

**Bangor University**  
**Doctoral School Board (DSB)**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

**Present:**       **Doctoral School**  
Professor John Turner [JT] (PGR Dean, Chair), Dr Penny Dowdney [PD], Aashu Jayadeep (Secretary)

**College Directors**  
Dr James McDonald [JM] (CNS), Dr Martina Lahmann [ML] (COPAS), Dr Helena Miguelez-Carballeira [HM-C] (CAH)

**Heads of DTPs/DTCs and other centres**  
Professor John Healey [JH]

**School Directors**  
Dr Gwion Williams (BBS), Dr Stefan Machura (Social Sciences), Dr Wei Shi (Law)  
Professor Raluca Radulescu (English Literature), Dr Eirini Sanoudaki (Linguistics)  
Dr Nathalie Fenner (Biological Sciences), Dr Neal Hockley [NH] (SENRGY),  
Dr William J Teahan (Computer Science)  
Dr Ross Roberts (SSHES), Dr Jane Wakeman (Medical Sciences)

**PGR Administrators**  
Beverley James, Christine Parry, Iwan Davies

**Students' Union Representatives**  
Helen Marchant

**PGR Student Reps**  
Laurence Jones (Business), Tanya Herring (Law), Elizabeth Woodcock (Social Sciences),  
Megan Baker (CNS), Luke Stephen Hillary, Clare Margaret Brewster [CB] (Biological Sciences), Eluned Hudson (Chemistry)

**ACTION**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the Doctoral School Board. He thanked Mrs Karen Chidley, the outgoing Secretary to the Board, for her valuable services and introduced Aashu Jayadeep as the new secretary. He reminded the Board that the Doctoral School would be the first point of contact for matters relating to PGR.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS/ACTIONS**

1. With reference to the Minute 3.2 (**PRES RESULTS DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS, Section 7**), PD enquired about the discussion about 'bench fees' with RSTG. The Dean reported that inequalities on 'bench fees' across different schools has been highlighted. The matter is currently under consideration with Planning & Governance with the proposal that every PGR should have access to some funds to run their projects with parity between International and Home/EU PGRs. PGR representatives will be involved in those discussions.
2. With reference to Minute 3 (**CONCLUDING REMARKS AND ACTIONS**), JT expressed his appreciation to all the Schools who had submitted a comprehensive PRES Action Plan to the Doctoral School regarding their PRES report and reiterated the

importance of the exercise. **He reminded others to complete their Action Plans and send these to the Doctoral School asap since they are now overdue.**

**SCHOOL  
LEADS**

He also reminded the PGR administrators to **make sure the Banner details of the PGR candidates are updated before the PRES launch to ensure that the survey runs smoothly.** Any abnormalities should be immediately reported and resolved with Student Records.

**PGR  
ADMINS**

3. With reference to Minute 4.7 (**DTP/DTC REPORT**), the chair informed that he clarified with Prof Robert Rogers, Academic Lead of the ESRC Wales DTP and the matter over communication has been resolved.
4. The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October were confirmed as a correct record.

### **3. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW : UPDATE**

1. The Chair informed the Board that the date for the Institutional Review would be the week beginning 21<sup>st</sup> May. QAA Wales will be undertaking the review for the first time.
2. PGR will feature as a focus area in the University's submission. It is important that we show our robust mechanisms and display parity across the University.
3. A self-evaluation document is being prepared which highlights how we have evolved over time from the previous QA review in 2012. An Interim review in 2015 led to the constitution of the Doctoral School, PGR Dean, Governance structure and the improvements thereafter.
4. Further meetings will be organised before the Review to disseminate information across all areas. The self-evaluation document will be shared once it is completed and approved by the task group.

### **4. PGR REGS: UPDATE**

1. The Chair informed the group that the current Regulation 03 and Regulation 05 along with Code of Practice 03 are now consolidated to form the new regulations for PGRs. The new document has been approved by Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee (SRSC) and the draft will be made available to all PGRs through Doctoral School website. Following final drafting, it will be made available on the Academic Registry Regulations web site.
2. The main changes are in processes and methods. They cover:
  - Scope
  - Criteria for awards
  - Method of study and admission
  - Postgraduate Management, supervision and Training
  - Monitoring and Review of Progress
  - Submission of Thesis and Examination
  - Terms
  - Appendix 1 Submitting a thesis
  - Appendix 2 Guidelines for Viva Voce

The main changes are:

Use of term Postgraduate Researcher or Postgraduate Candidate.

