

REC: 16.02.17

H/02/26/02

REC 16/17 3A

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

16th February, 2017

Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development Programme

Executive Summary

This paper follows on from REC paper 16/17 1H <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20160927agendapapers.pdf> to set out the results of an initial scoping exercise for setting up the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development Programme. It gives an overview of proposed oversight and governance arrangements and objectives, resource requirements and time lines for the following three proposed work streams.

ONE: Supervisor training and support

TWO: Mentorship and wellbeing

THREE: Personal and Professional Development Record

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

The paper aligns with the University Strategic Objective of Leadership in Research. It also aligns with the Committee priority of discussing options for taking forward the postgraduate research enhancement work.

Action requested

For discussion and approval of governance arrangements and proposed next steps

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper contains proposals for three work streams and includes timelines for implementation of each. The Academic and Programme lead will then communicate actions to all appropriate stakeholders.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

It has been agreed that the work included in this Programme can be supported at present by existing staffing resource in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and Academic Services. If the work identifies further resource implications, early discussions will be undertaken with relevant units.

2. Risk assessment

No major risks identified

3. Equality and Diversity

Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as necessary.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**

Key words

Doctoral education, supervision

Originator of the paper

Dr Fiona Philippi, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development Programme

Overview and Background

This paper sets out the results of an initial scoping exercise for setting up the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development Programme and gives an overview of proposed oversight and governance arrangements and objectives, resource requirements and time lines for the following three proposed work streams.

ONE: Supervisor training and support

TWO: Mentorship and wellbeing

THREE: Personal and Professional Development Record

It also sets out a number of questions for the committee to discuss and consider.

A detailed background to this work is set out in REC paper 16/17 1H

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20160927agendapapers.pdf>. This paper stresses the importance of an institutional- level programme of work to ensure an effective and cohesive approach to addressing the clear University strategic priority of growth in doctoral provision and the imminent roll-out of distance PhD programmes. It also explains that this work will have to be undertaken under existing structures and budgets, as currently there is no extra resource allocation. As such, it is important that the scope of each of the work streams is clearly defined from the outset and that realistic expectations are communicated to all stakeholders. Each work stream will identify and implement enhancements where possible under existing structures. Where extra resource is required, the objective will be to build a clear case for development.

Links with existing work

It is essential that the work for this Programme is clearly connected to other strategic objectives, University projects and initiatives. These are listed below (list non-exhaustive).

1. Enhancement- Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Outcome Report and areas for development (13: Postgraduate Research Student Experience)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Edinburgh/University-of-Edinburgh-ELIR-Outcome-15.pdf>

2. Flexible PhDs - Reports of the implementation group

REC Papers 16/17 1D, 1E, 1F

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20160927agendapapers.pdf>

REC Paper 16/17 2A <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20161115agendapapers.pdf>

3. The Service Excellence Programme, and particularly the Student Administration and Support sub-programme

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/service-excellence-programme>

4. New Style PhD scholarships

REC Paper 16/16 1I <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20160927agendapapers.pdf>

Oversight and Governance

It is proposed that the Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) will act as the Programme Board. The reasons for this are twofold:

1. This will ensure that the Programme and its work streams are given a central, strategic focus, and underpins the University's commitment to enhancement of the PGR student experience.
2. This is an efficient use of time and resource.

The role of REC in this capacity will be to:

1. Provide oversight and governance for the Programme, by checking progress of individual work streams against agreed timeframes, discussing and making decisions regarding issues referred by work streams, including resource requirements.
2. Identify and communicate synergies and links between work streams and other relevant University objectives, projects and initiatives.
3. Identify and monitor relevant success measures for the Programme as a whole.

The Programme Board will convene at scheduled REC meetings, and the Programme and constituent work streams will become a standing item on the REC agenda. Additional members (not normally on REC) may also be recruited to the Programme Board and they will be then invited to the relevant REC meeting to participate.

The Programme Board will submit reports to other Senate Committees if and when required.

The Assistant Principal Researcher Development/ Convenor of REC will provide academic leadership for the Programme.

The Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD) will act as Programme lead.

Academic Services and IAD will provide support through allocations of staff time and via secondment(s).

Question: Does the committee support this proposal for governance of the Programme?

Ensuring wider stakeholder involvement and buy-in

This Programme offers a mechanism to move forward quickly and effectively to determine best practice across the University, set unambiguous expectations, and identify tools and models of practice that enable fulfilment of those expectations to be monitored at local and institutional levels. This can only be achieved with the involvement and support of students, supervisors, Schools and Colleges. Consultation and communication and dissemination of the work of the Programme are key to ensuring this involvement.

