



University  
of Glasgow

# PGR Annual Report 2014/15



## **PGR Service Report**

### **1. Annual Committee Report**

The activity of the Deans of Graduate Studies Committee in 2014/15 can be summarised as follows:

#### ***Strategic Considerations***

- Dr. Thomas Jorgenson, Head of the Council for Doctoral Education, European University Association presented to the Committee about the EUA and the state of doctoral education in Europe.
- The Committee was briefed by Estates and Building regarding the new Campus Estates Strategy.
- The Committee reviewed data regarding recruitment and admissions at each meeting, including information about decliners.
- The Committee noted and reviewed the ELIR Final Report and discussed possible actions that might ensue from its recommendations.

#### ***Policy Matters***

- Research Integrity training was discussed at each meeting during the year. All Colleges include elements of research integrity training in their supervisor training. The provision of online training was discussed but not agreed.
- On several occasions, the idea of a PgCert for PGRs to accredit the personal and professional development that they undertake was raised. While there is some enthusiasm for this, there is no broad agreement about implementing this. Colleagues are aware that this would require significant commitment of resources to set up. It was agreed that if this were to be pursued, it should be done university-wide rather than by a single college.
- An Absence Policy for PGRs was discussed on several occasions across the year and agreed in the final meeting. The policy will need to be agreed by further Committees and this will take place during 15/16.
- Consideration was given to the topic of self-plagiarism. A small change was agreed to the University Plagiarism Statement in the Calendar to change 'auto-plagiarism' to 'self-plagiarism' for clarity. It was agreed that there were overlaps with copyright considerations in any discussion of self-plagiarism and that this would need to be clear in any guidance produced.
- The Committee considered on two occasions a statement about international performance criteria and adding this to internal scholarship selection criteria. The statement specified that students that had international experience could, all other criteria being equal, be given preference in selection processes. After extensive discussion, this was rejected as written.
- Selina Woolcott, Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing, spoke to the Committee about a proposed new 'lone working' policy that would apply to students.

#### ***Changes to the University Calendar / Code of Practice***

- The Committee considered a change to the thesis word limits in the Calendar regulations. The agreed new regulation was a change only for COSE and MVLS and removed the minimum word count and reduced the maximum to 80k (excluding appendices). These will take effect for students registering for the first time in 2015/16.
- A new regulation for an Integrated PhD (as an alternative to a 1+3 structure) was approved and forwarded to RPSC and Senate where it was further endorsed.
- A new regulation for a two year MPhil in COSE was agreed. This diverged from practice in other colleges but their case for seeking the regulation was agreed to be sound. This was later ratified by Senate.

- It was agreed to extend the maximum time period for part time PhDs to 8 years (from 6 years) with effect from 15/16. This was ratified by Senate.
- A number of changes were agreed to the PGR Code of Practice:
  - the inclusion of definitions of primary and secondary supervisors;
  - clarification of the points relating to the requirement for supervisors to be members of staff;
  - the section on suspension of study was amended to make clear the requirement for students to stay in touch with the Graduate School while on suspension and clearly communicate a date of return.

### **Quality Assurance Matters**

- A template for a Graduate School Annual PGR Report was agreed.
- The Graduate School Review guidelines were updated to include a maximum recommended size for the submission.

### **Operational Matters**

- The Committee agreed to the new selection process for the Kelvin Smith scholarship scheme.
- The implementation of Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was discussed at several meetings across the year.
- Submission rates across the institution were discussed. MVLS had undertaken a very thorough but very labour intensive data cleansing exercise which resulted in much improved submission being reported in Qlikview. Other Colleges were not able to undertake this activity to the same extent. However, the efforts they were able to make to clean up their data (poor data being a result of data conversion into MyCampus) resulted in much improved submission rates in the system. This remains an ongoing project.
- The Committee agreed a number of changes for implementation in MyCampus and the Student Lifecycle Development and Support Team were consulted as to the viability of these changes. One change was fairly simple (adding 4 months onto PGR milestones to avoid student cards expiring too early) and was implemented quickly. One further change (the possible implementation of a new status for PGR for students who submit their thesis before entering thesis pending) was discussed but agreed to likely be too difficult to implement. A final change (the formal status in MyCampus of students on suspension / internship) was referred to 15/16 for further discussion.
- There was discussion about the payment of Council Tax by PGRs who have submitted their thesis but have not yet had their viva. Looking at Council regulations and practices within other institutions, it was agreed that the current position (students become liable to pay upon submission of their thesis) was correct.
- It was agreed to split discussion of MyCampus issues into a separate meeting that would be attended by Graduate School Administrators, the PGR Service and SLSD for 15/16. Decisions would be ratified by the Committee Convenor or passed to the full Committee for comment as appropriate.

