



Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association Inc

The effects on Research Students of the University's reaction to the Research Training [sic] Scheme (RTS)

Punitive measures by Departments:

Charging for Internet access. The DVC(R)'s office has undertaken to reimburse all Departments for up to one gigabyte of "Internet download" per HDR Student (the simplest practical method for achieving this is still being worked out).

Recommendation:

Essential Internet usage up to one gigabyte of "download" for each Research Higher Degree Student should be centrally funded along the same lines as Internet usage of undergraduate and Honours Students. No research student should be personally charged for essential Internet access, this includes taking the money out of her or his Research Support allowance.

Charging for staff email accounts, even though Departments/Schools are not charged for email accounts, some students have been told that their department can no longer afford to support staff email accounts for postgraduate students. A staff email account is essential in commanding respect and attention from overseas or interstate colleagues. Threats like this only breed confusion and illwill.

Lack of photocopying, library loans and other support. The parsimony displayed by some Departments in this area is not only unnecessary and frustrating to students but also embarrassing to the University.

Other bullying tactics

Students have been told "If you don't finish in three years":

- You can't submit
- You will be charged fees
- You won't get office/laboratory space
- The Department won't receive any funding
- The Department can't enrol any more students

Students have also been told that:

- Their Department does not receive any funding for them if they are not on a scholarship
- Their Department does not receive any funding for them until they complete
- Their Department receives one third of the funding allocation per student on commencement, and the remaining two thirds on completion
- They "cannot" take intermission
- The Department will lose its allocation of students if they do not complete within three years
- Their Department will no longer accept part-time students
- The "three year rule" also applies to students who enrolled before 1/1/02

Recommendation

The Academic Board instructs the Board of Research Education and Development (BRED) to prepare and distribute widely throughout the University community, in particular to the Postgraduate student population:

- Clear, precise and transparent policy in relation to approved fees and charges, as well as minimum requirements for support for HDR students. (Much of this work has already been done.)
- Similarly, policy related to the method and disbursement of RTS funds and the management of students who take more than three years to complete their thesis, or whose candidature has lapsed, needs to be created and widely disbursed.

Punitive measures by the University:

The *Code of Practice*, 2002, Section 10.4 (iv) states:

A submission after the (candidature has lapsed), will incur a late fee of \$250 for a Masters thesis and \$500 for a PhD thesis. The fees will be directed to the Department or School concerned to compensate the Department or School for having to devote extra resources to deal with the student's thesis, given that the Department or School is not funded for any student whose candidature has lapsed. (p. 17)

Q: How much is a "Completion" worth to the University?

A1: \$0.

A2: "Permission" to enrol another HDR student

(The University is funded on EFTSU at enrolment - \$14,500p.a. for a low cost discipline, \$33,000p.a. (approx) for a high cost discipline.)

Recommendations:

The Academic Board recommends to the DVC(R) that:

1. The above section of the *Code of Practice for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Degrees* be repealed.
2. Departments or Schools be encouraged and supported in contacting lapsed HDR candidates who may be in a position to complete their thesis (say within six months).
3. Departments or Schools be compensated to an agreed amount for the effort needed to prepare such a thesis for examination.
4. Any student whose candidature has lapsed who is in a position to complete their thesis be supported with the necessary resources, including a monetary grant, for up to a maximum time of six months.

The part-time conundrum

Many students will not be able to complete their project in three years, particularly those undertaking fieldwork-based theses. These students will be forced to go part-time. Part time students do not get anywhere near the same support as full time students, this is one reason why these students are going to be "at risk" of not completing.

NB: A part-time student does not incur any disadvantage under the RTS to the University or Department, except in the fact that they are less likely to complete.

Recommendation

That the University sets aside targeted funds to Departments, Schools, Faculties or the Graduate Centre so that students who are forced to go part-time to "write-up" or finish off their thesis are not disadvantaged, or otherwise discouraged from completing.

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