

LTC15D143

Title: Review of Higher Doctorates
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Issue

This paper contains an administrative review of the University's higher doctorates: Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Letters (LittD) and Doctor of Science (ScD).

Recommendation

That the regulations for higher doctorates (LLD, LittD and ScD) be put into abeyance and no longer offered, on the grounds that:

1. The number of candidatures over the past ten years (four) is too few to support the administrative and academic costs of offering the degree; and
2. Efforts in attracting and supporting postgraduate research degree candidates would be better focused on other degrees including PhD, PhD by Publication, professional doctorates and research masters.

Resource Implications

N/A

Risk Implications

It is important that the Regulations and forms for these degrees are brought up to standard to ensure a good experience for candidates, supervisors and examiners, and reduce the risk of appeals and complaints.

Equality and Diversity

No particular implications for groups with protected characteristics are anticipated.

Timing of decisions

This paper covers issues which are current in April 2016.

Further Information

Contact Vivien Easson, x1835 v.easson@uea.ac.uk for enquiries about the content of the paper.

Background

The University currently allows candidates to register for the LLD, LittD or ScD if they graduated from UEA a suitably long time ago or have been a member of UEA (or affiliated institute) staff for a qualifying period.

The higher doctorate submission consists of a critical analysis (30,000 words) of the work submitted covering the development of the candidate's submitted work and its sustained, original and distinguished contribution to knowledge, along with a list of works which the candidate presents as evidence. This is out of line with sector norms which typically ask for a critical summary of fewer than 3,000 words.

The submission is considered by at least two examiners, including at least one external examiner, recommended by the Academic Director after consultation with the Head of School, and approved by the Faculty

AD PGR. The Academic Director considers the examiners' reports and, if satisfied, makes a recommendation for Senate to approve the degree.

Higher doctorates awarded by UEA and recorded on SITS are as follows:

- School of Environmental Science, ScD, pass list date 12 August 2010
- School of Social Work and Psychology, LittD, pass list date 22 March 2011
- School of Chemistry, ScD, pass list date 20 May 2011
- School of Chemistry, ScD, pass list date 20 November 2015

There is no standard length or mode of registration: the above candidates registered for between two and twelve months, some full-time, some part-time. There is a fixed, one-off tuition fee of £500. Estimated costs of administering the degree include at least one external examiner's fees at £150 and expenses of up to £300, thus costing up to £900 if both examiners are external. Time costs in administration are likely to be at least £100 counting admissions, lifecycle, assessment and graduation processing (6 hours @ average Grade 5). Time costs in supervision / internal examination are likely to be at least £450 (two full working days). It is clear that the current level of tuition fee does not cover costs.

We are not actively advertising this route. The Award Regulations are published in the Calendar. They and all of the documents supporting the candidate experience and assessment (where these exist) require updating.

The Postgraduate Research Executive considered higher doctorates as awarded by other universities and concluded that their recommendation would put to put UEA's higher doctorates into abeyance.