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Comments on the Information Supplied by UCL

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1 Introduction

This document is a response to a letter from David Hebblethwaite dated 17 January 2014 which informed me that I now have the opportunity to make comments on the information supplied by UCL.

Firstly, for the sake of clarity, let me reiterate the structure of my complaint submitted to UCL.

1. Deficiency in Supervision Received
2. Results of Examinations
 - (a) The examiners could not reasonably have been aware of special circumstances which significantly affected the candidate's performance in the examination
 - (b) The examination was not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations/procedures
 - (c) Evidence that both examiners were biased or prejudiced against the candidate

The Panel completely ignored the whole of 2 above, that is, they failed to investigate the majority of my complaint. And for the one aspect of my complaint that the Panel gave the appearance of investigating, Deficiency in Supervision Received, they failed to seek any evidence from independent witnesses (such as other supervisees), they simply asked the defendant, the Department of Computer Science, to supply their own evidence! Naturally, the Department were able to, and did, cherry pick the evidence that they supplied. The Department supplied many irrelevant emails (e.g. about business cards) which comes across as an attempt at obfuscation designed to disguise the fact that I'd not had any supervision. They also included emails that are of a derogatory nature towards myself in an attempt to unfairly discredit me and/or my complaint. The inclusion of such emails is deceitful, as they convey dishonest information, but are merely emails sent internally among the co-defendants, so are in no sense independent evidence. Unsurprisingly the Department have not included any emails from myself complaining about lack of supervision or those in which I request supervision (I am at a disadvantage as I simply no longer have emails that I

either sent or received ten years ago). Significantly, the Department failed to supply any evidence of supervision (note the lack of an emails from any supervisors) and absence of evidence is evidence of absence, but simply evidenced what was nothing short of a witch hunt by Angela Sasse. I'd not merely been given no access to supervision, but she was attempting to make me sit an upgrade viva before I'd had any supervision with the expectation that I would fail, and she could then have me removed from the department. She failed to do this, and is apparently (given the material that she went to the trouble of finding on her home computer) still seeking revenge.

Furthermore, the documents supplied by UCL were open to further manipulation in that the Panel were able to omit or include any materials they chose. For example, documents that I sent to UCL, such as Sewell (2012c), have been omitted. This document strongly evidenced the bias shown by the examiners (it makes their position completely untenable), and is repeated as Table 1 in Sewell (2013). Note that the file includes some items from myself, which were all completely ignored by the Panel. UCL even failed to supply information that was explicitly requested by the OIA. The only timeline of events was supplied by myself, see page 236 of 'Sewell HEI reps.pdf'. Also missing are 'Supervision records' and 'Annual review reports', because there were none. Supervision cannot be recorded when it doesn't take place.

I have responded in more detail below to five of the documents that were scanned and made up part of 'Sewell HEI reps.pdf', and page numbers refer to that PDF document:

- Email from Angela Sasse, 5 November 2004, p. 138
- Email from Anthony Finkelstein, 2 February 2006, p. 215
- Response to the Grievance Panel by Anthony Hunter, 30 September 2011, pp. 124–127
- Memorandum from David Ashton to David Bogle, 20 February 2012, p. 132
- Evaluation of Appeal by Julie Clark, July 2013, pp. 293–295

Throughout this document, quoted text is in italics, with my own comments inline and below in roman type.

2 Email from Angela Sasse, 5 November 2004, p. 138

Say that he has bucked our efforts to supervise his work since the end of his 1st year. Failed to turn up for Transfer viva and document submitted fell way short. Has not provided any evidence of academic work over the past 2 years, and is using UCL to give legitimacy to consultancy work he is doing, which is why I don't want him to have cards. I am taking steps to have his record terminated.

Here, Professor Sasse is asking her assistant, Vera Cady, to tell a pack of lies about me to the Head of Department. I have never resisted any form of supervision from anyone, ever, I spent much of my time at UCL seeking supervision. I never 'failed to turn up' to any transfer viva, Professor Sasse

admitted in her email dated 17 September 2003 (p. 198) that she forgot to tell me about my own transfer viva. She is not qualified to judge the quality of my work (she works in a different field). I never did any consultancy work whatsoever. So, she tells four lies, and then explicitly states that, rather than help find me a supervisor, she was taking steps to have me removed from the Department, for no valid reason.

3 Email from Anthony Finkelstein, 2 February 2006, p. 215

In the event you are able to submit academic work we will, of course, undertake to have it evaluated seeking external advice as appropriate. You clearly understand that we cannot undertake any supervision and that we can only extend to you limited services.

The first sentence is a direct admission from the Head of Department (at the time) that there was no one in the Department who was qualified to supervise me. It also follows that there was no one in the Department who was qualified to examine me, evidencing that David Barber was not qualified to act as an examiner (he has never published a single article in the financial domain). The second sentence evidences that I was told, before I'd had any supervision, that no supervision would be available to me.

4 Response to the Grievance Panel by Anthony Hunter, 30 September 2011, pp. 124–127

1. *Why was the student allocated Professor Treleaven when he first started his research degree programme and why was he advised to change his principal supervisor?*

I was not 'advised' to change my Principal Supervisor. I was dumped by Philip Treleaven because his own primary research interest had switched from finance to using 3D body scanning for clothes sizing. He told me this at the time. This information was in my original complaint (Sewell 2011) so it is a deceitful and leading question for the Panel to ask.

Martin Sewell applied in March 1999 to undertake MPhil/PhD studies in "Intelligent Systems in Finance" in the UCL Department of Computer Science. Professor Treleaven is a leading expert in this area, and as a result he agreed to supervise this student.

This is correct; I'm not sure when I applied, but I met with Professor Treleaven on 18 October 1999.

Mr Sewell registered as a student at UCL in January 2000, and for his first year, he was supervised by Professor Treleaven. During this period, Professor Treleaven felt that Mr Sewell would benefit from the involvement of Professor Campbell in the supervision team. Professor Campbell was Professor of Artificial Intelligence until his retirement in 2003, and he has considerable experience in the development of machine learning algorithms which were deemed to be of particular interest to Mr Sewell. Furthermore,

Mr Sewell has some strong views about the direction of his thesis, and he believed that Professor Campbell was more sympathetic to his views than Professor Treleaven. Given the focus of the supervision had shifted to Professor Campbell, it was agreed by all parties that he should take over as first supervisor at the end of the first year.