## **2. Summary of other Committee Activity**

### **Researcher Development Committee**

A summary of the work of the Researcher Development Committee (RDC) during 2014/15 is contained in the table below. While a full report of activity is available, this report notes only PGR matters of interest to this Committee. Specifically, the report reviews progress and changes to professional development opportunities according to themes agreed by the Committee in 14/15.

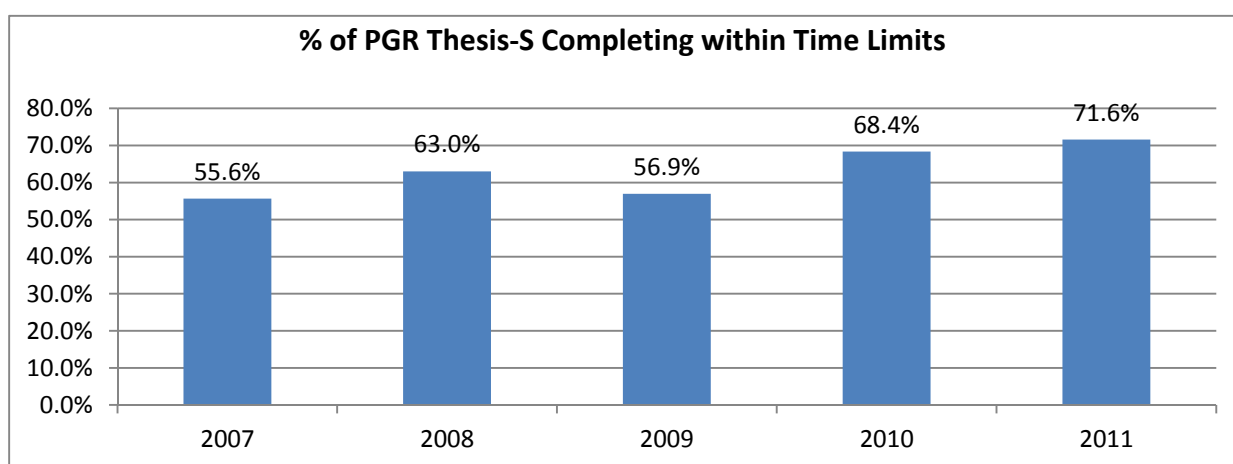
## Progress against PGR-related key themes identified by RDC for 14/15

Theme	Update on activity 2014/15
<b>Research integrity training</b>	<p>2.5hr face to face workshops were offered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PGRs</b>, through the Graduate Schools and centrally, with 432 students attending one of 17 workshops. This was mandatory for 1<sup>st</sup> year PGRs but also open to other PGRs. It was attended by ~54% of 1<sup>st</sup> Year (with notably higher attendance in COSS, where the Graduate School actively tracked students to send them reminders and scheduled additional sessions at the time of annual progress review).</li> </ul> <p>A research integrity working group met in July / August 2015 to review progress in this area, making a set of recommendations for future work.</p>
<b>Enterprise training</b>	<p>Four interns carried out some scoping work for the 'Innovation Platform' to gauge demand for a '<b>maker space</b>'. Their findings were presented to a cross-University group in December 2014, as well as feeding into Estates consultations for the research hub.</p> <p>In 2013/14, UofG was shortlisted for a <b>THE Award for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers</b> for <i>A Creative Enlightenment – a unique programme for enterprising arts researchers</i>. This four day training programme received AHRC funding in 2012/13 and, led by Glasgow, was delivered on three occasions to a Scotland-wide cohort of Arts early-career researchers. It has now become embedded as a core offering from the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities.</p> <p>The <b>Water Innovation Challenge</b> gave teams of PGRs and postdocs the opportunity to work alongside industry guests to explore important global challenges in a collaborative and innovative way. Inter-disciplinary teams worked on a topic or issue relating to the theme of water, with short skills sessions on subjects such as 'prototyping', 'marketing', 'creativity' etc. The winning team intend to pursue their project (on water education).</p>
<b>Oversight of PGR training environment, to ensure consistent high quality and innovation to meet changing environment and student / funder needs</b>	<p>Graduate Schools provide RDC with a researcher development spending plan at the start of each year, to ensure sharing of best practice and consistency of approach. Key activities in relation to PGR training include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72 cross-College workshops / events coordinated centrally for PGRs, in addition to College / School-specific events. This included 35 distinct offerings, ranging from half day workshops and large scale seminars (with up to 130 students) to multi-day residential programmes. This does not include workshops run by the PGR writing adviser.</li> <li>• 48 students submitted assessments for a CMI L3 Award in First Line Management (24 in 2013/14) and 25 to the CMI L3 Award in Project Management (newly introduced for 2014/15)</li> <li>• 3500 student places were filled at PGR transferable skills workshops. 1220 individual research students attended at least one workshop. (See Appendix 1 for attendance figures – this includes College-led transferable skills workshops)</li> <li>• 10 researcher-led bids were awarded (See Appendix 2, compared with 12 in 2013/14).</li> <li>• 39 PGRs participated in the 3 Minute Thesis competition (38 in 2014)</li> </ul>

