

news

July 2009 Issue 57

In this edition, the UKCGE is pleased to announce the re-election of Officers to the Committee and welcomes new members to the Executive Committee. The Council also welcomes two new members of staff to the Office and provides details of new changes to the website. There is an extensive report looking back at this years busy events schedule and the "Forthcoming Events" section includes advanced information on the programme of events for late 2009 into 2010. Also included are reports on "Higher Doctorate Awards in the UK" and "Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Research Degrees in the UK". The AGM Minutes are reproduced and we look forward to the International Conference on Professional Doctorates jointly hosted by Middlesex University on 9 – 10 November 2009.

Welcome to new Principal Officer and Assistant Administrative Officer

The Council is pleased to announce that Carolyn Raven has been appointed to the post of Principal Officer following the resignation last summer of Nicola Crouch. The Council also welcomes Christine Worrall who has been appointed as Administrative Assistant and replaces Suzanne Hayward.

Carolyn is joining the Council having previously worked for Birmingham City University in the Faculty of Health and before that at the UK Border Agency in the West Midlands region. Carolyn graduated herself from Birmingham City University in 2002 with an Honours degree in Business Administration with Human Resource Management. Carolyn is a keen runner and has recently completed the Great Manchester Run and the Great Midlands Fun Run (although she is still debating the "Fun" part) to raise money for Cancer Research UK.



Christine is joining the Council having previously worked as a Conference Assistant for the British International Studies Association helping to organise Conferences in Edinburgh, London, Warwick and Birmingham. Born and educated in Liverpool, Christine has worked in various places around the country as a Secretary and Personal Assistant and enjoys travel, visiting her villa in Tavira, Eastern Algarve and is a member of Lichfield Crown Green Bowling Club.



A study of research programmes in French Universities

This article outlines the procedures for research programmes used in French universities and includes the process for the public viva. The information was obtained through an interesting visit and meeting with Professor Didier Paris at the Université Lille 1. Following the recent UKCGE publication on *Access to Doctoral Examiners' Reports* it is perhaps timely to look at how the exchange of examiner reports works within the French framework.

What is clear from the report is that the procedures used in French universities are very different from those in England. The postgraduate level of education is normally a continuous progression from undergraduate study unlike in England where postgraduate study is often associated with students returning to study later on in their careers. My impression from Professor Paris was that part-time study although allowed was not highly regarded and in reality very rarely undertaken.

Programme of Study

The postgraduate research level of study in a French university starts in the *troisième cycle* which follows three years of undergraduate and one year of postgraduate study akin to our masters level. The *troisième cycle* provides a one-year training programme which can be offered in two different ways depending on the outcome required by the student. Firstly, a one-year professional programme leading to a DESS (*diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*) which upon successful completion allows the graduate to undertake employment within their specialist area. Secondly, a one-year taught research training programme leading to a DEA (*diplôme d'études approfondies*) which prepares the student for entry to a three to four year research programme and which involves writing a thesis.

Students holding a DEA can register for a PhD in one of the *écoles doctorales* which are the equivalent to Graduate Schools in England.

The *écoles doctorales* have been in place since the late 1980s as a focus for research and graduate research. In 2000 following a major review of research training by the French Government the *écoles doctorales* had their remit and significance strengthened and became the sole centres within institutions which can oversee research training of research students. Each of these graduate schools is accredited by the State and is authorised to deliver doctoral programmes. In France the *écoles doctorales* are modelled at a departmental level therefore it is not unusual to find several of them within the same university.

At the present time it is expected that the student will complete the research and produce a thesis in three to four years of full-time study depending on the discipline. The thesis is normally between 300-500 pages and the age of the student between 25-30 years.

Director of Studies

Each student will be allocated one Director of Studies for the duration of their programme of study. The role of the Director of Studies is to meet the student regularly and offer help and advice. Although there is only one official Director of Studies the student may have unofficial support from other members of staff in the particular subject area.

Once the programme has been agreed, finance obtained (if required) and the area where the research will take place a *Charte des Thèses* is signed by all of the different parties (the student, Director of Studies and Director of the laboratory etc.). This is an agreement principally outlining the responsibilities of each of the signatories, their rights and expected duties.

Financial Support

There are several ways in which the student can be supported financially whilst undertaking a PhD. If it's appropriate they can become a tutor *moniteur* within the university at which they are studying at or obtain a bursary. A bursary can be made up of 50% from the region (NPDC *Conseil régional du Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the case of Université Lille 1*) where the research is taking place and 50% from the private/public sector. For students undertaking scientific research a bursary can be obtained via CIFRE *Les Conventions Industrielles de Formation par la Recherche*.

The Viva - soutenances de theses

In France vivas are normally held during the winter term - November/December and usually no later than early January. The student in agreement with the Director of Studies submits the thesis in September. It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to arrange the viva and suggest the two external examiners. Agreement of the suitability of the external examiners is sought from the Rector of the University and an official letter will be sent through a central office inviting them to act as an examiner. An examination team *Le Jury* is made up of (by law) two external examiner specialising in the subject area, the Director of Studies and preferably two members of the University. Once the examiners have been agreed it is the responsibility of the student to send out their thesis. The student then writes an abstract outlining their research which is circulated to all universities in France.