The above five sentences manage to contain no less than six false statements. Professor Treleaven was my original Principal Supervisor, but did not supervise in any useful (technical) sense. The transition to Professor Cambell did not take place during my first year, but during my third year (on 12 March 2002, to be precise¹). Professor Treleaven told me to ask Professor Campbell whether he would become my Principal Supervisor because his own primary research interest had switched from finance to using 3D body scanning for clothes sizing (he told me this at the time), it was not for my sake. Professor Campbell's area of expertise was multiagent systems, which had nothing to do with my research interests at the time (forecasting financial time series). I never had any 'strong views' about the direction of my thesis, I was totally flexible and immediately embraced multiagent systems to accommodate a new supervisor (I ended up with a chapter on forecasting and a chapter on multiagent systems), this is a deliberate and deceitful attempt by the Department to create a false narrative. Professor Campbell did not take over as Principal Supervisor at the end of the first year, but during my third year.

2. ***What steps were taken to find the student a replacement supervisor after Professor Campbell retired?***

No steps were taken to find a replacement Principal Supervisor after Professor Campbell retired until eventually Professor Treleaven was reappointed by default.

When Professor Campbell retired, Professor Sasse, the Graduate Tutor at the time, arranged for each of his students to be assigned another first supervisor in the department. In each case, the student would be consulted as to who they felt would be an appropriate first supervisor. In addition, Professor Campbell also kindly agreed to act as an advisor to all his students, and so in most cases, his students continued to work closely with him after retirement until they they (sic) submitted their theses.

The above response is evasive, and has failed to answer the question.

3. ***Why was Professor Treleaven re-allocated as the student's supervisor?***

Because there were no qualified members of staff, he was reappointed by default. But of course having already dumped me, he was unwilling, so this was never going to work.

After the retirement of Professor Campbell, Professor Sasse, the Graduate Tutor at the time, decided that Professor Treleaven would be the replacement supervisor given his involvement with the student and his experience in the area of the thesis.

¹See page 232 of 'Sewell HEI reps.pdf'.

Yes, and because there was no one else qualified. What the above reply conceals is the time delay, for a period of time I was left as a full-time fee-paying student with no supervisor. That was, no supervisor on paper, and no supervisor in practice. Nothing.

4. ***What level of supervision can students expect to receive?***

Students can expect to receive one hour of supervision per week, though at critical stages in a student's project, they may get substantially more than this. It is the student's responsibility to arrange the meetings, to prepare the agenda, and to report on actions raised in previous meetings. It is the supervisor's responsibility to make themselves available on a regular basis, to discuss the student's work, to provide timely feedback, and to give knowledgeable guidance to the student.

In other words, the student (paying customer) is responsible for managing his or her supervisor (paid employee)!

5. ***What level of supervision did this student receive from his principal and subsidiary supervisor?***

For the first-year of Mr Sewell's studies, Professor Treleaven believes that he met with the student on a weekly basis, in line with the department expectations. He provided technical advice to the student to enable the student to make novel contributions to the field, and general advice to the student to help the student put together a good thesis.

Professor Treleaven would meet with half a dozen students at a time, and often discussed his own work, and tell us to find a second supervisor. He provided precisely zero technical advice.

Professor Campbell made himself available for a weekly meeting with each of his PhD students. He was happy to spend considerable time with students with much advice and support for their studies. He was a conscientious supervisor for students who sought his advice, but he would not chase the ones who didn't. According to Professor Sasse, Mr Sewell fell into the latter category, by his own admission on several occasions.

This is deceitful and false. Professor Campbell made himself available to me precisely once before retiring. During this meeting he asked me to read a newspaper in Russian, then expressed apparently genuine surprise that I couldn't read Russian. He is a likeable but eccentric character. It is also false that I was not a student who sought advice, I spent most of my student years seeking feedback and supervision, but no one was working in the financial domain at the time.

When Professor Treleaven took over as supervisor for the second time, Professor Treleaven held numerous sessions with Mr Sewell to discuss his draft thesis. These were aimed at getting Mr Sewell to rewrite and rework substantial parts of his draft thesis in order to make a coherent and substantiated contribution. Professor Treleaven spent a considerable amount of time with Mr Sewell explaining what is expected of a thesis in an engineering discipline. This involved getting the student to refocus the thesis on clear contributions that are justified by well-conducted experimentation.

The above is generic unmitigated drivel. Professor Treleaven met me about once and simply told me to rearrange my thesis in some unintuitive way. During the viva the examiners told me to change the structure back again.

6. ***Did this student only receive three hours of supervision whilst he was on his programme of study?***

Of technical (i.e. useful) supervision, yes.

The student received much more than three hours of supervision whilst being a MPhil/PhD student in the department. During his first year, Professor Treleaven believes that he met with Mr Sewell on a weekly basis. Then, when Professor Treleaven resumed as supervisor, he undertook numerous supervision sessions with Mr Sewell. These included some involved sessions that were aimed at getting Mr Sewell to rewrite and rework substantial parts of his draft thesis in order to make a coherent and substantiated contribution.

Note that the Department, yet again, and for no good reason, simply can't resist dishonestly using the word 'MPhil' out of pure vindictiveness. The above is deceitful, Professor Treleaven would meet with half a dozen students at a time and talk and discuss his own work, this is not supervision. The second sentence is true only if we redefine the word numerous to mean 'one'. Professor Treleaven was one step removed from supervision, he was more of a meta-supervisor and told us to find a supervisor. As for 'involved sessions', this is utter drivel, we barely ever met.

Also, Professor Shawe-Taylor provided some help to the student on certain technical questions in the thesis in 2007. Whilst Mr Sewell produced some interesting results in response to Professor Shawe-Taylor's input, Mr Sewell did not take the opportunity to develop this line of work further with Professor Shawe-Taylor.

