

A meeting of the Research Education and Development Committee will be held in the ARI Board Room, Level 7, 115 Grenfell Street, from 2.30 pm on 27 October 2008.

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## AGENDA

### FORMAL MATTERS

1. **Apologies**  
*Dr Bertram Ostendorf, Professor John Taplin, Dr Anthony Zander*
  2. **Conflicts of Interest**  
*For declaration by Committee members*
  3. **Starring of Items**  
*Recommendation: that the Research Education and Development Committee adopt any recommendations contained in the unstarred items.*
  4. \* **Minutes**  
Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2008  
*Recommendation: that the Research Education and Development Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2008.*
  5. **Business Arising from the Minutes (not otherwise listed on this agenda)**  
*(Item 5)*
- MAJOR REPORTS or ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL**
6. \* **Examples of Good Practice in Research Education**  
*Professor Nettelbeck to present.*
  7. \* **IELTS Requirements for International Students**  
*Professor Russell to report.*
  8. \* **Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses**  
*Professor Russell to report (Item 8).*
  9. \* **ERA : FOR and SEO Codes for Research Students**  
*Professor Russell to report.*
  10. \* **Applicability of Higher Degree by Research Program Rules and Specifications of Thesis**  
*Professor Russell to report (Item 10).*

11. \* **Postdoctoral Education**  
*Professor Russell to report.*
12. \* **Higher Degree by Research Induction Program**  
*Professor Russell to report (Item 12).*
13. \* **Towards a Master of Philosophy**  
*Professor Russell to report.*

**REPORTS FROM RESEARCH EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE WORKING PARTIES**

14. **Student Matters**  
*To note Student Matters report SM 08/5.*
15. **Doctoral Education**  
*No further meetings have been held.*
16. **Quality Issues Working Party**  
*No further meetings have been held.*

**UNSTARRED ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING**

17. **Scholarship Selection Dates for 2009 Major Round**  
*To note:*
  - i. International Scholarships Round: IPRS and ASI: Selection meeting is Thursday 13th November - Offers out by the next week*
  - ii. Domestic Scholarships Major Round: Selection meeting is 5th December, provisional Order of Merit list to be circulated 8th December. Offers commence 9th December.*
  - iii. AGFS Scholarships Round: Ties in with the Graduate Scholarships Committee Meeting for the domestic round.*
18. **Other Business**
19. **Next Meeting**  
*The next scheduled meeting will be held from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 1 December 2008 in the ARI Board Room, Level 7, 115 Grenfell Street.*

DONNA FROST  
Secretary  
F: 2007/4388

FOR APPROVAL

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MINUTES OF MEETING 7/08

A meeting of the Research Education and Development Committee was held in the ARI Board Room, Level 7, 115 Grenfell Street, from 2.30 pm on 29 September 2008.

**Present:** Professor Richard Russell (Convenor), Professor Margaret Allen (for Dr Kimi Coaldrake), Mr Simon Brennan, Dr Chris Ford, Mr Morteza Mohammedzeri, Professor Ted Nettelbeck, Professor John Taplin, Professor John Williams.

**In attendance:** Ms Donna Frost, Ms Anne Witt

FORMAL MATTERS

1. **Apologies/Announcements**

Apologies were noted from the following: Dr Kimi Coaldrake, Dr Bertram Ostendorf, Dr Anthony Zander.

Professor Russell thanked Professor Williams on behalf of the Committee for chairing the previous meeting in his absence and for serving as Acting Dean of Graduate Studies during his recent overseas trip.

2. **Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts were declared.

3. **Starring of Items**

The Committee resolved:

*to adopt the recommendations contained in the unstarred items.*

Item 6 was unstarred and AOB was starred at the start of the meeting.

4. **Minutes of Meeting**

The Committee resolved:

*to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2008.*

5. **Business arising from the minutes**

Members noted the status of actions arising from previous meetings of REDC, as detailed in Item 5.

MAJOR REPORTS and ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

6. **Examples of Good Practice in Research Education**

This item was postponed in the absence of Dr Zander.

