THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

GRADUATE BOARD

Minutes

20 June 2011

Present: The Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Professor E Spiers (in the Chair), Dr T Batten, Mr D Bradley-Williams (PGR Student Representative), Professor M Chipperfield, Professor J Donnelly, Dr H Dyer, Dr P Gardner, Dr O Harlen, Mr E Jebreel, Dr P Knapp, Professor P Millner, Dr A Mullis, Dr M Purvis, Dr W Rea, Dr M Treherne, Professor D Westhead.

In attendance: Dr A Bromley, Mrs J Y Findlay, Mr R Gilworth, Ms K Owen, Dr H Sears, Dr A Temple (for MM 10/417-419), Ms S Throp.

Congratulations and Expressions of Thanks

On behalf of the Board the Chair congratulated Judy Donnelly from Leeds Trinity University College on her appointment as Professor of Nutrition Education.

The Chair thanked Elliot Jebreel, the outgoing Education Officer for his contributions to the work of the Board during session 2010/11 and noted the appointment of Ben Jackson as the incoming Education Officer.

The Chair also thanked Dr Peter Knapp, Chair of the Examinations Group, who will be leaving the University at the end of this month to take up an appointment at the University of York. It was noted that Dr Nicola Stonehouse, Biological Sciences, had agreed to take on the role of Chair of the Examinations Group and that action had been taken by the Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Senate, to confirm her appointment with effect from 01 July 2011.

Postgraduate Research Tutors Forum

Members were reminded that the PGRT Forum would take place on Tuesday, 5 July. The meeting would be led by Dr Peter Gardner, Chair of the Programmes of Study and Audit Group.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2011 were confirmed.

Matters Arising on the Minutes (and not mentioned elsewhere on the Agenda)

M 10/301 Marketing for Split-Site PhDs (GB/10/100)

The Board received a report of recent discussions between RSA and International Office, with input from Student Recruitment and Marketing and Communications. It was recognised that split-site PhD opportunities should be fully embedded in the overall pgr marketing strategy. The Communications Team were intending to create a higher profile for split-site opportunities on the corporate website by November 2011.

MM 10/318 – 324 Employability and the Leeds PGR Student Experience

Dr Bob Gilworth advised the Board that the Careers Centre had recently held a conference on alternatives to academic careers for pgr students. There had been over 100 attendees from across the University and feedback on the conference had been very positive.
Attendees had responded with enthusiasm to the matter of internships but this was measured by recognition of the practicalities involved which included:

- Insufficient time available to pgrs during their research degree candidature and reluctance of some supervisors to allow their students to participate
- Lack of funding for blocks of time away from research
- Limited availability of genuine and meaningful projects
- Potential difficulties for SMEs in accommodating internships.

The Board agreed that consultancy style projects carried out by multi-disciplinary teams was a possible way forward. It was also agreed that it would be useful to reproduce a “Leeds for Life” style networking event for pgrs.

The Chair acknowledged that this would be an on-going issue which would increase in importance. To encourage progress a clear institutional steer was required. Dr Gilworth thanked the Board for their input into further discussions.

Action Taken by the Chair Since the Last Meeting (GB/10/101)

It was reported that the Chair, since the last meeting, had taken action on behalf of the Board to approve recommendations from the Chair of Programmes of Study and Audit Group as follows:

(a) to amend the University’s minimum English language requirements for research degree study, with immediate effect, which will ensure that international students will be able to acquire visas to enter the UK for study;

(b) to agree the following consequential and editorial amendments to:

- the Regulations to Ordinance X (Ordinance and Regulations and Programmes of Study for Research Degrees booklet)

  1. (e)

    i. Applicants for admission to a programme leading to a research degree award of the University must, before they can be admitted to the University, provide evidence that they have attained normally at least a band score of 6.0 (with not less than 5.5 in any component) in Listening & Reading and 5.0 in Speaking & Writing Skills in the British Council IELTS or equivalent qualifications, which have been approved by the University*. In addition some Faculties may require English language qualifications above this stipulated minimum. Candidates who wish to pursue a research degree candidature under split-site arrangements are normally required to provide evidence that they have attained a band score of 6.5 in IELTS with no component below 6.0;

- Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures (Footnote 5.)

