Welcome
The Chair welcomed the meeting and apologies were noted. The Chair introduced Dr Jenna Ng who would, from 16/17, be attending PPSC on behalf of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities.

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2016
The minutes were approved without further amendment.

Matters arising from the minutes:

M15-16/18.1 Tier 4 Leave of Absence statement clarification - update
AK confirmed that the Tier 4 Leave of Absence statement had been sent to Digital Marketing to be uploaded on to the YGRS ‘support for current students’ webpages. AK informed the group that the UKVI has released further guidance which stated that Tier 4 PGR students would no longer be able to transfer or downgrade to another course whilst on a Tier 4 visa. Jim Irving, Registry, had requested further clarification from UKVI on this and would report back in due course.

M15-16/29 Oral report from the Graduate Student representatives - update
The GSA reported that their intern had gathered information from all but three departments now and should be finalising the report on departmental facilities and supervision for PGRs shortly.

M15-16/30 Thesis Embargo Policy - update
AK reported that he had circulated the proposed changes to the thesis embargo policy to the faculty research groups. He expected feedback to be sent through by the end of May 2016.

M15-16/31 Researchfish / ORCID - update
AK reported that four departments had responded to the proposal; three were not in favour of mandating ORCID and one was strongly in favour. The group agreed this issue would be revisited in 2016/17 however no changes would be made for the 2016/17 academic year.

M15-16/33 PGR Aspects of APRs

JJ confirmed the actions from the last meeting were in progress. JJ confirmed that ASO did not believe a separate APR report for inter-departmental programmes was required and indeed would overburden departments. It was agreed therefore that a separate question could be added to the standard APR form for 2016/17 whereby any inter-departmental programme issues could be raised. TS also confirmed that it was being proposed that the PGWT policy should be transferred to UTC. It was currently held in HR / RDT however the policy’s main impact is on the undergraduate experience therefore it is important UTC is given formal oversight.

M15-16/35 PoRD 2015

This will be dealt with under agenda item 6.

M15-16/40 Oral report from the Chair

TS reported that applications had opened for Cumberland Lodge 2016. A new donor had also announced they would fund 12 new Masters scholarships worth £1000 each. They would be known as 'House Masters Scholarship'. The application process and eligibility criteria for the 16/17 YGRS scholarships had received some critical feedback as some found the process confusing. Efforts would be made therefore to improve the process for YGRS and House Masters Scholarships next year. PGR student loans worth up to £25,000 had been formally announced by the SLC. It was not clear yet what the impact to PGR recruitment and/or progression might be however it will likely be 2018/19 before it is evident. YGRS PGR induction event will take place on 23 September 10.00 - 12.00 and a PGR Research Showcase will take place at Kings Manor from 17.00 - 19.00.

M15-16/41 To receive an oral report from the GSA representative/s

Representatives from the GSA attended the national NUS Conference 2016 and found that that York was only one of five HE’s in the UK to have a student union wholly for PGRs (TS felt it was important to advertise this) and, where no similar structure exists in a HE institution, it was clear to those institutions that it was needed. York has been invited to visit the University of Cambridge who are unhappy with the existing structure of their GSA and are proposing to change to one similar to York. The GSA confirmed that representatives all five GSAs would meet in 2016. At the Conference, the GSA submitted a motion to amend the leave of absence regulations for Tier 4 students. It was accepted and the NUS will now lobby all student unions across the UK. The President of UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and MP for York have also agreed to lobby.

M15-16/42 To consider a paper proposing changes to the PoRD 2015 (PPSC/15-16/31)

- Review the 2 year extension limit on 1 year Masters courses: propose to limit to a 1 year extension as an expected maximum (PoRD 7.16) - Agreed
- Include reference to the Tier 4 ‘authorised absence’ guidance alongside LoA policy, to support Tier 4 students - No. This should only be referenced in the official Tier 4 guidance on the York website however it would be appropriate to link to this guidance in Regulation 2.
- In light of recent RCUK changes, to consider whether a policy statement on data sharing (re GtR and Researchfish) is required (PoRD 1.10) - AK to seek advise from RGC as to wording. Clarify the use of the word ‘contract’. Remove reference to ‘DTC’, only DTP and CDT should be used. Remove the reference to a four year PhD programme.
- To include the new progression system (annual progression points for PhD and MPhil), and to address extension to progression within this system - Agreed. AK and JJ to review and condense for inclusion. Ensure that extensions to Confirmation of Enrolment / Annual Progression Points are referenced and outline process for request / approval.
- To add clear statements on consequences of e.g. missing deadlines, where appropriate, to ensure no ambiguity exists regarding the essential nature of meeting e.g. submission deadlines - Agreed. Add to guidance to Section 7 of the PoRD that the last day of enrolment is the submission deadline (or the next working day if a weekend or bank holiday).
- Adjust to give expectation of when correction lists are provided - to ensure students are provided with corrections as soon as possible after examination (12.34 PoRD) - Agreed. Add in reference to a timescale that candidates will normally be provided with a list of corrections no more than two weeks following the viva.
- Clarify Reg. 2.9 re PhD by Publication to avoid ambiguity - agreed. AK will discuss with the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress. Clarity on co-authoring would also be welcome. Section 2.9.6 should refer to quality as well as quantity.
- To consider supervision requirements to facilitate extending the pool of supervisors while maintaining quality and QAA compliance. Agreed however it is the department’s decision to decide what is appropriate and approve. A statement could be added such as ‘Where a proposed supervisor is not on a research contract, the Head of Department is responsible for approving the appointment’.
- To include clear statements on consequences (esp. re. deadlines), where needed. This was agreed above.
- To review sections on examiner appointment and conflict of interest in light of current guidance - Agreed. SCA Examiner Guidance should be cross referenced to ensure consistency in PoRD.
- To consider ORCID requirements, if necessary, based on feedback from Graduate Chairs and approval of PPSC - No. This will be reviewed again in 2016/17.
- To clarify examination procedures for MA/MSc Res; esp. viva requirements, reports and evidence of students work - Partially agreed. Leave reference to viva in 12.16 iii). Add to the current MA/MSc by Research examination report ‘Are you sure this is the student’s own work?’.
- To review sections on examination requirements for resits, re prelim reports - Agreed. Add the requirement that resubmissions will also require a preliminary report even if a second viva is not needed.
- To ensure that there is clarity and strength regarding supervisor responsibility to students post initial submission - Agreed. However the Committee requested a separate proposal on this issue.

