

Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association

Submission to the

Review of the Higher Degree by Research Programme

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Introduction

The Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) represents the 3500 postgraduate and honours students enrolled at the University of Adelaide. Of these approximately 1500 students are enrolled in higher degrees by research programs.

We welcome this opportunity to present a submission to the Review of the University's Research Higher Degree Program. We commend the University for undertaking a broad review and look forward to being involved in the implementation of strategies to improve the quality of postgraduate research at the University.

Before commenting on each of the terms of reference, we wish to make some general comments about the challenges facing postgraduate education at the University of Adelaide.

Firstly, from a National Policy perspective, the Minister's White Paper on Research and Research Training, *Knowledge and Innovation*, identified a number of serious deficiencies in research education. These include:

- Poor supervision;
- Inadequate levels of departmental support and limited access to quality infrastructure;
- High attrition rates and slow rates of completion for research students;
- The need to improve the employment related skills of research degree graduates (Kemp, 1999a).

The Research Training Scheme (RTS), proposed by the Minister's White Paper, has significantly altered the system for allocating research places to universities. Previously, funding for places was allocated as part of university operating grants and established through negotiations with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA). Under the RTS, universities will have significantly less flexibility in allocating research places, with RTS funding based significantly on postgraduate completions. (Kemp, 1999a)

Secondly, this new policy and funding environment has come at a time when Adelaide University is having difficulties maintaining higher degree research enrolments. From 1997 to 1999, research higher degree enrolments declined from 1368 to 1340. (Adelaide University, 1999) The Academic Structures Working Party identified a number of other concerns about the quality of the University's higher degree programs, These concerns included organisational impediments to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, and the need for more consistent resource allocation. (Adelaide University, 2000a; 2000b)

Thirdly, what might be termed "the traditional or conventional" PhD program in Australia has been challenged by development of professional doctorates, flexible forms of delivery such as off-campus or remote programs, and the proliferation of knowledge through sub-specialities, cross disciplinary and applied research. Higher degree candidates are far more diverse in terms of age, sex, enrolment status, and geographic origin than ever before, and this diversity is not always reflected in the profile of those staff who supervise higher degree students.

The University needs to respond to these challenges in a positive and constructive manner. It needs to develop an organisational structure and programs to improve the education environment to attract and support postgraduate research and postgraduate coursework students.

In this submission the PGSA will make a number of recommendations that we believe will assist the University to ensure that its higher degree research programs are of the highest quality, and provide a rewarding and career enhancing experience for higher degree students. These recommendations are listed in the next section, and are discussed in more detail under each of the terms of reference.

Recommendations

- R1. The University clearly articulate those attributes and generic skills that graduates obtain from its higher degree research program. We believe that this will assist graduates in obtaining professional positions. In our view these attributes should include:
- advanced analytical and problem solving skills,
 - project management skills;
 - knowledge of research methodologies and their application;
 - capacity to undertake critical analysis of literature, research and experimental results;
 - capacity to use a range of research tools and information technologies;
 - ability to think creatively and imaginatively; and
 - ability to present research and results clearly to a wide range of audiences.
- R2. The pursuit of new knowledge and the capacity to conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality must remain a defining characteristic of the PhD program.
- R3. The University provide a program of skills development to ensure that graduates of research programs are in a position to obtain employment in a wide range of settings.
- R4. The University establish more structured supervision arrangements, where each student has a Principal Supervisor and at least one Co-Supervisor.
- R5. The University put in place procedures and incentives to encourage more experienced supervisors to undertake staff development.
- R6. That workshops be developed and provided for staff on supervising remote students, working with research students with disabilities, and cross cultural issues in supervision
- R7. That Departments are required to provide students with more detailed statements on their base standards of supervision.
- R8. Develop detailed guidelines on the content of the Structured Program to ensure that students are given support in writing literature reviews, establishing a research methodology and preparing the research proposal. Department should be given support to assist them to appropriately design and deliver their Structured Programs.
- R9. Provide Skills Programs to assist research students at the intermediate and final stages of their candidature.
- R10. That the University give consideration to the development of certificate, diploma and Masters programmes that can be taken by PhD students to enhance their skills in closely related fields, multidisciplinary areas, and for career enhancement.
- R11. That the University develop a policy for ensuring consistent standards for the assessment and award of honours grades.
- R12. That the University increase its pool of scholarships to attract more interstate and overseas candidates and to ensure the University does not lose high quality candidates to other institutions.

- R13. That the University ensure that all departmental webpages provide accurate and detailed information on:
- Areas of staff interests in teaching and research;
 - On-going research projects;
 - Lists of staff publications;
 - Staff available for supervision;
 - Topics available for research;
 - Resources available;
 - List of research topics completed in the department;
 - List of presently enrolled higher degree students and their topics.
- R14. That the University adopt a Statement of Minimum Resources for higher degree research students, based on the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations guidelines.
- R15. That the University include in its budgets for renovation and organisational restructuring, budget lines to compensate higher degree students for any delays caused.
- R16. That the University set a clear time frame for the establishment of the Graduate School, with a specific deadline for the location of the Graduate School in a distinct location or Centre.
- R17. That the Graduate School be funded from central budget lines and no monies be diverted from departmental and faculty budgets.
- R18. That departmental office space, laboratory space and facilities be maintained at appropriate levels to house postgraduate students.
- R19. That postgraduate coursework students and postgraduate coursework degrees come under the quality assurance framework of the Graduate School.

Terms of Reference

1. The educational principles that should underpin the design of the higher degree by research programme.

In addressing this term of reference, the PGSA believes that it is crucial to consider the purpose and objectives of postgraduate education. Traditionally, PhD and Masters by Research programmes have been concerned with preparing candidates to undertake research in a particular specialisation. The distinction between PhD and Masters by Research programmes have centred on such questions as the level of originality contained in the thesis and the capacity of a candidate to undertake research independently. This view is encapsulated in the definitions contained in the University's *Code of Practice* for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Degrees.¹ According to the *Code of Practice*, a Masters degree candidate will demonstrate:

- A thorough understanding of the techniques and methodologies in their field;
- Demonstrated competence in the field through the application of an appropriate methodology to yield meaningful results;
- Demonstrated capacity to evaluate these results critically; and
- Ability to present a clear and well-written thesis. (*Code of Practice*, p. 1)

Doctoral candidates are expected to:

... conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality. By the end of the candidature the student ought to be capable of conceiving, designing and carrying to completion a research program without supervision. The PhD student should uncover new knowledge by discovering new facts, the formulation of theories, or the innovative reinterpretation of known data and established ideas. (*Code of Practice*, p.1)

This model and set of objectives with its emphasis on preparing candidates to conduct and produce research, especially new knowledge, has in many respects provided a successful vehicle for preparing candidates for research careers. Moreover, and this is often overlooked in the current policy debates, research higher degree students produce a significant proportion of Australian university research.

Research by Powles (1984) found that postgraduate students contribute 43% of the total time spent on university research. More recently, the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Education has estimated that research students carry out between 65% and 70% of university research, and around 25-30% of publications have postgraduate research student as one of the authors. (Siddle, 1997)

Siddle (1997) also estimates that around one third of graduating PhD students continue in research as postdoctoral fellows or in research positions, that a further third had until that time obtained academic positions, around 20% find employment in industry, and 12% employment in government positions.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the focus of postgraduate research education has come into question. The Minister's White Paper argued that higher degree research programs were:

too narrow, too specialised and too theoretical leading to graduates whose communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills require further development. (Kemp, 1999a)

The Ministerial Green Paper suggested that postgraduate research education needed to be broadened to provide a greater focus on the broader range of skills needed by graduates to accommodate a diverse range of employment destinations. (Kemp 1999b)

¹ Hereafter referred to as the *Code of Practice*.

We note that other commentators have suggested that the PhD graduates lack skills required for employment outside of universities and require “supplementary training” in leadership skills, teamwork and the ability to view issues holistically. (Clark, 1996) Higher degree research students are also very conscious of restrictions in the traditional job markets for research degrees, in particular academic careers. Increasingly, they are seeking a qualification that will enable them to develop professional skills that are transferable to a range of professional positions.

