The University of Western Australia

BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

3 September 2008

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMBERS:
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) (Professor Robyn Owens) – Chair
Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Associate Professor Annette George)
Members Nominated by Academic Board:
  Professor Craig Atkins (School of Plant Biology) – Deputy Chair
  Professor Arun Dharmarajan (School of Anatomy and Human Biology)
  Associate Professor Judith Johnston (School of Social and Cultural Studies)
  Dr Allan McKinley (School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
  Associate Professor Ian Jacobs (School of Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care)

Co-opted Members:
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  Professor Dennis Haskell (School of Social and Cultural Studies)
  Associate Professor Brett Nener (School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering)
  Professor Greg Ivey (School of Environmental Systems Engineering)
  Associate Professor Mathew Martin-Iverson (School of Medicine and Pharmacology)
  Associate Professor Andrew Page (School of Psychology)
  Professor Susan Prescott (School of Paediatrics and Child Health)
  Dr Srilata Ravi (School of Humanities)
  Professor Jim Whelan (School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)

Dr Krystyna Haq (Graduate Education Officer)
Postgraduate Students’ Association President (Mr Daniel Bond)

BY INVITATION:
Dr Sato Juniper (Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships)
Dr Campbell Thomson (Director, Development and Research Services)
Dr Michael Azariadis (Graduate Education Officer)
Ms Jennifer Stevenson (School Manager, School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
Dr Aris Junaidi (Chair of Research Committee, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
Dr David Preen (School of Population Health)

AGENDA: PARTS I – III

The next meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School will be held in the Chancellor’s Room on Tuesday, 9 September 2008 at 2.15p.m.

Parts I and II of the agenda are to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. Parts III and IV are for discussion. A member may request the removal of an item from Parts I or II to Part III.

DR JOANNE CASTELLI
Executive Officer
Board of the Graduate Research School
1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST – REF: F34

The Chair will invite members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest, if applicable, with regard to items on the agenda.

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 12 August 2008.

3. ITEMS/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS FOR NOTING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ITEM/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS</th>
<th>ACTION BY:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest policy</td>
<td>GRSO</td>
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<td>Change in format of printed thesis</td>
<td>GRSO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft questions about Statistics competency (by circulation)</td>
<td>GRSO</td>
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PART I – ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE FIRST ROUND REVIEW PROCESS OF GRST SUBMISSIONS 2008 REF: F19619

Members will recall that at the 8 July Board meeting, the recommendations arising from the first round review process of GRST submissions for 2008 were presented by Dr Michael Azariadis. During discussion of the recommendations, data on the breakdown of applications and funding by School was sought, and this has been provided by Dr Azariadis as Attachment A1 – A3.

In summary, 56 eligible submissions were made, with the greatest number (8) being from Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences, followed by Animal Biology (6), Plant Biology (5) and Social and Cultural studies (4), with other Schools submitting three or less eligible applications.

The attachment provides details of the 14 top ranked submissions, which were awarded funds to a total amount of $50,000. Of these, the top five ranked submissions were awarded the full amount requested, with the next nine awarded part funding.

For noting.

5. FIELD OF RESEARCH CODES

Members may be aware that the Australian Government has introduced a new set of codes, Field of Research (FOR) codes, which will replace the Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) codes currently in use in the Australian Standards Research Classification. The change in the set of codes to be collected has occurred alongside the introduction of Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), which is the new research quality and evaluation system that will be replacing the Research Quality Framework (RQF).
Unfortunately, the mapping of RFCD to FOR data will not be simple, as in many cases one RFCD code could map to many FOR codes. Also, Callista, which is the repository of all student data, is not currently configured for the collection of FOR codes. A further issue is that it is easy to confuse the two sets of codes: they have the same structure, and in some cases the same numerals are used, but with different descriptions.

Although early indications are that Higher Degree by Research data will not be part of ERA, at least in its first iteration, it is nevertheless important that the University ensures that it collects FOR data for HDR students. The following actions have been taken:

- A mapping exercise (RFCD to FOR) has been completed by Planning Services insofar as is possible. Approximately 70% of the codes can be mapped relatively easily.
- An audit has been conducted of the current quality of the RFCD data in Callista. For research-only courses the data are generally of good quality, because a policy of zero-tolerance for missing statistical data was implemented by the GRSO in 2006. However, for some other courses the data are more patchy.
- Planning Services, Graduate Research and Scholarships and the SIMS team (responsible for Callista) have discussed the logistics of the changeover and agreed that it would be prudent to collect both the RFCD and FOR data during the changeover period. That is, a separate data table will be created for the FOR rather than overwriting the RFCDs. Hopefully, this will help to prevent the two sets of codes being scrambled. All forms will be updated accordingly.
- The SIMS team will liaise with the software provider to create a dedicated table in Callista for the FOR, which will record the history of any changes during a student’s candidature.
- Faculties will be requested to update the RFCD data, at least of current students, in the HDR courses that they administer in preparation for data migration from RFCD to FOR through a data map.
- Data will be migrated, and FOR codes will start being updated in Callista, when it is possible to do so.

