research partners. However, to support a continued, consistent student experience, Schools would benefit from clarity regarding how to approach the academic framework for new Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) provision and new PhD with Integrated Study Programmes. For example, how taught elements will be assessed and how they relate to student progression monitoring. The Research Support Office advise that, currently the Research Councils do not make stipulations about how PhD with Integrated Study programmes are structured and delivered.

In April 2018, The Researcher Experience Committee agreed to set up a short life working group, to be convened by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, including academic representation from relevant Schools and supported by Academic Services. The group would explore practical issues in relation to operating compulsory taught elements of and ensuring clarity for students on PhD with Integrated Study programmes. Following preparatory consultation work carried out by Academic Services during summer 2018, the task group met once on 25 October 2018.

Consultation

Academic Services consulted and met with Schools running PhD with Integrated Study programmes within Centres for Doctoral Training across the Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and Science and Engineering. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences does not currently have any PhD with Integrated Study programmes so was not included in this exercise.

Discussions covered

- how mandatory taught and research training components of PhD with Integrated Study programmes are set out,
- approaches to redeeming student failure on these and
- monitoring student progression in relation to mandatory taught elements.

The consultation also provided Schools with an opportunity to feedback any other comments on how these programmes are working.

Academic Services reported on discussions to the task group's October 2018 meeting. Several members of the task group had been involved with the consultation exercise.

Task group findings and proposed guidance

The task group believes that the existing Taught Assessment Regulations and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees already provide an appropriate assessment framework for PhD with Integrated Study. These regulations also provide sufficient flexibility for developing different degree programme structures. Therefore, the task group proposes no changes to the current regulations. However, the Research Experience Committee should continue to monitor the development of this type of programme and Research Councils' intentions for them.

The task group believe that the proposed guidance below will support Schools when they are establishing new PhD with Integrated Study programmes. Once Schools have established this approach for new programmes it may then be beneficial for them to review practice in relation to existing PhD with Integrated Study programmes. Existing programmes that adopt or transition to elements of the proposed academic framework should ensure this does not cause significant or detrimental change to on-programme students.

Guidance for compulsory taught or research training elements

- **Degree Programme Tables and compulsory course assessment**
  - Programmes should have a Degree Programme Table setting out all compulsory taught and research skills courses
  - All compulsory taught and research skills courses should be defined in terms of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit levels and volumes. Student-led individual created courses (SLICCs) may be used to capture flexible types of learning for credit.
  - Credit-bearing courses should be assessed and credit awarded by a Board of Examiners under the Taught Assessment Regulations. This also provides students with the right of appeal.
  - Credit-bearing courses should be recorded in the student record (EUCLID).
  - It may be possible to use existing Boards of Examiners or programmes may wish to set up a specific Board of Examiners to examine credit-bearing taught courses.

  The School Teaching Organisation may be able to offer help with the above points.

- **Taught course creation**
  Programmes may use existing taught courses (for example, from Postgraduate Taught programmes) or set up bespoke courses (new courses are subject to normal approval processes by Boards of Studies). Making use of the School Teaching Organisation will be helpful in setting up taught courses. SLICCs may be useful as a framework for awarding SCQF credit based on a variety or combination of skills

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training work, which would not otherwise carry credit. Course entries can be created to record SCQF credit obtained for courses delivered in partner institutions in EUCLID. Staff can find further guidance on setting up courses at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/admin-support-staff/programme-course-maintenance/course-creation-approval-maintenance

- **Progression**
  The annual progression review should include progress with compulsory taught and research skills elements. Schools should clearly state progression requirements, for example in the Programme Handbook or Degree Programme Table.

- **Redeeming failure**
  If taught and research skills elements are required for progression, students must have the opportunity to redeem failed courses either by 'credit on aggregate' or via access to a defined number of resits. This is important to ensure that students can progress and obtain the core skills needed. Programme information should explain how arrangements for redeeming failure will operate. These may include:

  o The award of credit on aggregate, where a student achieves passes in a defined volume of other courses and achieves an overall passing average in all taught and research skills courses.

  o Offering a defined number of resits/resubmission attempts.

  o Offering alternative courses to make up missing credits.

