LTC16D071

Title: **Confirmation of Chair's Action**
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Common Masters Framework-

Proposal agreed by Chair's action on behalf of LTC on 15 February 2017 to correct an omission from the revised CMF regulations, approved by LTC in July 2016

In July 2016 LTC approved the following about how the revised Regulations for the Common Masters Framework would be applied.

1. **Full-time**: the revised regulations will apply to all new f/t students commencing/continuing in 2016/17.
2. **Part-time**: those part-time students who go to Final Boards in the next academic year (Sept 16 – Aug 17) will graduate under existing 2015/16 CMF regs
3. **Any student** commencing a programme in 16/17 or completing in 17/18 will do so under the 'new' 17/18 regs.

Unfortunately it does not fully capture all of the variations in PGT programmes. One of the main concerns is that it does not make sufficient allowance for those programmes which do not follow the standard academic year.

For e.g.:

MBA students going to the February Board include:
1. Full-time students who started in January 2016 (Final BoE May 2017).
2. Part-time students who started in January 2015 (Final BoE May 2017).
3. Part-time students who started in January 2016 (Final BoE May 2018).

All students who have module marks that are being considered at the February 2017 Board will have a mixed economy of 'M' level (old) and level 7 (new) modules. The MBA starts in January each year (spanning programme) and has both full-time and part-time variants.

Difference in mark schemes

M level (up to September 2016) 15/16 Regulations	Level 7 (after September 2016) 16/17 Regulations
49.5 is a fail for the overall Module mark and student would be referred to reassessment (could have condoned fail in up to 40 credits but only after all taught elements are completed)	49.5 is rounded up and becomes a pass for the overall Module mark (compensation available in up to 40 credits for students with module mark < 49.5)

Student would be referred to synoptic reassessment	Where a student fails a module they would be referred to reassessment in the failed assessment items.

According to LTC approval:
1. Students under 1 above should be considered under the new 16/17 regulations (enrolled on new modules in 2016/17 so view as continuing full-time students)
2. Students under 2 should be considered under the 15/16 regulations (according to LTC part-time students going to Final Board in 16/17 should be considered under 15/16 regulations – this will affect 11 MBA part-time students)
3. Students under 3 should be considered under the 'new' regulations (will be completing in 17/18)

However, I think that when LTC approved the below:

> 2. *Part-time: those part-time students who go to Final Boards in the next academic year (Sept 16 – Aug 17) will graduate under existing 2015/16 CMF regs*

it was in all likelihood intended as a catch-all for those students who, for .e.g., had one outstanding piece of work to submit for an M level module and who had not been enrolled on/assessed in any new modules (level 7) in the 16/17 year.   If continuing full-time students are to be considered under the 2016/17 regulations it seems equitable that continuing part-time students should also be.

Difference in Award Rules:

2015/16	2016/17
Practice according to Board of Examiners re consideration of borderline cases.	Introduced algorithms for: • Merit • Distinction • Borderline merit/distinction
49.5 would be classified a FAIL at Masters for award.	**From 2016/17** all PGT modules follow the BIM UG mark scheme in which marks within 0.5% of the pass mark are treated as a pass. **(Approved by LTC 24/6/2015).** Also applies at classification level.
Condoned Fail for up to 40 credits – 45% or more, however, Boards did use their discretion as per the regulations.	Compensation for up to 40 credits – no lower level - remains at Board's discretion.

Proposal:
That all part-time students who are due to go to Board in the coming year and who have taken new modules in 16/17 (continuing) are considered under the 'new' 16/17 regulations as well as the 15/16 and have the no-detriment rule applied.

Any student who has taken all M level modules, and who goes to Final Board in 16/17, will be considered under the 2015/16 regulations.

Title: **MRes Social Science Research Methods – Proposed Changes**
Author: Dr Vivien Easson, Head of Postgraduate Research Service
Date: 20 February 2017

FAO: **Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee**

Issue
The SSF LTQC has recommended a number of significant changes to the MRes in Social Science Research Methods (MRes SSRM), and would like these to take effect from 2017-18.

