

Report of the meeting of the Doctoral School Board

Date: 17th October 2017

Present:

Doctoral School Staff

Professor John Turner, Dean of Postgraduate Research

Dr Penny Dowdney, Doctoral School Manager

Aashu Jayadeep, Doctoral School Administrator

School and College Directors of Postgraduate Studies

Dr Gwion Williams, BBS

Dr Stefan Machura , Social Sciences

Dr Wei Shi, Law

Dr Jean Ware, Education

Dr Helena Miguelez- Carballeira, College Director, CAH

Dr Eirini Sanoudaki, Linguistics

Professor Raluca Radulescu, English Literature

Dr Gillian Jein, Modern Languages and Cultures

Dr Steffan Thomas, Creative Studies and Media

Dr Neal Hockley, SENRGY

Dr Martina Lahmann, College Director, Physical Sciences & Chemistry

Dr Sion Williams, Healthcare Sciences

Dr Richard Ramsey, Psychology

PHD Representatives

Tanya Herring, Law

Elizabeth Woodcock, Social Sciences

Richard Dalliman, SENRGY

Paria Yousefi, Computer Science

Eluned Hudson, Chemistry

Kate Isherwood, Psychology

Undeb Bangor Representatives

Helen Marchant

Danielle Barnard

Secretary

Karen Chidley, Academic Registry

4.1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- I The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April were confirmed as a correct record.
- II The minutes of the special meeting to discuss the PRES results, held on 21st September were confirmed as a correct record. It was suggested that the School PRES Reports be appended to the Minutes for future reference.

With reference to “Section 7 Professional Development” – it was reported that the Dean would take the matter regarding bench fees to the RSTG where they would be discussed as part of a general review of PGR fees.

With reference to “Concluding Remarks and Actions “ – the Chair reminded DoGS to hold School or College meetings with their PGR representatives, and reminded them of the requirement for Schools with an overall satisfaction score below 81 to draw up a comprehensive Action Plan, and Schools scoring less than 80 in any section to specify actions to address these specific areas. All these should be undertaken, and the action plans submitted to the Doctoral School by the end of the Autumn term.

4.2 PGR ISSUES AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

Ms Kate Tindle, Head of Student Counselling gave the Board a presentation on the Counselling Service and the support they could offer to both postgraduate researchers and staff. She gave members handouts to circulate within their Schools and urged them to contact her if they required any further information or advice. Slides uploaded to Doctoral School ebsite.

4.3 PGRS AND THE PGCertHE

Dr Rosanna Robinson, Programme Director of the PGCertHE gave the Board a presentation on the newly revised PGCertHE.

She noted that 100hrs of varied teaching practice is required and she would not encourage 1st year PhD students to enrol onto the course as she felt that the demands of the PhD and the demands of the programme would be too much. It was noted that registration for the PGCertHE requires the PhD supervisor’s signature.

4.4 PGR ONLINE MONITORING

Mr Sion Morris, of the IS Student and Learning Applications team, gave the Board a demonstration of the latest facility of the PG Online Monitoring system which gives authorised users an overall view of the monitoring forms submitted. These can be accessed by the Doctoral School, College and School Directors and PGR Administrators. This new facility was very much welcomed and it was noted that it should be used immediately to follow up incomplete reviews.

It was noted that there were still technical and procedural problems with the system, mostly arising from incomplete input of information, and members were encouraged to contact either Sion Morris via the Helpdesk or the Doctoral School with their queries.

As part of an interim review a number of recommendations have been made, including removal of the e-mail notifications and the removal of the Chair’s preliminary form, and inclusion of a DoGS override where the report is held up due to no agreement. Members were asked to let the Doctoral School know of any further changes they would like to see with detailed explanation of the need for the change.

4.5 DEAN'S REPORT

I The Dean reported that Admissions for PGR for 2017/18 were 110 – with a breakdown between Colleges as follows:

CAH – 27 COBLES - 19

CNS – 30 COPAS - 8

COHABS – 26

96 Home/EU and 14 International.

Applications had decreased this year, with a total of 767 applications (548 International) and a total of 212 offers made.

Funding remained an issue that affected applications and Schools were encouraged to maximise recruitment opportunities by applying for new funding schemes and the Dean offered the Doctoral School's assistance to anyone when applying for schemes.

