GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

The Graduate Studies Committee met at 10.00 am on Tuesday 13 August 2019 in the Function Room on Level 5 of the F23 Administration Building.

Members present: Associate Professor Michael Kertesz (Chair), Dr Christopher Coady (Sydney Conservatorium of Music), Professor Ross Coleman (Director, Graduate Research), Ms Edwina Grose (Nominee of the Deputy Registrar), Associate Professor Patrick Kelly (Medicine and Health, Deputy Chair), Associate Professor Lynette Mackenzie (Health Sciences), Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair of Academic Board), Dr Petr Matous (Engineering), Dr Clare O’Reilly (Pharmacy), Dr Jan Shaw (Arts and Social Sciences), Associate Professor Lee Stickells (Architecture, Design and Planning), Dr Gareth Vio (Nominee of Academic Board), Ms Kelly Wang (Nominee of the President, SUPRA), Gu Yu (Postgraduate Research Student)

In attendance: Dr George Carayannopoulos (Head, HDR Administration Centre), Dr Glenys Eddy (Committee Officer, Secretariat), Mrs Charlie Foxlee (Manager Academic Model), Ms Christine Lacey (Senior Policy & Projects Officer, Education Portfolio), Associate Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Education Strategy), Mr Hugh O’Dwyer (Senior Policy and Projects Officer, Education Portfolio), Ms Jacqueline Toroian (Committee Officer, Secretariat), Ms Alyssa White (Manager Governance, Senate and Academic Board)

Visitors: Dr Bianca Waud (Senior Lecturer, Sydney School of Veterinary Science) for items 3.4 and 3.5

Apologies: Dr Peter Kench (Nominee of Academic Board), Associate Professor Matthew Beck (Business), Dr Andrea McCloughen (Nursing and Midwifery), Professor Shae McCrystal (Chair of the HDR Scholarships Subcommittee), Associate Professor Nicole Mockler (Nominee of Academic Board), Associate Professor Pauline Ross (Science), Professor Cameron Stewart (Law), Dr Munira Xaymardan (Dentistry)

2019/05

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-1
The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to accept the apologies as recorded.

Note for the record
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies listed above. Additionally, the Chair welcomed a new member, Dr Claire O’Reilly, who is replacing Professor Jo-anne Brien as the representative from Pharmacy on the committee.

1.2 Minutes of Meeting held on 18 June 2019

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-2
The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 as a true and accurate record.

1.3 Actions Arising

Resolution GSC2019/05-3
The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to note the updates provided on actions arising from the previous meeting.

Note for the record
The Chair reminded members that at the June meeting, a number of proposals had been endorsed conditionally and that these proposals, particularly those relating to transitional provisions, had been amended prior to submission to the Academic Board.
2. STANDING ITEMS

2.1 Report of the Chair

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-4
The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to note the report of the Chair.

2.2 Report of the Academic Board

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-5
The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 23 July 2019.

Note for the record
Further to the written report circulated with the agenda, the Chair of Academic Board informed members of the work undertaken jointly with the University’s Risk Management team regarding emerging risks of the Academic Board. It was noted that ahead of the next TEQSA registration, and for the purpose of good governance, a new framework is being developed to identify academic risks and to implement a series of risk mitigation controls. The Academic Quality Committee (AQC) will have oversight of this process under their current terms of reference. Oversight by the AQC will provide the added benefit of centralising and providing easy access to information when it’s needed, via the minutes of their meetings.

The Chair of Academic Board shared a concern raised at the last Academic Board meeting regarding the length of the PhD candidature, particularly in the context of the mandatory HDR coursework requirement. Members were reminded that the University is governed by TEQSA rules who set the standards required of a PhD qualification. It was noted that the intention behind the implementation of the mandatory coursework requirement was to help identify and address areas of weakness in the PhD candidature, such as where students struggle to complete on time.

The Chair of Academic Board informed members that the University will be hosting a symposium on Artificial Intelligence in Academic Decisions on 14 August 2019. This will be a forum for the Professoriate to engage with issues around the emergence of disruptive technologies and their potential role in the academic decision-making process.

2.3 Report of the HDR Scholarships Subcommittee

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-6
The Graduate Studies Committee noted the report of the HDR Scholarships Subcommittee on their meetings held on 05 July 2019 and 02 August 2019.

