



RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 5 March 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Professor David Bogle (Chair); Dr Donna Brown; Mr Ben Colvill; Professor Alison Diduck; Professor Mike Ewing; Mr Marco Federighi; Dr Douglas Guilfoyle; Ms Helen Notter; Dr Benet Salway; Dr Joy Sleeman; Dr Dave Spratt; Dr Andrew Stoker; Professor Kaila Srαι; Mr Ben Towse; Professor Ijeoma Uchegbu; Professor Claire Warwick.

In attendance: Mr Gary Hawes (Secretary); Ms Dilly Fung, Ms Helen Brookman (for Minute 18); Ms Lydia Harwood (for Minute 19); Mr Gary Smith (for Minute 10)

Apologies were received from: Mr David Ashton; Dr Steven Bloch; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Sally Leevers; Dr Stephen Marshall.

Key to abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
DTCs	Doctoral Training Centres
EdCom	Education Committee
FGTCs	Faculty Graduate Teaching Committees
FGTs	Faculty Graduate Tutors
FTCs	Faculty Teaching Committees
HEA	Higher Education Academy
ISBSB	International Student Barometer Student Barometer
LERU	League of European Research Universities
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
PGR	Postgraduate research
PGTAs	Postgraduate Teaching Assistants
PGT	Postgraduate taught
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RPS	Research Publication Service
SHS	Social and Historical Sciences
SLMS	School of Life and Medical Sciences
StRAC	Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee

16 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 16 OCTOBER 2013

Confirmed:

- 16.1 The Minutes of the meeting of RDC held on 16 October 2013 [RDC Mins.1-15, 16.10.13].

17 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

[see also Minute 18 below]

17A Amendment of the offer letter for PGR students

[RDC Min.3A, 16.10.13]

Reported:

17A.1 Although SRS colleagues had previously contacted the DTCs concerned to ascertain what the requirements were for the single offer letter covering both the MRes and PhD awards, there had been a lack of consensus as to whether or not the letter should be a combined MRes/MPhil/PhD offer. The Director of Student Administration would be meeting with the FGT for Engineering Sciences, however, before the end of the month with a view to agreeing a consistent position among DTCs that would offer a way forward.

17B Progression level from MRES to PhD 1+3 programmes

[RDC Min 4, 16.10.13]

Noted:

17B.1 At the previous meeting of RDC on 16 October 2013, RDC had proposed the following:

- That the criteria for automatic progression for MRes/PhD/EngD 1+3 programmes of study be changed to require attainment of an overall average of 50% *in addition to* an average of 60% on the main dissertation/research project component of the MRes;
- That DTCs wishing to permit the progression of any student who failed to meet these requirements be required to apply for a suspension of the regulations *via* the Chair of RDC.

17B.2 Following consultation with the programmes concerned, it had been proposed to effect the above proposed amendments with effect from September 2014, but with a slight amendment to the wording of the relevant regulation as follows (see italics):

For automatic progression from MRes to PhD/EngD, students should achieve an average mark of not less than 60% in the *independent, original research components* of the programme, and not less than 50% in the taught elements.

18 PGTA TRAINING AND TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

[RDC Min 7, 16.10.13]

Received:

18.1 A note at RDC 2-2 (13-14) on the UCL Arena Teaching Associate Programme, introduced by the Director of CALT who was in attendance for this item with Ms Helen Brookman, also of CALT.

18.2 At RDC 2-3 (13-14), the findings of a survey undertaken within SLMS on PhD students that teach.

Reported:

18.3 From September 2014, UCL Arena would provide a coherent but flexible suite of professional development events and programmes for UCL staff whose role involved teaching, supervising and/or supporting students' learning. While the scheme would

be geared towards building on excellence at UCL in teaching, supervision, education leadership, it would be centred on UCL's commitment to research-based education and encompass wider dimensions of academic practice, including research-related areas of activity, and be underpinned by the principle of sharing expertise across departments and Faculties.

- 18.4 The scheme would feature special provision for PGTA's via the UCL Arena One strand, which would comprise mandatory three-hour induction Gateway Workshop sessions held in September and January along with an optional Teaching Associate Programme spread over one term. The Teaching Associate Programme would involve PGTA's learning about various aspects of teaching through hands-on practice focusing on teaching in their subject areas. Topics would include engaging students in active, research-based learning, the development of learning resources, assessment and feedback, and supporting diverse students.
- 18.5 The accreditation of the scheme by the HEA would mean that participants on the Teaching Associate Programme would have the option of making an application to receive a UCL Arena Associate Fellowship and an Associate Fellowship of the HEA based on their experience of teaching or supporting students' learning. This would be a notable addition to their CVs when applying for future academic posts. Certificates would also be awarded to participants in the Gateway Workshop sessions.
- 18.6 The UCL Arena scheme would be launched formally by the Vice Provost (Education) at the UCL Teaching and Learning Conference on 3 April 2014, and full details would be circulated widely within UCL and made available online.

