

**CITY GRADUATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING 18
13 FEBRUARY 2017
CONVOCAATION SUITE
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

Name of Member	Meeting 17 07/10/16	Meeting 18 13/02/17	Meeting 19 13/04/17	Meeting 20 20/06/17
Professor Ken Grattan (Chair)	✓	✓		
Professor Andrew Jones	A	✓		
Professor Eugene McLaughlin	A	✓		
Dr Mauro Barelli	A	✓		
Professor Charles Baden- Fuller (Senate representative)	A	✓		
Professor Christine McCourt	✓	A		
Professor Ian Marsh	A	---		
Professor Chris Hull (Senate representative)	A	✓		
Professor Davide Ravasi	A	A		
Professor Giovanni Cespa	---	✓		
Stephanie Wilson	✓	✓		
Dr Youyou Yan	✓	✓		
Dr Pam Parker	✓	✓		
Zain Ismail (SU, Vice-President, Education)	A	✓		
Holly Powell-Jones (student representative)	---	✓		
Dr Karen Shaw Director of Research and Enterprise Office	✓	✓		
International Office	A			
Diane Bell (Library and Information Services)	✓			

In attendance: Yusuf Ahmad (President. SU), Alison Edridge (Assistant Director, Quality and Academic Development), Shereen Sally Deputy Director, Student Experience for item 11) and Megan Gerrie (Secretary).

✓ indicates attendance;

--- indicates a period when the member is on extended leave/when the person was not a member;

A indicates apologies have been provided

Part One: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome and Apologies

Members of the Committee were **welcomed** and apologies **received** and **noted**.

2. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Committee **noted** the Terms of Reference.

It was **noted** that the membership list needed to be updated and Schools were asked to confirm the details of their School representatives. It was agreed that Schools could ask more than one representative to attend meetings of the Graduate School Committee, but in the event of a vote only a single School representative (nominated by that School) would have voting rights.

The Committee welcomed Holly Powell-Jones as the student representative.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the City Graduate School Committee held on 7 October 2016 were **approved**. The Chair thanked Abdullah Rahman for acting as the Secretary at the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

The Committee **noted** the Matters Arising.

Work to increase the visibility of doctoral students' projects on the University website was ongoing, led by the Vice President Research and Enterprise. A new webpage template had been developed, but had not been fully implemented. A key challenge was that disciplinary differences were hard to accommodate within a single template, however, it was noted that a common approach was the preferred option.

There was some frustration in Cass that students were not able to manage their online profiles; older students were unable to update their details and new students did not have a profile at all. This was seen as a regressive step. Additionally, doctoral students did not have access to the staff hub in spite of needing access to information hosted there.

It was agreed that further urgent work was required and that the Chair would contact Marketing & Communications with a view to moving this forward and provide another update in April on progress.

Action: Chair and Marketing & Communications

The PhD representative informed members about a free workshop to help staff and students to raise their online (social media) profile. Details would be circulated to members to share with doctoral students and colleagues after the meeting.

Action: Secretary

It was **agreed** that the Committee should seek a further update on Tier 4 matters.

Action: Student and Academic Services

5. Chair's Business

There was no Chair's business to report that was not otherwise on the Agenda.

Part Two: Report from students

6. Report from the Students' Union

The President and Vice President (Education) of the Students' Union (SU) updated the Committee on recent priorities including:

- initiatives to increase representation across the University
- a student leadership conference
- welfare initiatives (particularly for the exam period)
- a Brexit essay competition.

The Committee **noted** the report and thanked the SU representatives for their input.

Part Three: Report from Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research and Enterprise

7. The Committee **noted** a report from the Vice President Research and Enterprise on the following matters of interest:

- A further draft of the Research and Enterprise Strategy had been developed, incorporating feedback from staff away days and other consultations. The draft would be presented to Senate in March. The most relevant aspect of the strategy for the City Graduate School would be the postgraduate research student community strand. The implementation plan for the strategy would be written in due course and this would provide the detail of how facilities and training for doctoral students might be developed. It was confirmed that the strategy did not set out plans for any change of status of the City Graduate School.

It was suggested that the Research and Enterprise Strategy should include a specific reference to employability and the placement of doctoral students in 'top jobs' in business and academia, post-completion. This information was not routinely captured, other than in Cass, so a consistent way to measure and monitor this would need to be developed for use across Schools as it would be valuable in future advertising of research opportunities at City.