As in England the examiners read the thesis and produce a short report which outlines their findings and any criticism. These reports are sent to the Director of Studies and to the student in question in advance of the viva. In receiving the copies of the report the student is then able

to make suitable adjustments to their presentation to ensure that they can fully defend their research at the viva.

The vivas are normally held in the afternoon which allows the examination team to meet over lunch (a good lunch being fundamental to the outcome of the viva) to discuss the thesis. A Chair *Le Président* is elected from the group which can only be one of the internal examiners from the University. The Chair is responsible for taking notes during the viva, summing up all the key points at the end and producing a short report. The report together with the outcome will be sent to the CNU *Conseil National des Universités* National Committee of Universities.

In France the viva is a public event and anyone wishing to attend can do so. The Chair starts the viva by explaining the procedure which is followed by a short presentation by the student. The Director of Studies then introduces the examination team and gives their personal view on the thesis. The role of the Director of Studies within the examination team is to act as defence for the student and outline why any problems (if any) had arisen and what had been done to alleviate them. In turn each of the examiners asks the student questions for approximately 20-25 minutes. Once all of the examiners are satisfied with the performance of the student both the student and audience are asked to leave the room to allow the deliberation to take place.

Once an agreement has been reached the student and the audience are invited back into the room. Unofficially the examination team informs the student of the outcome of their deliberations.

There are two awards which can be achieved:

La Mention Honorable - equivalent to just passing

La Mention Très Honorable - equivalent to a good pass

avec félicitations du jury à l'unanimité - unanimous agreement of the examiners

or

avec félicitations du jury à la majorité - majority agreement of the examiners

The report from the Chair of the examiners along with the outcome will then be sent to the CNU for their official approval. If there is a majority vote in favour of the decision made then it is the responsibility of the CNU to approve the final decision. Although either award allows the student to become a Doctor it is normal practice that to be able to apply for jobs at a Principal Lecturer level *maître de conférence* it is necessary to gain *La Mention Très Honorable avec félicitations du jury à l'unanimité*.

Often once the verdict is given the celebrations start with Champagne and delicacies offered to the examiners and everyone else who attend the viva.

Kathryn Brown, Leeds Metropolitan University and UKCGE Executive Committee Member

Election to the Executive Committee of the UK Council for Graduate Education 2009

Elections were held by postal ballot and the results were confirmed at the AGM which took place at the Winter Conference 2009, held this year at The British Library. This year three members of the Council stood for re-election having already served on the Executive Committee and they were all duly re-elected to post. The Council welcomes a new member to the Executive Committee, Professor Christopher Smith. All four members will serve for a term of three years 2009 – 2012.

Mrs Kathryn Brown – Leeds Metropolitan University

Kathryn has worked in the research environment for 12 years and currently works as a high level research administrator, working with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) in the University Research Office. In July 2006 she successfully completed and graduated, attaining a 2:1 part-time BA (Hons) Degree in French Studies and is currently undertaking a part-time Masters by Research (MRes). She has worked internally and externally with colleagues on all aspects of research activity and has worked on secondments most recently on a work-based placement in *L'Agence de Développement et d'Urbanisme de Lille Métropole*, and an invitation to attend a viva at *L'université de Lille 1, France*.

Professor Pam Denicolo – University of Reading

Pam has been an active member of the University Committee for Postgraduate Research Studies and has daily contact with issues related to graduate student and supervisor support/development. Pam stands as Chair of the Society for Research into Higher Education Postgraduate Network and is the editor of and contributor to the Guides for Supervisors Series. She holds membership of other national committees which, for example, review the impact of the Roberts funded generic skills training, and the concordance of UK universities with the European Code and Charter.

Professor Mick Fuller – University of Plymouth

Professor Mick Fuller is Head of the Graduate School at the University of Plymouth and is involved in all aspects of PGR business from the strategic to the operational implementation of PGR procedures and processes. He is involved with the strategic planning and decision making on issues of PGT and CPD and is research active in the School of Biological Sciences and currently supervises 6 PhD students. He represents the University within the EUA Council for Doctoral Education and is part of the EU-ASIA Platform for Doctoral Education Initiative.

Professor Christopher Smith – University of St Andrews

Professor Christopher Smith has been the Proctor and Vice-Principal at the University of St Andrews since 2007 with the responsibility for developing a Postgraduate College improving recruitment at PGT and PGR level; and enhancing the experience for all Postgraduates within the context of the overall student experience, for which he is a Vice-Principal. He obtained his Masters in Literae Humaniores in 1992 and then DPhil at Oxford University; area of specialism archaeology and history of early



Rome. He was appointed Lecturer at St Andrews before becoming Pro-Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculties of Arts and Divinity in 1998, Dean of Arts in 2002 and then Provost of St Leonard's College and Dean of Graduate Studies in 2006.

Election of Officers to the Executive Committee

This year three Officers stood for re-election and they were all duly re-elected to post. Professor Malcolm McCrae from the University of Warwick was re-elected as Chair, Professor Pam Denicolo from the University of Reading was re-elected as Vice Chair and Professor Anthony Fell was re-elected as Honorary Treasurer.

The Council is pleased to announce the co-option of three new

Co-opted Members to the Executive Committee

members to the Executive Committee who will serve for 1 year until March 2010.

