

Minutes for Crawford HDR subcommittee meeting on Monday 13 July 2015

Present: Sharon Bessell, Thu Roberts, Megan Poore, Belinda Thompson and Tracy McRae

Apologies: Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Premachandra and Bingqin Li

1. Director's update

- Staffing changes: Dr Keith Barney stepped down as RE&D convenor and Dr Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt took over this role. The committee expressed appreciation for Keith's amazing work in the HDR convenor role. Thu Roberts will be on secondment to College of Science for 6 months and being replaced by Tracy McRae.
- Update on HDR coursework

Program amendment forms were updated and sent to College for finalisation. Associate Dean (HDR), Luigi Tomba, is very good in coordinating this task. The approach is to adopt minimal program requirement with 12 units required and students can refer back to host program website for detailed information. Research Director, Dr Sharon Bessell had emailed convenors about this and they are happy with this approach. RE&D program is not yet confirmed as their website is not ready. Kuntala needs to take over this task from Keith, however, Keith had started to develop information for RE&D PhD program and it is waiting to be approved by the RE&D program director.

All PhD and MPhil courses now need 9000 codes, not 8000 codes. Master students can be in the same class but the outline and outcomes are different for each cohort. POGO, RE&D, NSC needs to take action regarding this change, with effect from next year. Exception for this is IDEC because of their part A requirements so they do not need to make changes at the moment. The advantage of 9000 coding is that we can keep the current "course requirement satisfied" assessment, instead of the 0-100 grading system. Research method courses need consistency. If the course is offered by another college, the grading system may be different.

- Milestone completion rate: the current completion rate for Crawford is 74% which exceeded college target of 60%. There are some issues with milestones, however Research Director had emailed relevant supervisors regarding specific concerns.

2. Items for discussion

- Assessing conference and fieldwork funding applications

There is an issue of duplicate payments with the process of funding payment as a scholarship grant and travel approval system. The correct process should be: funding application comes to HDR committee; once it is approved, PhD students submit

online travel approval form and select correct delegation. However, if delegations are wrongly selected, it can result in double payments or unauthorised payments which students will be asked to pay back. She will send out an email to all students advising the proper process including payment method (direct payment), domestic delegation as school manager (Margaret Eichholzer) and international delegate as school director (Robert Breunig).

The issue of inequity was raised. For instance, Sir Roland Wilson (SRW) scholars received a travel grant of \$46,000 so they should not apply for travel funding from Crawford. Also, the student representative, Belinda Thompson wondered if the conditions on spending \$46,000 can be loosen. Sharon will talk to Joan Uhr about conditions of SRW scholarships and also mention this to Luigi Tomba. The committee should also look into other generous scholarships that provide travel grants. Another inequity issue is that the fact that male students apply for maternity leave (10 days for male and 84 days for female students) and male students apply for extension based on parental ground, but not many female students do this.

- Screening PhD applications and tightening quality perspective students

Sharon thanked HDR convenors for maintaining high for the admission standards. Recently, there were two cases of candidates in RE&D and both were borderline cases for admission. Sharon contacted nominated supervisor for these applicants and supervisor confirmed he would be happy to work with these students. Keith also spoke to supervisor about these students. The key is that both supervisor and convenor need to look at applications carefully as it is a 4 year commitment for everyone.

Relating to this matter, Megan had sent a performance review report to the committee regarding students who struggle with their programs. We should think about whether we can help them bring up to speed or exit the program totally.

- Dean was concerned that Crawford is lagging behind on the strategic plan. There are two track planning approaches and one for strategic plan due in August. School engages in long assessment process for a few months, which academic, professional and PhD students got involved. Themes were identified by looking from UIE and research and also cross-school collaboration. Australia – Asia – Pacific is our region of research. There should be sub-narratives that just talk about PhD students. Sharon and Belinda can have a conversation about this in near future.

3. Other business

The student representative, Belinda Thompson raised three issues:

- Relationship between supervisors and PhD students and how it looks like. PARSA asked Belinda to help them with this conversation and she wanted the committee to know about this.

- Belinda asked a question regarding to Crawford top-up scholarships (\$10,000): are they still available and what is the guideline? Tracy will look into this.
- Foundation teaching course offered by CHELT raised a question about what should be the proportion for teaching/researching. Services can be looked at while doing PhD as well because PhD can be a training process. There is also a question of contributing to community and maybe we can put it into milestone reports. PhD student should understand service components.

Replying to this concern, Sharon mentioned that community work can be reflected is problematic to put this requirement in milestone reports because the reason of a PhD is research and the result of that research will be examined. Supervisors sometimes advise students do nothing but research. Schools may be penalised if students do complete their PhD on time. This issue is also facing by academic as they can be questioned why they provide much teaching/services but no research product? This may result in jeopardising their academic careers. However, Sharon suggested that Crawford could think about awarding students who are active in community services through two annual prizes/PhD awards. This can be discussed further with broader committee members in future meetings.