Roles and Responsibilities more clearly defined including College Director & School PGR Lead.

Careful wording and agreement re Personal Tutor following consultation with SU.

Staff candidature - It was agreed to remove the constraints on the mode of study.

Admissions Interview - It was recommended shortlisted PhD student should undertake an interview as part of the admissions process, and this could include interviews by Skype/video conferencing. Following consultation with Admissions – issues were raised.

Supervisor qualifications – further information was discussed regarding lead supervisor expertise (specifically degree level and experience).

Abstract length - It was agreed to change the minimum to 600 words.

The regulations do specify that a PhD thesis must not exceed 100,000 words, an MPhil 60,000 and MSc by Research 50,000 words. Requested from Examiners.

Language of thesis – It was agreed to relax the current regulations and to note that a thesis could be produced in any language provided that it was appropriate to the subject area and could be satisfactorily examined. (This proposal was overturned by SRSC).

Dual Awards-a cross reference to the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision was required in the regulations. Add to section 3.

PhD by Published Works – It was noted that this term and its separate regulations were removed. The revised regulations permit Schools to waive two years of study for postgraduate researchers who have already undertaken or published relevant research.

Time between submission and viva – It was agreed to specify within 3 months but acknowledge in some cases three months may not be sufficient.

Video conference and Skype - it was agreed that the regulations should state that the viva could be undertaken via video conference or Skype if appropriate, but that conditions need to be specified.

Furthermore it was noted that the regulations should state that the use of any recording device requires the permission of all parties. (This is in Appendix 2).

Agreed that Minor Corrections (A2) should be completed in up to 3 months (change from previous of 4 weeks) in response to external examiners.

Term for Replacing Academic Registry function – Student Records.

Any abnormalities from the norms should be notified to the Doctoral School and /or Academic Registry (Gwenan Hine).

3. JH enquired about uploading theses to PURE. The Dean informed him that PGR Administrators will coordinate the process with candidates. Soft copies of theses will still be prepared for use in the viva.
4. ML noted concerns about students in their final year who may wish to submit for the award of MPhil. rather than a PhD. The Dean confirmed that this decision cannot be made at that point in time and the candidates have to submit the thesis for the degree to which they are registered, even though the outcome may not be a PhD. He also informed the DSB that according to the new regulations, the minor correction period allowed would now be up to 3 months.

## 5. PGR ADMISSIONS : UPDATE

1. The Dean reported that the number of PGR candidates across the University currently stands at 533– with a breakdown between Colleges as follows:

CAH – 117	COBLESS - 82
CNS – 127	COPAS - 73
COHABS – 134	

Breakdown by Degree is :

434 (81%)	PhD
38 (7%)	Professional Doctorates
11 or (2%)	MPhil
50 or (9%)	Masters by Research

Bangor University has followed the sector trend, with a fall in PGR numbers in recent years, and currently has 533 postgraduate candidates, compared to 636 in 2016, 606 in 2015, 624 in 2014 and 609 in 2013. 54% are female and 46% male. 146 (28%) are international and 106 (20%) are Part Time; the latter proportion is low, perhaps reflecting our relatively rural location combined with the current economic climate. We have experienced a fall in applications from international students this year compared to previous years, and especially in those from Asia and the Middle East due to geopolitical problems, and eligibility for government scholarships.

2. With the new structure in place, the College PGR Directors and School PGR Leads will be continuing as the point of contact. The breakdown of PGR candidate numbers is estimated to be as below:

Arts & Humanities– 158	Human Sciences – 175
Natural & Physical Sciences- 200	

3. Applications had decreased this year particularly in areas of Health, Business, Law and Physical Sciences. JT reminded the Schools that recruitment is a priority, and that PGR Leads should make every effort to offer alternative projects if suitable applicants have applied in areas not supported. The Admissions office had raised concerns that turnaround time for approving and returning applications to the admissions office are sometimes taking more than 30 days instead of the expected 10 days.
4. Academics noted that this delay is often due to incomplete applications or inadequate research proposals being sent to them for approval. Suggestions to improve the online system to accept only complete applications were made. Guidance on completing applications is provided on the direct Applications website and additional information is available for international applicants. Academics also suggested that it would be good practice to encourage students to identify potential supervisors before applying (PURE profiles of staff will help facilitate this).

## **6. PGRS ONLINE MONITORING :UPDATE**

1. JT reminded the Board to let the Doctoral School know of any further changes they would like to see with a detailed explanation of the need for the change, with regards to the PGR Online Monitoring System before Feb 16<sup>th</sup>.

