PRESENT:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) (Professor Robyn Owens) as Chair
Postgraduate Students’ Association President (Ms Bronwyn Crowe)
Professor John Cordery
Professor Kevin Croft
Professor Arun Dharmarajan
Professor Matthew Knuiman
Associate Professor Andrew Lynch
Associate Professor Ian McArthur
Dr Allan McKinley
Professor Jim Whelan

Executive Officer (Mr Chester Cutinha)

BY INVITATION:

Director, Research Services (Dr Campbell Thomson)
Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships (Dr Sato Juniper)

APOLOGIES:

Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Associate Professor Annette George)
Graduate Education Officer (Dr Krystyna Haq)
Professor Craig Atkins (Deputy Chair)
Associate Professor Brett Nener
Professor Susan Prescott
Dr Srilata Ravi
Graduate Education Officer (Ms Karen Hall)

Professor John Cordery arrived at the beginning of the discussion of item 5.

1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST – REF: F34

Members and invitees were requested to declare any conflicts of interest that they may have with respect to any items on the agenda.

Professor Matthew Knuiman declared a conflict of interest with respect to the students referred to in items 8(c) and 8(d) of the agenda and left the meeting during the discussion of these items.

Dr Allan McKinley declared a potential perceived conflict of interest with respect to the student referred to in item 8(e) believing that he may have met the student socially on previous occasions.

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

RESOLVED – 97

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 14 August 2007 be confirmed.
3. DECLARATIONS IN THESES

Members were reminded of discussions at the August meeting arising out of a suggestion by Dr Christoph Hinz that the Board consider amending the declaration form to include the option for students to either list the percentage contributions of each of the co-authors or provide a detailed statement outlining the nature and extent of the contributions of each of the co-authors.

A revised draft of the Declaration proforma was tabled at the meeting for members’ consideration and approval by the Board.

Members approved the revised Declaration proforma and requested that it be made part of the Submission of Thesis for Examination form to ensure that students and supervisors are aware of it.

4. AMENDMENTS TO THE EXAMINERS’ RECOMMENDATION FORM AND THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL COVERSHEET

Members were reminded of a suggestion arising out of discussions at the August meeting that the Board clarify the level descriptors for PhD and Master theses so that level 6 reads "the thesis does not meet the minimum standard for a PhD/Master for this criterion" rather than the current "the thesis has fatal flaws".

At the same meeting Members had also discussed amending the Research Proposal Coversheet to clarify the level of internal review that the Research Proposal had undergone before being submitted to the Board for approval.

Members were provided with a draft version of the amended Examiners’ Recommendation form and a draft version of the amended Research Proposal Coversheet for consideration and approval by the Board. The draft Research Proposal Coversheet included a list of ways in which the Proposal might have been reviewed in the school prior to submission to the Graduate Research School.

In the brief discussion that followed, some members were concerned that the new Research Proposal Coversheet might mistakenly be taken to indicate that students’ Research Proposals were required to undergo all the listed modes of internal review. While members were of the opinion that it is good practice for Research Proposals to go through a robust process of internal review, the Board did not wish to give the mistaken impression that all the listed steps were mandatory.

The Board approved the Examiners’ Recommendation form.

Members approved the amended Research Proposal Coversheet subject to the wording being amended, and the addition of tick boxes, requesting students indicate which (if any) of the several forms of internal review the Proposal had been through.

ITEM FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE UNIVERSITY SECRETARIAT FROM THE BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2007

5. AMENDMENT TO THE GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISORS

Members had before them some draft amendments to the Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors. NB: this version did not include the amendments approved by the Board at its last meeting because these had not yet been ratified by the Academic Council.

In addition to some minor marked changes to the document, members were asked approve an addition to the Guidelines:

8. Specific supervisory responsibilities include:
   (i) bringing any serious concerns about the candidate’s wellbeing or conduct to the immediate attention of the Graduate Research Coordinator or Head of School.
The Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, spoke to this item and informed the Board that concern had been raised that the current version did not include a note about a supervisor's duty of care toward students nor an indication of the proper reporting pathway for supervisors wishing to express concerns. The Code of Good Practice for Graduate Research Supervision does include a note that Graduate Research Coordinators are expected to provide confidential counsel to candidates and supervisors where necessary, and following up matters of concern. However, supervisors are not all aware that they should bring matters of concern to the attention of the Graduate Research Coordinator, and there has been considerable variability in the ways that some serious matters have been handled.

