

University of Birmingham

Proposed Changes to Codes of Practice relating to Postgraduate Research Degrees

Purpose of the Paper

1. A review of Regulations and Codes of Practice relating to postgraduate research degrees has been undertaken taking into account:

Recommendations following the Woolf Inquiry into the London School of Economics links with Libya and the admission of Saif Gaddafi;
Changes to the University's masters provision from 2012-13;
Referrals to the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel

APRC is asked to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** the proposed changes to Codes of Practice to be effective from the beginning of 2012-13.

Proposals & recommendations

2. Changes are proposed to the following:

Codes of Practice

Code of Practice on Admissions of Students
Code of Practice for the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students
Code of Practice for Assessment of Research Students

Terms of Reference – Graduate School Management Board
Nomination of Examiners form
Thesis submission Declaration Form

The proposed changes are detailed in the attached appendices:

Appendix A: Code of Practice on Admissions of Students and Terms of Reference – Graduate School Management Board

Appendix B Changes to Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers

Appendix C Changes to Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree programmes, Nomination of Examiners form
Thesis Submission Declaration Form

Text that is proposed should be deleted from 2012-13 has been crossed through and new text to be inserted is underlined and highlighted in red. The rationale and a brief summary of the proposed changes are listed at the beginning of each document.

Background information and Consultation

4. Professor Brian Ford-Lloyd, Director of the University Graduate School and Dr Catherine Mills, University Graduate School Manager have considered the recommendations from the Woolf Report and a copy of their report on recommended actions is attached (**Appendix D**). Although the current Codes of Practice are generally considered fit for purpose and cover most of the issues raised in the Woolf

Report, a number of proposals are being made for amendments to the above Codes of Practice and are outlined in the Appendices A, B and C.

5. The current Codes of Practice require Schools to carry out a random check of at least 10% of all thesis submissions. At the March meeting of the Graduate School Management Board support was given to the recommendation that Schools should move to checking 100% of thesis submissions as soon as possible and amendments to the Codes of Practice are being recommended to confirm this. In order to help and guide Schools, The University Graduate School has prepared guidance on the process for plagiarism checking of all thesis submissions and a copy of this is attached (**Appendix E**).
6. To supplement the proposed change to 100% checking of thesis submissions, in addition to the revisions outlined in Appendix B Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers and Appendix C the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses, recommendations are also being made for amendments to the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee.

The proposed revisions to the Code of Practice on Plagiarism and the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee have been discussed and approved in principle by Tam Milner, Assistant Director of Registry (Operations). A larger review of the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee is being carried out at the request of Council and the proposed changes as a result of the Woolf Report recommendations will be considered as part of this review and the proposals will be submitted to the June APRC meeting.
7. The proposed changes regarding the internal assessor acting as the internal examiner were presented to and approved at the March Graduate School Management Board meeting.
8. Changes to Section 6 of the Code of Practice for Assessment of Research Degree Theses are to complement the changes already approved to the University's Regulations covering research masters provision from 2012-13.
9. The Graduate School Management Board has undertaken a review of writing up status involving input from Colleges, the Guild of Students, Legal Services and Graduate School. There are a number of points requiring final clarification and confirmation and recommendations to changes to regulations and Codes of Practice will therefore be submitted for consideration to the June APRC meeting.
10. A number of other small changes (for example cross referencing) may be required as a result of the proposed new Code of Practice on Distance Learning and the approval for the College of Arts & Law to offer PhDs by distance learning from 2012-13 and these will be submitted to APRC for consideration with the new Code of Practice on Distance Learning.

Professor Brian Ford-Lloyd
Director of the University Graduate School

Dr Catherine Mills
Graduate School Manager

