

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 23 March 2009.

AGENDA

FORMAL MATTERS

1. Apologies
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 2 March 2009
Recommendation: that the Research Education and Development Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2009.
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 Williams to present.
7. Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses
Professor Russell to report (Item 7 and document to be tabled).
8. * Towards a Master of Philosophy
Faculty representatives to report (Item 8).
9. * Evaluation of the Electronic Collection (Ecollect) of Theses by Examiners Scheme
Drs Ford and Zander and Professor Nettelbeck to report.
10. * Disclosure of Procedural Information to Students During Thesis Examination
Professor Russell to report.

- 11 * **HDR Examination Confidentiality**
Professor Russell to report. For discussion (Item 11).
- 12 * **What is the Minimum Research Requirement for Students intending to articulate from Masters by Coursework to HDR Programs?**
Professor Russell to report. For discussion (Item 12).

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

13. **Student Matters**
No further meetings have been held.

14. **Doctoral Education**
No further meetings have been held.

15. **Quality Issues Working Party**
No further meetings have been held.

UNSTARRED ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

16. **Adelaide Graduate Centre Induction Program**
To note that the next AGC Induction Program will be held on Thursday 26 March 2009. Further information and online registration is available at:
<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/graduatecentre/induction/>

17. **Other Business**

18. **Next Meeting**
The next scheduled meeting will be held from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 27 April 2009 in the ARI Board Room, Level 7, 115 Grenfell Street.

DONNA FROST
Secretary
F: 2009/36

FOR APPROVAL

MINUTES OF MEETING 1/09

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 2 March 2008.

Present: Professor Richard Russell (Convenor), Dr Kimi Coaldrake, Dr Chris Ford, Mr Morteza Mohammedzeri, Professor Ted Nettelbeck, Dr Michelle Picard, Dr Anthony Zander.

In attendance: Ms Donna Frost,

FORMAL MATTERS

1. **Apologies/Announcements**

Apologies were noted from the following: Mr Simon Brennan, Dr Bertram Ostendorf, Professor John Taplin, Professor John Williams, Mrs Anne Witt

2. **Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts were declared.

3. **Starring of Items**

The Committee resolved:

to adopt the recommendations contained in the unstarred items.

Items 17 and 19 were starred at the start of the meeting.

4. **Minutes of Meeting**

The Committee resolved:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2009.

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 to the next meeting in the absence of Professor Williams.

7. **Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses**

Members noted that Professor Russell had composed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor and President seeking the authority to establish a number of Doctoral Research Medals at the University. Whilst generally supportive of the initiative, Professor Russell advised that some details, largely relating to the ranking process for the medals, would need to be revisited and suggested that the matter be brought before REDC following further discussion of the proposal by Academic Board on 4 March.

Action	Responsible
Advise REDC of the UAB's response to the proposed establishment of Doctoral Research Medals on 23 March 2009.	Professor Russell

8. Postdoctoral Education

Professor Russell advised that Graduate Centre's plans to establish professional development opportunities for early career researchers were well underway. The Researcher Education Unit of the Graduate Centre had made significant progress towards the establishment of a Graduate Certificate in Research Methodology and was also engaged in encouraging the participation of relevant staff in the [Future Research Leaders Program](#).

9. Towards a Master of Philosophy

Professor Russell took the opportunity to remind members that the Master of Philosophy would be the only RTS eligible Higher Degree by Research degree moving forward. Faculties requiring discipline specific appellations were requested to provide these to Professor Russell or Ms Frost by the end of the month.

For the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Nettelbeck indicated that discipline specific appellations equivalent to the existing named degrees would be required. [Secretary's note: The discipline specific appellations for Health Sciences would therefore be: Master of Philosophy (Clinical Science), Master of Philosophy (Grief and Palliative Care Counselling), Master of Philosophy (Medical Science), Master of Philosophy (Ophthalmology), Master of Philosophy (Dentistry) and Master of Philosophy (Surgery).]

