PRESENT:
Dean of the Graduate Research School (Professor Robyn Owens) as Chair
Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Associate Professor Annette George)
Graduate Education Officer (Dr Krystyna Haq)
Postgraduate Students’ Association President (Ms Natalie Mast)
Professor Craig A Atkins (Deputy Chair)
Associate Professor Judith Johnston
Associate Professor Ian McArthur
Dr Allan McKinley
Professor Mark Randolph
Professor Jim Whelan
Professor John Cordery
Professor Sarah Dunlop
Professor Norman Etherington
Professor Matthew Knuiman
Dr Bu Yeap

Dr Sato Juniper (Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships)

By Invitation:
Graduate Education Officer (Dr Judith Skene)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Mr Chester Cutinha

APOLOGIES:
Professor Ken Clements
Associate Professor Kevin Croft
Ms Susan Lewis (Acting Director, Research Services)

1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members were requested to declare any conflicts of interest that they may have with respect to any items on the agenda. Professor Sarah Dunlop declared a potential for perception of conflict of interest with respect to the candidates referred to in items 9(a)(i) and 10(i) and did not speak to these items. Associate Professor Judith Johnston declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 10(viii) and left the room during the discussion of this item.

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

RESOLVED – 121/05

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 13 September 2005 be confirmed.
3. MINIMUM ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS – REF: F7334

Members were advised of recent changes to the University's minimum requirements for English language competency.

The main changes, due to Academic Council Resolution (R17/05) were:
- TOEFL (paper-based) which was 550; changed to 570
- TOEFL (computer-based) which was 213; changed to 230
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English which was B; changed to C.

Members were also advised that while these were minimum requirements, individual areas of the University were at liberty to set their own standards above these.

Also provided for members’ information were the following qualifications that are currently in operation for admission of candidates to courses administered by the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification through WA TEE or equivalent</th>
<th>Pass in English, English Literature, or English as a Second Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCE Ordinary Level English</td>
<td>C6 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL (Paper-Based total)</td>
<td>570, with a TWE of no less than 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL (Computer-Based total)</td>
<td>230, with a TWE of no less than 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>6.5 (no individual band less than 6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English</td>
<td>B grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Scholarship Applicants</td>
<td>Evidence of a TOEFL score of at least 580 (paper-based) or 237 (computer-based) and a Test of Written English (TWE) of 4.5, or IELTS score of 6.5 with no individual band less than 6.0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications assessed on an individual basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further change endorsed by the Academic Council was the addition of the following:
- Successful completion of the last two years of full-time or equivalent degree studies undertaken in Australia is now accepted as minimum evidence of English language competency.
- Council also approved that degree studies taught and examined in English outside Australia, where the Admissions Centre or International Centre was satisfied that these were equivalent, could be accepted.

In the past, in the case of applicants for research higher degrees, these and other qualifications had been covered by the 'other qualifications considered on an individual basis' clause allowed by the Graduate Research School.
However, recently there had been some confusion whereby staff in some schools had assumed that because of the recent changes to the University’s minimum requirements an applicant would be deemed qualified if they had studied in English, regardless of any judgement about the equivalence of the studies, and have advised applicants of this.

The Board was requested to address the following questions:

(i) Did the Board wish to reduce its requirement for a Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency B to C?
(ii) Did the Board wish to make any other change to the current method of assessing English language competency? In particular, did the Board wish to change the current practice with respect to applicants who do not have formal qualifications in English but who may have completed previous tertiary studies in English? Currently, these applicants are assessed on an individual basis.

In relation to the first question, the Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, advised that the International Centre had advised that a C is equivalent to the required levels for the IELTS and TOEFL. Very few candidates cite the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency as their primary qualification in English.

In relation to the second question, the Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, recommended that the current method of assessing individually those applications where the only qualification offered is degree studies in English be retained, and that successful completion of degree studies in English, whether in Australia or elsewhere, not be published as an automatic eligibility criterion. In practice, completion of degree studies in English, and particularly in Australia, would often be assessed as sufficient. In addition, applicants can be issued with offers that are conditional on their later demonstrating that they meet the University’s requirements. However, publishing this criterion is problematic, as it can lead to confusion among applicants and prospective supervisors. Problems have been encountered since the University changed its minimum criteria.

