

SENATE

Subject: PhD Submissions by Publication or Containing Published Material

Origin: Dr Brigette Vale

Action Required: On the recommendation of Research Committee Senate is asked to approve an amendment to the Code of Practice on Research Degree Programmes to clarify the arrangements for the incorporation of published material in a research degree thesis and the presentation of a thesis in the style of published material.

Research Committee previously approved a proposal which permitted the submission of a thesis formatted in the style of journal publications (see attached). This was principally in response to a request to enable students in the Ecology discipline to submit in this style which is becoming a common format in that discipline and which it was felt would facilitate publication.

This proposal was distinct from any proposal to permit students to submit theses wholly by publications. Nevertheless an action emerged to bring forward proposals to Research Committee to enable amendments to regulations to permit such student submissions by publication.

The UK Council for Graduate Education recently undertook a survey on PhDs by Publications and it was hoped that this would provide some guidance in this area, but publication of the survey results has been delayed indefinitely. Some of the raw data has, however, been made available to the Research Student Office for consultation.

There are a number of factors which argued for a cautious approach to adopting any route which might lead to the submission of a PhD by a student wholly by publications.

From the unpublished summary data from the UKCGE it is clear that while one or two institutions are considering the publications route for students it is still largely restricted to alumni and staff of Universities which is also currently the case at LU. This situation is also confirmed by the QAA report on Doctoral Degree Characteristics (2011). If we were to develop this route we would have to consider carefully the implications for supervisors, annual reviews and examinations. One potential model might be that of the EngD programme which permits the award of an EngD on the basis of a 3 journal papers and a 30,000 word discourse, however the distinctive nature of this programme is reflected in the title of the degree awarded .

It should also be noted that the current REF guidance excludes doctoral awards by publications from the return-

'The only qualifications that may be included in REF4a are those returned to the HESA record as 'D00: Doctorate degree that meets the criteria for a research-based higher degree' and 'D01: New Route PhD that meets the criteria for a research-based higher degree'. Data returned to the HESA record as E00: 'Doctorate degree not obtained primarily through advanced supervised research written up as a thesis/dissertation' are excluded from REF4a. PhD by publication, PhD by portfolio and professional doctorates recorded as E00 are not eligible for inclusion in REF4a.'

On the basis of the above information Research Committee has agreed that it is not a priority at this time to develop this type of submission and that any developments in this area should be kept under review by the Director of the Graduate School.

Nevertheless the University does wish to encourage the publication of material by students in the course of their research degree programmes and from time to time it will be appropriate for research students to include some of their published material in their theses.

The following amendment to the University's Code of Practice would facilitate this -

'Any PhD student may include in a thesis submission published material of which they are the author or co-author , in which case this must be integrated into the thesis in a coherent and structured manner. Where appropriate to the subject discipline, thesis chapters may be formatted as journal papers to facilitate future publication more easily. Where published material is included in a thesis submission, the extent of any collaboration and the author's contribution must be fully acknowledged. A thesis submission may not consist entirely of published material except in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 7 of Regulation 26.'

Annex