2.4 Report of the Board of Interdisciplinary Studies

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-7
The Graduate Studies Committee noted the report of the Board of Interdisciplinary Studies on their meeting held on 17 July 2019 as presented. [Secretary’s Note: See also item 3.1 below]

3. ITEMS FOR ACTION

Major Course Proposals

There were no major course proposals submitted for this meeting.

Minor Course Proposals

3.1 Education Strategy & Board of Interdisciplinary Studies: Sydney Professional Certificate Streamlined Approval Process
Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-8
The Graduate Studies Committee noted the financial modelling for the 2020 Sydney Professional Certificate Courses and the proposal to waive the requirement for an Expression of Interest for all new Sydney Professional Certificate proposals.

Additionally, the Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the Academic Board:

1. Approves a simplified approval process for new Sydney Professional Certificate (SPC) courses consisting of the use of a shortened proforma course proposal template developed by the Education Portfolio in consultation with relevant service units. The simplified template will remove sections that are not relevant for the SPC and include pre-filled information for aspects that are common to all SPC courses.

Note for the record
Dr Hayley Fisher spoke to this proposal.

The GSC noted the financial modelling for the 2020 Sydney Professional Certificate (SPC) courses and agreed that waiving the requirement for an Expression of Interest for all new SPC proposals was sensible, noting that this would reduce the length of time for approvals by as much as six months.

Members discussed the embedded courses and credit towards other awards (clause 4 of the resolutions) and Dr Fisher highlighted that while a variety of different approaches were considered, enabling students to gain full credit for work completed provides a worthwhile and attractive exit option for students.

In discussion, the Chair also highlighted a discrepancy in the attendance pattern (clause 2 of the resolutions), which gives students the option to study on a full-time or part-time basis. Given that to qualify for the award students are required to take only two 6-credit point units from Table A, it was difficult to see how a student could study full-time. Members agreed that this section needed to be re-considered.

Subject to the amendment above, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

3.2 Engineering: Master of Transport

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-9
The Graduate Studies Committee endorsed in principle the recommendation that the Academic Board:

1. Approves the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering to amend the Master of Transport, the Graduate Diploma in Transport, and the Graduate Certificate in Transport; and
2. Approves the amendment of the course resolutions arising from the proposal, with effect from 1 January 2020.

Note for the record
Dr Petr Matous and Ms Christine Lacey spoke to this proposal.

The proposal seeks to amend the course resolutions to include the requirement for applicants to have a bachelor degree in a cognate discipline to qualify for admission and to successfully undertake several of the core units. While the list of cognate disciplines were not evident in the course resolutions, Ms Lacey confirmed that the list will be visible to students on the Sydney Courses page.

The Chair of Academic Board also agreed to take on notice a question raised by members on whether this proposal should be submitted to the Admissions Subcommittee to for further academic oversight prior to proceeding to Academic Board.

3.3 Engineering: Master of Professional Engineering; Master of Professional Engineering (Accelerated)

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-10
The Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the Academic Board:
1. Approve the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering to amend the Master of Professional Engineering and Master of Professional Engineering ( Accelerated); and
2. Approve the amendment of the Senate and Course resolutions arising from the proposal; and
3. Approve the amendment of the table of Units of Study arising from the proposal, with effect from 1 January 2021.

Note for the record
Dr Petr Matous and Ms Christine Lacey spoke to this proposal.

The proposal seeks to introduce a new specialisation in ‘Sustainability and Environmental Engineering’, within the Master of Professional Engineering. The purpose is to provide an avenue for students wishing to study in this area of expertise, but are unable to gain entry into the Master’s program.

The following comments were raised by the Education Portfolio and Director, Graduate Research:

- Under Part 4 of the resolutions (Specialisations) there should be a clause stating “Completion of a specialisation is a requirement of the course”
- The transitional arrangements in the resolutions should be updated to say 1 January 2021 (not 2020)
- Requirements to be awarded the degree should be clearly outlined in the preamble of the Units of Study table. The Education Portfolio can provide a Units of Study table template.
- Note that a core unit is defined in the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015 as “Core units must be completed by all students enrolled in the award course or relevant curriculum component of specialisation”. Some of the units identified as core units in the proposal give students a choice (they can take one or the other). This effectively means that they are not core as not all students will take them.