Ms Gill Clarke

Gill supports graduate education at institutional, UK and international level. At Bristol University, she works with the University Graduate Studies Committee (all disciplines) and contributes to supervisors' workshops. She worked with QAA on research education, chairing the working group that revised section 1 of the QAA Code of Practice: Research degree programmes. She contributes to national working groups (Vitae Rugby Team, PRES Steering Group; two RCUK groups - European Charter and Code and Research Concordat. Gill has participated in Bologna events (e.g. EUA doctoral seminar in Nice in 2006; launch of the European Council for Doctoral Education (Lausanne, July 2008). Gill has run numerous sessions for UKCGE workshops and is the co-author of UKCGE's latest publication "Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Degrees in the UK".



Dr Catherine McCrohan – The University of Manchester



Currently Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research, Catherine has responsibility for developing and implementing strategy in relation to recruitment, PhD training and quality, studentship funding models and supervisor guidance. She is also a member of the University Graduate Education Group. She has 15 years experience of Graduate Education management, including compiling studentship bids, recruitment, development of Graduate Training Programme, online progression monitoring, and the examination process. Catherine obtained her MA in Natural Sciences from Cambridge and DPhil Neurobiology at Sussex.



Mrs Hannah Rundle – University of Exeter

Hannah Rundle is responsible for all Postgraduate matters within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Exeter University. Her responsibilities include the strategic development of the Graduate School and the management of general administrative operations such as marketing, admissions, supervisory arrangements and monitoring. Having previously worked for the Postgraduate Faculty at Exeter University she has also developed institutional level Postgraduate policies as well as developing and running professional development sessions for supervisors and induction sessions for students. Hannah is also a member of the Higher Education Academy PRES steering group. The sixteenth Annual General Meeting of the UKCGE took place on 9

Annual General Meeting

March 2009 at the British Library Conference Centre, London.



Present: Professor David Bogle, University College London, Mrs Kathryn Brown, Leeds Metropolitan University, Professor Pam Denicolo, University of Reading, Professor Anthony Fell, University of Bradford, Professor Michael Fuller, University of Plymouth, Dr Douglas Halliday, Durham University, Professor Diane Houston, University of Kent, Professor Kevin Lee, University of Leicester, Mrs Kathryn Ludlow, University of Teesside, Professor Alison McCleery, Edinburgh Napier University,

Professor Malcolm McCrae, The University of Warwick, Professor Chris Park, Lancaster University, Professor Christopher Smith, University of St Andrews, Professor Imelda Whelehan, De Montfort University.

In attendance: Carolyn Raven, UKCGE Principal Officer, Angus Burns, UKCGE Events Officer and Christine Worrall, UKCGE Assistant Administrative Officer.

1/09 Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 3 July 2008

The minutes were agreed.

2/09 Chair's Business

(a) Council Executive Committee

It was noted that Professor Alistair McCulloch had resigned from the Executive Committee, and so thanks were given for his contribution to the work of the Council.

It was also noted that Carolyn Raven had replaced Nicola Crouch as the Council's Principal Officer.

Christine Worrall is the new Assistant Administrative Officer.

3/09 Elections to the Executive Committee

(a) Nominations for Election 2009

It was noted that there were 9 colleagues put forward for nomination and 4 vacancies on the Committee. The following three people were re-elected:

Mrs Kathryn Brown, Leeds Metropolitan University
Professor Pam Denicolo, University of Reading
Professor Michael Fuller, University of Plymouth

One new Committee member was elected:

Professor Christopher Smith, University of St Andrews.

4/09 Treasurer's report

The report was presented by the Honorary Treasurer, Professor Tony Fell.

A full written report has been included in the Meeting paperwork. The following issues were highlighted:

- There are some future strategic challenges to consider on the financial side of Council business.
- The 2007/08 financial year was very strong and the Treasurer is very pleased with the results.
- Gratitude was expressed to the Membership for their continued support.
- The current cash flow situation is strong, thanks in part to the successful programme of Workshops and the micro-organisation from the Council Office Staff.

The following elements of the balance sheet were highlighted:

- Subscriptions were comparable to previous years.
- Expenditure on Conferences and Workshops was higher than in the previous financial year but this was as a result of an increase in the number of Delegates attending. This meant there was a significant increase on the income from Workshops and Conferences.

- Overall Income was up by £54,000 for the year
- Strict cost controls in place on expenses during the year.
- Printing costs were down by about £6,000.
- Rent increased in line with inflation.
- Salaries saw an increase of approximately 10%, however, this is explained by the National Pay Award that was implemented across all Universities during this financial year.
- Staff Development costs were significantly down from the previous year, however, a larger sum has been allocated for the new financial year and there will be an effort to ensure this is spent as staff deserve to be supported in this area.
- The nett result is a surplus of £41,463 which was invested in Fixed Term Bonds which have a return of around 3% or 4%.

It is a policy that the Council has sufficient reserves invested to cover all the Salary costs of its Staff for a calendar year.

Council resources have been diversified amongst a number of Banks, this is to ensure that all the funds are protected under the Government Investment Protection Scheme which has a cap of £50,000 for each institution that money is invested in.

The salary increases will be linked to inflation over the next few years and Membership Fees will also be going up in line with inflation. However, when the full impact of National Pay Award has been felt, Membership Fees may need to be raised by slightly ahead of inflation to maintain the security of the Council's finances.

