Bangor University  
Doctoral School Board (DSB)  
Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2019

Present:  
**Doctoral School**  
Professor John Turner [JT] (PGR Dean, Chair), Penny Dowdney [PD]  
**College Directors of PGR**  
Dr Helena Miguelez-Carballeira[HM-C] (CoAHB), Prof Debbie Mills[DM] (CoHS), Prof James McDonald [JM] (CoESE)  
**Heads of DTPs/DTCs and other centres**  
Professor John Healey[JH] (Envision)  
Professor Jonathan Roberts [JR] (AI CDT)  
Professor Debbie Mills [DM] (ESRC Wales DTP)  
**School PGR Leads/ Representatives**  
Dr Wei Shi (Law), Dr Robin Mann [RM] (H,P&SoS), Dr Line Cordes (OS), Dr William J Teahan (CS & EE), Dr Richard Binney(Psy), Dr Ross Roberts (SHES), Dr Gwion Williams (BBS), Dr Eirini Sanoudaki (L,L&L), Prof. Pwyll ap Sion (M&M),  
**PGR Administrators**  
**Students’ Union Representatives**  
Harry Riley [HR]  
**PGR Student Reps**  
Elizabeth Woodsock (History, Philosophy & Social Sciences)  
Nebu George (History, Philosophy & Social Sciences)  
Luke Hillary (Biology, Natural Sciences)  
**Library**  
Beth Hall  

**Apologies:** Aashu Jayadeep, Julie Boulton, Mr Graham French(Ed &HD), Dr Neal Hockley (Natural Sciences), Everil McQuarie, Dr Martina Lahmann (Chemistry), Mark Barrow [MB], Janet Thomas, Andrew Van Der Schatte Olivier, Eluned Hudson (NS); Richard Dallison, Clare Barwood, Dr Jane Wakeman (MS), Dr Sion Williams (HS), Prof. Gerwyn Williams (Welsh), Dr Nathalie Fenner (NS), Gwenda Pritchard, Christine Parry, Everil McQuarie, Anwen Williams, Marc Davies, Michael Hand, Adina Grigorie, David Ellis, Rebecca Ward, Gareth White, Bethanie Francis, Helen Ford, Heli Gittins, James Jackson, James Monks, Sophie Harrison, Angharad Wilkie, Ashleigh Johnstone, Hamidreza Bagheri, Beverly Pickard-Jones, Carla Marie Owen

**ACTION**

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**  
The Board members introduced themselves and the Chair welcomed members to the Doctoral School Board meeting. The chair asked that more PGR reps. attend these meetings in future and recommended that PGR Leads encourage them to attend before each meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS/ACTIONS**  
Minutes of the May 9th meeting have already been signed off by RIISTG.
3(d) : the small task group working on the PGCertHE has not advanced over the summer. The intention is to provide PGCertHE training specific to PGRs. The School of Education will play a role in this.

3(e) : PGR leads to take up initiatives to develop DTPs / CDTs. This is an ongoing matter – develop ideas and potential partners, engage with framework commissioning with UKRI, and therefore be best placed when calls come out.

4. PGR leads (recruitment action) is on the agenda.

PRES meeting Minutes were circulated. JT reported that this had been a useful meeting, which is reported in detail in the Minutes.

JT highlighted these points:
- PGRs need to be given a clear direction at Induction
- PGRs must attend Inductions
- Supervisors and PGR Leads need to explain what progression involves
- Roles of the supervisory team need to be clear at Induction

Meetings with PGR reps will now drill down into PRES results, leading to PRES action plans. We need to pay attention to scores below 80%. Actions will be taken through the school / college structures and implemented. We need to tell PGRs what has been done.

3. BRIEF REPORTS
   a. PGR Dean’s Report
      1. The Dean reported that he had sent out an autumn update. He emphasised PGR Inductions, and the Doctoral School drop-in surgeries; other aspects would be raised during this meeting.
      2. Recruitment
         JT reported that Senate had looked at recruitment and enrolment targets, using sectoral comparisons. The Vice Chancellor set a target increase of 35% for PGR, over the next two years. Banner data shows us data from the same time in the year for the current and the previous year showing we admitted 121 this year, 148 last year. We expect to see this figure increase.
         JT raised some areas of concern:
         - College of Arts, Humanities & Business: recruitment is fairly level
         - College of Environmental Sciences & Engineering: numbers are significantly down, with a fall of 42% (though these numbers are likely to go up).
         - College of Human Sciences: a slight fall (from 48 to 44)

      Data for overseas PGRs was similar, showing a very small difference (19 currently, 17 last year), from 500+ applications.
      PGR numbers have been gradually increasing from 2015/16 to 2018/19.
      There are funding opportunities in Health Sciences for Home students, identified as an area of likely future growth.
      BU has seen a reduction in International PGRs, for geopolitical factors. Other countries and other Universities seem to be recruiting well from unaffected countries, but not BU.
      Overall BU PGR is female dominated, at 57 – 60%.
      Aims are for more DTPs / CDTs and more high quality overseas PGRs going forward.

