# College Forum Meeting Minutes

## ***PGR Cross-College Forum, Postgraduate Research Students***

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| **Date:  25/04/2023** | | **Time:  12:00pm** | | **Location: Teams** |
| Chair: | Angie Flores Acuña | | | |
| Minutes: | Frank Frayne | | | |
| **Apologies:** | | | | |
| Staff: | | | Student reps: | |
| * Julie Gwilliam (PSE Postgraduate Dean) * Annabel Hurst (University Catering Services) | | |  | |
| **In Attendance:** | | | | |
| Staff: | | | Student reps: | |
| * Michaela Hennessy (Representation and Policy Coordinator) * Angie Flores Acuña (VP Postgraduate) * Jane Harding (Student Advice) * Kath Evans (PSE Education Manager) * Amanda Tonks (BLS Postgraduate Dean) * Liz Wren-Owens (AHSS Postgraduate Dean) * Paul Jones (IT Services) | | | * Morgan Lee (ENCAP) * Juan Usubillaga Narvaez (ARCHI) * Kamal Haddad (ARCHI) * Kerry Bunkhall (MUSIC) * Sophie Slater (EARTH) * Gifty Andoh Appiah (ENCAP) * Daiana Condrea (ENGIN) | |
| **Update on Actions from the Previous Panel:** | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |

