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Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)

Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 at 14:10 on MS Teams

Present

Professor Jennifer Quint (ECRI Academic Deputy Director) [Chair]
Shabna Begum (NHLI)
Professor Charlotte Bevan (College Consul)
Dr Linda Cremonesi (Physics)
Professor Martin Dallimer (Centre for Environmental Policy)
Dr Ilaria Dorigatti (School of Public Health)
Professor Pier Luigi Dragotti (Electrical and Electronic Engineering)
Professor James Flanagan (Surgery and Cancer)
Professor Saskia Goes (Earth Science and Engineering)
Chris Harris (Associate Director (Strategy and Operations), ECRI)
Dr Parastoo Hashemi (Bioengineering)
Emina Hogas (ICU Deputy President (Education))
Dr Sarah Martin (Crick Doctoral Centre)
Dr Enrique Martinez-Perez (Institute of Clinical Sciences)
Professor Alex Michaelides (Business)
Robin Mowat (Centre for Academic English representative)
Professor Kevin Murphy (Brain Sciences; Immunology and Inflammation; Infectious Disease; Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction)
Dr Iro Ntonia (CLCC/CHERS)
Karen Omisore (Academic Registrar)
Dr Dario Paccagnan (Computing)
Professor Martin Rasmussen (Mathematics)
Professor Vahid Shahrezaei (ECRI Academic Deputy Director)
Dr Tony Southall (Life Sciences)
Professor Alan Spivey (Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience))
Dr David Taborda (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Susie Underwood (Chemical Engineering)
Dr Jeffrey Vernon (Faculty Senior Tutor (PGR) representative)
Dr Rudiger Woscholski (Chemistry)
Emma Rabin (Assistant Registrar: Partnerships, Monitoring and Review) [Secretary]

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In Attendance

Annette Fitzpatrick (Head of Assessment Records)

Annemarie Gupta (Assistant Registrar: Academic Policy)

Diran Solanke (Head of Research Security) for item 6

Scott Tucker (Deputy Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

Kirstie Ward (Assistant Registrar: Academic Standards) for item 4

Part 1 – Preliminary Items

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed new members to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from:

Dr Chris Cantwell (Aeronautics)

Dr Jun Jiang (Mechanical Engineering)

Professor Cleo Kontoravdi (Chemical Engineering)

Professor Miriam Moffatt (NHLI)

Dr Choon Hwai Yap (Bioengineering)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting [PRQC.2025.11]

2.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 October 2025.

2.2 The Committee noted the action list [**PRQC.2025.12**].

It was reported under point 5.5 that discussions had been held in regard to having visibility of submission rates. This had been raised with Planning and Insight Division for REF and the Assessment Records team – it was agreed a dashboard could be developed but resources needed to be identified to carry out the work.

3. Matters arising

3.1 No additional matters were raised.

Part 2 – Matters for Consideration

4. Academic regulations and policies

4.1 **2026/27 regulatory framework for the awards of MPhil, PhD, MD(Res), and EngD [PRQC.2025.13]**

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- 4.1.1 RPRC had requested that the feasibility of combining the separate research regulations into one document be explored to simplify the regulatory framework and ensure consistency between awards.
- 4.1.2 A mapping had been undertaken that demonstrated the regulations for MPhil, PhD and MD(Res) could be combined but some adjustments would be needed to ensure that there was alignment where this was appropriate.
- 4.1.3 It was reported that there were approved EngD regulations which related to CDTs that were no longer in operation and all students had completed. It was recommended these be rescinded.
- 4.1.4 The meeting agreed that the university should develop a regulatory framework for EngDs that will support future programmes and ensure there is a consistent approach to the requirements for this award.
- 4.1.5 A combined version of the MPhil/PhD and MD(Res) regulations, with updates to be considered for 2026/2027, would be submitted to PRQC for review at its next meeting. The recommendation to rescind the following EngD regulations would be submitted to QAEC for approval:
- i. Doctor in Engineering (EngD) Non-Destructive Evaluation 2025-2026
 - ii. Doctor in Engineering (EngD) Nuclear Engineering 2025-2026
 - iii. Doctor in Engineering (EngD) Water Engineering 2025-2026

Action: Kirstie Ward

- 4.1.6 It was noted that a very small number of students enrol at the university whose target award is the MPhil. It was felt that areas of the regulations require strengthening to address the specific requirements for this award. This would also highlight that the MPhil is a qualification in its own right under the FHEQ in addition to an exit award for the PhD. It was agreed that recommendations would be included in the updates for 2026/2027 for consideration by the committee.