During the brief discussion of the item, the following main points were made:

- It is the Graduate Research Coordinator, rather than the Graduate Research School, which is the appropriate first point of contact for a supervisor who is concerned about a student.
- This addition might lead supervisors and students to think that supervisors have a parental responsibility for students or to interfere in their personal lives, or that the main intention of the addition is to identify student misconduct rather than provide support for students. These concerns could be addressed by specifying that it is students' professional wellbeing and conduct that is of interest and that the intent of the addition is to address the University's duty of care for students.

The Board

RESOLVED – 98

To recommend to the Academic Council that the Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors be amended as in attachment (Attachments A1 – A7) to include the following:

8. Specific supervisory responsibilities include: ....
   (i) to address the University's duty of care for candidates, bringing any serious concerns about the candidate's professional wellbeing or conduct to the immediate attention of the Graduate Research Coordinator or Head of School.
Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors

By its resolution R141/02 the Board of the Graduate Research School approved the following as a statement of expectations with regard to graduate research supervision. The document draws together Board of the Graduate Research School resolutions regarding aspects of graduate research supervision, extracts from the research higher degree regulations and policy on supervision. In addition to this document, supervisors should familiarise themselves with the Regulations Governing Research Higher Degrees and the Code of Good Practice for Graduate Research Supervision.

1. Principles for Supervision

(a) The University of Western Australia provides supervision and advice for each graduate research candidate through the appointment of an experienced supervisor who has successfully supervised a research higher degree candidate to completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution.

(b) The Board of the Graduate Research School will not accept applicants for admission unless appropriate supervisory arrangements can be made for the specific field and course of study.

(c) Appropriate supervision must be provided and maintained throughout the research period. Formal co-supervision or informal “back-up” arrangements must be made to cater for the possible absence of the coordinating supervisor. In the case of co-supervision, this arrangement must be approved by the Board of the Graduate Research School or faculty, as appropriate. The co-supervisor or “back up” supervisor must be involved in a meaningful way with the research from the commencement of candidature to ensure that minimal disruption takes place should the coordinating supervisor be unable to continue with the supervision.

(d) It is expected that, in conjunction with the Head of School, supervisors undertake fully their responsibilities as outlined in this document and the Code of Good Practice for Graduate Research Supervision and ensure they fulfil all academic and administrative requirements promptly and satisfactorily.

2. Selection and Nomination of Supervisors

(a) Supervisors will normally

- be appointed from among the staff of the University of Western Australia. If the proposed supervisor is not a member of academic staff, then a co-supervisor must be appointed from among the academic staff.

- have the necessary knowledge, time, commitment and access to resources to undertake the supervision. In cases where the coordinating supervisor has the necessary knowledge, time, commitment and access to resources but is not an experienced supervisor, an experienced co-supervisor must be appointed. In cases where the proposed supervisor has the necessary knowledge, commitment and access to resources but not the necessary time to give adequate supervision (eg is a Head of School, is supervising a large number of research candidates or has heavy teaching or other commitments), a co-supervisor must be appointed.
• have research expertise and experience relevant to the area of the candidate’s proposed research and provide evidence of continuing and active involvement in research programmes.

• reasonably expect to hold a university appointment for the duration of the course.

• normally hold a qualification at least equivalent to the level of qualification being supervised and have an appropriate record of scholarly publications. A member of staff who is also a research higher degree candidate enrolled at this University may not supervise another candidate at the same level. It is recommended that supervisors who are enrolled candidates in a PhD and are supervising candidates for the degree of master by thesis do not undertake sole supervision of these candidates.

(b) Joint supervision across Schools or from outside the University (from industry or from another university) is permissible. There is no limit to the number of supervisors a candidate may have but it must be possible to ensure that all parties are able to meet regularly and agree on the direction of study. Joint supervision differs from joint enrolment.

