

**Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee  
held on 16 January 2018 at 2pm  
in the Main Boardroom, Edinburgh College of Art**

Present: Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (Convener), Assistant Principal Researcher Development  
Dr Fiona Philippi (Vice-Convener), Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)  
Professor Neil Mulholland, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)  
Dr Antony Maciocia, Dean of Students, College of Science & Engineering (CSE)  
Dr Paddy Hadoke, Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Researcher Experience, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)  
Ms Megan Brown, Students' Association Staff PGR Representative  
Mr Fabio Battaglia, Postgraduate Research Student Representative, Students' Association  
Ms Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services  
Professor Jamie Pearce, Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences  
Ms Kirsty Woomble, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Ms Susan Hunter, Academic Services (Secretary)

Apologies: Ms Gabriela Hajduk, PGR Student Representative, CSE  
Dr Shari Sabeti, Moray House School of Education  
Dr Danijela Gasevic, Usher Institute  
Ms Zoe Lewandoski, Director of Human Resources  
Dr Mits Ota, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences  
Dr Caroline Proctor, School of Biological Sciences  
Mr Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services (University Secretary's representative)

**1. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

**2. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted the paper including the following:

- Student Status  
An electronic update from Student Systems will be provided to the Committee on remediation work to live systems.
- Heads of Graduate Schools meeting to discuss Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys (PRES) topics  
Academic Services will arrange this meeting focusing on PRES themes with the option to broaden discussion to include other relevant topics.

**3. Convener's Communications**

There was nothing to report.

**4. Enlightenment Scholarships**

The Committee noted the paper which comprised proposed documentation, including terms and conditions, Management Group remit, scholarship description for potential applicants, introduction to the teaching and professional

development tracks and applicant selection process. The first scholars will be recruited to start in September 2018 across five Schools. The Committee was invited to discuss and endorse the documentation.

During discussion it was clarified that resources for centrally-provided development activities for the teaching track will be provided by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and that the Careers Services will provide these resources for the professional development track.

**Post meeting note:** The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences clarified that History, Classics and Archaeology will not be participating in the initial cohort of scholarships.

Discussion of the Enlightenment Scholarships Management Group (Management Group) Remit highlighted the need for an appropriate balance between devolved monitoring of progress and support for individual scholars and central oversight. It was agreed that the Management Group remit should be amended to provide an oversight role using information from annual reports provided by Schools. The Management Group will be a sub-group of the Committee, will meet annually and will be supported by Academic Services. It was also agreed that a representative from the Careers Services would be included in the Management Group membership.

The Committee discussed equality and diversity implications concerning the scholarships. In relation to the four year funding model the Committee noted that scholars will be enrolled on a standard three year PhD programme. The scholarship funding recognises that it can take longer to achieve a PhD when additional expectations on students are included, however the expectation is still that the research project is completed within three years. Therefore accessibility implications specific to the Enlightenment Scholarship were not anticipated in this respect. Comparisons may be drawn between the Enlightenment Scholarships and 1+3 model or PhD with Integrated Study in terms of monitoring any accessibility implications. It was agreed this would be monitored by the Management Group.

**Action: Enlightenment Scholarships Management Group**

The Committee agreed that maternity leave conditions need to be consistent with University policy and Research Council conditions and would be amended in the terms and conditions.

**Action: Convener**

The Committee discussed equality and diversity implications of interviewing candidates in relation to the potential for unconscious bias. The implications of unconscious bias were noted and it was agreed this would be monitored by the Management Group.

**Action: Enlightenment Scholarships Management Group**

The Committee discussed equality and diversity implications of English language requirements, particularly in relation to the teaching track which proposed a requirement which exceeded the normal minimum requirement for all the Schools

planning to participate. It was noted that this will be a programme requirement rather than a scholarship requirement and the scholarship specific English language requirement will be removed from the documentation. However it was agreed that this will be monitored by the Management Group.

**Action: Enlightenment Scholarships Management Group**

Any further comments from members should be submitted via the Secretary by 19 January 2018.

Subject to the amendments noted, the Committee **agreed** the Enlightenment Scholarships documentation.