### 3. Statistical Overview

Student Numbers 2014/15

College Name (Advisor)	Total by Supervisor Load	Full Time	Part Time
College of Arts	369.98	245.23	124.75
College of Med, Vet & Life Sci	731.3	638.8	92.5
College of Science & Eng	671.32	637.62	33.7
College of Social Sciences	405.4	318.75	86.65
External	4.4	4.4	0.00
University Services	9.42	6.82	2.6
Total	2191.82	1851.62	340.2



#### Overall satisfaction by Graduate School, PRES 2015

	Overall satisfaction 2015	Overall satisfaction 2013
Arts	90%	84%
MVLS	88%	86%
Science and Engineering	89%	82%
Social Sciences	81%	81%
OVERALL	<b>88%</b>	<b>83%</b>

Overall, response rates and satisfaction were high, showing significant improvements in all four Colleges and in all areas of the survey.

#### 4. Graduate School Review Summary

In 2014/15, the Graduate School in the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences was reviewed.

The recommendations of the Panel to MVLS were both strategic and operational in nature. Strategic considerations are presented here.

##### **Strategic:**

- PG Convenors should be encouraged to feel that they have a strategic role, one

aspect of which is to sell the benefits of the GS. Further, their role should be clearly articulated so that they are able to act as effective agents for the GS within their Schools and RIs.

- The GS should develop processes to support the production of funding bids for student places and seek ways in which they can be more proactive about encouraging the emergence of new bids. The GS should take the lead in developing tactics for improved positioning with the research councils, charities and other major funders.
- The GS should continually review its student recruitment strategy and, if it was falling behind recruitment targets, take the lead in exploring new avenues to pursue.
- Overall, the GS should not hesitate to identify where greater support from the College or the institution would be beneficial. Some of the recommendations above may be equally applicable to other GS and the MVLS GS is encouraged to pursue what it identifies as generic issues with other College GS' to mutual benefit.

### **Conclusion**

The over-riding message is that one to one supervision is excellent and students are having a positive experience overall. Clearly there are challenges, such as the scope and size of the GS and the geographical distribution of staff and students, but the GS has made great strides in building an effective operation. The Panel welcomed the development of new PGT and PGR strategies and encouraged the GS to continue to look forward and evaluate its progress.

The Panel also acknowledged that a number of the challenges that were raised for exploration and/or which came up in subsequent discussion with the various groups were those that were also raised by the GS in their submission, signalling that their reflective processes were effective.

### **Previous Reviews**

All four Graduate Schools have now been reviewed since the restructure in 2010. 2015/16 will be a 'consolidation year' and no review will take place. Reviews will resume in 2016/17. Themes that emerged from the review of all 4 Graduate Schools are as follows:

- The Graduate Schools were all commended for the distance travelled since the restructure. After a period of significant change within the University, 4 strong Graduate Schools have emerged with efficient and effective process for supporting students. Students participating in the reviews were very positive about their experience at Glasgow.
- The Graduate Schools were encouraged to continue to develop and articulate their internal strategies and link these with College and University strategies as well as School and Institute-level strategies.
- Engagement with external partners has provided additional funding streams to support students as well as rich and varied opportunities for students to engage with organisations outside of the University for personal and professional development as well as public engagement.
- All Graduate Schools were encouraged to be aware of funding opportunities and changes in the funding landscape in order to think strategically and position themselves effectively.
- Challenges in common articulated within the reviews were:
  - constraints on physical space in many areas across the university;
  - developing effective communication loops with students and staff;
  - community building and inductions processes were highlighted in PRES results as well as during the reviews as challenges.

