

Recommended actions resulting from the Woolf Report

2a. Greater uniformity of admissions practice

We have reviewed the current *Code of Practice on Admission of Students* and have identified areas of the current guidance which we believe address the 2a recommendation of the Woolf report. We have also identified sections of the current guidance which might benefit from some additions or slight changes (please see below). A copy of our suggested changes has been sent to Roderick Smith (Director of Admissions) for his comments and he has approved our proposed revisions.

2.3 outlines the responsibilities of the Director of Admissions. We suggest that a brief paragraph is added after this section outlining the role of the Director of the University Graduate School and the PVC for Education in the admission of postgraduate researchers: *"2.4 For applications to research programmes, in circumstances where the Head of School or nominee, with advice from the supervisor and/or the School admissions team, cannot easily make an admissions decision or there are issues in terms of conflict of interest or nepotism or wider ethical considerations, then the Director of the University Graduate School as Chair of the Graduate School Management Board (whose terms of reference include PGR admissions oversight) and the PVC Education will assist in the decision process."*

This new paragraph will need to be cross referenced in 5.11 and 6.5. In the latter section, we suggest that after "and/or other appropriate persons" the Director of the University Graduate School be added as an example.

3.1 refers to entry requirements and the University regulation 5.1.1 and this details the requirements for accepting alternative qualifications to honours degrees, and should already mitigate against admission without relevant qualifications or experience.

3.3 indicates that a formal interview will *normally* be required, but in order to achieve uniformity perhaps we need to strengthen the wording here so it states simply that a *"formal interview is required."* In that case, 3.5 outlining what assessment will be needed in the absence of an interview will need to be removed.

3.14 is relevant in that a student may not be admitted without the field of study having been agreed at least in general terms, and would mitigate against a student being admitted without any idea of what subject will be researched.

5.11 is important as it states that the recommendation to admit an applicant shall in all cases be made by the Head of School or nominee who must be confident the applicant is qualified to undertake the proposed research, that the proposed research is capable of being studied to a depth appropriate to the award, that the proposed research can be completed within the time available and that appropriate supervision and appropriate resources will be available.

3. Oversight of admissions and continuing programme of work

We have amended the Graduate School Management Board terms of reference so that it states clearly that GSMB now has oversight of PGR admissions as well as oversight of continuing programme (progression). Please see proposed revised GSMB Terms of Reference document.

4. Good lines of communication

The *Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers* outlines throughout the importance of good lines of communication between School, Supervisory team and postgraduate researcher. We recommend that the following paragraph be added after 2.4 in the 'Supervision Arrangements' section: *2.5 In the case of collaborative or interdisciplinary programmes where more than one School is involved in the postgraduate researcher's programme of research, at least one co-supervisor must be appointed in the partner School."*

5. What assistance is and is not appropriate

We recommend that the following guidance be added to section 2 'Guidance' of the *Code of Practice on Plagiarism*: *"2.8 Proof reading and correction of English (for theses written in English) either by a member of the supervisory team or by a professional is acceptable. Such correction may involve the rewriting of some of the text originating from the student for the purposes of clarifying the student's written English. Rewriting of text with the purpose of improving the student's research arguments or contributing new arguments is not acceptable. Provision by any third party (including the supervisor(s)) of any sections of the thesis which have not originated from the student is unacceptable and will be deemed as plagiarism."*

This should be cross referenced in the *Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers* by modifying 5.2.1 in the 'Responsibilities of Supervisors, Academic Advisers and Mentors' section to the effect that: *"5.2.1 Giving guidance on the following: the nature of research and the standards expected (including standards of presentation, e.g. in relation to referencing and presenting bibliographic information), the planning of the research programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught classes, research techniques required and arranging for training where necessary, progress, publication of results, intellectual property rights, ethical, academic writing skills to avoid unintentional plagiarism and plagiarism issues (this includes providing clear advice on and monitoring the appropriate levels of support postgraduate researchers can draw on with regard to proof reading and assistance with academic writing – see 2.8 in the Code of Practice on Plagiarism for details)."*

