UNIVERSITY of York

GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

POLICY AND PROGRAMMES COMMITTEE

25th April 2022 11:00 - 13:00 via Zoom

Present: Dr Michelle Alexander, Professor Kate Arnold (Chair), Ms Susanna Broom, Ms Charlotte Chamberlain (minute taker), Dr Claire Chambers, Ms Viviane Yuxin Cao (GSA), Dr Karen Clegg, Dr Martin Cockett, Dr Patrick Gallimore, Dr Juliet James (Secretary), Mr Ekansh Kapoor (GSA), Dr Andrew Pickering, Dr Andrew Taylor, Dr Dani Ungar

Apologies: Ms Camilla Danese, Dr Sally Hancock, Dr Kelly Redeker, Dr Carolyn Snell

21-22/32	**Welcome from the Chair**
	Apologies were **noted** as above.
	The Chair welcomed the Committee's new members .
	The Chair thanked the following retiring members for their valued contributions to the Committee: Dani Ungar, Sally Hancock, Claire Chambers.
21-22/33	**Minutes**
	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were **approved.**
21-22/34	**Matters Arising**
	No matters arising were **noted** that were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.
21-22/35	**Action Log**
	The action log (**PPSC/21-22/20**) was **noted**, with updates reported.
21-22/36	**Report from the GSA**
	The GSA Vice-President Academic **reported** that**:**

- Nominations for GSA elections had closed and voting was scheduled to begin on the 3rd May
- Two new student forums had been set up, one for distance learning postgraduates and the other (jointly run with YGRS) for PGRs. Any PGR issues raised in the distance learning forum would be brought to the PGR Forum.

ACTION: KC to introduce EK to the new 'Thrive and Survive' coordinator, for a possible collaboration to support distance learning PGRs.

21-22/37	**Chair's Report**
	The Chair **reported** that:

- The inaugural PGR Forum was due to take place on the 27th April
- The new PGR Experience Committee was expected to meet in the summer term
- An internal survey to inform the institutional response to the UKRI consultation on the 'New Deal' had been circulated
- The internal PGR Recruitment, Selection and Admissions project was in the initial discovery phase. A survey had been sent to departments and a survey to PGRs would follow
- Regulation 7 was under review. The SCA was of the opinion that academic and non-academic misconduct should be separated and the Committee agreed with this. The GSA noted the need for clear and accessible language in the revised Regulation
- The University's approach to Leave of Absence (LoA) was being reviewed. The Committee suggested that the review should:
  - be undertaken by a working group including student/PGR representatives
  - acknowledge that the PGR experience of LoA differs greatly from that of a UG or PGT student
  - ensure that PGRs on LoA feel supported by the University and are helped to prepare for their return
  - take into account the experience of different demographic groups who may feel forced into LoA, or conversely unable to take LoA, due to their particular circumstances. One demographic group that needed attention was international PGRs, including the impact of visa requirements.

21-22/38   **PhD in Politics by Distance Learning.**
The Committee **considered** a proposal (**PPSC/21-22/21**) from the Department of Politics for a distance learning variant of the PhD in Politics for entry from October 2022 and for transfer with immediate effect. The programme had been reviewed in advance of the meeting by two members of the Committee.

The Committee was positive about the programme, with the community of practice for distance learners receiving praise. It was, however, noted that the proposed training was adequate rather than ambitious.

The Committee **approved** the programme, subject to an amendment of the wording regarding post-induction attendance requirements and a commitment to considering how the delivery of training to distance learning PGRs might be enhanced, including learning from the experience of other departments already catering for distance learning PGRs. The Department should also contact BRIC, which was releasing online materials for PGR personal development planning which could support the programme.

21-22/39   **Professional Development for New and Experienced Supervisors**
The Committee **considered** a paper from Karen Clegg and the Dean

(**PPSC/21-22/22**) on proposals for the professional development of new and experienced PGR supervisors. Whilst supervision at York was, for the most part, highly rated, the proposals were needed to discharge the University's duty of care to both its PGRs and their supervisors.

During discussion, it was **noted** that:

- Overall, there was strong support for the proposals, recognising that professional development for supervisors was necessary and that York's lack of mandatory professional development made it an outlier within the sector
- There were some concerns about the additional workload on academic staff
- An online tutorial could be an efficient and effective means of providing a baseline of key knowledge but could risk a box-ticking mentality
- Face-to-face sessions were more valuable for dealing with nuanced aspects of supervisory practice
- Peer mentoring schemes for supervisors (unconnected to performance review) could be a valuable form of professional development
- Over time, as expectations, including those of funding bodies, changed and the training itself evolved, 'strongly recommended' training might become 'expected', 'expected' training might become 'mandatory' and the sanctions for non-completion of mandatory training might increase
- [In response to GSA queries] formal supervision meetings were monitored via SkillsForge and that work remained ongoing in relation to policy on respectful supervisory relationships.