Additionally, members noted that the transitional arrangements provisions under Part 9 of the resolutions should apply from 2021 not 2020 and, overall, the resolutions required greater consistency in terminology.

Subject to these amendments, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

3.4 Science: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-11

The Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the Academic Board:

1. Approves the proposal from the Faculty of Science to amend the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine; and
2. Approves the amendment of the Course Resolutions arising from that proposal with effect from 1 January 2020.

Note for the record
Dr Bianca Waud spoke to this proposal, advising that the purpose of the changes is to apply consistent terminology across the program, to ensure greater clarity around admission criteria, deferral, course structure, assessments and credit for previous studies. Additionally, the changes will ensure greater clarity around progression rules by incorporating new placement units mandated by the accrediting bodies. In discussion, it was agreed that the School be asked to amend Part 7 of the course resolutions to insert the word “all” so that it’s clear that students must successfully complete ‘all’ units for progression.

Noting that the Unit of Study Tables have already been updated with the new units and subject to the above amendment, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

3.5 Science: Master of Clinical Psychology

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-12

The Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the Academic Board:

1. Approves the proposal from the Faculty of Science to amend the Master of Clinical Psychology; and
2. Approves the amendment of the Course Resolutions arising from that proposal with effect from 1 January 2020.

**Note for the record**

Dr Bianca Waud spoke to the proposal to amend the course resolutions of the Master of Clinical Psychology (MCP), to allow students to transfer from the MCP standalone degree to the MCP/PhD double degree. The proposed changes also include the new Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Honours) as an admissions pathway into the MCP.

Members were informed that although the admission criteria for both the MCP standalone and the MCP/PhD are the same, the benefit to the student is that they would only need to write one thesis. Additionally, the change will facilitate the School's aim to increase enrolment in the MCP/PhD program.

In discussion, it was agreed that the School be asked to amend the transitional provisions to be effective from 2020 unless retrospectivity was specifically required. Furthermore, the Chair of Academic Board noted that the requirement to complete by 1 January 2024 (Part 10 Transitional Provisions) may need to be re-considered by the School, given the ten-year limit on Masters programs.

Members expressed in principle support for the proposal and subject to the School reviewing these amendments, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to Academic Board.

**Higher Degree by Research**

3.6 **Arts and Social Sciences**: Master of Arts (Research), Master of Education (Research), Master of Fine Arts, Master of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy (Education) and Master of Philosophy (Social Work)

**Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-13**

The Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the proposal from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to amend the course resolutions for the Master of Arts (Research), Master of Education (Research), Master of Fine Arts, Master of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy (Education), and Master of Philosophy (Social Work) degrees, be re-considered in view of a number of required changes and be re-submitted to a later meeting for consideration.

**Note for the record**

Dr Jan Shaw spoke to this proposal, advising that it represented an adjustment to reflect the introduction of the compulsory HDR coursework component via Table R and to align the resolutions for HDR courses across the University, including thesis examination procedures.

In discussion, Dr Shaw acknowledged that there were some discrepancies in the transitional arrangements across the six courses and that these will be corrected so that the course resolutions consistently apply from ‘2020’ for implementation from ‘2021’.

It was highlighted that the proposed changes shifted responsibility for determining the results of the thesis examination to the HDR Examinations Subcommittee (HDRESC) for all courses except the Master of Fine Arts. Members were informed that this change was brought about as a result of outdated faculty resolutions that referred thesis examinations for Research Masters degrees to now non-existing committees. As this may have potential workload implications for the HDRESC, the Chair of Academic Board suggested that this required further consideration. The Director Graduate Research also concurred with the view that faculties needed to carefully decide who should be determining the outcome of examinations for their Research Masters degrees.

Additionally, the following matters were raised by the Committee for consideration/and or clarification:

- Clause 9 ‘The thesis’ needs to be revisited to include the mandatory coursework component. Currently, it reads as though only a thesis is required.
- Clause 10 ‘Units of study’ should be amended to reflect that under the new coursework arrangements, students will required to take units as specified in the milestones document for that degree.
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- Clause 5 relating to the appointment of supervisors needs to be re-worded to simply state that supervision would be arranged in accordance with the HDR Rule. This way, if the HDR Rule changes in the future, there would be no additional requirement to change the course rules.
- In the Master of Fine Arts (Research), reference to the credit point requirement under part 4 (clause 8) needs to be removed.

