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

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

The following conflicts of interest were declared in relation to Part IV of the Agenda (Student Matters):

- Professor Judith Johnson declared a conflict with respect to the student referred to Part IV Item 2(c) and did not speak to this item;
- Dr Allan McKinley declared a conflict with respect to the student referred to Part IV Item 3(b) and did not speak to this item

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

RESOLVED – 73
that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on 8 September 2009 be endorsed.

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

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<tr>
<th>ITEM/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS</th>
<th>ACTION BY:</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<td>Change in format of printed thesis</td>
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PART I – ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

Members noted that Professor Dennis Haskell had resigned from his position on the Board to concentrate on his new duties as Chair of the Australia Council Literature Board. The Chair congratulated Professor Haskell on this prestigious appointment and thanked him for his contribution to the Board of the Graduate Research School.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE DOCTORATE

Members had before them a paper prepared by Winthrop Professor David Plowman in response to a call for submissions regarding the Australian Qualifications Framework and its proposed new architecture for degrees. Professor Plowman summarised the history and evolution of the doctorate internationally, and had also described the variety of structures of doctorates in Australia generally and at UWA in particular.

Members noted that the paper recommended that UWA create a Working Party that would include strong representation from the Graduate Research School. The aim of the Working Party would be to investigate the opportunities for rationalisation and innovation afforded by the current course review, and to enable a more comprehensive set of recommendations concerning Cycle 3 courses at UWA. The Board will be informed of developments in this regard in due course.

Noted.

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

There were no items

PART III – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

6. REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISORS FOR HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

Members were reminded that the Board has, over the years, determined various criteria for the appointment of supervisors and various policy points for the conduct of supervision. Members had before them a summary of the current rules and policy for nomination of
supervisors. These had been extracted from the University General Rules for Academic Courses and the Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors.

In brief, the following main principles are used in the appointment of supervisors:

(i) Every student must have at least one supervisor who is a member of academic staff of UWA (Rule 1.3.1.7 (2); Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(ii) Other supervisors may also be appointed, from the professional staff or external to UWA (Rules 1.3.1.7 (2) and 1.3.1.7 (7); Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(iii) A supervisor is normally required to hold academic qualifications at least equivalent to the level being supervised Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(iv) A supervisor must reasonably expect to hold a University position for the period of candidature of the student being supervised Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(v) A supervisor is expected to have relevant background for the project being supervised and be actively engaged in research Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(vi) Every student must have a Co-ordinating Supervisor who is a staff member of the school in which the student is enrolled. The Coordinating Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all administrative and reporting requirements of the supervision are met. The Coordinating Supervisor need not necessarily be the supervisor who provides the main academic input to the supervision (Rules 1.3.1.7 (8), 1.3.1.7 (9), 1.3.1.7 (10) and 1.3.1.7 (11))

(vii) Co-supervision is desirable, especially in cases where a supervisor has other heavy commitments (Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors 2 (a));

(viii) Every student must have at least one supervisor who has previously supervised a research higher degree student to successful completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution (Rule 1.3.1.7 (3))

(ix) A supervisor who has not previously supervised a research higher degree student to successful completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution must attend an approved workshop on supervising postgraduate students (Rule 1.3.1.7 (4)).

The Associate Director, Graduate Research and Scholarships, was invited to speak to this item.

The Board heard that concern has been expressed that an increasing number of supervisors fail to keep abreast of changes in the management of Higher Degree by Research students that have occurred as a result of changes in national policy and legislation, and University policies. This is of particular concern with respect to Coordinating Supervisors, who need to be up to date with requirements in order to fulfil their roles.

Rule 1.3.1.7 (4) states that a supervisor who has not previously supervised a Higher Degree by Research student to completion is obliged to attend a workshop on supervision. However, in practice not all new supervisors do this. Further, having previously supervised even several students to completion is not a guarantee that a supervisor is aware of their obligations in the current environment. This is especially so if the supervision was undertaken in another university. A change in practice was recommended in the interests of risk.
management, quality assurance, quality enhancement, professionalism and enhancement of students' experience of research.