The University’s minimum English language entry requirements for admission of research students whose first language is not English are the British Council IELTS band score 6.0 (with not less than 5.5 in Listening and Reading and 5.0 in Speaking and Writing skills in any component) or paper based TOEFL 550 (with 4.0 on the Test of Written English TWE) or internet based TOEFL (iBT) overall 80–87 with not less than 18–21 in listening, 21 in writing, 20–22 in reading and 20–23 in speaking. Some Schools may require levels of achievement that are higher than the stipulated minimum.

(Additions shown using bold type and deletions shown using strikethrough)
(c) to approve the following recommendations\(^1\) with effect from 2011/12:

(i) a new research programme, Programme of Study entry and Learning Outcomes for the Integrated PhD and MSc (Nuclear Fuel Cycle) (as set out in Annex A (a-c)).

(ii) a new research programme, Programme of Study entry and Learning Outcomes for the Integrated PhD and MSc (Medical and Biological Engineering) (as set out in Annex B (a-c))

(iii) Programme of Study entry and Learning Outcomes for the Integrated PhD and MSc (Chemical Process Research and Development) (as set out in Annex C (a-b)).

(iv) amendments to the Programme of Study entry for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClinDent) (following approval of changes to taught modules agreed at the meeting of the Board held on 18/04/11) (as set out in Annex D)

(v) amendments to the research degree programme and Programme of Study entry for the Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care (as set out in Annex E (a-b))\(^2\)

(vi) amendments to the research degree programme for the DTC in Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine (as set out in Annex F)\(^2\)

(vii) amendments to the research degree programme and Programme of Study entry for the Integrated PhD and MSc (Low Carbon Technologies) (as set out in Annex G (a-b))\(^2\).

New Route PhD Consortium

The Board noted that RSA had informed the New Route PhD Consortium that the University would be withdrawing from membership at the end of this year. Reference to the University of Leeds would now be withdrawn from the Consortium’s website. This action was consistent with the Board’s decision, taken in December 2010, to withdraw Leeds from the New Route PhD Consortium but to continue to offer Leeds Integrated PhD and Master programmes with no further connection with the Consortium.

International Office had been advised to remove any reference to the “New Route PhD” and the Consortium from any publicity. Faculties and Schools were asked to ensure that any references in their material were also removed.

Update on the PGR Project 2009-11 (GB/10/102)

Professor Spiers provided a report on the PGR Project which was due for completion in May 2011. Key outcomes from the project included:

- Marketing plans in support of pgr recruitment in faculties were being developed in alignment with the University’s PGR marketing strategy – however, resources had been diverted in marketing and communications to deal with taught fee matters;
- PGR Experiences and Expectations brochure would be produced on a biennial basis;
- On-going work was being undertaken to enhance the PGR web pages;
- Ongoing work on delivery plans for a refreshed University strategy for personal and professional development skills for pgr (Post-Roberts). It is expected that a proposal will be presented to FMG in the summer;

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\(^1\) Subject to approval by the relevant Learning and Teaching Committees, and TSEB, where appropriate.

\(^2\) Approved immediately after the meeting of the Board on 20 June 2011
Annual pan-University PGR conference
Development of a University-wide personal development record (PDR) system
PGR Finance Overview Committee has been convened
Review and recommendations for Faculty Graduate School paper presented to VCEG
Recruitment of a PGR Dean;
Identification of future priorities for pgr

A detailed review report of the PGR Project was being prepared and a benefits realisation, for implementation beyond project delivery, was also being prepared. These would be available in July 2011.

It was noted that interviews for the post of PGR Dean would be held on 21 June 2011. Appointment of the PGR Dean would allow for further consideration and clarification of the management structure for pgr matters and consequential amendments to Section 2 (Management Structure) of the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures with effect from session 2012/13 onwards.

Postgraduate Development Record System - Update Report (GB/10/103)

The Board noted that development of the PDR System is functionally complete and it was expected that user acceptance testing (UAT) would begin during the week commencing 27 June 2011 and this would be followed by training (implementation workshops) in July. The system would be rolled out in August with the aim of a September go live date for the PDR system. To facilitate this Faculty Implementation Teams, comprising academic, administrative and IT members, had been established.

Members were encouraged to disseminate information about the PDR system within their faculties, schools and services as appropriate. Support to do this, and any further information on the project, could be obtained from Sally Edwards (s.edwards@adm.leeds.ac.uk).

PGR Academic Fees (Standing Item on the Agenda)

The Chair informed members that there was currently no information for report on the matter of pgr academic fees. Discussions were ongoing.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

QAA Institutional Review of the University of Leeds (2012) (GB/10/104)

The Board received the first draft of the Institutional Briefing Paper for the QAA Institutional Review of the University in 2012. It was expected that the review would take place on 13 and 14 December 2011 and the week beginning the 6 February 2012.