Action	Responsible
Present an example of good practice in research education within the Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences at the next REDC meeting on 27 October.	Dr Zander

## 7. IELTS Requirements for International Students

Professor Taplin reported that subsequent to the last REDC meeting, the Deputy-Vice Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) had advised that the Coursework Entry Committee did not have the jurisdiction to approve changes to the IELTS requirements for international students. [Secretary's note: the Coursework Entry Committee is responsible for the University's Admissions Policy in which English language entry requirements are specified]

Members were in agreement that it would be preferable for the English language proficiency requirements specified in the University's Admissions Policy to be modified to acknowledge their applicability to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students and to enable changes to the requirements to be authorised by the Coursework Entry Committee. It was thought that this would avoid both policy proliferation and the duplication of effort required to produce a separate policy on English language requirements that was specific to HDR students. Professor Russell indicated that he would pursue this matter with the DVC&VP(A). In the interim, it was agreed that the usual channel for approval of HDR policy changes be followed for changes to the IELTS entry requirements, namely, consideration and approval by the University Research Committee followed by the Academic Board.

On the subject of the current IELTS requirements for HDR programs at the University, Professor Taplin advised that the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) panel had expressed some concerns about the minimum IELTS score required for admission being lower at the University of Adelaide (6.0) than at all the other G08 universities (6.5). Regardless of any proven relationship between IELTS score and academic performance [See Item 8 below], the perception of lower standards invoked by Adelaide's lower IELTS scores was potentially detrimental to the University's reputation. In this context, some Faculty representatives indicated that they would appreciate the opportunity to revisit their Faculties' position on IELTS.

The proposal from the Faculty of Professions to raise the overall IELTS score to 7.0, with a minimum band score of 6.5 for all programs (Item 7.0) was endorsed.

Action	Responsible
Contact the DVC&VP(A) regarding English Language Proficiency requirements for HDR students.	Professor Russell
Forward Faculty requests to modify the IELTS entry requirements to HDR programs to Professor Russell and Ms Frost by 10 October 2008.	Faculty representatives
Seek approval for any Faculty's request to modify the IELTS entry requirement from URC and UAB.	Ms Frost

## 8. English Language Proficiency and Academic Outcomes for International Students

In response to the Committee's request at the previous meeting, Ms Frost had undertaken some analysis to investigate whether a relationship existed between IELTS admission score and academic performance for HDR students (Item 8a). On the basis of the limited data available, members were satisfied that it was not possible to establish a quantitatively significant relationship between English Language proficiency at entry and academic outcomes.

It was agreed, however, that a qualitative analysis in the form of a survey of supervisors of international students could yield more informative data. It was suggested that supervisors be surveyed when their student(s) were approximately one year into candidature with a view to determining the impact of English language proficiency at admission on supervisory load.

Action	Responsible
Draft a survey for supervisors of international research candidates for REDC to review.	Dr Cally Guerin

## 9. Confirmation of Candidature Practices

Professor Russell summarised progress towards strengthening confirmation of candidature practices across the University as requested by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee (VCC). Best practice across the University had been examined and the common (and desirable) elements determined to be:

1. Review of progress by a Committee comprising the supervisors, together with additional Departmental staff (preferably including the Postgraduate Coordinator) and external discipline experts where possible. The Postgraduate Coordinator would normally function as the Chair of the Committee (thereby removing the onus of (potentially) providing negative feedback from the supervisor(s)), however, in his or her absence, another staff member who was not a supervisor could fulfil this role;
2. An assessment of the candidate's progress against both the quality and quantity of work required for completion within the required timeframe for the degree, together with the generation of a required timeline for the remainder of the project;
3. An assessment of the student's relationship with the supervisor(s) to determine whether their professional compatibility is sufficient to facilitate completion of the degree within the required timeframe;
4. Early and documented identification of problems and issues likely to affect the ability of the candidate to complete within the required timeframe for the degree. Note that typically, any candidate who was not on track to complete within the required time frame for the degree would be expected to have their Major Review of Progress extended for 3-6 months. During the extended period of provisional candidature, the student would have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to complete their program within the required timeframe before their progress was reassessed. Depending on the outcome, the [Committee's] recommendation could be to confirm, downgrade (if applicable) or terminate candidature;
5. Where necessary, an assessment of the remedial action required to bring the candidate's progress up to the required standard is to be undertaken, with clear milestones and associated timelines set for the extended period of provisional candidature.

Members reviewed the Major Review of Progress form with a view to incorporating the best practice elements detailed above, together with sections for comment from the Candidature Confirmation Committee and for commendation of the candidate. In addition, it was agreed that the style of

questions be modified to allow the Committee to answer on a scale e.g. from excellent to unsatisfactory, rather than with a yes or no.