What an utterly deceitful, negative and twisted response. My work with John Shawe-Taylor led to Chapter 5 of my thesis and was published as Sewell and Shawe-Taylor (2012) in *Expert Systems with Applications*, a journal with a 5-year impact factor of 2.339, with no corrections. This, frankly, nonsensical reply evidences that this document has not been seen by the Head of Department, Professor Shawe-Taylor. I was never given the opportunity to 'develop this line of work further'. Firstly, how much further could we take it beyond publishing it?² Secondly, I was never offered any more meetings, Professor Shawe-Taylor was never my supervisor so it would not have been appropriate to take up any more of his time (he became Head of Department, so was very busy).

In general, Mr Sewell did not avail himself well of the advice and feedback provided by supervisors or graduate tutors in the department. Professor Sasse reports that for periods he would refuse to attend meetings, and he would not answer emails, concerning supervision arrangements.

This is just a bald-faced lie. I *always* followed any advice or feedback I was given, I *never* refused to attend any meetings, and I *never* failed

²A Nobel Prize?

to reply to an email³ (given the tiny amount of advice, meetings and emails I received). I had no supervision, and twice no supervisor, so naturally enough my progress was slow. Professor Sasse failed to find me a supervisor, so her life would have been easier if she could find an excuse to remove me from the department. She tried to do so, unsuccessfully, but I didn't merely have no access to supervision, I had to contend with a witch hunt. Naturally, we fell out, so any reports from Professor Sasse are unreliable.

7. ***What role did the Departmental Graduate Tutor play in helping the student to find a replacement supervisor? Is it usual for students to find a supervisor for themselves?***

She at first tried to help, then when she realised that there was no one qualified, rather than help, she took steps to remove me from the Department.

The Graduate Tutor is responsible for ensuring that each student has an appropriate supervision team in place. When Professor Campbell retired, Professor Sasse (who was the Graduate Tutor at the time) consulted each student for their input. It is not the case that a student is left to his or her own devices to find a supervisor. However, we do want to take the student's opinion into account since they can make valuable contributions to this important decision.

This is complete nonsense, I spent a lot of time seeking a supervisor. I approached anyone and everyone that I thought may be able to help, including Massimiliano Pontil, Mark Herbster and an academic at ELSE⁴.

8. ***Why did the Departmental Graduate Tutor remove the student from the Department and why did the Head of Department over-rule this decision as claimed by the student?***

If the Panel had read my complaint properly, they would be aware that I was never removed from the Department. That they think this way shows severe prejudice. Being removed from the Department would be a serious action, which would presumably be done for good reason. My record at UCL was unblemished, so it is shocking that such an assumption was made.

Mr Sewell was not removed from the department. However, in Dec 2005, the Graduate Tutor did request that his department email account be suspended because it appeared that he was not progressing with his studies, he would not meet with his supervisors, and because of inappropriate usage; He would routinely send derogatory responses, copied to all, whenever there were announcements about events for female students, and he used his UCL account to email people in the City, and represent himself as a "UCL researcher" to promote his ideas (which neither his supervisor nor his examiners felt were sensible). The decision to suspend his account was over-turned by Professor Finkelstein, the Head of Department at the time, because it was felt that the student should be given a further opportunity to complete his studies.

³Ironically, the Panel themselves have failed to respond to the majority of my emails.

⁴ESRC Centre for Economic Learning and Social Evolution.

The above is false, vindictive and defamatory. Almost every single assertion is untrue. The accusation that I would not meet with my supervisors is not merely false, but utterly farcical. I had no effective supervisors, and I have never refused to meet anyone. The accusation of sending ‘derogatory responses’ is not merely false and defamatory, but given a wider circulation I would take legal action. I have never sent anything ‘derogatory’ to anyone in my entire life. In fact I even maintained a web page of links of interest to women working in computer science, and also forwarded relevant links to Zhaoping Li, the Department’s Women in CS contact person. Feel free to ask her. I have never described myself as a ‘UCL researcher’, but may have described myself as a PhD student at UCL when I was a PhD student at UCL. I have no idea what ‘which neither his supervisor nor his examiners felt were sensible’ could possibly mean, what examiners? I have never attempted to promote my ideas and nobody has ever told me that any ideas of mine weren’t sensible. Professor Treleaven once accompanied me to a bank seeking funding, so obviously he thought that was sensible. Professor Finkelstein overruled Professor Sasse’s decision to suspend my account because there was no valid reason for suspending it. Professor Sasse was being vindictive, it is not normal for email accounts to be suspended, even after a student leaves. The Department know that they are negligent, and know that they will never be able to produce any evidence of supervision, so have resorted to using the oldest trick in the book which is to divert attention away from the fact that I was not offered any significant supervision by making dishonest and derogatory comments about the complainant in an attempt to undermine the complainant’s credibility.

9. ***What guidance was given to the student to prepare for the viva examinations?***

I was told to give a PowerPoint presentation and defend myself vigorously. Both recommendations were disastrous.

Professor Treleaven gave Mr Sewell advice on how he should defend his thesis. He talked him through a mock viva and he pointed out what was expected of him at each stage of the viva. He advised the student that the examiners will question the candidate with a range of questions to test the candidates understanding of the field, to clarify any problems with the thesis, and to get the candidate to defend their position orally. Mr Sewell was also advised to answer questions clearly and concisely so as to help the examiners in understanding the thesis and its import.

The above stock answer sounds wonderfully generic and reads like something out of a manual. Professor Treleaven told me to defend myself vigorously, and this turned out to be an unmitigated disaster because, absurdly, Dr Barber informed me that I was not allowed to defend myself. Professor Treleaven also told me to start each viva with a PowerPoint presentation, which I did. The examiners were not impressed.

10. ***What feedback was the student given on the draft of his thesis and who provided it?***

Almost none.