## College of Arts

### Graduate School PGR Report 2015

#### **1. Introduction / Summary Statement**

2015 has been a very positive year for the College of Arts Graduate School. We have achieved our highest ever PRES result for overall student satisfaction (90%), and were the only College to meet the University's target in this respect. The completion rate for our PhD students supported by our primary external funder, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, rose to 96%, and the proportion of our 2015-16 PhD student intake in receipt of external funding rose to more than half. Our regular skills development programme was enhanced by very successful sessions on 'Publishing your PhD thesis as a Book' and 'Mock Interviews for Non-Academic Jobs'. We also invested considerable effort in a College-wide international interdisciplinary conference on 'Creativity: Method or Madness?', in community building initiatives, and in improving our policies and procedures and our colleagues' awareness of these through supervisor training. A final highlight of the year was the award of £50,000 from the AHRC to support six paid 3-month internships with Glasgow Life for students who have just completed their thesis, as a means of gaining a practical understanding of non-academic contexts and contributing to the cultural life of the city.

#### **2. Summary Report from Graduate School Board or PG Committee Business**

In addition to the regular business of the Graduate School Board, the following topics were a particular focus of attention during the report year:

Supervision by Library/Museum staff: Non-academic members of staff were not permitted to co-supervise PGR students, but had important specialist knowledge and were supporting doctoral students on a goodwill basis. The Committee agreed to formalise the process, which would in turn address the issue of staff workload and transfer of income to non-academic units. A supervisor training session for Library/Museum staff was held in March.

Training Needs Analysis: There was discussion of ways of improving the process of clearly defining the training needs for each individual PhD student at the start of each year. The TNA forms in the Skills Development Handbook were flagged to staff and students, and the importance of TNA was stressed at Supervisor Training and students' Setting Off training.

Annual Progress Review: There was a variety of practice across the College and the Convenor was keen to investigate and share best practice, as well as to ensure that procedures were properly observed and problem cases were referred to the College Progress Committee. More detailed guidance for Schools was in preparation.

PG Staff-Student Liaison Committees: There was discussion of ways of making the SSLCs more meaningful. If students themselves did not suggest themes, it was agreed to propose themes for them to explore and report back on, e.g.: what do students understand about PRES?; what do students expect from induction?; discussion of professional networks; ideas regarding opportunities for interdisciplinarity.

Procedures for Appointing GTAs: The guidance document, which had been in preparation for some time and had had extensive input from a range of committees and from HR, was finally approved and implemented on a one-year trial basis in Schools.

PhD by Practice: This already exists in some subjects. New proposals were approved for Film and Television Studies and Music, consisting of a shorter thesis accompanied by a practical component such as an artistic or experimental work, an exhibition, installation etc.

PhD Word Limits: The proposal to reduce the maximum word limit, in line with a number of other Russell Group institutions, was discussed. The rationale was that a PhD programme now involved considerably more than writing a thesis. The thesis might be supplemented with a reflective piece outlining KE activity and additional skills gained. Opinions from Schools were mixed, but it was agreed to proceed with a proposal of a limit of 80 000 words. Ultimately, however, this was not agreed at Senate, so the 100 000 limit remains in place.

PG Advising System: Opinions were sought on the current system. In summary it was felt by both staff and student reps that this was worth preserving as PG advisers played a valuable role in providing a personal contact for students for pastoral/advice purposes which had the advantage of confidentiality/neutrality as the adviser was from a different School.

MRes Working Group: As the MRes degree had been the subject of a significant number of questions to the Graduate School office, the Dean formed a small working group to discuss the key issues, report back to GSB and prepare a guidance document for staff.

