SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

To be held on Thursday, 30th April, 2009 at 1:15pm in room 116

AGENDA

I	**Minutes of the last meeting** To approve	Appendix A
II	**Matters arising** To discuss	
III	**Procedure for the ethical review of research projects** To approve	Appendix B
IV	**SOAS policy for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct** To approve	Appendix C
V	**An overview of research skills training at SOAS** To receive a report from the Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator	Appendix D
VI	**MPhil student survey** To receive a report from the Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator	Appendix E
VII	**Early career researcher skills training programme** To receive a draft report from the Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator	Appendix F
VIII	**ESRC recognition process** To receive an update from the Chair	
IX	**Research strategy** To discuss a draft version of the revised strategy document	Appendix G
X	**Research publications 2008** To receive a draft report of SOAS research published in 2008 and entered into the SOAS Research online repository	Appendix H
XI	**Recent awards** To receive a report of recently awarded external grants for research	Appendix I
XII	**Research Committee &** **Strategic Initiative Fund awards** To receive a report of the internal awards made by the Awards Advisory Panel	Appendix J
XIII	**Any other business**	

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday 30th April, at 1:15pm in Room 116

MINUTES

Members:	Professor G Furniss (Chair)
	Dr M Bentham
	Professor H Bernstein
	Professor I Brown
	Professor M Craven
	Professor R Fardon
	Professor MJ Hutt
	Professor U Kratz
	Dr C Lapavitsas
	Ms K Oatey (Secretary)
	Dr I Standish
	Mrs S Yates
In attendance:	Mr M Cerny
	Mr P Garrod
	Mrs Huei-Lan Liu
	Professor G Holderness
	Mr J Robinson
	Dr D Thomas
	Mr R Whiteing
	Ms S Young
Apologies:	Mr A Abreu
	Professor A Gerstle
	Professor N Rao

1.   Chair's communication

1.1   The Chair thanked the Committee for its work during the year. Particular thanks were given to the Information Compliance Manager for his efforts in preparing a new research ethics policy, a procedure for the ethical review of research projects and a policy for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct, to the Research Manager and Research Grants Officer for their secretarial support and to the Associate Dean for Research of the Faculty of Languages & Cultures who was stepping down from the position at the end of the academic year.

2.   Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED** subject to the following amendment:

Minute 6.3 The Committee AGREED the formation of a working party to consider in detail the implications of the consultation document and what would be involved in devising a framework of research training within the School that met the ESRC criteria.

3. Matters arising

3.1 *Minute 13.2* The Associate Deans for Research confirmed that recommendation 1.3.4 of the Departmental Programme Review of the Languages & Cultures of Africa had been implemented.

3.2 The Chair confirmed that all other action points from the previous meeting had been carried out.

4. Research Ethics Policy

4.1 The Information Compliance Manager reported that the document had been revised to incorporate the recommendation from the United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) that the policy be modified to indicate that its scope extended to any research conducted under the auspices of SOAS.

4.2 The Committee **APPROVED** the revised Research Ethics Policy, subject to further approval by Academic Board.

5 Procedure for the Ethical Review of Research Projects

5.1 The Information Compliance Manager reported that the document had been revised to incorporate feedback received following the previous meeting of Research Committee, the subsequent meetings of Faculty Research Committees and comments received verbally from UKRIO.

5.2 The Committee **AGREED** that the wording of the Procedure for the Ethical Review of SOAS Research projects should be revised to reflect the fact that Associate Deans for Research would often need to consult with colleagues on their Faculty's Research Committee before making a decision whether or not to grant ethical approval of a research proposal.

5.3 The Committee **APPROVED** the revised Procedure for the Ethical Review of SOAS Research Projects, subject to further approval by Academic Board.

6. SOAS Policy for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct

6.1 The Committee **APPROVED** the revised Research Misconduct Policy, subject to revisions in the light of any comments from the Human Resources Department and Trade Unions and approval by Academic Board.