- The University would shortly join the London International Development Centre. This initiative would require further capacity and a bid for additional resources would be submitted to ExCo. It was noted that this development would require both a balance of central and local support and academic leadership to ensure its success.
- Work was continuing to explore several options to increase the number of appropriate doctoral training partnerships. It was acknowledged that it would time to establish these relationships. The University was also exploring a potential collaboration in the arts and humanities with Brunel University and Loughborough University. This collaboration would most likely be a 'kite mark' of quality rather than a source of resource.
- The Leverhulme Trust had established a new fund to support studentships in specific theme areas. Each institution would only be permitted to apply for a single grant in this scheme. City would be inviting Schools to submit proposals and a process would be established to identify the strongest proposal which would be developed for submission.
- It was confirmed that work was ongoing to review the way that the University managed its data and reporting for PhD completions and that a new KPI would be established in due course. It was suggested that the University needed to consider its approach to suspensions as the existing approach did not support an improvement in completion rate data.

The Vice President Research and Enterprise was thanked for a comprehensive report and for responding to questions and comments from the members of the Committee.

Part Four – Items for discussion

8. Research degree completion rates and School plans

(i) Update on School plans for improving completion rates

The Committee **received** updates from the School representatives on actions that were in progress to improve completion rates:

- Cass had provided an update via email and reported good progress in implementing the School action plan. Developments in the four key areas – student recruitment, selection and admission, progress monitoring and registration, supervision and supervisor development and research environment – were highlighted. The report stated the importance of the University making progress to enable students to publish profile and project information online.
- The strategy in SASS had been to focus on progression between the second and the third year, ensuring that students were fully aware of requirements and the potential for de-registration if sufficient progress was not evidenced.
- SHS reported that they believed that their completion rates were improving as they implemented the actions in their School plan. The School was monitoring the progress of the DPsych (Health) students who had recently transferred to the SHS from SASS.
- SMCSE reported that work to improve practice locally was ongoing. The School asked the City Graduate School to consider a review of the policy and process for granting extensions to students. This would be considered alongside other priorities for 2017.

Action: Chair, Student and Academic Services

- CLS supported the request to review the process for extensions and suggested that the guidance was too generic.

Several School representatives enquired about sector expectations for PhDs to have programme specifications. It was proposed that this would be discussed at a future meeting and members were asked to forward any examples of specifications for research degrees to the secretary. It was noted that the professional doctorates and the Cass MRes had already specific programme specifications (which could form the basis of a model).

(ii) Developments to highlight in the PRES survey

Schools were asked to consider any local developments that had been actioned in response to the PRES 2015. These should be highlighted to students.

(iii) Requirements for School plans

The Committee discussed the requirements for School plans to be aligned with completion rate data for subsequent Senate reports and noted the Senate requirement to receive these consolidated reports from Schools by July 2017. A template would be developed by Student and Academic Services and this would be circulated with completion rate data for 2016/17 by May 2017.

Action: Student and Academic Services

9. Policy for research students who teach

The SU welcomed the report that addressed issues that had arisen during their review of the implementation of the policy. The PhD student representative highlighted the significant challenge faced by doctoral students in balancing competing requirements for teaching (and related duties), to publish articles and present at conferences and to meet the normal progression milestones. The transition from Year 2 to Year 3 was highlighted as being particularly demanding. It was stated that these pressures had the potential to adversely impact on a student's mental health and well-being and that absolute clarity in the expectations of students was essential to prevent this.

The Committee was clear that the opportunities to teach were a very valuable part of the research student experience for many candidates, the experience was a marketable quality of graduates and as such it was essential that these opportunities were well managed and meaningful.

Members considered the responses that had been provided by Boards of Studies (Appendix 1) setting out how the policy had been implemented within Schools. It was noted that the level of detail provided in the responses were varied and the view of the Committee was that **overall** the information presented was not sufficient to provide assurance of the full and proper implementation of the Research Students who Teach Policy in all School. The Students' Union argued that a mechanism, such as the *pro forma* used by SASS to track students (provided in Appendix A), was the best and most convenient way to provide a consistent and reliable way to ensure compliance with the requirements of the policy and to enhance the management of research students who teach. It was agreed that the SASS template would be expanded by Student and Academic Services and that this would be issued to Boards of Studies by 13 March 2017. Revised reports would be received by the City Graduate School Committee at its meeting in April before submission to Senate.