2. Some of the suggestions after discussion were as follows:
  - a. History of reviews to be included
  - b. Student submission date to be displayed on their profile
  - c. Visa Expiry information to be included

## 7. BRIEF REPORTS

### 7.1 PGR Dean : Chairs Report

1. The Dean reiterated that the Institutional Review is the current priority. **Measures are being undertaken to ensure that all processes and procedures with respects to PGR are in place across the University, and Colleges and Schools need to ensure that they are following these**
2. JT mentioned that the Doctoral School will be focusing on improving the recruitment and training of cohorts. He welcomed ideas from Schools to implement the same.
3. JT informed the DSB that it is important that **academic staff update their profiles in PURE to highlight their relevant research interests and areas of research degree supervision, and encouraged the PGR Leads to inform staff in their department to do the same.** It would help in attracting potential research candidates and help them understand the areas available in which proposals can be developed. NH remarked that this would also help the PGR candidates identify their potential supervisors.

COLLEGE  
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### 7.2 Doctoral School: Updates

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

1. **Induction** – the Winter Induction event was held on 16<sup>th</sup> January and was successful with over 15 attending. The event has been recorded using Panopto and is available on the Doctoral School Blackboard site along with the slides of the presentations.
2. **Training and Development programme**- the Semester 2 programme is currently running successfully.
3. **Website Review** - The Doctoral School undertook a thorough review of the website to remove and update content and identify broken links in accordance with CMA. The exercise helped to evaluate the details on the website. JT remarked that it would be good practice if all Schools could make sure the information that they display about PGR on their webpages are accurate and up-to-date.
4. **PRES Action Plans** - will be uploaded to the Doctoral School web site for reference.
5. **Research Visions** - the Image competition closed on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. The Winners would be announced shortly.
6. **Events** –Wine Tasting workshop, organised for the first time was a great success.

7. The Doctoral School are working with the SU to support PGR initiatives (e.g. PhTea; 3 Minute Thesis) and with DocSoc (Induction; Socials etc.)

### **7.3 College DoGS : Updates**

1. HM-C reported that a workshop – ‘Impact and Postgraduate Study’ is being organised for PGR candidates to be delivered by Professor Vian Bakir who has experience supervising doctoral research projects with impact. The workshop will be on 21<sup>st</sup> March.
2. JM reported the following from CNS:
  - Dr. Nathalie Fenner has been appointed as DoGS for the School of Biological Sciences.
  - A PRES Action Plan Event was held in November and all schools in CNS have completed a PRES action plan. Implementation is ongoing.
  - Nine new PGR reps have been appointed. CNS now has 12 PGR reps.
  - An induction for new PGRs in CNS was held on January 16th.
  - Year 2 and 3 inductions are being organised in the next few weeks.
3. ML – No updates

### **7.4 PGR Admin Staff: Updates**

No updates from Admin staff

### **7.5 DTPs/DTCs/KESS 2: Updates**

1. PD reported to the Board that work is progressing on the EPSRC DTC Submission for March led by Bangor.
2. KESS 2 re-profiling until 2022 is completed. Currently there are 328 KESS 2 projects with 92 from Bangor. The possibility of expansion of KESS 2 to KESS 2 East is undergoing discussion with WEFO. This would generate a further 120 PhDs.
3. JT appreciated that the success of KESS 2 would significantly influence PGR developments and feed into future research strategies. This would bring further positive alliances with Industry.
4. CB raised concerns regarding KESS 2 feedback. The students raised issues as below:
  - a. Process followed for approval of contracts is not satisfactory
  - b. Approval processes were delayed
  - c. Communications with regard to start dates were misleading
5. Discussions suggested constituting a Task and End Group to investigate the feedback and identify solutions

**Dr PENNY  
DOWDNEY**

### **7.6 Student Representatives : Updates**

1. PhD monthly Café in SENRGY

### **7.7 SU: Updates**

1. The Students' Union reported that the recently commenced "PhTea" sessions in Pontio every Thursday from 12-2pm for research students to get together for a chat over coffee and cake is now up and running successfully.
2. The SU is also involved in the self-evaluation document as part of the Institutional Review.

#### **8. OPEN DISCUSSION ON PGR MATTERS**

1. **FSB-** The members enquired when the new structure would formally be announced to students. The chair informed the DSB that proposed College names have now been passed on to SU for their opinion and would be formalised and then announced. Changes are expected to be in place for 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

#### **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Doctoral School Board will be held at 10.00 am, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018 in the Council Chamber.