

University of Birmingham

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

**Topic and purpose of the paper**

1. To set out proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. As this is a Sub-Panel of the Progress and Awards Board, which is a Sub-Committee of APRC, approval of these amendments should be determined by APRC.

**Proposal(s)/Recommendation(s)**

2. APRC is requested to **consider and approve** the proposed amendments, attached as Appendix A, to the Terms of Reference of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, to come into effect immediately.

**Background to the paper**

3. At its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008, the Progress and Awards Board considered both its own terms of reference and membership and those of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel (PAB Minute No. 08/22 refers). The Board identified an amendment in respect of the arrangements for dealing with more complex cases, cases notwithstanding Regulations and cases where one member is unable to confirm the recommendation of the examiners, or is unable to approve a request under Section 1 of the Terms of Reference. A proposed modification to create a three stage process is set out in the attached Terms of Reference, with proposed insertions underlined and deletions struck through.
4. Two further amendments are also proposed:
  - The deletion of the existing clause 1.11, which deals with the approval of requests for a waiver of the maximum number of words in a thesis or report, because this falls outside of Regulations and may be dealt with under clause 2, which determines decisions concerning the progress and status of individual research students notwithstanding Regulations.
  - The insertion of a new clause, to become clause 1.14, to approve a request for a postgraduate research student to carry out further minor corrections. This is proposed new clause provides consistency with clause 7.47 e of the University Regulations.

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## Appendix A

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

Secretary: Dr Chris Twine (Academic and Student Administration)

#### Terms of Reference

<b>1</b>		<b>To determine decisions within Postgraduate Research Degree Programme regulations:</b>
	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ratify examiners' recommendations where the recommendation is To reject the thesis</li> <li>To award an alternative qualification</li> <li>To request the student to revise and resubmit their thesis</li> </ul>
	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).
	<del>1.11</del>	<del>To approve a request for a waiver of the maximum number of words in the thesis or report.</del>
	<del>1.12</del> <u>1.11</u>	To approve a request for a thesis or report to be submitted in a language other than English.
	<del>1.13</del> <u>1.12</u>	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.
	<del>1.14</del> <u>1.13</u>	To consider and approve requests by postgraduate research 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 for postgraduate research students to carry out further minor modifications
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2	To determine decisions concerning the progress and status of individual research students notwithstanding University Regulations.
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### Composition and Membership

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

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 decisions to the Assistant Student Records Manager (Research Programmes), 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 Records Manager (Research Programmes), Academic & Student Administration.

(iii) In the event of a failure to reach a decision, a meeting of the Chair and two Sub-Panel members to be convened by the Assistant Student Records Manager (Research Programmes), Academic & Student Administration.

### **Reporting frequency**

Reports to the March meeting of the Progress and Awards Board (PAB):

- Annual report on Sub-Panel decisions
- Annual report on submission rates
- Annual report on examiners' recommendations
- Annual report on exceptional appointment of examiners
- Annual report on decisions notwithstanding Regulations

### **Reporting relationship**

Reports to PAB and, via PAB, to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC).