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Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)

Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 at 14:10 on MS Teams

Present

Professor Jennifer Quint (ECRI Academic Deputy Director) [Chair]
Ruksana Begum-Meades (ICU PGR Academic & Welfare Officer (Medicine))
Dr Chris Cantwell (Aeronautics)
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 Saskia Goes (Earth Science and Engineering)
Dr Parastoo Hashemi (Bioengineering)
Professor Alex Michaelides (Business)
Professor Miriam Moffatt (NHLI)
Professor Kevin Murphy (Brain Sciences; Immunology and Inflammation; Infectious Disease; Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction)
Dr Iro Ntonia (CLCC/CHERS)
Dr Dario Paccagnan (Computing)
Emma Pruszewicz (Centre for Academic English)
Professor Ben Sauer (Physics)
Professor Vahid Shahrezaei (ECRI Academic Deputy Director)
Dr Tony Southall (Life Sciences)
Dr David Taborda (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Dr Jeffrey Vernon (Faculty Senior Tutor (PGR) representative)
Dr Rudiger Woscholski (Chemistry)
Emma Rabin (Assistant Registrar: Partnerships, Monitoring and Review) [Secretary]

In Attendance

Scott Tucker (Deputy Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement)
Dr Suzanne Husein (Funding Strategy Manager – Doctoral Training Lead, Research Office)

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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:

David Ashton (Academic Registrar)

Professor Charlotte Bevan (Surgery and Cancer)

Dr Mazdak Ghajari (Design Engineering)

Chris Harris (Associate Director (Strategy and Operations), ECRI)

Nico Henry (ICU President)

Emina Hogas (ICU Deputy President (Education))

Dr Jun Jiang (Mechanical Engineering)

Professor Cleo Kontoravdi (Chemical Engineering)

Robin Mowat (Centre for Academic English representative)

Professor Martin Rasmussen (Mathematics)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting [PRQC.2025.01]

2.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2025 subject to the correction of minute 4.1.2 to refer to ‘PT’ rather than ‘PG’.

2.2 The Committee noted the action list [PRQC.2025.02]. The majority of actions had been completed or were on the agenda for discussion.

2.3 The committee noted the Chair’s Action list [PRQC.2025.03].

3. Matters arising

3.1 Under point 5.5 – it was asked whether, given the focus on on-time submission rates in REF2029, PRQC should be monitoring data regarding university submission rates. It was agreed to investigate whether this data could be provided.

Action: Jenni Quint

Part 2 – Matters for Consideration

4. Terms of Reference and membership 2025/26 [PRQC.2025.04]

4.1 The committee agreed to recommend the Terms of Reference and membership to QAEC for approval.

5. Academic regulations and policies

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5.1 **Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree student supervisor partnership [PRQC.2025.05]**

5.1.1 Members noted the proposed minor changes to the mutual expectations document.

5.1.2 The meeting approved the document subject to the following amendments:

- i. Re-insert part of the deleted text in paragraph one to ensure there is reference to being supported to completion of studies.
- ii. Update the link to plagiarism training so this leads more directly to the course and add a link to the new training requirements for DACR.

Action: Emma Rabin

5.2 **Procedure for the appointment of examiners for research degree examinations [PRQC.2025.06]**

5.2.1 At its previous meeting, PRQC had considered the procedure in order to consolidate versions into a single document. During the discussions, members raised a number of general matters relating to the procedure. It was agreed the procedure should be reviewed by ECRI and comments were invited from members that could be included as part of the review.

5.2.2 A specific concern had also been raised regarding an update to paragraph 12 that proscribed the use of internal or external examiners who had published with the supervisor(s) in the previous five years - members were invited to comment on this amendment.