The Board had before it for consideration a proposal to establish a simple system to register supervisors of Higher Degree by Research students.

Key points of the proposal were:

(1) No changes would be made to existing supervisory arrangements;

(2) There would be three levels of registration, for internal supervisors (see below for descriptions);

(3) There would be no changes to the arrangements for external supervision;

(4) All existing internal supervisors would automatically be in at least Level One;

(5) After the system is implemented only Level Two or Level Three staff would be appointed as Coordinating Supervisors for new students;

The proposed levels were as follows:

Level One: This would be all existing internal supervisors plus all new suitably qualified staff who attend a workshop on supervision within their first year of employment. Level One staff could co-supervise but could not be appointed as Coordinating Supervisors (and therefore they could also not be appointed as sole supervisors).

Level Two: These would be suitably qualified staff who have attended at least a half day workshop on supervision within the last two years and continue to update their knowledge by attending a workshop every two years. These staff could be appointed as Coordinating Supervisors.

Level Three: These are appointed by the Board of the Graduate Research School. They are Level Two staff who have, for example, served as Graduate Research Coordinators or are in another way determined by the Board to be qualified to be senior supervisor mentors. They would be identified as Invited Mentors and encouraged to contribute to supervisor development and networking activities.

Essentially, implementation of this proposal would mean that all new supervisory staff would be obliged to attend a development activity for supervisors and that all new and existing staff would be obliged to attend such an activity before they could be newly appointed as a Coordinating Supervisor. However, there would be no effect on existing supervisory arrangements.

The Board was advised that if it approved development of the strategy proposed above, then further draft amendments to the Rules would be brought to the Board.

In addition, the Board was requested to approve the following amendment to Rule 1.3.1.7(4).

The Graduate Research and Scholarships Office had recommended this amendment regardless of whether or not the Board approved development of the strategy above:

1.3.1.7(1) The head of school concerned must nominate at least one supervisor but may nominate two or more supervisors for a student and must, before the commencement of the student's prescribed period of advanced study and research, submit the name(s) of the supervisor(s) to the Board for approval together with any other details requested by the Board.
(2) A student must have at least one supervisor who is a member of staff of this University.

(3) A student must have at least one supervisor who has previously supervised a research higher degree student to successful completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution.

(4) Any new staff member who wishes to supervise higher degree by research students must attend an approved workshop on supervising postgraduate students, either before the supervision commences or within their first year of employment.

 Deleted: (4) A supervisor who has not previously supervised a research higher degree student to successful completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution must attend an approved workshop on supervising postgraduate students.


(6) If the Dean of the Graduate Research School is of the opinion that a supervisor may have infringed the Code of Good Practice for Postgraduate Student Research Supervision or the Guidelines on Research Ethics and Research Conduct, the Dean may, after consultation with the Board of the Graduate Research School, refer the matter to the Vice-Chancellor.

(7) In addition to the supervisor(s) nominated in accordance with (1), (2) and (3), the head of school may recommend the appointment of a co-supervisor who is not a member of staff of this University.

(8) If a student has more than one supervisor the head of school must nominate one of the supervisors as the co-ordinating supervisor.

(9) The co-ordinating supervisor must be a member of staff of this University.

(10) The co-ordinating supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the administrative and reporting requirements of the supervisors are met.

(11) The co-ordinating supervisor receives all correspondence from the Graduate Research School relating to the student and is responsible for communicating with and between other supervisors.

(12) If a student has more than one supervisor, the supervisors and the student must discuss the relative roles of the supervisors, record this in writing and lodge the record with the Graduate Research School as part of the Research Proposal.

For clarity of discussion, the Chair asked the Board to consider the item in two parts:-

Part 1: Amendment of Rule 1.3.1.7(4), and
Part 2: Formal registration of supervisors

Part 1: Amendment of Rule 1.3.1.7(4)

In the discussion the following main points were raised:

- Obligatory development for supervisors is common in Australian universities, including in the Group of Eight, and UWA is out of step with other universities in not mandating attendance at development activities.
- A member commented that her school, which has 230 Higher Degree by Research students, would welcome a requirement for Coordinating Supervisors to attend development activities. It is likely that Graduate Research Coordinators in other
schools would be similarly appreciative as it is they who in the first instance have to manage the consequences of errors and misunderstandings.