(a) **Accounts 2007/2008**

There was a comment from the floor that they were a good set of accounts, however, the Executive Committee were encouraged not to sit on the surplus but to use the extra funds to increase activity. The Treasurer commented that there were ambitious plans currently being worked on the next year.

The audited accounts for the year 2007/2008 were considered. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Professor David Bogle, University College London and seconded by Professor Alison McCleery, Edinburgh Napier University.

The appointment of Council Auditors:

It was noted that the Council were currently engaging with a number of potential Auditors who would audit the accounts for the present financial year. In view of this, it was agreed that the motion to approve the appointment of Council Auditors for the current financial year would be postponed until the July Business Meeting.

(b) **Membership Fees**

Approval was sought from the membership for the Council to raise its annual subscriptions for 2009/2010 in line with the rate of inflation. It was noted that the Council had previously agreed to increase the subscription fees annually in line with inflation.

It was noted that this would take the Full Membership fee from the current rate of £580 to £610 in September 2009. The Associate Membership fee from the current rate of £250 to £265 in September 2009 and the Individual Membership fee from the current rate of £65 to £75.

Acceptance of the new Membership fees was proposed by Professor Chris Park, Lancaster University and seconded Mrs Kathryn Ludlow, University Of Teesside.

5/09 Proposals from Members

The Chair asked if there were any proposals from the membership, emphasising that this was the time to put forward any ideas for events or issues that it was felt the Council should be addressing.

It was noted that the Council always welcomed new ideas, and that any suggestions could be proposed outside of the AGM.

No proposals were made.

6/09 Council Events/Activities

- (a) The programme of forthcoming and proposed Events for the remainder of the current academic year and for the start of the 2009/10 academic year was noted.

7/09 Any Other Business

None

8/09 Date of Next Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting would take place on 1 July 2009 during the Summer Conference at The University of Manchester.

*Professor Mick Fuller, Honorary Secretary
Christine Worrall, Assistant Administrative Officer*

March 2009

The New Immigration Regulations under Tier 4

I freely admit that when it comes to this topic of debate, I have splinters in my derriere through sitting on the fence for far too long but it's one that never fails to interest me having experienced working for both UK Border Agency and for Higher Education. The introduction of Tier 4 by the Home Office has brought what seems to be endless confusion, unanswered and unanswerable questions and the sense that the majority of UK Universities feel totally unprepared to take on new sets of rules and regulations, which dare I say it, are vague and difficult to interpret.



Having listened with great interest to Suzanne Barnes from UKBA at UKCGE's workshop "The New Immigration Regulations: Understanding and Implementation" the impression was certainly given that a great deal of consultation had already taken place, and while the position on day to day supervision of Masters and PhD students needs clarifying, the long term implications of Tier 4 are leaving an even bigger question mark over the future of International Postgraduate Study and many HEI's have asked the question, is this change in the Immigration Rules necessary? If I put my Immigration hat back on, my answer would be, absolutely. In my previous life as a Home Office Presenting Officer, I would appear before an Immigration Judge in an Immigration Court to represent Entry Clearance Officers during an Appeal to hear the case of a student who had been refused a student visa. I hated these appeals because the decisions of Entry Clearance Officers were based on suspicions and subjective views and trying to defend these decisions, was, quite frankly, embarrassing. UKBA have acknowledged this and have taken on board that these decisions were unpopular with genuine institutions and their students, so on that fact alone, I fully support and welcome a change in the Immigration rules. I would guess that the majority would agree that there needs to be fair balance between meeting the needs of the HEI International Student market and Immigration Control for the public good, however, the debate on the new Immigration Regulations would suggest that there is a perception that the balance is definitely tipped heavily one way over the other.

The affects of the new Tier system are already being felt by many UK Universities in the postgraduate field, and UUK have reported that many Universities are already losing researchers to other countries which will see a marked reduction of highly skilled people that can contribute to research work now that the sponsored researcher visa has been abolished. The UKBA are introducing the tier system with the intention that it would be mutually beneficial to both students and Universities and this, in theory is welcomed, however, while Universities strive to remain competitive in this increasingly competitive global market, it's possible that the new Tier system could strip away many UK Universities competitive edge.

Ultimately, it's about perception and the changing perception of UK Postgraduate Study is happening at a critical time and so poses the question "Is this the right time to be making these changes?" UKBA state that the new Immigration Regulations will make the process more transparent as students will be able to see with ease if they fit the criteria but is this actually how potential students perceive these changes? The messages that the United Kingdom is sending to our potential students are mixed ones and this has the potential to be damaging to our universities. The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown is launching initiatives to improve the support and networks available to international students, yet the new Immigration Regulations run the risk of making the UK appear that international students are not welcome. The US are now welcoming international students with open arms following several years of strict immigration rules following 9/11 and so in comparison the UK may appear to be less than welcoming. The perception of UK Postgraduate Study needs careful management however, is it the responsibility of our Universities to manage on their own, is it for the HE Sector to manage collaboratively or is it for the Government?

When taking into account the considerable income generation international postgraduate students can bring a University against the current national and international economic climate, if there was a

time for perceptions to change, this is certainly a bad one. PhD Students will only be granted a 3 year visa for their 4 years of study and then be expected to pay for an extension at a time when they will be least able to pay. With an already estimated decline in the UK's market share between now and 2020, it leaves many UK Universities in an increasingly vulnerable position.