5.2.3 The following points were noted in discussion:

- The five year time period regarding publishing was restrictive particularly if it was a small or specialist field.
- This would also cause restrictions in fields where extremely large multi-authored papers are common but there has been no direct relationship between the supervisors and other authors listed.
- As the internal examiner's role is related to maintaining academic standards, there could be a shorter exclusion period if one is required.
- It is important that supervisors understand that declaring a conflict does not automatically mean a nomination will be declined.
- It is hard for DPS to identify conflicts of interest (if these have not been declared) – although a publications check can be performed, in-depth scrutiny is time intensive.
- Having a clear decision trail regarding conflicts of interest and how these have been managed is important for academic integrity.

5.2.4 It was agreed that the paragraph should be amended to remove the five year period

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and instead state that there should not be any close collaboration between the supervisor(s) and examiners. This would be supported by the production of guidance/examples of what is considered to be close collaboration either on the form itself or in a separate document.

Action: Jenni Quint / Scott Tucker

5.3 **Revised PGR Periodic Review schedule [PRQC.2025.07]**

- 5.3.1 The committee approved a revised schedule for undertaking PGR Periodic Reviews. This would be recommended to QAEC.

6. **Guidance on the use of the Imperial affiliation when publishing [PRQC.2025.08]**

- 6.1 The committee had previously considered draft guidance which was intended to clarify when Imperial research degree students could use the Imperial affiliation when publishing – particularly when the publications did not relate to the thesis topic. The document had now been amended to address members' comments.
- 6.2 The following points were noted in discussions:
- As agreed at the last meeting, supervisors do not need to give permission for students to undertake such publications but it is expected it would be discussed between the student and the supervisor.
 - If students are using Imperial resources on research outside their thesis topic, they should have approval from the person responsible for those resources.
 - Work published with an external supervisor at another university and related to the thesis topic should have the Imperial affiliation attached.
 - This guidance is to address the very small number of cases where students are publishing outside of their thesis topic without the knowledge of their supervisor(s) but using the Imperial affiliation.
 - The guidance is intended to set boundaries but it can be reviewed later if further clarification is needed.

- 6.3 The committee agreed to recommend the guidance to QAEC for approval.

7. **UKRI revised terms and conditions [PRQC.2025.09]**

- 7.1 Members received a presentation and paper on changes to the UKRI terms and conditions for training grants which took effect from 1 October 2025. Training Grant Holders (TGHs) and administration contacts had been informed of the changes.
- 7.2 The meeting discussed the new absence categories that have been introduced. It was noted that the university was required to have a return to study policy for

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students requiring a phased return from medical, family or additional leave.

- 7.3 The meeting discussed the UKRI requirement that student leave under each category is tracked. Members felt it would be most appropriate for this to be managed via a central system. However, the use of TeamSeer to track research student leave had previously been explored and ruled out. Discussions had been held as part of the Great Service project to use the new platform (Oracle Fusion) but it could not be interfaced with Banner. It was agreed that this issue should be raised again with the Great Service team.

Action: Vahid Shahrezaei / Suzanne Husein

- 7.4 As the requirement to track leave is already in effect, a spreadsheet has been produced and circulated to Training Grant Holders for this purpose. A PowerApps form based on the spreadsheet is currently being evaluated to improve functionality – if the testing is successful, this can be shared with departments to use.

Action: Suzanne Husein

- 7.5 It was unclear from the UKRI terms and conditions whether the new leave categories also required an extension to the stipend and/or a concurrent interruption of studies. It was requested that UKRI be contacted for clarification.

Action: Suzanne Husein

- 7.6 It was noted that the changes to the UKRI terms and conditions mean that leave entitlements will be different for UKRI-funded students and other funded students. This will need management in departments to ensure all students receive the correct entitlements.

Part 3 - Items for note

8. List of Partner Research Institutions, Split PhDs and Imperial Recognised Locations

- 8.1 The meeting noted the list.

9. Reports of sub-committees

- 9.1 No reports were received for noting

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 No business was raised.

11. Dates of future meetings

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11.1 Meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams as follows:

- Wednesday 26 February 2025 – 14.10 – 16.30
- Wednesday 21 May 2025 – 14.10 – 16.30