Discussion:

- 18.7 It was noted that there would be an opportunity for the three-hour PGTA Gateway Workshop sessions to cover aspects of laboratory-based teaching, eg laboratory demonstrations. There would be also an opportunity for the UCL Arena Open scheme to also include workshops and events focusing on undergraduate project supervision.
- 18.8 The UCLU Postgraduate Students' Officer noted that it would be helpful if consideration could also be given to offering the PGTA Gateway Workshop sessions later in the academic year, eg in May, particularly as it was around this time that many first-year PhD students began to consider their options for gaining teaching experience for the next academic year.
- 18.9 While it might be considered desirable to make participation in the PGTA Gateway Workshops mandatory for all PhD students, it was noted that there were not currently the resources to permit this. However, CALT colleagues would be in a better position to assess expansion options for the scheme after its first year of operation. Feedback from participants in the first year of the programme would also help to shape the development of the scheme.
- 18.10 It was noted that the IQR process would continue to serve as one of the means of identifying any issues around the provision of training for PGTA's. In the meantime, UCL academic departments would need to be encouraged to ensure that all PGTA's who were involved in teaching attended one of the Gateway Workshops sessions, and it was suggested that the Research Student Log could be used to record student attendance at these sessions.
- 18.11 While postdoctoral researchers who were involved in teaching would have the option of participating in the UCL Arena One strand, it was noted by CALT colleagues that the UCL Arena Open strand would be likely to offer these colleagues more flexible options for their professional development. CALT colleagues would be available to

offer guidance to colleagues who were unsure about which strand of the scheme would be appropriate for them.

- 18.12 Members of RDC noted that the survey at RDC 2-3 (13-14) offered a useful snapshot of PGR student teaching activity within SLMS. It was agreed that subject to amendment of the some of the questions (viz. amendment of the first question to read "What percentage of PhD students in your Department teach?" and amendment of the fourth question to read "Is it part of their PhD studentship?") it would be worthwhile circulating the survey with a view to eliciting responses from other UCL schools/faculties also.
- 18.13 Some members of RDC drew attention to the fact that a number of departments had indicated at RDC 2-3 (13-14) that they did not pay their PhD students to teach. RDC agreed that this was not acceptable and that it would be timely to remind UCL departments of the relevant guidance on the HR web pages (see http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/guidance_to_teaching.php) that had been previously issued by the Graduate School and agreed by the Provost's SMT and by AC.

RESOLVED:

- 18.14 That subject to the amendments proposed in Minute 18.8 above, FGTs be asked to distribute the survey questions set out at RDC 2-3 (13-14) to all departments within their faculties, for completion and return to them.

ACTION: Faculty Graduate Tutors

- 18.15 That FGTs be asked to take action to remind departments of the relevant guidance on the HR web pages at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/guidance_to_teaching.php on providing teaching opportunities for PGR students and early-career research staff. *[Secretary's note: this guidance is in the process of being reviewed and updated and will be available shortly]*

ACTION: Faculty Graduate Tutors

19 STUDENT BAROMETER AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER DATA FINDINGS

Received:

- 19.1 A presentation on the data findings of the ISBSB in relation to PGR students, introduced by Ms Lydia Harwood of the UCL International Office.

Reported:

- 19.2 The PGR student response rate for the Autumn 2013 ISBSB had been 29% (cf an overall student response rate of 26%). An online version of the findings of the ISBSB would shortly be made available to UCL faculties so that they would be able to consider the information for individual departments and programmes.
- 19.3 While overall the ISBSB had portrayed UCL PGR students' experiences in a positive light, some areas had been highlighted as presenting lower levels of PGR student satisfaction relative to the institutional averages and/or averages of Russell Group and other surveyed institutions. These areas included: accommodation and accommodation costs; living costs; opportunities to teach; course organisation; quality lectures; sports facilities; social facilities; faith provision; careers support; student advisory.
- 19.4 The following main conclusions were offered by the presentation:

- Insight into the ways in which a student engaged with UCL prior to study could be useful for future marketing, in both university-wide and subject- or department-specific promotion.
- There was a need to look at how university-wide issues of accommodation dissatisfaction and difficulty opening bank accounts could be improved for new enrolments.
- Careers advice, work experience and opportunities to teach all appeared to be linked, so working to improve the three together could be an efficient way of improving the PGR student experience.