With many universities focusing their priorities firmly on the operational implementation of Tier 4, what constitutes 10 interactions and the technical infrastructure across the two sectors, the short term issues are distracting from the long term and perhaps more critical issue of the future of international postgraduate study at individual institutions and the impact it will have. There have been calls for UK Universities to broaden their view of internationalisation and improve provision of sources for support and information to international students as part of the visa application process, which, I agree is a necessity for Universities to remain competitive against each other. What I do question however is the seemingly ever increasing burden and responsibility that is being placed on our Universities, which, if we don't comply with, can result in UKBA effectively giving us an illegitimate status. Should it really be our responsibility to police and enforce the rules or should we be embracing the change with the view that we are working in partnership to preserve our reputation and maintain the integrity of our immigration control? The debate continues.

Carolyn Raven, UKCGE Principal Officer

New UKCGE Publications

Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Research Degrees (2009)

Professor Stuart Powell (University of Hertfordshire) and Gill Clarke (University of Bristol)

This report seeks to identify the current context within which doctoral level education is being undertaken in the UK and review the kinds of developments that are taking place. The report revisits some of the thematic issues that were referred to in the 1996 report, namely the purposes of a doctoral education, assessment mechanisms and international aspects of doctoral education.

Higher Doctorate Awards in the UK (2008)

Professor Stuart Powell (University of Hertfordshire) and Nicola Crouch

Following expressions of interest, this new report maps out the Academic awards known as "Higher Doctorates" that are currently on offer in member institutions and to examine how the situation with regard to these awards is changing, if at all.

To view or download copies of these publications please visit www.ukcge.ac.uk/publications. Hard copies of publications are also available.

UKCGE Website and News Bulletins

Following the successful re-launch of the UKCGE website (www.ukcge.ac.uk) in Summer 2007, changes to the navigation system have been made to the site to make access to news stories and features easier and quicker. Newsfeeds are now available on our homepage and visitors to the website are now able to register for RSS feeds. All news bulletins are now sent to subscribers of the UKCGE mailing list informing them of changes and up to date information within the postgraduate arena. To subscribe to the UKCGE mailing list please visit www.ukcge.ac.uk/news/subscribe.

If you have any suggestions as to any new features that you would like to appear on the website, please email: ukcge@ukcge.ac.uk.

Workshops and Events in 2008- 2009

This year, the Council has run an extensive programme of workshops which have focused on a wide range of postgraduate issues, both postgraduate taught and postgraduate research. Much discussion has taken place amongst delegates and many issues have been raised and copies of presentations and notes can be downloaded from the UKCGE website.

The New Immigration Regulations: Understanding and Implementation, 20 October 2008

Summary of Content

Susan Barnes, Policy Manager, UK Border Agency (UKBA), outlined the current situation in relation to regulations and institutional responsibilities under the Tier 4, the Student Route to Immigration within the new Points Based System. Dominic Scott responded with his perspective as Chief Executive of UKCISA on the impact for PGR and PGT students, indicating in general a welcome to the process which, through preliminary on-line self assessment, would now make it clearer to prospective international students whether or not they would have sufficient points to be considered for a visa. Catherine Marston, Policy Officer, Universities UK, and Laura Du Plessis, Senior International Student Adviser, Warwick University International Office, outlined views on and current plans for institutional implementation. A breakout session provided the opportunity for delegates to discuss institutional plans and concerns.

Key points of discussion

Outstanding areas of the process yet to be defined gave delegates cause for concern as some felt their institutions could not commit to Registration for the 4-year licence under Tier 4 (necessary by early Spring 2009) until more detail was known, on which internal procedures could be established and on which their appropriateness to be registered would be vetted by UKBA. Staff nominated to use the on-line Sponsor Management System would also be vetted. The point at which a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) could be issued was

important, and institutions should only issue a CAS when a student had firmly accepted an Unconditional offer.

The requirement to report on failed starts or non-attendance was also of concern as definitions of enrolment periods and frequency of required attendance could vary across institutions and between subject disciplines. However, some flexibility would be permitted. Institutions needed to inform UKBA of their enrolment periods beyond which students may be reported for non-arrival, and it was for institutions to determine what were the 10 interactions, e.g. Tutorials, assignments, labs, milestones etc and report against those attendance requirements. However, if no reports were ever received by UKBA about missing students, UKBA may seek to visit institutions. A high level of problems with students may reduce an institution's rating from A to B, and non-compliance of a sponsor in one category will affect rating in a separate category, e.g. educational establishment acting as a sponsor for students and also an employer. Leave will be granted for the duration of the course, plus a reasonable period to tie up affairs, or seek an extension, but initially, which will not exceed four years. Only two extensions for re-submissions/resits etc would be allowed, i.e. maximum of six-year stay. A new CAS would need to be issued for each of these. The lack of discussions with UUK and other representatives on the IT aspects of delivery was of major concern to both institutions and UUK. What data would be required to be exported to UKBA and how this could be gathered from existing information held by institutions in order to avoid costly, unfunded, duplication of data entry was yet to be addressed. Delegates were concerned that to date, debate appears to have been around UG and PGT students; more debate is required about implications for PGR students.