Action	Responsible
Draft a revised Major Review of Progress form for REDC's consideration.	Ms Frost, Professor Russell

## 10. The Annual Review of Progress

Members agreed that the existing Annual Review of Progress form was adequate; however, the efficiency of the existing process of lifting thesis embargos (Section B, question 3) was questioned by Mr Brennan. It was noted that currently, thesis embargos could only be lifted on the advice of Adelaide Research and Innovation and seeking such approvals often led to significant delay. In the spirit of public accessibility to publicly funded research, it was agreed that thesis embargos be automatically lifted after twelve months *unless* advice to the contrary was received from ARI.

Action	Responsible
Convey the change in process for lifting thesis embargos to AGC and ARI staff.	Ms Frost

## 11. Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses

Professor Russell reported that the University of Adelaide is currently the only university in the G08 that does not recognise students who graduate with the highest quality PhD theses with some form of medal. To rectify this situation, Professor Russell proposed to initiate the award of up to three medals per Faculty for the best PhD theses at the University each year.

To facilitate the identification of the top ranked theses by Faculty, the Examiners' Report Form (Item 11) had been modified to include an additional section requiring the examiner to make a judgement on the quality of the thesis and to indicate their own experience in examining PhD theses. The additional section would be kept confidential from the candidate, but would be made available to the relevant Faculties to assist them in the ranking process.

With minor modification the revised form was endorsed by the Committee for use during a twelve month trial period.

Action	Responsible
Revise the Examiners' Report Form as requested and seek approval from the Vice-Chancellor's Committee/UAB for the establishment of a University Medal for Doctoral Theses.	Ms Frost and Professor Russell respectively

## 12. Proposed Revision to the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture Programs

Dr Terry Williamson, School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design introduced a proposal to restructure the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture coursework

degrees to provide graduates who completed the research stream, with direct entry into Higher Degree by Research programs at the University and eligibility for scholarships (Item 12).

With minor modifications (to ensure that the development of a research proposal was incorporated into the course "Seminar A" and that "Seminar A" was directly related to the "Research Thesis A and B" courses), REDC determined that the proposed research component contained within the reconfigured programs was sufficient to qualify graduates for direct entry to HDR programs and scholarship ranking.

Given the complexity of the issue, it was agreed that the question of how to determine Honours equivalence scores for the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture programs for scholarship ranking purposes would be addressed at a later stage within the context of a wider review of Honours equivalence.

Action	Responsible
Send a memo to Professor Russell detailing the revisions to be made to the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture in view of REDC's comments.	Dr Williamson
Write to the Head of School indicating that the revised Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture will be acceptable for the purpose of direct entry to Higher Degree by Research programs.	Professor Russell
Review Honours equivalence for the purpose of scholarship ranking and report back to REDC.	Graduate Scholarships Committee

### 13. Proposed Master of Research Studies/PhD Program

Professor Russell requested that members review the draft program rules for the proposed Master of Research Studies/PhD program (Item 13) and forward any comments to Ms Frost within 2 weeks.

Action	Responsible
Forward any comments on the draft Master of Research Studies/PhD double degree program to Ms Frost by 17 October 2008.	All REDC members

### 14. ERA : FOR and SEO Codes for Research Students

Professor Russell reported that with the introduction of the ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) initiative, research income, publications and other quality measures would be reported against a new set of standard research codes, namely: Fields of Research, FOR codes (replacing RFCD codes) and SEO codes (replacing the former SEO classification system). Members noted that ERA was silent on the subject of research training quality, however, given that this situation could change in the future, it was recommended that research student data be captured using the new classification system from 1/1/2009 to ensure (any) future reporting requirements could be met (Item 14).

REDC endorsed the recommendation, together with a parallel recommendation for the University Research Committee to support the modification of the PeopleSoft Research Module for the purpose of recording the new FOR and SEO codes from 1/1/2009.

Action	Responsible
Forward REDC's recommendations to the URC for consideration.	Ms Frost

## REPORTS FROM RESEARCH EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WORKING PARTIES

### 15. Student Matters

*There was nothing to report.*

### 16. Doctoral Education

*There was nothing to report.*

### 17. Quality Issues Working Party

*There was nothing to report.*

## UNSTARRED ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

### 18. Revision to the Higher Degree by Research Academic Program Rules and Specifications for Thesis for 2009

Members noted that the revisions to the HDR rules and *Specifications for Thesis* document for the 2009 Calendar had been endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor with the removal of the clause regarding the applicability of the 'current' rules to previous cohorts and the correction of minor typographical issues.

### 19. Other Business

#### Cotutelle Grants Seminar

Professor Taplin advised that he and Professor Russell would be hosting a seminar on Cotutelle grants for PhD students on Friday 3 October from 12:45pm in the Napier Building, Room G04. The guest speaker would be Professor Michel Thibier, Science and Technology Counsellor from the Embassy of France in Australia, who would talk about how to access the Cotutelle grants scheme and the advantages associated with the scheme. REDC members were encouraged to attend and promote the event within their respective Faculties.