For noting

**PART II – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC**

There are no items

**PART III – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION**

6. **PROPOSED JOINT AND/OR DOUBLE-BADGED TRANSNATIONAL PHD PROGRAMME BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND NANJING UNIVERSITY, CHINA REF: F**

Attached for members’ consideration (Attachment B1 – B22) is a proposed Joint and/or Double-badged transnational PhD Programme between the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Western Australia and the Medical College of Nanjing University.

For discussion and approval.
7. PROPOSED JOINT AND/OR DOUBLE-BADGED TRANSNATIONAL PHD PROGRAMME BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY, CHINA REF: F

Attached for members’ consideration (Attachment C1 – C23) is a proposed Joint and/or Double-badged transnational PhD Programme between the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Western Australia and the Medical College of Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

For discussion and approval.

8. PROPOSED JOINT AND/OR DOUBLE-BADGED TRANSNATIONAL PHD PROGRAMME BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY, CHINA REF: F

Attached for members’ consideration (Attachment D1 - D22) is a proposed Joint and/or Double-badged transnational PhD Programme between the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Western Australia and the Medical College of Zhejiang University.

For discussion and approval.

9. REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE PhD

Members may recall discussions at the February and May meetings of the Board about proposed changes to the structure of the PhD to allow for the inclusion of more coursework, especially in the first year. The Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences had requested this to accommodate particular groups of international students who require additional coursework as preparation for the PhD and for whom it is not practical to require completion of a Higher Degree by Research Preliminary programme before commencement. It is not difficult to expand the amount of coursework permitted as part of a PhD, and the relevant rules have already been re-drafted for this purpose should the Board decide to recommend this (Attachment E1 – E3). However, other parts of the proposal, such as the provision of exit strategies, are problematic.

Extracts from the minutes of the February and May meetings are attached for members’ information (Attachment E4 – E7).

Following the May meeting the Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, has discussed the Board's comments with the Faculty Manager and agreed that a more practical approach might be to establish a combined coursework Master/PhD in which:

- the first year consists of 48 points of coursework, including a unit dedicated to the preparation of a Research Proposal;
- the Research Proposal is due after 12 months;
- the Confirmation of Candidature occurs after 18 months;
- at least a third of the course must be completed before a student is allowed to exit with the lesser qualification (the Master).

Each faculty would be requested to establish or identify its own Master course for the purpose of the combined course. Those faculties not wishing to do so could be exempt.

For discussion

10. PROJECT TO REDESIGN THE METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING COMPLETION FUNDING

Some members may be aware of the disputes that can arise with respect to the distribution of funding, particularly completion funding, for HDR students who are jointly enrolled in two schools or who have non-standard enrolment histories, such as having moved between schools or between sole and joint school enrolment during their candidature, or for whom the perception is that the burden of supervision or other support has been disproportionately borne by one of their joint schools.
A project is underway between the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office, two faculty staff and a representative of Financial Services, to analyse the problem and propose a change to the mechanism for directing completion funding. The proposal will be brought before the Board in due course. A brief outline of the project is attached (Attachment F1 – F4) for members’ information and comment. Dr Juniper will speak to this item.

For discussion

11. UNIVERSITY GENERAL RULES: THESIS WORD LIMITS

Members will recall the discussion at the 12 August 2008 Board meeting regarding the word limits for PhD theses. It was noted that research conducted by the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office regarding the policies of other universities revealed that most respondent universities specified a limit of 100,000 words for a PhD thesis, and most did not include appendices and other ancillary material in the limit but some did include footnotes. The Board favoured the approach taken by the University of Melbourne, which encourages students to prepare theses of up to 80,000 words but does not require them to seek special permission unless they wish to exceed the limit of 100,000 words.

As a result of discussion of the issue, the Board resolved (R80/08) that the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office should redraft rule 1.3.1.36 (1) (which at present states that a thesis submitted for the degree of PhD must not exceed 100,000 words, excluding tables, footnotes, endnotes appendices and other illustrative matter) to one which encourages the candidate to aim to submit a thesis of up to 80,000 words including footnotes, but excluding words in tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices. The redrafted rule is provided as Attachment G1.

For discussion.