### **3. Summaries of feedback from other mechanisms**

In addition to feedback received via PRES, we engage with students' views and suggestions in four other ways:

1. PG Staff-Student Liaison Committees. These meet twice per semester at Subject, School and College level, and the agenda is set by the students. Almost all queries / problems are resolved at Subject or School level, allowing the College-level meetings to have a more strategic focus (e.g. a recent meeting discussed possible improvements to the PhD Induction process). Our PGSSLC includes representation from home and international students, as well as distance-learning, disabled and part-time students. In general students have been very happy with the effectiveness of communication and with the willingness of staff to address any issues raised. However, a perennial complaint surrounds the availability and quality of personal study space for PGRs (see more on this in 5 and 6 below).
2. Meetings with College interns. The Dean holds periodic meetings with the College interns to solicit feedback on their experience and check that the scheme is functioning well as a skills development opportunity. There are currently 23 College interns, each of whom completes 4 hours of duties per week. Most have reported very positively, e.g.:
  - 'Although not every task was scintillatingly interesting, there was a good balance of the more mundane administrative tasks and challenging / rewarding ones.'
  - 'I felt valued in my role within the Centre, and was frequently consulted by staff members seeking to organise and publicise events. I was also able to attend Centre meetings, which provided insight into how such a group operates, and how funding applications were processed.'
  - 'Overall I have found my internship experience to be a truly positive one that has contributed to my career development. For me, this opportunity to gain an insight into the administrative side of the university has been incredibly useful and eye-opening. I have gained a much better understanding of how the College functions and where its strengths lie. Going forward, with the increasing influence of Impact on funding allocation, I feel that my understanding of KE puts me in a strong position as an academic.'

The few who were less satisfied with their experience stated that they had been allocated tasks where they had no true ownership or no sense of building a key skills set. The Graduate School is acting on this feedback to ensure that activities are properly



discussed in advance and that they allow students to see the fruit of their labours and gain meaningful experience.

3. Feedback on Training Provision: Feedback sheets are completed by students on all training courses and the results collated by the Deputy Dean for discussion at the Graduate School Board. On the whole students have a positive attitude to the skills development programme and have responded very appreciatively to the content of the sessions, many of which are run by external providers. Negative feedback, where it exists, tends to come from distance-learning or part-time students who struggle to attend the scheduled sessions and would like customised arrangements.
4. Feedback on Community Building Initiatives: During the report year the Graduate School supported a number of modest School community-building initiatives, which took the form of providing soup or home baking to encourage attendance at PG seminars, for example. This was well received, giving students who can otherwise be quite isolated in their studies a focal point in the week to come together for both a social and an academic purpose. We also ran a fully guided Heritage Day Trip for a similar reason, visiting the Antonine Wall and Rough Castle Roman fort, the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies, feedback on which left no doubt that this had been a useful initiative:
  - 'It's totally on heritage - sites well chosen and of a good mixture. Kenny gave us professional introduction about the archaeological site, which was also very informative. Also, this is a very good chance to meet other students in College of Arts and learn about each others' subjects and how similar/different our work is.'
  - 'The places we went were interesting and engaging. Having [...] an archaeologist on hand to explain the sites in-depth helped even more make it culturally and historically interesting. Going inside the Kelpies was phenomenal. Really enjoyable trip, glad I went.'

Cross-College trips to Abbotsford House in the Scottish Borders and the Mount Stuart Estate on the Isle of Bute are planned for next semester.

#### **4. Issues arising / New Initiatives**

The Graduate School Board held a Strategy Day in September 2014 at which recommendations arising from the recent Review and other suggestions for the forthcoming year were discussed. A sharper focus on marketing the College's strengths, as well as initiatives to improve procedures and communications in key areas were agreed.

2014-15 was the first full year of operation of the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities. Glasgow Arts students benefited considerably from the enhanced range of training opportunities and collaborative initiatives available.

To showcase the College's strengths and improve our marketing initiatives, the College undertook to make a series of videos promoting PGT programmes. Both international and home students were interviewed, and 10 films were completed last year. This feeds into PGR, as many students complete a Masters course as preparation for doctoral study.

A new PhD collaboration in Philosophy with Paris Sorbonne IV was established.

The Hunterian Associates Programme, which gives PGR students the opportunity to work with materials from the archives of the Hunterian Museum, Hunterian Art Gallery and the University Library Special Collections, had another strong cohort of competitively selected students who received specialist training and developed a range of public-engagement projects. A public Showcase event for the students' work was held in November.

An expanded 'Careers Focus' series of workshops on employability, CV-preparation and interview techniques, in its second year in 2014-15, was held in semester 2. The new session on 'Publishing your PhD Thesis as a book', open also to ECRs, attracted a very large audience. Employers who participated in the 'Mock Interviews for Non-Academic Jobs' session' included the BBC, Northlight Heritage, Citizens Theatre, Comedy Unit, Ernst and Young and Hymans Robertson. Very positive feedback was received from the students.