It was noted that the document, so far, related to Learning and Teaching with some information on PGR taken from the Interim Report which has recently been sent to the QAA. Further work was required together with additional information. The document, would be shorter than for previous reviews and was due to be submitted to the QAA by the end of October 2011. Links to evidence to support the document would be mounted on a secure website.

It was agreed that a specific event would be arranged for DOGES to attend and contribute to the development of the Briefing Paper.

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3 A change of title form “Personal” to “Postgraduate” Development Record has recently been agreed.
The Chair drew the Board’s attention to the 44.5% response rate which had been achieved by the University and thanked Dr Heather Sears, SDDU, for her work towards securing this excellent return.

Dr Sears drew attention to the paper (GB/10/105) which presented a comparison of Leeds 2011 responses to the Russell Group institutions benchmarking group and the Leeds 2008 results.

Overall results were pleasing with 87.6% of Leeds PGR students, who completed the survey, indicating that their experience on the research programme either met or exceeded their expectations. In many areas the results showed a significant improvement for Leeds compared with 2008 responses and the University’s performance against the Russell Group benchmarking Group was good.

The Board discussed how the data collected might be presented to aid more detailed discussion at Faculty/School level. It was recognised that PRES provided a useful tool to aid enhancement of the research student experience. Discussion also took place about what level might be identified below which Faculties/Schools would be required to take action to address negative responses. It was felt that those scoring in the bottom quartile might be required to take action to address issues.

It was agreed that next steps would include:

(i) Producing a report which presented responses to each question by School and compared to the University average. This would allow Schools, FGSCs and the Board to see variations in scoring across the University;
(ii) Providing each school and FGSC with qualitative comments from their students;
(iii) FGSCs to invite the PRES Officer to a meeting to discuss the results, further data analysis requirements and to generate action plans. Progress on action plans would be monitored by FGSCs and the Board;
(iv) The PRES Officer will work with LUU to analyse specific LUU questions and qualitative comments and to disseminate results to PGRs.

The Partnership (GB/10/106)

The Board received a copy of the Partnership document which had recently been approved by Senate after consultation with staff and taught students across the University. It had been developed in anticipation of the effect of the new funding regime from 2012 onwards.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student Education, Professor Jones, had asked that the Partnership document be copied to the Graduate Board for information and discussion on how it might be implemented in the graduate area. Whilst some of the vocabulary might be seen as more relevant to taught students (for example, reference to “personal tutors”) it was intended to be a pan-University document and its principles could hopefully be translated for pgrs both as students and as teachers.

A paper, giving the background to previous discussions by the Graduate Board following the introduction of the original Partnership Agreement from 2006/07 was made available to the Board.

This was the first occasion upon which the Partnership had been referred to the Board for consideration. The Board noted that the new document was not intended to replace the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures. It did, however, provide a general over-arching statement of shared expectations across the University and might be implemented as such for pgrs subject to further consideration of some of the vocabulary.
Engaging Research Students with Ethics and Wider Societal Impact (GB/10/107)

Dr Alice Temple informed the Board that following previous discussions by UREC and the Board RSA had sent a questionnaire to Faculty Graduate Schools to ask how they are implementing recommendations for improving the engagement of pgrs with ethics and wider societal impact. In particular Graduate Schools were asked to identify, along with a justification, whether:

a) salient research governance, ethics and impact issues exist in each school in the faculty;
b) each school runs or plans to run a tailored research governance, ethics and impact training event;
c) each school does/will require students to include a statement on research governance, ethics and impact in the transfer submission;
d) each school does/will require students to include a statement on research governance, ethics and impact in the final thesis.

The Board noted that the responses, in summary, indicated that:

a) the vast majority of schools have salient research governance, ethics and impact issues;
b) all except Chemistry, Food Science and Mathematics provide or plan to provide tailored training;
c) all with salient issues except Physics and Arts will require a statement in the transfer submission;
d) all with salient issues except Medicine and Health, Physics, Environment and Arts will require a statement in the thesis;
e) the Faculty of Engineering has provided a ‘one approach does not fit all’ response; a response is awaited from Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies, Music, Performance & Cultural Industries.