Concerns were expressed regarding the number of international applications compared to conversions and it was suggested that work continue to look at ways of streamlining the admissions procedure.

II The Dean reported that in 2016/17 PGR results were as follows:

PhD – 117 Professional Doctorate – 14 Masters by Research – 8 MPhil – 2

PhD by Published Works 2 Resubmissions – 9

Over 90% have been awarded their degree with some corrections and less than 5% failed to achieve the standard.

The Quality Assurance Unit raised concern that only 75% of vivas were held within the University regulation of 3 months following submission. It was acknowledged that there is normally a valid reason why vivas extend beyond the 3 month period. Members were reminded to ensure that External Examiner nomination forms were accurately completed, with CVs for non UK examiners, and a Head of School's justification for selection of a non HE External Examiner.

III It was reported that the Doctoral School's future plans for its structure and plans had been submitted to the FSB.

A College Director of Postgraduate Studies will be appointed in each of the three new Colleges and the term "College Graduate School" will no longer be used.

4.6 DOCTORAL SCHOOL REPORT

Dr Penny Dowdney gave the Board an update on the work and developments within the Doctoral School:

Training and Development programme- a brochure has been produced and was distributed to members; the on-line programme has also been updated and many bookings are currently being made for the workshops.

Doctoral School Budget- the Doctoral School budget was confirmed last week and they will be able to re-consider the training programme and add further sessions to those over-subscribed.

Induction – the central Induction event was held on 4th October and was very successful with over 60 attending. The event has been recorded using *Panopto* and will be available on the Doctoral School *Blackboard* along with the slides of the presentations. A second induction event will be arranged for January.

Social Events – Arrangements are commencing for an event in November, which will be the same format as last year, held in Pontio with a speaker, followed by refreshments. There will also be a Research Images competition with a PGR section.

4.7 DTP/DTC REPORT

The Chair reported that the call for the ESRC DTP Collaborative projects was open. Concerns were expressed by 2 Schools because they had not received the call when first released.

Action: JT to raise with Pathway leaders and Prof Robert Rogers.

It was reported that the NERC Envision Conference had been held in Bangor during the Summer which was very successful. The DTP was also about to advertise its latest round of PhD studentships.

4.8 STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

The Students' Union reported that they have recently commenced "PhTea" sessions in Pontio every Thursday from 12-2pm for research students to get together for a chat over coffee and cake; up to now they have been very successful with up to 40 participants.

They are continuing to arrange elections for postgraduate student representatives.

4.9 PERSONAL TUTORS/ CHAIRS

The Chair reported that following a number of meetings over the Summer between the Doctoral School, the Students' Union and Senior University staff, a decision has been made regarding the role of the Chair and Personal Tutor for postgraduate researchers.

It has been agreed that each postgraduate researcher's Review will consist of their Supervisor, Internal examiner and a Chair. Normally the Chair will be the students' Personal Tutor, however a student can nominate any other member of staff as their Personal Tutor, in some instances it could be envisaged that they would like to continue with the person who was their Personal Tutor in their undergraduate studies for example. PGRs are reminded that they can seek support from Co-supervisors, Personal Tutors, Senior Tutors (= Directors of Graduate Studies), Heads of School, College Directors of Graduate Studies and PGR Dean.

4.10 OPEN DISCUSSION ON PGR MATTERS

Accommodation for Doctoral School – It was noted that the Doctoral School was still hopeful for new accommodation but in the meantime they have two offices on the 1st Floor of the New Arts Building, one to be used as a meeting room and one as an office.

Information - A request was received to bring all information for postgraduate researchers together in one place and it was noted that work was continuing on the Doctoral School website and the on-line postgraduate research handbook.

FSB – Concerns were raised regarding the new contracts and the distinction between Teaching and Scholarship contracts and Research and Scholarship contracts in particular with reference to PhD supervision. The meeting agreed that it was beneficial for T&S staff to be able to supervise PGR. The Chair agreed to raise these concerns at RSTG.

4.11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DRAPERS MEDAL

The Board received nomination forms for the 2018 Drapers Medal for Postgraduate Researchers, closing date for submission to the Senate Prizes and Awards Committee was 15th January 2018.

4.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Doctoral School Board will be held at 10.00 am, Thursday 1st February 2018 in the Council Chamber.