Action	Responsible
Forward any required discipline specific appellations for the Master of Philosophy to Ms Frost or Professor Russell by 31 March 2009.	All REDC Faculty Representatives

10. ERA: FOR and SEO Codes for Research Students

Professor Russell confirmed that the implementation of ERA would not require the provision of information about Higher Degree by Research students in the first round. However, in anticipation of future requests, the Graduate Centre would continue to collect FOR and SEO codes for all HDR students at enrolment and to maintain this data in an excel spreadsheet for import PeopleSoft, when and if the necessary reconfigurations were completed.

REPORTS FROM RESEARCH EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WORKING PARTIES

11. Student Matters

The reports of Student Matters meetings SM 09/1 and (unconfirmed) SM 09/2 were noted.

12. Doctoral Education

There was nothing to report.

13. Quality Issues Working Party

There was nothing to report.

UNSTARRED ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

14. REDC Membership

Dr Michelle Picard, Director of Researcher Education, Adelaide Graduate Centre, was welcomed as a new member of REDC. The Committee noted the revised membership list (Item 14).

Professor Nettelbeck advised that he was undertaking special studies leave in second semester and would therefore be stepping down as the Chair of the Faculty of Health Sciences Higher Degrees Committee from 1 July and from REDC following the meeting on 1 June. Discussions about Professor Nettelbeck's replacement were ongoing within the Faculty and the Committee would be advised of the outcome as soon as possible.

Professor Russell expressed the Committee's sincere appreciation for the valuable service and contributions of Professor Nettelbeck to the Committee over the past several years.

15. REDC Meeting Dates for 2009

The revised schedule of REDC meeting dates for 2009 was noted (Item 15).

16. Higher Degree by Research Induction Program

Members noted that the AGC Induction Program held on 20 February 2009 was attended by 156 students and that the next Induction Program would be held on 27 March 2009. Further information including the evaluation report and online registration form is available on the web at: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/graduatecentre/induction/>

17. Applicability of Higher Degree by Research Program Rules and Specifications for Thesis

It was noted that all HDR students would be required to decide which program rules would apply to them at submission when completing their [notification of intention to submit](#). Further information and current/historical rules for HDR programs are available on the Graduate Centre web site at: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/graduatecentre/program_rules/

18. Expediting the Lifting of HDR Students' Thesis Embargos

Members noted that from 1/5/2009, student embargos would be automatically lifted on conclusion of their (normally) 12 month term providing that no request for continuance had been received from ARI.

19. Research Proposal Proforma

The information received from the Faculty of Sciences on the proposed generic research proposal proforma (Item 19) was noted; a response from the Faculty of Professions is pending.

Action	Responsible
Provide Ms Frost with a copy of the finalised Faculty Research Proposal Proforma.	Professor Williams

20. Proposal to Develop Good Practice Principles for English Language Competence

Members noted that in April 2008, DEEWR initiated a project to develop good practice principles for English language proficiency in academic studies, focusing on international students studying onshore in Australian universities. The final report will be made available for REDC's consideration in due course.

21. Other Business

Mid-Year Scholarship Round and Completion Scholarships

Professor Russell reported that at the last Vice-Chancellor's Committee Meeting, a decision was made (in recognition of the additional APA scholarships awarded to the University at the end of 2008), to reconfigure a portion of the funding allocated for Divisional Scholarships to deliver a mid-year scholarship round for international students.

10 new Adelaide Scholarships International and 5 Adelaide Graduate Fee Scholarships (AGFS) would be offered to eligible international applicants intending to commence study in Semester 2, 2009. Further information including scholarship provisions, conditions of award and application forms is available on the Graduate Centre web site at:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/graduatecentre/scholarships/postgrad/international/>

In addition, 7 Completion scholarships providing a living allowance for 6 months at the APA rate (pro-rata) would be offered in 2009 for domestic students who had not previously been in receipt of scholarship funding. As per the University of Western Australia model, Schools would be required to nominate those PhD students they were confident of completing within the 6 month term of the scholarship. Failure of the student to complete within one month of the completion scholarship expiry date would require the School to reimburse the cost of the scholarship to the University. Further details of the scheme would be provided on the Graduate Centre web site in due course.

