

Minutes of the AHSS (PGR) College Forum

Held on: Thursday 22nd January 2021 at 2pm

PRESENT

Staff:

Annabel Hurst	Head of Catering and Foodservice, Estate and Facilities
Jane Chukwu (JC (VP PG))	VP Postgraduate (Chair)
Jane Harding	Student Advisor
Paul Jones	IT Services
Rob Gossedge	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (AHSS)
Sarah Allbeson	Careers and Employability Business Partner
Tim Fry	Student Voice Coordinator (AHSS)

Student Reps:

Alexander Jones	CARBS
Dewi Alter	WELSH
Hanna Marie Pageau	SHARE
Hedydd Phylip	LAWPL
Ianto Gruffydd	WELSH
John Poole	CARBS
Josie Cray (JC (ENCAP))	ENCAP
Nia Rees	GEOPL
Suzanna Nesom	CARBS
Yang Sun	CARBS
Yundong Luo	CARBS
Yuxuan Zhou	CARBS

Apologies received from: Martha Ashford (Libraries), Lindsay Roberts (Libraries), Claire Morgan (Pro Vice Chancellor), Ben Lewis (Student Support), Debora Cabral Lima (ENCAP), Ani Saunders (GEOPL), Anna Ferreira (MUSIC), Laigah Osman (SHARE).

JC (VP PG) welcomes everyone to the session and asks everyone to introduce themselves. Asks SA for update from careers and employability department.

SA – A new online resource called Career Directions for Researchers has been launched, which is found on ‘Your Career Journey’. This tool helps researchers consider their career path using information and advice, as well as interactive mediums such as questionnaires. Please spread the word and get feedback to improve the experience. We particularly want to increase the number of case studies available to help inspire. Furthermore, PGR students can access any element of our service online. For example, you can book career guidance meetings via Teams and this can be booked through your ‘Careers Account’ on the intranet. We also have an adviser who has time specifically for PGR students along with the Doctoral

Academy on Friday's 2-4. We are also running a programme of employer events virtually that can be prebooked via your Career's account. Finally, online virtual work experience is available, found via student intranet. We are also happy to offer talks for schools about career options for PGR students. Any questions?

JC (ENCAP) – How can we give feedback?

SA – A feedback form will be sent out through the Doctoral Academy soon. If you want to give us feedback sooner then send me an email.

HMP – What accessibility measures have been put in place for disabled students via the online platforms?

SA – We have the option for large print resources where relevant, and transcripts and subtitles for audio/video clips can be provided, where possible, to support students. I don't know all the details on this but I can find out.

HMP – Yes please can you follow up and contact us with this information.

JC (VP PG) asks if there are any more questions for SA. In the absence of questions, SA thanks everyone and leaves meeting. Then asks JH from student advice for an update.

JH – Cardiff University Student's Union is an independent and confidential advice service. We try and help all issues given to us and if we can't then we sign post you. Specialities are with housing and academic advice. We are not currently open for face to face services but are available for meetings over webcam. Can contact us via our email. Just wanted to pick up on HMP's point of support measures for students with disabilities. If you are personally having issues then we encourage you to contact us or contact RG for advice and guidance.

JC (VP PG) asks if there are questions and there are none. Asks AH to provide an update.

AH – Most catering services are closed at the moment, but some are open. Trevithick Restaurant, Biosciences, IV Lounge and Hadrian Ellis are all open with usual opening hours. We have a Click and Collect service available at the Main building. We also have Click and Deliver service for students that have residential meals on campus, for example Aberdare Hall. We can deliver to any of the Cardiff University residences and are looking to expand further. Finally, we have the Marketplace, which is the system for students who are isolating in university residences to use their £20 voucher to buy essentials. This happens automatically after a student updates their SIMs. Any queries can be sent to foodanddrink@cardiff.ac.uk

JC (ENCAP) – Is it possible to get £20 credit if you do not live in CU residences?

AH – That question is best directed to Student Support and Wellbeing as the Catering department does not make these decisions.

JC (ENCAP) – Thank you AH. Can we have an update from PJ?

PJ – There is nothing specifically to report.

JC (VP PG) - A Library Services representative was unable to attend so the following is their update. Bookable library space slots have been extended to 3 hours and opening times have been extended, including opening on Saturdays. Libraries are considering asking students to leave the premises if they refuse to wear facemasks. There is a library update every week so keep an eye on it to see any changes.

HMP – Have pick up hours been extended? I have received many complaints that the pick-up times are inappropriate as they are unrealistic for students with part time jobs.

PJ – On the Intranet it says the hours have been extended into evenings and weekends for some libraries.