The Committee **approved** the papers's proposals for the professional development for new and experienced supervisors, subject to:

- Greater clarity with respect to the distinction between 'mandatory', 'expected' and 'strongly recommended' training
- Graduate Chairs and/or Heads of Department being held responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy, within their departments
- The online tutorial being shortened, split into self-contained sections to enable completion over several sessions, and made as engaging and interactive as possible
- A revision to the proposals for experienced supervisors, removing the current wording around strongly recommended and encouraged

participation and instead making participation in a workshop or mentoring scheme or community of practice an expectation, at a frequency to be determined.

It was **noted** that the final wording around professional development would need to be approved by the Committee at its next meeting and feed into the annual review of the Policy on Research Degrees.

There were a number of practical issues to be resolved, including the platform for the online tutorial, how to monitor external supervisors, and building capacity with respect to the delivery of face-to-face sessions (for example providing sessions at departmental and/or faculty and/or interdisciplinary level).

The Committee **approved** the proposal that it should receive a second paper covering other elements of supervisory practice.

In-person training on inclusive PGR supervision would be trialled shortly and members of the Committee would be welcome to attend.

21-22/40   **Entry With Advanced Standing in Health Sciences**
The Committee **considered** a paper (**PPSC/21-22/23**) on the proposed introduction of a policy on admission with advanced standing in Health Sciences for experienced researchers who wished to undertake a PhD with a shorter period of enrolment.

The Committee noted that changes to the Policy on Research Degrees which had prompted the paper had arisen as a result of an institutional commitment to widening participation to PhD entry associated with the approval of the EPSRC mobility pilot DTP, and was in line with governmental objectives and changes in the sector.

The Committee **approved** the Health Sciences policy, subject to further clarification of the type of research post that would fit the aims of the policy.
ACTION: JJ to flag the issue of fees for a shorter PhD enrolment period to Planning to ensure a consistent approach.
ACTION: JJ to share the Health Sciences policy with the EPSRC mobility pilot DTP.

21-22/41   **Research Integrity and Good Ethical Governance**
The Committee **received** a report (**PPSC/21-22/24a)** on minor changes to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity (**PPSC/21-22/24b)** and the Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance (**PPSC/21-22/24c).**

The Committee endorsed the changes to these policies. It was, however, **noted** that there was still some ambiguity around the scope of the policies but that a clearer definition of the nature of the research covered would address this concern.
Action: AT to work with Zoe Clarke to ensure that the policies include a clear definition of type of research covered.

With regard to the Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure (RMPP), it was **noted** that, following an OIA ruling, work was in hand to: (i) to revise the RMPP to provide an appeal process for PGRs that meets OIA expectations; and (ii) to review University training on the ethical approval of research for supervisors and PGRs.

It was also **noted** that there were new guidelines on paying research participants and YGRS had offered to help share this information with PGRs.
ACTION: JJ

21-22/42   Updates to the Policy on Research Degrees
It was **reported** that the Policy on Research Degrees (**PPSC/21-22/25)** would undergo its annual review at the next meeting. Members were asked to flag any issues with proposed changes to the Policy on Research Degrees with Juliet James.

21-22/43   Changes Approved by Chair's Action
The Committee **received** for information (**PPSC/21-22/26**) changes approved by Chair's action since the last meeting as follows:

DERS
Approval (includes Planning approval) of a distance learning (DL) variant (full-time and part-time) of the PhD in Health Economics for entry (already available as a transfer route at the start of year 2 or part-time equivalent), with immediate effect. Approval was conditional on:
- being able to cover the necessary training for year 1 (year 1/2 for PT) DL PGRs
- meeting the DL induction requirements: a minimum of 5 days on campus at the start of the programme
- ensuring that year 1 (1/2 PT) DL PGRs are integrated into the Department's research community (e.g. allocated a buddy; access to the relevant research group/seminars etc.)
- an annual attendance requirement above and beyond induction.

Archaeology

Approval (also Planning approval) of a 4-year PhD (no continuation year) in Archaeology with immediate effect (for a PGR to transfer onto), at the request of the LCAB (Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity). As with previously approved 4-year variants for the LCAB, all aspects of the programme remain the same as the department's 3-year PhD except the duration.

Philosophy

Approval (includes Planning approval) of a distance learning variant of the MA (by research) in Philosophy for entry with immediate effect.

21-22/44 **Collaborative Update**
The Committee **received** for information (**PPSC/21-22/26**) an update on collaborative provision, as follows:

CITY College:
Further to M21-2/26, to note that the admissions round for 2022 entry was underway: eight applications had been received for projects in TYMS, Physcology, Language and Linguistic Sciences and Electronic Engineering (this would require the setting up of a new off-site PhD)**.**

ChemArch double PhD
Further to M21-22/26, the individual double PhD studentship agreements were now in the process of being signed.

21-22/45 **Dates of the Next Meetings**
- Tuesday 7th June 2022 3-5pm (online)
- Wednesday 16 November 2022 10-12 (in person)
- Wednesday 1 March 2023 10-12 (online)
- Wednesday 19 April 2023 10-12 (online)
- Wednesday 7 June 2023 10-12 (online or in person).