The Board welcomed the report as a summary of what action was being taken across the University but noted that the response from the Faculty of PVAC remained outstanding and should be included. It agreed that it was appropriate for Faculties to each agree suitable arrangements for their particular areas. In addition it was noted that the Board had amended, with effect from 2011/12, the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures and Learning Outcomes for all research degree programmes to include clearer reference to ethical issues. In particular, the Code of Practice now required consideration of ethical issues by the School at the admissions stage, further responsibilities were included for supervisors and specific reference was made to consideration of ethical issues at the transfer stage.

The Researcher Development Framework and Statement – The new national research skills framework endorsed by RCUK (GB/10/108)

Dr Tony Bromley reminded the Board that since 2001 the RCUK Joint Statement of Skills (JSS) had acted as the reference document that had guided the development of the skills of researchers throughout the “Roberts” funded period. However, the JSS was limited as it only considered the skills development of pgr researchers. A new Researcher Development Framework (RDF) had now been developed nationally that considered the development of researchers throughout their career. The Researcher Development Statement (RDS) was a companion “summary” version of the RDF which had been endorsed by many national organisations including RCUK.

Paper GB/10/108 provided an overview of the RDF/RDS and introduced a new RDF-derived training and development needs analysis (TDNA) for use with effect from session 2011/12. This was designed as a tool and it would not be compulsory for pgrs to complete it.
Some minor comments were made on the proposed TDNA and Dr Bromley undertook to consider these and make appropriate amendments. The TDNA would be included in the PDR System.

ISSUES FOR REPORT

Report from the Education Officer, LUU (GB/10/109(a))

Elliot Jebreel, Education Officer, informed the Board that LUU’s bid to the NUS/HEA for funding to complete a project on pgr engagement had been unsuccessful. However, the University of Sheffield, which was in receipt of funding, had agreed to undertake the project outlined in the Leeds bid.

The Board was advised that LUU intended to hold networking events for pgrs starting from October 2011. The aim of the events was to enable students to build contacts with other students, LUU, UCU and other relevant University departments.

Results of the LUU PGR Student Survey: PGRs Who Teach (GB/10/109(b))

Elliot Jebreel reported on the response to the LUU questionnaire on the subject of PGRs who teach. A response rate of just under 10% was received from PGR students. Questions covered a wide range of areas including the level of teaching undertaken, training, evaluation and mentoring of teaching, preparation time, whether marking was required, terms and conditions and payments for the work undertaken and awareness of the University Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching.

The Board expressed its appreciation of the contribution that this questionnaire would make to further discussion. It noted the evidence of variation of practice across the institution and that some of the practice did not comply with the University Code.

The Board had, at its February meeting, already agreed that a Working Group be established to review the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching and to consider the various issues and tensions surrounding the role of PGRs in teaching. Now that LUU had provided valuable information on the views of PGRs, steps would be taken to establish a Working Group as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: that the Chair be asked to take steps to establish a Working Group in consultation with TSEB and other interested parties, including LUU, with a view to reporting in early 2011/12.

Training for Research Student Supervisors and Internal Examiners: Annual report (2010/11) (GB/10/110)

The Board noted the summary of the training courses for supervisors and internal examiners of research degrees at Leeds run by SDDU in 2010/11, which involved six courses, most of which were delivered at least twice because of demand.

It was noted that the feedback on recent Effective Research Degree Supervision courses had been exceptionally good. The Board expressed its appreciation to the tutors for their commitment to the development and delivery of the courses.
QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Section 2: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning – Amplified version (October 2010) (GB/10/111)

The Board noted that TSEB’s Standing Group on Collaborative Provision had given consideration to the amplified code (changes to an earlier Code published in 2004) and referred 3 particular issues, relating to pgr, to the Graduate Board for consideration.

The Board endorsed the proposed responses set out in GB/10/111 and agreed that the Chair of the Split-Site Steering Group be asked to discuss with RSA some proposed actions which were set out and to report back to the Board.

PGR Conference Update

Dr Tony Bromley reported on the preparations for the PGR Conference on 13 December. It was noted that the web site gave details of the competitions and that a new development was planned for a 3 minute thesis competition, with prior training and coaching being provided for participants.

It was noted the competitions were limited to those research students who had not submitted theses for examination before 31 August 2011.

UNIVERSITY BOARDS/COMMITTEES

RECEIVED: the Minutes from the following University Boards/Committees:

(i) Taught Student Education Board (18/05/2011) (GB/10/112)
(ii) Research Board (11/04/2011 and 16/05/2011) (GB/10/113 (a) and (b))
(iii) University Research Ethics Committee (31/03/11) (GB/10/114)

Dr Trevor Batten, the Board’s representative on UREC, presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 31/03/2011. A discussion took place on a recommendation from FREC Chairs that postgraduate students whose projects had begun from 2007 onwards, but who had not sought ethical review of relevant components of the research, should apply for retrospective evaluation.