Evaluation and outcomes

The workshop provided an excellent overview of a major development affecting postgraduate study and debate could have continued for some time. Some institutions may need to consider closer monitoring and reporting of students than hitherto. This may be more difficult in relation to PGR students where there is less stipulation of frequency of contact. Systems must be robust and one University (Kent) already has an on-line attendance system for all students so international students are treated no differently in this respect. This workshop was repeated on 21 January 2009.

Mrs Kathy Ludlow, Teesside University and UKCGE Executive Committee Member



Residential Workshop 2008: Audit and Best Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 12 – 13 November 2008

Summary of Content

This Residential Event focused on all aspects relating to the Institutional Audit of Research Degree Programmes. The content of the residential was to crystallise the perspectives of experienced QAA specialist advisers and focus on the actual audit experience of those HEIs whose RDPs have been recently audited. In particular, best practice in *Recruitment, Induction, Monitoring, Examination and Skills Training* formed the focus of small syndicated workshop group discussions, where delegates shared their problems and solutions in establishing effective and efficient RDPs, in preparation for QAA institutional audit. Key issues relating to HEFCE policy on Qualification Rates, Professional Doctorates, Part-Time Registrations, Extramural and Franchised RDPs were covered.

The workshop opened with a presentation from Professor Paul Luker (*Assistant Director, QAA & Senior Associate, HE Academy, York*) focusing on Key Audit Issues for Research Degree Programmes. Discussion focused on the need for HEIs to fully reflect on how they build and deliver skills training for PGR in their institutions. Discussion took place in the context of the QAA RDP auditing process and with the benefit of input from an experienced QAA auditor we were able to identify those areas that will require particular attention as we develop training provision. It was extremely useful to hear about the audit process from institutions that had already been audited as well. Delegates were then divided into two groups for the syndicated workshops which covered Auditing the QAA / RC Skills Training agenda and RDP Audit Issues: Best Practice for Recruitment & Induction.

The second day of the Residential opened with a plenary presentation on RDP Audit Issues at Institutional Level – the Durham University Experience by Dr Douglas Halliday (*Graduate Dean, University of Durham*). The presentation provided a useful and informative insight into the policy and practice of an individual institution and highlighted some useful points to the delegates to consider. Delegate feedback for this session was particularly positive, learning from the experiences and practice of the University of Durham. Further plenary presentations included Best Practice Outcomes from the Special QAA Review by Gill Clarke (*University of Bristol*) and Research degree qualification rates: current HEFCE policy and implications for audit by Suzanne Wilson (*Policy Officer, HEFCE*). The presentation by Suzanne Wilson focused on the supply of future researchers and knowledge delivery, questioning if universities were delivering and producing high quality researchers. The key points of discussion looked at how institutions look at rates and what do they do with them; the trend is to reduce years to completion to meet Research Council targets and the need to persuade universities that completion is an area the whole institution must engage in – need to be positive. Following further syndicated workshops covering HEFCE Policy Issues and the QAA Audit and The Professional Doctorate – validation and other issues, the final plenary presentation was given by Professor Bonnie Steves (*Director, Caledonian Graduate Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University*) on Audit issues for the Professional Doctorate. The presentation started with a definition of a professional doctorate as compared with a PhD, confirming a professional doctorate as an evidence-based research programme with an emphasis on undertaking research within the context of professional practice, in which the 25 student is a member

of a cohort. The Glasgow Caledonian model was described as a generic Professional Doctorate framework which enables students from a range of backgrounds to study together; commencing as a programme for Health Professionals, it now includes students from Psychology, Education and Business.

Key points of discussion

The key points of discussion included the taught elements of the programme need defined learning outcomes at the appropriate level and the modules used at Glasgow Caledonian were defined.

Evaluation and outcomes

The two day Residential Workshop provided focused discussion and information sharing on best practice and experiences. The themed workshops provided valuable insight and opportunity for reflection to delegates and inside knowledge from the presentations given by Durham, QAA Bristol and HEFCE were insightful and valuable.

Professor Anthony Fell, UKCGE Executive Committee Member

The Changing Role of the Supervisor, 3 December 2008

Recent years have witnessed a revolution in PhD education. New styles of PhD have appeared, including the PhD by publication and the professional doctorate, the numbers of mature and part-time students have increased, and the nature of the training itself has been shaped to meet increasing student expectations and the broader and more structured training requirements of the research councils and other funding bodies. For many of our academics, the supervisor's role is now very different to what they experienced as a student. This one-day event looked at the new expectations of students and supervisors and explored ways of training and supporting staff to be effective supervisors in the new academic climate. The programme included presentations, discussion groups and a student-led exploration of their expectations.

Full summaries of all discussions were presented in plenary sessions to ensure that all delegates benefited from the collective experience shared in each workshop discussion group.

Professor Pam Denicolo, University of Reading and UKCGE Executive Committee Member

Professional Doctorates, 12 February 2009

Professional Doctorates are relatively new to the UK and create a range of challenges to HEIs in their development, introduction and quality assurance. Unlike the "traditional" PhD there is little overall agreement on what constitutes a Professional Doctorate or any single, agreed template for such a qualification. This has led to a very wide range of programmes, the spectrum of which can spread from some which are relatively indistinguishable from the traditional PhD with perhaps some additional taught material, through to quite short, part-time routes that rely very heavily on the professional experience and ongoing work of the candidate. The recent major expansion in a number of universities of this form of study for a higher degree has led to an ever growing number of titles and discipline areas where such degrees may be awarded.