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| **Rep Feedback: ENCAP** |
| 1. Morgan Lee (ML) feeds back with nothing to report on their end.  Gifty Andoh Appiah (GAA) states that peers are looking forward to hearing about new PGR contracts. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Angie Flores Acuña When: ASAP** |
| 1. Angie Flores Acuña (AFA) agrees that the sentiment towards new contracts is shared across colleges. Links are shared by AFA for a student intranet page containing all relevant information, as well as a PGR group chat.   Postgraduate Research Student Group Chat: <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3acc267929892b4e01a37e1f008e10a0d1%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=8b0e21ae-a4f7-40d1-b3c8-9782193fcbd0&tenantId=bdb74b30-9568-4856-bdbf-06759778fcbc>  Postgraduate Research Students involved in teaching (Student Intranet): <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/teaching-engagement-programme> |
| **Rep Feedback: MUSIC** |
| 1. Kerry Bunkhall (KB) states that all students seem to be happy, however states that they’ve not heard any correspondence about contracts so asks for insight on this. 2. Kamal Haddad (KH) adds that information isn’t clear about contracts, and asks staff for a discussion to clear things up. A 30-point document has been collated so far with points to consider. 3. Conversations with the PGR teaching coordinators have been set up, and updates are being awaited along from the head of school. KH and peers created a forum that they aim to circulate to help PGR understanding from the tutoring perspective. They’re happy to share the outcomes with the school. 4. KB mentions the pay disparity between schools, with a lack of information coming to them directly. 5. KB enquires about induction of PG tutoring across disciplines, asking if there was a generic cross-school one available. 6. Juan Usubillaga Narvaez (JUN) requests that the communications on policy implementation needs to be revised, so school-level discussions can be coordinated. They also ask whether any representation from PGR students in the implementation committee. 7. JUN adds that themselves and peers discovered even if external practitioners and PGR tutors are doing the same job, they are paid completely different rates and transport costs. External practitioners’ pay grade is not known. |
| **Action/Key Decision:    Who: Liz Wren Owens, Angie Flores Acuña, Michaela Hennessy, Amanda Tonks, Gifty Andoh Appiah, Kath Evans   When: ASAP** |
| 1. Liz Wren Owens (LWO) adds information linking to contracts, noting an increase in capacity for the launchpad training programme next year. Increased capacity in the associate fellowship programme too, so everyone who is on the waiting list should have been offered a place in autumn. 2. Responds to KH, stating that it’s difficulty to compare pay rates across institutions, owing to non like-for-like comparisons. 3. AFA agrees that it is helpful to share data, so the school knows how to act.   AFA asks Michaela Hennessy (MH) if they can distribute the document collated by KH and peers, to send to other PG reps outside of ARCHI. MH agrees that they could distribute the information if they did not get a response from the PGR group chat. AFA will be in contact with KH to find the best solution before LWO and AT are contacted. 4. AFA adds that the links and information shared above relating to contracts have already been added to the PG newsletter. 5. LWO says that schools across AHSS were asked what they use for each of their PhD students in terms of teaching prep. Everyone has access to the LaunchPad programme, and that schools have said they offer specific amounts of time dedicated to talk through individual modules with students. This time varies across college, but schools have been asked to commit a minimum amount of time. Students should have both launchpad as well as a specific module induction. Amanda Tonks (AT) adds, commenting that it would be good to hear back opinions of the policy surrounding PG teaching and that students should be able to take part in consultation surrounding policy change. 6. GAA, replying to JUN’s flags, says that reps were involved in an ENCAP consultation meeting. Decisions were reached. Point **3** was also replied to, with stating the importance in care in acknowledging that not all conditions can be applied to every school. Specific points across schools could be isolated and treated for across a PGR community. AFA and AT agree that the links shared at the beginning of the meeting needs to be communicated in a dedicated PGR communication, where Alison Tobin will be contacted. Kath Evans (KE) furthers that they’ve sent the links to their PGR administrators. 7. This point is not directly responded to. |
| **Rep Feedback: ARCHI** |
| Nothing else to add |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: When:** |
| **N/A** |
| **Rep Feedback: EARTH** |
| 1. Sophie Slater (SS) gave an update on some work being done regarding PGR office space organisation. 2. GAA asked about the extension for progress monitoring deadlines due to strikes.  * GAA asked for confirmation on if students get a 2-week extension on submissions due to the strikes. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Amanda Tonks, Liz Wren Owens When:ASAP** |
| 1. AT that is covered as part of the framework – it does continue. LWO said it still stands but Education and Governance are currently reviewing the status for PGR so it could change.  * MT stated that the mitigation remedies had been sent to heads of school and is not available on University website, the mitigation approaches are relevant to a students needs and some can be managed by the school. That is for submissions, LWO stated that students can rearrange progress monitoring. However, there may be new guidance released shortly. * AT is unsure about that and will ask about it. |
| **Rep Feedback: ENGIN** |
| Daiana Condrea (DC) no major comments.   1. DC stated progress on attempts to improve social and community environment at University through coffee meets.  * Trying to boost events that encourage a community feel throughout ENGIN, like what is being done in Physics and Astronomy.  1. DC organising with external organisations to host workshops with students about alternative career paths (outside ENGIN). 2. KH suggested the idea of a social event across the college and PGR community. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Angie Flores Acuña When: ASAP** |
| AFA supported all three events and offered to help coordinate the college wide social event. KE updated on how there are conversations happening post the Focus Groups to achieve quick wins. |
| **Staff Updates: Liz Wren-Owens, Mandy Tonks, Paul Jones, Kath Evans, Angie Flores Acuña, Jane Harding, Mandy Tonks** |
| **Department/Service name: Liz Wren-Owens (AHSS Postgraduate Dean)**   * LWO stated how AirBnB is now permitted as an expense on the Travel and Expenses Policy following a review.   **Department/Service name: Amanda Tonks (BLS Postgraduate Dean)**   * AT shared information from a talk by the research culture lead at CU in relation to a PGR Culture survey. Data will be sent to schools shortly. AT keen to support that as a group. * AT described how they are attempting to create a priority list of improvements to make the experience for PGRs better. Consultation has been completed and the task will be worked on this week. This is a way to incorporate feedback into changes and AT described them AT stated that progress and wins will be shared. * AT informed how CU has added their name to lobbying for the offer of free childcare for PGRs to be extended.   **Department/Service name: Paul Jones (IT Services)**   * Paul Jones (PJ) Shared the new way of contacting the IT service desk via <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/it-support/it-service-desk/> * PJ apologized for the disruption that the printing issues has caused; it should be fixed by the afternoon. * GAA asked is there is a reason why some schools pay for printing but in others students have to pay. PJ answered that it is up to the schools.   **Department/Service name: Kath Evans (PSE)**   * KE wanted to remind students about the Doctoral Academy Funding initiative, grants are going quickly and there’s info on the student intranet. * AT stated how this is a pilot, funding is up to £1,000. It is for anything developmental, making use of it now may mean it is here longer term. * KB wanted to double check what would come be suitable for this funding – does it apply to things such as conference attendances? * KE stated that the criteria for what is applicable is intentionally vague so events such as conferences are applicable. Apply! * GAA asked if it covers subscriptions to associations memberships and how long should the funding go on for? * KT stated it is a pilot – outcome and impacts will be evaluated to see if it’s a good investment for giving opportunities to PGRs. * GAA asked does it include social projects. * KT said as long as that fits with your developmental needs and the application is minimal. * KE shared the link to apply <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/doctoral-academy/funding-schemes/development-fund-application-guidance/>   **Department/Service name: (Students Union) Angie Flores Acuña, Jane Harding**   * Jane Harding (JH) reminded students of the advice and help they offer. * JH offered to share with AT their services and work. * MT stated how the PGR Scoping Review guided their priority areas. AT suggested it would be good to discuss whether there are specific themes present among students who face difficult situations. That would help best tailor support to ensure students get the best support they can. JH suggested them have a conversation to discuss prevention ideas. * AFA stated how there are 2 Student Rep thank you events being ran and shared a link to the Heath Park event and promised to share a link tomorrow about the Cathays one on the 16th May. * AFA reminded students of the need to complete the Rep Survey by 26th May to receive the Rep certificate. Should be sent out next newsletter. * AFA shared a link to the PGR Student Experience Survey and told anyone to message if they need anything. |
| **Any Other Business: Kerry Bunkhall, Amanda Tonks** |
| * KB stated that a big problem in the school of Music is the lack of social network due to the spaced out nature of the school. Travel is expensive so people are not coming in and if they do the Parking is extremely expensive – coming to use the facilities is a costly thing to do and that doesn’t help the social side of the school. KB asked if anyone knows of any parking hacks that students could use as they can’t get parking spaces like staff can. * MT stated its worth an investigation – so leave with them. |