In our view, however, it is important to adopt a balanced perspective on this debate. Many postgraduate research students have excellent communication and presentation skills, and the completion of their research has required significant levels of initiative and project management skills. Many postgraduate students are involved in research that requires interaction with industry, government departments and community organisations. These students can only undertake their research successfully by developing and maintaining professional relationships with external organisations and their staff.

We should also not forget that higher education institutions and industry continue to require graduates with high quality research experience and skills. Moreover, research higher degree study represents one of the few spaces open for people within our community to pursue research unimpeded by specific interests of industry and governments. This space needs to be protected and fostered.

The PGSA argues that we need to clearly articulate, and build on, the qualities provided by current postgraduate research programs, but to do so in a way that does not reduce the ability of postgraduate students to undertake research and develop their research skills. The PGSA would support, either through a structured set of workshops or specific coursework, a program of skills development to ensure that graduates of research programs successfully obtain these attributes. The details of such a program are discussed more fully under Term of Reference 2.

Recommendations

The PGSA therefore recommends that:

- R1. The University clearly articulate those attributes and generic skills that graduates obtain from its higher degree research program. We believe that this will assist graduates in obtaining professional positions. In our view these attributes should include:
 - advanced analytical and problem solving skills;
 - project management skills;
 - knowledge of research methodologies and their application;
 - capacity to undertake critical analysis of literature, research and experimental results;
 - capacity to use a range of research tools and information technologies;
 - ability to think creatively and imaginatively; and
 - ability to present research and results clearly to a wide range of audiences.
- R2. The pursuit of new knowledge and the capacity to conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality must remain a defining characteristic of the PhD program.
- R3. The University should provide a program of skills development to ensure that graduates of research programs are in a position to obtain employment in a wide range of settings.

2. The appropriateness of learning and research training processes within the higher degree by research programme, in relation to University and Government objectives and priorities.

The *Code of Practice* provides the framework for the oversight of the University's research higher degree program. In this section we will discuss the effectiveness of the *Code of Practice* against the four areas identified in the Minister's White Paper as areas of concern: supervision: departmental support and infrastructure, completion rates and times, and the need to improve the employment related skills of research degree graduates.

2.1 Supervision

Supervision is a key factor in determining both the quality of research higher degree programs and successful completion rates. In general, most students at Adelaide University receive professional and valued support from their supervisors. However, there are still a significant number of students who do experience problems with supervision. Even those students who indicate that their overall experience is satisfactory can point to elements of their supervisor's practice that can be improved. We will discuss levels of student satisfaction in more detail under Term of Reference 5.

In our view there are a number of policies and procedures that can be put in place that will enhance and improve the quality of supervision at Adelaide University.

A. Structured Supervision Arrangements

There is a wide range of supervision arrangements currently in place at Adelaide University. These include sole supervision, co-supervision and joint supervision. The results of the 1993-94 exit surveys returned by higher degree research students who complete or withdraw from their candidature found that over half (53.5%) of the respondents had sole supervision, while a third (33.1%) had joint supervision, with the remaining 13.5% co-supervised. (Hejka, 1995)

The PGSA believes that quality of supervision received by students would be greatly enhanced by moving away from sole supervision and adopting across the board more structured arrangements such as co-supervision or supervision panels. Our view is supported by research on PhD student views of supervision at the Australian National University (ANU), by Cullen *et al* (1994), which found that:

... students receiving supervision from more than one supervisor indicated higher levels of satisfaction. The survey results also indicate that students distinguish between the level and quality of supervision provided by their individual supervisors, and the overall quality of supervision which they received from all individual and institutional sources. The single most important determinant of satisfaction with overall supervision was not satisfaction with the efforts of individual supervisors, but the size of the active supervisory panel. Students receiving regular supervision from more than one supervisor indicated higher levels of satisfaction with overall supervision. (p.47.)

There are a number of arguments in favour of co-supervision: firstly, it ensures that students receive continuity of supervision throughout their candidature. When one supervisor is ill, on leave, away on conferences, study leave, or moves to another institution or retires, there is another supervisor who had been working with the student from the commencement of their candidature. It also minimises the danger of dependence on one person and of personality clashes. (Moses, 1984)

Secondly, it allows students to draw on the skills and expertise of a number of staff members. One supervisor maybe stronger in developing broader theoretical perspectives, while the other able to assist a student with detailed criticism. One supervisor may have a stronger knowledge of specific techniques or methodologies, while the other may be able to direct a student to funding sources, conferences and be more attuned to the administrative requirements of the University.

Thirdly, more structured supervision can assist supervisors. Supervisors can obtain support from a colleague when considering critical issues such as the selection of the topic and adoption of the research methodology. Less experienced supervisors, in particular, are able to draw on the experience of a more experienced colleague. (Holloway and Walker, 2000, p. 37)

We note that some commentators are critical of joint or co-supervision. Phillips and Pugh (2000) for example argue that problems associated with joint supervision include diffusion of responsibility, conflicting advice, and lack of overall academic view. However, we believe that these problems can be minimised or overcome by ensuring that one of the supervisors is given the role of principal supervisor with the responsibility of coordination of communication. This role and responsibility is already contained in the *Code of Practice*. (Clause 4.2, Part I). At Flinders University one principal supervisor and up to two co-supervisors are appointed for each higher degree candidate. (See Appendix A).

B. Development Programs for Supervisors

Supervision is a complex teaching and mentoring role. Connell (1985) argues that it is one of the most advanced teaching tasks. The complexity of the role, and the need to balance communication and interpersonal skills, with the transfer of knowledge and research skills is evident from the list of qualities and attributes associated with good supervision. For example, Powles (1989), citing the literature, reports the following characteristics of good supervision. She writes that according to students, 'good' supervisors:

... guide while encouraging independence; they are positive, interested in and encouraging about the students' intellectual enterprise; they provide stimulation through their own involvement in research in the student's and related field and through regular critical feedback on work done; they encourage frequent contact and achievement of timelines throughout the enrolment period; they are aware of personal problems and know where to refer students in times of crisis. (p.96)

Yet many supervisors have never received any formal staff development in this complex of pedagogical practices. In the absence of any formal training, supervisors tend to reflect on their own experience as research students. In doing so they tend to replicate what they perceive as successful practice or react against their own experiences of poor supervision (Cullen *et al* 1994, p. 67) Unfortunately this is a very narrow set of experiences to reflect on such a demanding role.

The Advisory Centre for University Education currently organises supervision development for novice supervisors. (ACUE, 2001) In our experience, it is new supervisors and dedicated supervisors who are more open to seeking assistance, reflecting on their own practice and willing to learn who attend such workshops. The PGSA is concerned that academic staff who have been supervising for many years assume that they are qualified supervisors when this is not necessarily the case. The University needs to put in place procedures and incentives to encourage more experienced supervisors to undertake staff development. One possible mechanism that the University could consider is linking staff development for supervisors to a system of accreditation. New supervisors would need to complete a program of staff development in order to be registered as a supervisor, and more experienced supervisors could be required to undertake "refresher courses." The University of South Australia has adopted a Register of Research Degree Supervisors identifies persons who are qualified to be appointed as Principal Supervisors (see Appendix B). This could be linked to membership of a Graduate School. The US Council of Graduate Schools (1990) argues that one of the advantages of a separate graduate school is that:

...it provides a specific review process aimed at ensuring that only well-qualified faculty members are involved in graduate programs. (p.21)

Given the growing diversity of the higher degree population we also believe that workshops should also be offered on subjects such as supervising remote students, working with research students with disabilities, and cross cultural issues in supervision.

C. Monitoring of Supervision

The PGSA is concerned about the lack of effective monitoring of supervision at the Faculty and Departmental level. The PGSA receives a number of complaints each year (as we shall discuss in detail under Term of Reference 5) that would be avoided by greater diligence on the part of departments. Two areas stand out. Firstly, departments need to give greater attention to the frequency of interaction between supervisors and students. Secondly, alternative supervision arrangements need to be put in place more quickly (with due consultation with the students concerned) when supervisors are absent from a department, retire, transfer or take on roles that reduce their interaction with the department.

