

PPR of: College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

Date of review: 13 & 14th March 2019

Date of 14 week response: 13th August 2019

Date of year on response: 7 May 2020

The College is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.

If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>Thesis Committee</p> <p>The review team recommends that Thesis Committees are implemented consistently across the College and in particular, the role of the Principal Supervisor in these committees should be clarified.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the 10 week review meeting should be standard practice across the College and that it includes training needs analysis discussion with students. Training needs analysis should also be a standard part of all annual progression reviews.</p> <p>The review team recommends that there should be clear procedures for the formation of Thesis Committee membership and in particular, membership should not be allocated by the supervisor. The College should ensure consistency of allocation, clarity of roles and a truly independent Thesis Committee Chair. This will support the College remit item on equality of student experience.</p>	1 year	<p>The Graduate School will take steps to streamline thesis committee processes across the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CMVM). This will be achieved by reviewing current practice in all Deaneries and producing a single set of Guidelines and Principles for formation and function of a Thesis Committee (this process is already underway). Clear processes will be identified for formation of the Thesis Committee, with the anticipation that the Thesis Chair will be selected from a pool of experienced senior staff. The 10 week review will be promoted as standard practice. Training needs analysis will be built into the process, probably by inclusion of an Appendix to the Thesis Committee Form mapping training opportunities against postgraduate student lifecycle.</p> <p>Students and staff will be involved in the review and revision of the Thesis Committee process via Postgraduate Researcher Experience Committee (PG REC) and direct communication with supervisor groups and postgraduate societies. The new guidelines and forms will be made available on the College Wiki, and will be promoted to staff and students through Deanery Postgraduate Deans, PG REC, Supervisor Briefings, welcome events/ inductions and direct communication to supervisor groups and postgraduate societies.</p> <p>Responsibility: College.</p>	13 th March 2020
2	<p>The review team recommends that the College considers separating pastoral support from the Thesis Committee and ensures support for pastoral issues is available in all areas.</p>	2 years	<p>Separating pastoral support from the assessment component of the Thesis Committee is seen as a preferred option. The review and revision of the Thesis Committee process will include consideration of a mechanism to provide students with a suitable individual/individuals to provide pastoral support. For example, it could be envisaged that the Thesis Committee Assessment meeting will be followed by a meeting with a different member(s) of staff</p>	13 th March 2021

			with a role in student welfare/ support. This will require identifying, recruiting and training suitable individuals. It is conceivable that these members of staff should also be selected to ensure that they are not close colleagues of the other staff members of the Thesis Committee. Responsibility: College (liaison with Student Welfare)	
3	<p>Communication</p> <p>The review team found evidence of variable student experience of induction, particularly where students arrive before or after the start of the academic year. There was also evidence of inconsistency in the information available to new students. The review team recommends the College ensure standardisation of induction and that all students have access to induction.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the College consider developing a central repository for information relevant to all postgraduate research students, such as tutoring opportunities, seminars and student representatives and ensures that students are aware of where to find this information.</p>	1 year	<p>Communication is complicated by the complex structure of CMVM and the geographical spread of different Deaneries, Schools, Centres, and Institutes. It is further complicated by the increasing number of students completing considerable percentages of their study away from the University.</p> <p>CMVM will work with recruitment and admissions teams to streamline College Welcome and Induction events with those provide centrally (by the University) and locally (by Centres/ Research groups). A student representative has been added to PG REC and this individual will liaise with Postgraduate Societies at the 4 main Campuses (Little France, Easter Bush, Western General Hospital, Central Campus) to disseminate information and feedback to the College. The Director of Experience will set up a structured programme of presentations/discussions with students in Cohort-based doctoral programmes.</p> <p>Responsibility: College</p>	13 th March 2020
4	<p>Student Voice</p> <p>The review team recommends that the College explore ways to support sustainability of societies, including administrative support and formalised constitution of societies to promote transparency.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the College consider a more formalised structure for using the Postgraduate Student Reps in reporting up and down between students and College. The College should ensure appropriate training is available for all Reps, the sustainability of these roles and that Rep contact details are communicated to the student body.</p>	3 years	<p>Discussions have begun with Chairs of Postgraduate societies to identify ways to support and promote these groups. Steps already taken include involving representatives from the postgraduate societies in Welcome events/ inductions and setting up communication links with societies at the different campuses.</p> <p>The inclusion of a postgraduate representative on PG REC is intended as the first move in formalising a structure for reporting between postgraduate students and the Graduate school. This will be developed further.</p> <p>Strategies for sustainable support for postgraduate societies, including administrative support and training for reps, combined with greater transparency, will be explored within CMVM and in discussion with IAD.</p> <p>Responsibility: College (in collaboration with IAD)</p>	13 th March 2022
5	<p>The review team recommends the College ensures there is visibility and transparency in the publicising of and recruitment to teaching and tutoring opportunities for students. There may be opportunities for the College to explore the availability of demonstrating positions in the College of Science and Engineering to increase opportunities</p>	5 years	<p>This is desirable but challenging, as the College Graduate School does not administer these positions. Considerable effort expended at University level to increase transparency and equality of opportunity has had only limited effectiveness. The College will liaise with teaching organisations (MTO, BMTO), CSE, postgraduate</p>	13 th March 2024