- A member asked whether consideration could be given to staff who have attended supervisor development at other universities. There was a general consensus that this could be accommodated as long as the content was relevant to UWA requirements. For example, most of the Group of Eight universities have similar processes and requirements to those at UWA but not all Australian universities do, and the processes and requirements in universities outside Australia are often very different.

- Concern was expressed that obligatory attendance at a development activity would be considered as unnecessary by new staff who were highly qualified and experienced supervisors.

- To overcome this objection it was suggested that those new staff transferring from other institutions who perceive that they do not require development could be encouraged to participate by being invited to help deliver the training.

- Members suggested that the development activities could be broken into several components:
  1. a short, core component of rules, policies, ethics and expectations, possibly as part of the Foundations of Teaching and Learning course which all new academic staff are already obliged to attend, and which is offered though the Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL);
  2. a workshop on issues of particular importance in the supervision of international students for staff in those schools which have large numbers of these students;
  3. a range of expanded workshops (half to one day in length) of more general or skills-based content, similar to some sections of the workshops already presented by the Graduate Research School in conjunction with CATL.

- A member suggested that staff who attend development courses should be issued with a Certificate of Attendance.

- Could the core component be offered online? Then it would be simple to track those who had and those who had not completed it. There was general agreement that offering the core component online would be highly desirable. The Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships commented that, in the meantime, the Director of CATL has indicated that CATL is willing to record attendance.

The Board

RESOLVED - 74

To recommend to Academic Council that Rule 1.3.1.7 (4) be amended as follows:

(4) Any new staff member who wishes to supervise higher degree by research students must attend an approved workshop on supervising postgraduate students, either before the supervision commences or within their first year of employment.

Deleted: (4) A supervisor who has not previously supervised a research higher degree student to successful completion at this or another recognised tertiary institution must attend an approved workshop on supervising postgraduate students.

The Board agreed that in this context the workshop would include:

- a one to two hour core component, hopefully to be offered online and/or as an obligatory part of the Foundations of Teaching and Learning programme if CATL agrees to this; and
- obligatory attendance at a separate, approved development workshop of at least half a day duration.

Part 2: Formal registration of supervisors

The Board then discussed the proposal for registration of supervisors. In the discussion, the following main points were raised:
A member commented that the quality of supervisory practice and awareness of the requirements of supervision should be addressed as part of the annual Performance Development Review.

The different supervisory roles are relevant to workload models in schools and faculties. The workload for a Coordinating Supervisor might be greater than that for a co-supervisor. Another member commented that this would differ from school to school and from case to case.

A member asked for clarification of the issue of how staff would maintain or lose their registration status. For example, what would happen if a staff member failed to keep their training up to date? Would they be able to continue as Coordinating Supervisor for an existing student if they were already in this role? The response was that it was intended that in a situation like this a Coordinating Supervisor could continue in that role with an existing student but would not be appointed as Coordinating Supervisor for a new student until they had satisfied the requirement.

A member questioned whether CATL would be able to handle the large volume of staff attending workshops and was assured that the Director of CATL was confident that this would be possible.

The regularity with which supervisors are expected to attend development activities should be longer than two years. Perhaps every four or five years would be more appropriate.

This raised the question as to how often it is necessary for supervisors to refresh their understanding of rules and requirements.

It was suggested that training online would be a more convenient and manageable format and remove the necessity of attendance at a specified time. However, a number of members expressed the opinion that online training would mean loss of face to face interaction and input. Online format is appropriate for some content but not for all.

Could the levels of registration replace the "quality of research environment" criterion that is currently used to rate applications for research scholarships? The Chair explained that the "quality of the research environment" is a criterion for International Postgraduate Research Scholarships that is required by the Federal Government. Use of a registration system could be part of this but would be unlikely to cover the whole criterion.

The Board agreed that the proposal to introduce a system for registration of supervisors had merit and should be developed further. The proposal will be brought back to the Board in due course.