- **Exit awards**
  The Postgraduate Degree Regulations allow for the award of general postgraduate certificate or diploma with appropriate credit. That is, at least 60 credits with a minimum at SCQF level 11 for a certificate and at least 120 with a minimum of 90 at level 11 for a diploma (this includes use of credit on aggregate). The regulations do not provide a general Masters award; therefore, it is useful to have a named Masters where possible. This avoids situations where students have to leave with a Diploma even if they have enough credit for a Masters award. Schools should clear state arrangements for exit awards, for example in the Programme Handbook.

- **Recording achievement**
  The University plans to introduce a postgraduate research Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR). This will give an opportunity to record approved types of non-credit bearing activity alongside results for credit-bearing courses.

- **Non-compulsory taught and research skills courses**
  In addition to any compulsory taught and research skills courses, integrated PhD programmes can offer students the opportunity to take a wider range of non-compulsory research and professional skills development activities. If these are SCQF

credit-bearing they would be subject to the University's Taught Assessment Regulations and to the same points about redeeming failure and recording in EUCLID.

All the above applies irrespective of whether the taught and research skills courses are delivered by Edinburgh or a partner institution. However, in some circumstances, the partner institution's assessment regulations may apply (where agreed by the partner institutions).

Additional guidance on submission and supervision

Although not in scope for this task group, the group discussed the challenge of ensuring students have time to do additional work. The group noted the new norm of funding for 42 months for a standard PhD, determined by the Research Councils. Research Councils also expect submission within four years. This has led to a mismatch between funding and submission expectations, particularly for the PhD with Integrated Study. The task group recommend the following additional points are included in the guidance.

- **Submission period:** the task group noted that Research Councils treat this in different ways and that some apply penalties for late submission. University regulations treat PhD with Integrated Study programmes as four years plus 12 months submission period; however, some partner institutions have different regulations. There is some tension here between funding, scholarships and expectations on time to complete. The group supported clarity in the guidance that PhD with Integrated Study is a four-year programme with submission in the fifth year.

- **Supervision**: the task group noted potential challenges with supervision where the first year or semester is dedicated to taught elements. Students may not have a Principal Supervisor in the traditional sense for the first part of their programme as they have yet to settle on a specific project, so the supervision they receive is more akin to that of a programme director. These students are not normally allocated a Personal Tutor and the supervisor may not be experienced in taught provision. Therefore, School may need to ensure that appropriate academic support is available. The group supported highlighting this in the guidance as something to consider when setting up new programmes.

- **Credit weighting**
  The task group also discussed the credit element of the thesis. The Postgraduate Degree Regulations define the standard PhD programme as at least 540 credits, which equates to recognition of three years of study. The PhD with Integrated Study programme is defined as 720 credits of which at least 540 are at SCQF Level 12. Of

the remaining 180 credits, 150 should be at SCQF Level 11 or above. Therefore, there is no prescription on the amount of taught course credits. Does the Committee want to explore whether a minimum volume of non-thesis credit should be included? This may mean a change to the regulations and current practice in some areas, and would need further consultation.

Professor Neil Mulholland, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Susan Hunter and Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services
07 January 2019

Task Group remit and membership

Remit

To develop practical guidance regarding the set-up and operation of PhD with Integrated Study programmes, covering the following issues: how to set out mandatory taught / training components in Degree Programme Tables and to reflect students' attainment of them in EUCLID; approaches to redeeming student failure on mandatory taught / training components (for example, resits or credit on aggregate); approaches to monitoring students' progression in relation to mandatory taught elements; approaches to exit awards.

Membership

Convener – Dean of Postgraduate Studies (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), administrative representatives from the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, academic representatives from three Schools that currently have PhDs with Integrated Study, Academic Services.