## **5. Excellence in Doctoral Research & Career Development**

The Vice-Convenor informed members that the next comprehensive six monthly update will be provided to the May meeting.

### **5.1 Progress report on work stream 1: Supervisor Training and Support. Short life task group – Continuing Professional Development for Doctoral Supervisors**

The Vice-Convenor introduced the paper which provided a proposed remit for a task group to explore continuing professional development (CPD) for supervisors. Currently the University has no clear route on CPD for doctoral supervisors. If approved, the group will be convened as soon as possible and progress will be reported to a future REC meeting.

REC **approved** the composition and objectives for the task group.

### **5.2 Progress report on work stream 2: Mentoring and Wellbeing**

The Vice-Convenor reported that, following the previous REC meeting where it was agreed to consider how the recommendations presented would be addressed, a paper had been prepared for the Mental Health Strategy Group. Additional comments to this paper from members will be sought electronically. The Vice-Convenor will report back to a future meeting.

**Action: Vice-Convenor**

## **6. Update on Review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students**

The Secretary presented the paper which outlined the content for the revised Code of Practice, proposed an approach to regulatory and policy content currently located in the Code of Practice and a communications strategy.

The Committee agreed the draft outline for the revised Code of Practice, noting that fees and funding information should signpost other conditions of funding, studentships and Research Councils.

The Committee agreed the proposed approach to regulatory and policy content with the exception of 2.2.3 on annual progression review (it was agreed to retain this content in the Code of Practice) and an amendment to 2.2.5 to clarify in the

regulations the process when the College committee varies the recommendation of the examiners. The Committee also agreed that consultation on the minimum number of supervisory meetings would be undertaken by Academic Services before any proposal for inclusion in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.

**Action: Academic Services**

The Committee also agreed the proposed new content on part-time work during studies.

The Committee agreed that further student feedback would be sought on the revised Code of Practice design by Academic Services. The Students' Association would be able to provide support with this. A paper with draft content for the revised Code of Practice will be provided by Academic Services to the next meeting.

**Action: Academic Services**

## **7. Supervisor roles**

The Committee noted the paper which had been produced as a result of discussions at the Postgraduate Research Supervisor Network and on the Code of Practice. The paper aimed to stimulate discussion on supervision and consideration of whether there is a need for simplification and clarification of supervisory roles. The Committee noted that the Principal Supervisor has responsibility for the student and that there are different models of supervisory teams operating across the University. Discussion also highlighted that there were links with the CPD for Supervisors task group but that some additional consultation would need to be undertaken to define the aspects of supervision and the key elements of Principal Supervisor responsibilities. Consultation would need to involve supervisors and students and could include the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Supervisor Network and postgraduate research student representatives. It could be a topic for the planned Heads of Graduate School meeting to discuss PRES topics. The Committee supported a broader consultation exercise being undertaken.

**Action: Vice-Convener, Academic Services**

## **8. Service Excellence Programme update: Student Administration and Support**

The Committee noted the paper and that additional seconded expertise is being recruited to support Timetabling and the PGR lifecycle. To ensure the outcomes from the Personal and Professional Development Record Task Group (work stream 3 of Excellence in Doctoral Research) are passed to the right people, the Director of Academic Services will be asked to request a briefing with new recruits to the Service Excellence Programme.

**Action: Director of Academic Services**

**9. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**

The Committee noted the paper and members were encouraged to make themselves familiar with the new Information Security Policy.

**10. Research Policy Group Report**

The Committee noted the paper and clarification will be sought on informal and formal allegations in relation to research integrity.

**Action: Secretary**

The Convener gave a verbal update on an EDINA project proposal to Research Policy Group where more consultation is likely to involve this Committee. The Committee would be interested to hear more information in due course and has an interested in being involved in further deliberations.

**11. Any other business**

**11.1 Conferences and events**

Some forthcoming internal events being facilitated by IAD include:

- Supervisor focus on – mental health and wellbeing
- Supervisor discussion group – monthly themed events – next meeting 31 January on supervisory meetings.

Members were asked to promote these to their constituencies.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Convener, who was leaving the University at the end of January. Members thanked the Convener for his leadership and contribution and wished him future success.

Susan Hunter, Academic Services  
17 January 2018