

Report of the Second meeting of the Doctoral School Board

Date: 27th April 2017

Present:

Doctoral School Staff

Professor John Turner, Dean of Postgraduate Research

Dr Penny Dowdney, Doctoral School Manager

Aashu Jayadeep, Doctoral School Administrator

DTP , School and College Directors of Postgraduate Studies

Professor Aziz Jaafar, BBS

Professor Raimund Karl, History, Welsh History and Archaeology

Dr Hans-Peter Kubis, Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences

Dr Martina Lahmann, College Director, Physical Sciences & Chemistry

Dr David Markland, Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences and DTP

Dr Helena Miguelez- Carballeira, College Director, CAH

Dr Tomos Owen, English Literature

Professor Robert Rogers, DTP

Dr Eirini Sanoudaki, Linguistics

Dr Wei Shi, Law

Dr Bill Teahan, Computer Science

Dr Steffan Thomas, Creative Studies and Media

Dr Jean Ware, Education

PGR Administrators

Iwan Davies

Susan Metcalfe

Christine Parry

Gwenda Pritchard

CarolineRandall

PHD Representatives

Gregg R Ashcroft, Biological Sciences

Megan Baker, Ocean Sciences

Laurence Jones, BBS

Angharad Wilkie, Medical Sciences

Undeb Bangor Representatives

Helen Marchant

Also present

Ann Parry, Academic Registry

Alan Edwards, IEC

Secretary

Karen Chidley, Academic Registry

2.1 WELCOME

Professor John Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members that the purpose of the committee was to discuss all matters related to Postgraduate Research in the University and for the Doctoral School and invited support services to disseminate information relevant to PGR.

2.2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January were accepted as a correct record.

2.33 VISA COMPLIANCE UNIT

Mrs Ann Parry of the Visa Compliance Unit in the Academic Registry and Mr Alan Edwards of the International Education Centre gave the committee a presentation.

Mrs Parry's presentation outlined the main role of the Visa Compliance Unit. It was noted that the unit was responsible for ensuring that the University complies with all the requirements of the Home Office in respect of our sponsoring licence. The unit was responsible for ensuring that all Postgraduate Researchers we recruit are genuine and credible. the University has to ensure that all Postgraduate Researchers are fully engaged on the course, which includes monitoring their attendance, and in the case of PGR, this is a meeting with the supervisor every 2 weeks, which is required to be recorded on MyBangor. All Postgraduate Researchers have to live within a reasonable distance of the University.

The UKVI expect Postgraduate Researchers to have completed their course within the allocated time, however it was noted that this was not always possible due to a variety of reasons and the University will help the Postgraduate Researcher apply for an extension on their visa. At this stage Mr Alan Edwards of the IEC stated that Postgraduate Researchers should be advised to speak to him and his team in the IEC for advice on their visa extension.

A course for PhD supervisors on Visa Issues has been arranged by HR, with a session coming up on 17th May, members were encouraged to attend one of these very useful sessions.

2.4 ELECTRONIC ONLY SUBMISSION OF FINAL THESES

Dr Beth Hall, Research Support Librarian gave the Committee a presentation on the proposal to move towards submitting electronic only copies of the final, post viva and corrections thesis . This will be done via the PURE system and it will enable the Postgraduate Researchers to submit their theses electronically; the system will include options to opt out of the open availability and new procedures will need to be set up to deal with bars on access.

If adopted, then modifications will be required to Postgraduate Regulations, the Research Postgraduate Researcher Handbook, Library Internal Processes, and training sessions will need to be set up for Postgraduate Researchers.

We will have to wait until the launch of the new PURE Portal before moving towards this, which should be at the beginning of the next academic year.

Dr Hall was thanked for her presentation and it was agreed that an implementation plan would be considered once the new PURE Portal was released.

2.5 DOCTORAL SCHOOL STANDING ITEMS

[I] MONITORING

The Dean thanked all those involved with monitoring in 2015/16 and noted that 424 out of 491 expected Postgraduate Researcher reviews had taken place. Eleven Postgraduate Researchers were reported as unsatisfactory and positive, encouraging, letters have been sent to them, with copies sent to the School Directors of Graduate Studies.

The majority of those not reviewed this year were Postgraduate Researchers in the writing up period and all effort must be made to ensure that these category of Postgraduate Researchers are reviewed in the future, and this should be easier with the new on-line system.

[II] INDUCTION

It was reported that two central induction events were organised in 2016/17 with 35 Postgraduate Researchers attending in September and 30 in January. The January event was new this year and it was felt that it was definitely worthwhile and the possibility of holding an additional one in April will also be considered.

It was a concern that some Postgraduate Researchers are missing the September one which is held during Welcome Week and therefore it has been agreed move this to early October in 2017 with College and School inductions moving in line. A number of presentations at the January event have been recorded on Panopto and are available to Postgraduate Researchers on the recently established Doctoral School Blackboard site.

[III] ADMISSIONS

The Chair reported that the latest admission/enrolment figures for PGR were low across all categories.