Action: Student and Academic Services

It was proposed and agreed that a School representative should take ongoing oversight of the operation of the policy within Schools. It was proposed that this might be the Director of Studies or an appropriate equivalent; this was a model that had worked well in Cass. The same representative (rather than individual supervisors) should also be responsible for approving that doctoral students were able to contribute to teaching activities. This adjustment would be made to the policy.

Action: Student and Academic Services

In addition the Committee approved all of proposals set out within the paper to enhance the policy. This work would be undertaken in March so that an updated policy could be presented to the City Graduate School Committee in April before submission to Senate for approval in May 2017.

Action: Student and Academic Services

The Committee considered the update from LEaD on the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) module (Appendix 2). The SU representatives expressed support for LEaD and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment module as a pre-requisite for doctoral students who teach. It was acknowledged that the data presented appeared to indicate that there were too few students taking the module, however it was not always clear when a student should be required to take the module, or where some alternative training (or experience elsewhere) had excused them from attendance on the module. It was agreed that this information should be captured within the *pro forma* proposed above. LEaD highlighted important challenges in resourcing the module where Schools insisted students registered on the course before they were due to undertake teaching responsibilities (in Year 1, for example) and where students registered on the module but failed to attend. The module now operated with a reserve list and this had helped, but it was recognized that

additional capacity was needed to enable LEaD to deliver training for all of the doctoral students who would be required to take the LTA module. It was agreed that LEaD would present a further proposal to Finance setting out the resource requirements for running the module.

Action: LEaD

LEaD reminded School representatives that they should undertake teaching observations with doctoral students, especially where this was required to support their professional development.

It was noted that the SU would meet with Human Resources and representatives of the Unions to progress discussion about the contractual status of research students who teach. The SU would provide an update on the progress of these discussions at the next meeting.

Action: Students' Union

10. Policy for the approval of doctoral degree supervisors

The Committee considered a report on the review of the Policy for the Approval of Doctoral Degree Supervisors. The report comprised two parts; a summary of feedback from Boards of Studies on the operation of the policy within their Schools (including proposed adjustments) and a report on the number of exceptions that had been requested (and approved) during the period since May 2015.

There was significant discussion of the report by the Committee. The Committee wholly endorsed the objective of the policy to ensure that doctoral students received the highest quality supervision from research excellent academic staff. However some School representatives restated their concerns (expressed in written School responses), about the requirement for the 'first' – Category A – supervisor to have an ARQM score of 3* and above. Some members remained uncertain that the metric was a reliable indicator of the quality of supervision and were concerned that the policy would exclude supervisors who were experienced but did not meet the ARQM requirements for Category A supervision. Further, it was noted that there were implications for the workload for Category A supervisors and who would be required to both act as the first supervisor and support the development of Category B supervisors. Cass reported that they had not experienced the same degree of challenge in planning to implement the policy and they did not anticipate that they would in the immediate future.

The discussion also included the degree to which the 'first' and 'second' supervisors worked together to create a 'supervision team' (with the role 'first' supervisor thus less differentiated from that of 'second' supervisor). It was noted that practice varied widely across Schools: in some cases, team supervision was widely practised – in others the 'second' supervisor was seen as someone who could be called upon when the first supervisor was not available e.g. due to illness, Sabbatical leave or other commitments. It was suggested that the roles of 'first' and 'second' supervisor be more clearly defined.

The Students' Union echoed the requirements from School representatives to ensure the highest quality of supervision. The PhD representative stated that students' primary concerns were that their main supervisor had expertise in their area of research and that they had time to support them. It was felt that whether that support came from a Category A supervisor or a Category B supervisor was of less importance to the students than the quality and consistency of the support. It was noted positively in the PRES 2015 survey 92% of students surveyed agree to the statement 'My supervisor(s) have the skills and subject knowledge to support my research'.

The Committee discussed whether it was necessary for alternative forms of supervision to be explored and defined at this time. It was reported that in many cases, the main support for doctoral students was not, in practice provided by the Category A supervisor; the primary point of contact and support was frequently the Category B supervisor (albeit under the supervision and mentorship of a Category A supervisor). Members spoke passionately about the need for the University to ensure that the role of Category B supervisors in their providing high quality supervision to students was fully recognized. Additionally, representatives felt that the policy might reflect a clearer role for and value of team supervision. This approach would require responsibilities to be clearly defined to ensure that both supervisors fully shared in the teamwork needed for effective supervision.

