Bangor University
Doctoral School Board (DSB)
Minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2020

Present: **Doctoral School**
Professor Andrew Hiscock [AH] (PGR Dean, Chair), Penny Dowdney [PD], Aashu Jayadeep
College Directors of PGR
Dr Helena Miguelez-Carballeira [HM-C] (CoAHB), Prof Debbie Mills [DM] (CoHS)
Heads of DTPs/DTCs and other centres
Professor John Healey [JH] (Envision)
Professor Debbie Mills [DM] (ESRC Wales DTP)
School PGR Leads/ Representatives
Dr Gwion Williams (BBS), Dr Wei Shi (Law), Prof. Pwyll ap Sion (M&M), Dr Robin Mann (H,P&SoS), Dr Neal Hockley[NH] (Natural Sciences), Dr Line Cordes (OS), Dr William J Teahan (CS & EE), Mr Graham French(Ed &HD), Dr Richard Binney[RB] (Psy), Dr Ross Roberts [RR](SHES)
PGR Administrators
Students' Union Representatives
Harry Riley [HR](SU)
PGR Student Reps
Daniel Fishburn [DF] (Env, Natural Sciences)
Ian Green (MScRes)
Angharad Wilkie (Medical Sciences)

Apologies: Prof James McDonald (CoESE), Dr Eirini Sanoudaki (L,L&L), Prof. Gerwyn Williams (Welsh), Dr Nathalie Fenner (NS), Dr Martina Lahmann (Chemistry), Dr Sion Williams (HS), Christine Parry, Gwenda Pritchard, Everil McQuarie, Julie Boulton, Janet Thomas, Anwen Williams, Mark Barrow, Marc Davies, Michael Hand, Nebu George, Adina Grigorie, David Ellis, Rebecca Ward, Gareth White, Andrew Van Der Schatte Olivier, Bethanie Francis, Helen Ford, Bethany Pettifor, Tara Garraty, Katie Medlin, Eluned Hudson, James Jackson, James Monks, Sophie Harrison, Clare Barwood, Ashleigh Johnstone, Hamidreza Bagheri, Beverly Pickard-Jones, Carla Marie Owen

ACTION

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

   The new PGR Dean introduced himself and welcomed all board members to the second meeting of the DSB for the academic year 2019/20. The members introduced themselves.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS/ACTIONS**
   i. With reference to minute **3 - page 2 (PURE),** the PVC Research would be sending out an email to all PGRs seeking confirmation for completion and display of details in PURE.
      With reference to minute **5 - page 3 (Research Degree results-** good practice of SNS to offer a presentation opportunity before the viva), the Chair commented that a survey could be a good idea to find out thoughts on this across the schools.

DS to circulate survey to

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ii.

iii. With reference to minute **6 - page 4 (Inductions are taking place before official start dates),** PGR leads pointed out that some PGRs have raised the issue that there are overlaps in the content of the Inductions. The Chair encouraged School & Colleges to think about variety in content. He also proposed that PGR Inductions are to be conducted after October so that we can include as many late starters as possible.

iv. With reference to minute **7 - page 4 (Updates- PGR Regulations**), The Chair informed the Board that the DS has been requested to review the regulations. The changes proposed will be presented at the appropriate committee.

v. With reference to minute **7 - page 4 (Updates-** cases where video conferencing or skype is used for viva), if circumstances allow the viva can happen in 3 places. The regulation could be updated to allow the external examiner to be part of the viva long distance and need not necessarily be present in Bangor.

vi. With reference to minute **9 - page 5 (PGR Event),** the members shared positive feedback from the PGR community and expressed interest in having regular events in the future.

vii. The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September were confirmed as a correct record

3. **BRIEF REPORTS**
   a. **PGR Dean's Report**
   i. **Recruitment-** the Dean reported the below stats. as per BI reporting :

PGR data overview (correct as of 28.1.20)

College figures (recruitment)

Colleges	Int. candidates (2019/2020)	Total candidates (2019/2020)
PGRs across BU	183/167	198/187
CoAHB	70/69	76/75
CoESE	72/74	73/82
CoHS	41/24	49/30

School figures (recruitment)

Schools	Int. candidates (2019/2020)	Total candidates (2019/2020)
Business Sch.	33/33	33/33
Hist., Phil & SoSc	7/3	7/4
LLL	17.5/19.5	18.5/21.5
Law	4/7	7/8
Music & Media	8.5/6.5	10.5/8.5
Welsh		
Comp. Sc & Elec. Eng	13/22	13/26
Natural Sc	55/49	55/53

