

**Research & Research Training Committee
Meeting 06/11**

MINUTES

Thursday, December 15, 2011, 2.15pm – 4.00pm. Conference Room, RBB

Present: Robert Reeve (Chair), Philip Smith (HOD), Olivia Carter, Malini Chandrakumar, Jason Forte, Robert Hester, Amy Jordan, Nick Allen, Garry Robins, Lisa Phillips, Simon Hall, Wayne Murdoch, David Castle (Executive Officer)

1. Apologies: John Trinder

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes passed without amendment

3. Matters arising from Minutes

MPsych research experience

The Professional Programs Committee will be responsible for overseeing the MPsych research experience component (beginning 2012).

Unsatisfactory research student progress

A recent unsatisfactory progress issue highlighted the need for Psychological Sciences to follow due process in terms of the University's confirmation and progress review procedures. University guidelines should be distributed to staff and students. See item 4.

ACTION: Bob Reeve and David Castle will compile information re: staff and students of RHD expectations and responsibilities.

Annual research student presentations

The RHD event was a great success with over 50% of students presenting their work. Papers were enthusiastically received. The event will be held again in 2012. RRTC members strongly support the view that the event should be held annually and that it should be mandatory for all RHD candidates. There was strong support for the view that the Annual Progress Review process be linked to a satisfactory presentation. Reluctance to present may be considered a red flag by the individual's advisory committee.

Non-APAC 4th Year: Status of advice

The HOD pointed out that practical considerations limit the fourth year program annual intake to 70 students. Over 700 eligible applicants miss out each year. The non-APAC program can only work if APAC places are reduced— this is not a viable solution. It might be better to promote higher degrees in psychology to those completing fourth year in related disciplines.

Ethics/REP to be considered by the Executive Committee

Not yet considered.

PhD Research Training: Psychology specific and stats subjects

Will be reviewed in 2012. The RRTC will discuss the need for a statistics subject for PhD students to run in 2013.

Revision of RRTC Governance structure

Loretta Gibson had started to review the governance structure for all Psychological Sciences committees. Simon Hall will take over the task.

Mediation processes

The mediation group will comprise Paul Dudgeon, Bob Reeve and Olivia Carter. Students may approach any member of the group to discuss issues. Information about the the group will be added to the RHD manual.

Frequency of RRTC meetings for 2012

The RRTC will meet monthly throughout 2012 as graduate matters require an ongoing compliance review.

4. PhD candidature management processes

Bob Reeve and David Castle will review documentation re: University guidelines for RHD candidates and supervisors the aim of which is to compile a manual for students and academic staff.

Confirmation/Thesis Advisory Committee obligations & committee structure

Confirmation Committees should be established within one month of enrolment. They should meet at least once, and more often where appropriate, with students prior to confirmation.

The committee should include the principal supervisor and chair (both should be members of the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences) and at least one other member. Large committees need to be aware of the need to meet as a group.

Current practice is for the supervisor to invite committee members. In the past, the committee included a departmental nominee, selected by the HOD or Research Convenor as the HOD nominee. This practice was established to provide a standard confirmation experience.

The Confirmation Committee and the Thesis Advisory Committee are equivalent.

RRTC members expressed concern regarding compliance associated with frequent meetings. The current practice of students collecting signatures should be discouraged.

Concern was expressed about the impact on staff time of an increase in the number and frequency of Confirmation Committee meetings. It was suggested that some thought be given to allocating a committee member at random to Committees.

ACTION: RRTC to Review Committee Structures (via Spreadsheet)

Supervisor affiliation

RHD candidates may have a supervisor outside institutions provided the principal supervisor and committee chair is a member of the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences. An honorary member of staff may not be the principal supervisor

Possible PhD Models

Nick Allen described different models of RHD supervision in use. He noted that, depending on the model (lab based, team based or individual supervisor and student), expectations may differ enormously. Nick reported that his students are expected to spend approximately 250 days working on their PhD. This is consistent with the University's position that RHD students should spend approximate 66% of their time on research-related activities.

It was agreed that it would be useful to provide information to students on different PhD models.

ACTION: Bob Reeve, Nick Allen, Amy Jordan and Jason Forte to outline common models in their areas. Nick Allen to coordinate documents

5. Equipment and Research Assistance submissions

Bob Reeve met with Philip Smith to review preliminary funding requests. The following limits have been set:

- \$15,000 for research assistance
- \$10,000 for equipment

For those requesting both, an overall limit of \$20,000 has been set.

Those who had requested larger amounts have been asked to submit a revised request.

A list of submitted requests was tabled.

Requests and issues

The RRTC agreed that each requested item seems reasonable. The following issues were raised for clarification:

5.1 MPlus license requests

Five requests for license funding have been submitted. Are bulk purchases possible?

ACTION: Bob Reeve to consult with Paul Dudgeon re: MPlus site license

5.2 General RRTC comments

The RRTC recommended the approval of grant requests.

ACTION: Chair of RRTC to notify applicants

6. Online journal publication costs

Olivia Carter raised the issue of amounts payable for online journal publication costs. The Executive Committee had announced that \$2500 per staff member would be available for journals ranked as 'A' and 'A Star' (previous ARC ranking system). Nick Allen noted that the Executive was not wedded to the ARC ranking system; it simply needed clear criteria to use.

RRTC members expressed concern that even though the ARC ranking system had been abandoned, it would still be used. Two further points were raised in objection to using the ARC system. First, the ARC star ranking system was completed several years ago (5 years?), and had not been updated recently. Second, even in the older ARC system, journals had to be published for three years to receive a rank. It was suggested journal with a high impact factor should receive funding.

The HOD explained that is not possible to fund all publication costs –\$35,000 has been set aside and it is necessary to limit the school's liability. It is reasonable to expect that some funds be considered personal research costs.

The *Frontiers* journals were put forward by Olivia Carter as a test case since it is a broad group with a high impact factor

DECISION: It was agreed that a prima facie case had been made for the *Frontiers* journals. The RRTC therefore recommended that it be included for funding purposes. The RRTC accepts that there are many online journals that may prove to be significant. Staff may make submissions on a case by case basis. The ranking system will be revisited at the end of 2012.

7. Graduate Student Databases

Ongoing

8. Graduate Student Research: Monitoring

7.1 MPsych-PhD& PhD Progress/completed

7.3 Issues and implications

Discussion held over due to time constraints

9. Ethics

Discussion held over due to time constraints

10. ERA

Discussion held over due to time constraints

11. Colloquia

Full schedule and well attended

12. Research Advisory Sub-Committee

Discussion held over due to time constraints

13. Research Promotion

Discussion held over due to time constraints

14. Faculty Research Training Committee: Report

- Scholarships
- PhD by publication

Discussion held over.

15. Any other business

No other business due to time constraints.