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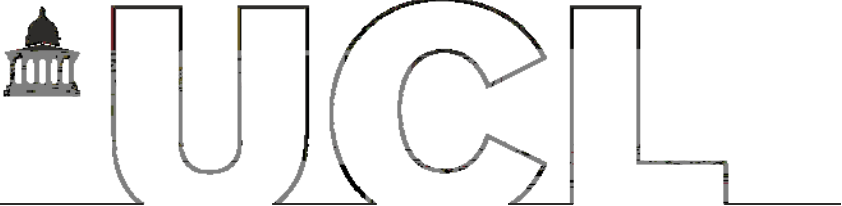*Discussion*

15A.5 The Chair noted that the UCL overseas institutions which awarded UCL degrees, such as SERAus and the new centre in Qatar (UCL-Q), were required to follow UCL quality assurance processes. Although Heads of international campuses would report direct to the VP (Academic and International) their research students would continue to belong to Faculties and they would be part of the QA processes of the designated Faculty (SERAus in Engineering Sciences and UCL-Q in Social and Historical Sciences). Graduate students at these overseas institutions must also use the Graduate School Research Student Log.

15A.6 In future, it was expected that when staff had been approved as MPhil/PhD supervisors it would be recorded by HR in their staff record and also in Portico. It was noted that if a member of staff had been approved as a PhD supervisor they were also eligible to supervise MRes level projects. However, if a member of staff was approved as a supervisor of MRes projects it did not necessarily allow them to supervise PhD students, this required further approval by the FGT.

15A.7 It was confirmed that when candidates were accepted to study for an MPhil/PhD degree the Department was not required to name the prospective student's supervisor, and the offer letter does not include this information, with the exception of candidates applying to some programmes at the Faculty of the Built Environment. It was noted that in some instances the supervisor may not be known at the time of acceptance or may be subject to change; therefore it might not be helpful to require supervisors to be identified at the application/acceptance stage.

15A.8 The FGT for Social and Historical Sciences was unable to attend the meeting and would be requested to provide a written report in advance of the next meeting c -ul and4Ce supeMRTc off rct to

16   **REPORT FROM PMASG ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW MRES AND DOCTORATE PROGRAMMES**

[Dr Vivek Mudera, Division of Surgical and Interventional Sciences, Faculty of Biomedical Sciences attended for this item]

Noted

16.1   The Programme and Module Approval Sub-Group of Education Committee (PMASG) had received PIQs for the following programmes: MRes Linguistics and Doctorates in Orthopaedics (Doc Orth) and Dentistry (DDent). The DDent met all the requirements for a post graduate research degree and had been approved by PMASG. Summary reports were provided for the MRes and Doc Orth.

Received

16.2   An oral report by the Chair of PMASG on the MRes Linguistics programme.

At <u>APPENDIX RDC 2/14 (10-11)</u> the PIQ for the Doctorate in Orthopaedics.

Reported

16.3   The RDC Chair confirmed that for new MRes programmes RDC would only consider the research element of the programmes and would be advised by PMASG for the taught components. The research component would be reviewed to ensure that it met the required minimum of 105 credits and that the programme conformed to the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and all QA processes. It was noted that PMASG reviewed PIQs for all new programmes and would report to RDC any

Discussion

16.7   The Chair noted that students on the Doc Orth should use the Graduate School Research Student Log and should be made aware of the training and facilities available for graduate students at UCL.

16.8   At a general level, the Chair noted that the PIQ form did not include specific questions relevant to postgraduate research degrees. He suggested that it would be useful to include a section on the PIQ form on the supervision process for taught doctorates and confirmation that these complied with the UCL Code of Practice for Research Degrees. The Director of Student Services advised that a new on-line PIQ form had been introduced which required more details about the research element for taught doctorate and MRes programmes with the aim to maintain consistency among these types of programmes.