By its very nature the *Code of Practice* tends to be broad rather than a prescriptive document due to its coverage of a wide range of discipline settings and departmental administrative structures. However, for students who experiencing difficulties, this lack of specificity can create problems. The *Code of Practice* provides very little guidance on even relatively straightforward question such as the frequency of meetings between student and supervisor, the turn around time for a piece of written work. The recent Review of the Adelaide Law School raised similar concerns. The Review Committee found that

... there did not appear to be effective policies to ensure base standards of supervision, contact between supervisor and student, and so on. We note that procedures of this kind are important in actively encouraging new research students, as well as in managing existing ones and ensuring appropriate standards of supervision. (Adelaide University, 2000d, p.22)

Recommendations

The PGSA recommends that:

- R4. The University establish more structured supervision arrangements, where each student has a Principal Supervisor and at least one Co-Supervisor.
- R5. The University put in place procedures and incentives to encourage more experienced supervisors to undertake staff development.
- R6. That workshops be developed and provided for staff on supervising remote students, working with research students with disabilities, and cross cultural issues in supervision
- R7. Departments are required to provide students with more detailed statements on their base standards of supervision.

2.2 Departmental support and infrastructure

The *Code of Practice* requires departments to provide higher degree research students with a written statement outlining the availability of departmental facilities, equipment and financial support for student research. (Clause 2.1.2, Part II) There are two weaknesses with this policy.

Lack of compliance. In some departments students do not receive a written statement, and in some cases, students receive no information. Many international and interstate students would prefer to receive this information when they are considering their choice of institution.

Lack of a minimum standard. The Policy provides no guidance on what should be a minimum standard of facilities and resources. There are considerable variations in the provision of resources and basic facilities between departments even in similar fields.

We will address the question of adequate departmental support and infrastructure, and make a number of recommendations to rectify these concerns under Term of Reference 5.

2.3 Completion rates and times

As Margaret Powles (1989) indicates there are many interrelated personal and institutional factors that contribute to lengthy completion times and non-completion. Institutional factors that contribute to lengthy completion times include poor quality of supervision (see recommendations R4 to R7), and lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure.

The Structured Program

Adelaide University has also sought to improve the completion times of its higher degree students through the adoption of a structured program in the first year of the PhD. In some departments, masters by research students also undertake the structured program. The stated purpose of the Structured Program is to ensure that all students have the necessary knowledge and skills to adequately complete their research program within a reasonable time. Individual Departments are encouraged to develop programs that suit the specific requirements of research students in their discipline. (ACUE, 2001) It is also a mandatory requirement for Doctoral students to successfully complete the structured program before they can continue into the second year of candidature. (*Code of Practice*, Clause 2.2, Part II)

Unfortunately there are a number of limitations to the Structured Program. Firstly, there is considerable variability in the quality of the programs organised by departments. While there are a number of departments that run very good programs, we are aware of other departments where the program does not provide a good grounding for students in the necessary organisational, technical and research skills required of commencing a research higher degree. We are aware of departments where postgraduate students have been asked to organise their own program.

The second weakness is that often the focus of the program is on setting requirements for students (such as the completion of a literature review and research proposal). The PGSA does not dispute the value of setting these requirements. Our concern is that for some structured programs, apart from an orientation to staff and facilities in the department, these requirements are in effect the entire program. There are no workshops designed to actually assist students to write a literature review, develop a research proposal, establish a methodology, or to bring students rapidly up to speed on relevant research and library tools. (To illustrate the considerable variation in the quality of programs, two structured programs are attached in Appendices C and D).

In addition to the structured program, students require support at the intermediate and writing up stages of their research. The ACUE currently organises a number of thesis writing workshops. These workshops could be expanded to form the basis of an intermediate research skills program for higher degree students at Adelaide University, by bringing together the staff and resources of the ACUE, IT Services, and contracting services from Professional and Continuing Education. Such a program could include models on thesis writing, how to give academic presentations (conferences and seminars), writing for publication, IT skill development (e.g word processing for lengthy documents), tutor training and teaching workshops, and technical skill development (e.g statistical analysis).

Recommendations

The PGSA recommends that the University:

- R8. Develop detailed guidelines on the content of the Structured Program to ensure that students are given support in writing literature reviews, establishing a research methodology and preparing the research proposal. Department should be given support to assist them to appropriately design and deliver their Structured Programs.
- R9. Provide Skills Programs to assist research students at the intermediate and final stages of their candidature.

2.4. Employment Related Skills

As discussed under Term of Reference 1, the PGSA supports the development of programs that will assist research students to develop professional skills and enhance their career prospects. However, we would caution against the development of programs based on narrow conceptions of research student skills and needs. Postgraduate students require professional development programs that are integrated with discipline specific requirements, and are based on an awareness of career paths in different fields of study. Failure to do this could result in programs that have a limited value for students in some fields of research. In addition in designing professional development program, there needs to be an awareness of the time constraints on students and the pressure to complete within four years. Finally, we wish to stress that professional development programs should be provided free of charge for students.

From our contact with our membership the following areas of professional development would be beneficial for research students, and would meet industry concerns about the interpersonal and communication skills of PhD graduates.

- Project management skills: this should include the design of project briefs, setting goals and time management, and preparing budgets. Development of these skills could be linked to the structured program and the preparation of research proposals.
- Interpersonal skills: including supervising staff and negotiation skills. Cross-cultural training and awareness would also be useful area of professional development.
- Communication skills: this should include skills in public speaking and making academic presentations. Courses on writing theses, reports and grant applications would also be very popular.
- Professional skills: especially in the areas of research ethics, Occupational Health & Safety, and IP and the commercialisation of research.
- IT skills: there is an enormous demand from students to upgrade and maintain IT skills.

The University of Melbourne provides a good model for this type of program - the Advanced Leadership and Professional Skills Program - organised by the Graduate Centre. This program is specifically aimed at providing postgraduate students with the skills to facilitate their transition to employment. This program contains specific modules on leadership, running a consultancy, managing workplace culture, multimedia development in academia and industry, academic career development; and the commercialisation of intellectual property. (University of Melbourne, 2001)

3. The structure, organisation, content and overall quality of the programme, including supervision and student support mechanisms.

We have addressed the overall quality of the University's higher degree programme under Terms of Reference 2 and 5. The organization of higher degree programmes is addressed under Term of Reference 6. In this term of reference we will focus on the structure and content of the programme, in particular the question of the inclusion of coursework in research higher degree programs. Coursework is an integral aspect of doctoral programmes in North America, where students complete a number of years of coursework before proceeding to research and the dissertation.

Coursework in doctoral programmes in Australia is relatively recent phenomenon. In 1989 there were only two professional doctoral programmes. The same year, the *Review of Australian Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees* recommended the introduction, initially through pilot programs, of professional doctorates in the fields of Engineering, Accounting, Law, Education and Nursing. (NBEET, 1989, p. 32) Following this recommendation, there has been a slow but steady growth in the number of research-coursework doctoral programmes in Australia. Trigwell *et al* (1997) report that by 1996 there were 47 professional coursework-research doctoral programmes. They also indicate that there are a few PhD programmes that contain coursework.

In professional doctorates, coursework serves three major purposes. Firstly, the coursework subjects are specifically designed to develop candidate's knowledge and skills in research methodologies as preparation for the research and dissertation. The second reason is related to professional practice. Coursework provides an opportunity to examine issues related to the profession, to broaden candidates understanding and knowledge of the profession. The third reason relates to content expertise, and here coursework subjects present more advanced material not included in undergraduate qualifications, to ensure that candidates are academically familiar with their area of research. It is also argued that the structure and content of doctoral programmes is a major reason for their appeal to candidates. The coursework allows for more flexibility, and gives candidates more structured feedback. The focus on professional practice and orientation towards practical problem solving is seen as more relevant to the career aspirations of candidates already in professional practice. (Trigwell *et al*, 1997).