JC (VP PG) – Any feedback from academic reps?

JC (ENCAP) – Many students were not happy with only being able to withdraw 6 books at a time from the library last term. Has this changed? Also there have been some issues with digital resources. As books only have one digital licence, if someone else takes this book out then they are unable to access the book. Is it possible for the library to purchase additional licences for the books heavily used by PGRs?

JC (VP PG) – The libraries are aware of the digital licencing issue and are looking into costs to work out the best solution. This is still being worked on.

HMP - I would like to second JC's (ENCAP) point. This is also a problem in SHARE. Some books have a one day check out time, so you must sign out the book out daily.

JC (VP PG) - I can give you an update regarding library services when I find out more. Thank you.

Written response from Martha Ashford, Libraries:

The library monitors the 'turnaways' of single user eBooks so that if there are more people requiring to use a book with limited licence options at any one time we then investigate purchasing further licences.

NR – I want to raise a point regarding impact of school closures on PhD students. There is a policy in place for university staff who are parents but can PhD students who are parents be supported in the same way?

RG – Which policy are you referring to?

NR – I don't know personally as this is regarding a specific individual.

RG – I think we need to know what this student's situation is before I can comment. Students, including PGRs, are able to access the same childcare services that staff can. Short

interruptions to studies are available, as are extensions etc. For longer periods of interruption, they can apply for an adjustment to studies process. Less evidence is now needed for these processes. Please get the student in touch with me or Mara.

NR – The student is in touch with Mara but I am grateful for your input. I hope we can all work together to find the best solution.

HMP – Is the university able give advice to international student parents' studies regarding breaks of study?

RG – International Student Support are a great source of information. They are more up to date than many schools on this issue.

NR – I also had another question. Students are confused regarding what they can spend their annual budgets on, especially as they cannot spend it on things such field work due to Covid. Are there any guidelines to make this clear?

RG – It depends if you are talking about a 'funder', in which case you would have to go to the funder body. If you mean an individual school has allocated some money, or if you're a tutor.

NR – I mean in regards to the ESRC and from the school directly. Mara has said that for these two funding sources you can buy what you need as long as you can justify it, however I just wanted to double check this is correct.

RG – I recommend to contact either the ESRC, Carol Baker, or Gill Bristow to confirm.

JC (VP PG) – Thank you. IG?

IG – If students need an extension and they need to supply evidence, and which forms are required for this? This person has asked the school and they cannot give him an answer.

RG – If the school cannot answer this then they can contact me. Generally, evidence is only needed if interruption of study wanted is beyond 6 months.

HMP – Does this mean proof will be required six months after the automatically given six months, essentially a year later?

RG – Yes. Evidence is not as strenuous as in the past because it is harder to get evidence in the current climate.

IG thanks RG for response and leaves the meeting. JH also leaves the meeting.

JC (VP PG) – any other issue to raise?

JP – None.

AJ – None.

HMP – No more questions. I would like it noted that the Disabilities Service have not been in contact for a while. Contact should be better. Also it is not clear who I should go to about issues regarding disabilities – school or disabled services. Sign posting should be better and should be more condensed so that you don't have to contact so many different people.

RG – Noted and recorded.

JC (VP PG) – Thank you. VP Welfare and the Disabilities Officer are pushing a project regarding disability. This is an issue that they are happy to raise and be addressed with the university. I can also get you into contact with them. Any other issues?

YL – no issues to raise.

YS – no issues to raise.

HP – I just want to echo the point about the budgets. There is some confusion in the school about what this can be spent on. I also wanted to ask about PGR office space availability in the school because a lot of it is very open. I've heard that the university are potentially starting a programme to request office/desk space.

RG – We have a centralised process for all students that cannot access school facilities and it is running throughout lockdown. This can be booked through the Doctoral Academy.

JC (ENCAP) – Are all schools reinstating PGR budgets?

RG – I do not know. I will contact heads of schools and encourage them to contact students regarding this issue to clarify.

NR – How have other schools retained their PGR community online? We have monthly meetings and occasional quizzes.

JC (ENCAP) – In ENCAP we have the PGR common and room and have set up a Teams chat where we have a weekly tea and coffee room. Our PGR team/office set this up.

HP – We have not kept in touch very well in LAWPL. Staff have struggles to reach out but are trying to improve communication.

NR – Ever since Covid we have had monthly head of school meetings in GEOPL.

JC (ENCAP) – After speaking to different departments in the school, we sent out an email with groups and links regarding Discord groups to encourage people to game together and we encouraged people to message people they think may be lonely at least once a week. Could be a good idea for other schools.

JC (VP PG) thanks everyone for their attendance and feedback before ending the meeting.