#### Postgraduate Research Induction

Professor Taplin advised that during the recent AUQA focus groups, a number of research students had made comments about the length of time they were required to wait following enrolment before attending a University induction program. Members noted that this problem was compounded by the number of students who commenced in candidature outside of the preferred start dates (January for Semester 1 commencers and June for Semester 2 commencers) whether by accident (e.g. delays in visa approval) or design.

Professor Russell indicated that in addition to the planned development of an online induction program he would investigate the feasibility of increasing the number of induction programs run by the Graduate Centre to three per year.

Action	Responsible
Investigate the feasibility of running three AGC Induction Programs per year.	Professor Russell

**20 Next Meeting**

*The next meeting is scheduled for 27 October 2008 in the ARI Board Room, Level 7, 115 Grenfell Street.*

DONNA FROST  
Secretary

CONFIRMED:  
Day/Month/Year .....  
Date CONVENOR

FOR NOTING

ITEM 5

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

MEETING 7/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p><b>6. Examples of Good Practice in Research Education</b></p> <p>Present an example of good practice in research education within the Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences at the next REDC meeting on 27 October.</p>	Dr Zander	See Item 6
<p><b>7. IELTS Requirements for International Students</b></p> <p>Contact the DVC&amp;VP(A) regarding English Language Proficiency requirements for HDR students.</p> <p>Forward Faculty requests to modify the IELTS entry requirements to HDR programs to Professor Russell and Ms Frost by 10 October 2008.</p> <p>Seek approval for any Faculty's request to modify the IELTS entry requirement from URC and UAB.</p>	<p>Professor Russell</p> <p>Faculty Representatives</p> <p>Ms Frost</p>	<p>Completed. See Item 7</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p><b>8. English Language Proficiency and Academic Outcomes for International Students</b></p> <p>Draft a survey for supervisors of international research candidates for REDC to review.</p>	Dr Cally Guerin, RED	Pending
<p><b>9. Confirmation of Candidature Practices</b></p> <p>Draft a revised Major Review of Progress form for REDC's consideration.</p>	Ms Frost, Professor Russell	In progress
<p><b>10. The Annual Review of Progress</b></p> <p>Convey the change in process for lifting thesis embargos to AGC and ARI staff.</p>	Ms Frost	In progress

<p><b>11. Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses</b></p> <p>Revise the Examiners' Report Form as requested and seek approval from the Vice-Chancellor's Committee/UAB for the establishment of a University Medal for Doctoral Theses.</p>	<p>Ms Frost/ Professor Russell</p>	<p>Completed. See Item 8</p>
<p><b>12. Proposed Revision to the Master of Architecture and the Master of Landscape Architecture Programs</b></p> <p>Send a memo to Professor Russell detailing the revisions to be made to the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture in view of REDC's comments.</p> <p>Write to the Head of School indicating that the revised Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture will be acceptable for the purpose of direct entry to Higher Degree by Research programs.</p> <p>Review Honours equivalence for the purpose of scholarship ranking and report back to REDC.</p>	<p>Dr Williamson</p> <p>Professor Russell</p> <p>Graduate Scholarships Committee</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Pending</p>
<p><b>13. Proposed Master of Research Studies/ PhD Program</b></p> <p>Forward any comments on the draft Master of Research Studies/PhD double degree program to Ms Frost by 17 October 2008.</p>	<p>All REDC members</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p><b>14. ERA: FOR and SEO Codes for Research Students</b></p> <p>Forward REDC's recommendations to the URC for consideration.</p>	<p>Ms Frost</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p><b>19. Other Business</b></p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of running three AGC Induction Programs per year.</p>	<p>Professor Russell</p>	<p>Completed. See item 13</p>

**MEETING 6/08**

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p><b>25. Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Research Proposal Proforma</u> Provide Ms Frost with a copy of the finalised Faculty Research Proposal Proforma.</p>	<p>Dr Ford, Professor Williams</p>	<p>In progress</p>