Awards for Excellence in Higher Degree by Research Supervision

Members agreed that administration of the yearly Awards for Excellence in Higher Degree by Research Supervision currently undertaken by the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD), be assumed by the Adelaide Graduate Centre from 2010.

Action	Responsible
Contact Ms Barbara Brougham, Project Officer, CLPD re: the administration of	Ms Frost/ Professor

the supervisor award.	Russell
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Strengthening Confirmation of Candidature and the Revised Major Review of Progress Form

Members noted that Professor Russell's paper on strengthening candidature confirmation processes, together with the revised Major Review of Progress form, would be considered by the next meeting of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

Electronic Collection of Theses (ECollect) by Examiners

Professor Russell indicated that at the next meeting of REDC, a review of the work done on electronic collection of theses for the Sciences and Engineering, Computer & Mathematical Sciences Faculties would be undertaken. Representatives of these Faculties were asked to canvass any concerns, problems or positive experiences that staff with experience of the project had encountered.

Members noted that if the feedback proved to be as positive as the uptake of the scheme would suggest, he would consider changing University policy to enable students submitting electronically to accompany their submission with only 1 paper copy as opposed to the 3 currently required. Professor Nettelbeck was asked to consider whether the Health Sciences Faculty wished to participate in the Ecollect scheme.

Action	Responsible
Canvass feedback on the success of the ECollect scheme within the Sciences and ECMS Faculties.	Drs Ford and Zander respectively.
Advise whether the Faculty of Health Sciences wish to participate in the Ecollect Scheme.	Professor Nettelbeck

Data Sharing Amongst the G08 Universities

Professor Russell advised the Committee that the G08 were committed to openly sharing benchmarking data about and amongst the member institutions. To this end, a new staff member, based in Canberra, had been appointed to convey the G08 view of doctoral education.

Thesis Examination Process

Dr Ford questioned the status of the policy on revealing procedural information to HDR students during the course of a thesis examination. It was agreed that the issue be revisited at the next meeting.

Action	Responsible
Add "Disclosure of information to HDR students during thesis examination" to the next REDC agenda.	Ms Frost

Researcher Education Unit Support for Combating Plagiarism

Dr Picard, Director, Researcher Education Development (RED) Unit indicated that the RED unit were able to provide ongoing training for HDR students struggling with plagiarism on the conclusion of the Core Component of the Structured Program. The training would take the form of up to three individual appointments with a RED staff member, plus the opportunity for students to undertake a monitored task e.g. the preparation of an annotated bibliography or a review of work done.

Action	Responsible
Convey the availability of RED support for combating plagiarism amongst HDR students to Faculties.	Faculty representatives

PGSA Workshop

Mr Mohammedzeri advised that the PGSA would be holding a workshop for postgraduate students which would include the following:

1. The current regulations for HDR examination;
2. an exchange of ideas about reducing the examination time in Higher Degree by Research student examinations (noting that the period of examination when students had neither a scholarship or a degree was often financially difficult for students).

22 Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held from 2:30pm to 4:30pm on 27 April 2009 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 1/09

