

**Minutes of the meeting of the Researcher Experience Committee
held on Tuesday 15 November 2016 at 2pm
in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, King's Buildings**

Present: Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (Convener), Assistant Principal
Researcher Development
Dr Fiona Philippi (Vice-Convener), Acting Head of Researcher
Development, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Antony Maciocia, Dean of Students, College of Science &
Engineering (CSE)
Professor Philippa Saunders, Dean of Postgraduate Research, College
of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka, Students' Association Staff PGR
Representative
Mr Patrick Garratt, Vice-President Academic Affairs, Students'
Association
Ms Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Vashti Galpin, School of Informatics, Early Career Researcher
representative
Ms Alex Laidlaw, College of Science & Engineering (CSE)
Dr Paddy Hadoke, Centre for Cardiovascular Science
Ms Jane Johnston, Head of Postgraduate Recruitment, Student
Recruitment & Admissions (SRA)
Ms Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance & Research Policy,
Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP)
Ms Susan Hunter, Academic Services (Secretary)

Attending: Professor Konstantin Kamenev, School of Engineering

Apologies: Ms Shelagh Green, Director of Careers Service
Ms Julia Ferguson, College of Science & Engineering (CSE)
Ms Katharina Heil, Postgraduate Research Student Rep (CSE)
Ms Zoe Lewandoski, Director of Human Resources
Professor Neil Mulholland, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, College of
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)
Ms Nataliya Muzyka, Postgraduate Research Student Rep (CAHSS)
Mr Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services (University Secretary's
representative)

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development

The Vice-Convener reported on scoping and identification of five work streams. It is envisaged that the Service Excellence Programme may

provide the administration and IT tools work stream, but that is awaiting confirmation. The other four work streams will be:

- Supervisor training and support
- Doctoral supplement and personal development planning
- Mentorship and student well-being
- Policies and regulations

A brief consultation document will be circulated to College Research Committees to gain input on priorities.

REC will act as Programme Board and the work streams will report to the Committee beginning in January 2017.

2.2 New PhD Scholarships model: Edinburgh Enlightenment Scholarships

The Convener reported that Central Management Group (CMG) had agreed to delay the roll out of the new scholarship until September 2018. CMG had requested some additional financial modelling to be submitted to its April 2017 meeting.

This was welcomed by the Committee as a more realistic timescale. The meeting noted that the Assistant Principal Academic Support's work on staff selection could be adapted for selecting students for the scholarships. The meeting also noted these would be advertised as 4-year PhD scholarships.

An update will be available for a future REC meeting.

2.3 Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students

The meeting noted that two workshop events for PhD supervisors and students would be held on 30 November and 7 December 2016. Outcomes will be reported to a future REC meeting.

2.4 Postgraduate Research Space

The Convener reported on a productive meeting with the Director of Estates, Gary Jebb to discuss study and social space for postgraduate research students. Mr Jebb will be invited to attend the March 2017 REC meeting. Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Chair of the Space Strategy Group will also be invited this discussion at the March meeting.

3. Convener's Communications

3.1/

3.1 Chile: Doctoral Education Workshops

The Convener and Vice-Convener will be providing doctoral education workshops in Santiago and Concepcion and will report to the next REC meeting.

3.2 IAD Head of Researcher Development

Dr Sara Shinton has been appointed and will take up post in the new year. The Vice-Convener has a new role as Head of Doctoral Education at IAD, in addition to her role as Deputy Head of Researcher Development.

For Discussion

4. Distance PhD Implementation Working Group

4.1 Distance PhD Implementation Working Group – interim report

The Convener reported on the meeting held on 14 November.

The group agreed that the EUCLID engagement tab would be sufficient for recording supervision meetings. It was noted that Excellence in Doctoral Research programme may provide further development.

The group had an interesting presentation from English Language Education on their developing English language testing system. This will be an alternative for students who do not need visas, using the same categories as IELTS and is planned for general release in January 2018.

A paper will be submitted to Fees Strategy Group electronic business proposing two fee models: flexible, for remote study with occasional attendance in Edinburgh, and online, similar to current Masters with a flat fee.

Action: The Convener will report on this before the next REC meeting.

The paper identified items that may require additional resources.

Item 1 – Supervisor training: the meeting discussed whether this should be centralised or provided at College level and what tools of engagement should be. It was **agreed** that Colleges and IAD should work together to develop training resources and that these might be provided online.