As we discussed in the introduction there are concern that the PhD is no longer adequately preparing graduates for professional employment, and that employers would like to see PhD graduate with improved teamwork, leadership and communication skills. This has raised questions about the possibility of inclusion of coursework in the PHD (Kemp, 1999b). Former Adelaide University Vice-Chancellor D R Stranks argued this more than a decade ago. (Stranks, 1984) Current DETYA guidelines allow up to one third of a doctoral programme to be coursework

Our view is that the inclusion of some coursework into the PhD would benefit students and improve the quality of programme. The Structured Program could be formalized and enhanced to become a research methodology course. Students could also broaden their knowledge through advanced coursework, and undertake subjects to enhance their employment prospects. Our concern is that the constraints on PhD students, in particular, the requirements for timely completion (students are now told they should complete within three years), largely preclude formal coursework in the PhD program. For this reason we recommend that the focus should be on a series of skills workshops and on improving the structured program. (See R3, R8, and R9).

It may be more feasible for the University to develop coursework programmes to complement or articulate with the PhD. This would be in line with some recent developments in the US where a number of universities have considered modifications to add more academic content to their doctoral programmes. These have included minors or certificate programmes in closely related to fields to the dissertation (e.g computer science for physical science students), opportunities for multidisciplinary study and electives in broad but related areas, and courses and certificate programmes in what seem at a first glance as unrelated areas (e.g journalism and business courses for science students). (LaPidus,1997)

We do not wish to give definite recommendations, but some suggestions that the University may wish to explore are:

(a) developing a number of professional doctorates with a clear distinction between the PhD with its focus on research-careers and Professional Doctorates with their emphasis on research combined with advance professional education. This would give students the option of pursuing a more professionally focused qualification.

(b) developing coursework masters that provide students with both professional skills and preparation for undertaking research, that are carefully articulated to a PhD program. The idea would be to allow students to develop their proposal, methodology and possibly their literature review as part of the assessment for research methodology subject within the coursework masters. Students would then commence their PhD program, with a professional qualification to their name, and would have already completed the requirements of the structured program.

(c) developing coursework certificates/diplomas that could be piggybacked or articulated with PhD programs. Students could then obtain specific skills or multi-disciplinary knowledge that would complement and enhance the specialised knowledge they will receive from their PhD. To assist students seeking Academic careers one of the programmes considered should be a graduate certificate/diploma in tertiary teaching.

Recommendation

R10. That the University give consideration to the development of certificate, diploma and Masters programmes that can be taken by PhD students to enhance their skills in closely related fields, multidisciplinary areas, and for career enhancement.

4. The type of recruitment strategies and selection processes utilised by the University.

4.1 Adelaide University Honours programmes. Australian students tend to be less mobile than students in North America and the UK. As a result many students undertake their research higher degrees at the same University they completed undergraduate and honours qualifications. Adelaide University is no different in this regard to other Australian universities. For this reason it is crucial that the University ensures that its honours programmes provide students with the best possible preparation for higher degree research. Secondly, given that the awarding of the honours grade is so critical to the gaining entry into higher degree research and the awarding of scholarships, the University must ensure that the assessment of honours is transparent, and consistent and equitable across the University. Recent media coverage of an investigation by the NSW Ombudsman into the awarding of a first class honours degree to the relative of a senior bureaucrat at Sydney University highlights the importance of developing transparent and consistent assessment procedures for honours. (Spenser, 2001)

The PGSA has received reports from honours students of concerns about departments and disciplines with very different approaches to the awarding of first class honours, with some departments awarding high percentage of firsts on a regular basis with others restricting firsts to very few students each year. This anecdotal evidence is supported by preliminary data presented by the Academic Board Working Party on the Comparability of Honours Standards, which found that considerable variation in the awarding of first class honours by field of study. The Working Party found that the proportion of First class honours varied from 20% for economic and commerce, to 32% for Arts, and up to 48% for maths sciences and health science. (Adelaide University, 2000e)

Recommendation

R11. That the University develop a policy for ensuring consistent standards for the assessment and award of honours grades.

4.2 Interstate and overseas recruitment. In terms of attracting more interstate and overseas candidates the University needs to do more to improve the quality of information it provides on its higher degree programs and the research projects available. More than fifteen years ago Moses (1984) indicated the importance of the provision of accurate information to facilitate student selection of a supervisor or a research area.

The University also needs to increase the number of scholarships it offers. The reality is that prospective students, who are in a position to move between universities, tend to apply to a number of institutions. Creating a larger pool of scholarships will improve Adelaide University's ability to attract these students, it will also ensure that Adelaide University does not lose high quality candidates to other institutions.

Recommendations

R12. That the University increase its pool of scholarships to attract more interstate and overseas candidates and to ensure the University does not lose high quality candidates to other institutions.

R13. That the University ensure that all departmental webpages provide accurate and detailed information on:

- Areas of staff interests in teaching and research;
- On-going research projects;
- Lists of staff publications;
- Staff available for supervision;
- Topics available for research;
- Resources available;
- List of research topics completed in the department;
- List of presently enrolled higher degree students and their topics.

4.3 Pre-candidature information and counselling

Each year we received a small number of telephone calls from students who have not applied for scholarships by the due date who have found out only late in the day that they will be receiving a first class honours and could have applied. The PGSA is concerned that there are suitable candidates for higher degree research who are not sufficiently encouraged to pursue this option during their honours year. We believe that these problems may be reduced through the provision of more information to honours students about research and scholarship opportunities.

The PGSA through our casework has assisted a number of PhD students who have experienced severe problems during their candidature and have either withdrawn or had their candidature terminated withdrawing without receiving a qualification. In these cases it may have been far better for these students to undertake a masters degree or more structured qualification such as a masters by coursework. In our view, departments need to provide prospective candidates with more information about the expectations and requirements of a PhD prior to enrolment.

5. Student and graduate satisfaction with the academic programme offered by the University.

In the literature on postgraduate education, there are a number of studies that have investigated student dissatisfaction with the quality of supervision and institutional support. Many of the early studies conducted in the 1980s found that between 20% and 30% of students were dissatisfied with the supervision and support they received. (Moses, 1984 and the references therein)

In her study of higher degree students at the University of Queensland, Moses (1984) identifies the range of problems experienced by students. She found that 29% of students were not satisfied with aspects of their supervision. A 1984 survey of University Melbourne PhD students reported by Powles (1988) found that about two-thirds of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their supervision. In terms of dissatisfaction, she reports that 17% of PhD candidates were “not satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with their supervision.

Since the studies of Moses and Powles there has been a concerted effort across the higher education system and, in particular, at Adelaide University to establish a more regulated and supportive environment for higher degree research students. At this University we have seen the adoption of the *Code of Practice*, grievance procedures, and the structured program.

It is therefore instructive to establish whether this has improved the level of student satisfaction with supervision and institutional support. The recently conducted Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ), received responses from 2253 postgraduates enrolled at 35 Australian and 1 New Zealand institutions in the financial year 1998 to 1999. The survey found that 83.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “overall, I was satisfied with the quality of my higher degree research experience.” In terms of dissatisfaction, 6.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. (Ainsley, 2001, p.11)

Comparing the system wide response to the responses from students at the University of Adelaide to this question, we find that the results are remarkable similar. Eighty three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the question, while 6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In terms of specific questions – the strongest areas of dissatisfaction at Adelaide University were as follows:

- opportunities for involvement in broader research culture (22%);
- delays in thesis examination (21%);
- financial support for research activities (20%);
- guidance with the literature search (20%);
- and research ambience of department/faculty (20%) (Adelaide University, 2001)

These results suggest that there has been an improvement in student satisfaction. However, there needs to be some degree of caution exercised here, and certainly there is no room for complacency. Firstly, there are areas where around one in five students expressed dissatisfaction, and this is not acceptable in any ones terms. Secondly, the problems experience by research students can be prevented with improvements in supervision practice, departmental resources and facilities, and student support services. Making these improvements will not only improve student satisfaction it will improve completion times and in some circumstances enable students to finish their higher degrees.

From inquiries and complaints received by the PGSA, we can identify three major sources of student dissatisfaction with the University’s support for higher degree research students. These are discussed below.