Consultation

- Following approval from REC at this meeting a short paper setting out the Programme objectives and work streams will be drafted for presentation and consultation at College committees.
- A requirement for wide and appropriate consultation is built into each of the work streams.

Question: How can we maximise buy-in from all relevant stakeholders?

Communication and dissemination

A plan for communication and dissemination of the work undertaken by the Programme will be drafted and presented to the Programme board at the next REC meeting.

Question: Has the committee a view on the profile this Programme should adopt, i.e. whether it should have a low- level profile (internal communications only) or whether it should also be external facing (e.g. via a webpage)

Proposed Work Streams

The Programme will be made up of three interrelated work streams. These are as follows:

ONE: Supervisor training and support

TWO: Mentorship and wellbeing

THREE: Personal and Professional Development Record

The results of early scoping for each of these work streams is set out below. This includes a brief summary of each with a table which details main work areas, proposed outcomes and resource implications. Each work stream will be expected to consult widely and to invite input from Colleges, Schools, students, supervisors and services. Where there are implications for regulatory or policy change, Academic Services will be consulted. Where there are implications for systems, Student Systems will be consulted.

It is proposed that work stream ONE and TWO will not require a formal task group but will be coordinated and managed through IAD. Given the nature of work required for work stream THREE, it is proposed that a formal short-life task group be convened.

Question: does the committee approve the proposed work streams and agree to the formation of a short-life task group for work stream three, personal and professional development record?

Brief Summary of each work stream (detailed tables below)

Work stream ONE: Supervisor Training and Support

The supervisor- student relationship is a vital part of the doctoral experience. Routine and mandatory supervisor briefing sessions for all new supervisors are now embedded across all three Colleges at Edinburgh. However, further work is required to support these centrally through updated banks of resources and sharing of best practice. This work stream will also explore ways in which supervisor training can be effectively and accurately recorded. In addition, work will focus on building resources and materials to support supervising at a distance.

Timeframe

Work to start with immediate effect.

Report on progress to the May REC meeting.

Task group required?

NO – will be coordinated through IAD with wide consultation. To explore ways to set up a 'reference group/ network' to ensure appropriate consultation and communication

Work stream TWO: Mentorship and Wellbeing

There is increasing awareness of the added benefit for doctoral students to have access to a mentor. It is less clear how this mentor function should operate. It appears that there are several different possible models, each with advantages and constraints. This work stream will conduct background work to identify existing good practice, benchmark and scope for several models. Related to this, wellbeing of researchers has recently come to the fore as a priority. The work stream will look at existing support for students and relevant policy to highlight ways to communicate this effectively to doctoral students and supervisors and to identify gaps. In doing so, it will take account of other relevant University activities, for example the impending launch of a new University mental health strategy.

Timeframe

Work to start with immediate effect.

Report on progress to the May REC meeting.

Task group required?

NO – will be coordinated through IAD with wide consultation. To explore ways to set up a 'reference group/ network' to ensure appropriate consultation and communication

Work stream THREE: Personal and Professional Development Record

This work stream will undertake work to identify the possibilities for the creation of an institutional transcript or record for doctoral study and look at mechanisms to allow doctoral students to reflect on and record development throughout their studies. A key part of this is understanding the demand and purpose of this from the perspective of students, the institution and employers. The workstream will also map the business process and assess the practical implications (eg systems) associated with different options. Given the complexities of this work stream and potential implications for a number of different areas of the institution, it is proposed that a short-life task group is formed to channel background work and allow for in-depth discussions.

Timeframe

Task group can be set up in early Spring 2017. To report to REC November 2017.

Task group required?