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>7. Recognition of Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Theses</p> <p>Advise REDC of the UAB's response to the proposed establishment of Doctoral Research Medals on 23 March 2009.</p>	<p>Professor Russell</p>	<p>Completed See Item 7</p>
<p>9. Towards a Master of Philosophy</p> <p>Forward any required discipline specific appellations for the Master of Philosophy to Ms Frost or Professor Russell by 31 March 2009.</p>	<p>All REDC Faculty representatives</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>19. Research Proposal Proforma</p> <p>Provide Ms Frost with a copy of the finalised Faculty of Profession's Research Proposal Proforma.</p>	<p>Professor Williams</p>	<p>Pending</p>
<p>21. Other Business</p> <p><u>Awards for Excellence in Higher Degree by Research Supervision</u> Contact Ms Barbara Brougham, Project Officer, CLPD re: the administration of the supervisor award.</p> <p><u>Electronic Collection of Theses (ECollect) by Examiners</u> Canvass feedback on the success of the Ecollect scheme within the Sciences and ECMS Faculties.</p> <p>Advise whether the Faculty of Health Sciences wish to participate in the Ecollect Scheme.</p> <p><u>Thesis Examination Process</u> Add "Disclosure of information to students during thesis examination" to the next REDC agenda.</p> <p><u>Researcher Education Unit Support for Combating Plagiarism</u> Convey the availability of RED support for combating plagiarism amongst HDR students to Faculties</p>	<p>Ms Frost/Professor Russell</p> <p>Drs Ford and Zander respectively</p> <p>Professor Nettelbeck</p> <p>Ms Frost</p> <p>All Faculty Representatives</p>	<p>Pending</p> <p>See Item 9</p> <p>See Item 9</p> <p>Completed. See Item 10.</p> <p>In progress</p>

MEETING 9/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>6. Examples of Good Practice in Research Education</p> <p>Forward an electronic copy of the template letter to lapsed students to Ms Frost for circulation to all PGCs.</p>	Dr Zander	Completed
<p>7. English Language Proficiency and Academic Outcomes for International Students</p> <p>Assemble data on the students of potential interview candidates for Professor Russell.</p> <p>Interview 1-2 supervisors from each Faculty who have supervised significant numbers of both international and domestic students about the impact of English proficiency on supervisory work load.</p>	<p>Ms Frost</p> <p>Professor Russell</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Pending</p>
<p>9. Postdoctoral Education</p> <p>Forward information on the School of Wine and Horticulture's ECR Mentoring Scheme to Professor Russell.</p> <p>Forward information on the ECMS career progression workshops to Professor Russell.</p> <p>Provide information to Professor Russell about Faculties' planned financial contributions to centrally run ECR initiatives.</p> <p>Request assistance form Mr Glen Harrison to identify the University's Early Career Researcher's through ORBIT.</p>	<p>Dr Ford</p> <p>Dr Zander</p> <p>Dr Ford and Professor Williams</p> <p>Professor Russell</p>	<p>Pending</p> <p>Pending</p> <p>Pending</p> <p>Pending</p>
<p>10. Towards a Master of Philosophy</p> <p>Discuss at Faculty level the number of research units that coursework students would need to complete to gain admission to a HDR program and equivalence to Honours for scholarship selection purposes.</p>	All Faculty representatives	In progress.
<p>19. Other Business</p> <p><u>Outstanding Master of Science Thesis</u> Organise the modifications required to PeopleSoft to enable the Master of Science student to graduate with a PhD.</p>	Ms Frost	In progress

MEETING 8/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>7. IELTS Requirements for International Students</p> <p>Provide members with information about the progress of the review of English Language Standards as available.</p>	Professor Russell	Pending

MEETING 7/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>12. Proposed Revision to the Master of Architecture and the Master of Landscape Architecture Programs</p> <p>Review Honours equivalence for the purpose of scholarship ranking and report back to REDC.</p>	Graduate Scholarships Committee	Pending

MEETING 5/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>6. The Core Component of the Structured Program and Plagiarism</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>9. Identifying Opportunities for Improving Research Student Support</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 3/08

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
<p>6. Proposal to Introduce more Flexible Entry Pathways to the PhD for International Students through a Master of Research Studies</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 7/07

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

DONNA FROST
Secretary

Extract from the draft minutes of Academic Board meeting 1/09 held on 4 March 2009

7. University Doctoral Research Medals

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Operations) spoke to his report recommending the introduction of doctoral research medals. Professor Russell explained that the paper represented a simple proposal to recognise the best theses completed each year. Initial ranking would be undertaken by Faculties, with a representative group then reviewing the recommendations and producing a consolidated list in a process similar to that used to allocate graduate scholarships. The proposed method of collecting information concerning the quality of theses had been in use at the University of Western Australia for some years. This information was to be made available to Faculties on a confidential basis for ranking purposes only. Professor Russell recommended that the process be reviewed after two cycles.