In the discussion that followed, the following main points were raised:

- Should the Graduate Research School’s English language requirements be changed to bring them in line with the University’s minimum requirements so as to give international students a better chance of entry?
- The reduction of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency from B to C is an attempt to bring about parity with the minimum requirement set for scores from other assessing authorities.
- There is an argument that the requirements for research degrees could be more relaxed than for other courses, because the supervisor can, and should, work closely with the candidate to develop their English skills.
- Unfortunately, not all supervisors are willing or able to assist candidates to improve their English skills to the required level.
- There is no need to fix something that is not broken – the current system and criteria used by the Board are adequate and appropriate and should not be changed.
- A difficulty is that some applicants who do not have formal qualifications, but who might be deemed eligible on an individual basis, may not be aware of the latter and may be discouraged from applying [NB: the Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, undertook to ensure that communication to applicants is improved].
- Candidates who have completed the last two years of full-time or equivalent degree studies undertaken in Australia or undertaken degree studies taught and examined in English outside Australia should continue to be assessed on a case to case basis.
The Board

RESOLVED – 122/05

(a) Not to change the minimum English language requirements for admission of candidates into graduate research courses, ie that a B grade in the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English will be required for courses administered by the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office; and
(b) Applicants who were applying for their English language competency to be considered either on the basis of the successful completion of the last two years of full-time or equivalent degree studies undertaken in Australia or on the basis of degree studies taught and examined in English outside Australia, would continue to be assessed on an individual basis.

4. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF VARIATIONS OF CANDIDATURE AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Board members had before them a proposal from the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office to set nominal limits on variations of candidature for graduate research candidates. The proposed limits were intended as guidelines and were not meant to be inflexible. In its proposal the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office acknowledged that in the management of graduate research candidates it would always be necessary to allow flexibility in recognition of particular circumstances. However, it wished to signal to candidates and supervisors that some limit was appropriate.

Proposed Guidelines
The Graduate Research and Scholarships Office proposed the following:

- that changes between full-time and part-time candidature and scholarship should normally be for no less than a semester (or three months) at a time;
- that changes to supervision should normally be for no less than a semester (or three months) at a time;
- that suspensions of candidature and scholarship should normally be for no less than one month at a time;
- that any variation to a scholarship will normally be requested at least three weeks prior to the start of the variation.

In special circumstances these limits could be waived if necessary.

These new guidelines would assist to limit workloads in the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office and in Schools, and would also allow better regulation of variations that may have serious consequences for funding of schools.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were raised:

- Supervisors are also finding it time consuming and difficult to submit necessary documentation when they are to be away for short periods of time and intend to continue to supervise candidates via email.
- It was never the intention of the Graduate Research School that alternative supervisors be nominated formally to cover short periods of absence when the supervision is continuing via email. Clearly, there has been a misunderstanding in some schools.
- While supervision and discussion via email is suitable for some disciplines, this mode of supervision would not be appropriate in certain environments, especially where laboratory experiments are involved. Continuous supervision in some environments is imperative, as there could be insurance and workplace safety issues.
• While some supervisors will need to arrange for a replacement supervisor to ensure continuous supervision for periods when they are away, it may not be necessary to update the changes on Callista for periods of less than three months [NB: an email to the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office would still be appreciated, to advise what the supervision arrangements are to be. This would be placed on the candidate's file].

• There is a potential for funding to be lost disproportionately if candidates are suspended for short times across census dates. This will not always be compensated by enrolment for extra time at the end of candidature.

• Including "three months" and "one semester" in the guidelines is confusing. "Three months" should suffice.

The Board to accept the proposed guidelines and

RESOLVED – 123/05

(a) that changes between full-time and part-time candidature and scholarship should normally be for no less than three months at a time.
(b) that changes to supervision should normally be for no less than three months at a time.
(c) that suspensions of candidature and scholarship should normally be for no less than one month at a time.
(d) that any variation to a scholarship will normally be requested at least three weeks prior to the start of the variation.

5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RULES FOR EXAMINATION OF THE MASTER OF MUSIC (IN PERFORMANCE) – REF: F10221

Members noted that the School of Music had requested some changes to the Rules for examination of the Master of Music (in Performance). The changes had been proposed in order to accommodate the difficulties the School was experiencing with the need to identify, in advance of the two recitals currently required for the Master of Music, two examiners who might be able to attend both recitals. The difficulties arose from the fact that the recitals were often separated by some considerable time, and were also often assessed both by a local examiner present at the recital and an external examiner who examined via recordings of the recitals.

Members were advised that previous to the recent changes to the Rules for Master of Music recital examinations, the recitals were always examined by recording externally at the end of the degree along with the thesis component. The School had applied to change this as it is preferable for recitals to be examined in situ where possible. However, it is not practical to expect both examiners to be present at both recitals, since the performances under the current degree structure could take place more than a year apart, depending on the candidate’s research plan, and given that at least one of the examiners has to be external to Western Australia.

