

University of Birmingham

**Terms of Reference and Membership of the
Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel**

Topic and Purpose of this Paper

1. The Progress and Awards Board is a Sub-Committee of APRC and, in turn, the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel reports to the Progress and Awards Board. Accordingly, approval of amendments to the Terms of Reference and membership of both the Progress and Awards Board and the Sub-Panel should be determined by both APRC and the Progress and Awards Board.
2. For APRC to **consider** and **approve** amendments to both the Terms of Reference and membership of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, together with, for consistency, a complementary amendment to the University's Regulations.

Proposal

3. That the following new clause be added to the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, as 1.14:

To approve a request from the examiners for Registered Students who have made major corrections to their thesis to be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor corrections to such parts of their thesis affected by the major corrections (but no other part). Where the original decision of the examiners was that the Registered student make minor corrections to their thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be permitted.

4. That University Regulation 7.4.7 (e) be amended as follows (additional text underlined) in order to ensure consistency with the additional clause 1.14 above:

Where the Registered student is required to make minor/major corrections, the Registered Student is permitted one opportunity to complete the corrections to the satisfaction of the examiners. The award of the degree is withheld until a 'Certificate of Correction' is provided by the internal examiner for minor corrections and by all examiners for major corrections. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of Senate or delegated authority, a request having been made by the examiners, a Registered Student who has made major corrections to their thesis may be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor corrections to such parts of their thesis affected by the major corrections (but no other part). Where the original decision of the examiners was that the Registered student make minor corrections to their thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be permitted.

5. In relation to paper APRC.10.05.05, that the following new clause be added to the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, as 1.15:

To approve the award of an aegrotat degree, diploma or certificate, in such circumstances where a Registered Student is unable to complete the requirements of his or her programme due to serious illness, death or other significant cause.

6. That the Terms of Reference be amended to include the term of office (that being a three year period), with the opportunity for Colleges to re-nominate members and that Colleges be invited, through the Chair, to review their representation on the Sub Panel. In effect that, for each College:
1. the longest serving member continue in office until the end of 2009/10 and that Heads of Colleges be invited to re-nominate for 2010/11 by 1 September 2010;
 2. the two further representatives be considered by Heads of College for re-nomination at the end of 2011/12 and 2012/13 and new appointments be identified by 1 September 2011 and 1 September 2012;
 3. where representatives were appointed at the same time, Heads of College should determine the periods of office for all existing members to ensure that appointments are made on a 3 yearly period.
7. In order to be consistent with Regulations and Codes of Practice that the Terms of Reference be amended to refer to "Registered students" throughout.

Background and Context

8. During the 2008/09 academic session, meetings of APRC and the Progress and Awards Board gave consideration to the issue of whether Registered Students should be permitted to carry out further minor corrections to their thesis. It was resolved that rather than adding this function to the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, determination of these matters should be matters dealt with under Section 2 of the Terms of Reference for the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. In practice, this has often required consideration by two members of the Sub-Panel before referral to the Chair of the Sub-Panel, the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Quality).
9. However, as this arrangement has proven to be administratively cumbersome, with the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor receiving a large and increasing number of such requests for consideration, it is proposed that a more efficient manner of undertaking this responsibility could be achieved via a revision of the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel and that a corresponding amendment be made to the University Regulations.
10. A revised Terms of Reference was considered by APRC at its meeting on 16 February 2010 and it was determined that further revisions should be made by the Secretary in conjunction with the Director of Legal Services, and the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel be brought to the next meeting of APRC for approval.

11. The Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel recently received a request for the waiving of the viva examination due to severe ill health and possible inability of student to complete any corrections/revisions to determine how work could be recognised. Further information on this is provided in the report to APRC (APRC.10.05.05 refers).
12. Academic Board on 22 November 2001 agreed the Terms of Reference and membership of the Research Postgraduate Progress Board, stating: *The Progress Board would be chosen from a pool of members:*
 - *Three from the Research Postgraduate Committee, nominated by the Research Postgraduate Committee on a biennial rotational basis*
 - *Four members of academic staff nominated by Schools and Departments at the request of the Chair of the Research Postgraduate Committee.*
13. Membership and the Terms of Reference for the Research Postgraduate Progress Board were reviewed by the Postgraduate Committee in April 2001 and it was agreed that the terms of Reference and period of office of each member of the Board should be presented to the first meeting of the Postgraduate Committee at the beginning of each academic year.
14. Membership and Terms of Reference was reviewed in August 2006 and the name changed to the Research Progress and Awards Sub Panel reporting to the Progress & Awards Board of Senate. Membership was agreed for the academic year 2006/07.
15. Membership was reviewed in June 2007 and remained unchanged for 2007/08.
16. In June 2008 membership was reviewed and reconfigured in line with the new University College structure with 3 members appointed from each College. Due to the restructure of the Sub Panel and staff leaving, a number of vacancies were filled.
17. No further review of membership has taken place and the term of appointment to the Sub Panel remains unspecified.

