



Postgraduate Research Rep Forum		
Date: 07/06/19	Time: 14:00	Location: 4J
Chair:	Jake Smith (VP Postgraduate)	
Minutes:	Tanay Shinde (Student Voice Assistant PSE)	
Apologies:	Jackie Yip (VP Education), Bethan Foweraker (Student Engagement Manager), Jen Kent (VP Heath Park)	
In attendance:	Staff (Students' Union): Jake Smith (VP Postgraduate Students) Holly Thomas (Student Voice Co-ordinator AHSS) Lucy Davies (Student Voice Co-ordinator PSE) Tanay Shinde (Student Voice Assistant PSE)	Staff (University): Martin Kayman (AHSS Dean for Postgraduate Students) Emma Kidd (BLS Dean for Postgraduate Students)
Ratification of previous minutes:		
Approved.		



Agenda item: PHYSX

- After 5 years, work has begun on the toilets (from male to unisex with disabled and baby change) in the North block of the Queens Building. The Rep system is not working as well as it could, not all reps keep in touch with each other and the students. SSP happens 3 times per year but this is not enough, therefore discussion sessions are being set up with the DPGRS. This will be trialled for a year. Reps have highlighted many wellbeing issues recently. Students don't know who the mental health first aid officers are. Across PSE there will be a PGR Learning Central module for all main documents (Mental Health First Aid Officers, Progress Monitoring, Extenuating Circumstances, travel forms). Induction information is helpful but it becomes buried in emails. This module will put it all in one place for staff and students.

JS - Has the Mental Health First Aiders issue been raised with the school?

- Yes, there have been staff who have stepped down from EDI, but changes are being made.

JS - Should the SU speak to the School?

- Not at the moment, but if it this does not improve, they will get in touch. New DPGRS is very proactive.

Action- HT to speak with LD about new PGR Rep discussion sessions in PHYSX.

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?
HT to speak with LD about new PGR Rep discussion sessions in PHYSX	HT	ASAP



Agenda item: SOCSI

- There was a leak in the PGR Office for a year. Despite complaints, no progress was made, and recently the roof fell in. This has been fixed and the offices have become a very nice environment. As reps, we noticed that the root to discuss PGR Tutor roles was outside the rep system, therefore we are trying to incorporate this. Soon to have a meeting with the person who coordinates the PGR Tutor role. There will be a formal mechanism to feedback on this in the school. Lots of reps sit on different committees, trying to pull this all together to work out who is on each committee. Progress Review Meetings – ongoing conversation for reps. Some of the new changes have not worked well e.g. all of the progress reviews brought forward to fit with rest of the school. Happened at same time as marking for PGR Tutors. At the Progress Review meeting, students used to meet only with progress reviewers. But the standardisation means that SOCSI have had to have the reviewer and supervisor together. Students preferred having separate interactions.

MK –September entries must have progress reviews by May/ June to give 3 month period for student to complete before they enrol for the subsequent year.

- Previously they were always mid-June, then became early May.

MK – This may be due to number or staff marking. The supervisor does not have to be part of Progress Review team but there must be more than one person. In the interview with review team, there should be a point when the supervisor is able to leave the room.

- Worried this will slow down progress reviews. Now trying to find a date that more people can make.

- Can email communications be reduced? Can a policy on email communications be created?

- In PHYSX, students find there are very few emails from the school itself e.g. supervisor comes to office if needs to talk. There has been a discussion of a school newsletter. Trying to get calendar of seminars in the college, have discussed with Julie Gwilliam. Looking for a way to collate the information, and put in one newsletter.

MK – In ENCAP, an email is sent on a Monday morning.. Notification of seminars will begin in AHSS too. Each school will have an outlook calendar of research seminars, and can sign up to them. You can import any session into your own outlook diary. This will be trialled next session. Unsure if this will stop the emails however.

HT – The University and Students' Union have been working on a partnership group this year on communicating with students. Once a policy is finalised, this can be circulated.

Action- HT to share outcomes of Communications Partnership Group

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?
HT to share outcomes of Communications Partnership Group	HT	ASAP



Agenda item: MLANG

- The support of from the school has improved, since the new PGR administrator. Any teaching issues have calmed down due to time of year, unsure if issues have been resolved – e.g. access to Learning Central.
- Wondered if someone could take on the role of managing PGR Tutors.
- JS – Has the Learning Central issue been resolved?
- Raised many times, but nothing happened. This has caused many communication issues. Need to be able to see room changes etc. Tutors have had criticism from module leaders for turning up to wrong place.