YES

Work stream ONE: Supervisor Training and Support

Main work areas	Proposed outcomes	Resource Implications	Time frame	Links to other work areas	Consultation to include (non- exhaustive)
<p>Enhancing content of compulsory supervisor briefings by sharing practice across Colleges and ensuring updated database of resources.</p> <p>Identification, design and pilots of optional training for supervisors, including facilitation guides for Schools to use.</p> <p>Consult with Schools and Colleges to design an online toolkit to support supervising at a distance.</p> <p>To scope, design and pilot online training for supervisors.</p> <p>To explore whether the 5-year refresher training for supervisors should be regulation or guidance.</p> <p>To explore ways in which to ensure accurate, central recording of supervision training.</p> <p>To identify ways to recognise and share practice of excellence in supervision.</p>	<p>Enhancement of comparable, compulsory supervisor training sessions in all Schools and Colleges by building on best practice and review.</p> <p>Building of central database for training and materials to aid sharing of best practice and succession planning for College Deans/ College and School Graduate Schools.</p> <p>An agreed list of optional training topics for supervisors, pilots designed, offered and evaluated. Facilitation guides created.</p> <p>The design of an online toolkit to support supervising at a distance.</p> <p>The development of a pilot online training resource for supervisors (perhaps in the form of a test).</p> <p>A detailed outline of desired central recording system for supervision training with a business case for development.</p>	<p>The bulk of this work will be coordinated by IAD. No extra resource requirements identified at present.</p> <p>May be future resource implications for development of online and optional training resources.</p> <p>May be future resource implications for systems – recording supervisor training.</p>	<p>This work stream can begin scoping and development work with immediate effect- February 2017.</p> <p>A report on progress to be submitted to the May 2017 REC meeting.</p> <p>Optional supervisor training to be piloted from 2017/18.</p>	<p>ELIR Flexible PhDs HEA accreditation/ Edinburgh Teaching Award UKCGE supervision project</p>	<p>College Deans and College Committees Heads of Graduate Schools or equivalent Supervisors Students (via EUSA) Academic Services Student Systems HR Information Services Careers Service Counselling and Disability Services</p>

Works stream TWO: Mentorship and Wellbeing

Main work areas	Proposed outcomes	Resource Implications	Time frame	Links to other work areas	Consultation to include (non-exhaustive)
<p>Exploring the mentor function for doctoral students across the University and identifying a number of possible models. Benchmarking, scoping and defining.</p> <p>Possible models</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentor function in thesis committees 2. Peer mentorship 3. Alumni as mentors <p>Building appropriate guidance for the mentor function in different models.</p> <p>Benchmarking and gap analysis of support for PGR wellbeing.</p>	<p>Clearly defined models of the PGR mentorship function which include expectations, risks and solutions, oversight and evaluation – including examples of existing best practice.</p> <p>Materials and guidance for the mentor function.</p> <p>A report into support for doctoral wellbeing at Edinburgh.</p>	<p>Initial scoping and benchmarking will be undertaken by IAD with support from Academic Services.</p> <p>Report on doctoral wellbeing support coordinated by IAD.</p>	<p>This work stream can begin scoping and development work with immediate effect – February 2017.</p> <p>Report on progress to be submitted to the May 2017 REC meeting.</p>	<p>Supervisor training and support Tutors and Demonstrators policy Mental Health Strategy Work stream THREE</p>	<p>College Deans and Committees Schools Academic Services Careers Service Student Counselling EUSA Development and Alumni</p>

Work stream THREE: Personal and Professional Development Record

Main work areas	Proposed outcomes	Resource Implications	Time frame	Links to other work areas	Proposed task group members
<p>Background research and benchmarking on PGR records.</p> <p>Consultation on demand for and purpose of PGR record.</p> <p>Identification and scoping of different models for a PGR record with an options appraisal.</p> <p>Scoping of objectives, demand and requirements for a mechanism for students to reflect on own development, possibly through a PGR version of the Edinburgh Award.</p>	<p>A scoping report which sets out objectives and options for a PGR Record.</p> <p>A clear vision statement and business case as to what is required in terms of a PGR record (based on consultation with students/ supervisors/ administration/ central services).</p> <p>A design for a pilot of a means for students to reflect on own development (Possibly an Edinburgh Award for PGRs). This would require clear lines of oversight and potential for expansion if successful. (possibly piloted through the Enlightenment PhD scholarships)</p>	<p>As this work stream will require input from a range of different perspectives (Colleges/ Schools and services) it is proposed that a REC short- life task group is convened. Depending on outcomes, there may be resource implications for Student Systems, Academic Services, IAD, ISG, Careers and Schools.</p>	<p>If REC approves, a task group can be set up in Spring 2017. The final report to be submitted to the November REC meeting.</p> <p>If pilot of Edinburgh Award designed, to be piloted in 2017/18 (possibly in conjunction with new style scholarships)</p>	<p>Enlightenment scholarships PURE Edinburgh Award Work stream TWO</p>	<p>Lead: to be decided Director of Academic Services or nominee Head of Doctoral Education, IAD Employability Consultant/ Edinburgh Award Manager IAD secondee – School of Engineering Head of Student Administration, HiSS (IAD secondee) EUSA representative Student Systems representative Other suggestions</p>