**PGR Committee**
**08 March 2023**
**Minutes**

## 1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Attendees: Graeme Nixon; Lucy Leiper; Rhiannon Thompson; Matthew Clarke; Mohsen Lalehparvar; Philip Ziegler; Vincent Greenier; Louise Haynes; Audrey Paterson; Isabella Kasselstrand; Ruth Quigley; Valerie Speirs; Patric Bach; Simon Bains; Peter Cserne; Robert Findlay; Paul Hallett; Charlotta Hillerdal; David Johnston; Mehmet Kartal; Hilary MacDonald (clerk); Amudha Poobalan; Ekkehard Ullner

1.2 Apologies: Chris Collins; Samantha Miller; Suk-Jun Kim; Aravinda Guntupalli; Peter Mitka; Kate Smith; Mel McCann

1.3 Graeme Nixon (GN) welcomed to the committee Isabella Kasselstrand (Social Sciences), Vincent Greenier (acting LLMVC), Amuda Poobalan (MMSN), Charlotta Hillerdal (Geosciences) and Louise Haynes (Education PGR, Distance Learning Representative).

## 2. EdD Presentation – Matthew Clarke                                    Presentation

2.1 Matthew Clarke (MC) gave a presentation on the Professional Doctorate Programme within the school of Education. The committee noted the structure of the programme being taught in intensive blocks during school holidays. The programme has a focus on research processes, many aspects which may be transferrable to other disciplines to help increase PGR numbers.

2.2 Philip Ziegler (PZ) advised DHPAH have previously had doctoral programmes in place which were successful at the time. Due to the topic/cohort the numbers started to decrease.

2.3 GN noted that Engineering also offers and EngD but that only a small number of students ever register. Mehmet Kartal noted that it would be worth reviewing to more fully understand the structure and appeal of the programme.

**Action – Mehmet Kartal (MK)/Ruth Quigley (RQ) to review EngD programme.**

2.4 MC advised the Education programme has international recognition and is open to both the UK and International market.

2.5 GN noted that schools should consider supervisor capacity before proceeding with a similar programme given the implications on workload for developing materials and business case .

2.6 MC highlighted he was happy for members of the committee to make contact with any questions related to the programme.

## 3. Minutes of previous meeting and action log

3.1 Minutes approved from December committee meeting.                              **PGR 23_12**

3.2 GN provided an overview of the action log from December committee meeting.     **PGR23_13**

3.3 **Simon Bains (SB)** provided an overview of storage/back up project (item 6.5). GN informed committee he will be on the board of the project committee.

## 4. School PGR Items                                                        Oral Update

4.1 MK raised concerns surrounding PGR tuition fees for International students which are the same as PGT fees and double what other European institutions charge. Alongside Brexit, he noted this has resulted in reduced international student applications. GN confirmed the fees are set by the Fees & Scholarships

committee and are comparable to other UK institutions. GN and **Lucy Leiper (LL)** advised the Fees & Scholarship committee the increase of 10% may be too high but the 10% was approved by committee. GN advised it was difficult to compare the University of Aberdeen with European institutions as, for example, Denmark offer a free PhD programme. GN is a member of the Student Recruitment Committee and will share this feedback.

**Action – GN to raise PGR fees at next SRC**

4.2 **Ekkehard Ullner (EU)** requested clarity about the Turnitin reporting process and the role of the supervisor, noting that the report was difficult to work with if there were concerns around similarity. He noted that supervisors don't have full access to the report so it isn't easy to see where the similarity lies. **Robert Findlay (RF)** advised the supervisor has complete oversight of the process. If the supervisor, as an industry expert, responds to Registry within the timeframe and confirms it is okay it will not go any further. If no response is received within a reasonable timeframe it will go to examiners for review. **RF** confirmed there is not a way to give supervisors full access online for data protection reasons. **RF** confirmed there is an option which can be selected if the thesis contains confidential information. This may be relevant for industry based students where there may be concerns surrounding intellectual property rights.

## 5. Doctoral Reps Group Items                                           Oral Update

5.1 **Mohsen Lalehparvar (ML)** and **Louise Haynes (LH)** advised engagement in the PGR Reps group has been low and inconsistent amongst schools. He sought ideas to improve this. A number of suggestions were given from the group including meeting dates being scheduled in advance, relationship building between rep and school co-ordinator and formalising the role and recruitment process. **LL** confirmed there is a role description and guidance document available.

**Action – PGC's to make contact with Reps to increase visibility of role.**

## 6. Additional Research Costs                                           PGR 23_14

6.1 **RQ** presented the paper PGR Admissions: Policy and Process for Additional Research Costs. No concerns were raised with the content.

**Action – RQ to finalise ARC paper and flowchart for inclusion in supervisors handbook**

## 7. Supervision Engagement                                              Discussion

7.1 **LL** opened discussion around how to incentivise PGR supervision. GN noted there are a number of qualified supervisors who do not currently have any PGR students and the ratio of student : supervisor is below our counterparts. GN advised in some schools supervision is considered part of the general workload and in others a specific number of hours are allocated to supervision.

7.2 **Audrey Paterson (AP)** shared the School of Business practice where junior supervisors who have not supervised to completion, supervise alongside a research mentor to gain experience.
**Peter Cserne (PC)** advised the School of Law have Teaching Fellows which are very similar.

7.3 **Paul Hallett (PH)** questioned if the decline was partly due to fewer UK students, or lack of EU eligibility. **LL** agreed this was a contributing factor.

7.4 **LL** raised there are a number of outstanding applications with schools where no decision has been made. **RQ** advised the Admissions Team welcomes any feedback on school processes and forms and can provide advice which may aid school decision making process.

## 8. PGR Mentoring/Buddying                                              Discussion

8.1 **Rhiannon Thompson (RT)** raised concern about the number of PGR students contacting the Engagement Team with worries, issues and problems and asked for the groups thoughts on introducing

a Mentoring/Buddy scheme for PGR students.  **Valerie Spiers (VS)** advised MMSN ran a similar scheme during the pandemic.  GN asked for distance learning students to be considered in any plans.
**Action – VS to share buddy matching form with RT.**

9. **AOCB**
   There were no AOCB items raised.