It was acknowledged that it was extremely difficult to attract Postgraduate Researchers at the moment due to the funding environment and it was noted that Schools will need to enter into DTP/DTC competitions whenever possible. The Doctoral School also continues to work on its bid for a Leverhulme Scholarship Doctoral Programme on the subject of 'Movement', due for submission on July 17th

[IV] TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The training workshops are continuing and a review will take place at the end of the term to help plan next academic year's workshops; members were asked again to let the Doctoral School know of any training they would like to see being offered.

The next Supervisor Training will take place in July and all were encouraged to take part in these very valuable training opportunities. It was noted that for some DTP bids, it was a requirement for supervisors to have undertaken such training.

Enquiries were raised whether there were plans to Panopto some of the training workshops, as this would be a very valuable tool, in particular for distance and part-time Postgraduate Researchers; it was agreed to look into this for next year, but it was noted that external providers do not generally agree to this.

[V] PGR EVENT

It was reported that the PGR Social which was arranged on 22nd March in Pontio, which included a presentation by Professor David Thomas, Ocean Sciences and followed by a social in the bar was very successful, and further socials including guest speakers would be arranged.

It was noted that the Doctoral School and Students' Union hoped to arrange joint events in the future.

It was highlighted that events should be accessible to everyone and that there was a need to arrange a variety of events.

2.6 GROUP STANDING ITEMS

[I] REPORTS FROM PhD REPRESENTATIVES

Enquiries had been received from Postgraduate Researchers on how they should access their own expenditure and research costs account and they were advised to speak to their School or College Manager to arrange for an RSTG account. This was an issue that had received some attention lately especially within DTPs where it was felt Postgraduate Researchers should have more autonomy and input into their research accounts and the Doctoral School was looking at including training on this element. The Chair felt that the best practice for dealing with these would be for the supervisor and Postgraduate Researcher to meet to agree on how the money should be spent and encouraged everyone to do this.

[II] REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Concerns were raised regarding the MyBangor monitoring system and it was noted that Postgraduate Researchers are appearing on the system who have left. It was suggested that any such problems should be directed to the MyBangor team and Academic Registry via Postgraduate Administrators

[III] REPORTS FROM COLLEGE DIRECTORS

Dr Helena Miguelez-Carballeira sadly reported that Bangor had been informed by the North West AHRC DTP that they would not be included in this DTP, and that this was a huge disappointment to the College.

[IV] REPORTS FROM DTPs/DTCs DIRECTORS/LEADS

[A] All Wales DTP - Professor Rogers reported that the All Wales DTP was operational and following the competitions Bangor had secured 5 studentships from the general competition and 2 from the collaborative competition. .

Dr Markland referred to the All Wales Conference which took place in Swansea and enquired whether there would be any support and resources from the Doctoral School if Bangor was to host this event in the future, and it was agreed that they would be happy to be involved in organisation, but do not have finances.

[B] NERC Envision DTP - It was reported that the NERC Envision DTP would be holding their annual conference in the new building in the School of Ocean Sciences in Menai Bridge between 5th -7th July,

and this conference will also be open to Bangor non NERC Postgraduate Researchers who wish to attend.

[C] KESS 2 – It was reported that KESS 2 was in the 2nd year of a six year project and was meeting its PhD allocations rapidly, however there was a high number of Research Master opportunities available and further advertising would be taking place for these.

2.7 PGR ONLINE MONITORING

The Chair reported that the HEA funded project to set up an online monitoring system for PGR Postgraduate Researchers is now operational and all PGR reviews for 2016/17 will be undertaken with this system. All Schools need to enlist on the system and those Schools who have not yet enlisted were encouraged to contact Cameron Grey, the programmer of the system to set up their forms.

All reviews should take place between May –July with the deadline for the submission of the review forms in September. The system does have the capacity to arrange a further meeting in September for those who were deemed having made unsatisfactory progress in their initial meeting and for whom goals and Action Plan are set. All Postgraduate Researchers should be reviewed, including writing up, and if necessary these meetings can take place via Skype.

The PGR Administrators have a role in initiating the process and it was noted that the Administrators were yet to receive training, it was agreed that training sessions for the Administrators would be arranged in the very near future. **Action – JT/PD**

The Doctoral School are expecting the School Directors of Graduate Studies to encourage everyone to use the new system and to give presentations if necessary on how the system works.

Concerns were raised re the timing of the implementation of the system and also regarding the requirement for an additional unbiased person on the Review Committee, in addition to the Chair, this for some smaller Schools would be impossible to implement. The Dean advised that these roles were currently under review, and that further discussion will take place at the Research Degrees Committee. Action JT.

2.8 PRES

It was reported that the PRES survey was now open and it would be closing on 18th May. Currently the response rate is 32% but the aim is for a 50% response rate. Members were asked to encourage their Postgraduate Researchers to complete the survey and the importance of feedback to the University was emphasised.

2.9 DOCTORAL SCHOOL OFFICES

Discussions were continuing regarding the establishment of offices for the Doctoral School in the Main Arts Building, enabling the Dean and Manager to meet with PG researchers at a central location.

