# College Forum Meeting Minutes

##  ***Postgraduate Research Cross-College Forum***

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|  **Date:  29/11/2023** | **Time:  3:00pm** |  **Location: Zoom**  |
|  Chair:  |  Micaela Panes |
|  Minutes:  |  Roshan Roy |
|  **Apologies:** |
| Staff: | Student reps: |
| * Julie Gwilliam (PGT Dean for PSE)
 | * Katerina Boncheva (CARBS)
* Hannah Baird (PHRMY)
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|  **In Attendance:**  |
| Staff: | Student reps: |
| * Micaela Panes (VP Postgraduate)
* Michaela Hennessy (Academic Representation Coordinator)
* Paul Jones (IT Services)
* Jane Harding (Deputy Head of Student Advice)
* Elizabeth Wren-Owens (Dean for AHSS)
* Sian Lewis (Education Manager for AHSS)
* Amanda Tonks (Postgraduate Dean for BLS)
* Sian Ballard (Education Manager for BLS)
* Kath Evans (Education Manager for PSE)
* Nicola Jones (AHSS Library Services)
* Libby-Rae Kendrick (Wellbeing Manager)
 | * Jack Morewood (ARCHI)
* Sheridan Clements (SHARE)
* Alex Elliot (ENCAP)
* Matthew Colborne (PHRMY)
* Stephen Miles (COMSC)
* Anirudh Gullapalli (ENGIN)
* Luca Bianchi (EARTH)
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|  **Update on Actions from the Previous Panel:** |
| N/A |

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|  **Rep Feedback: ENCAP** |
| 1. Alex Elliot (AE) raised an issue about a student's VIVA. A part-time student was informed by the examiner that the correction process, typically taking 3 months for full-time students, was causing stress. The student, who was juggling childcare responsibilities, found it challenging. AE raised the point that corrections should be pro rata, allowing for up to 6 months, or alternatively, the student should be given prior notice regarding correction-related events.
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|  **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: 1) Amanda Tonks When: ASAP**1. **Micaela Panes**
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| 1. Amanda Tonks (AT) mentioned that the outcomes for PhD VIVA are set but raised that the student could have applied to extenuating circumstance for a potential extension. AT said that a 3-month correction period usually reflects minor corrections.
2. Micaela Panes (MP) for PhD students' information about post VIVA should become more publicly available/presented.
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|  **Rep Feedback: SHARE** |
| 1. Sheridan Clements (SC) asked for an update on raising the library book loan limit and mentioned getting several complaints from students about the limit.
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|  **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: 1) Nicola Jones When: Completed**  |
| 1. Nicola Jones (NJ) the limit has been increased from 35 to 50 but there are some technical difficulties which will be sorted.