On the PGR side this should already be covered by section 6.2.1 under 'Responsibilities of Postgraduate Researchers': *"6.2.1 Ensuring that they are familiar with and comply with University Regulations, Codes of Practice and School guidelines and procedures relating to their degree, the University's Code of Conduct for Research and Code of Practice for Research, relevant policies and other University requirements, safety advice, the monitoring of progress and terms of any sponsorship."*

6. Guidance on investigation of student's contravention of support guidelines (plagiarism etc)

This is quite clearly covered in the existing *Code of Practice on Plagiarism* and the *Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee*, in particular section 6 of the latter document.

We have drafted a number of separate plagiarism progress guidance documents to support the move to Schools checking 100% of PGR theses submitted (please see separate documents). To support these proposed changes we also recommend the following revisions be made to the current *Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers*, the *Code*

of Practice on Plagiarism, the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses and 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). Tam has made clear however that 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 that our proposed changes will have to fit into this review. She has therefore requested that these set of proposals are submitted as part of her paper to the June APRC meeting.

Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers:

Section 4 Responsibilities of Schools

4.14 To have mechanisms in place for the checking of all theses submitted for examination via Turnitin.

Section 5 Responsibilities of Supervisors, Academic Advisors and mentors

5.1 The lead supervisor is responsible for:

5.1 8. On receipt of the Intention to Submit Form to sign the form to acknowledge the intended submission and to ensure the thesis is submitted to the appropriate School contact for checking via Turnitin. Forwarding the signed Intention to Submit Form to the Research Student Administration Team. In signing the form the supervisor is not confirming that the thesis is fit for submission or that the submission will be successful.

The Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses:

Section 2 Nomination of Examiners

2.2. The supervisor will make arrangements for the thesis to be forward to the appropriate School contact for checking via Turnitin.

2.4 On receipt of this form Research Student Administration will send a "Nomination of Examiners for Research Degrees" form to the postgraduate researcher's Head of School for their completion and approval. Where the latter is also the postgraduate researcher's supervisor, the nomination should be approved by the member of academic staff within the School with responsibility for postgraduate researchers. The completed form should be returned with any supporting documentation, where appropriate, to Research Student Administration. If any section of the form is incomplete, it will be returned to the relevant Head of School or member of academic staff with responsibility for research Registered Students. If any exceptional cases have been made (see paragraph 4.1 of this Code of Practice) Research Student Administration will be responsible for transmission to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel for consideration. Please note the thesis will not be sent for examination until the check via Turnitin has been completed and Research Student Administration informed of the outcome.

The Code of Practice on Plagiarism:

7.2 For Registered Students or Students on a Leave of Absence on research-based programmes of study, where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred within the research element, the Registered Student or Student on a Leave of Absence may resubmit his or her dissertation/thesis for the original qualification with the offending sections/data removed within one month of the Plagiarism Meeting. No further work should be undertaken. This will still be considered the first submission.

The Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee:

6.2 For students on research-based programmes of study, the following additional penalties are available:

- a) The student may resubmit his/her dissertation/thesis for the original qualification with the offending sections/data removed, the length of time given for resubmission (maximum allowable 12 months) and the extent to which additional work may be carried out on the thesis to be determined by the Misconduct Committee;*
- b) The student may be required to remove the offending sections/data from his/her dissertation/thesis, and to resubmit the resulting dissertation/thesis for a lower award of the University. The award, the length of time given for resubmission (maximum allowable 12 months) and whether any additional work may be carried out on thesis is to be determined by the Misconduct Committee.*
- c) The student may be required to withdraw from the University.*

7. Awareness of regulations by academics

Changes to PGR related Codes of Practice and Regulations are now reported as a standing item at GSMB.

Articles outlining changes to PGR related Codes of Practice and Regulations are included in the University Graduate School Supervisor newsletter.

Advice on such changes is also posted on the University Graduate School website.