3. PURE

JT updated the group re recent PURE numbers, stating that PURE use needs to be more visible and emphasising that it is essential this data is completed. JT asked that this is flagged as mandatory at inductions, and a tick box to show this has been completed will be included in the
PGR review. It was stressed that a link between PURE and school websites is vital. JT reported that this action is ongoing.

4. **PGR Registration**

The continuation fee system will be implemented in 2020 / 21, it has been agreed with student registration that all PGRs will remain registered and on the Banner system until their final submission.

5. **Research Degree results**

These results will go forward to the Research Degrees Committee.  
May to August:

- 50 PhD
- 2 Professional Doctorate
- 2 MPhil
- 2 Masters by Research

Results as follows:

- 3 without corrections
- 36 minor corrections
- 17 substantive corrections
- 0 referrals / exits with lower awards / failures

External examiner reports:

- Many commended the practice of having a viva Chair
- It was noted as good practice that part of SNS offer a presentation opportunity before the viva
- Closure of Chemistry was highlighted by an examiner as an ill-founded decision
- Concerns were raised regarding the practice of remote vivas, which were considered as not sufficiently rigorous

b. **College Directors Reports**

HM-C (CoAHB) reported the following: no report

DM(CoHS) reported the following:

- Meetings were happening currently re PRES
- It has been agreed to expand the College conference to a full day
- Progress was being made regarding other types of PGR events

JT reported the following representing JM(CoESE):

- There were 30 new PGRs in the College, a reduction on last year’s numbers.
- A welcome Induction / event was planned for next week
- The PRES action planning event has happened and action plans for the schools would be submitted over the next few days
- Focus is on recruitment
- PGR admin. problems have come to a head. Some PGR leads were still unsure as to who to contact and how.
c. **SU Report**

The SU reported that course representatives would be elected within the next three weeks.
The SU annual survey would be going out on November 11th. The survey would have a PGR focus. There would be 120 questions.

d. **DTP Reports**

Envision: JH reported that applications are now going in for next year.
The annual Envision conference would be in July in Lancaster this year.

ESRC Wales: DM reported that a review was taking place and that collaborative scholarships were open.

KESS 2: PD reported that a call was open for PhD and Research Masters opportunities. The call closes on November 18th.

AI CDT: WT reported that there had been an induction in Cardiff yesterday. Two PGRs were available to BU

Nuclear CDT: no report

6. **Chair invited members to raise issues not yet discussed**

- A viva had taken place with the Chair not aware that he/she needed to be there; PGR admin. should send calendar invitations so as to avoid this happening.
- Please refer to PGRs as ‘Postgraduate Researchers’ not as ‘students’.
- Explore ways for PGRs to participate in seminars / training in Welsh Universities without the need to travel.
- Ensure MSc by Research get invited to inductions
- Inductions are taking place before official start dates – we should increase boost attendance by holding these after 1st October.
- Conference funding in CoAHBL: one school does not offer funding for first year PGRs; the first annual review needs to be passed before anything is available. Even then the amount available is small.
- Some PGRs are locked out of their accounts after the Viva.

7. **Updates**

- The PGR Regulations have been in place for a year now and will be refreshed. As committee structures change under the new Vice Chancellor, so changes will be implemented
- Study modes for staff: can currently only register part-time – this will be changed to allow for full-time mode as well
- JT is seeking feedback to gain some clarity on the complicated scene of maternity / illness and holidays for PGRs. Funds for maternity / paternity / adoption leave are available within DTPs / KESS 2, but self-funded PGRs receive no support as they are not staff. JT invited feedback
- Clarification was sought re the regulation that PGRs who are staff members would require two external examiners – confirmed that this is the case.
• JT invited details of any cases of viva outcomes where it is not a clear fail so that the thesis is resubmitted and where the cycle of corrections being made are not accepted starts. A suggestion is to add a flow diagram to the PGR Regulations to clarify outcome routes.
• JT is seeking more details of cases where video conferencing or skype is used for viva; currently this can only happen in two places, whereas we may need to consider more options to ensure that we cover all limitations, but with appropriate constraints and checks.
• An issue around extensions was highlighted, where a PGR fails to complete corrections on time (e.g. due to extenuating circumstances). Currently a PGR is deemed to have failed if the deadline is not met. It is the decision of the Chair whether PGRs have more time, these should not go to Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee as extensions.
• Clarification was sought on how much contact a PGR should expect from their supervisor. WAM: 120 hours across the supervisory team; PGR Regulations indicate a meeting every two weeks

8. Final Thesis Submission
   • This happens through PURE
   • Reported to the DSB one year ago – this is now the normal practice, but assistance may be required from Dr Beth Hall where a PGR has gone beyond the 4-year registration and does not have access to PURE.
   • Will send and post a step by step reminder.
   • Considering a flow chart of process.
   • N.B. embargo forms (Doctoral School).
   • N.B. open access once thesis is loaded.

9. PGR Event
   • VC / PVC R&I to open.
   • Three talks: one PGR per College, plus posters/exhibits from each College/School
   • Need nominations for speakers please

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
    The next meeting of the Doctoral School Board is on January 8th, 2020.