[Action: RDC Chair to review PIQ]

RESOLVED

16.9   That RDC recommends to AC the approval of the Doc Orth.

[Action: RDC Secretary]

17   **MPHIL/PHD APPLICATIONS 2010-11**

[Bella Malins, Head of Outreach and Admissions, Registry, attended for this item]

Received

17.1   At <u>APPENDIX RDC 2/15 (10-11)</u> a report from the Registry on MPhil/PhD and MRes applications and admissions in session 2010-11 and 2011-2012.

17.2   An oral report by **Bella Malins**, Head of Outreach and Admissions, Registry.

Reported

17.3   Reports on student applications and admissions were previously considered by the Committee for the Recruitment of Students which was disestablished last session. Therefore reports regarding MRes and MPhil/PhD applications would now be considered by RDC, as appropriate.

17.4   It was noted that:
  • there was an increase in MRes and MPhil/PhD applications compared to the same period last year and a subsequent increase in offers;
  • there was a lower level of acceptances than at the same period last year but it was noted that this might have been due to problems with the on-line application system at the end of last year;
  • the largest drop in acceptances was in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities;
  • there was a drop in applications and offers in the Faculty of Engineering Sciences;
  • the largest increase in acceptances was in the Faculty of the Built Environment;
  • the numbers quoted for the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences were not accurate because applications for some programmes were managed at Faculty level and did not come via the UCL Registry.

Discussion

17.5   The FGT from the Built Environment attributed the increase in acceptances to the economic recession - with less jobs available more people were encouraged to study. The FGT in Engineering Sciences noted that the Departments within his Faculty were optimistic about student recruitment. It was noted that the tables provided at Appendix RDC 2/15 were a snapshot and might not reflect the actual student numbers enrolling in September 2011. The application data available in April/May would provide a more accurate picture of student recruitment for programmes starting in September 2011.

17.6   It was agreed that it would be useful for RDC to receive an updated report on the number of applications received and offers made. Bella Malins would produce a further report for the RDC meeting on 14 June 2011.

17.7   It was noted that 'Visiting Research' students, previously called 'Affiliate Research Students' were not always accepted because some candidates had not identified academics they wished to work with and no appropriate supervisors were available. It was noted that some students applying to come to UCL through this mechanism were funded by overseas governments who would only provide funding for 12 months. Therefore they could not complete

Discussion

18.5   The FGTs noted that it would be helpful to be able to send the submission data to Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments for information and discussion. The Graduate School Administrator would send the Excel spreadsheets to FGTs, HoDs and DGTs.

[Action: Graduate School Administrator]

19   **STATISTICS FOR UPGRADE FROM MPHIL TO PHD**

Received

19.1   At <u>APPENDIX RDC 2/17 (10-11</u>) a table to show the average number of months to upgrade from MPhil to PhD by Faculty, for students who upgraded in the academic year 2009-10, irrespective of start date. The report was produced by the Graduate School using data from Portico.

19.2   An oral report by the **Chair**.

Reported

19.3   The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to receive upgrade data annually to be considered by RDC. It was noted that the usual upgrade period from MPhil to PhD was 12-18 months after the start date, for part-time students the upgrade period was 20-30 months. It was noted that Registry was not necessarily informed immediately ugrade had been approved, therefore there might be a delay in this information being recorded on Portico. It was also not recorded whether the student had been upgraded at the first or second attempt. It was suggested that rather than monitoring the average time to upgrade, it might be more useful to look at the data in terms of the median time to upgrade. It was suggested that it might be helpful to correlate the upgrade data with the submission data, and also data on the number of students referred - this would need to be discussed with Student Data Services. It was noted that the date used should be the actual upgrade date rather than the date of notification by Departments to the Registry.