	for its students. Supervisors should offer encouragement to all students to take up these opportunities.		student organisations and supervisors to determine what steps can be taken to improve this situation. Responsibility: College (in collaboration with teaching organisations, CSE, postgraduate student organisations, supervisors).	
6	The review team recommends the College ensures that the University Mental Health Strategy and its implementation, are relevant for the specific issues faced by postgraduate research students within the College. The College should ensure that College support and activities related to wellbeing are better communicated to students, with clear sign-posting to support routes within Deaneries.	5 years	This will be a continual and progressive process, building on changes already introduced and implemented. Meetings have already been held with Student Welfare and the Counselling Service to address issues raised in the review; particularly those raised by students. Implementation of the University Mental Health Strategy will be reviewed for postgraduate students; including consideration and adoption of the new Support for Study Regulations . Plans are underway to introduce a CMVM “Postgraduate Special Circumstances Committee” to improve process, transparency and resources for dealing with student support and welfare issues. Support structures will be presented to the students at Welcome/ Induction events, through direct presentation to students in postgraduate societies and in cohort-based doctoral programmes, through Supervisors and thesis committees, and by placing relevant information on the College Postgraduate Wiki. Staff will informed of support structures through supervisor briefings, thesis committee information, and via the College Postgraduate Wiki. Responsibility: College (in association with Student Welfare and Counselling, and in collaboration with the other colleges).	13 th March 2024
7	The review team recommends the College ensures clarity on supervisory team appointment and responsibilities and monitors support for students during medium term supervisor absences.	2 years	New procedures will be introduced to monitor supervisory teams and projects for new students, with clear guidance on the recommendations and requirements for formation of an acceptable supervisory arrangement. This will include clarification of the roles and responsibilities of Principal Supervisor and Co-supervisors in a co-supervisory arrangement. It will also include clarification of the role of non-University staff in student support roles (e.g. as Advisors to students studying abroad). This process will require interaction with the other colleges as it has implications for supervision across the University. Discussion will need to take place with Human Resources so that understanding of these roles is reflected in grading and promotion processes. This information will be disseminated to staff and students through Welcome/ Induction events (for staff and students), relevant postgraduate and postdoctoral societies, supervisor briefings, Thesis committees, cohort-based doctoral programmes, and supervisor briefings. Support for students during medium term supervisor absences should be arranged by the supervisory team and, if necessary,	13 th March 2021

			<p>through the Thesis Committee. Monitoring supervisor arrangements at this level would be a considerable change of approach for the College and would not be straightforward. Discussions will be arranged through the postgraduate Board of Examiners and PG REC, combined with revision of the Thesis Committee structure, to identify whether this level of monitoring can be achieved. Since this has implications for supervision in other Colleges, discussions will be had on this subject with the other College Postgraduate Deans.</p> <p>Responsibility: College (in collaboration with Academic Services, Human Resources, and the other colleges).</p>	
8	<p>The College and the review team identified obtaining clear, relevant progression and completion, and equality and diversity data to inform quality assurance and management decisions as a challenge. The review team recommends that the College explore with Student Systems how data provision might be improved and supplied to the College in a more usable format.</p>	2 years	<p>Discussions are already underway in the Graduate School to improve clarity and reliability of progression and completion data. Through discussions on the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Committee, processes have been introduced to provide Deaneries with completion data for inclusion in Deanery Quality reports. It is considered desirable that completion and progression information are also monitored for individual supervisors; this has stimulated discussion at People Committee and with College Human Resources about data protection (GDPR) and transparency. Obtaining Equality and Diversity (E&D) data is desirable but it is unclear how feasible it is to obtain this information and, perhaps more importantly, it is not clear how the data would be used. Discussions at People Committee indicated that the Widening Participation Strategy appears to have omitted Postgraduate students (the suggestion being that E&D considerations for this cohort only becomes relevant at progression from Undergraduate to Postgraduate: this seems a mistake). Efforts will be maintained to include Postgraduate E&D within the remit of the Widening Participation project. Discussions will also be initiated with the other Colleges to investigate their approach to postgraduate E&D (initial enquiries suggest the situation in CMVM is replicated in the other colleges).</p> <p>Responsibility: College (in collaboration with People Committee and the other colleges).</p> <p>Response from Student Systems: Given the timeframe for redoing the dashboards we were unable to cover metrics related to PGR provision given the complexity of the population. This is a priority for development though. In the meantime the student numbers benchmarking report does cover PGR students and gives benchmarking on size, shape and student</p>	13 th March 2021

			<p>mix so colleagues can look at equality and diversity at a subject level.</p> <p>We can commit to developing and getting agreement on how we should be measuring progression and completion for PGR students.</p>	
9	The review team recommends that the College consider with Academic Services the value of restructuring future postgraduate programme reviews.	1 year	<p>Informal discussions on this matter have already begun. It is felt very strongly in the CMVM Graduate School that the process was extremely valuable for reviewing and enhancing the Function of the College in supporting students in a rapidly changing environment. It became evident during the preparation process for the review that the system was not well designed to reviews run at College level. There are clear alterations to the process that could be introduced relatively easily to make it smoother and less labour intensive to organise and implement. Not least, some clearer continuity for the next review would help the organisers. Since Postgraduate student support is co-ordinated and managed at a College level, through the Graduate School, it would be preferable to develop the review process to fit the organisation than to revise the organisation to fit the review process.</p> <p>Responsibility: College (in collaboration with Academic Services).</p>	13 th March 2020
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	Feedback on the review to students has been provided through PG REC, with the inclusion of a postgraduate student representative whose remit is to feedback to postgraduate student societies. In addition, the Director of Experience has attended postgraduate student society meetings to discuss the outcomes of the review.		