**MEETING 5/08**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<p><b>6. The Core Component of the Structured Program and Plagiarism</b></p> <p>Advise the Committee of further progress towards the development of a summative version of the online plagiarism module when available.</p>	Professor Russell	In progress
<p><b>8. Confirmation of Candidature Practices</b></p> <p>Prepare a paper for the Vice-Chancellor's Committee detailing recommendations for the strengthening of candidature confirmation practices at the University.</p>	Professor Russell	In progress.
<p><b>9. Identifying Opportunities for Improving Research Student Support</b></p> <p>Prepare a paper for the Vice-Chancellor's Committee detailing recommendations for the strengthening of candidature confirmation practices at the University.</p>	Professor Russell	In progress

**MEETING 4/08**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<p><b>6. The Core Component of the Structured Program and Plagiarism</b></p> <p>Discuss the options for the ongoing support of students identified as requiring remedial assistance in avoiding plagiarism and report back to REDC.</p>	Professor Russell	In progress

**MEETING 3/08**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<p><b>6. Proposal to Introduce more Flexible Entry Pathways to the PhD for International Students through a Master of Research Studies</b></p> <p>Bring PAC proposal for the creation of the Master of Research Studies/PhD double degree program to a future REDC meeting for consideration.</p>	Professor Russell	Pending

**MEETING 1/08**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>17. Other Business</b> <b>Problems with Assignment of Supervisors</b>  Speak with Mr Shane McGregor, the Chief Financial Officer, about how the course description related to monies reaching the School/Discipline.	Professor Russell/Mrs Witt	In progress

**MEETING 7/07**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>6. Strategies for Increasing HDR completions and Meeting Recruitment Targets (Item 7 from Meeting 5/07 and Item 6 from Meeting 6/07)</b>  Obtain data, regarding HDR completions and meeting recruitment targets, on PhD students in the UK.	Professor Russell	In progress

**MEETING 8/06**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>7. Higher Degree by Research Completions</b>  Consider the introduction of financial incentives for submission within 3.5 years FTE from commencement.	Professor Russell/Mrs Witt	Tied to the future of the scholarships scheme.