In discussion members noted:

- i. the relationship between an examiner's experience and their classification of the quality of a thesis;
- ii. that the selection mechanism may disadvantage theses from disciplines which traditionally graduate few HDR students;
- iii. the effect that discrepancies between examiners' reports may have on the selection process;
- iv. that Faculties were capable of making mature judgements regarding the quality of theses and ranking them accordingly;
- v. the eligibility of candidates in categories a), b) and c) for nomination for a medal; and
- vi. that a nomination process was required which included a statement regarding the quality of the thesis, accompanied by a justification for its nomination.

The Board expressed enthusiasm for the introduction of doctoral research medals but requested that Professor Russell amend the examination report form in the light of its discussion, with the revised paper to be presented to the next meeting for endorsement.

FOR DISCUSSION

ITEM 11

From: PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR
Sent: Friday, 13 March 2009

Hi,

I believe this MUST be put up for review. I will not inform the leader in our field that his time has been wasted on the basis of a policy like this.

I believe the policy is flawed and should be reconsidered. The question of anonymity should only be an issue if there is a serious belief that its lack will compromise the review process. In this case it was broken by the examiner, at a point where he is apparently close to making his report.

Clearly he has no concern about his anonymity, and believed that its lack would not distort his report.

No doubt anonymity was specified in the guidelines provided, but **THE EXAMINER** clearly forgot the policy, presumably because it is so different from that of Cambridge and the other Universities with which he has been involved. And I suspect he would not believe that our University would follow such a policy so blindly in such a clear cut case.

If it is the eventual decision of the REDC that a third reviewer be appointed, then I suggest that they write a letter to **THE EXAMINER**, and his head of department apologizing formally for wasting their valuable time. I don't know the resulting effect on Adelaide's reputation, but I imagine that we will be seen as rather backward and bureaucratic. I doubt it will improve our prestige to imply that Cambridge University's PhD assessment process is invalid.

In addition I expect that graduate studies will write to the student concerned, explaining the delay in assessment of his thesis. This is no fault of his, and it is rather unfair that he should be left waiting for an additional period while his thesis is assessed by an additional reviewer. I don't know the exact details of his current employment contract, but it is not unusual for there to be financial implications related to a delay in acceptance of a thesis.

On the other hand, I would be very happy to ask **THE EXAMINER** for a formal statement that he waives his right to anonymity, and that his report will remain unbiased as a result.

Regards,
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

Pamela Cook wrote:

>
> Dear CO-SUPERVISOR
>
> I am sorry you don't like this outcome. It is most unfortunate but
> there were clear instructions to examiners about confidentiality.
>

> There are really two options:
>
> 1. we seek a third examiner report
> or
> 2. the matter is referred to REDC on 23 March and they can decide,
> although they may well required the appointment of a third
> examiner.
>
> My preference would be to move quickly, but if you wish to test the
> will of REDC, I can accept that recommendation.
>
> Rick
>
> Professor Richard Russell
> Dean of Graduate Studies

Original Message -----

Subject:Re: Electronic Thesis Collection

Date:Wed, 11 Mar 2009 16:09:01 +1030

From:Jade Wildy <jade.wildy@adelaide.edu.au>

To:CO-SUPERVISOR

CC:PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

Pamela Cook <pamela.cook@adelaide.edu.au>

Dear CO-SUPERVISOR and PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR,
The case has been referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review.
Kind regards
Jade

CO-SUPERVISOR wrote:

Dear Jade,

As the examiners are entitled to waive their confidentiality on their report, how does this matter? If THE EXAMINER submits a report that does not waive his confidentiality, then I would agree that there is a breach. However, assuming that THE EXAMINER does waive his confidentiality, then I can see no logical reason why the University would not accept his report.