Members were provided with the proposed changes to the regulations concerning recital examinations by the School of Music.
The Board

RESOLVED – 124/05

to recommend to the Academic Board/Council that the attached changes to the rules of the Master’s Degrees by Research administered by the Board of the Graduate Research School, Division 7 – Master of Music (Attachment A), be adopted.

6. PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY

Members had before them a draft Memorandum of Agreement for the establishment of a double-badged doctoral degree program between The University of Western Australia (UWA) and Zhejiang University (ZJU). The purpose of this Agreement was to establish a double doctoral degree program between UWA and ZJU. Candidates in this program would be jointly supervised by academics from both UWA and ZJU. Successful graduates would be awarded a doctoral degree by both institutions, stating that the award was made as the result of an agreement between the partner institutions.

Professor Owens briefed the Board on the proposed agreement between the two universities. During the ensuing discussion the following main points were raised:

• The exchange of candidates could be unbalanced at the individual discipline or school level, but it would be important to work toward a balance at the institution level. ZJU is a much larger institution than UWA, with about 125,000 students. Currently, schools in the Faculties of Life and Physical Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences and Business are interested in forming links with ZJU.
• Graduates would be awarded the doctoral degree from the institution nominated as the home institution, and the certificate would indicate that the award was made as a result of an agreement between the partner institutions.
• The arrangement would be similar in nature to existing co-tutelle arrangements with French institutions.
• Research Training Scheme (RTS) funding will be received for candidates where UWA is the home institution, but there is some confusion about whether DEST currently counts completions for candidates whose home institution is outside Australia but whose host institution is in Australia. DEST has indicated that it is working to ensure that all such completions are counted for calculation of RTS funding.
• It is hard to see what the advantage of this arrangement would be for schools unless the completions count.
• Schools and Faculties should explore the possibility of seeking funding assistance from the State Government to assist with costs for candidates for whom UWA is the host institution, and for whom we will not receive load funding in the normal way.
• The Board should concern itself with the academic, rather than the financial, considerations of the proposal.
• ZJU has adequate resources in terms of finances and equipment but appears to lack supervisory expertise. Their motive is to ensure adequate research training for their candidates.
• Will candidates whose home institution is UWA be disadvantaged when they are at the host institution in an environment where some supervisors are known to supervise forty or fifty candidates at a time?
• The arrangement could be seen as a politically strategic move that will benefit candidates whose home institution is ZJU and possibly disadvantage candidates whose home institution is UWA in the short term, but will benefit both institutions over the long term.
• This is part of the current drive toward internationalisation, particularly in research training. Mobility is highly sought after in the current global economic climate. Erasmus Mundus and the Bologna Protocol are strategies that have been adopted in Europe to address this drive. There will be some good career outcomes from this for some candidates.

• The current proposal differs from some recent co-tutelle arrangements that have been made between individual schools (eg Physics) at UWA and their counterparts in international universities, in that those arrangements have tended to be "bottom up", whereas the current proposal is for a "top down" agreement between two universities that will include many schools.

• What will UWA's input to the thesis examination be? Would UWA be willing to lend its crest to the award of a degree for which it has no say in the examination process, as would be the case under the proposal for candidates whose home institution is ZJU?

• ZJU requires the publication of three papers in ISI journals before a candidate is allowed to submit the thesis. Their standards are high.

• It is a concern that the ZJU candidates will not write their theses in English.

• It is not clear whether candidates will receive a degree from each institution or one joint degree.

The Board

RESOLVED – 125/05

to recommend to the Academic Board/Council that, pending clarification that The University of Western Australia (UWA) was prepared to lend its crest to a degree where the candidate’s thesis would be examined under the regulations and processes of Zheijiang University over which UWA had no control, to approve the Memorandum subject to the establishment of the Agreement.

Members also requested that their general comments and concerns, outlined above, be communicated to the Academic Board/Council.

7. PRIZES FOR HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS – REF: 8211

Board members had before them the following recommendations, which were in the Final Report of the 2004/2005 Prizes for Higher Degree by Research Achievements for discussion and endorsement for future rounds:

1. That Heads of School be asked to include in their letter of support a comment on the standard of the journal in which the paper is published, indicating its ranked position in the field and the number of journals in the field. This was seen to be more useful than an impact factor, as these varied widely across fields. It was felt that comparisons using absolute values disadvantaged some disciplines.

2. That the guidelines for the prizes make clear what constitutes a Creative Work, namely:
   - Quality of idea or content
   - Level of skills
   - Creativity and innovation
   - Originality of work
   - Resolution of work.
3. That in future prize rounds, the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel not be asked to consider submissions involving experimental science (including Psychology) unless their subject matter clearly marks them as belonging to this group; e.g. Linguistics.