5.1 Supervision

The PGSA is aware of supervisors who meet with their higher degree students only once or twice a year. We are also aware of supervisors who are no longer at the University but have been retained on the panel of supervisors (in some instances the principle supervisor) by Departments. In some cases these supervisors have not maintained regular communication with the students concerned. The *Code of Practice* clearly states that supervisor is responsible for “maintaining close and regular contact with the student”. (Clause 2.4.7, Part I) The University needs to monitor the levels of supervision more closely. As the current President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee, has commented, in the new environment created by the White paper we should “... not expect to see reports of rare and random contacts between supervisor and student” (Chubb, 2000, p.19)

We are also aware of PhD students who do have regular contact with their supervisors, but the staff members concerned are so overworked and stressed that the meetings are short or perfunctory. These students do not receive in-depth intellectual discussion and guidance about their research or thesis, and in some case receive directions that cause unnecessary delays.

The PGSA has received reports from a small number of students with supervisors who have not been willing or conscientious enough to read their thesis. This is despite the fact that the *Code of Practice* requires supervisors to comment on the content and draft of the thesis, and to certify prior to submission that the thesis is prima facie worthy of examination. (Clause 2.4.12, Part I)

Our recommendations addressing these concerns are discussed under Term of Reference 2.

5.2 Resources, space and infrastructure

The provision of resources, infrastructure, and office facilities for postgraduate students is a perennial problem for research students. The analysis of the 1993-94 Postgraduate Exit Surveys found that 41.7% of respondents reported limitations in carrying out their research. The most frequent reasons given were equipment/technical problems, and lack of information/resources (Hejka, 1995, pp. 19-21)

The PGSA is currently conducting a survey of departmental resources and facilities. We have yet to compile the results, but we can report receiving comments from a significant number of respondents, who indicated that they experienced delays due to difficulties associated with resources or facilities. Some of these comments have been included below to illustrate the problems experienced by research students.

Lack of Equipment/Resources or Equipment failure

Students complaint to the PGSA about lengthy delays caused by unreliable equipment or equipment breakdown. These delays can be as much as 6 to 12 months over the course of a student’s candidature.

[My] research was delayed for almost a year in some projects due to the down-time on the mass spectrometer. This is difficult to avoid, however, as the instrument is characteristically unreliable, and break downs have been common occurrences. (PhD student, Physical Sciences)

Some equipment in department is very old and unreliable (since removed) which resulted in ongoing assays having to be set up on equipment in other departments. Using equipment in other departments equaled further problems as that equipment was sent interstate for “repairs/service”. Now using equipment at Flinders Uni. (PhD student, Health Sciences)

My first year was delayed due to a lack of growth cabinets. Experiments were held up for at least six months because of this reason. (PhD Student, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences)

I have spent a lot of time seeking resources outside the university/department. (PhD Student, Health Sciences)

Computers

We receive numerous complaints from students with concerns about lack of adequate computer facilities. Often students have to struggle with inadequate computers for years or are forced to purchase their own computers in order to undertake their studies.

Computer resources have been very limited until a couple of months ago. Now there is a vast improvement. However, for the main part of my candidature I suffered from lack of computer access. A major frustration that postgraduates in my department lobbied for 3 years to change. (PhD student, Health Sciences)

I had to wait 1.5 years to get an adequate computer. (PhD student, Engineering)

The inability of the department to provide a decent computer was definitely a considerable delay to the progression of my work. I was forced to purchase my own computer as the one I eventually received was 10 years old, really (and I mean exceptionally) debilitatingly slow and crashed all the time. (PhD student, Humanities)

Difficulties acquiring lab/work space

We are aware of students without adequate office space or laboratory space. In some cases students experience lengthy delays due to negotiations with departments or other research groups.

Acquiring even small lengths of bench space for equipment or work in 'communal' labs is very difficult. Other research groups touchy about use of their equipment, sometimes off-limits entirely. Impact has been delays while negotiations are held. Estimated loss of time around 2 months. (PhD student, Health Sciences).

It has taken me 6 months to get a decent work space in which I can be productive. I have spent a lot of my own money to become productive thanks to my scholarship as my department has very limited resources. (PhD student, Social Sciences and Humanities)

We are aware of a significant minority of students who study from home due to lack of adequate resources and office space.

Building Renovations and Departmental Moves

In the last year or so students in a few departments have also found themselves attempting to research and study while major building renovations have occurred. These renovations have resulted in major disruptions to the productivity of the student affected as can be seen from the following comment:

I was greatly delayed and disrupted during the renovations of X Building. I was without lab facilities for months, restricted at other times. In general we have a profound lack of appropriate equipment – consequences of many years of inadequate funding. (PhD student, Biological Sciences)

While some students have received extensions to scholarships and candidature, compensation has not been made available to students who have already received scholarship and candidature extensions for other reasons. Students in this situation feel very aggrieved, as the delays have been the direct result of University initiatives outside of their control. Students in the early stages of candidature have been told they must wait until the end of their scholarships and candidature before applying for extensions, leaving them quiet anxious about their completion times.

A number of departments in recent years have moved building and campuses, also resulting in delays for research students. For example:

Move of department 60 km north left the department "packed up" for months. After shift no critical mass of staff and students left in the department. Facilities took months to organise and get back to some state of normality. (PhD Student, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences)

Difficulties working between departments/labs/campuses

In addition, we have complaints from student undertaking multi-disciplinary research who report being caught between departments with neither willing to take full responsibility for providing students with appropriate facilities and resources. Something, which should be relatively simple, as providing after hours access, if denied to a student because they are not considered a member of one of the departments can cause severe disruptions to a student.

During the first 3 years of my candidature I was required to work between department A and department B. As after hours access was not permitted in department B this affected work progress. Also shifting buildings in the middle of [my] 2nd year [caused delays]. (PhD student, Biological Sciences)

Lack of Transparency

Student contact the PGSA on a regular basis reporting that they are unable to find out what resources, facilities or funding they are entitled to. Other students report a lack of clear procedures for requesting resources or funding. In some cases, students only find out about their entitlements mid-way through their candidature, and are told that allocation from earlier years has already been spent by the department on other purposes.

The PGSA believes that the adoption of a **statement of minimum resources and facilities**. This standard would address many of the concerns raised by students. It would ensure that students were fully informed of their entitlements, and would establish benchmarks against which departments would need to comply. Moreover, it will provide prospective students with information on what level of resources they can expect from Adelaide University, and therefore allow them to make informed choices when selecting departments and universities. Students have the right to know what facilities and resources will be available, and that these resources and facilities will be adequate to support them throughout their research.

The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations has developed a Statement of Minimum Resources and a summary of this statement can be found in Appendix E. We recommend that this statement should be the starting point for the development of a formal statement on research student resources at Adelaide University.

Recommendations

R14. That the University adopt a Statement of Minimum Resources for higher degree research students, based on the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations guidelines.

R15. That the University include in its budgets for renovation and organisational restructuring, budget lines to compensate higher degree students for any delays caused.

5.3 Support and Administrative Services

At the end of 1999, the University implemented a restructuring of its central administrative services. The PGSA believes that this restructuring has been detrimental to the provision of quality services for higher degree students. The shift of the Scholarship Office away from Graduate Studies is not conducive to the coordination of scholarship and candidature administration. In addition, the PGSA receives many inquiries from students who are unable to obtain assistance with presentation skills (seminars and conferences), statistical advice (survey design and analysis), as well as computing and IT assistance (SPSS, Word for large documents).

In our view there are major gaps in support services provided by the University, and a real need to improve the coordination of higher degree administration and the providers of support services. This coordination would be one of the major benefits of a Graduate School. (This is discussed more fully under Term of Reference 6).

6. An appropriate model for the support of quality assurance and the delivery of top quality programmes and services.

In November last year, the Academic Structures Working Party released a discussion paper in which it proposed the organisation of research higher degree programs within the framework of a graduate school. In its final report to the Vice-Chancellor, the Academic Structures Working Party formally recommended the establishment of a Graduate School. University Council has since adopted this recommendation. To quote the final report:

The Working Party wishes to recommend, at the level of principle, the establishment of a Graduate School with a distinct physical location. Recognising that this is unlikely to be achievable in the short term, however, we are nevertheless of the view that a physically dispersed Graduate School offers benefits in the areas such as consistency and quality assurance of supervision and the management of candidature, the development of a cost-effective and collaborative approach to some shared elements of a postgraduate programme, the potential for mentorship and the fostering of resource networks, and the facilitation of cross-disciplinary or inter-faculty research education.