In attendance at the task group meeting on 25 October 2018:

Professor Neil Mulholland (Convener)
Dr Adam Bunni (Academic Services)
Dr Susan Farrington (MVM)
Dr Jane Haley (MVM)
Dr Will Hossack (SE)
Susan Hunter (Academic Services)
Dr Adam Lopez (SE)
Amanda Mackenzie (SE)
Lynn Walford (AHSS)

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

25 January 2019

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015 – Recommendations

Executive Summary

The paper presents the last report submitted to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) on progress with the postgraduate research student experience area for development theme from the University's ELIR in 2015. An updated report will be submitted to SQAC in February 2019 and members are asked to provide contributions.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with the Committee's remit. Additionally, SQAC has responsibility for monitoring progress against agreed ELIR actions.

Action requested

To consider the report and provide contributions for the updated version that will be considered by SQAC in February 2019.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Reports for several ELIR 2015 areas for development themes will be considered at SQAC in February 2019 and any actions will be communicated by Academic Services and/or the theme leads.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   No additional actions are requested.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The ELIR has been managed within the University's risk management process.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   This paper does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. Equality and diversity considerations will be taken into account by the theme leads.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open.

Key words

ELIR, Enhancement-led Institutional Review

Originator of the paper

Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services
17 January 2019

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)
Theme Lead Report

Theme: Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) Experience

Theme lead: Professor Jeremy Bradshaw

Effective communication and consistent implementation of the Code of Practice
The Code is currently undergoing a review to ensure that its purpose is clear, that information is contained within the appropriate place and to minimise duplication of information, especially in light of the Programme and Course Handbook Policy. This includes cross-referencing to regulations where appropriate and redrafting some of the Code of Practice as policy. The Code of Practice review has included feedback from supervisors and postgraduate research students in determining its content. The draft outline has been approved by Senate Researcher Experience Committee and further input from key stakeholders, including PGR students, will be sought on the publication's design and presentation. Some content will be relocated into University regulations and policy. A draft of the revised publication will be submitted to the March Researcher Experience Committee meeting and a communication strategy will be confirmed

Review the effectiveness and regularity of research supervisor training
Work on the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development programme has continued. Further information and a progress report from December 2017 can be found at: http://edin.ac/2pFy7zo One of the themes of this programme is Supervisor Training and Support, which aims to:
- Enhance the content of compulsory supervisor briefings by sharing practice across Colleges and ensuring updated database of resources.
- Identify, design and pilot optional training for supervisors, including facilitation guides for Schools to use.
- Consult with Schools and Colleges to design an online toolkit to support supervising at a distance.
- Explore ways in which to ensure accurate, central recording of supervision training.
- Identify ways to recognise and share practice of excellence in supervision.

Following on from work undertaken from February to May 2017, the later half of 2017 focused on enhancing the PGR supervisor network programme and communications for supervisors. A programme of events was set up, drawing from discussions at the PGR supervisor network launch event in June 2017. New webpages for supervisors were created on the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) webpages and a newsletter is now produced three times per year. The webpages will continue to be developed throughout 2018/19.

Through discussions and work undertaken it became clear that a more comprehensive approach to supervisor CPD should be taken and a proposal for a short-life task group to be convened to look at this was approved by the Researcher Experience Committee

(REC) in December 2017. A paper setting out the remit for this group was approved at the January meeting.

Analyse the needs and experience of PGR students (School, College and University) to ensure effective support (particularly in the context of increasing numbers) and clarify where students go for further support
One of the strands of the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development programme, Mentorship and Wellbeing, is working to:
- Explore the PGR mentor function across the University and identify a number of possible models. This involves benchmarking current practice, scoping and defining different models.
- Benchmark and carry out a gap analysis of support for PGR wellbeing across the University.

Two of the outcomes from this work stream are as follows:
1. A six month full time post has been approved to look at expanding peer mentoring to PGR students. This post will be jointly managed by IAD and the Student's Association and will start in Spring 2018. It will involve building models for peer mentoring and support and managing pilots.
2. A comprehensive report on 'strategies for PGR wellbeing' was commissioned by IAD and produced in June 2017. This report sets out a set of recommendations for the University, REC and the Excellence Programme. The Mental Health Strategy Group has discussed this and REC is currently agreeing on priorities for 2018/19.

