

19 May 2011

University of Birmingham

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. The Sub Panel is chaired by Professor J Bale, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Quality) and is made up of three representatives of each of the five Colleges.

APRC is asked to **consider** and if thought appropriate, **approve** that the membership of the Sub Panel be increased to five representatives from each College with each representative being appointed for a period of three years.

Proposal

2. The role of the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel is to determine decisions within Postgraduate Research Degree regulations where the approval of Senate or delegated authority is required (the delegated authority being the Sub Panel) and to determine decisions concerning the progress and status of individual postgraduate researchers for courses of action to be taken as matters notwithstanding University Regulations.
3. A copy of the terms of reference and membership for 2010-11 is attached.
4. Cases that fall within Section 1 of the Terms of Reference are referred to one member of the Sub Panel on a case by case basis.

More complex cases, cases notwithstanding Regulations and cases where the Sub Panel member is unable to approve a request under Section 1 of the Terms of Reference are referred to initially to two members of the Sub Panel who confer on the case and their comments are then referred to the Chair, who confirms the final decision.

5. Over an academic year in excess of 600 referrals are made to the Sub Panel:

2006-07	644
2007-08	630
2008-09	663
2009-10	670

This breaks down to an average of 45 referrals per year for each Sub Panel member, some of which are extremely complex.

6. Referrals to the Sub Panel are made via the Research Student Administration team who select the member to refer the case to taking into account a number of factors, such as the availability of Sub Panel member; the home School of the student and Sub Panel member in order to avoid conflict of interest or perceived bias, and for consistency any previous referrals for the student falling within the same category.
7. Sub Panel members are asked to consider and make a decision on referrals within a two week period but often due to circumstances surrounding the individual request, they

are asked to make a decision within 24 hours.

8. To avoid unnecessary delays in the referral process, Sub Panel members are asked to keep the Research Student Administration team aware of any periods when they are away from the University and thus unable to consider referrals.

During the summer vacation period the number of available Sub Panel members available to consider requests is reduced and this is often the time when the number of referrals increases as a result of end of year progress decisions and confirmation of student progression.

9. The Research Student Administration maintains a database of referrals and a copy of the breakdown of referrals in 2008-9 and 209-10 is attached.

A report of Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel activity 2008-09 and 2009-10 was presented to the Graduate School Management Board in March 2011. .

GSMB endorsed the suggestion that the membership be increased to 5 members per College to be effective from the beginning of the 2011-12.

10. If approved, the Head of each College will be requested to nominate two additional members as well as confirming the replacement or re-appointment of the Sub Panel member due to retire from office at the end of 2010-11