7. An overview of research skills training at SOAS

7.1   The Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator presented a report on a series of interviews with research tutors during 2008-9 about discipline-specific research skills training at SOAS.

7.2   The Committee **NOTED** the potential for cooperation between Faculties as a way of eradicating duplication of provision. A group of SOAS research tutors was to be established on Blackboard, the virtual learning environment (VLE) in order to share information about research training provision.

7.3   The Committee **AGREED** that the process of monitoring and maintaining the provision of research skills training should be continued by the Research Student Management Group, established by the previous meeting of Research Committee.

8.   MPhil Research Skills Training 2009 Survey

8.1   The Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator presented a report into the findings of the SOAS MPhil Research Skills Training 2009 Survey.

8.2   The Committee **NOTED** that the full report was to be published on the VLE where it would be accessible to students. The Head of Learning & Teaching Strategy emphasised the importance of student surveys in terms of their impact on institutional reputation and reported that the Learning & Teaching Unit (LTU) was piloting a similar survey of postgraduate taught students.

9.   Early Career Researcher Skills Training Programme: 2009-2010

9.1   The Research Skills Trainer/Co-ordinator and the Head of College Careers Service presented a draft version of the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Skills Training Programme: 2009-2010, designed for members of staff who had recently completed PhD research and were in the early stages of their academic career and PhD students in the final post-fieldwork stages of their research projects. The intention was to offer a unified programme of courses with an online presence.

9.2   The Head of College Careers Service reported that £12,700 of Roberts Funding had been earmarked to pay for one day per week dedicated careers advice for ECR staff, to be supplied by the University of London Careers Group. The Committee welcomed the additional resource for the careers service and recognised that SOAS had been behind the sector in providing this type of support.

9.2   The Committee **NOTED** that as a member of Universities UK, SOAS was a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/.

10.   ESRC recognition process

10.1   The Chair reported that the School was awaiting the final document from the ESRC outlining the recognition process and criteria. The next step was for members of the ESRC DTU Recognition Working Party to meet with colleagues at Birkbeck and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine to discuss

ways in which the three institutions might work together to satisfy the ESRC's subject criteria.

10.2 The Committee **AGREED** to examine SOAS's institutional structure with regard to support for postgraduate research students at its first meeting in the next session (2009-10).

11. SOAS Research & Enterprise Strategy 2009-2012

11.1 The Chair presented a draft version of the revised Research & Enterprise Strategy 2009-2012.

11.2 The Committee **AGREED** that the draft document should be sent to Faculty Research Committees for discussion and further feedback.

12. SOAS Research Online listing of 2008 publications

12.1 The Committee **NOTED** that the list was clearly incomplete and included a number of inaccuracies. Several staff had not entered their publication details and others had been allocated to the wrong department.

12.2 The Committee **NOTED** that the Repository Support Officer would chase up those staff that had not yet entered any publications details into the database. The listings would also be made available to Faculty Research Panels.

12.3 The Committee **NOTED** that commercial abstracting and citations databases e.g. Scopus, could be explored by the Research & Enterprise Office to determine whether SOAS could employ the same tools that the Research Excellence Framework (REF) would be employing.

13 Recent awards

13.1 The Committee **NOTED** a list of successful applications for external research funding submitted through the Research Office since 1st August, 2008.

13.2 The Committee **NOTED** that following the establishment of the Research & Enterprise Directorate it was anticipated that more detailed external research funding related management information would be made available on a regular basis.

14 Research Committee & Strategic Initiative Fund Awards

14.1 The Committee **NOTED** a list of awards made by the Research Committee Awards Advisory Panel 2008-9 and by the Chair from the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 The Associate Dean for Research of the Faculty of Languages & Cultures reported the case of a bogus academic overseas, falsely claiming to hold a SOAS qualification. The Committee confirmed that in such cases the usual practice was to issue a "cease and desist" order.