Updates on progress to December 2017 can be found here:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education

A pilot event for supervisors called Spotlight on…. mental health and wellbeing support for PGR students will be held in February 2018. This is a partnership between IAD, Student Counselling, Student Disability Service, the Student's Association and the Chaplaincy. The event will be evaluated.

Training and support of PGR students who teach (including on assessment and feedback and are aware of career development resources through IAD)
In response to the ELIR, institution-led reviews, and other feedback, the University reviewed its Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators during 2016/17 and agreed to replace it with a new Policy. The new Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators, was implemented at the start of the 2017/18 session. It clarifies the arrangements for recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators. The Policy may be downloaded at:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators_policy.pdf The Policy will be after it has been running for one year.

PGR students who teach can consult the IAD webpages for Tutors and Demonstrators for information on workshops, routes to Higher Education Academy accreditation and relevant resources. http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/tutors-demonstrators

University involvement in the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland's Focus On the PGR student experience: http://edin.ac/2vHKqkr

Recommendation 64. The majority of students who met the ELIR team had positive

experiences with their supervisors, indicating that they felt supported and encouraged to engage with development and educational opportunities, including attendance at events and conferences. However, a small number of students did not feel that this was the case and they were not aware of what to do or where to go if they required further support. Not all of the students considered that the Code of Practice was implemented consistently. Heads of school outlined the roles of the co-supervisors in cases where students did not consider that their needs were being met, and acknowledged that further training for some research supervisors could be beneficial. The team encourages the University to review the effectiveness and regularity of research supervisor training.(Further background information at ELIR Technical Report paragraphs 61,62,63,65,78)

Recommendation 66. The University should continue to analyse the needs and experience of postgraduate research students at school, college and institutional level to ensure that they are effectively supported, particularly in the context of the University's plans to increase the research student numbers. The University should review the effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training and ensure that the University's Code of Practice is communicated and implemented effectively. The University should also made certain that postgraduate research students who teach are properly trained and supported for the role (including in the provision of assessment and feedback) and are made aware of the career development resources available through the IAD.   [Para. 65 has background information to the recommendation on training for postgraduate research students who teach: "The training and development for tutors and demonstrators has developed since the 2011 ELIR with better oversight of tutors through guaranteed contracts and the appointment of a staff member in the IAD who works specifically with this group. Nonetheless, during the current ELIR, undergraduate students expressed a level of dissatisfaction with teaching delivered by postgraduate research students; the research students who taught indicated to the ELIR team that they did not always feel sufficiently trained or prepared to do so."]

Recommendation 78. In the context of the University's ambitions to increase the postgraduate research student population, there would be considerable benefit in the institution continuing to analyse the needs and experience of postgraduate research students at school, college and institutional level to ensure that they are effectively supported. The University should review the effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training and ensure that the University's Code of Practice is communicated and implemented effectively. The University should also make certain that postgraduate research students who teach are properly trained and supported for the role (including in the provision of assessment and feedback) and are made aware of the career development resources available through the Institute for Academic Development.

REC 18/19 3I

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update and Discussion of Contextualised Themes

Executive Summary
The paper updates Committee members on the University's preparations for its 2020 ELIR, and asks for their views on the proposed contextualised themes.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
Relevant to the University's strategic priority to improve the quality of the student experience and specifically the Student and Staff Experience Plan and the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Action requested
To note the update on preparations and discuss the proposed contextualised themes, indicating prioritisation and any gaps.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
The views of Senate and its four committees are being sought and will be used by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and Academic Services to develop a final draft list of contextualised themes for discussion with the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) in late March 2019. The final list of contextualised themes will be approved by the Learning and Teaching Policy Group on 18 April 2019.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   No additional actions are requested.

2. **Risk assessment**
   A successful ELIR outcome is of vital importance to the University.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Will be considered as part of individual activities/projects.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open.