(c) Where it is appropriate to appoint a supervisor from outside the University, who has particular expertise unavailable within the University, an additional supervisor must be appointed by the Board of the Graduate Research School or faculty, as appropriate. In cases where the proposed supervisor has not previously supervised a research higher degree candidate at UWA a curriculum vitae or other supporting material must be provided.

3. Appointment of Supervisors

When an applicant is recommended for admission to the University a prospective supervisor(s) is asked to:

• sign the application form to indicate their willingness and availability to supervise; and;

• indicate that they recommend to the Head of School that a prospective applicant be accepted to candidature.

It is expected that, where possible, direct consultation between applicant and prospective supervisor has occurred before a prospective supervisor signs an application form. Approval of an offer of candidature and/or scholarship constitutes approval of the proposed supervisor(s). Applicants are told the name(s) of the supervisor(s) when they are made an offer of candidature.

4. Changes in Supervision

Candidates may request changes in supervision during candidature, and may seek advice on this from the Graduate Research Coordinator, Head of School, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) or the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office. Applications for changes in supervision must be made in writing to the Board of the Graduate Research School or faculty, as appropriate. Normally, the current supervisor, the proposed new supervisor and the candidate must endorse/acknowledge the change. If changes involve appointment of a supervisor
from a School the new Head of School must also endorse the change. All changes must be approved by the Board of the Graduate Research School or faculty as appropriate.

5. Variation to Candidature with Implications for Supervision

Any proposed variation to candidature which has implications for supervision arrangements, such as a temporary move to another location for research purposes or a move to take up employment elsewhere, requires approval by the Board of the Graduate Research School or faculty, as appropriate, with the written support of the supervisor, well in advance of any such proposed move. It may be necessary to appoint another supervisor in any new location to ensure adequate day-to-day supervision, in addition to maintaining email or other communication between the chair of the panel and the candidate.

6. Arrangements During the Absence of a Supervisor

When a sole supervisor on a supervisory panel goes on extended leave for more than four consecutive weeks, an acting supervisor from within the University must be nominated. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to make a nomination to the Board of the Graduate Research School, normally at least a month before the supervisor departs, and after consultation with the candidate. It is expected that the original supervisor will continue to have regular contact with the candidate when practicable, but the acting supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day assistance required by the candidate. Where there is more than one supervisor, the supervisor remaining on campus when the other goes on study leave or other approved leave will normally assume primary responsibility for supervision. The Board of the Graduate Research School must still be notified that the coordinating supervisor has gone on leave.

7. Policy on Frequency of Contact and Feedback

The type and amount of contact between supervisors and candidates varies within and between Schools, and depends on a variety of factors including developing experience and expertise of the candidates and the stage of candidature. However, the recommended minimum amount of formal contact is fortnightly.

Where there is more than one supervisor, all parties should meet together regularly if possible, and notes of all formal meetings and agreements must be circulated to all parties. While it may be appropriate in some cases for supervisors to hold supervisory meetings with several candidates in a group, all candidates should have regular opportunities to meet with their supervisors individually.

Maintaining contact is considered to be a mutual responsibility; supervisor and candidate are jointly responsible for initiating discussions. If a formal meeting is not possible some form of contact (e-mail, telephone) should be maintained.

Internal Candidates
An internal candidate means a person undertaking study towards a research higher degree who, except for approved periods, will conduct research and study towards the higher degree in an approved University School for most or all of their period of candidature.

Supervisors must maintain close and regular contact with candidates. For internal candidates, the minimum amount of contact should be monthly face-to-face meetings. Candidates and supervisors should establish at the outset of candidature the basis on which contact will be made. (It is recommended that this decision be recorded in a Candidate-Supervisor Checklist if one is used.)

When acting as the UWA supervisor of an internal candidate, in a joint supervision arrangement involving an external supervisor, the supervisor must maintain contact with the candidate at least monthly, if possible on a face-to-face basis, in accordance with R58/97 of the Board of the Graduate Research School.

---

**External Candidature and Remote Supervision**

An external candidate is a person undertaking study towards a research higher degree who, as a result of their location, cannot conduct research and study towards the higher degree in an approved University School for most or all of their period of candidature.