Mr Sewell had a draft thesis for a number of years. Professor Treleaven held numerous sessions with Mr Sewell to discuss this thesis. These were aimed at getting Mr Sewell to rewrite and rework substantial parts of his draft thesis in order to make a coherent and substantiated contribution. Professor Treleaven spent a considerable amount of time with Mr Sewell explaining what is expected of a thesis in an engineering discipline. This involved getting the student to refocus the thesis on clear contributions that are justified by well-conducted experimentation. Similar feedback was provided by Professor Shawe-Taylor in 2007.

Again, the above is nonsense and looks like it was copied from a manual. Professor Treleaven met me once and told me to rewrite my abstract. That was it.

11. ***Did the Department take any action to obtain the examiners (sic) reports for the student?***

No.

It is not departmental policy to obtain examiners' reports for students. Given the confidentiality of the reports, the student is advised to obtain the reports directly from the examinations office.

The second sentence is false, I was sent the examiners' reports by the Registry.

12. ***Do you have any comments to make about the conduct of the viva? (If one of the student's supervisors was present at the vivas, it would be helpful to obtain this person's view of the conduct and content of the vivas).***

This sounds like a stock question, the Panel should have known who was present during the vivas. The conduct of the viva was shocking. The external examiner's only concern was that I had failed to reference his own work, and he was visibly angry, whilst the internal examiner kept telling me not to defend my thesis(!), and this made me almost speechless with anger.

Professor Treleaven was present at both vivas. He believes that in both vivas the student was rigorously examined, in the sense that the examiners were trying to find a worthwhile contribution in the thesis. He felt that in the first viva, the student did not perform well. He did not answer questions well, and generally he did not perform as would be expected in a viva. Then in the second viva, he performed very poorly. He was unable to defend his thesis. He appeared unable to field questions or to respond well to any criticisms raised, and therefore, Professor Treleaven believes that it was fair for the examiners to deem the student to have failed the viva.

If Professor Treleaven stated that my thesis was good, he'd be undermining work colleagues, if he said that my thesis was poor, he'd be undermining himself, so he has little choice but to blame the student's defence in the viva. The reality is that Professor Treleaven warned me about Dr Barber being notoriously harsh, as did every single person I met who knew him. This document was supposed to be a response from the Department as

a whole, only two members of the Department were present in the vivas, and one was an examiner, so any response is biased.

13. ***What advice was given to the student as feedback after the first viva?*** This is absolutely crucial. At this point the examiners are in a position to help the student pass, or help him to fail. UCL (2011) states that in cases when examiners refer a thesis for re-submission for examination ‘the examiners’ joint report should include detailed guidance for the candidate and what is expected for them to achieve the standard for an award.’ I was not given *detailed* guidance of what was required to achieve the standard for an award. For example, the first point listed in Barber and Tsang (2009), ‘The technical aspects in chapters 4 and 5 lack academic rigour and many of the experiments are lacking in sufficient detail to be reproduced’, is important yet far too vague to be useful. At the hearing a member of the Panel asked whether I’d sent the examiners my thesis in advance of my second viva to ensure that it was okay. I replied that I thought that it would not be appropriate to do so. So, it looks like my honesty cost me my PhD. I was not given any feedback from the Department.

After the first viva, the examiners provided substantial feedback to the student on how the thesis could be improved. Professor Treleaven also provided substantial feedback on how to improve the thesis and on how to behave in the viva. In particular, Mr Sewell was advised to respond to queries in a clear and precise way, and to systematically defend the position he has presented in his thesis.

The above is wholly nonsense. After the first viva, the examiners gave woefully inadequate feedback, see Barber and Tsang (2009). Professor Treleaven gave me zero feedback on how to improve the thesis. There was very little wrong with the thesis in the first place.

14. ***Do you have any comments to make about the allegations of prejudice and bias of the examiners against the candidate, as detailed on pages 4 to 10 of the student’s submission.***

The Panel surely know that it is not in an academic’s career or personal interests to accuse a fellow academic of prejudice or bias, whilst it is apparently quite safe to tell lies about a mere student.

As a department, we do not believe that the examiners demonstrated any prejudice or bias against the candidate. The thesis was weak. There were problems with it, and the net result was not a substantial contribution to the literature.

‘As a department’? Only two members of the department were present, one of whom was an examiner. It is not in an academic’s interest to accuse a fellow academic of prejudice or bias against a candidate.

Note that the question did not ask for academic judgement, but the Department took the opportunity to be vindictive. If the Department genuinely believe that the thesis is ‘weak’, I suggest that they inform the editor of the *International Journal of Statistics and Probability*, which published Chapter 3 of my thesis, that they have accepted a ‘weak’ paper. Then they should inform the chairs of ICAART 2012, who accepted Chapter 4

of my thesis, that they accepted a ‘weak’ paper. When they’ve done that, they should inform the editor of *Expert Systems with Applications*, who published Chapter 5 of my thesis, that they have accepted a ‘weak’ paper, and then they should castigate their own Head of Department, Professor Shawe-Taylor, for jointly publishing such a ‘weak’ paper with me.⁵ The thesis was not ‘weak’, my thesis is fully peer reviewed and generated a greater number of publications (24) than any other PhD that I am aware of awarded within the department. Besides, if the thesis was ‘weak’, why was I told to submit it by both my supervisor and the Head of Department (although admittedly neither had read it)?

There were various significant contributions to the literature⁶, unfortunately no one in the Department has sufficient experience within the domain of finance to recognise them. If there were any experts in finance, I would likely have had a willing supervisor in the first place. Indeed, no one in the Department is qualified to judge the thesis, and that includes the internal examiner, Dr Barber, who to this day has not published a single paper in the financial domain.

Prior to each viva, the examiners found it difficult to determine whether or not there was a real contribution in the thesis, and therefore, they undertook a very detailed examination of the thesis during each viva. This involved some rigorous questioning of the student in order to see if there was a sufficient level of scholarship in the thesis that could merit a pass.

This is not even an answer from the Department. Prior to the first viva, the external examiner didn’t even bother to send a preliminary report, so we have no idea what he genuinely thought. Prior to the first viva, the internal examiner would have likely been aware of derogatory comments from Professor Sasse, clouding his judgement.