DONNA FROST  
Secretary

RESEARCH EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING 8 – 2008



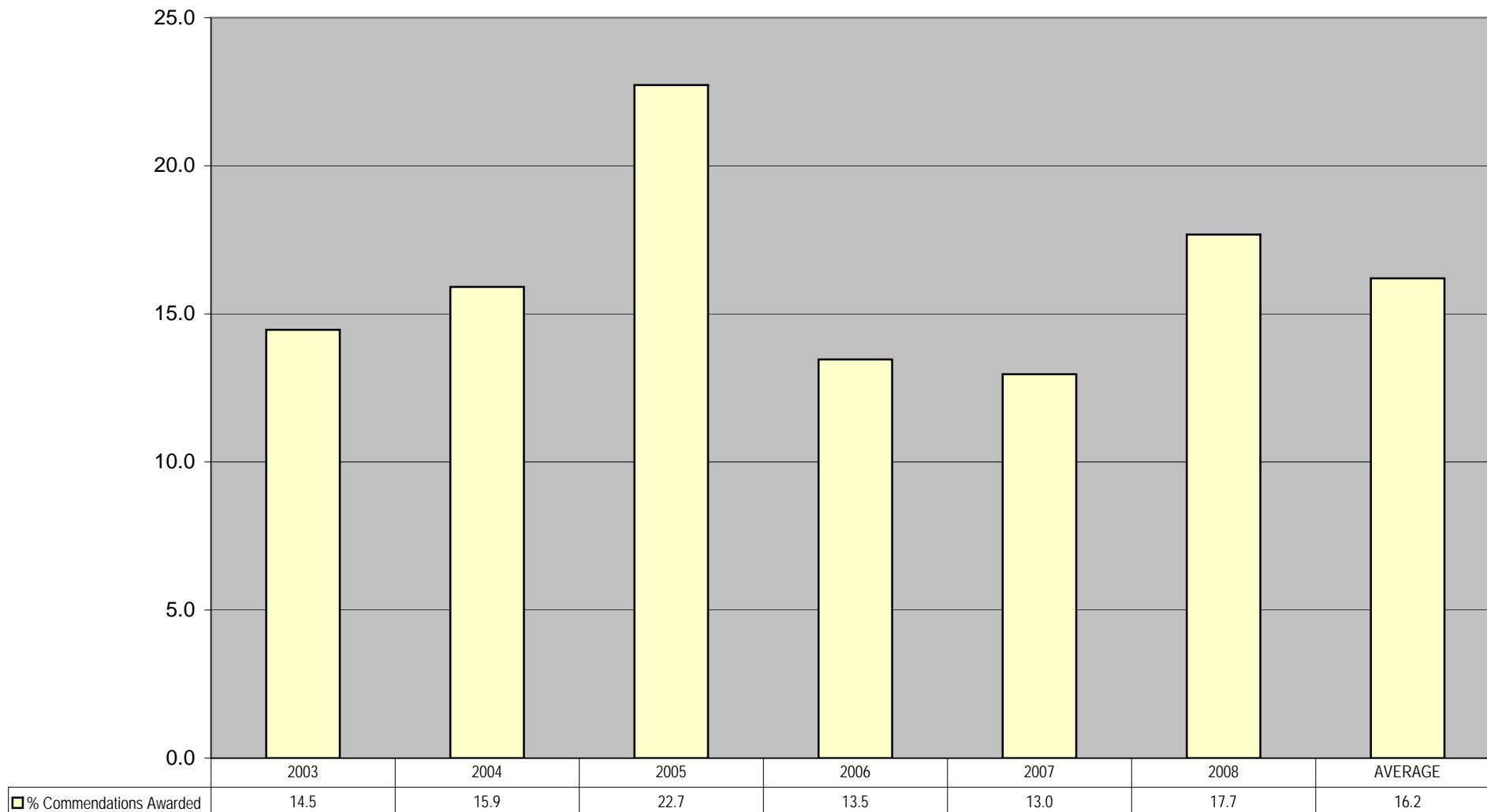
FOR NOTING

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Examples of Good Practice in Higher Degree by Research Policy and Practice: Schedule for 2008

Date of Meeting	Presenter	Faculty/Division
7 July 08	No presentation	No presentation
18 Aug 08	Dr Kimi Coaldrake	Humanities and Social Sciences
29 Sep 08	No presentation	No presentation
27 Oct 08	Professor Ted Nettelbeck	Health Sciences
1 Dec 08	Dr Anthony Zander	Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting 2009	Professor John Williams	Professions
2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting 2009	Dr Chris Ford	Sciences

Percentage of Higher Degree by Research Students Awarded a Special Commendation by Year



### Which Academic Program Rules apply to me at the time of thesis submission?

Students can choose whether they wish their thesis to be examined under the academic program rules in place during the year of enrolment, or the rules in place at the time of submission.

If the current rules are selected (recommended option), students will be required to abide by all current program rules and all requirements detailed in the current *specifications for thesis* document. Thesis examiners will be sent a copy of the current program rules and current specifications for thesis to use as a reference during their examination of the thesis.

If the program rules for the year of enrolment are selected, students will be required to abide by all program rules for their year of commencement together with all requirements detailed in the *specifications for thesis* document for that year. Thesis examiners will be sent a copy of the relevant year's program rules and *specifications for thesis* to use as a reference during their examination of the thesis.

Note that where a student has transferred programs e.g. from a Masters to a PhD, the choice of academic program rules and *specifications* will be between those in place during the year of commencement in the current program (i.e. PhD) and the rules in place at the time of submission.

### When should I choose which Academic Program Rules and Specifications will apply to me?

At the time of lodging their notification of intention to submit, students will be asked to nominate whether they wish their thesis to be examined under the current rules and *specifications for thesis*, or those in place in their year of enrolment. However, it is recommended that the options are evaluated before this and preferably before thesis preparation is underway in earnest as the decision may impact significantly on the format and length of the thesis.

For example, a PhD student who first enrolled in 2000 who chose to be examined under the 2000 academic program rules would not be eligible to submit a PhD by publication; however, no word limit would be applied to the thesis. In contrast, a student who chose to be examined under the current (2008) program rules, would be eligible to submit a PhD by publication, however, a thesis word limit of 80,000 words would apply.

### Where can I find a copy of the academic program rules and specifications for thesis that were current in my year of enrolment?

Historical copies of academic program rules and specifications for thesis documents are available in the University Calendar for the relevant year and online at: XXXXX