The Chair set out that the current policy already provided for an appropriate degree of flexibility to allow for exceptions to the policy to be approved by the President. Reviewing the report for the period (Appendix 1), it was noted that relatively few exceptions had been required and so it would not be needed for the Committee to propose an adjustment to the current policy.

Action: Chair

It was generally agreed that progress with the development of a realistic work load allocation model in each individual School would take account of supervision requirements was urgently needed to support both Category A and Category B supervisors.

It was noted that the number of exceptions was likely to increase as supervisors who were appointed as Category A before May 2015 reached the stage of completion with current students. These supervisors might shortly require an exemption before they were assigned to new candidates. These would be dealt with in the usual way to see the President's approval.

The report on exceptions was noted. It was also noted that a full response from SMCSE was outstanding and that this would be progressed after the meeting. The updated report would be presented to Senate in March.

In conclusion, it was agreed that no changes to the policy would be required and Schools were encouraged, where it was seen as appropriate, to use the flexibility provided by a request for exemption. It was agreed however that further clarification of the roles of and requirements for external supervisors and consultants would be developed for discussion at the City Graduate School Committee in April. Consultation with Boards of Studies had supported this in light of the difference between external supervisors (having a defined contractual relationship with the Institution) and consultants who have not. Changes to the Guidance on 'Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Supervisor' were being prepared.

Action: Chair, Student & Academic Services

Secretary's Note: Senate accepted the report on the Approval of Doctoral Supervisors. No further actions were required. A report on the number of exceptions to the policy would be considered annually.

11. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017

It was **noted** that the biennial PRES would be launched in March 2017. The Committee **received** the surveys pack that had been developed by the Student Experience team in Student and Academic Services. Members discussed how to maximize participation in the survey and Schools were reminded of the importance of communicating to students any information on actions that had been taken since the last PRES survey (in 2015). City Graduate School Committee members agreed to be active in encouraging research students to fill in the survey (which opened on 13th February 2017) and to target a better response rate than was achieved in 2015 (about 25%).

Action: School representatives

12. Research and Progress (RaP)

The Committee **noted** a report that set out options for replacing RaP when the license expired (in February 2018). It highlighted potential risks and questions for consideration by the Committee and other stakeholders, and set out a high level timeline for the work. There was limited time to discuss the report at the meeting and it was agreed that Schools would be contacted to provide feedback in between meetings.

Action: Student and Academic Services

13. City Graduate Library Centre

The Chair presented an update on the City Graduate School Library Centre. It was noted that some Schools had identified additional space for use by postgraduate students. This would provide a short term fix, but the Committee would support the SU as they worked to find a longer term solution that provided dedicated Graduate Student space.

14. City Graduate School Annual Report

A draft of the City Graduate School Annual Report was **received**. However the Committee requested a fuller report for which more data were needed and it was agreed that this would be done. Key issues for that fuller report included:

- an annual summary of completion rates. It was noted that the Annual Report would provide an institutional oversight, but that detailed analysis and action planning would be provided through School reports presented to Senate in July
- data on employability of research students, where this was available. Cass representatives agreed to share a template for Schools to use to support this. Where such data does not currently exist, it would be necessary to determine what steps are needed to obtain the information requested for subsequent years.
- evidence of formal training of PhD students (leading to an MRes, for example)
- an overview of research students publications and the extent to which this is captured by the institution as a whole through joint writing. It was proposed that the total number of publications and the number in 3* and 4* outlets over 5 years after graduation be noted
- data on the variety of 'routine' administrative activities that underpin the submission, examination of and communication with research students.

As an advisory group, it was not necessary for the Committee to approve the report before its submission to Senate, but the Chair agreed to present an updated version for consideration and comment by the City Graduate School Committee as soon as resources could be made available for its completion. It was noted that the additional information required would need considerable resource to obtain this – resource that currently was not available. Following completion, it would be send to Senate thereafter.

Action: Chair

Part Five: Items for information

15. Research degrees awarded

The Committee **noted** that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

16. Research degree examiner appointments

The Committee **noted** that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

17. AoB and Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of meetings scheduled for 2017.

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