Furthermore, the examiners found it difficult to get straight answers from the student during each viva, and this meant that some questions needed to be followed with some tenacity in order to get adequate replies.

‘Some questions needed to be followed with some tenacity’ being a biased-in-favour-of-the-examiners way of conceding that the examiners were aggressive and bullying. The question concerns ‘allegations of prejudice and bias of the examiners against the candidate’, the examiners are on trial, not the candidate!

4.1 Conclusion

Contrary to the Panel’s request, the document was not written by the department as a whole, just those who had a vendetta against me. Why was it not overseen by the Head of Department? It is not in an academic’s career interests to criticise a fellow academic, and the Department would be reluctant to admit any guilt in writing as they would be afraid of being sued, so it is no

⁵I’m sorry, but the only rational response to this vindictive drivel is sarcasm.

⁶I identified four that the examiners had completely missed on page 9 of Sewell (2011), whilst the inefficiencies identified in Chapter 3 of my thesis Sewell (2012d) are profound, and the work reconciles the apparent efficiency of markets according to linear statistical tests with the potential for non-linear forecasting methods to generate above-average risk-adjusted returns.

surprise that the answers are generic and evasive. The Department have used their answers as an opportunity to attack my character in order to undermine my credibility without needing to provide any actual evidence (lies can be told with impunity) in order to divert attention away from the fact that I wasn't given access to supervision. It is the oldest trick in the book, and shameful that the Panel apparently fell for it. In summary, the document is little more than a contrived pack of lies. The Panel could, and should, have gathered evidence from independent witnesses, not from the Department. For example, they could have asked other supervisees, or at the very least they could have asked the members of staff who I published with (i.e. who actually knew me), Chris Clack and Professor Shawe-Taylor, rather than the sources of the complaint (the defendants themselves), Professor Treleaven and Professor Sasse.

What particularly galls me is that from the very start of proceedings, I was careful to ensure that every sentence that I wrote was 100% true, I would be happy to defend my case in a court of law. In contrast, the Department have been quite happy to distort the truth and tell lies. Even if the Panel then took the middle ground, that would be unfair, but it's far worse than that, all of my evidence has been ignored.

5 Memorandum from David Ashton to David Bogle, 20 February 2012, p. 132

Firstly, note the most obvious breach of procedures, the memorandum is from David Ashton, Director of Student Services, and to David Bogle, Head of the Graduate School, with nobody else Cc'd, in other words, the student representative member of the panel, Rachel Eyre, was excluded from the decision-making process.

As you know, we held a hearing under the Student Grievance Procedure to hear the case of the above research student from the Department of Computer Science.

Correct.

You will recall that the Department had not submitted in advance any evidence to support its case. The Panel suggested that the Department was asked to provide this evidence. We have now received a second batch of material which shows that the student was difficult to manage as well as an indication that an upgrade viva took place on 27 November 2003 and he was not upgraded but to write up for an MPhil (see emails of 4 November 2004, 11 December 2003 and 13 November 2003).

This evidences bias from the start, the Department was not supposed to have a 'case', it is me that has the case!

I was most certainly not 'difficult to manage' and there is no evidence that suggests that this was the case. There was a witch hunt, yes. Professor Sasse failed to find me a supervisor as there was no one with relevant (financial domain) expertise in the department at the time, naturally this delayed my progress as a student. Her only solution then was to have me removed from the department, and she attempted to force me into an upgrade viva before I'd had any supervision. She became not merely unhelpful, but was obstructive (in breach of regulations she attempted to cancel my e-mail account) and petty

(despite being a full-time registered student she refused to let me have business cards). This was nothing short of a witch hunt.

An upgrade viva did *not* take place, this was discussed during the Hearing and accepted by all! I don't know why it matters, but if it's important, the Panel should at least get their facts right. As I explained in an email dated 4 November 2004 (p. 140) 'Due to various reasons beyond my control, I never had a transfer viva. Angela et al., instead, read a draft report I'd written for my mentor, David Corney (which was about three years old at the time, and never intended for a viva), privately in my absence. Naturally, they had no idea what it was about. Wonderfully unprofessional, but presumably it enabled her to mentally tick a job done box.' Also, I was never, ever, registered as an MPhil student, why did the Panel not simply ask the Registry? The document on page 237 of 'Sewell HEI reps.pdf' proves that I *was* upgraded (it is the official signed document), and also that the Panel know full well that I was upgraded. The Panel's assertion is not merely wrong, but is inexcusable and demonstrates pure prejudice. The quality of my PhD thesis is not in any doubt, to the best of my knowledge it is more peer reviewed than any other PhD thesis from that department. The above simply evidences gross prejudice from the Panel. Besides, what has any of this got to do with my complaint, lack of supervision and bias from the examiners? The Panel seem more interested in attempting to denigrate my character than investigating my complaint.

We have now ascertained that the student was registered for three years full-time from 10 Jan 2000 - 21 Sep 2003. He moved to full-time CRS status 22 Sep 2003 for one session, to Sep 2004. He then moved by default to post-CRS status until 25 Nov 2008 when he submitted his thesis. He paid fees relating to this period as well as a late submission fee and a resubmission fee.

Almost true! Except that I submitted my thesis on 25 March 2009.

In its initial discussion, the Panel was minded to provide some compensation for the supervision that he was given. There was no evidence of bias and there was a concern that this was a matter of academic judgement.

Firstly, the Panel were not asked for any compensation, but if they were minded to do so, should have considered the opportunity cost of having no supervision for seven years. And what about compensation for the supervision that was *not* given? That is, 98% of it. The Panel are being wilfully ignorant, I provided no less than six pages of evidence of bias by the examiners (Sewell 2011, pp. 4–10), which they completely ignored.

It was concerned that there was a deficiency of supervision between the two vivas and clarification on what the examiners were expecting was not sought and communicated to the student. He was therefore not properly prepared for the second viva.

But the Panel were not concerned that I'd received no technical supervision for seven years?!

The Panel was considering allowing the student a third attempt at the viva.

