



Postgraduate Research Representative Forum		
Date: 30/11/2018	Time: 11.30am-1.30pm	Location: 4D, SU
Chair:	Jake Smith (Vice President Postgraduate)	
Minutes:	Chilé Fernandez (Student Voice Assistant- AHSS)	
Apologies:	HR Personnel	
In attendance:	Jake Smith (Chair) Lucy Davies (SVC) Chilé (SVA) (UCU Rep/ENCAP) (MUSIC rep) (ENCAP rep) (MLANG rep) (MLANG rep) (MLANG rep) (COMSC rep) (COMSC rep) (PHYSX rep) (PHYSX rep) (MLANG rep)	
Ratification of previous minutes:		
Approved.		
Agenda item: SU Update		
Jake Smith:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rundown on PGR events/activities over fresher's period were successful- Notified about recruitment for exec- process now finished, all now in post for PG Exec Committee of 10. Four of which are PGR's.- PGR Christmas Social - 9th December; summary from AGM motions. Mentions the construction of Uni building in front of the SU and pending new entrance - looking at 2021 finish but not confirmed- The Students' Union is organising a grass roots campaign to improve housing in Cardiff with citizens Cymru- seeking students who want to get involved- Mentioned about if reps want individual PRES data for their schools, to email studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk who can then release that data.		



Agenda item: Updates from Reps

PHYSX - New Progress Monitoring forms for Review (3,4,9 months) and requesting adjustment to its layout to avoid biased handling of the document- Supervisors directly receiving the section where students state issues they experience with such Supervisors; question raised on issues with Supervisors; missing Staff, elaborated on supervision/mentor issues, difficulty with support. On the whole, pleased about the forms, greater scope to feedback to quality supervision.

COMSC - gave observation - similar Progress Monitoring form issue; issues with teaching remains in the school

MLANG - PGR convinced school on the SSRM that are going to be PGR next year, have won them access to have a space in the office (because of uncertainty); unfair guidelines for funding; received updates/information late; missed Rep training; Admin/Staff absences, PGR Director unknown; don't feel integrated with the overall School; no support for the teaching they have to do; new Admin seems excellent and could potentially be great help; (Lucy advised of training and support that is still available for Reps – please email studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk)

ENCAP - new progress monitoring forms are helpful; shortage of teachers/ remain general teaching issues in school, one of which is more modules and less teachers; issue with setup of essay marking and how they are paid for this, only get paid 6 minutes per essay is the time allocated. Post PGR teaching was mentioned.

MUSIC - The performance based PGR find it difficult to access performance focused staff members – specifically mentioned some of performance PGR are being supervised by non-performance supervisors In general cohort, lack of performance support.

Agenda item: UCU- PGR Teaching Discussion

UCU rep - working with UCU and Students' Union and University HR, for PGR students who teach to be recognized as employees and work on contracts being drawn up; Second meeting not arranged as yet, it's a slow process, but will push for meeting to be held in January.

Discussion on how much PGRs contribute to the function of the university and how losing their contribution would impact its operation.

Reps agreed with the push for contracts and hoped for improvements in PGR teaching soon.

General discussion: University unwilling to comply with move in admin fees; Schools saying that they are short on PGRs to demonstrate.

MLANG is not short but has the PGs but reluctant to use them; question on how rights of PGRs should be reflected in contracts.

PHYSX: The director of teaching is asking the university whether 4th years can demonstrate for 1st year students. General opinion within the school is that this won't be allowed.

JS: summarised the work of the PGR university and SU partnership group that took place this spring that looked into contracts. Talked about the engagement reps had. Referred to the circulated list of improvements that PGR reps had previously said would like to see, asked if reps were still happy with the list of improvements?

Everyone agreed



Agenda item: Quality PGR Wellbeing Support Discussion

Jake explained that by working with student advice, the SU responded to registry on new PGR constellations on revised PGR regulations. Brief overview of things pushed for: PGR not having to disclose specific reasons for absence to supervisors and generally for more opportunities for PGR to comment on quality of supervision. PGR to have access to pastoral support outside of their school. Some of things were accepted by the university, others they have agreed to look into.

Suggestion to have similar support access in Queens Building, as they feel disconnected; mention of useful PG Peer Support that university runs. Mentioned of school/doctoral academy inductions, creating an expectation of mental issues instead of encouragement on how to avoid these problems; noted that there needs to be more positive expectation on work load.

PHYSX noted upcoming Intl. Day of Disabled Persons event

Reps mentioned that there should be ways to dispute the outcomes of progress review meetings.

Jake posed the question - would you be happy to have minutes taken in review meetings for the record.

Reps agreed

Agenda item: HR

Jake explained HR couldn't attend but will send concerns over.

(MLANG): late notice on teaching opportunities/teaching timetable until the week of teaching and no remorse for the delays that these late/incorrect forms will cause in their payments; won't get paid until end of December until this term of teaching is finished. Discouraged from usage of own material while teaching/demonstrating and mentioned it may be to avoid paying the PGs for their developed materials, but they feel slightly disadvantaged having to use older materials.

(PHYSX) were warned via emails that late timesheets or late notice of hours worked will result in no pay for said hours from HR, with no explanation in support of this warning (which adds to their stress).

(ENCAP) no pay from compulsory induction training and no appropriate sections on form in which to claim for those hours.

(MUSIC) unaware as yet of concerns- nothing to report

Action Point:	Who will do it?	By
To send concerns over to central university HR	Jake	Next meeting



Agenda item: PGR Issues - Open Discussion

Jake opened the floor to any topics reps wanted to raise

(PHYSX) explains uncertainty of status (of staff) for students who are between full and part time (e.g 30 hours) degree hours and regulations for their case, accessibility difficulty, equipment issues- formalizing support for their particular situation and its tediousness is troubling (issue around disabled students), lack of preparation for said persons entering the course, suggesting a document to make for better preparation and management of disabled needs. Discussion on disability support in schools.

A lot of last minute information that results in difficulties for most; no acknowledgement of need for time off as PGRs who teach and depend on pay to continue the degree; advising that the university shouldn't advertise courses that aren't offered in actuality, due to lack of teaching. Support for students before they start, so university is better prepared for their needs – disabled students who have declared before starting, provisions to be put in place. Encourage physics staff members to undertake the university disabilities awareness training.

MLANG: Only just been told which students have learning difficulties in their seminars, 7/8 weeks into teaching term.

PHYSX: Part-time and full-time – professional services staff need to know the difference, nearly all physics are full-time, felt staff didn't know how to handle part-time. The schedule of review meetings isn't any different to full-time despite doing 30-hours, review schedule meeting hasn't been adapted or tailored to accommodate. Currently there is confusion over what that would look like at 9 month review, due to having to do an extended piece of writing.

MLANG: part-time – amount of holiday for PGR, whether it is allowed. Doctoral academy induction stated that part time PhD students are expected to do 23h/week, with no holiday time.

Was also noted that the Doctoral academy should not advertise courses that they aren't actually running. Unclear whether these courses were cancelled but should only be advertised if they are definitely going to be on.

PHYSX: They produce a brochure of courses at the start of the academic year, including many coding courses. As they couldn't find people to teach these courses, they now seem to use linked-in learning in place of an in person course, although that hasn't been updated in the brochure.

Jake invites feedback from Reps in ARCHI, CHEMY, ENCAP, SHARE, JOMEC and SOCSI on their office/working space. Email VPPostgraduate@cardiff.ac.uk