The key aspects of these changes are:
 (a) To increase the credit allocated to the research dissertation element from 80 credits to 100 credits;
 (b) To introduce six new pathways, in Politics, Economics, Experimental Philosophy, Human Geography, Social Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Sustainability (STS).
 (c) To refresh the six existing pathways, which are: Business and Management, Education and Lifelong Learning, International Development, Law, Psychology and Social Work and Social Policy.

In particular, the new MRes SSRM will be consistent with the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015). **These changes should therefore improve the prospects of students** wishing to use this course in order to progress on to an ESRC-funded PhD, or indeed any course at doctoral level.

A meeting was held on 7 February 2017 between Andrea Blanchflower, Vivien Easson, Laura Thompson and Nick Watmough at which it was agreed that a notice explaining that there may be proposed changes would need to be sent to any applicants and offer holders to the MRes course, in line with CMA expectations, and that suitable options would need to be presented to any offer holders in the event that the changes were approved by the University. A moratorium on offers to the MRes Social Science Research Methods was put in place that day following communication between Andrea Blanchflower and Alix Delany.

As of 7 February, there were 25 records relating to entry to the MRes SSRM in September 2017, breaking down into the following categories: 2 incomplete applications; 4 being considered by academic selectors; 8 offers communicated; 6 unsuccessful applicants; 3 offers accepted; 2 applications withdrawn.

Six of these applicants (4 with offers communicated as of 7 Feb, and 2 with academic selectors) are also being put forward for funding to the SeNSS (South East Network for Social Sciences) ESRC DTP – the deadline for us to send these to the coordinating institution (University of Essex) is 4pm on Tuesday 21 February. Two of these applicants would like to register on new pathways (Social Anthropology and STS respectively), while the other four have offers for existing pathways.

Normally we would expect applicants put forward for SeNSS funding (full Home fees, stipend and Research Training Support Grant) to be in receipt of an academic offer from the University for their PhD and also for the MRes where relevant, before we put them forward to SeNSS. This may need to be waived here in some cases but it is very important that the offers are made for an approved course and pathway within the MRes as soon as possible. Since academic colleagues expected the new versions of the MRes pathways to be approved by the University in time for the SeNSS submission deadline (21 February), only the new versions of the MRes pathways were submitted to the SeNSS ESRC DTP (http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/) for approval. These new versions have all been approved by SeNSS as complying with the ESRC and SeNSS guidelines. **Without this approval, these UEA applicants will not be eligible for SeNSS funding in 2017/18.**

We have been extremely cautious in checking what applicants to SeNSS have put in their submissions regarding the MRes SSRM, to reduce the likelihood of any problems arising from this. Nonetheless, SeNSS applicants relying on doing the MRes in 2017/18 are concerned about whether or not their

proposed pathway will be approved by UEA, and a swift resolution of these issues would assist with managing their situation. SeNSS pathway selection panels are meeting from w/b 6 March. If the changes could be formally approved before then it would greatly assist UEA academic pathway representatives involved in SeNSS.

Vivien Easson met with Alix Delany on 8 February 2017 and assisted in the preparation of a communication to MRes SSRM applicants, which was sent to offer holders on 16 February to explain that the University is reviewing the programme and proposing changes. Text from this communication is included overleaf.

Recommendation
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is asked to approve the proposed changes to the MRes in Social Science Research Methods, by Chair's action ahead of the next Learning and Teaching Committee. The detailed changes are in accompanying paperwork which will be provided by LTS.

Resource Implications
There have been time implications in terms of updating the MRes SSRM to comply with the new structure.

Laura Thompson has also checked whether the modules on the current versions of the MRes pathways will still run in 2017/18, if students wish to follow the old version (by concession from the ADTP). If the course changes are approved for 2017/18 then the Course Director will need to be informed that old/advertised modules have to be running. This is a theoretical need at this stage and may not be required but we have to give the option.

Risk Implications
In order to comply with CMA expectations and consumer protection legislation, where courses are changed at this stage, written notification, including advice about any alternative options that may be given, will need to be sent to applicants holding offers. ARM is aware of this, and will liaise with LTS and PGR to ensure that information is correct. Offer holders have already been informed that there may be changes as below.

Equality and Diversity
There were no part-time applicants for entry in 2017-18 when ARM checked on 8 February. Part-time applicants and students may need to be taken into account when checking module availability during 2017/18.

