

Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences

Research & Research Training Committee

Meeting 05/12

MINUTES

Thursday, June 21st 2012, 2:15pm

Conference Room, Redmond Barry Building

Present:

Robert Reeve (Chair), Nick Allen, Malini Chandrakumar, Paul Dudgeon, Jason Forte, Simon Hall, Rob Hester, Amy Jordan, Wayne Murdoch, Lisa Phillips, Philip Smith, and John Trinder.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Castle, Olivia Carter, and Garry Robins.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 17th May, were confirmed as a correct account.

3. Matters arising

Although three items had been listed as arising from the minutes, namely:

3.1 Discipline-specific subject and statistics subjects

3.2 Statistical consulting

3.3 Possible PhD Models: Advice to students and confirmation committees

Bob Reeve reported that these issues would be discussed under other items later in the agenda.

4. PhD candidature management

4.1. PhD application review

Simon Hall reported that the Associate Dean, Research Training, Ian Van Driel, had proposed changes to the candidature and application management processes of the Faculty. Under the proposal, the MDHS Student Centre would take greater responsibility for such administrative tasks as ensuring applications were complete and for scoring scholarships, whilst the Faculty Research Office would be responsible for policy matters. A recent review of application processing had raised concerns about process efficiency and the amount of time it took to process applications. The review also pointed to the numerous (five) levels of administrative responsibility in the processing of PhD applications and the need to clarify roles and simplify the process.

There was some discussion about the issue and Simon suggested that the review report be circulated at the next meeting as it provides comparisons of the length of time different departments and schools took to process applications. Forthcoming changes to the application method for entry to the combined MPsych/PhD, which were recently approved by PPC and APC, will also streamline the application process for students transferring from the first-year of the MPsych to the second-year of the combined programme.

5. Graduate Student Research Issues

5.1. Supervision meeting frequency

Bob reported that he had heard of two cases of students being dissatisfied with the frequency of their meetings with external supervisors. The situations had not yet escalated to formal cases of grievance, but it was a matter for concern.

6. Ethics

Jason Forte reported that the University's central Ethics Committee had released draft guidelines which sought to clarify the ethics process regarding genetic research. Jason said he was in the process of reviewing the guidelines and would bring them to the next meeting for report.

7. Colloquia

Nothing to report.

8. R&RTC: School Planning Day

The School's Planning Days will be held in early July and Simon Hall gave an overview of the purpose and format of the two day event. There were evolving compliance regimes around the University and their effect on the School's candidature management needed to be discussed and planned for.

A document outlining RHD compliance issues had been circulated with the Agenda. Bob Reeve stated that the goal of today's meeting would be to agree on a list of topics for discussion at the planning session; these included those in the circulated document, namely; Confirmation Committees' roles and composition, research supervision, student commitments, research funding, PhD by publication, possible PhD thesis models, and statistical consulting. Other items raised by committee members included the dissemination of career path and career structure information, graduate satisfaction, grants and grant seeking strategies. There was a great deal of discussion about these various items and it was agreed that Bob would circulate to the Committee a modified version of the document already under discussion and Simon would give Bob a proposed structure of the RHD section of the Planning Day and the time allocated to various discussion groups on the day.

9. Focus on Research

This item was held over to the next meeting.

10. Research promotion

Simon Hall reported that the remit for research promotion fell within the scope of the School's External Relations committee and the Web Committee. He and Paul Dudgeon were members of both committees, as well as this one and would report any issues of concern regarding research promotion to the appropriate committee.

Two issues were raised;

- It had been noted that the audiovisual presentation in the 12th floor foyer was out-of-date and the research material presented on the screens should be revised and updated. Simon commented that he was aware of the situation and would put together new material based on research profiles supplied by academic staff as part of the information gathering exercise currently being undertaken to update profiles on the School's website.
- An academic staff member had asked permission to use print media to advertise for potential PhD candidates. There was some discussion about the ethics and advisability of using such avenues, and it was agreed that general advertising in print media was not a strategic means of seeking applicants; there were other, more targeted means of advertising for students. Simon said that he would approach the Faculty regarding available resources and would construct a list

of appropriate channels for the School's various advertising needs. The relaunched website would also be an opportunity to pursue new avenues of advertising and promoting School activities, including the possibility of a "button" on academic staff members' web pages asking interested individuals to apply for courses or positions.

11. Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 4:05pm