4.2 **Conduct of Oral Examinations procedure [2025.14]**

- 4.2.1 As part of the review of the regulatory framework above, it was noted that the procedures for PhD/MPhil and MD(Res) are almost identical. It was suggested that the procedures could be rationalised and members were invited to comment. The following points were noted in discussions:
- Provide guidance to students and examiners on the viva outcomes and expected actions in relation to pass / not pass subject to amendments.
 - Included timelines for students submitting amendments in this document.
 - Consider adding a deadline for examiners to review amendments and confirm the outcome to avoid lengthy delays.
 - Provide examples of what would be considered minor and major

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amendments to support examiners when considering outcomes.

- Require examiners to be clear on the changes they expect to see if they require the student to make amendments.

- 4.2.2 A query was raised regarding cases where reasonable adjustments were needed to the exam format. It was confirmed that if such changes are required, these will be set by the university, and examiners will need to conduct the viva in accordance with these. It was suggested that the text relating to this should be discussed with the Disability Advisory Service.

Action: Scott Tucker

- 4.2.3 An updated document would be submitted to the May meeting for consideration.

Action: Scott Tucker

4.3 **Review of PGR milestone criteria and precepts [PRQC.2025.15 / PRQC.2025.16]**

- 4.3.1 It had been previously noted that the rationale for the ESA and LSR are not appropriately differentiated and it would be useful to consider the purpose of the assessments. The paper recommended that a working group be set up to consider this issue and make recommendations to the May PRQC.

- 4.3.2 It was noted that ESA and LSR are critical assessment points – especially if the outcome is for students to transfer to an MPhil or withdraw - so it was important to ensure that the process is robust and consistent across the university.

- 4.3.3 It was clarified that the university would set the purpose and requirements of the ESA and LSR and would agree the extent of any disciplinary-based variation.

- 4.3.4 Vice Deans (Education) and Vice Deans (Research) would be contacted to nominate members for the working group, noting that PRQC representatives were well placed to fulfil this role.

Action: Scott Tucker

- 4.3.5 Members were invited to comment on the Research Degree Precepts and whether these are still of use to departments.

- 4.3.6 It was noted that these are referred to by departments in some instances. However, there is duplication in the document, and it may be more effective to review how information about research degrees is presented and how accessible it is when staff have queries.

5. **1 + 3 programme structures [PRQC.2025.17]**

- 5.1 The committee was asked to approve a set of characteristics that relate to 1+3

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structures to ensure these are clearly defined and can be easily identified by central services when making administration changes.

- 5.2 The principles were agreed but it was noted that there may be individual variations due to funding requirements which will need to be accommodated.

6. Research Security training [PRQC.2025.18]

- 6.1 The meeting received a proposal to require all research degree students to undertake research security training. This training has been produced in response to the UK government's Trusted Research Agenda and is already available to research staff. Research students are considered to be Early Career Researchers and this training may be helpful to support them to make more informed decisions about their research.
- 6.2 The following points were noted in discussion:
- This would apply to all research students (MPhil, PhD, MD[Res], EngD) including international students regardless of their country of nationality.
 - The training lasts 60-90 minutes.
 - The training is based on case studies that are applicable to different disciplines.
 - UKRI grant outlines include reference to aligning with the trusted research agenda.
 - The university is considering whether to make this training mandatory for all staff.
- 6.3 It was agreed that this training should be required for all research students and should be completed by the ESA alongside the other mandatory training. This will be recommended to QAEC for approval and inclusion in the regulations.
- Action: Scott Tucker**
- 6.4 It was noted that, subject to approval, students would be required to complete three specific mandatory training requirements by the ESA deadline, in addition to two ECRI professional skills credits. It was further noted that the regulations do not set out any sanctions for non-completion by the required date, including where an approved extension applies, and that there is currently no proposal to introduce such measures. As a result, the importance of ensuring that all students complete the training was emphasised, and it was agreed that completion should be monitored to avoid any potential confusion regarding final assessment outcomes.

Part 3 - Items for note

7. Reports of sub-committees

- 7.1 The meeting noted the minutes from the following sub-committees:
- i. Unconfirmed minutes of the CDT/DTP Governance Committee meeting 21

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May 2025

- ii. Unconfirmed minutes of the Crick Research Degree Committee meeting 6
March 2025

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 No business was raised.

9. Dates of future meetings

- 9.1 Meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams as follows:
 - Wednesday 25 March – 14.30 – 15.30
 - Wednesday 21 May 2025 – 14.10 – 16.30