4. That in future prize rounds applicants be required to provide copies of their submission as it had been printed in the stated publication, or, in the case of work not yet published, in the latest possible proof form.

5. That Heads of School and/or student supervisors be asked to include in their letter of support a comment on:

   In the case of journal articles:
   - the practices and rigour of the journal's refereeing process; and
   - the standing of the journal in which the paper is published.

   The standing of the journal was considered to be of prime importance, particularly in regard to establishing the quality of the submission itself at the time of application, and the rigour of the process of review it had undergone.

   In the case of a paper in an edited book:
   - the standing of the publisher; and
   - the practices and rigour of the publisher's refereeing and editorial processes.

6. That the guidelines for the prizes make clear that, where the work submitted is a chapter in a book, the referees’ reports on the chapter (rather than the whole book) should be submitted.

7. That evidence submitted with an application be mainly peer-review based and not publicity-based.

8. To maintain consistency in the process, that past committees convey to incoming ones the relative importance of the four assessment criteria used in considering and deciding on the applications received.

9. That future applications be checked very closely against the selection criteria to avoid ambiguity or later exclusion.

In the brief discussion that followed, Board members decided to accept most of the recommendations with a few changes as laid out in the resolution below. The fifth recommendation was considered to overlap with the first recommendation and hence they were integrated. The Board

RESOLVED – 126/05

(a) That in future prize rounds, Heads of School be asked to include in their letter of support a comment on: in the case of a journal paper, the standard of the journal in which the paper is published, indicating its ranked position in the field, the number of journals in the field, and the practices and rigour of the refereeing process; in the case of a published book, the standing of the publisher and the practices and rigour of the refereeing process.

(b) That some representatives from the creative disciplines be requested to review the definition of what constitutes a ‘Creative Work’ under the guidelines for the prizes for future rounds and that the committee be advised that the Board’s recommendation is they be inclusive rather than exclusive in their approach.
(c) That in future prize rounds, applicants be asked to indicate which panel they thought would be the most appropriate to evaluate their application. An application could be transferred from one to another if both panels agreed that the application was more suitable to a particular panel. Alternatively, both panels could agree to assess the application.

(d) That in future prize rounds applicants be required to provide clear evidence of submission and acceptance dates of publications.

(e) That the guidelines for the prizes make clear that, where the work submitted is a chapter in a book, the referees’ reports on the chapter (rather than the whole book) should be submitted.

(f) That evidence submitted with an application be mainly peer-review based, with publicity-based acceptable as additional evidence.

(g) That to achieve consistency in the processes, continuity of membership be maintained on the panels by appointing members with overlapping terms.

(h) That applications be checked very closely against the selection criteria to avoid ambiguity or later exclusion.
ATTACHMENT A

Examination

7.7(1) For the Master of Music (in performance) the Head of the School of Music must advise the Board at least two months prior to the date of the recitals, of the details of the recital(s) including the date, venue and other relevant details.

(2) The composition portfolio or recital(s) are examined by two examiners, at least one of whom must be external to The University of Western Australia.

(3) The examiners are appointed by the Board, on the recommendation of the Head of the School of Music.

(4) The recital(s) are performed before both at least one of the examiners, where possible practical, and the Head of the School of Music or his/her nominee.

(5) The recital(s) are recorded and the recordings made available provided to the examiners for their consideration and subsequent archival retention.

(6) If an examiner is not present at a recital, they will examine on the basis of the recording.

(7) Where practical, both examiners will be nominated by the School of Music at least one month in advance of the first recital.

(8) Where it is not practical to nominate one or both examiners in advance of the first recital, the School of Music will formally advise the Board of this as early as possible before the first recital.

(9) Where one or both of the examiners was/were not nominated before the first recital, the School of Music will nominate the remaining examiner(s) at least two months prior to the second or final recital.

(10) Where an examiner has been nominated prior to the first recital but is subsequently unable or unwilling to examine the second or subsequent recitals, a replacement examiner will be appointed to examine all recitals.

(11) If either or both external examiners cannot be present at the recital(s) the School of Music must forward the recording of the recital(s) to the absent examiner(s).

(12) The examiners are expected to prepare a short working report of each recital as it occurs and a final report of all recitals at the end of the process. The examiners must forward to the Board their final reports and recommendations for classification.

(13) If a report on a recital from an external examiner is not favourable, the Head of School may provide an explanation of any extenuating circumstances surrounding the recital which may have affected the quality of the recital.