A candidate may be permitted to enrol as an external candidate provided a supervisor is appointed at the location at which the person will be studying and that appropriate access to facilities and resources has been arranged. Regulation 11(3) permits the Board to waive the requirement for appropriate external supervision if electronic or other methods of remote supervision have been arranged and approved by the Board. Contact should be maintained during any period of fieldwork.

---

**Submission of Written Work to Supervisors**

Supervisors are expected to negotiate with candidates a schedule for regular submission of written work, and to follow up with requests for the work if necessary. Candidates are expected to submit written work by the agreed dates or, for work that has been requested specifically, within a mutually agreed period, normally not later than one month after the request. It is suggested that agreements for submission of written work be noted in the Candidate-Supervisor Checklist if one is used.

It is acknowledged that the period required to produce written work may vary depending on a variety of factors including the scope of the work requested and personal schedules. It is suggested that for pieces of work which are expected to take longer than one month to produce, the candidate provides a progress report by an agreed date, which will normally be within one month of the date of request for the work. In this case the final date for submission of the work should also be mutually agreed and noted.

---

**Feedback on Written Work**

It is expected that supervisors will comment, preferably in writing, on candidate’s written work within a mutually agreed turnaround period, normally not later than one month after submission of the work. It is suggested that the turnaround period be
negotiated between the supervisor and candidate and noted in the Candidate-supervisor Checklist if one is used.

It is acknowledged that the turnaround period may vary depending on a variety of factors including the scope of the work submitted and personal schedules. It is suggested that, for pieces of work which are expected to take longer than one month to review, interim feedback be provided by an agreed date, which will normally be within one month of the date of submission of the work. In this case the final date for receipt of feedback should also be mutually agreed and noted.

8. Specific Supervisory Responsibilities

Specific supervisory responsibilities include:

**At the Commencement of Candidature**

(a) advising on and discussing with the candidate at the commencement of candidature the research process, aims, scope and presentation of the thesis, and any orientation, course work or supplementary training necessary for the research project;

(b) clarifying the candidate's and the supervisor's respective expectations of supervision and of the operation of the supervisory panel if applicable. On the basis of this discussion the supervisor and candidate should establish guidelines and expectations pertaining to, for example, frequency of formal meetings between the supervisor and candidate; the extent and style of the supervisor’s input into the candidate’s day to day activities; turnaround time for feedback on written work; any arrangements for co-supervision and interim supervision in the case of extended absence of the supervisor, if applicable; and the candidate’s access to resources and space within the School.

(c) assisting candidates in planning an appropriate course of collateral reading, suggesting relevant background reading and giving advice on the literature review. Supervisors should also ensure that candidates are thoroughly familiar with the University resources available to them and that they are able to make full and proper use of literature sources;

(d) identifying specific areas in which the candidate requires development of their skills (e.g., computing, academic writing, statistics, English language) and referring the candidate to the appropriate sources of assistance;

**Throughout the Candidature**

(a) monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress (as required by Regulation 14)

(b) arranging acceptable meeting times with candidates for formal discussions and constructive evaluation of progress.

(c) initiating and holding frequent and adequate discussions with the candidate on the candidate's research programme. Supervisors must discuss, assess and guide the progress of their candidates at regular intervals and should encourage candidates to provide a regular written progress report on what has been achieved and to indicate objectives for the next period.
(d) requiring written work from the candidate on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule; monitoring the progress of the work in accordance with the agreed schedule; discussing the progress of the work, and any impediments to maintaining the agreed schedule, with the candidate at regular intervals;

(e) ensuring that any major decisions about the candidate’s research programme made in conversation between the supervisor and the candidate, or any major variations to agreed expectations and guidelines, are confirmed in writing and a copy given to the candidate, and to any other supervisor or advisor, and noted in the annual progress report. Use of a Candidate-Supervisor Checklist is encouraged to develop the broad framework of the supervisory relationship.