A Graduate School could provide the framework for “general” courses such as intellectual property commercialisation and presentation skills, and might also provide a focus for social and student organised collective activities such as presentations of papers, debates, and various forms of cross-disciplinary interaction. A University-wide structure would also permit more effective advertising, recruitment and co-ordination of policy and information and would be a clear focal point for external approaches to the University from, for example, overseas governments and funding agencies. (Adelaide University, 2000c)

Graduates Schools have therefore become a major topic of discussion within the University community. One of the problems in this debate has been defining precisely what is meant by a Graduate School. Graduate Schools are only a recent development in Australia, and most staff and postgraduate students have no experience of working within a Graduate School structure.

From the literature, we know that while there is a long history of graduate schools in the US, there is also considerable variation in the structure of graduate schools, and that no two Universities graduate schools are the alike. The structure of graduate schools range from separate graduate institutions, distinct graduate faculties/schools to more devolved structures without a centralised graduate school. The common feature of nearly all US graduate schools is the presence of a Dean of Graduate Study (or equivalent position), and an agreed purpose or mission to define and support excellence in graduate education. (Poole and Spear, 1997)

According to the US Council of Graduate Schools, the role of a graduate school is to articulate a vision of excellence for the Graduate Community, and define the purpose of graduate education, and in particular, clarifying the difference between graduate and undergraduate education. A graduate school should establish policies that define good practice, ensure equity across disciplines and bring an institutional wide perspective to all graduate endeavours, support the non-academic endeavours of graduate students, emphasise the importance of graduate teaching, and enhance the intellectual community between students and staff. It should also serve as an advocate for graduate education, and in particular, advocating for issues critical for the success of graduate programs. (Council of Graduate Schools, 1990)

In sum, the defining feature of a graduate school is its purpose and mission – its commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of graduate education. There is a wide range of structures for graduate schools – ranging from very devolved operations to more highly centralised and distinct schools or faculties, which can support such a mission and purpose.

Having now agreed to establish a Graduate School, Adelaide University needs to now develop a School that complements its structures and ethos, while at the same time providing innovation to improve the quality of postgraduate education.

The PGSA has consulted widely with its membership about the proposal to establish a Graduate School. In general, there is support amongst postgraduate students for the establishment of a Graduate School/Centre as a framework and facility to improve services and support for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students have, however, expressed three concerns about a Graduate School:

1. There are concerns that a Graduate School may diminish the relationship between postgraduate students and their departments and supervisors. Postgraduate students fear that they may be located in a Graduate Centre or building some distance away from their departments, and that this will make it harder for them to maintain contact with supervisors and the academic culture in their departments.
2. Postgraduate students are concerned that a Graduate School may take funding and resources away from departments. In a tight budgetary environment they fear that this may lead to a diminution of support, facilities and resources for postgraduate students. They are also concerned that the establishment of limited facilities and resources in a Graduate Centre may “let departments off the hook” and that departments will relinquish or reduce their responsibilities to provide appropriate facilities and resources, and direct students to the Graduate Centre.
3. At the other end of the scale we have received feedback from postgraduate students concerned that the University will establish a Graduate School in name only. They are concerned that the University may use the term Graduate School to recruit more students without providing the necessary support services, development programs for students and staff, and without the commitment to quality assurance in postgraduate education.

At a number of points within this submission the submission the PGSA has referred to the need to provide better integration and coordination of administration and support services for postgraduate students. We have also called for greater attention to the development of staff involved in postgraduate education as well as programs to assist in the development of postgraduate student skills. In addition there needs to be a greater focus on quality assurance issues, and consistency of resource provision.

What structure should the University adopt for a Graduate School/Centre?

On balance, we support the establishment of a Graduate School. In our view, for a Graduate School to be an effective and vital element of the University, it must contain the following elements:

1. The Graduate School should have a mission to elevate the standard and quality of postgraduate education at the University. The Graduate School should develop, promote and facilitate these standards through policy development, quality assurance, the coordination of staff and student development, and the provision of resources and services.
2. Postgraduate students should be located in departments and schools to ensure close contact with supervisors, lecturers, experimental laboratories and classes. The role of the Graduate School is to promote, facilitate and ensure compliance with consistent and high standards of teaching, supervision and course delivery.
3. It should be located in its own building or in a clearly defined location. This will enable the Graduate School/Centre to house administrative and support services for postgraduate students, providing a 'one-stop-shop' for postgraduate inquiries and support, and improved coordination of services. The Graduate School/Centre will then become a focus for postgraduate students in need of support. Services that could be located in such a centre could include Graduate Studies, scholarship administration, postgraduate recruitment and

enrolment, and relevant study, research and professional skills support and training, and the PGSA.

4. It should act as a centre for excellence in supervision and postgraduate teaching. The Research Training Scheme has imposed more stringent requirements for higher degree research student completions, and it is incumbent on the University to provide appropriate staff development for supervisors and lecturers of postgraduate courses and awards.
5. The Graduate School/Centre should be responsible for the coordination and provision of career development and professional, research and study skills programs for postgraduate students. This is a crucial role given the Federal Government's focus on improved completion times and improved professional and career orientated skills. The Graduate School/Centre could act as the venue for these programs, and coordinate the training expertise in Professional and Continuing Education, the ACUE and the training section of IT services.
6. It should have sufficient resources to address gaps in the provision of departmental resources and facilities for postgraduate students.
7. A key role of Graduate School/Centre should be to assist and support multi-disciplinary postgraduate scholarship. It would also be in a position to promote a more dynamic postgraduate culture at the University through conferences and seminars, and public forums.
8. In sum, the Graduate School/Centre should be both the symbolic and practical representation of the University's commitment to postgraduate education. It will provide considerable support for existing students through improved services, training, staff development, resources, policy initiatives and quality assurance. Of equal importance, it will communicate to potential postgraduates, the community and other universities within Australia and overseas, the University's strong commitment to high quality postgraduate education. It will be a highly visible and tangible benefit the University can use to promote its postgraduate research and courses.

There are three major questions that need to be resolved in moving towards the establishment of the Graduate School.

1. Should postgraduate students be located in a Graduate School?

In our view, it makes no sense for postgraduate students to be separated from their departments and supervisors. It would diminish the level of contact between students and staff and isolate students from the academic culture of departments. In the case of students in experimental sciences, locating students in the Graduate School/Centre would separate their office facilities from their experiments.

The only situation where it may be appropriate to house postgraduate students in a Graduate School/Centre would be in the event that no space or facilities were available in department. The PGSA is aware of students in such circumstances, and we believe they would welcome space on campus to work. Such an arrangement would be considerably less isolating than working from home.

2. How will a Graduate School be funded?

The PGSA does not support the diversion of funding from departmental teaching and research towards the creation of a Graduate School. This would not only jeopardise the support and infrastructure provided by departments it would also put a risk the good will within the university community needed to support this change.

The creation of a Graduate School represents a major strategic opportunity for the University to address its weaknesses and enhance its strengths in the area of postgraduate education. For this reason we believe that the establishment of the Graduate School, including the refurbishment of

office space should be funded from central University budget lines such as the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Initiatives Fund.