**What if I have already submitted my notification of intention to submit?**

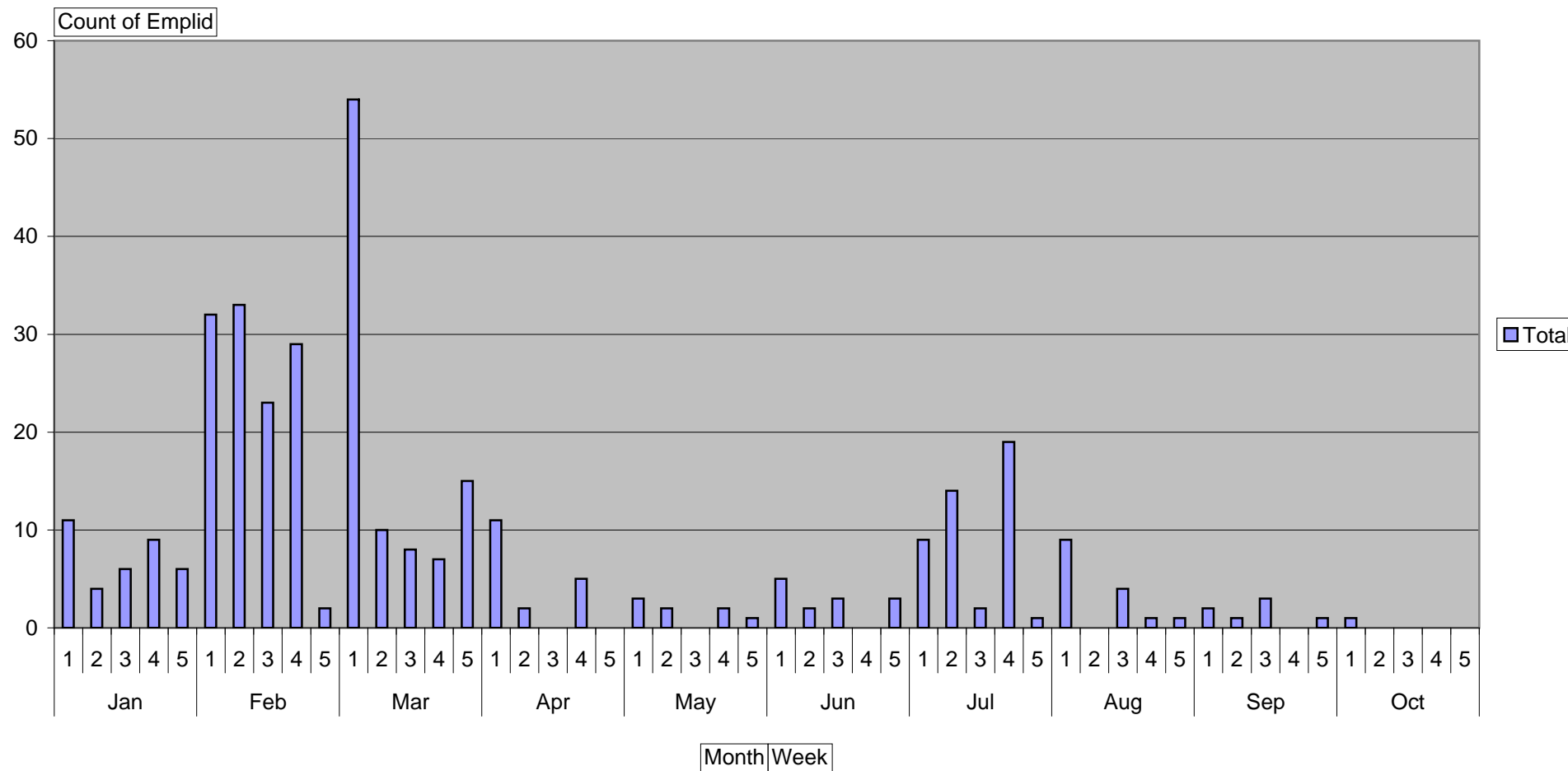
It will be assumed that students who have already submitted a notification of intention to submit wish to be examined under the current (2008) academic program rules and specifications for thesis, unless the [Graduate Centre](#) is advised otherwise.

**Can I choose to abide by some Academic Program Rules/Specifications from my year of enrolment and some from the current year?**

No, whichever set of rules/specifications you choose to abide by will apply in full.

### Higher Degree by Research Enrolments by Month and Week in 2008

Current as at 30 September 2008



STUDENT MATTERS SUB-COMMITTEE  
MEETING 08/7 – DATE



FOR APPROVAL

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MINUTES OF MEETING 08/5

A meeting of the Student Matters Sub-committee (SMS) was held on Level 14, 115 Grenfell Street, from 12.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 September 2008.

**Present:** Professor Richard Russell (Convenor); Dr Kimi Coaldrake; Dr Liz Cousins;  
Dr Chris Ford

**In attendance:** Miss Rosanna Scarsella

FORMAL MATTERS

1. **Apologies/Announcements**

Apologies were received from Ms Felicity Rai.

2. **Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts were declared. Members did not participate in discussion of cases from their Faculties.

3. **Minutes of Meeting**

The minutes  
*of the meeting held on 9 July 2008*  
were approved.