- To consider adding a requirement for T4 students to have Formal Supervisions into their WU year, to further comply with Home Office tracking requirements (7.6 PoRD) - Partially Agreed. Require all students in their Continuation Year to maintain regular contact with their supervisors and add link to the Tier 4 attendance policy.

- To clarify that 8 Formal Supervisions / year are sequential, non-overlapping, spaced across the year. To ensure the definition of a Formal Supervision is clear and appropriate - Agreed. AK to draft.


- To update the thesis embargo policy in line with that agreed by PPSC and with feedback from Faculties on embargo limits - Agreed. AK to draft when final approval received.

Action: AK

M15-16/43 To consider a proposal from the Department of Theatre, Film and Television for an MA by Research (PPSC/15-16/32)

BSR began the discussion and noted the following:

- Very positive and impressive proposal
- Ambitious
- Clear audience identified
- Attractive to H/O/EU
- Good structure

The Committee noted the following issues:

- The proposed entry IELTS score of 7 is high and may restrict recruitment - the department is asked to provide justification as to the requirement for 7 overall.
- Students enrolled on the programme must have one TAP whilst on the programme and this should be added to the proposal.
- Is there enough dedicated workspace? If the enrolled students are researching all year, they will need space. The department is asked to provide reassurance that they have thought through the student numbers in terms of space and equipment availability.
- Will the students be able to access the Writing Centre as PGRs? The department is asked to check this with CELT. If not then remove.
- Only students on an approved Distance Learning (DL) programme can actually be DL. The department is asked to clarify the reference to distance learning.

The Committee approved the proposal on the condition that the department responds satisfactorily to the above issues. The Chair of PPSC will consider this outside of the meeting by Chair’s Action.

Action: HP to forward to ASO to liaise with department
To consider a proposal from the Department of Computer Science on the implementation of the PGR Progression Policy (PPSC/15-16/33)

The Committee considered the proposal well thought through, thorough and an example of good practice [particularly the opportunity to get feedback at month 9 TAP on work to be submitted for progression, and the clear expectations for students entering a continuation period]. The following was noted:

- If a progression point has been deferred then the panel should ensure that, along with the recommendation to re-sit, they also comment on the likelihood of success the second time around - if this is deemed unlikely then a downgrade [transfer or withdraw] should be recommended.
- The suggestion to submit a ‘final’ research paper to a Year 2 progression point panel could be revised, a ‘final’ version could include the work of others [i.e. it needs to be clear to the progression panel what input (including editing) the supervisor or others have had into the version of the paper submitted to the panel]
- The guidance in the proposal which emphasises that a progression point is to assess progress and not to be used as an opportunity to direct the student’s research elsewhere is useful and an example of good practice.
- The reference to Tier 4 requirements in the Continuation Year should be removed.[apply principles to all students]
- The IGGI proposal references completion of modules however it does not explicitly state they should be passed. Either way, the department should clarify this.
- The IGGI proposal also assumes a 5th year which is currently under review.
- The proposal of an 8-week window for progression panel meetings is too long and needs to be revised [the window is now 6 weeks]

The Committee approved the proposal on the condition that the department removes the reference to Tier 4 requirements in the Continuation Year.

Action: PPSC secretary

To consider a proposal from the Department of Economics on the implementation of the PGR Progression Policy (PPSC/15-16/34)

Time constraints meant this agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

To consider a proposal from the Department of Philosophy on the implementation of the PGR Progression Policy (PPSC/15-16/35)

Time constraints meant this agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

To consider initial responses on the implementation of the PGR Progression Policy for the following departments (PPSC/15-16/36)

- Archaeology
- Biology
- CMS
- Chemistry
- Education
Time constraints meant this agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

M15-16/48 AOB

M15-16/49 To note the date of next meeting: 16th May 2016 09:30 - 11:30 H/G21 (Heslington Hall)