

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT AND POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES

21/13 A meeting of the Committee on Researcher Development and Postgraduate Research Studies was held on Monday 25th October 2021 at 10:00am (on Microsoft Teams)

There were present: Professor Adrian Williams [Chair]
Dr Elena Bedisti
Dr Nicolas Bellouin
Dr Graeme Cottrell
Mrs Catherine Hale [Secretary]
Mrs Lynn Moore
Mrs Rachel Thorns

Apologies for absence: Professor Adrian Bell
Mr Andre Dornelles
Mr Jonathan Lloyd
Dr Rachel Foxley

The Chair introduced himself to the Committee and noted the meeting was quorate.

21/14 Committee Membership / Terms of reference for the 2021-22 session

The Committee received the following documents and commented as follows:

Membership and terms of reference

The Chair queried the first term of reference; to devise and implement strategies to support the development of early career researchers; both Research Staff and those on T&R contracts. The Chair asked the Committee whether this Committee is responsible for just Research Staff or should it be including Early Career Researchers. It was noted that there are blurred lines but this Committee should be supporting the development of Research Staff but should be sharing good practice if applicable to Early Career Researchers as it could be beneficial. **Action: The Chair and the Secretary to amend wording for the first term of reference.**

It was also noted that there was an error on the membership list 5. Should be HR Partner not Manager and 6. Should be split into two roles Staff Development Manager and Chair of the Research Staff Committee. **Action: The Secretary to make these changes.**

The Chair noted the need for a representative from the Research Staff Committee and the

difficulties of having good practice communities of practice. It was noted that at the next meeting the Committee would discuss structures for localized communities for Research Staff to help encourage representatives to talk to us about training and development.

a. Disclosure of Interests and Risk Register

These were accepted by the Committee.

b. UBTSLE Risk Register and memo for Committees

It was noted that PGR numbers go into the Teaching and Learning score for the Times Higher results but these are not mentioned in the Risk Register.

21/15 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2021 were approved.

21/16 Matters arising

It was noted that the attainment gap is still concerning and the Chair had a meeting to discuss this next week.

There were no further matters arising

21/17 PGR Student Recruitment

The Committee received papers from the Recruitment and Marketing Officer. The Chair noted that Home numbers were surprisingly struggling, overall numbers have held up well but staff are being more selective on accepting students due to a backlash from the pandemic.

It was also noted that the Scenario DTP had just opened for project proposals and there had been a record number. Dr Elena Bedisti noted that traditionally DTPs and CDTs get a lot of project proposals but this is not the same for self-funded applicants.

The Chair noted that we need to be more strategic with recruitment and marketing and it was agreed this would be looked at for the next Committee.

21/18 University Postgraduate Research Studentships

Dr Elena Bedisti gave a brief update on autumn 2021 studentship starters. The Committee were told that there had been 107 studentship starters with the bigger DTPs and Henley Business School having the highest numbers. It was also noted that a large portion of these had Graduate School input. Dr Elena Bedisti would send a PowerPoint to the Secretary to upload onto Teams with all the information. **Action: Dr Elena Bedisti to send the Secretary her PowerPoint to be uploaded.**

The Committee were told of the key timelines for September 2022 deadlines:

China Scholarship 7th January 2022

International Studentship 10th January 2022

AHRC South West and Wales DTP 30th November 2021 – 24th January 2022

Regional Bursary and Wilkie Calvert 3rd May 2022

ESRC SeNNS 14th January 2022

Dr Nicholas Bellouin noted that SCENARIOS deadline is mid-January.

The Committee were told that some changes were being introduced for the International Studentship competition, such as anonymised applications and removing the School ranking for the panel.

The Chair noted that we are involved in a greater number of Research Councils, more than some of our competitors, whereas outside of UKRI funding we are not doing as well

as our competitors. The Chair asked what other Universities do better in this aspect. Dr Elena Bedisti noted that other institutions may use their own funding to supplement more studentships and as an institution we have stopped most internal funding due to the pandemic.

The Chair asked the Committee to ask colleagues to draw from their networks to see what other institutions are doing to increase home PGR Students. The Chair noted that we need to know what we are doing well at and what we are not. **Action: Committee members to speak to colleagues.**

Dr Elena Bedisti noted we are supplementing a lot of DTPs and CDTs but should we be using this funding more strategically.

It was agreed that we would come back to this at the next meeting.

21/19 Reports from other bodies

The Committee received minutes from the last PGR Representatives Forum and it was noted that the next meeting will be held later this term. The Committee also received minutes from the HBS PGR Board of Studies.

21/20 The new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Chair told the Committee that the Dean's remit now includes career development of researchers. As the Graduate School does not have capacity to support this role there will be a 2 year RETF funded post to support researcher development. This post will work with Mrs Lynn Moore, Professor Adrian Williams and the Graduate School.

- a. Chair Report to Council on progress with implementing Research Development Concordat

The Committee had received the report to Council. It was noted that this report was not shared with the Committee before going to Council and going forward it will be seen by this Committee. Mrs Lynn Moore noted that the HREiR report will also be seen by this Committee.

- b. Concordat HREiR Action Plan 2020-22

The Committee received a copy of the Action Plan. It was agreed that Reports and Plans should be sent to the Committee outside of the three official Committee meetings for comments before submission.

- c. University of Reading HRER Submission 2020 – Review Report

The Committee received a copy of the report. It was reiterated that this Committee should have input into these reports.

21/21 Any other business

It was agreed that having the autumn meeting during half-term would result in more apologies so it was agreed that this will be changed next year.

The Chair noted that he wanted this Committee to be more of a forum for discussion. It was also noted he would restructure the format and Agenda.

Mrs Lynn Moore told the Committee about the development of a new online resource aimed at

new Research Staff highlighting how the University supports them and what we have in place. It is 30 minutes long and is currently in draft stage. Lynn asked the Committee if they would be happy to review this resource. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a broader list of constituents to review the final draft before it is published.

It was agreed that the Chair and the Secretary needed to look at finding replacements for Katherine Harloe and invite a Teaching and Learning Dean and a representative from the Research Staff Committee. **Action: Chair and Secretary to discuss.**

Summary of Actions

- The Chair and the Secretary to amend wording for the first term of reference
- The Secretary to amend the Membership list
- Dr Elena Bedisti to send the Secretary her PowerPoint to be uploaded
- Committee members to speak to colleagues from their networks to see what other institutions are doing to increase Home PGR student numbers.
- Chair and Secretary to discuss replacements for Committee

21/22 Dates for the diary

Fairbrother lecture (17th May
2022)

Doctoral Research Conference (15 June 2022)

21/23 Dates of next meetings

Monday, 31 January 10am (venue to be confirmed)
Monday, 9 May at 10am (venue to be confirmed)