This workshop gave delegates an in depth study of certain Professional Doctorates (DBA, Health Care and a “Generic” Professional Doctorate) and provided an opportunity in break-out groups for more detailed discussion of aspects of the Professional Doctorate in which individuals had a particular interest and where they were able to find answers to any questions they had about this qualification.

Dr Sheena Blair, Programme Organiser for PD in Social Care and Nursing, School of Health and Social Care, Glasgow Caledonian University, discussed the design of Professional Doctorates in the Health Care Arena and Emerging Issues, explaining the factors which influenced the design of the programme at GCU, the outline of the programme, and analysed some of the strengths and problematic issues and the emerging dynamics. Professor Carol Costley, Institute for Work Based Learning, Middlesex University, discussed the Generic Professional Doctorate – current perspectives on development and validation. She paid close attention to the generic abilities for professional practice being a key component of doctorate learning and that the generic approaches can be formulated through a subject discipline route or as a field of study in its own right. Professor Jerry Wellington, Head of Research Degrees, School of Education, University of Sheffield discussed the models and modes for the EdD and the viva experience, what has changed with the Doctorate and why people do them.

Professor Mick Fuller, University of Plymouth and UKCGE Executive Committee Member

Winter Conference 2009 The Future Re-sourcing of Postgraduate Study, 9 March 2009

This year’s UKCGE Winter Conference at the British Library focused on issues associated with ‘Future Resourcing of Postgraduate Study’. Plenary session presentations from The Hon David Willetts MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities & Skills) and Professor Ian Diamond (Chief Executive of ESRC) gave respectively a political view and Research Council perspective on issues surrounding the resourcing of postgraduate study given the recent changes in the global economic situation. Breakout sessions covered Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey; FEC and Cross Subsidies in Postgraduate Provision; The Payback to Students from Postgraduate Training; Resourcing of Postgraduate Students in the Digital Age. Delegates will have an opportunity to take a guided tour of the British Library to become fully acquainted with the support facilities that it can provide for postgraduate study.

Minutes of the Business Meeting – 1 July 2009, The University of Manchester

Present: Ms Gill Clarke, University of Bristol; Professor Tony Fell, University of Bradford; Professor Mick Fuller, University of Plymouth; Professor Sharon Huttly, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; Dr Karina Linnell, Goldsmiths, University of London; Professor Malcolm McCrae, University of Warwick; Dr Catherine McCrohan, University of Manchester, Dr Elizabeth Robertson, University of Teesside; Mrs Betty Warnock, Kingston University.

In attendance: Carolyn Raven, UKCGE Principal Officer, Angus Burns, UKCGE Events Officer and Christine Worrall, Assistant Administrative Officer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 9 March 2009 were agreed.

2 Chair’s Business

(a) Executive Committee Membership

The Chair reported on Executive Committee membership:

- that Professor Christopher Smith (University of St Andrews) was newly elected to the Council on 9 March 2009.
- that Mrs Kathryn Brown (Leeds Metropolitan University), Professor Pam Denicolo (University of Reading) and Professor Mick Fuller (University of Plymouth) were re-elected to the Council on 9 March 2009.
- that Ms Gill Clarke (Bristol University), Dr Catherine McCrohan (The University of Manchester and Mrs Hannah Rundle (The University of Exeter) were co-opted to the Council for a period of one year from 9 March 2009, which can be extended.
- that Professor Tony Fell (University of Bradford) was re-elected to the position of Honorary Treasurer, Professor Pam Denicolo (University of Reading) was re-elected to the position of Vice Chair and Professor Malcolm McCrae (University of Warwick) was re-elected to the position of Chair, all for a further term of three years, at the 85th Executive Committee meeting held on 16 June 2009.

3 Honorary Treasurer’s Report

- a) The Honorary Treasurer presented the year-end accounts for 2008-2009. He noted that we are running at a surplus of approximately £16,000 and this gave a very healthy outcome to the year end figures as the projected surplus was £5,000. Annual Subscriptions had all been recovered and there were no non-payers. He also commented on the very successful programme of events for the year, and in particular the exceptionally high number of delegates attending, approximately £5,000 up on the projected figure indicating the topicality of workshops had been excellent and was credited to the hard work of the Events Officer. He also confirmed that £150,000 had been diversified amongst a number of Banks, this is to ensure that all the funds are protected under the Government Investment Projection Scheme which has a cap of £50,000 for each institution that money is invested in.



- b) The Honorary Treasurer outlined the budget for 2009/2010. The projected figures show an increase in salaries of 3% but a decrease in travel expenditure by the Executive Committee. Target numbers for the Winter Conference and the Summer Conference have been reduced slightly (by 5), to reflect the slightly lower numbers.

The ICPD is being jointly hosted with Middlesex University, who have sponsored the event with a generous contribution, already received, of £20,000. The ICPD takes place on 9th and 10th November 2009. £4,000 to £6,000 expenditure, actual budget assuming 75 paying delegates.

Annual budget income, investment of monies and subscriptions. The interest that we have been earning has reduced over the last 12 months. Carolyn has done excellent market research and found some good deals. We should receive approximately £4,000 interest.