The College of Arts successfully collaborated with Glasgow Life (which manages sports, arts, libraries, archives, museums and music across the city) in submitting an application to the AHRC Cultural Engagement Fund to support six full-time paid research internships for students who have recently completed their PhD.

The Graduate School held a two-day international, interdisciplinary PG conference on the theme 'Creativity: Method or Madness' in May 2015. The event was student-led, and the lively conference committee developed important practical skills through their involvement.

## **5. PRES Action Plans / Updates**

- Introductions / Comments re Key Performance Indicators or areas of special interest

The College of Arts was very encouraged by the 'overall satisfaction' result of 90% in PRES 2015, a substantial uplift from 84% in 2013, the highest figure in the University, and well above the Russell Group average. Three of our four Schools scored above this. There are, however, key areas where there is room for improvement.

- Key Area 1: Supervision

We are pleased to see the generally high scores in this crucial area, particularly in relation to supervisors' skills, regular contact and feedback. In two out of four Schools supervisors are clearly helping students to identify their training needs, while improvement is needed in the other two. To address this, the College is stressing the importance of regularly updating the TNA, and this is also a key point at Supervisor Training. Staff who have not attended training will this year be identified and written to individually by line managers. To complement the mandatory 5-yearly training, several Schools are considering an annual workshop to update supervisors on their responsibilities and share best practice.

- Key Area 2: Resources

The key issue here is PGR desk space. Only 64% in Arts responded that they had a suitable working space (cf. 83% UofG and 79% RG). Recent initiatives to address this problem are outlined in 6.2 below, and some additional desks will be provided this year, but the problem remains acute and institutional investment is needed if we are to treat our PGR students as they deserve and avoid reputational damage. Looking ahead, it is crucial that PGRs are properly accommodated in the new building on the Western Infirmary site. Arts students may well need more space than Science students who spend much of their time in labs.

- Key Area 3: Research Culture

Satisfaction in Arts with Induction (69%) was well improved on the 2013 result, but remains lower than the UoG and RG average (76%). Further improvements were introduced in Oct 2015, and it is hoped that the upward trend will continue. The College continues to review this provision, and at a recent meeting with the PG Staff-Student Liaison Committee on this subject fresh suggestions were made for next session.

All Schools have regular seminar programmes in which PGRs are actively involved and which are appreciated by students for both social and academic reasons. While they are open to all, and while students' perception that they have access to the wider research

community beyond their own subject at 69% is higher than the UoG and RG scores of 65% and 63% respectively, strategies for disseminating information and invitations continue to be developed as students may not receive automatic notification of events outwith their own School. A College intern has been appointed to work on communication via social media.

- Key Area 4: Progress, assessment and understanding of roles and responsibilities

College of Arts scores are broadly in line with RG averages in this area, although there is still scope for improvement. There is a link here to induction which is being addressed (see KA 3 above). Annual Progress Review has recently been the focus of scrutiny across the College (see section 2 above on GSB business) and further guidance is forthcoming in 2015-16.

- Key Area 5: Research Skills and Professional Development

In most questions related to this key area there has been an improvement for Arts PGRs from 2013, though confidence in communication skills sits disappointingly a couple of points below the RG average. This may be explained by the relative isolation of Arts PGRs compared to their UG experience when they frequently make presentations. New subject-specific training sessions are being developed by individual Schools to complement more generic College provision.

- Key Area 6: Teaching opportunities

Results vary across the College. Although we score above the UoG and RG averages, the figure of 61% could be substantially improved. The new GTA policy guidelines implemented this year should go some way to addressing this. The policy is subject to a one-year trial, and the situation will be closely monitored this session and any necessary adjustments made.

- Conclusions or Summary Points

All four Schools in Arts are actively addressing the key areas outlined above at local level in consultation with students. Improvements and best practice are discussed at GSB and action will be taken on any initiatives which can be implemented more widely across the College.

## **6. Graduate School Review Action Update**

The last review was held in May 2014. There were 5 Recommendations, all of which have been actively addressed. Some are already touched on above.