(f) advising the candidate about any plans for extended supervisor's absence from the University (e.g. on study leave, long service leave) during the candidature and the proposed arrangements for supervision during this absence, where possible with at least six month’s notice and preferably on enrolment;

(g) encouraging the candidate to be, and as far as possible ensuring that they are, actively engaged in the research course in a manner likely to produce significant results by the time of the annual report and by the time the thesis is due to be submitted, or advising the candidate in writing that progress is unsatisfactory and identifying improvements necessary for continuation of candidature;

(h) submitting to the Head of School and Board of the Graduate Research School an annual report on the progress of the candidate, noting any significant achievements, difficulties and problems discussed with the candidate, including inadequate progress if applicable, and the action taken or advice given;

(i) to address the University’s duty of care for candidates, bringing any serious concerns about the candidate's professional wellbeing or conduct to the immediate attention of the Graduate Research Coordinator or Head of School;

Preparation of the Thesis

(a) recognising that the thesis is the candidate’s own work, that the candidate is the sole author of the thesis under the mentorship of the supervisor, and that the role of the supervisor in preparation of the thesis is to be a guide, advisor and critical reviewer rather than co-author or editor;

(b) acknowledging that, while it is highly desirable for candidates to publish their work throughout the candidature, preparation of material for publication should not be at the expense of timely submission of the thesis;

(c) developing with the candidate a timetable for preparation and submission of the thesis within the time allotted for candidature;

(d) discussing the form and content of the thesis, and the processes of thesis planning and writing, freely with the candidate, and, where necessary, assisting the candidate with strategies for planning and writing the thesis;

(e) advising on the outline of the thesis and providing guidelines and feedback about appropriate style, accuracy and use of English to assist candidates to develop their own writing style and proficiency in editing and correcting their own work.
(f) where necessary, referring the candidate to appropriate sources of assistance with such matters as English expression, academic writing and statistical analysis and interpretation, and doing so as early in the candidature as the need for this assistance is identified;

(g) commenting on the content and the drafts of the thesis and, at the time of submission, certifying that the thesis is properly presented, conforms to the Regulations and is, therefore, prima facie, worthy of examination;

(h) developing with the candidate a timetable for preparation and submission of material for publication and assisting to prepare these, with appropriate agreements about co-authorship.

Thesis examination and revision

(a) recognising that the role of the supervisor as guide, advisor and critical reviewer rather than co-author or editor of the thesis extends through the thesis examination and review processes.

(b) when so requested, assisting the Graduate Research Coordinator to prepare advice for the Board of the Graduate Research School that will help it to classify the thesis appropriately in the event that the Board has received diverse or adverse reports from the examiners.

(c) advising the candidate on how best to revise the thesis after classification to bring it to the required standard and providing feedback about the revisions that have been made and the candidate's Report of Revisions.

Other Support

(a) aiming to be an accessible advisor, available to counsel, provide support or references to appropriate other areas of the University or Guild on both academic and personal matters.

(b) suggesting ways in which the candidate can make the most effective use of time;

(c) recognising personal strengths and limitations and, in particular, identifying situations in which a candidate needs to be referred to colleagues for assistance;

(d) committing the time necessary to allow for maintaining the close and regular contact with the candidate, (which for internal candidates shall normally include at least monthly face-to-face meetings) and establishing at the outset the basis on which contact will be made.

(e) encouraging candidates to give seminars and to submit articles for publication.

(f) developing strategies for contact with and introductions to other researchers in related areas, including external agency, industry, or other institutional links.

(g) advising the candidate on post-doctoral research, visiting fellow appointments or other career options, and on any prospective publications arising from the final thesis.
(h) in consultation with the Head of School, and after giving the candidate an
opportunity to comment on possible examiners for the thesis, nominating examiners
to the Board of the Graduate Research School, for approval by the Dean normally at
least three weeks before the thesis is due to be submitted;

(i) in consultation with the Head of School, advising the candidate on any examiners'
recommendations for amendments to the thesis, and (if required) advising the
candidate during the revision process for re-submission and re-examination.

Support with Resources and Facilities

(a) provision of necessary material resources to complete the thesis, including
fieldwork or other research travel support, orientation, learning support, prescribed
course work, training courses, and conference support as required,

(b) facilitating contact between the Candidate and other researchers in related areas,
including external agency, industry, or other institutional links.