Given that I received just three hours of technical supervision, and nine regulations were breached during the examination process, I would have thought that it was a straightforward case! Besides, it is not the student that needs a third attempt at a viva, I only need one attempt, with non-prejudiced examiners. So on what basis did the Panel change their mind? Why are they not prepared to say?

The email trail suggests that his research whilst registered was not of sufficient quality. There is evidence that he was told who his supervisors were: an email of 13 March 2002 stated that his principal supervisor was John Campbell and his subsidiary Philip Treleaven.

The first sentence manages to be simultaneously doubly irrelevant, false, unfair and vindictive. It is irrelevant because it is only the quality of the thesis that is examined that would be relevant, doubly irrelevant because academic judgement is not supposed to be a consideration (this is a breach of procedure), false because my research whilst registered was precisely the quality that one would expect from a student who had yet to have any effective supervision, unfair because there is no evidence from anyone qualified to judge the quality of my research, and vindictive because the Panel know full well that every piece of my research has passed peer review and is published.

The second sentence above, ‘There is evidence that he was told who his supervisors were: an email of 13 March 2002 stated...’ is complete and utter nonsense, and quite telling. The email written on 13 March 2002 was written by myself!⁷ Yes, I had to inform the Department who my supervisors were. The Panel take years to deliberate, then respond as though they’ve had just a cursory glance at the evidence. Besides, what is the point of the statement? So, the Panel found no evidence of any supervision, but that’s okay because UCL do not require that supervisors give any supervision, merely that a student is given their names?!

Now that there is evidence about his performance whilst registered, I am not sure if the Panel would have come to the same conclusion.

The above sentence is, incredibly, doubly irrelevant, false and nonsensical. Irrelevant because ‘performance whilst registered’ is not what is of interest (but the quality of the submitted thesis), doubly irrelevant because academic judgement is not supposed to be made (this is a clear breach of procedure), false because there is no evidence concerning my performance whatsoever (just evidence of a witch hunt) and nonsensical because no ‘conclusion’ has been given in the memorandum.

Would you like me to arrange for the remainder of the evidence to be sent to the Panel members and to

The rest of this document was missing, which raises my suspicions further.

5.1 Conclusion

The Panel have not requested the right sort of evidence, and they have completely misinterpreted what they received. They haven’t even pretended to take my evidence into consideration. The above memorandum, between two important decision makers within UCL, is a confused muddle, I am unconvinced that UCL have any systematic procedures at all. Most of the assertions in the memorandum are, quite literally, false, it is an abuse of position and power to take such a careless attitude with such important matters. It is no wonder that their decision making is so woeful and naive. The Panel are apparently unable to read between the lines, and side with the Department, but I am struggling to believe that such senior members of UCL are as naive as they appear.

⁷See page 232 of ‘Sewell HEI reps.pdf’.

6 Evaluation of Appeal by Julie Clark, July 2013, pp. 293–295

UCL really are a law unto themselves, and have failed to follow their own procedures at every stage of the process. To recap, seven regulations were breached in terms of supervision, nine further regulations were breached during the examination process. Next the Panel attempted to withdraw my right to an appeal (it took the Vice Chancellor to intervene), and finally the document below was initially withheld from me. I received the third and final Completion of Procedures (Saffery 2013) without it attached.

Given that my appeal (Sewell 2013) had evidenced that the original two Completion of Procedures (Ashton 2013a,b) were basically each a pack of lies, I was horrified and astonished that my appeal was not upheld and the findings and decision of the initial Grievance Panel still stood. So I contacted Julie Clark seeking an explanation (and not having been given the document commented on below). She was unwilling (unable?) to justify her reasoning, and for no apparent reason Ce'd UCL with each reply. Dr Clark was supposed to act as an 'independent witness', but turned out to be nothing of the sort.

Evaluation of Appeal of Mr Martin Sewell under UCL Grievance Procedures There are three allowable grounds for appeal and they have been evaluated in turn.

1. *That the representation was not conducted according to the procedures.*

Annexe A provides a point by point evaluation of the procedures. In this section the major points are considered. Mr Sewell feels that he was not afforded equal treatment since the Department was asked to supply further information and he was not asked to provide anything further. From reading the transcript it is evident that pertinent basic facts about the history of supervision were missing and needed in order to make any decision regarding supervision. Whilst the Department was asked to provide information, and Mr Sewell was not, the decision to gain extra information that was clearly required does not equate to unequal treatment in the sense of providing advantage to one party over another.

The Chair was very forthright in his demand for evidence of supervision from Professor Treleaven. Then when the Panel received precisely zero evidence of supervision, they apparently didn't seem to notice. Of course the Panel wanted evidence from the Department, because they ignored all of the evidence provided by myself, and needed to give the appearance that they were basing their decisions on evidence.

Mr Sewell is concerned about the time elapsed between his submission of the grievance and the hearing and production of the report. The procedure refers to the minimum time required between the circulation of documents to all parties and the hearing and is a different point.

At the end of the Hearing, the Chair spoke of 'five working days' or similar. Yet I waited for over a year before I received even the first Completion of Procedures (Ashton 2013a)! This is absolutely shocking. It is also, of course, farcical that UCL needed to send three successive 'Completion of Procedures' documents.

Mr Sewell states he felt pressured by the presence of members of Department in the meeting. To have all parties present is a basic 'legal principles' requirement of this type of meeting. Mr Sewell could have brought a 'friend' to boost confidence but did not. The Panel Chair did invite questions on procedure at the beginning of the meeting and so there was an opportunity for the matter to be raised at that point. It is evident from the transcript that Mr Sewell was able to give answers to the questions and so the panel did 'interview the student and member(s) of staff concerned'.

What I meant was that it is difficult to criticise the person who is sitting next to you, or even in the same room, it is not a natural thing to do.

The transcript demonstrates that the interview did concentrate on the points of complaint and did ask pertinent exploratory questions. The transcript does not show that the interview did anything other than investigate the grounds of the grievance.

The student representative, Rachel Eyre, didn't even speak, was she present for some sort of box-ticking token gesture? Certainly, she has refused to reply to a single email of mine (sent after proceedings were complete), so she can hardly have my interests at heart.