Argument in Support of the Proposal

18. The proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference will ensure that the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel have sufficient scope to effectively exercise its functions as a Sub-Panel of the Progress and Awards Board. The proposed amendment to University Regulation 7.4.7 (e) ensures consistency of approach in the interpretation of the Terms of Reference and Regulations on this matter
19. Some members of the Sub Panel have been in office since May 2004. Whilst this does offer consistency and experience of members, it is inconsistent with other committees and groups where appointments are made on a fixed term

basis.

Claire Evans
Assistant Manager, Research Student Administration
Academic & Student Administration

**Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel
(a Sub-Panel of the Progress and Awards Board)**

Secretary: Mrs Claire Evans, Assistant Manager, Research Student
Administration, Academic and Student Administration)

Terms of Reference

1		To determine decisions within Postgraduate Research Degree Programme regulations:
	1.1	To ratify examiners' recommendations where the recommendation is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To reject the thesis• To award an alternative qualification• To request the student to revise and resubmit their thesis
	1.2	To approve a request for a waiver of the oral examination
	1.3	To approve a request for a change to the minimum period of study (i.e. a reduction in the minimum period of registration).
	1.4	To approve a request to backdate registration.
	1.5	To approve a request for a leave of absence.
	1.6	To approve a request for an extension to the maximum period of study.
	1.7	To approve early submission of theses (i.e. within the minimum period of study).
	1.8	To ratify decisions around students required to withdraw
	1.9	To approve the non-standard appointment of examiners, supervisors and chairs (Code of Practice: Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students (section 2)).
	1.10	To approve the transfers of students between programmes (excluding the transfer of a student from MPhil to PhD).
	1.11	To approve a request for a thesis or report to be submitted in a language other than English.
	1.12	To consider and approve cases where a postgraduate research student is studying on a split location basis and a local academic adviser is not appointed.
	1.13	To consider and approve requests by Registered students to change their mode of study part-way through their period of research, i.e. from or to study on a split location basis.
	1.14	To approve a request from the examiners for Registered students who have made

		<u>major corrections to their thesis to be permitted one final opportunity to make further minor corrections to such parts of their thesis affected by the major corrections (but no other part), prior to the thesis being submitted again. Where the original decision of the examiners was that the Registered student make minor corrections to their thesis, no further minor corrections to the thesis shall be permitted.</u>
	1.15	<u>To approve the award of an aegrotat degree, diploma or certificate, in such circumstances where a Registered Student is unable to complete the requirements of his or her programme due to serious illness, death or other significant cause</u>

2		To determine decisions concerning the progress and status of individual Registered Students and the eligibility of requests for courses of action to be taken as matters notwithstanding University Regulations.
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Composition and Membership

Term of Office: 3 years

Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Students) in the Chair	Professor Jeff Bale
Fifteen academic members of staff, three from each College, nominated by the relevant Head of College*:	
Arts & Law	(1) Professor Susan Hunston (04/05) (2) Ms Sonia Harris-Short (06/07) (3) Professor Leslie Brubaker (08/09)
Social Sciences	(1) Dr Chris Corcoran (06/07) (2) Dr Tim Freeman (06/07) (3) Dr Jo Duberley (08/09)
Life & Environmental Sciences	(1) Dr Jan Oyeboode (04/05) (2) Professor Joan Duda (04/05) (3) Professor John Bryson (04/05)
Engineering & Physical Sciences	(1) Dr Alison Davenport (08/09) (2) Dr Roy Johnston (04/05) (3) Dr Peter Hancox (06/07)
Medical & Dental Sciences	(1) Professor Colette Clifford (04/05) (2) Professor David Luesley (04/05) (3) Dr Dick Shelton (06/07)

Following decisions by examiners, where clear and consistent recommendations had been made and there was no evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the examination, these and other unproblematic cases would be referred to one member of the Sub Panel.

More complex cases, cases notwithstanding Regulations and cases where the member is unable to confirm the recommendation of the examiners, or is unable to approve a request under Section 1 of these Terms of Reference, will be referred to three members of the Sub Panel, including the Chair, who will normally consult via email and only meet in the event of a failure to reach a full decision. dealt with under the following arrangements:

- (i) The case to be referred to two members of the Sub-Panel, who will normally consult via email, and who will communicate their recommendations to the Assistant Manager, Research Student Administration, Academic & Student Administration.

- (ii) The case and the decisions of the two Sub-Panel members will be referred to the Chair for consideration, the Chair's decision being communicated to the Assistant Student Manager, Research Student Administration, Academic & Student Administration.
- (iii) A meeting of the Chair and two Sub-Panel members may be convened by the Assistant Manager, Research Student Administration, Academic & Student Administration.

Reporting relationship: Reports via GSMB to QAEC and via PAB to APRC