In view of the extensive changes required, members recommended that the proposal be reviewed with the guidance of the Director, Graduate Research and re-submitted to a later meeting, for consideration.

3.7 Business: HDR Coursework

In the absence of representation from Business, this paper was held over for deliberation at a later meeting.


In the absence of representation from Law, this paper was held over for deliberation at a later meeting.


In the absence of representation from Law, this paper was held over for deliberation at a later meeting.

3.10 Research Education: PhD Graduate Qualities

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-14

The Graduate Studies Committee recommended that the Academic Board:

1. Approves the use of the PhD Graduate qualities as an important reference for HDR supervisors and students when selecting and/or reflecting upon possible development opportunities in candidature.
2. Approves the use of the term “Researcher Graduate Qualities” to appropriately reflect the deep research skills and activities undertaken by doctoral candidates.

Note for the Record

The Director, Graduate Research presented this item.

It was discussed that there needs to be clearer articulation of the benefits of the PhD in terms of graduate qualities as well as a framework to support students and supervisors when undertaking reflective analysis of a candidate’s development of skills and experience, throughout candidature. It was further added that the intention is not to create a tick-boxing exercise, but rather, a journey to identify student needs and to steer the focus towards student development. Noting that the PhD Graduate qualities are less well-defined than undergraduate qualities, the Director Graduate Research also proposed that these should be more accurately phrased as “Researcher Graduate Qualities” to make it clearer that this is a journey to transition from apprentice to researcher.

Regarding the proposed forms for recording development opportunities (two samples were tabled and discussed), it was noted that these represented a fall-back position in the event that an integrated systems solution under the SOM HDR Project/Research Support Model isn’t possible.

Members supported the proposal, but highlighted the need for some nuanced supporting text that explains that the researcher graduate qualities reflect what the student should have attained once they have graduated. Members also stressed the need for providing training for students in identifying and realizing means of attaining the graduate qualities. Members agreed that there should be no ambiguity that would lead the student to assume that by attesting to these qualities, the student has passed before their thesis has been examined.
3.11 Research Education: HDR Coursework

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-15
The Graduate Studies Committee endorsed the proposed exemptions model for HDR Coursework and the amendments to the Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015.

Note for the record
The Director, Graduate Research presented a paper on the proposed exemptions model for the mandatory HDR coursework requirement which will come into effect from 2021.

Members were informed that there are a number of specific circumstances where coursework is not appropriate due to the range of higher education backgrounds of candidates as well as some combined HDR programs already having coursework arrangements embedded. Therefore, a process for applying exemptions to the mandatory HDR coursework requirement needs to be in place, before it commences from 2021.

Members discussed the following suggested amendments:

- Scenario 1.2 – this be amended to read over ‘50% candidature’ not EFTSL
- Clause 12 (7) of the Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015, appears to be out of place. It was suggested that the Education Portfolio should consider whether this should be somewhere else in the policy.
- With regards to Cotutelle, joint and dual PhD’s, there may be instances where a student may wish to transfer into a different (non-dual) degree where coursework would be required. In these instances, some guidelines for APR Panels and Chair’s around the conversations they should be having with students, would be useful.

Following discussion of the Annual Progress Review (APR) process, members agreed that at the first APR meeting, there needs to be a formal check of the level of coursework that has been completed and a plan in place for what needs to be done for the student to remain on track. The Director, Graduate Research advised that while this is already part of the process, further panel and chair training would be beneficial.

Subject to these suggested amendments, the Committee expressed support for the proposal and recommended that it be presented to the Academic Board.

4.1 Education Strategy: Dual and Joint PhD Degrees Working Group report

Resolution AB-GSC-19/05-16
The Graduate Studies Committee noted the recommendations of the Dual and Joint Degrees report.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Any other business

Next Meeting
The next meeting of AB-GSC is scheduled on Tuesday 08 October 2019.

Meeting closed at 11.52 pm.