3. Should postgraduate coursework students be included in the Graduate School?

While the question of postgraduate coursework education is outside the terms of reference for this review, we believe it needs to be considered as part of any set of recommendations related to the Graduate School. The PGSA believes that coursework students should be included in the Graduate School. Our reasons are summarised below:

- (a) **Common features of postgraduate awards.** All postgraduate qualifications require a student to have completed a first degree. In particular, there are significant areas of commonality shared by postgraduate coursework and research higher degree programs. Many coursework masters programs require an entry standard of an honours degree of IIA or better, which is equivalent to the entry requirements of higher degree research programs. Many coursework Masters degrees require a research component and thesis.
- (b) **Moves to introduce coursework into doctoral awards.** The introduction of professional doctorates with coursework content has tended to reduce the distinction between a research only doctorate and other postgraduate programs. It should be noted in Europe and North America, many PhD programs include advance coursework.
- (c) **Lack of policies and quality assurance.** The PGSA receives quite a number of complaints each year about the quality of the content and delivery of coursework degrees. It is compounded by the lack of policy regulation and specific quality assurance for postgraduate coursework awards. As a general rule the University tends to focus on undergraduate awards or higher degree research degrees, and postgraduate coursework students fall between the cracks. A Graduate School with a focus on coursework students would be able to address this gap in policy and quality assurance.

Recommendations

- R16. That the University set a clear time frame for the establishment of the Graduate School, with a specific deadline for the location of the Graduate School in a distinct location or Centre.
- R17. That the Graduate School be funded from central budget lines and no monies be diverted from departmental and faculty budgets.
- R18. That departmental office space, laboratory space and facilities be maintained at appropriate levels to house postgraduate students.
- R19. That postgraduate coursework students and postgraduate coursework degrees come under the quality assurance framework of the Graduate School.

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Appendix A: Flinders University Policy on the Appointment of Supervisors

- 7.1 One principal supervisor and up to two co-supervisors will be appointed for each higher degree candidate. If the candidate is enrolled on an external basis, normally the University will appoint in addition to the supervisors, a suitably qualified person who is resident at or near the place of study to provide advice and support to the candidate. If this person meets the criteria, he/she could be appointed as a co-supervisor. The faculty will ensure that:
- (i) the principal supervisor and the co-supervisor(s) are suitably qualified to supervise the candidate and have proven and current research credentials and that at least the principal supervisor has a satisfactory record of postgraduate supervision. Supervisors of PhD candidates will hold a PhD or MD, or equivalent experience. Supervisors of masters candidates will hold a masters or higher degree, or have equivalent experience.
 - (ii) at least one of the supervisors is a full-time member of staff or holds academic status in the University. In special cases where a supervisor is not a member of academic staff or does not hold academic status in the University, he or she will be suitably qualified to supervise the candidate as prescribed in Clause 7.1(i) in this policy and have a close association with the University. A person will only be appointed as a principal supervisor if he or she can reasonably be expected to be able to provide supervision for the duration of candidature.
 - (iii) supervision is provided for the duration of candidature and that an appropriate replacement be made in the event of the prolonged absence (longer than three months), retirement or resignation of either the principal or co-supervisor(s).
 - (iv) prospective candidates are consulted about their nominated supervisors and agree to work with the supervisors before their appointment is confirmed. Where it becomes necessary to appoint a replacement supervisor for the reasons as prescribed in Clause 7.1(iii) in this policy, the candidate will be consulted about the supervisor and agree to work with the replacement supervisor before the appointment is confirmed.
- 7.2 The principal supervisor must have relevant knowledge, expertise and interest in the candidate's research topic.
- 7.3 The co-supervisor(s) will be involved from the outset in the development of the candidate's research plan and an agreed mechanism will be established to ensure the maintenance of communication with the student and the principal supervisor.
- 7.4 In some cases, for example where the topic is multi-disciplinary, more than one co-supervisor or a panel of supervisors may be appointed. Whatever the supervisory arrangement, the primary responsibility must be made clear to all parties.
- 7.5 The principal supervisor carries the responsibility of coordinating communication between the supervisors and the candidate, and for resolving any issues.

Source: URL: <http://adminwww.flinders.edu.au/Calendar/Vol3/SecL.htm>, accessed on 11 July 2001 at 1pm.

Appendix B: University of South Australia

REGISTER OF RESEARCH DEGREE SUPERVISORS

POLICY NO: RES 8.0

DATE OF APPROVAL: 1 November, 1993

AMENDMENTS: AB Resolution 96/7/167

16 August, 1996

Further amendments by Research Degrees Committee June 1999.

REFERENCE AUTHORITY: Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and International)

CROSS REFERENCE: Code of Good Practice: Research Degree Supervision

PREAMBLE

The Register of Research Degree Supervisors identifies persons who are qualified to be appointed as Principal Supervisors of candidates undertaking Doctoral or Masters degrees by research at the University of South Australia. This policy specifies:

- the conditions which must be met in order for individuals to be admitted to the Register of Research Degrees Supervisors.
- the differences between Principal Supervisors and Associate Supervisors.

DEFINITIONS

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

1. A Principal Supervisor has prime responsibility for guiding the progress of a designated research degree candidate and must have been admitted to the Register of Research Degree Supervisors.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR

2. An Associate Supervisor provides support to the Principal Supervisor and need not have been admitted to the Register of Research Degree Supervisors.

POLICY

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

1. Principal Supervisors for research degree candidates must have been admitted to the Register of Research Degree Supervisors.

2. In order to be eligible for admittance to the Register a person must meet each of the following conditions:

2.1 be either a member of the academic or research staff of the University (lecturer Level A or above in a tenured or tenurable position, or in an academic or research contract position normally for at least three years) or a person who has been granted an honorary academic title by the University;

2.2 be either a Professor, Associate Professor or hold a higher degree by research or have an equivalent record of scholarly achievement;

2.3 be currently engaged in either research degree supervision or in research methodologically appropriate to the discipline or have been an Associate Supervisor for at least one successful research degree candidate;

2.4 have either undertaken or agree to undertake appropriate training in research degree supervision;

2.5 supervise research degree candidates in accordance with University requirements.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR

3. In order to be eligible to act as an Associate Supervisor a person must be either:

3.1 a member of the academic or research staff of the University who has been admitted to the Register of Research Degree Supervision; or

3.2 a member of the academic research staff of the University seeking supervision experience prior to being admitted to the Register of Research Degree Supervision; or

3.3 a person, internal or external to the University, chosen for the role because of expert knowledge or scholarship in the designated area of research.

4. Associate Supervisors must supervise research degree candidates in accordance with University requirements and have either undertaken or agree to undertake appropriate training in research degree supervision.

PROCEDURES

1. Individuals seeking admission to the Register must submit an application to the relevant Divisional Research Management Committee. If the application is supported by this committee a copy of it should be forwarded to the Executive Officer, Research Degrees Committee, together with the committee's rationale and recommendation for admittance.

2. Applications will be considered by the Chair, Research Degrees Committee who has delegated authority to admit staff to the Register. Disputes on a determination by the Chair shall be referred to the Executive Officer, Research Degrees Committee for a decision by the Committee as a whole.

3. Divisions are responsible for reviewing the supervisory performance of individuals who have been admitted to the Register on the recommendation of their Divisional Research Management Committee. Where performance does not meet University supervisory requirements, Divisions shall recommend to the Chair, Research Degrees Committee that they be removed from the Register. These steps will normally be undertaken at the time Divisions submit their Research Management Plans to Research Degrees Committee but may be undertaken more frequently/on a continuous basis at the discretion of a Divisional Research Management Committee.

4. Where removal from the Register is approved by the Chair and disputed by an individual, objections must be submitted to the Executive Officer, Research Degrees Committee for consideration and a decision by the Committee as a whole.

Note: Reference to Division includes Whyalla; reference to Divisional Research Management Committee includes equivalent committee at Whyalla

Source: URL: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/adminfo/policies/research/res08.htm>, accessed on 11 July 2001 at 1.30pm.

Appendix C: Example of a Structured Program that focus primarily on student requirements (details of department have been removed).

Part A: Student Orientation:

Please note that you are required to complete this list of activities as soon as practicable after enrolment. Your supervisor will assist you in this. These activities are additional to any other requirements that your supervisor has indicated.

Introduction to Head of Department.