Key words
ELIR, Enhancement-led Institutional Review

Originator of the paper
Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services
14 January 2019

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

Enhancement-Led Institutional Review is the method by which the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) reviews universities and other higher education institutions in Scotland. The last ELIR took place in 2015 and the University received the highest possible judgement, an outcome of 'effectiveness' in the management of academic standards and enhancing quality. The University's next ELIR takes place in October and November 2020.

A review team, comprising between 4-6 senior academic peer reviewers and student reviewers is appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) to conduct the ELIR and will visit the University twice, meeting with staff and students.

Key dates:
- Planning visit: Thursday 1 October 2020[1]
- Review Visit: Week beginning 16 November 2020 (visit likely to last 5 days)[2]

ELIR provides an opportunity for us to reflect on our approach to learning and teaching and the quality of our student experience, and to gain valuable feedback from an external review team. As such, ELIR is a process that we should embrace positively as we seek to enhance further both the student experience and the quality of our teaching, building on our many achievements to date since the last review.

In preparation for the review we are asked to develop a Reflective Analysis (RA) covering: contextual information; enhancing the student learning experience; strategy and practice for enhancing learning and teaching; academic standards and quality processes; and collaborative provision. The development of the RA will involve inputs from across the University and opportunity for feedback from students and staff to ensure that it reflects the strategies, practices and intentions across the whole University. The RA will be supported by an Advanced Information Set that comprises a set of supporting evidence (including a sample of key quality reports and an analysis of student feedback).

Management of the ELIR Process

Rather than establish a separate ELIR Steering Group for ELIR 2020 (as was the case for ELIR 2015), a small team comprising the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and staff in Academic Services will lead the preparations, and the Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) will oversee these preparations. Papers and discussion items will be brought to LTPG at relevant intervals, and members will be asked to give comment on draft chapters of the RA as it develops. LTPG does not have student representation so regular meetings will be held with representatives from the Students' Association to inform ELIR preparations. Other committees and groups will also be consulted and a number of staff from across the University and the Students Association will be involved in drafting content for the RA.

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[1] The Planning Visit is likely to involve three meetings with colleagues from the institution. There will be a working meeting with the main contact from the institution, who is likely to be the senior member of staff with responsibility for leading the institution's preparations for ELIR. The ELIR team will meet with a group of student representatives, a key aim of which will be to establish the students' views of the topics that should be explored during the main Review Visit. There will be a further meeting with a group of staff involved at the discipline level.

[2] During the visit, the ELIR team will consider a range of the institution's documentation and hold meetings with staff and students.

Contextualisation of ELIR[3]

A key development of the ELIR process since last time means that we now have to identify, ahead of the review, themes that we wish the review team to focus on.

The intention is that this helps to contextualise the review process, ensuring it is more responsive to us and how we operate, our student population and our strategic priorities. Identifying appropriate themes is therefore crucial to ensure we get the greatest value from the review process.

Contextualised Themes

The themes will not be new activities, but should be existing or planned activities linked to our strategic priorities that we wish to focus on throughout the ELIR. They should be informed by a consideration of available evidence (such as student surveys and other key performance indicators) and discussions with staff and students.

Sources to Inform Contextualisation

Key sources of information we should consider include:
- Significant changes to the student population
- Outcomes of the last ELIR
- Significant changes in strategy, for example: Strategic Plan; Learning and Teaching Strategy; Student and Staff Experience Action Plan; Widening Participation Strategy; Student Mental Health Strategy
- Evaluation of student feedback (including the themes in the Student Partnership Agreement)
- Outcomes of quality assurance and enhancement processes*
- Quality Code mapping (the Code sets out fundamental principles that should apply to higher education quality across the UK and to which the University maps its policies and practices)
- Annual reports to the Scottish Funding Council (linked to *) and Outcome Agreement
- External surveys and related reporting e.g. NSS and DHLE (reflected on as part of *)

Proposed Contextualised Themes

Early consultations with stakeholders on potential contextualised themes have been held to date with the Senior Vice-Principal and other senior colleagues (including via LTPG); College Deans for Learning and Teaching and Quality, the Director of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), and Students' Association representation.