Discussion:

- 19.5 While UCL had in common with many other HEIs made efforts this year to improve communication with chosen banks, eg Santander, it was noted that some of the account options offered by these banks were not always the best-value options for international students.
- 19.6 It was agreed that further investigation around the relatively low satisfaction scores for course organisation and quality lectures would be desirable with a view to understanding the possible reasons for this. In particular, it would be helpful to i) establish what specific questions in these areas were put to students and ii) gain a breakdown of PGR student responses to these questions by research degree programme to establish which specific groups of PGR students were affected.
- 19.7 It was agreed that it would be useful to invite a representative of UCL Careers to the next RDC meeting for a discussion around the possible connection between the relatively low satisfaction scores for careers advice, work experience and opportunities to teach. In the meantime, it was noted that the findings of a PGR student survey on careers advice and employability that had been undertaken within the Faculty of Brain Sciences might be of interest to members of RDC.

RESOLVED:

- 19.8 That Ms Harwood be asked to provide more information around the relatively low satisfaction scores for course organisation and quality lectures, viz. i) what specific questions in these areas were put to students and ii) a breakdown of PGR student responses to these questions by research degree programme.
ACTION: Gary Hawes (to confer with Lydia Harwood)
- 19.9 That a representative of UCL Careers be invited to the next RDC meeting for a discussion around the possible connection between the relatively low satisfaction scores for careers advice, work experience and opportunities to teach.
ACTION: Gary Hawes
- 19.10 That the findings of the PGR student survey on careers advice and employability undertaken within the Faculty of Brain Sciences be made available to RDC members.
ACTION: Dr Julie Evans (to make this available to Gary Hawes)

20 MPhil/PHD UPGRADE AND SUBMISSION

Received:

- 20.1 At RDC 2-4 (13-14), data on MPhil/PhD upgrade and submission, introduced by the Head of Student Data Services.

- 20.2 At RDC 2-5 (13-14), a note inviting RDC to consider whether the current upgrade regulations should be altered to work more clearly and seamlessly with the academic insufficiency process, introduced by the Graduate School Administrator.

Reported:

- 20.3 The data at RDC 2-4 (13-14) had taken into account all interruptions of study recorded on Portico together with annual changes of method of study and approved extensions to the writing-up status.

Discussion:

- 20.4 While the data on MPhil/PhD upgrade and submission did not appear to suggest any direct correlation between upgrade and submission rates across UCL faculties, it was noted that there had been an increase in the overall upgrade rate (from 22% in 2007-08 to 33% in 2008-09) while overall submission rates had dropped (from 73% in 2007-08 to 65% in 2008-09). In light of this, it was suggested that it would be helpful to be provided with upgrade data for 2009-10 and 2010-11 with a view to establishing if this upward trend was continuing. In the meantime, FGTs were asked to ensure that the data at RDC 2-4 (13-14), was received by FTCs and FGTCs (or their equivalents – see Minute 24 below) with a view to discussing any anomalies around departmental submission rates and any issues that might give some explanation for this. It was suggested that the lower submission rates in some faculties, eg the Built Environment and SHS, relative to the consistently higher submission rates in other faculties, eg Brain Sciences, Life Sciences and MAPS, could be attributed in part to the fact that students in these faculties were less likely to be in receipt of Research Council or charity-funded studentships.
- 20.5 It was noted that a study aimed at determining whether there was any correlation between the amount of teaching being undertaken by PGTA and PhD submission rates would shortly be carried out in the faculties of Arts and Humanities and SHS. RDC agreed that it would be interesting to see details of this in due course
- 20.6 In terms of benchmarking comparisons, UCL was thought to be middle-placed among Russell Group HEIs in terms of its PhD submission rates. Other HEIs such as King's College were thought to have improved their PhD submission rates by introducing more rigorous upgrade procedures.
- 20.7 The Chair of RDC noted that it would be helpful for the note at RDC 2-5 (13-14) to be received and discussed by FTCs and FGTCs (or their equivalents) with a view to reporting views and comments back to the next meeting of RDC. It was noted that the current arrangement, in which upgrade and Academic Insufficiency proceedings were not directly related, could lead to significant delays in addressing situations in which there were concerns over student progress.