Action- MK to investigate Student Learning Central issue with school.

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?
MK to investigate graduate tutors access to staff Learning Central	MK	12/06/19

Agenda item: ARCHI

- The new DPGRS is proactive. Over the past 2 years there has been a problem with engagement between PGRs and Staff in the school. Planning events to change this (e.g. away days and poster days). New research group structure in the school – changing the nature of where to go. The new Progress Review system is not allowing the supervisor to attend, which is causing anxiety among students (particularly among Year 1s and 2s). There are also still issues with PGR budget allowance for attending conferences and the school states that they provide an ‘above average’ budget. Code of Practice for teaching hours and international students – issues raised around hours for international students: asking why this is not discussed with supervisor and the limited hours. There was also an issue with space, however this has recently been solved with Friary House.

- JS – Progress monitoring - were PGRs objecting to have supervisors in the room?
- PGRs want their supervisors in the room.

- Need more emails and more communications from the school. PGRs feel separate – don't receive anything from the school. New structure and new DPGRS, there will be enhancement around integration. There are also more teaching opportunities. Feel more integrated and engaged with teaching.

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?



Agenda item: EARTH

– new DPGRS since January 2019 – they are trying to sort out a more effective means of communication (e.g. a forum for the whole of PGR cohort). There is a PGR SSP, but some of the PGRs still feel like their voices are not heard therefore the school hosted a forum and all PGRs were strongly encouraged to attend to speak with new DPGRS. Although people still complained that they were being asked to come to a meeting – hard to find a balance. There is a plan to integrate the forum with another event (e.g. someone from the Doctoral Academy to do a workshop). Integration with another event might encourage turn out.

Action Point:

Who will do it?

By when?

Agenda item: ENGIN

– In ENGIN, wellbeing has improved since it was raised – on University and Union level. Emails helpful – managed to direct a student to help who received help very quickly. Supervisor student conflict – spoken about this with Emma Kidd at the last meeting but since have spoken with the school about this as advised. Had discussion with PGR Tutor in the school, said that each case is specific therefore couldn't make a generic point – each supervisor, each student, have different issues. More awareness of what to do, however there are rules in the University students can fix the issues. In ENGIN, no PGR break rooms. Currently, have to use the ENGIN forum and it is mostly for UG and PGT. No rooms nearby to get water from – no kitchen space. Other schools have PG specific space, but there isn't one in ENGIN.

JS – Has this been raised with the school?

– It has been raised in its fullest capacity, however we will push for it more.

- School specific PGR space in ARCHI & SOCSI.

– SOCSI have a group called the PG Café, coordinate it to create a sense of belonging to the school.

Regular lunchtime session, social activities in the evenings. It helps with mental health. This is on top of the research groups. Small budget from the school to manage it.

– groups in ARCHI meet up over lunch too – aiming to have the social network.

JS thanks EK and MK for their attendance at the meeting. MK says thanks for working with Students' Union, and thanks are returned. MK retiring from July 2019.

Action- HT to send PGRR Forum dates for 2019/20 to the PG Deans.

Action Point:

Who will do it?

By when?

HT to send PGRR Forum dates to the PG Deans 2019/20

HT

Summer
2019



Agenda item: Further Rep Discussion

- Cleaning is an issue in the Queen's Buildings since the cleaning staff and budget has been halved. Things are not being cleaned out properly, and we don't have access to cleaning supplies to get the office cleaned. Have to put in a request with estates for a deep clean of the office.

JS - Has this been raised with the school and are there any specific standards for cleaning?

- Not really, this is not an issue of the school but is a central issue. The standards are being met but are flawed.

JS - PGR office space - Feedback is still being collated about PGR space available, the management of the space, and how the administration works (relationship between estates and the schools). A report is still being conducted on this.

- Supervisors sharing office space with their students can create a different atmosphere. Offices for retired researches should be removed if they are not being used often.

JS - Is there anything reps think should be included in the induction process?

- We don't have a school induction in ARCH1, just a Doctoral Academy induction.

- MLANG does the same as the Doctoral Academy. We don't receive information on where to go for support.

- The induction should highlight: who the staff is, how to get to around, how things work etc.

Students want to feel a part of the school.

- There should be an option to do half-days during induction. There is so much in the one week.

There should also be accessible PowerPoints for people with disabilities for student support.