Timing of decisions
We would recommend a swift decision on the proposed MRes changes, to assist both with CMA compliance and also SeNSS processes. We would also like to be able to lift the moratorium on making offers to the MRes SSRM. For all of these reasons we would like a decision made as soon as possible by Chair's action, rather than waiting until the next Learning and Teaching Committee on 15 March.

Further Information
Please contact Alix Delany, Vivien Easson or Laura Thompson with queries depending on whether they relate to MRes admissions, doctoral training/SeNSS/ESRC guidelines or module choice/LTQC QA respectively.

Background: Text from communication sent to offer holders on 16 February 2017

Master of Research (MRes) Social Science Research Methods degrees are aimed at people training for careers in social sciences research and for those progressing to a research degree in the social sciences. They are also relevant for those working towards careers in related areas of policy and practice and management.

UEA is part of an ESRC-funded Doctoral Training Partnership and we have recently reviewed our UEA MRes in Social Science Research Methods in light of the 2015 Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines produced by the UK Government's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

As a result of this review we are proposing some exciting new course changes for this September with the aim of:

- Increasing the credit allocated to the research dissertation element from 80 credits to 100 credits, allowing more time for students to pursue their independent research project and receive further individual support from a specialist supervisor.
- Adding six exciting new pathways, in Politics, Economics, Experimental Philosophy, Human Geography, Social Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Sustainability.
- Refreshing the six existing pathways, which are: Business and Management, Education and Lifelong Learning, International Development, Law, Psychology and Social Work and Social Policy.

We believe that the proposed changes will help improve the future prospects and employability of MRes students, particularly if they are seeking funding for a doctoral degree (PhD) from the ESRC in the future, either at UEA or at another UK university.

FT Pathway in MRes SSRM	Current FT pathway	Proposed revised FT pathway
All Pathways have → **Then pathways have options as follows:**	**Dissertation (80)**	**Dissertation (100)**
Business and Management		• Research Methods (20) • Business Research Methods (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Qualitative Analysis Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Business Management M-level module • Placement and Professional Skills
Education and Lifelong Learning		• Research Methods (20) Choose one of the 40-credit options: • Independent Studies (40) • Independent Studies (20) **AND** Placement and Professional Skills (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Qualitative Analysis
International Development		• Research Methods (20) • DEV M-level module (20) • Advanced Qualitative Research and Analysis (20) Choose 1 out of 3 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Placement and Professional Skills • DEV M-level module

Law		• Research Methods for Law (20) • Research Methods (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis (20) • Qualitative Analysis (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • LAW M-level module • Placement and Professional Skills
Psychology		Choose 1 out of 3 40-credit modules: • Cognitive Neuroscience Theory and Methods • Social Psychology Theory and Methods • Developmental Science Theory and Methods Choose 2 out of 3 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Qualitative Analysis • Placement and Professional Skills
Social Work and Social Policy		• Research Methods (20) • PSY/SWK M-level module (20) • Qualitative Analysis (20) Choose 1 out of 3 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Placement and Professional Skills • PSY/SWK M-level module
Economics	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • Econometrics module (20) • ECO M-level module (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Qualitative Research Methods • Placement and Professional Skills
Experimental Philosophy	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • Methodology and Epistemology of Philosophy (20) • Quantitative Analysis (20) Choose 1 out of 3 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Placement and Professional Skills • EXPHIL Supervised Study Module
Human Geography	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • ENV or DEV M-level module (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Qualitative Analysis

		Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • ENV or DEV M-level module • Placement and Professional Skills
Politics	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • Politics M-level module (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Advanced Qualitative Research and Analysis • Qualitative Analysis Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Politics M-level module • Placement and Professional Skills
Science, Technology and Sustainability	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • ENV M-level module (20) Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • Quantitative Analysis • Qualitative Analysis Choose 1 out of 2 20-credit modules: • ENV M-level module • Placement and Professional Skills
Social Anthropology	None – this is a new pathway	• Research Methods (20) • Engaging Anthropology in Development (20) • Advanced Qualitative Research and Analysis (20) Choose 1 out of 4 20-credit modules: • World heritage: problems and prospects • Critical perspectives in cultural heritage • Placement and professional skills • Quantitative Analysis