The communication of the eventual decision did take time, but this does not appear to contravene the procedures; neither does the circulation of the decision letter in relation to paragraphs 30 to 32 of the procedure.

Taking eighteen months to write a three page document (Ashton 2013a) (which is almost entirely false) is not good enough, and nor is the above excuse. A 100-year delay would apparently not contravene the procedures either. Meanwhile, my promising career in academia (I was a Senior Research Associate at the University of Cambridge) has been wrecked, I am now long-term unemployed (and depressed).

Mr Sewell disagrees with some of the summarising of his complaint in the letter and contests the eventual views and decisions of the panel. Mr Sewell is entitled to disagree in this way, but it does not mean that the procedures were not followed. Mr Sewell complains about the length of time taken at some stage and I can see that this would not help his confidence in the procedure; but again it does not mean the procedure was not followed.

I have done rather more than disagree and contest the views and decisions of the Panel, I evidenced that the Completion of Procedures was basically a pack of lies (Sewell 2013). That the procedures are also clearly flawed does not mean that they were not also not followed! The Panel ignored the majority of my grievance, is this not a breach of procedures? The Panel then failed to do the one remaining thing they had to do, seek evidence of supervision, is this not a breach? The Panel made many false and derogatory statements, is telling lies not a breach of procedures? The Panel relied on academic judgement (in a negative and deceitful way) which is a clear breach of procedures. Does nobody care that there was never any independent review of my work in terms of examination? Given the evidenced witch hunt by Professor Sasse, how can the Panel be sure that she didn't influence Dr Barber? The same prejudice has clearly propagated to the Panel. Being vindictive, Professor Sasse was determined that I should be awarded an MPhil. Where most people would say 'thesis', she

would (incorrectly) use the term ‘MPhil’, despite the fact that I was never registered for, on track for, or submitted for, an MPhil (feel free to ask the Registry). The point is that the fact that the external examiner, Edward Tsang, failed to submit a preliminary report was potentially hugely significant yet completely ignored. It wasn’t even mentioned by the Panel!

2. ***Procedures and Evidence submitted after the meeting between the Panel and Mr Sewell.***

I have inferred that the second meeting of the panel on 20 th April was the private meeting of the panel at which it ‘deliberated its decision’ as described in paragraph 29 of the procedures. However I cannot ‘prove’ this point from the paperwork, so I have considered in the section below whether this second meeting and its contents would be likely to lead to a materially different outcome had Mr Sewell been present at their meeting:

There could have been a dozen phone calls or meetings without us ever knowing. I’m sure they only leave a paper trail when it suits them.

Mr Sewell’s 16 April 2012 document of evidence of bias on the part of the examiners was accompanied by documents concerning supervision and published papers. The Department submitted emails which demonstrated the timelines and events concerning supervision. Mr Sewell received copies of the Department’s submission. This later material was circulated to all members of the panel who met together on 20th April 2012 but did not meet Mr Sewell for a second time. Below, I consider whether the absence of Mr Sewell at this meeting was likely to have materially affected the outcome.

The Department did not submit any timelines (I did) and certainly no events concerning supervision!

Regarding supervision, the Department’s material confirms dates and events but does not alter the essence of the information provided at the first meeting. Mr Sewell’s material on supervision provides some additional dates of meetings and participants. This evidence enabled the panel to confirm shortcomings in supervision by the Department. I do not think this view would have been different had Mr Sewell been part of a second discussion.

Eh? The Department’s material has nothing to do with supervision! For obvious reasons. So the Panel didn’t notice the elephant in the room, and nor did Dr Clark? Also, the Panel, and Dr Clark, both agree that supervision was inadequate, but they also both agree that my request to be re-examined should not be given!? Yet neither is willing to give a reason.

A PhD examination is about other matters as well as publishable quality (a further 12 are listed in the UCL Academic Regulations and Guidelines for Research Degree Students) plus a successful oral defence. The examiners’ report of 2011 gives a clear point by point critique of each of these points indicating weakness; they do indicate that Chapters 4 and 5 have work that could be published and that they were aware that papers had been submitted. Since all of this was contained in the examiners’ report, it was also available to the Grievance Panel when they were considering the question of bias and at the time that they had the opportunity to discuss matters

with Mr Sewell at their first meeting. Therefore the extra evidence of the actual publications would not have significantly altered this discussion.

To start playing down the importance of a thesis being of ‘publishable quality’ is incredibly naive, and goes against everything that both the Department and the examiners stress, taking such an unusual stance also shows prejudice by Dr Clark (if the work wasn’t published, and this was picked up by the Panel, I suspect that she’d be preaching the polar opposite). I have made a complaint against the examiners, and I have been through the examiners’ joint report (Tsang and Barber 2011) in detail and evidenced that it is largely nonsense (Sewell 2011). When addressing my complaint you can’t then point at the target of my complaint and condition on its validity; this, of course, is insane (and implicit prejudice)! Just to be clear, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are all published (Sewell 2012a,b; Sewell and Shawe-Taylor 2012) in the same form as they were examined. To paraphrase Dr Clark, she is essentially saying ‘I find it surprising that this information has been ignored by the Panel, but they had access to it, so that’s okay then’, when a more valid conclusion would be ‘I find it surprising that this information has been ignored by the Panel, but they had access to it, which makes them negligent’. Again, she is working on the assumption that the Panel have used fair and reasonable judgement. If that was so, there would be no need for an appeal!

Whilst I think it is not ideal that further evidence was considered without Mr Sewell’s presence at a meeting, I do not think this would have added material detail to the conclusion of the panel. More pertinently there is nothing in the procedure that prevents a second meeting being held in this way. Mr Sewell was at least aware of the meeting and its contents.

I’m not sure why Dr Clark believes that I was ‘aware of the meeting and its contents’, she never contacted me. On page 131 of the document ‘Sewell HEI reps.pdf’ there is a mention of a ‘Pre-meeting for exam irregularities’ for Panel members only. So the Panel admit privately that there were exam irregularities, but then cover it up? What was this secret meeting? So much for conducting a transparent and fair investigation.