The Executive Committee have decided it would be helpful for at least one year to employ an Engagement Officer working with the Link People at HEI's. Approximate salary would be £30,000 to £33,000 per year, for a one year period in the first instance. This is an investment of our well earned surpluses which it is anticipated will strengthen the future of the Council.

- c) The Honorary Treasurer requested formal approval of the new Council's auditors Haslehursts of Sutton Coldfield. Haslehursts have proposed to carry out the audit from the Council's office and have demonstrated their interest and efficiency in serving as Auditors for the Council. Part of the problem with the previous Auditors, Maths Partnership, is that they are geographically quite a distance from the office. Haslehurst Auditors were Proposed by Dr Catherine McCrohan (University of Manchester) and Seconded by Ms Gill Clarke (University of Bristol). Thanks were also expressed to the Principal Officer for all her work in managing the Council's finances.

4 Events

- a) The events hosted during the year were noted.
- b) Future events have been proposed until July 2010. We are always very keen to hear of areas or issues from the floor that people feel would be useful for us to talk over, usually a workshop.

5 Publications

The Council's publication for the year, which is being launched at this meeting, was noted and those concerned with its production thanked. The title concerned was:

'Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Research Degrees.'

6 Internal Policy Issues

It was noted that there was no internal policy issues to discuss.

7 External Policy Issues

The Chair noted that there was nothing specific to discuss under this agenda item.

8 Proposals from the Membership

The Chair offered the opportunity for the membership to raise suggestions or discussion. None were forthcoming. The Chair suggested that the Council needs to be more proactive in lobbying politically. He noted that we were clearly in a time of flux in higher education and there were opportunities for our collective voice to make an impact, The Council will bring collective thoughts to both the Executive and the full membership in the future.

9 Any Other Business

No items of any other business had been notified beforehand and none were raised from the floor.

10 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the seventeenth AGM of the Council will take place during the Winter Conference, at the British Library, London, on 15 February 2010.

*Professor Mick Fuller, Honorary Secretary
Christine Worrall, Assistant Administrative Officer
July 2009*



Forthcoming Events

International Conference on Professional Doctorates, London, 9 – 10 November 2009

Many countries are now responding to the demands of professional people at work by providing funding that engages with the needs of employers and people at work. Universities in many countries have responded by providing a wider range of postgraduate opportunities. In the last fifteen years there has been a steady growth of Professional Doctorates that focus on professional areas of learning. This has led to the development of new learning relationships between higher education and 'work'. Doctorate programmes have emanated from a range of educational practices that are now reshaping themselves towards new epistemologies and ways of thinking about learning.

UKCGE is looking forward to hosting jointly with Middlesex University, the first International Conference in Europe focusing on key advances in the Professional Doctorate with speakers from Australia, the USA and Europe – including the design of different models, programme validation, best practice in delivery, supervision and assessment, regulatory requirements and comparisons with the traditional doctorate. Latest developments in specific areas will include research in health, social sciences, psychology, business management, criminal justice, architecture, the performing arts and education.



The format based on workshops, round-table discussions, posters and presentations in the Cavendish Conference Centre, London, with the social programme, will ensure ample opportunity for networking and establishing new contacts in the international Professional Doctorate community.

Exhibition space and poster display opportunities are available. Please email Angus Burns, Events Officer – a.n.burns@ukcge.ac.uk for further details.

There are a variety of different Conference Packages available, please see the table below for details. On line bookings and more information is available at www.ukcge.ac.uk/profdocs.

Package	UKCGE member rate	Non-member rate
Full Conference	£375	£440
Attendance at both days of the Conference with lunch, refreshments and a delegate pack. Also includes the Conference Dinner on 9 November.		
One-Day Conference 9 November	£220	£260
Attendance on 9 November with lunch, refreshments and a delegate pack. (<i>Conference Dinner not included.</i>)		
One-Day Conference 10 November	£220	£260
Attendance on 10 November with lunch, refreshments and a delegate pack. (<i>Conference Dinner not included.</i>)		
Conference Dinner	£55	£55
Additional places available to 'One-Day' delegates as well as partners and colleagues of any delegate attending the dinner.		





2009 – 2010 Workshops

20 October 2009

Meeting the Needs of... Research Managers and Administrators

Birmingham, Venue TBC

9 – 10 November 2009

International Conference on Professional Doctorates

The Cavendish Conference Centre, London
Jointly hosted with Middlesex University



December 2009

Latest Developments in Research Council Practice

Date and Venue TBC

January 2010

Meeting the Needs of... Doctoral Examiners

Date and Venue TBC

15 February 2010

Winter Conference 2010

The British Library Conference Centre, London
Hosted by The British Library



March 2010

Residential Workshop 2010

Date and Venue TBC

April 2010

Meeting the Needs of... Postgraduate Taught Students

Date and Venue TBC

May 2010

Research Ethics

Date and Venue TBC

June 2010

Meeting the Needs of... International Students

Date and Venue TBC

July 2010

Summer Conference 2010

Date and Venue TBC

Early 2010/2011

Update on Immigration Regulations

Date and Venue TBC

For further information about any of the events listed, please contact Angus Burns on **tel: 01543 308 603** or email: a.n.burns@ukcge.ac.uk.