From the consultations to date, the following long-list of suggested themes has been generated:

- Widening participation
- Academic community (including online)
- Student support (including use of data e.g. retention)
- Postgraduate research student experience
- Teaching and academic careers
- Data-driven innovation and the curriculum
- Community engagement
- Student voice (including co-creation of the curriculum)
- Use of data to manage learning and teaching.

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[3] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaas/reviewing-he-in-scotland/elir4-handbook-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=178af581_16

- Employability

From the above long-list the following four themes are proposed. Views are sought on whether these should be the main themes we wish to focus on, in terms of using the ELIR to support our objectives. The RA provides opportunity for us to highlight other aspects not directly included under the proposed themes.

- Teaching and Academic Careers
  - This would include all the academic development work provided by IAD, plus the recent work of the Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group.
- Student Voice and Community
  - Including the work the Students' Association has done around representation and the work around student surveys, mid-course feedback and strengthening of other student voice mechanisms, but also including planned work and future directions under the new Student and Staff Experience Plan.
- Student Support
  - This will include an (expected) update on developments with student support following the focus on Personal Tutors in the last ELIR, but will refocus around the new plans under the Student and Staff Experience Plan for student support as well as including work around widening participation and considering student support more broadly than academic support.
- Student Skills and Employability
  - Including all work related to supporting the development of students' skills and attributes for employability.

Further Consultation

Throughout late February/early March, a series of both face-to-face and virtual sessions will be held giving students and staff the opportunity to feed in views on the proposed themes and to consider the evidence-base to put forward.

REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

12 October 2018

1   Digital Disruption

The Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation on Digital Disruption, highlighting other sectors that have been disrupted by digital technologies and the scope for similar disruption within higher education. Opportunities to deliver high quality online education at scale and to use new technology to benefit 'on campus' students were considered. The Committee discussed difficulties in predicting the extent and type of digital disruption, to be mitigated by using flexible, broad-based platforms for online learning and student preference in many cases for in-person contact with academics, particularly at undergraduate level.

2   University Study Spaces

The Director of User Services delivered a presentation on study spaces across the University. There are 7,588 individual study spaces (equivalent to 19% of the student population), 2,263 of which are in the Main Library, the most popular study space area. Options for increasing the proportion of study spaces in the Central Area (equivalent to 8% of the student population) were considered, including increasing study spaces in the Main Library and utilising some teaching rooms as study spaces after 5pm in peak periods. The Committee welcomed further work to develop shorter and longer term options to increase study spaces and discussed advertising available study spaces to students using a mobile application, ensuring new or refurbished buildings have flexibility to accommodate temporary study spaces if required and the accessibility of some campuses and their study spaces outside normal working hours.

3   Report on National Student Survey IT and Library Questions

Responses to the three library and IT-related questions in the 2018 National Student Survey and associated free text comments were reviewed. A theme of student frustration with inconsistency in availability of recorded lectures, library materials, printing of course materials and the quality of study spaces was noted. The possibility of developing an examination timetable mobile application was welcomed, with a class timetable mobile application in pilot project stage. It was noted that library opening hours had previously been the most frequently raised issue but the Main Library is now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and similar ambition would be shown in addressing the current issues raised in the free text comments.

4   Distance Learning at Scale Update

An update on the Distance Learning at Scale pilot programmes was considered. A partnership agreement has been signed with edX, with a Business School MSc in Business Analytics to be the first course offered under the partnership with an accompanying Predictive Analytics 'MicroMasters.'

5   Other items

A proposed programme of 16 digital research services projects to be undertaken in 2018/19 were reviewed and approved. An update on the ongoing procurement exercise for Phase 1 of the Core Systems Strategy was reviewed. Revisions to the Web Accessibility Policy were approved. An update on the review of the University's web estate, including a risk register and activity plan, was considered.