Given the above (Sections 1 and 2) and the testing of points as shown in Annexe A my opinion is that the Procedures were followed.

Really? Do the procedures instruct the Panel to ignore most of the complaint? Do the procedures tell the Panel to avoid any independent evidence, and ignore all of the evidence provided by the student? Do the procedures tell the Panel to tell lies? What a whitewash.

3. *That New Evidence has become available*

The contents of Section 3 of Mr Sewell’s appeal of 6 April 2013 is hearsay and in my opinion does not constitute evidence for this purpose. Therefore I conclude that no evidence has been presented for this appeal which was not previously available to the panel.

Firstly, in England and Wales, hearsay is generally admissible in civil proceedings. Secondly, hearsay means ‘information received from other people which cannot be substantiated’, and the new evidence offered includes two items from current members of the Department, why not simply ask

them?! By the same token, the third-party emails provided by the Department would also be considered hearsay! To unfairly and falsely claim ‘hearsay’ is lazy, and to only apply it to my evidence is direct evidence of bias which can only be motivated by prejudice.

4. ***That the compensating action agreed by the Grievance Panel was either excessive or inadequate.***

Mr Sewell points to his wasted time and efforts over many years. I note UCL charged fees for 4 years and has given compensation of one year’s fees. I note the award of MPhil is available to Mr Sewell.

The total cost to myself (the opportunity cost of having no supervision plus the future cost of withholding the PhD) would be in the region of £1 million. The second and third sentences are both false. UCL have not given me any compensation whatsoever. My opportunity for being considered for an MPhil degree expired on 13 September 2011 (this was made explicit in a letter from UCL Registry dated 13 July 2011), whilst it took until 27 August 2013 for UCL to complete their grievance proceedings. Given that my thesis is more peer reviewed, and generated a greater number of publications, than any other PhD that I am aware of awarded within that department, does any (non-prejudiced) individual *really* think that I should merely be awarded an MPhil? Of course not.

In order to evaluate this I have referred to the OIA Case Studies and their March 2013 leaflet of 20 pages ‘Approaches to Remedies and Redress’ available at http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/42902/oia-remedies_and_redress_leaflet.pdf. The latter shows that the OIA take into account the actions of both staff and students. The OIA settlements range widely over few published case studies involving supervision. They take account of students’ time, the waiving of fees and student proactivity for example.

I have discounted the submission fees paid since the examinations were conducted since they were for examination purposes and the examinations took place.

The second examination only took place due to the vindictiveness of the examiners, it was entirely their discretion. Why abuse someone for four hours, when you can abuse them for eight? I had to pay for the privilege, quite literally.

There is a need to balance the details of the findings of the report weighing in favour of Mr Sewell and the efforts made by UCL. In my view, whilst there is quite a margin of possibilities in estimating from OIA settlements; the UCL settlement does appear to fall within that range. Therefore there is no reason to suppose the compensating action was excessive or inadequate.

So Dr Clark is claiming that the OIA recommends that a student who received effectively no supervision for seven years then finally received just three hours, but despite this submitted an above-average PhD thesis only to be met with bullying examiners should receive just one year’s worth of fees (about £3000)? Really? The total cost to myself (the opportunity cost of having no supervision plus the future cost of withholding the PhD) would be in the region of £1 million. Furthermore, I was never actually given any compensation. Does she *really* think that wasting a decade of

someone's life warrants just a token gesture?! I have gone through the psychologically destructive and time consuming complaints process just to have my grievance (almost entirely) ignored, that in itself demands compensation.

***Conclusion** According to the terms of the Grievance Procedure I am not of the opinion that the appeal should go further.*

But according to anyone with an ounce of common sense, it clearly should.

Mr Sewell clearly finds the reasoning of the panel incorrect, but that is not reason to agree to an appeal under this Procedure.

I have evidenced (Sewell 2013) that the original Completion of Procedures Ashton (2013a) is basically a pack of lies, and Dr Clark does not disagree with me, but she still sees no reason to agree to an appeal?!

Mr Sewell should be sent an OIA Completion of Procedures letter; this will provide a route to an independent review of the case itself.

Indeed, and the appeal was supposed to be an independent review.

6.1 Conclusion

This was not an effective independent review in any sense, it was a naive and contrived box-ticking exercise (almost literally, see p. 296 of the document 'Sewell HEI reps.pdf'). Dr Clark was both unable to justify her reasoning and unable to respond without Cc'ing UCL, evidencing both a lack of integrity and a lack of independence. I pointed out to Dr Clark a serious and obvious breach of procedures, that the student representative member of the panel was excluded from the decision-making process, and she refused to respond. UCL have repeatedly breached their own rules, clearly breached natural justice and are also guilty of insensitive handling, but it was apparently not in Dr Clark's interest to worry about justice. It would not be in her career interests to criticise fellow academics, or rock the boat. The Panel have clearly failed to hold the Department properly to account for their actions, but Dr Clark is apparently afraid to speak out.

7 Conclusion

Despite having had just three hours of supervision, my thesis is more peer reviewed, and generated a greater number of publications, than any other PhD that I am aware of awarded within that department. Unfortunately, no supervisor has ever read it. I suspect that if I wrote it in my own blood, and was subsequently awarded a Nobel Prize, the Panel would still continue to propagate the same prejudice and lies that stemmed from the Department's original witch hunt. The Department seem genuinely motivated to distort the grievance process so as to ensure that their own fee-paying student fails, and the Panel have picked up on their prejudice and extended it. I have received no support from my Department, no support from the students' union and no support from the rest of UCL. I feel disappointed, angry, helpless, victimised, emotionally drained and depressed. Because it is so shocking, I contacted the Vice Chancellor of UCL about my case. I simply received a reply from an assistant saying that it was not the Vice Chancellor's concern. The attitude across the board seems to be

‘yes, we’ve told lies; yes, we’re negligent; and yes, we’re corrupt, but none of this matters, because you can appeal to the OIA!’. This is simply not good enough.

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