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Graduate Board
16 January 2020

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MINUTES	
Venue:	McClelland Suite SB7
Author:	Amanda Westwell
Present:	Professor Nigel King (Chair); Dr Rowan Bailey; Ms Charlotte Bartley (part); Dr Rachel Birds; Ms Lydia Blundell; Mrs Emi Chiu (part); Dr Dougie Clarke; Dr Lisa Colton (part); Mr Jonathan Croall; Mrs Judith Davidson (part); Mr Martin Gill; Mr Emmanuel Haruna (SU); Dr Jonathan Hinks; Dr Helen Jones; Mrs Heather Lee; Dr Dawn Leeming; Dr Julia Meaton; Mr Matt Mills (part); Mrs Cathie Raw; Mrs Chinyere Sam-Okerenta (Stu Rep); Dr Anna Seabourne; Professor Liz Towns-Andrews; Ms Tracy Wood
In attendance:	
Apologies:	Professor Andrew Ball; Dr Jonathan Hinks; Ms Tanya Horan; Ms Heather Kerrick; Professor Jane Owen-Lynch; Mrs Joanne Ryan; Ms Annette Rhodes; Professor Dave Taylor; Dr Tracy Turner; Ms Laura Thompson

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		Action
1.	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest.	
2.	**Minutes** **Resolved**: the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 were accepted as a correct record, with the exception of the correction noted below. GB-2019-11-25-M <ins>Minute 4a Academic Integrity module</ins>: Make Epigeum completion compulsory from January 2020 for all new starters. AS clarified that this was a research integrity module rather than an academic integrity Module. It was noted that the module would not cover plagiarism and something compulsory may have to be developed to cover that element. It was confirmed that new starters must complete the Epigeum module at induction and submit their certificate at PM1.	
3.	**Matters Arising** **3a. PRES Presentation:** confirmed that NK has shared the presentation with Board members through Box. Confirmation of where it has been shared will be communicated to members by Registry.	CR

	3b. PRES focus groups: confirmed that NK has established a cross-school focus group to explore how the research culture can be improved. It was confirmed that there would be a separate group for staff PGR, and an email will be sent to all PGRs by NK shortly. The intention is to hold the meetings in February.	NK	
	3c. Dean's tenure: confirmed that LB has raised the Board's concerns at Equality, Diversity and Inclusions Committee (EDI), as EDI had been informed that there were not specific roles in the University that require post holders to hold a certain grade. The Graduate Board discussed that practice did not reflect this assertion. It was noted that there is a structural inequality and the point has been raised and discussed before, and is part of a wider issue. It was confirmed however that there were two applicants and both RB and LTA would sit on a panel with AB in February. The intention is that the new appointee will shadow NK until the end of his tenure.		
	3d. Pregnant students' policy: confirmed that HL will clarify the maternity leave allowance in the student regulations.		
	3e. Research Integrity Module: confirmed that DoGE's have made Epigeum completion compulsory from January 2020 for all new starters and that Research Support Plans are being reviewed by someone external to the supervisory team in all cases.		
	3f. PGR Admissions Policy: confirmed that NK, HL and CR have engaged with the Admissions Team to develop policies that inform practice in Schools, and that further meetings will take place between Admissions and Registry.		
4.	**Chair's Business** **4a. Update – Dean's Tenure** **4b. VC fee waiver** NK reported that: - The new scheme will replace the old scheme - It would be available from September onwards - There would be a cap on VC fee waiver numbers from now on. - One full bursary per school was requested. Each school will take up to four partial bursaries of at least 3k p.a. each. - Fee waivers and bursaries will be competitive. - Schools need to consider their strategic priorities and strengths as well as their research strategy - They will be available to any of our graduates, whether home or EU. - Application for a waiver must be consistent across schools i.e. deadlines and interviews		

It was noted that NK would discuss the internal marketing with Marketing and flesh out the detail, which would then be circulated to DoGE's to disseminate amongst their staff.

4c. Registry Restructure and Staffing Change

It was reported that the service had been aligned to three strands:
- Quality
- Postgraduate Research and Events
- Taught

Validation for all provision will sit within Quality. CR confirmed that the priorities are to up-skill the new team, and that project work may take a back seat in the short term due to HL's departure to the School of Human and Health Sciences. CR would be acting up into HL's role in the interim.

Colleagues thanked HL for her contribution.

4d. Research Degree Application Deadlines

The following points were noted:
- There had been a rise in January applicants for PGR
- Application deadlines mean that the time between offer and start date is unreasonable for many students, especially international PGRs
- Postgraduate study fairs are also out of sync with the application cycle
- The International Office was overwhelmed with applications before Christmas
- Could the enrolment process for PGR start later?
- There is not enough time on the academic side to process applications
- Admissions and enrolment to agree if the dates can be moved back

It was agreed that a working group would take this forward, and as part of its review should bear in mind actual working days when considering application timeframes, especially over Christmas. There is a need to develop a recurring mechanism to review it each year.