1. Promoting our research strengths and unique selling points. See 4, para 3 above, on new promotional videos. We also held a conversion workshop and met on several occasions last year with international agents / in-country officers to present our USPs.
2. Finding additional workspaces for students. Students rightly or wrongly regard dedicated desk space with good quality computer equipment as a right, especially in view of the fees they pay, and frequently remind us of this. What we offer in Arts is poor compared to some other RG institutions. We have converted 18 hot-desking spaces to dedicated desks, and our IT team is currently identifying and replacing the oldest of the computers. Putting more desks into some larger rooms is also underway, but these solutions remain modest and piecemeal and we cannot accommodate everyone who would like a space. Regrettably students see this as an invidious two-tier system, since externally funded students are guaranteed a space. Further investment is needed here.
3. Improving GTA selection and support. The new policy is in its first year of implementation and has also been disseminated as a model across the University.
4. Communication with students and staff: The Graduate School Moodle site has been further improved, several policy documents have been clarified/expanded, and two College interns have been assigned to work on website development and social media.
5. Implementing an online system for APR: A common university-wide online system is currently in active development, supported by all four Graduate School administrators.

**University of Glasgow**  
**College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences**  
**Graduate School PGR Report**

## **1. Introduction**

In the past 12 months the Graduate School has undergone review which has provided the opportunity for self-reflection and consideration the significant achievements during this period. Notable areas have been the successful joint MRC Doctoral Training application with University of Edinburgh which will increase our portfolio of academically excellent students. The online assessment and review system has been significantly remodelled to provide more opportunities for student feedback and intervention at an earlier stage when problems arise. This system has been introduced from 2015/16 and will run in tandem with the previous online annual review for those students who commenced prior to this academic session. Student recruitment strategies have proved successful in growing the international PGR community, with growth seen at a 13% increase over 2014 and 2015. This reflects the College's strong performance in targeting the highly competitive international student market through an effective recruitment and advertising campaign.

Other notable achievements had been:

- Success in securing Chancellor's funding totalling £5k to establish the Science Den event adapted from the successful and highly acclaimed Dragons' Den British television series. Successful teams will be given the opportunity to pitch their science themed inter-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange project ideas to a panel of 'dragons' consisting of senior university staff and external partners for a chance to win financial investment to fund/supplement the winning project idea.
- There has been an introduction of research skills training modules in Bioinformatics and Imaging specifically targeted to PGR students.
- PGT cluster structure is continuing to flourish with a dedicated Moodle site for dissemination of information and a portal to share best practice.
- Digital education offerings have increased with new programmes introduced in 2015 with a view to diversifying and attracting students of more varied backgrounds from a broader base of countries regardless of their financial means. Four new online distance education programmes have been launched: Sport and Exercise Science and Medicine, Health Professions Education, Wildlife and Livestock Management and Health Technology Assessment. In addition to developing the courses for each of these online programmes, the digital education unit (DEU) has created an online study induction course that all distance learning students participated in prior to starting their chosen programme of study; and designed an online academics study skills course to support online distance learners with developing their research and study skills. An online induction course for staff has also been created to support staff in developing and delivering online learning. It is encouraging that recruitment targets of 45 students have been exceeded for online distance learning provision.
- The use of social media has grown with dedicated staff within the Graduate School who are responsive to the site's traffic. The College student recruitment Facebook account continues to grow, with an audience now of over 100,000 followers. The Graduate School continues to invest resource into this key marketing channel with dedicated Graduate School staff managing its content plan. Work continues on developing social media channels as a future engagement tool with the existing student cohort, with the intention of filling a current communication gap.

- Introduction of Graduate School Newsletter has been well received with featured articles reflecting the diverse staff and student community supported by the Graduate School
- Online review system has been remodelled and now includes a visible representation of each student's skills training credit profile. This provides supervisors with a real time snapshot of their student's training activities and has been favourably received by colleagues and students in the test environment.
- Cohort building initiatives such as regular skills events which are now embedded within the DTP Programme. These include monthly BBSRC/MVLS and MRC research skills training sessions. There are also regular DTP themed events which provide students with the opportunity to engage with their peers and members of the academic community.
- Supervisor training will include interactive sessions on Tier 4 compliance, social media opportunities and more bespoke Q&A time from the audience.

