

2 April 2012

## Request for amendment to the Regulations pertaining to language of thesis

### Purpose of Paper

1. APRC is invited to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** amendments to Regulation 7.4.2(a) and 7.4.1 (i) for 2012-13, in order to remove ambiguities and clarify the position regarding the language to be used for research degree theses.

### Proposals/Recommendations

2. That the Regulations are amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

#### **7.4.1 Award Requirements**

*7.4.1 (i) A Registered Student should submit a synopsis (in English) of about 200 words of the work presented, to be included in the bound copies of the work submitted. The examiners shall be required to certify that the synopsis is an accurate summary.*

#### **7.4.2 Format of theses or reports**

*7.4.2 (a) ~~Theses and reports shall be submitted in English except where an exemption has been approved by the Senate or under delegated authority. In general, an exemption shall be granted where a Registered Student is studying a language other than English and the assessment or part of it is intended to demonstrate the Registered Student's ability in that language. The default language for all research degree theses is English. With the approval of the Senate or delegated authority, where there are demonstrable academic benefits, the thesis may be submitted in another language.~~*

### Background

3. The current regulation requires the PGRs to obtain permission to write and submit their thesis in another language at the point of admissions. In practice this has not been the case and requests have been submitted to the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel just prior to submission as it appears that the need to use another language arises during the period of research. A recent case to submit an MPhil thesis in Italian was referred to the Sub Panel just prior to the thesis submission, which cited the reason for the request as the external examiner (the world expert in the field) was a non English speaker.
4. Recently there have been a number of requests submitted to the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel from the School of Languages, Cultures, Art

History and Music for exemption to Regulation 7.4.2 and there have been inconsistencies in the decisions made on the applications.

5. It is also important that use of another language should not be seen as an easy option and an opportunity for a PGR to write and submit the thesis in their native language.

### **Consultation**

6. The Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Education has met with Professor L Brubaker, Director of Postgraduate Studies from the College of Arts & Law and Dr Aengus Ward from the Department of Languages & Culture to discuss application of current regulation and agreed the changes recommended in this paper.

### **Arguments to Support Proposal Topic and Purpose of the Paper**

7. It is recommended that from 2012-13 Regulation 7.4.2(a) is amended to confirm that research degree theses should be written and submitted in English unless approval is granted by the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel for the thesis to be written in another language and that such permission should only be granted where the academic benefits of doing so can be clearly established.
8. An amendment is also recommended to Regulation 7.4.1 (i) to confirm that whatever language is used for the body of the thesis, the abstract should always be submitted in English.
9. Where approval is granted for the thesis to be written and submitted another language, the e-thesis and hardbound copy would also be in that language and for purposes of clarification and explanation that it is acceptable for parts of the viva examination to be conducted in the language of the thesis
10. As for taught programmes, the programme specification for postgraduate research programmes with taught elements should confirm where module assessments are to be in another language.
11. The request is made in order to enforce the requirement for a thesis to be written in English but to provide an opportunity for requests to be submitted where a demonstrable academic benefit can be made to support the thesis being written and submitted in another language and ensuring that applications for exemption are more consistent.

Claire Evans  
Assistant Manager, Research Student Administration Team  
Registry