It would be discussed with Marketing whether postgraduate study fairs could be moved back to give applicants a longer lead up time, and Schools longer to find appropriate supervisors.

4e. Consideration of Date of Next Board

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 28 February 2020.

TO CONSIDER:

5.	**UK Quality Code Gap Analysis**		
	 It was reported that a new Quality Code had been published in 2019, and PGR provision had been remapped against this in November 2019.		
	It was reported that there were some areas that were not compliant, predominately Admissions and Partnerships. Research Degrees also identified as not compliant was requested by members to be amended to 'some areas of concern, and HL agreed to amend the report. It was also reported that support and training was not as robust as it could be.	HL	
	NK reported that he had met with the University Secretary and requested a copy be sent to her. It was also noted that Senate should be made aware of the report before it goes to Council.	HL	
	It was agreed that NK and HL would meet and decide who should lead on which area, as well as agreeing to report back to Graduate Board on a regular basis, so that compliance could be continually monitored and reviewed.	NK/HL	
6.	**Regulation Changes for 2020**		
	It was agreed that these would be presented at the next meeting. Members were requested that if they had amendments they would like to be reflected in the regulations, they flag them up with HL.	CR	
7.	**PGR Student Fees and Finance**		
	It was agreed that a meeting needs to be held to discuss the new rules.	JC and CR	
	It was noted that PGRs can visit the Student Finance Office for advice on funding implications to interruptions to study.		
8.	**Update on Programme Management System**		
	It was reported that after various proposals and discussions, it has been agreed that there is a need for an off-the-shelf solution for managing PGR. The following points were noted: - If Skillsforge is retained for training and development it will soon be out of date; - If PhD manager reports into ASIS, it needs to satisfy HESA reporting – currently there is manual intervention to correct data; and - The IT strategy group is being disbanded and replaced by SPIB which will be chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. There are currently 130 projects in the pipeline		

	The PhD student representative commented that Skillsforge was not fit for purpose and there were issues with regards to completing supervisory reports, which was acknowledged by members. It was noted that the policy for uploading supervisory reports was covered in the supervisor training. It was clarified however that Skillsforge is the area where records of supervisory meetings are held and that the records were important especially if a student were to appeal or request a change of supervisor.	
9.	**PGR Board Report** Members were circulated a copy of the most recent PGR Board Report. GB-2020-16-01 P9 It was noted that progression and examination arrangements had improved in some instances. DoGE's were urged to review the data to see where improvements could be made and why in some instances the percentages were low. It was discussed that there should be a clear expectation that all supervisors should do their fair share of progression reviews and NK would report this to the Deans.	NK
10.	**PRES Plans** It was agreed that as part of the PRES plans it would be useful to provide an update of what has been done to date, and what is left to do, so that a record of continuous improvement could be kept and reviewed by Graduate Board to ensure loops are being closed on actions. It was agreed that HL would look at the initial plans and the DoGE's would look at the original plans and confirm if there were any additional actions/amendments by 21 February 2020, so that it could be reported at the next meeting.	DoGE's DoGE's/HL
TO NOTE:		
11.	**Minutes from ADA** Minutes from the Research and Enterprise meeting held on 26 September 2019 were noted by members. GB-2020-16-01 P11	
12.	**Minutes from AS** Minutes from the Research and Enterprise meetings held in September and November 2019 were noted by members, as well as the minutes from the PGR Forum.	

	GB-2020-16-01 P12.1 GB-2020-16-01 P12.2 GB-2020-16-01 P12.3	
	The Chair thanked the Schools who had submitted their reports and encouraged them to continue to do so. It was noted that an item on representation would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.	CR
	It was reported that a section on proof reading had been added to the resource area on Brightspace, and members were asked to signpost their PGRs to it. It was also noted that the Proof reading policy was up for renewal and Registry would be working with the SU to update this.	RB/SU

OTHER BUSINESS:

13.	**Any Other Business** **13a**.Draft updates to the membership and terms of reference for URC and Graduate Board were tabled at the meeting. It was reported that URC reports into Senate, and that operational issues have switched back into Graduate Board. It was noted that a meeting had been scheduled with Andrew Ball to go through the membership and terms of reference.	
	Feedback on the membership and terms of reference for Graduate Board was welcomed by no later than 1 March 2020.	CR
	13b.Members requested a final version of the teaching policy. It was agreed that the Graduate School website would link to the policy.	HL
	13c.It was agreed that there would be a separate focus group for staff PGRs and the DoGE's were asked to encourage new members of staff to attend as well as existing members of staff. It was also noted that staff PGR need to review their PGR emails at least once a week. The expectation is for a February focus group and NK will circulate an email.	NK
14.	**Availability of Agenda, Papers and Minutes** No papers will be excluded from the public record.	
15.	**Dates of Next Meetings** The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as follows: 28 February 2020 at 9.00am in the McClelland Suite SB7 13 May 2020 at 9.00am in Level 6 Boardroom Student Central	