Action: College Deans and Vice-Convener

Item 2 – Community and central resource: the meeting suggested that this might be addressed by a similar group to the MOOC oversight group and therefore would not require additional resource. IAD was

asked to consider if the resource or oversight group should be owned by them.

Action: Vice-Convener

Item 3 – Online tools/IT tools: the meeting noted issues experienced with Personal Tutor tools and the need to ensure contingency and support.

Action: PH to email detail to Convener

Item 4 – Summer schools: the meeting noted that central provision would require resources and discussed the potential to tap into existing provision by Schools. It considered this item was important to the student experience and asked that further data is collected on what is currently being offered.

Action: Distance PhD Implementation Working Group

Item 5 – Access to Masters modules: the meeting noted that units costs per student were higher for online than on-campus provision. It was unclear what level of uptake would be and this may be met through internal resource transfers.

Item 6 – Rooms for (video-linked) viva: the meeting suggested the roll out of lecture capture may provide facility for this.

4.2 MSc by Research Task Group – remit

The meeting noted the paper and suggested minor revisions. The task group will review and revise as necessary policy, regulation and guidance. In addition, the task group was asked to consider how these programmes are promoted and how induction is provided for students. It was noted that these additional items are secondary to the task group's main remit items. It was also agreed that IAD will be represented on the task group by the Vice-Convener, and Roshni Hume, Academic Services will be included as administrative support.

4.3 Review of Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators

The Convener reported that two meetings of the full group had been held and a sub-group had met to begin drafting a revised Code. The revised document will be shorter and written for one audience. A paper will be available for the January 2017 REC meeting.

It was noted that multiple strands of activity are reviewing elements of tutoring and demonstrating. One of these is covering research staff who tutor.

Action: Convener to confirm activity strand to VG

5. **Supporting the Supervisory Relationship**

The meeting noted the paper and that final approval of regulatory change is for Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. REC was invited to comment on the proposed approach.

REC considered that it was important that regulation supports both sides, the student should be supported at every stage, the University has a duty to support staff and other students who may be affected. The Support for Study process should be referenced. It was important that regulation should be worded appropriately and Legal Services will be consulted before this is finalised.

REC also considered that for “Transfers out”, the University should support the student in seeking and negotiating an appropriate alternative institution when required, rather than the University seeking and negotiating such transfers for the student.

REC welcomed the addition of a mediation process.

6. **Postgraduate Research Student Status Following the End of the Prescribed Period**

The meeting noted the paper which outlined confusion around student status and what should be provided by Schools after the end of the prescribed period. The recent UKVI audit and the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) also had potential impacts in this area. It was noted that systems elements may be addressed if prioritised by the SEP board.

REC considered that once outcomes from the SEP board were known, a further paper identifying key action points should be submitted to REC for discussion.

Action: JF

7. **Senate Committee Planning 2017-18**

The meeting identified activity that may require resources:

- Excellence in Supervision
- Distance PhDs, for example summer schools
- New studentships
- Tutors and demonstrators
- PGR student monitoring and support systems/IT tools – may be met through SEP
- Scholarships – for discussion at January meeting

Action: Secretary to invite Director of Student Administration

For Information

8. Knowledge Strategy Committee report

This report will follow at the January meeting.

9. Research Policy Group report

The most recent meeting discussed research development funding, research strategy and preparation for Research Excellence Framework (REF). A REF readiness exercise will be carried out in early 2017.

10. Research strategy

It was noted that links between research and teaching need to be more specific in the strategy.

Action: PS to email update

11. Any other business

11.1 Conferences and events

11.1.1 UKCGE 24 January 2017, Benchmarking the important elements of PhD Study, Edinburgh

UoE hosting this event and three free places are offered. Colleges will nominate one attendee each for these.

11.1.2 UKCGE 23 February 2017, UKCGE Supervisors Network Inaugural Seminar: Building excellence in research supervision, Birmingham

This event will consider what should be included in a toolkit for supporting supervision. Suggested an early career researcher toolkit would also be useful. The Vice-Convener will attend.

11.1.3 Russell Group Special Interest Group

The Convener will attend and report to the January meeting.

11.2 Students' Association

11.2.1 Teaching Awards

Launch event "What does good teaching look like to students" being held on 1 December 2016.

11.2.2 Tutors liaison committee

Report to January REC meeting.

11.3 ECR experience

The Dean of Postgraduate Research MVM will have an expanded role in relation to early career researchers.

H/02/26/02

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 17 January 2017, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

Susan Hunter
16 November 2016