

Minutes of the BLS College Forum

Held on: Thursday 26th November 2020 at 2pm

PRESENT

Members:

Jane Chukwu	VP Postgraduate
Tim Fry	Student Voice Coordinator
Sebastian Ripley	VP Heath Park
Emma Kidd	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (BLS)

Mariana Sousa Leite	PSYCH
Aylin Mooren	PSYCH
Philip Butler	PSYCH
Neil Cook	BIOSI
Hannah Hereward	BIOSI
Anya Tober	BIOSI

JC thanked everyone for coming before commencing the session.

NC – Many students concerned about PhD extensions. Any new information regarding this?

JC – Asked EK to answer.

EK – There are funds for those who's funded period ends September 2021. For everyone else at the moment there is no money. Kim Graham (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Enterprise) is planning to talk to the University Executive board to ask if there is any more money, but there is no guarantee. Advised that students should focus on the essentials for PhD and do not let supervisors distract you from this. I understand this may not be relevant to all of you.

JC – Thank you. HH?

HH – Can we have non-funded extensions from the university?

EK – The extension deadline has moved to the 31st December, but this has issues because the university is closing for Christmas as well as supervisors being very busy. We are looking at authorising the Schools to give a 4 week extension to those that feel they need it and are close to submission. For those not close to submission, you can apply for an extension on top of the 3 months already given. You must explain why you need it and prove why the 3 month extension already given is not enough due to the level of disruption you have experienced. If it is Covid related, you must explain the specific impact on you and your

ability to complete your PhD. If your deadline is longer than 6 months away then we recommend you wait until a closer time before applying for an extension because then you can fully explain the impact to your PhD.

JC – Can you apply for an extension on top of an extension?

EK – No. We prefer to give someone a realistic extension, we do not like to give multiple.

JC – Thanked EK. Anything to add HH?

HH – No.

JC – Okay. AM?

AM – MSL had something to add.

MSL – We just had general questions regarding how PhDs work.

JC – The Doctorate Academy have training and seminars available to tell PhD students how postgraduate studies work. They have a booking system for these seminars, as well as newsletters about it.

MSL – Yes we have directed students to their resources before.

EK – You can also ask your supervisors. There are many avenues of support.

MSL – Yes, Tom Freeman and other staff in the school have set up a Group in Teams. This group is for both academic and social communications.

JC – That is a good idea. There is also a general PhD Facebook group where you can ask any questions. I will send you all the link and you can pass it on. Any more feedback? PB?

PB – Just to add to MSL, there is now a Mature Students PSYCH Teams group.

JC – Thanks PB and asks for any more updates.

SR – Advise that you keep an eye out for communication from the university.

JC – Please email if you have any problems or other feedback, even if you do not know who to send it to, as we can forward it on to the right people. My monthly newsletter will be sent soon. If you have any ideas about a postgraduate social event also let us know because the Doctorate Academy have funds to financially support this.

SR – vpheathpark@cardiff.ac.uk

AT– Apologises for being late.

JC – Asks for feedback from AT.

AT – Lots of people seem to be disappointed about the extensions situation. Hard to plan for field work as we do not know if we will have an extension.

JC – Do you think BIOSI engages with you enough on this subject?

AT – Those students who are early stages/midway through their PhDs have not had much communication, whereas people who are in the last year of their PhD have had much more.

EK – Explains the problem is that at the moment there is only funding for final year students, and do not know if more funding will come. It is best to plan assuming that you will not have one, so you are not let down.

AT – Thank you, that's helpful.

EK – We will be trying to get funding and we will not get a decision for a while. In terms of communications with students, the Deans are planning to meet more often to find emerging problems/questions. If there are any problems, then these will be communicated to the student body. Meanwhile you must read the general university guidance emails, as they do apply to postgraduate students. Be aware that there will be limited access to labs over Christmas, as always, but this year it will be longer.

JC – Thanks EK and advises that all physical library books that students want to have over Christmas must be taken before 18th December as you cannot get them after this date. Library times have changed and we also have our study centre in the SU where you don't have to book in advance. Asks SR to explain student testing.

SR – Screening tests will be happening until the 15th December so you can receive results before the 18th.

JC – in the absence of feedback, I will bring the meeting to an end. Take care and thank you for coming everyone.