Ocean Sc	4/3	5/3
Ed	12/5	14/6
Health Sc	9/6	10/6
Med Sc	12/6	12/6
Psy	5/5	9/10
Sport, Health Exer. Sc	3/2	4/2

Student headcount - by College (doctoral level - including PhD, MPhil & professional doctorates)			
		201920	**201920**
College	**School**	International	Overall
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	Bangor Business School	24.0	33.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	School of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences	27.0	79.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	School of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics	20.0	63.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	School of Law	10.0	18.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	School of Music and Media	10.0	46.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business	School of Welsh		19.0
College of Arts, Humanities and Business Total		**91.0**	**258.0**
College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering	School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering	19.0	45.0
College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering	School of Natural Sciences	41.0	144.0
College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering	School of Ocean Sciences	4.0	38.0
College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering Total		**64.0**	**227.0**
College of Human Sciences	School of Education and Human Development	3.0	29.0
College of Human Sciences	School of Health Sciences	12.0	46.0
College of Human Sciences	School of Medical Sciences	1.0	11.0
College of Human Sciences	School of Psychology	13.0	99.0

College of Human Sciences	School of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences	6.0	34.0
College of Human Sciences Total		**35.0**	**219.0**
UNIVERSITY TOTAL		**190.0**	**704.0**

ii. Notes from RDC

AH presented the following points from RDC:

i. **Matters regarding viva** – already raised under **minute 2**

ii. **Leverhulme application**- call for Leverhulme Doctoral Studentships application opened in January 2020. There will be 10 awards of £1.35 million each, for 15 students for up to 3 yrs. Only one application can be submitted per institution. These should be based around a clear, coherent, overarching theme which does not cover areas such as diseases, illness, disabilities in humans/ animals. No themes which are clinical/medical, or which are a priority of individual research councils will be accepted. The application should cover an interdisciplinary theme which should be in alignment with the University's strategic research plan.

Members discussed the procedure to be followed and arrived at the conclusion that previous procedures could be consulted and followed appropriately.

DS to consult RIIO and follow up

b. Doctoral School Report

PD thanked Prof John Turner on behalf of the members and the Doctoral School for guiding us as PGR Dean and Chair of DSB for more than 3 years, and welcomed Prof Andrew Hiscock as incoming PGR Dean.

i. The Doctoral School arranged its second Induction for PGRs on 16th January 2020. 14 PGRs registered for the event. The presentation slides are available on the DS website and Black Board for PGRs who were not able to attend the session.

ii. The training & development programme for the new semester is ready for booking on the Doctoral School website. Monthly reminders are sent out as usual via the PGR mailing list.

iii. Doctoral Supervisor training has been arranged for 30 & 31st of January.

iv. An evaluation of the first semester workshops will be done. We welcome all suggestions from staff & PGRs who have attended the workshops.

v. The Doctoral School has been awarded another Internship project for summer and will be recruiting interns to work on areas related to PGR recruitment. Recordings from the last internship project about doctoral supervision are getting ready to be published on different media platforms.

c. College Directors Reports

i. JM(CoESE): no report

ii. DM(CoHS) reported the following:

- There has been no formal College induction, but individual workshops were arranged to support new PGRs
- Chris Staples has been appointed as new PGR Lead for Medical Sciences
- A PhD conference is being arranged for Feb 27th with two keynote addresses, a poster presentation, a quiz etc. planned for the day
- A survey to assess the needs of PGRs to use the Bangor University Nursery and Child Research Centre, Tír na nÓg (TNN) was conducted through the DS. There were only 13 responses of which only 5 were from PGRs with children. The results were reported to the Athena Swan Committee and the TNN Management Board. Even though the numbers were low this initiative resulted in a 10% reduction in fees for PGRs.

iii. HM-C (CoAHB) reported the following:
- A portfolio of workshops is being offered from the College : Transitioning from the PhD into an academic job; Common mistakes in working for a postgraduate dissertation ; Editing your thesis.
- HM-C requested that the DS promote these workshops through the DS website so that opportunities can be opened for all PGRs.

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- Communication strategies are improving in reaching out to PGRs.

d. DTP Reports
Envision:
- JH reported that the closing date has passed for this years applications. Ranking will take place for 32 nominated candidates and the selected 16-17 candidates will be funded. He expressed concern that not enough applicants are coming forward for projects this year.
- The annual Envision conference would be in July in Lancaster this year.