RESOLVED:

- 20.8 That the Head of Student Data Services be asked to provide upgrade data for the years 2009-10 and 2010-11.

ACTION: Gary Hawes (to confer with Gary Smith)

- 20.9 That the PhD upgrade and submission data at RDC 2-4 (13-14) be received and discussed by FTCs and FGTCs (or their equivalents) with a view to discussing any anomalies around departmental PhD submission rates.

ACTION: Faculty Graduate Tutors

- 20.10 That the note at RDC 2-5 (13-14) be received and discussed by FTCs and FGTCs (or their equivalents) with a view to reporting views and comments back to the next scheduled meeting of RDC.

ACTION: Faculty Graduate Tutors

- 20.11 That details of the study aimed at determining whether there was any correlation between the amount of teaching being undertaken by PGTA and PhD submission rates that would shortly be carried out in the faculties of Arts and Humanities and SHS be received by RDC in due course.

ACTION: Professor Claire Warwick (to make available to Gary Hawes)

21 APPLICATIONS, OFFERS OF ADMISSION AND ACCEPTANCES TO PGR AND MRES PROGRAMMES

Received:

- 21.1 At RDC 2-6 (13-14), a report on student applications, offers of admission and applicant acceptances to PGR and MRes programmes of study.

Reported:

- 21.2 Overall, UK/EU applications for research programmes were up by 2.9% on the previous year's figures, and overseas applications had increased by 27.8%. While a significant amount of the increase was owing to the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, it was not yet possible to determine whether this increase would be sustained or whether it was a reflection of applications not being in the main admissions database in 2013 until later in the cycle.
- 21.3 There had been an appreciable increase in the number of offers being produced in both the UK/EU and overseas categories relative to the previous year (38.9% and 23.5% respectively), and the number of acceptances was also currently higher than at the same point for the previous year (20.5% and 31.78%v respectively). However, as it was still early in the admissions cycle, little could be read into acceptance figures at this stage.
- 21.4 There had been a 21.8% increase in MRes applications for 2013/14 compared with the previous year, together with increases in both the number of offers (up 18.8%) and acceptances (up by 11.4%). For all other research applications, UCL experienced a 19.9% increase in applications, with offers of admission up by 7.8% and applicant acceptances up by 12.5%.

Discussion:

- 21.5 Some members of RDC drew attention to the fact that a number of UCL's global competitors admitted and trained a greater number of PhD students per academic member of staff. However, it was noted that the Vice-Provost (Research) had reported to the RDC Chair that Deans were broadly comfortable with PhD recruitment to their Faculties, although there could be a better spread between staff.
- 21.6 The Chair of RDC noted that he would be meeting shortly with the Vice-Provost (Research) and the Chair of StRAC with a view to discussing the status of the PhD Marketing and Admissions Working Group that had previously operated as a working group of RDC but whose remit to review strategy for marketing of research degrees at UCL with a view optimising the number and quality of our UK and non-UK PhD students now fell within the purview of StRAC.

- 21.7 Some members of RDC drew attention to the beneficial effect that the IMPACT research studentship scheme had had on research student admissions in a number of faculties.

22 PGR STUDENT SUPERVISION BY RETIRED STAFF

Received:

- 22.1 The note at RDC 2-7 (13-14), introduced by the Graduate School Administrator.

Reported:

- 22.2 While it was currently the case that research supervisors who retired were permitted to continue with supervisory duties for their existing research students, RDC was invited to consider i) whether this practice should be tightened to ensure that appropriate other mechanisms of support were provided to students when their supervisor retired, and ii) whether any changes should only apply to a Principal Supervisor who retired or whether this should be extended to also cover Subsidiary Supervisors.

Discussion:

- 22.3 RDC agreed that in instances where a member of staff serving as Principal Supervisor retired, the following arrangements should ideally apply:
- That continued supervision by a retired academic staff member should only be permissible if explicitly agreed by all parties, ie the student, the department and the supervisor, and the decision recorded by the department
 - That the existing Subsidiary Supervisor should be appointed as joint Principal Supervisor with the retired member of staff
 - That a third supervisor (possibly the DGT by default) should be appointed to the supervisory team;
 - That these arrangements should be subject to annual review by all parties to confirm that they were working effectively.

- 22.4 It was agreed that a formal proposal for amendment of the UCL Academic Regulations and Guidance for Research Degrees to include the above arrangements should be submitted for formal approval to RDC's next scheduled meeting. It was further suggested that it would be desirable for this proposal to take account of any guidance that was provided by HR to UCL Heads of Department around the retirement of staff.