I think that this now represents a waste of both THE EXAMINER and THE RESERVE EXAMINER'S TIME. It is not a respectful way to treat our colleagues. You say that Tim's report will still be received, but it will have no official status. So Tim even writing his report is a further waste of his time.

I am sorry, but I think this is a very very bad decision that upsets everyone.

CO-SUPERVISOR.

Subject:Re: Electronic Thesis Collection

Date:Wed, 11 Mar 2009 16:00:17 +1030

From:PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

To:Jade Wildy <jade.wildy@adelaide.edu.au>

CC:CO-SUPERVISOR

I ask because it was THE EXAMINER who revealed his identity. It seems likely from that, that he is not concerned about his anonymity at this point (presumably because he is planning a positive report). If that is the concern, I could ask him specifically about the issue and check that he does not have a problem.

Regards,
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

On 11/03/2009, at 1:09 PM, Jade Wildy wrote:

Dear PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR,
Unfortunately a new examiner is unavoidable. However we will still receive THE EXAMINER'S report given the time and effort which has been put into it.
Kind regards
Jade

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR wrote:
Can we avoid this? THE EXAMINER has no doubt spent some time already reading the thesis. I don't want to unduly delay the thesis by bringing in another examiner like this, or inconvenience examiners unnecessarily.

Regards,
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

P.S. I have CC'd THE CANDIDATE'S co-supervisor on this.

Jade Wildy wrote:

Dear PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR,

I note that you have been included in the email from THE EXAMINER advising of the status of his report and that the candidate, was also included in this communication. Unfortunately the Dean of Graduate Studies has advised that, as the confidentiality of the examination process has been breached, we are no longer able to accept THE EXAMINER'S report. I am emailing to advise that we will now be contacting the first reserve, to examine.

Kind regards
Jade

RESEARCH EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING 2/09 – 23 March 2009



FOR DISCUSSION

ITEM 12

Date: Wed, 11 Mar 2009 14:28:49 +1030
From: Susan Graebner <susan.graebner@adelaide.edu.au>
Reply-To: susan.graebner@adelaide.edu.au
Subject: Pathways to HDR programs
To: anne.witt@adelaide.edu.au

Hi Anne

I am working on the development of a Coursework Academic Programs policy, which will articulate a lot of the principles underpinning design of coursework programs into a policy - principles that are sort of understood but have never been documented: like 'all coursework programs required a specified total of units to be completed to qualify for the conferment of the relevant award' and that a bachelor degree has a minimum of 72 units, and so on. It is designed to clarify for academic staff designing and delivering coursework programs what the university's minimum requirements and standards are. It covers minimum admissions standards, and workloads, and other things like that.

The working group developing it discussed yesterday the issue of whether, when coursework programs are intended to be used as a pathway to an HDR program, there is a requirement for a minimum research component in the coursework program? This would be relevant primarily to honours and masters coursework programs, presumably. Is there a documented minimum research requirement that must be completed? I note that the Entry Requirements webpage states that 'A Master's degree with a substantial research component may be considered for admission to doctoral candidature' but there is no obvious definition of 'substantial'. Given that all coursework programs are based on 24 units a year, it should be possible to specify the required amount in units (I think).

I am envisaging a provision in the policy which reads something like this:

A coursework program which is intended to serve as a pathway into a higher degree by research program must include at least 6 units of courses on research practice and a 6-unit research project, or a 12-unit research project (or something like that).

Any ideas?

Happy to discuss, if that's easier.
Thanks
Sue

Susan Graebner
Project Officer, Major Projects
Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Academic)