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|  **Rep Feedback:** **PHRMY** |
| 1. Mathew Colbourne (MC) has not raised any issues but has received inquiries from students regarding obtaining support for mental health during their PhD studies. MC is seeking advice or feedback that he can convey to the students.
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|  **Action/Key Decision:** **Who: Micaela Panes When: After Christmas break** |
| 1. Micaela Panes (MP) mentioned that postgraduates can use the mental health and well-being support provided to undergraduate students. MP has organized several well-being events for postgraduates through the SU. Additionally, MP stated that there will be increased signposting during the Christmas period. Furthermore, MP expressed the intention to initiate a PGR book club.
2. Nicola Jones (NJ) typed about the wellbeing collection in every Cardiff University library and an online reading list (https://bit.ly/librarywellbeinglist).
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|  **Rep Feedback: ARCHI** |
| 1. Jack Morewood (JM) discussed several successes, including the provision of a second monitor for every PGR student's desk, the purchase of a high-performance simulation PC, and the implementation of a booking system. Furthermore, contracts and mentors have been assigned to each student. JM highlighted in the Student Staff Panel (SSP) the need for additional support to assist students in developing effective methodologies. However, there have been security concerns in the department, leading to instances of stolen belongings.
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|  **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: 1) Nicola Jones When: ASAP** |
| 1. Nicola Jones (NJ) highlighted that the libraries have the same problem and to raise this issue to students to be vigilant. She mentioned enquiring about getting funding to improve security through CCTV or other measures.
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| **Rep Feedback: COMSC** |
| 1. Stephen Miles (SM) raised an issue with the PGR contracts in COMSC and asked if anybody else has experienced the same issue.
2. SM asked for advice on how to handle the growing number of PGR students and to increase engagement.
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| **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: When: ASAP**1. **Micaela Panes**
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| 1. Micaela Panes (MP) mentioned that some schools in PSE were facing challenges in implementing changes to the contract. Attempts were made by certain schools to address this issue by posting through Jobshop instead of HR (Human Resources), but these instances were identified and resolved.
2. MP shared her personal experience of initiating a seminar series and organizing events specifically for postgraduate researchers, including regular gatherings like PGR coffee.
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| **Rep Feedback: ENGIN**  |
| 1. Anirudh Gullapalli (AG) mentioned that several academic representatives were in their final year and faced challenges dedicating sufficient time to their roles. AG has been actively working to foster engaged student representatives.
2. AG inquired about the availability of funding for postgraduate researchers that could be utilized to establish research communities.
3. AG highlighted the success of postgraduate research (PGR) inductions in ENGIN compared to previous years. Additionally, AG raised the importance of acknowledging breaks and vacations for PhD students.
4. AG brought up the issue of PGR students receiving their monthly salaries a month later, acknowledging that while this is not a concern once payments have started coming through, it has been raised a couple of times by students.
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| **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: When: N/A****1) Amanda Tonks** |
| 4) Amanda Tonks (AT) mentioned that receiving the monthly payments are to do with payroll and the need-to-know what needs paying by a particular date. |
| **Rep Feedback: EARTH** |
| 1. Luca Biachi (LB) asked a question about training with the role of chair.
2. LB raised the issue of booking field work through the travel system they noted this is slow, inefficient, and more costly than personally booking the trip.
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| **Action/Key Decision:**  **Who: When: ASAP****1) Michaela Hennessy****2) Micaela Panes** |
| 1. Michaela Hennessy (MH) mentioned that there is optional training available for Chairs/Vice Chairs both in-person and online.
2. Micaela Panes (MP) mentioned there are some changes that are occurring to the reimbursement system. MP will also forward this issue to the finance department.
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| **Staff Updates:**  |
| **Student Health and Wellbeing Services (Libby-Rae Kendrick)*** For all Student Health and Wellbeing events see this link- [Events - Student intranet - Cardiff University](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/events?collection=intranet-student-events&form=student-search-en&f.Series%7Cseries=student+wellbeing) You'll notice the next [PG Coffee lounge](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/events/view/2749106-postgraduate-coffee-lounge) is taking place on the 4th of December. There's also regular LGBTQ+, Cultural Coffee lounges, Undergraduate coffee lounges and we are due to launch Disabled Students Coffee lounges. All students are welcome at all events.
* See here for more information on [PGR support Poster - Health and Wellbeing 2023.24.pdf](https://cf-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/atvarst_cardiff_ac_uk/EaH1vzqlH7RBrh9lp0xH_0sBkXh8K7SVyT_hdJvRYx4sbA?e=N1Sgxa) and

[Presentation- PGR Support pdf 2023.pdf](https://cf-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/atvarst_cardiff_ac_uk/Eb_moqYrONlDlnrXMPNs9NEBqr7qW50UE8UrZwqOvwLS2g?e=BJVDZF)**IT Services (Paul Jones)*** The annual SIMS upgrade will occur this weekend which will run through midday Friday until 1pm Monday.
* Scam messages have been identified as a problem and have been tried to be limited.
* First point of contact for IT is the IT Service Desk: https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/it-support/it-service-desk
* If you wish me to look at anything specifically or want anything escalated, then my email address is JonesP11@cardiff.ac.uk
* You can also get updates on the status of key IT services via the Status Page - https://status.cardiff.ac.uk/
* Scam emails advice on Intranet - https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/it-support/security-and-scams/scam-emails.

**College Education (Sian Lewis)*** The university has mandated the creation of college committees for PGR education enhancement which will be set up for the second semester.

**Library Services (Nicola Jones)*** The library service is looking to update its acquisition policy and try to find the balance between printed and digital books.
* To promote the library services there will be several activities such as talking walls, surveys and focus groups.
* A short-term post for the past 6 months that has been decolonising the library catalogue.
* See here for wellbeing collection in the library <https://bit.ly/librarywellbeinglist>.

**VP Postgraduate (Micaela Panes)*** Know your rights campaign has been ongoing for the past couple of months, and PGR contracts have been implemented correctly in all the schools.
* Creating more PGR specific events within the SU and building a community.

**Student Voice (Michaela Hennessy)*** Student Reps will receive a newsletter detailing about sign posting over the holiday period for students might be by themselves over this period.
* Lanyard collection is still ongoing for the coming weeks.

**Student Futures Update*** Student Futures hub is now open on 1*st* floor CSL – come along and meet our Student Futures Assistants and get your CV checked.
* Follow us on CU Student Life Instagram to keep up-to-date with events happening both in Student Futures and across Student Life.
* For more information on Student Future Services see here: [Student Futures support crib sheet.pdf](https://cf-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/atvarst_cardiff_ac_uk/EThO9AQtLeBNr2xz2sDUpDEBa_aV-aaOlwUMdOxQ1LpmRw?e=MkhhPa)
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| **Any Other Business:**  |
| **N/A** |