RESOLVED:

- 22.5 That a formal proposal for amendment of the UCL Academic Regulations and Guidance for Research Degrees to include the arrangements at Minute 22.4 above be submitted for formal approval to RDC's next scheduled meeting.

ACTION: Ben Colvill

23 FORMATTING OF PHD THESES

[RDC Min.3B, 16.10.13]

Received:

- 23.1 At RDC 2-8 (13-14), a note introduced by the Student Records Manager.

Reported:

- 23.2 RDC had at its previous meeting on 16 October 2014 asked the Student Records Manager to explore the possibility of providing electronic copies of theses to examiners. In reporting back to RDC, the Student Records Manager drew attention to the following:
- A check of webpages for other Russell Group universities had confirmed that none as yet required students to submit electronic theses as part of the original submission.
 - Potential difficulties in effecting this arrangement included:
 - the need to ensure an electronic thesis was identical to the bound copy;
 - problems with the size of a file if sent by email;
 - the need to ensure that the file sent to examiners could not be amended, or that any annotations could be clearly identified.
 - An ideal solution for the future would be for theses to be deposited in some form of on-line repository that could be accessed by examiners. The Research Publication Service used by Library Services for the final copies of theses provides a model for this.
- 23.3 In light of the above, the Student Records Manager's proposal was that UCL's Regulations should continue to require the submission of two bound copies of a thesis, but that the provision of electronic copies of theses to examiners could be arranged if requested under certain, pre-defined circumstances.
- 23.4 The Chair of RDC reported that in response to an enquiry from the RDC officers around the feasibility of adapting the UCL RPS to make PhD theses available electronically to examiners, the UCL Discovery Manager had written to highlight various benefits and issues that would need to be further considered.

Discussion:

- 23.5 RDC agreed that until there was agreement over what pre-defined circumstances should govern the electronic provision of PhD theses, the Student Records Manager should continue to deal with requests for supply of electronic copies of PhD theses as and when these were received. It was further agreed that it would be important for staff and students receiving enquiries and/or requests regarding the electronic supply of PhD theses to ensure that these were referred to and handled by the Students Records Manager.
- 23.6 It was agreed in order to give an indication of the current level of demand for the supply of electronic copies of PhD theses, the Student Records Manager should be asked to report back to the next meeting of RDC on the number of requests for supply of electronic copy of PhD theses that she had received from examiners. RDC agreed that in the meantime, encourage the Library to build this into their future plans.

RESOLVED:

- 23.7 That for the time being and until guidance on determining what the criteria were for the electronic provision of PhD theses to examiners was produced by the Student Records Manager, the Student Records Manager should continue to deal with requests for supply of electronic copies of PhD theses as and when these were received.

ACTION: Helen Notter

- 23.8 That in order to give an indication of the current level of demand for the supply of electronic copies of PhD theses, the Student Records Manager be asked to report back to the next meeting of RDC on the number of requests for supply of electronic copy of PhD theses that she had received from examiners since the March 2014 meeting of RDC.

ACTION: Helen Notter

- 23.9 That the RDC officers respond to the UCL Discovery Manager to inform her of RDC's discussions and to encourage UCL Library Services to consider extending the RPS to cover the electronic provision of PhD theses to examiners as part of its future plans for development of the service.

ACTION: Gary Hawes

24 PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FACULTY GRADUATE TEACHING/RESEARCH COMMITTEES

Received:

- 24.1 The note at RDC 2-9 (13-14), introduced by the RDC Secretary.

Reported:

- 24.2 The note at RDC 2-9 (13-14) proposed template terms of reference for UCL faculties that were already currently operating or planning to operate separate committees for giving oversight to taught postgraduate/research student matters, based on the guidance for core terms of reference for Faculty Teaching Committees that was set out in the UCL Academic Manual.

Discussion:

- 24.3 The following amendments to the proposed terms of reference at RDC 2-9 (13-14) were suggested by RDC members:

- Clause 2: should the committee indicated be QMEC instead of AC?
- Clause 9: FGTCs should report to EdCom instead of to AC on PGT matters

- 24.4 It was further suggested that the RDC Secretary should consult with Academic Services colleagues over whether any amendments to the duties of Deans of Faculty that were outlined in the UCL Academic Manual would be required so that reference to FGTCs (or their equivalents) was included.

