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File Ref

# PAPER NUMBER

The University of Edinburgh

Researcher Experience Committee

14<sup>th</sup> May 2019

## **Update on Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper gives a short update on the current status of work stream 1 (supervisor training and support), work stream 2 (mentoring) and work stream 3 (personal and professional development record) of the Excellence programme. These include progress to date and proposed next steps. The committee is requested to discuss progress and approve proposed next steps where appropriate. Further information on the Programme is available here: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education>

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University Strategic Goal of Excellence in Research and Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience, and the committee priority to improve the Postgraduate Research Student experience.

### **Action requested**

REC is asked to discuss and approve proposed next steps for the projects.

Given the review of the senate committees, REC is asked to discuss and make recommendations on ownership of the projects in this programme going forward.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

IAD will be responsible for communicating updates on supervisor training, and with Students' Association will communicate outcomes of peer mentoring project. This will be through established mechanisms such as School e-mails and PhD student newsletters.

REC Convenors will take responsibility for communicating any recommended changes in committees responsible for oversight of ongoing projects.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Some of the work to take forward actions can be supported by existing staffing resource in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), Students' Association and Service Excellence Programme.

Development of online training for PhD supervisors will have additional resource implications so discussions will be undertaken with relevant units to identify resource.

Outcome of the peer mentoring project may recommend additional staff resource to sustain projects, either within the Students' Association or the University, so a case will be made as appropriate.

## **2. Risk assessment**

Risk that resource is not identified to develop online supervisor training so halting this work.

Risk that Service Excellence Programme business case for PGR lifecycle project will not be approved, or will not include work on the personal and professional development record for PGRs.

No other risks identified.

## **3. Equality and Diversity**

Outcome of project on peer support for postgraduate researchers should lead to introduction of new programmes and improve equality of access to this support across the University.

Development of online training for PhD supervisors will help equality of access to training for internal and external supervisors, and as a result may improve the PGR student experience.

## **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

### **Key words**

PhD supervisor, mentoring, professional development

### **Originator of the paper**

Sharon Maguire, Head of Doctoral Education (maternity cover), Institute for Academic Development, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019

# **Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme**

## **Report on Current Status of Workstreams**

### **Introduction**

The [Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme](#) was launched in January 2017 and is governed by the Senate Researcher Experience Committee. The programme focuses on three specific and interrelated areas of the Postgraduate Research experience; (1) supervisor support and training, (2) mentorship and wellbeing, and (3) personal and professional development record. Workstreams for each area were established with specific work groups set up for streams one and three, and an intern recruited to carry out a project around peer support for postgraduate researchers for work stream two. The work groups have since concluded and reported their findings to REC. This paper outlines continuing work in these areas and asks REC to consider how these areas of work can be supported in the future.

### **Updates on Workstreams**

#### **Workstream One: Supervisor Support and Training**

The final report of the Task group on a CPD Framework for PhD Supervisors was presented at REC in March 2019. As a result of recommendations from REC, a group has been set up with a remit to initially oversee the development of online training for supervisors, and to review the effectiveness of supervisor training on an ongoing basis in line with ELIR recommendations. The group is convened by the Head of Doctoral Education, IAD and consists of membership from Academic Services, Student Association, Institute for Academic Development, College Postgraduate Office as well as the Postgraduate Research Student Deans from each College.

The first meeting of the group was in April 2019 and initial discussions were around key content for an online course, and the target audience (e.g. new and experienced supervisors, Edinburgh and external). Once content has been agreed, the group will have to identify resource to support development of the course.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that IAD take ownership for this group and the development of supervisors training in the short term. Oversight of the group may move to a more suitable structure in the future in line with any developments in governance of PGR matters.

#### **Workstream Two: Mentorship and Wellbeing**

Following on from the initial work carried out by a PhD intern on peer mentoring for postgraduate researchers and reported on previously, we have now recruited another PhD Intern to continue to research and develop peer support for PGRs. The intern is working on a part time basis (up to 9 hours per week) for one year from April 2019, based in the Students' Association with joint supervision from the Institute for Academic Development.

Initial work has involved looking at some current undergraduate peer support schemes that may be suitable for rolling out to the PGR community, connecting with the 2 existing Students' Association supported PG peer mentoring schemes (Performance Psychology Alumni Mentoring and SSPS PG Peer mentoring – both of which are for PGT students), and identifying other forms of student-led PGR support structures across the University. The focus of semester one will be on piloting some new peer mentoring projects, based on the research into what PGR students want from peer mentoring, and in semester two on evaluating these pilots and recommendations for sustainability of successful activities.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that IAD and Students' Association jointly keep oversight of this project and report as appropriate to relevant committees.

### **Workstream Three: Personal and Professional Development Record**

As previously reported to REC, the workgroup looking at a personal and professional development record for PGRs finalised their report and handed action on this over to Service Excellence Programme. There is no further information on how a personal and professional development record will be implemented in this work, although developing a system that will allow the production of a PGR HEAR has been part of the discussions during SEP workshops. The business case for the PGR Lifecycle project of SEP was submitted to their board in April and if approved the detail of work to be undertaken will be determined.

**For discussion:** It will be important that progress on this is monitored so the work done by the REC group in developing guidelines for this record is not lost and that the recommendations are implemented as appropriate. Discussion and suggestions on how this can be achieved are welcome.