ESRC Wales: DM reported that they had been asked to collate information for the review.
KESS 2: all PhD opportunities have now been filled. Research Masters opportunities remain and calls will be opened throughout the year.
AI CDT: no report
Nuclear CDT: no report

e. SU Report
- The SU annual survey has closed now. 25% of PGRs responded. The results of the survey are expected to be released in April/May.
- SU is seeking nominations for the Annual teaching awards and the Course Rep awards. HR reiterated that it would be a good opportunity for staff to nominate PGR reps who have been contributing to the PGR community.

All DSB staff members
- BU Employability week has been organised from 10-14th February. A variety of events (30-40) have been organised throughout the week.
- PD informed the group that the BU "Doc Soc "- Doctoral Society for PGRs have renamed themselves as "PGR Soc". They have proposed to organise an inter-disciplinary academic PGR conference for PG researchers across the University.

4. **ISSUES FROM PGR LEADS/ PGR REPS / ADMIN**

  i. **Issues with Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental Leave & Sick Leave policies**- DF, PGR rep from Natural Sciences, raised the issue around the policy of Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental Leave & Sick Leave across PhD funding bodies that the PGRs in the School are facing (document circulated). Currently some of the self- funded PGRs and the ones funded by ERC have no contractual cover for both illness and pregnancy for the duration of their studentship when compared to other funding bodies (like KESS).

  He added that although covered by the University's insurance whilst in-the-field, PGRs have no contractual guarantee that they will have financial stability if circumstances result in them falling physically or mentally ill. Some of the candidates are concerned about applying for a PhD because of this instability. He informed the Board that PGRs are hoping to work together with the DSB to bring the Universities policy on rights of postgraduate students in-line with the rights of UK employees in other sectors.

  JH commented that some organisations provide stipend type funding to cover this. Although the University has a moral obligation to examine how PGRs are treated, the situation needs to be analysed with respect to the entire student population.

  The Doctoral School requested NH to enquire about travel insurance and sickness cover for PGRs with Chris Benson.

  Neal Hockley, PGR Lead

  ii. **Issues with procurement** – DF raised the issue that PGRs are facing difficulties regarding procurement. There is no information/training provided to them during inductions about how to use cost codes or any of the other procurement formalities.

  RB informed the group that the School of Psychology invites finance representatives to talk during inductions to provide useful contacts and handouts.

  The Dean commented that this is good practice and requested all College Directors and School Leads to note this and provide finance information during inductions.

  PGR directors , PGR Leads

  iii. **Issues with cost codes for some scholarships –** RR informed the Board that some cost codes, such as for the DTP scholarships, are not configured correctly in Agresso and do not reflect the correct coding. This affects the recorded research revenue of the School. The Dean commented that the DS will look into this and report back to the Board.

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  iv. **Issues about PGR admin support –** NH raised the concern that the School was promised continuous PGR admin support, but they are now facing various issues due to over stretched Admins. and constant changes happening. All the College Directors and School Leads supported NH and informed the Board that they are also facing these issues. More efficient planning is required.

  JH mentioned that it would be good to have the Admin. reporting structured under the Doctoral School.

The Dean commented that DS will look into this and report back to the Board.

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5. **POSSIBLE UPDATES TO PGR REGULATIONS**
The PGR Regulations have been in place for a year now and will be refreshed. The Doctoral school will be working with the compliance team to review the regulations and implement the changes proposed.

6. **PURE PHD PROFILES/EMBARGO**
   i. **PURE**
   The Chair reminded members to encourage staff and PGRs to complete their PURE profiles. It is important to showcase our supervisory expertise for the purpose of recruitment.
   JH enquired about the inconsistencies noticed in PURE & the webpages. PD commented that the DS had not been consulted to date on the changes that are proposed and the development of a new BU website.
   RB raised an issue regarding professional doctorates not being given access to PURE.
   The Chair commented that the DS will look into this and report back to the Board.

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   ii. **EMBARGO REMINDER**
   The Chair reminded members that an Embargo request can be made to the DS (pgr@bangor.ac.uk) if necessary. The DS can only allow six months embargo and a request for longer than this period will be forwarded by the DS to the Senate special cases committee.

7. **PGR EVENT**
   - PD reported that the PGR Event organised for the 11th of December was a great success.
   - The VC / PVC R&I provided opening remarks.
   - In addition to posters/exhibits from Colleges/Schools, there were four talks from PGRs.
   College Directors also commented that they had received good feedback from PGRs.

8. **AOB**
The Chair mentioned that PGRs have been contacting him to enquire about travel funds. He reminded College Directors/ School Leads to continuously make this information available to PGRs.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The next meeting of the Doctoral School Board is on May 11th, 2020.