[Action: The Chair to discuss the reporting of upgrade data with Gary Smith]

Discussion

19.4   The FGT for the Bartlett noted that it had improved its upgrade procedure which was managed at Faculty level. The Graduate Tutor from the Department of Chemistry noted that its upgrade procedure was managed centrally by the Department and all students with the same start date were examined for upgrade during the same 2-3 day period, this year, out of 30 students, 5 students had been referred. The referral process varied on a case by case basis, in some instances students were required to act within a specified time frame, in other circumstances the referral requirements were agreed with the student. Dr Wendy Brown agreed to write a short note to describe the Department's process for circulation to RDC members.

[Action: Dr Wendy Brown]

19.5   Where students were not upgraded at the first attempt, it was suggested that it would be preferable to agree with the student the further requirements necessary for the second attempt, to avoid the potential for student grievances to be made with reference to unfair demands.

22   **GRADUATE SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10**

   Received

   22.1   At <u>APPENDIX RDC 2/19 (10-11</u>) the Graduate School Annual Report to
            Academic Board and Council. The report was also available on the
            Graduate School Website at <u>http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/annreport/</u>.

23   **GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCH STUDENT SURVEY**

   Noted

   23.1   A research student survey was completed by the Graduate School in July
            2010. The results of the survey were available on the Graduate School
            website at <u>http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/survey/</u>

   23.2   The Chair noted that UCL did not currently participate in the Higher Education
            Academy's Postgraduate Experience Surveys but the Graduate School
            carried out its own surveys. The latest Graduate School survey noted that
            18.3% of the registered research student population completed the survey,
            which aimed to capture levels of satisfaction regarding the following aspects

25   **THESES INCORPORATING DOCUMENTARY FILMS**

Noted

25.1   At its meeting on 23 February 2010, GEESC approved the inclusion of documentary films as part of a PhD thesis. It was agreed that Professor Stephen Hart, Vice Head of the Graduate School, Arts and Humanities, Laws, Social and Historical Sciences would produce guidelines for students wishing to include a documentary film. The Guidelines were attached for information at APPENDIX RDC 2/21 (10-11).

26   **REMOVAL OF POST COMPLETING RESEARCH STATUS (CRS)**

Received

26.1   An oral report by Helen Notter, Student Records Manager, on the impact of the removal of Post CRS status.

Reported

26.2   There had been very few issues raised following the removal of Post CRS status. The only comment from students was that they could no longer access on-line journals remotely. It was reported that:
- 334 student records had been closed;
- 10 students had re-enrolled as fee paying students;
- 94 students had requested approval to submit their theses late as non-registered students;
- records had been closed for students whom it had not been possible to contact.

Discussion

26.3   The Chair noted that it was important to try to contact students who had lost touch with their supervisors/Departments. It was also noted that records should be kept of attempts made to contact students. The Director of Student Services noted that in future Portico would include the capability to record that a plan of action to contact students had been received.
    [Action: David Ashton to liaise with the Chair on developments in Portico]

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28   **ENGAGEMENT MONITORING**

Reported

28.1   The Director of Student Services reported that engagement monitoring of all students was important for the following reasons:
- pastoral and duty of care;
- meeting the requirements of the UK Border Agency for UCL as a highly trusted sponsor, where applicable;
- meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice;
- obligations to sponsors, fee payers;
- ensuring appropriate access;
- meeting regulatory requirements such as the period of registration in order to be allowed to enter examinations;
- insurance purposes;
- collection of tuition fees;
- statistical returns, such as to Government agencies.

28.2   In order to ensure that UCL complied with the requirements, six points of engagement had been set. The first point of contact was enrolment or re-enrolment. The remaining five points of engagement could be set by the host department and could include the following:
- attendance at a departmental induction event;
- a meeting between supervisor and research student (the Research Student Log could be used to note this);
- attendance at lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions or any teaching sessions;
- submission of work;
- email contact with supervisor;
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30   **NEXT MEETING**

Noted

30.1   The next meeting of RDC was scheduled for **Tuesday 14th June at 10am** in the **South Wing Council Room** (not Wednesday 25th May at 10am as previously circulated).