Introduction to the Postgraduate Secretary

- receive copy of Support for Students Enrolled in a thesis
- advice on seminars related to thesis development
- instruction on use and abuse of photocopiers
- how to get on a circulating journal list
- to get a photo taken

Introduction to the Departmental Receptionist

- telephones
- mailbox
- stationery supplies
- fax machine
- first aid kit
- department newsletter - student should prepare a brief introductory note for next issue
- tea and coffee tax (if applicable)

Introduction to the Departmental Secretary

- any queries on money/grants etc
- after hours access/keys/departamental
- security
- OHS matters (accident reporting,emergency procedures etc)
- accommodation

Introduction to Computing Subcommittee

- explanation of computer access/facilities
- introduction to computing officers

Introduction to Convenor of Graduate Studies Subcommittee

Introduction to Seminar Convener of departmental seminar programs

Appointment with research Librarian/orientation at BSL/database access

Part B: Academic Matters

(i) Exposure to Departmental Researchers and Research

We expect that in the normal course of events you will meet and discuss aspects of research with many, if not all, the academics in the Department. Many such discussions begin at morning tea to which you are of course always welcome! More formally, in the first month of your enrolment, your supervisor will select 3 members of the academic staff with whom you are required to make an appointment. Each member of staff will wish to discuss your background and interests, their own current and past research, and ideas about approaches to research.

(ii) Seminars

The Department offers a lunch time Departmental seminar. As a thesis student you are invited to attend, and will be most welcome at, these seminars. You are required to attend two-thirds of the seminars unless otherwise advised by your supervisor.

You are also required to present at least one seminar in the Department before submitting your

Outline of Proposed Research to the University. It is perfectly acceptable, that this seminar be held earlier, rather than later, in the process so that you can derive the maximum benefit of the broad range of feedback you receive. Your supervisor will advise you on seminar techniques and coordinate your seminar(s) with the Convenor of the Graduate Studies Subcommittee and the organiser of the seminar program. At least one month notice is required.

(iii) Coursework

Your supervisor will assess your needs in the light of your past academic background, and the skills that your research is likely to require. The Department teaches a wide variety of courses at undergraduate, Diploma and Masters level and you may be required to enrol in, or otherwise formally audit, one or more of these courses. From time to time the Department holds special courses about which your supervisor will advise you.

(iv) Written Work

Whatever other tasks your supervisor may set, you are required to submit the following to the Convenor of the Department's Graduate Studies Subcommittee (through your supervisor):

(a) a draft Outline of Proposed Research at least one month prior to sending the final Outline to the University. The University expects the final Outline by 6 months after enrolment, and in any case, no later than 12 months.

(b) an estimate of the costs associated with the proposed research programme. This estimate should accompany the Outline when it is submitted to the Department's Graduate Studies Subcommittee. (It is not intended that the estimate will be sent to the University.) The Department must be in a position to advise whether the research is financially feasible.

Your supervisor will give guidance on this requirement.

(c) a fully referenced Literature Review of approximately 3000-5000 words on (one of) your possible topics. Note that this review does not prevent you from subsequently choosing another topic for your final Outline. The literature review should be completed within 3 months of enrolment. On the basis of this literature review your supervisor may advise you to undertake other courses that will assist in the later preparation of your thesis

Appendix D: Example of a Comprehensive Program: Politics Department Structured Program

25 February **University Induction Program; 8.30 am - 12.0 pm, Napier 102**

29 February **Politics Orientation Seminars: Seminar 1: Introductions**

- personal introductions
- identifying research topics
- departmental facilities and resources
- office etiquette

For Next Seminar: review theme, focus, assumptions and scope of your research

7 March **Seminar 2: Planning a Research Proposal**

- re-state research topic, discussing key assumptions
- key elements to consider for a research proposal:
 - your personal and intellectual interests
 - the 'field' in relation to teaching and career prospects
 - method
 - qualifications: languages, statistics, experience etc.
 - justification: 'significance' and feasibility
 - importance and relevance of conclusions
 - timetable for research
 - budgeting for time and finances
 - ethical considerations

For Next Seminar:

- production of a working title (linked to Research Proposal requirements)
- preparation of a fully costed budget-and identifying sources of funds
- prepare an initial 3-year time budget showing research stages

7 March **Toasting the New Year**

Drinks and nibbles for all the Postgraduate School and Staff

14 March **Seminar 3: Research Budgeting**

- report of revised project/thesis titles
- report on finance and time budgets
- conferences, travel and funding sources
- review techniques of postgraduate research styles and practices:
 - a research plan, integrating writing and research
 - a research and writing diary as a record of the structure of the work as a whole
 - elements involved in the actual research
 - noting and index systems
 - use of computers for noting and bibliography

For Next Seminar:

- focus on literature and data resources for research project
- identify the discipline, area, field and specialty of your research

16 March **Faculty of Arts Structured Program**

21 March **Seminar 4: 'Positioning' Your Research: The Disciplinary Field**

- the 'literature survey': its place in research
- strategies for finding your niche and making your mark

For Next Seminar:

Present an account of the central relevant to research project and identify key assumptions, concepts and methods.

28 March **Library Research Tour**

Mr Peter Newnham, Politics Research Librarian

2.10 pm* Barr Smith Library, Main Floor Information Desk
(Time and date to be confirmed.)

4 April Seminar 5: Methods, Originality, Significance

- report back on literature survey
- discussion of methods
- the issues of 'originality' and 'significance' of research
- consider requirements of the Research Proposal

For Next Seminar:

- prepare initial draft of a Research Proposal plus a paragraph on methods relevant to your project.
- analyse the methods actually used by two key works related to your field

11 April Seminar 6: Drafting the Research Proposal

- present draft of Research Proposal to the group
- work through the methodological issues raised by each of the research projects
- illustration of method and argument by a member of staff

For Next Seminar:

Review available resources, skills and techniques for producing the thesis
Reflect on presentational techniques and information needed for the
Research Proposal presentation to the Postgraduate/Staff Seminar

17-28 April Mid-Semester Break

2 May Seminar 7: Producing the Thesis

- stages in postgraduate research and writing, from initial design to submission and examination
 - the practical requirements of producing a thesis
 - style and format of thesis
 - using style sheets in Microsoft Word
- illustration of method and argument by another staff member
- techniques for seminar presentation and participation
- discussion of work plans and research methods

For Next Seminar:

prepare Research Proposal for presentation

9 May Seminar 8: Publishing Your Work

Presentation(s) by Departmental Staff

16 May Seminar 9: Publishing Your Work

- scholarly publication and its place during postgraduate student candidature
- professional journal articles and book reviews
- publishing the doctoral thesis

For Next Seminar: prepare a curriculum vitae

23 May Seminar 10: Planning an Academic Career

- selecting your 'field' in teaching and research
- applying for an academic position
 - 'reading' the job advert. & related works of fiction
 - essential and desirable appointment criteria
 - the appointments process, de jure and de facto
- the professional c.v. and your 'presentation'

29 May/5 June Postgraduate Research Proposal Presentations

Appendix E: Summary of the CAPA Statement of Minimum Resources

Study Space

Each student shall have exclusive access to:

- an office of no less than 4 metres in floor space which is secure, ventilated, heated, cooled, lit to ASA standards, and located near toilets and
- other amenities;
- an ergonomically sound chair and desk; desk space to be no less than 0.5 sqm;
- a telephone and a lockable four drawer filing cabinet;
- a personal computer, with access to current research and publishing tools including e-mail and the internet; and
- sufficient laboratory space, equipment and facilities to complete the program of research.

The facilities will be accessible 24 hours a day for the duration of a student's research & writing-up.

Facilities

Each student shall have unfettered, though not necessarily sole access to:

- photocopying facilities including an account for photocopying within university libraries;
- information technology support and departmental technical support;
- a fax, an on campus mailing address, postage and courier;
- stationery;
- binding and other services required to produce copies of the thesis;
- funds to cover expenses arising from field work, experiments, data collection and conference attendance;
- tea room and wash room and;
- full library services including Australian and overseas interlibrary loans and prompt access to subject librarians and other library staff.

Study Environment

All Postgraduate students shall be accorded a study environment where work areas:

- meet health and safety regulations
- are suitably insulated from noise
- are accessible to all as are ancillary facilities
- provide secure 24 hour access for women and men
- are free of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race and sexuality.

All costs associated with your research should be met by the University or the Cooperative Research Centre.