Members of the Board recognised that it was important to ensure that students did not encounter difficulties in the examination process because of issues connected with the absence of formal ethical review in some cases. However, it supported the view that ethical review for relevant components of research should be mandatory for those students that had commenced study from session 2009/10 and that those starting in 2007/08 and 2008/09 be advised that retrospective evaluation was both available and desirable. Adoption of the above policy would enhance awareness amongst supervisors and students, but would not cause undue delays in the examination of theses. It was also important that the matter be clarified as soon as possible and steps be taken to communicate relevant information to students and staff.

The Chair agreed to convey the views of the Board to the University Research Ethics Committee.

NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ISSUES

Bologna Issues - Report on the EUA Council for Doctoral Education meeting in Madrid (09-10 June 2011) (GB/10/115)

Dr Martin Purvis (Chair of the University Bologna Group) reported on the 4th Annual Meeting of the EUA Council for Doctoral Education.
The theme of the meeting had been “Promoting Creativity – Cultivating the Research Mindset”. Speakers approached this topic in different ways with wide ranging views, including those who criticised auditing and a structured approach on the grounds that these inhibited creativity and risk taking.

Attention was drawn to the new Marie Curie Actions for encouraging participation by SMEs and also to recent critical articles in the Economist and Nature about the alleged state of doctoral education including claims of an over-supply of doctoral graduates. Concern was expressed at the CDE meeting given the current tendency at present for Governments to approve funding cuts.

GROUPS AND COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Faculty Graduate School Committees (GB/10/116 (a) – (h))

RECEIVED: Minutes from meetings of FGSCs as follows:

(a) Business (28/03/2011)
(b) MAPS (09/05/2011)
(c) PVAC (11/05/2011)
(d) Biological Sciences (24/05/2011)
(e) ESSL (25/05/2011)
(f) Medicine and Health (07/06/2011)
(g) Arts (08/06/2011)
(h) Environment (13/06/2011)

The Board noted that there had been discussions in the Faculty of Biological Sciences about the feasibility of charging a single combined fee to cover both the academic fee and a bench fee in specified cases. The possibility of charging fees within 3 different bands had also been discussed.

The University position and steer with regard to academic fees for PGR was, however, still undecided (see M 10/404 above).

Vacancies for Faculty Representatives on Groups of the Graduate Board (GB/10/117)

Faculty Graduate School Committees were asked to nominate representatives to serve on Groups of the Graduate Board where vacancies arose for session 2011/12. It was particularly noted that a vacancy for a representative from the Faculty of Business on the Examinations Group had remained unfilled since August 2010.

Notification of new Faculty representatives should be sent to Sarah Throp in Research Student Administration.

Reports from meetings of the Examinations Group (11 April and 6 June 2011) (GB/10/118(a) and (b))

The Board noted:

(i) that the Group had prepared a questionnaire in order to obtain the views of PGR upon their experience of the research degree examination process. The questionnaire had been sent to the University lawyer for comment prior to dispatch to students with their award letters;

(ii) that since October 2010 5 letters of congratulations had been sent to students in recognition of the research excellence of their theses. Steps had been taken (in internal examiner training, the advice to Examiners and in the format of the examination entry form) to make examiners more aware of their opportunity to recognise excellent work.
• Mid-Cycle Briefing Paper submitted to the QAA (final version) (GB/10/119)
• PG Res Circ 697 “Important Change to English Language Requirements for International Students Requiring a Student Visa” (GB/10/120)

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<th>Min Ref</th>
<th>Required Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/407</td>
<td>DOGES to meet to discuss development of Institutional Review Briefing Paper</td>
<td>DOGES/RSA</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/428</td>
<td>Establish Working Group to review CoP for PGR Students Engaged in Teaching and its implementation</td>
<td>Chair of GB</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/432</td>
<td>Consideration of actions proposed in relation to collaborative pgr arrangements</td>
<td>Chair of Split Site Steering Group/RSA</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
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<td>10/446</td>
<td>Nominate Faculty representatives where vacancies occur on Groups of the Graduate Board</td>
<td>DOGES</td>
<td>By 31 July 2011</td>
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Ext 35778
30/06/2011