RESOLVED:

- 24.5 That i) the RDC Secretary would consult with Academic Services colleagues on the matters outlined in Minutes 24.3 and 24.4 above with a view to incorporating amendments if necessary and ii) once finalised, the template terms of reference be circulated to Deans of Faculty and FGTCs.

ACTION: Gary Hawes

25 GRADUATE SCHOOL – ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

[see also Minute 27 below]

Received:

- 25.1 At RDC 2-10 (13-14), a summary of the Graduate School Annual Report 2012-13.

Noted:

- 25.2 The full version of the Graduate School Annual Report is available at <http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/annual-report/> and will be filed with the Minutes of this meeting (as RDC 2-10 (13-14) * Annexes 1-8).

Reported:

- 25.3 The Chair of RDC drew attention to the following areas that had been highlighted in the Graduate School Annual Report:
- Uptake of the Skills Development Programme delivered by the Graduate School continued to be strong –10,989 registrations were taken over 700 skills courses in 2012-13
 - Research student uptake of the Research Student Log was 95%.
 - Now in its eighth year, the Graduate School-led Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network continued to be a successful way of sharing training opportunities in the local area. Membership had been widened in 2013 to include King's College.
 - The Graduate School had convened a new Researcher Development Working Group to consider how to translate UCL's strategic ambitions for early career researchers into a consistent framework for researcher development, identifying priorities for change and improvement within existing activities, practice and policies.
 - A new and much improved Graduate School website had been created and launched in the autumn term 2013.
 - The Head of the Graduate School had chaired the annual meeting of the LERU Doctoral Studies Community, which had discussed LERU's commitments under its Memorandum of Understanding with the European Commission on the European Research Area, the variety of mechanisms for PhD exams, and the draft of LERU's advice paper 'Good Practice Elements in Doctoral Training' which was published in January 2014.
 - The Graduate School-led Yale UCL Exchange Scheme continued to provide an excellent opportunity for UCL and Yale doctoral students to undertake exchange visits to the benefit of both institutions, benefiting students' own research activity and as well as facilitating ongoing collaborations between the two institutions.
 - Scholarship applications continued to be of outstanding quality: 41 UCL Overseas Research Scholarships, 17 full Graduate Research Scholarships, 4 Cross-Disciplinary Research Scholarships, and 4 Gay Clifford awards were made for 2013/14.

26 STUDENT GRIEVANCES REPORT

Received:

- 26.1 The report at RDC 2-11 (13-14).

Reported:

- 26.2 The report at RDC 2-11 (13-14) was set out according to the new format for reporting annually to OIA.

Discussion:

- 26.3 While it was noted that there had been a total six grievance cases applying to research students, it was not possible to distinguish from the report any further details pertaining to these.

- 26.4 RDC noted that whereas the report at RDC 2-11 (13-14) had concluded that the number of student complaints overall was increasing year on year, this was not necessarily the case in respect of UCL's research degree programmes.

RESOLVED:

- 26.5 That the RDC officers would request from the Deputy Registrar (Operations and Planning) that the report for future meetings should provide a more specific breakdown of information pertaining to student grievances involving research degree students.

ACTION: Gary Hawes

27 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

27A UCL Graduate School

Reported:

- 27A.1 The Chair of RDC drew attention to proposed changes to the structure and organisation of the Graduate School that were currently under discussion. These included the proposed renaming of the Graduate School as the UCL Doctoral School focussing exclusively on research students. The Doctoral School would focus on the development of institutional strategy and liaison with external bodies such as Research Councils and LERU. The Doctoral School would also be responsible for the evaluation of doctoral student strategy, plans and delivery by Faculties. Current Graduate School operational matters would be devolved in the most part to other units to facilitate this change – for example: the Skills Development Programme would move to Organisational Development in HR; the Research Student Log would move to ISD; and funding for conferences and research staff bridging between contracts would be devolved to Faculties. The operational units would be accountable to the Doctoral School for strategic direction and effective delivery.

Discussion:

- 27A.2 The UCLU Postgraduate Students Officer noted that UCLU had submitted a response to the Graduate School Organisational Change Proposal outlining its concerns. He agreed to make this available to the RDC Secretary for circulation members of RDC

RESOLVED:

- 27A.3 That the UCLU response to the Graduate School Organisational Change Proposal be circulated to RDC members.

ACTION: Ben Towse to supply to Gary Hawes for circulation

28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

- 28.1 The next meeting of RDC was scheduled as follows:

Wednesday 4 June 2014 - 10am (South Wing Council Room)

- 28.2 Items on the Agenda would include:

- FGT report on generic issues emerging from Joint Examiner Reports