- Timetables - The induction is before the start date, this is an issue for international students. This has been raised with the school and is being reviewed.

- Doctoral Academy advertises courses that they do not currently offer - this has been an issue all year. Couldn't find anyone to do the coding classes so the booklet isn't accurate and is repeat of the previous years. When we get the emails about the classes, since they come in late, the courses are full or are already over.

JS - University is looking at a uniformed booking system for classes

- Disabilities contact should be able to guide you towards student support.

- Lack of transparency on budgeting/funding on attending conferences etc. Explicit information needs to be given out.

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?



Agenda item: Updates from SU

JS – are there any questions you would like us to put to the PG Deans in writing?

Panel – Unanimous no.

JS – There is a significant development in PGR at Cardiff. The new Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research is instigating a Cardiff University Postgraduate Research scoping group. There is going to be at least three meetings, starting from 11th of July. Large focus committee, including all PG deans, PVCs, representatives from the DA, HR, finance, recruitment, Students' Union etc. They are going to touch upon a few specific points: Recruitment and marketing, academic standards, training for supervisors, training in careers, funding and organisational structure. Looking into how to approach these topics, which aspects to cover. With respect to recruitment & marketing is there anything you would like to be particularly investigated?

- Students know more about PGR opportunities when they arrive. If this insight was given before it would have been useful: it doesn't feel fair or promote equality. Recruitment are only reaching recent graduates about PhD opportunities. The University should investigate how to reach people more externally of the university.

- In PHYSX, recruitment is often not based on the strength of applicants but about who you know in the university already.

ARCHI & ENGIN– Sponsorship and fees are an issue.

- Who is the target audience if international students are not allowed to get funding? If this is not possible, this should not be advertised. The recruitment needs to be adapted especially with the advertisement of projects and what is needed from students.

- There needs to be a safety net with funding, for example if your supervisor leaves and takes funding with them. The school do not know what advice to give because of the infrequency of it happening. We would need to know the procedure in the case this were to happen.

- Could the bullet points of the scoping group be sent to all reps, so suggestions can be made?

Action- JS to send bullet points of Cardiff University postgraduate research scoping group discussion to reps.

JS – Progress update around reforming teaching – a lot of work has been done in the SU about this. Feedback data has been collated, identifying every paragraph of the Code of Practice that has not been met/followed. The University have written a review report since to address these issues, ranking the schools on how well they implement the Code of Practice. The worst schools for implementation were: SHARE, MUSIC and ARCHI. The middle tier were ENCAP, JOMEC, BIOSI and COMSC. The good tier are MLANG, SOCSI and PHYSX. The SU will be questioning some of the rankings. This feedback has come from the Deans speaking to each school DPGRS and sometimes reps. Many of the DPGRS were not aware of the Code of Practice itself, so the review has raised awareness across the University. From the next academic year schools will be required to have dedicated, identifiable PGR teaching co-ordinators. The review has also said that BIOSI should look at how to upscale the Code of Practice for bigger schools that have a large number of demonstrators. The learning to teach course in AHSS, or similar, is also being considered for BLS and PSE to help support demonstrators. Review is also mandating College PG Deans to work with schools to address teaching concerns raised by PGRs in certain schools. The co-ordinator will be dedicated to ensuring the standards and Code of Practice is followed and maintained and will be a point of contact for tutors.

- This role needs definition for clarity in the job description.

- Not sure if school would enforce this even with a member of staff in place.

JS – JOMEC have recently recruited somebody as a teaching coordinator.



Student Academic Reps
Cynrychiolwyr Academaidd Myfyrwyr

Cardiff University Students' Union
Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd

Cardiff University Students' Union Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By when?
JS to send bullet points of Cardiff University postgraduate research scoping group discussion to reps.	JS	June 2019
Agenda item: General updates		
<p>JS - Found from the review that EDI training is lacking for PGR's, inconsistent across schools. The contractual status for PGRs - 6 weeks ago there was a meeting between SU, UCU & the university to set up a task and finish group to resolve these issues in the best possible manner & for PGR students to be given a contractual status.</p> <p>Yesterday the Society for Women Graduates hosted a research conference, this is a PGR led society. Highly encourage you to join if you are interested (women and non-binary).</p> <p>New society formed - the Postgraduate life sciences society. Open to everyone interested.</p> <p>The SU has recently been running a campaign on employment rights - if you want to find out more visit cardiffstudents.com/employmentrights</p>		