MAJOR ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL

All members reviewed all documentation and the fact that a particular issue was not mentioned explicitly in these minutes did not mean that it was not reviewed in depth and at length.

4. **MA examination case 08\_5\_1**

The thesis was not of Master's standard. It was poorly-presented and both examiners had commented on the many typographical, spelling and grammatical errors. The supervisor(s) had acknowledged the errors, including mistakes in punctuation, in their report.

After consideration of all the documentation, SMS decided (d) – revise and re-submit. As part of the outcome letter, the student was to be strongly encouraged to seek appropriate editorial advice before submitting the revised thesis.

5. **PhD examination case 08\_5\_2**

This case highlighted again the difficulty in the examination of cross-disciplinary theses.

Examiner 2, who had been undecided between (d) and (e), had provided an extremely thorough report. He had concerns with the structured reviews, believing they were too limited and omitted "highly relevant and important research". He also had concerns about the central hypothesis of the

research which had been to investigate the impact that time had on patients' re-call of chemotherapy treatment information. He questioned if patients in fact were "re-calling" what they had been told or had learned at the time of consent or were actually reporting new information obtained over a period of time.

The supervisor(s) argued that this examiner seemed "unfamiliar with the strict nature of the Public Health method of using structured reviews to exclude and include references in debate". They also argued that the thesis was not "measuring the true construct of re-call, but the experience of patients over time ...".

After consideration of all the documentation, SMS decided that the thesis be sent to a third examiner.

**6. PhD examination case 08\_5\_3**

SMS noted Examiner 1's concerns. His concerns seemed related to clarification rather than methodology, but his comments seemed to lean more towards a (b) or (c) recommendation than the (a) he had given.

The comments of Examiner 2 seemed more in line with a (c) recommendation than the (d) he had recommended.

The supervisor(s) had provided clear guidance with regard to the amendments to be made.

After consideration of all the documentation, SMS decided (c) - award of the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis.

**7. PhD examination case 08\_5\_4**

SMS noted Examiner 1's comment that many of the statistical tests were flawed. If this were the case, it was difficult to understand how the conclusions could be substantiated. Also of concern was this examiner's comment (confidential from the student) that while there were "some fundamental flaws requiring substantial revision of several chapters (and his) recommendation came close to (d)" he was confident (being conversant with the principal supervisor's capabilities) that all the necessary changes could be accommodated within a (c) recommendation.

It was pointed out that statistical help was needed by many postgraduate research students but that such help was not readily available, within the University, at little or no cost. Professor Russell undertook to look into this matter.

After consideration of all the documentation, SMS decided (d) – revise and re-submit. Furthermore, as part of the outcome letter, the student was to be told that SMS strongly advised her to seek appropriate statistical advice as part of the revision process.

**8. PhD examination case 08\_5\_5**

Given the wide discrepancy between examiners' recommendations and after consideration of all the documentation, it was decided to send the thesis to a third examiner.

**9. PhD examination case 08\_5\_6**

It was noted that, notwithstanding the fact that the examiners' report forms had incorrectly indicated the thesis was "conventional" when it was, in fact, "by publication format", both examiners had correctly examined it as a thesis "by publication format".

SMS agreed with the examiners regarding the quality of the published work. However, SMS also recognized that a thesis by publication format was more than just a collection of papers and agreed with Examiner 1 about the lack of appropriate introduction, lack of up-to-date literature review and sub-standard general conclusion. Rule 8.4 (i) of the PhD rules stated that "a thesis that incorporates publications shall also contain: a contextual statement that normally includes the aims underpinning the publication(s); a literature review or commentary that establishes the field of knowledge and provides a link between publications; and a conclusion showing the overall significance of the work and contribution to knowledge".

After consideration of all the documentation, SMS decided (c), but with special requirements and conditions.

As part of the specified amendments the student was required to make, he was to update the literature review and improve the introduction and conclusion.

The Head of School was to confirm that this had been done by way of a special "Thesis Lodgement for ADTP Confirmation of Amendments to Thesis" proforma. The amended thesis was to be approved by SMS before the student qualified, academically, for the award of the degree.

**Other Business**

**10. Review of examination outcome – case 08\_1\_1 – [considered by SMS – case 06\_7\_2 on 19 October 2006 and (revised thesis) case 08\_3\_2 on 10 April 2008]**

The information was noted.

**11. PhD examination case 08\_2\_5 (considered at meeting on 14 March 2008)**

The information was noted.

**12. Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be scheduled as required.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.

ROSANNA SCARSELLA  
Secretary

CONFIRMED:

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CONVENOR