## **2. Summary Report from Graduate School Board**

1. The Graduate School's strategy document had been formulated with Graduate School Board having ratified this as the official document going forward.
2. The Board considered a change to the thesis word limits. The agreed new regulation was a change only for COSE and MVLS and removed the minimum word count and reduced the maximum to 80,000 (excluding appendices). These will take effect for students registering for the first time in 2015/16.
3. Work on the Graduate School website was a key priority area for investment to ensure that content is both informative and user-friendly.
4. A comprehensive training needs assessment has been created and is intended as a guide to assist both the student and supervisor to identify training needs as part of a continuous process throughout the student's doctoral studies.
5. Soft deposits were introduced for international applicants who are in receipt of an offer on PGT programmes. It was anticipated that this would assist in forecasting the number of students who would take up their place on these programmes.
6. The application to renew the University's Medical Research Council Doctoral Training Programme in partnership with University of Edinburgh had been submitted. This bid had been successful with the final award suggesting that four studentships per year would be available at Glasgow.
7. The Graduate School Review had been complimentary on the efforts the Graduate School have made in improving the student experience as demonstrated in the improved PRES results.

## **3. Summaries of Feedback from other Mechanisms**

One of the key areas which provide students with the opportunity to provide feedback is through the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). This is used as a benchmark of how the College is performing against other Russell Group universities. The results are carefully considered by the Graduate School to identify areas where improvements could be made and efforts targeted to further enhance the postgraduate student experience. In response to students' request for more feedback the Graduate School has made several adaptations to the online progress review system to provide three opportunities to engage with supervisory teams through an initial, interim and final review.

In an effort to further develop communications with colleagues across the College the Graduate School hosted a number of open forum meetings for current and potential supervisors; the main purpose of which was to communicate strategy and explain the new monitoring system for PGR

students, the expansion of digital education and developments within the PGT clusters. It is intended that for future planning these sessions will become a permanent feature of our conversation with colleagues including dedicated events hosted at Garscube.

The Graduate School Review, which took place in May 2015, provided a number of opportunities for students and other stakeholders to comment on the Graduate School's performance and express their opinion on where improvements can be made. This proved to be a significant opportunity for the Graduate School to self-reflect and evaluate achievements and engage in action planning in response to feedback received.

#### **4. Issues arising/New Initiatives**

The Graduate School has embarked on a number of new initiatives which are aimed at improving the delivery of induction for students and supervisor training for colleagues. Key to this is the presentation style to incorporate more online elements, including Tier 4 compliance, general safety advice and social media opportunities.

A number of system developments have been introduced to the online progression system in an effort to provide regular feedback to students and establish targets through the introduction of three milestone reviews at an early, mid and late appraisal point in each academic year.

Cohort building activities have remained at the forefront of the Graduate School's initiatives to enhance and support the student experience. Cohort events are an important component of the MRC and BBSRC/MVLS DTP calendar and have been well received by both students and supervisors. Theme leaders, including colleagues from University of Strathclyde, have been appointed to enable group discussions.

An MRC Postgraduate Day was hosted by the Graduate School. This event provided MRC-supported postgraduate students and fellows from across the College with the opportunity to meet and network with academic staff; and it was an opportunity for delegates to learn about new MRC policies and the MVLS-MRC College research skills training programme. Presentations from both internal and external speakers and poster displays from 2nd year students formed a core part of the programme of events.

Industry Day has once again been an important element of the Graduate School's activities to promote partnering opportunities between academia, industry and NHS. The event this year focussed on precision medicine and opportunities to build upon existing and new collaborations. The Graduate School continues to explore prospects for industry investment through the IPP and MRS Schemes.

#### **5. PRES Action Plans/Update**

There has been a small increase in response rate from 53% to 54% from the previous PRES with encouragingly high scores in almost all categories; it is recognised however that further progress is required within the areas of teaching support and opportunities for students to become involved in the wider research community. Whilst satisfaction with supervisors' skills and knowledge achieved high scores it was noted that opportunities for engagement in interdisciplinary activities was relatively low at 52%. It was reassuring that student satisfaction with the overall experience of their research programme compared well against the other Russell Group institutes at 88% against 83% respectively.

### **Key Area 1: Supervision**

In general the College scored highly across all the Institutes and Schools. The School of Life Sciences scored poorly at 67% , however given the low number of respondents this is the most likely explanation for this result. The Graduate School continues to reinforce good supervisory training through a programme of workshops, which in 2016 will include interactive sessions including social media opportunities and Tier 4 compliance. The Graduate School webpage has been remodelled to provide role descriptors for each member of the supervisory team.

### **Key area 2: Resources**

The percentage of respondents who indicated that they were satisfied with their working space and access to specialist resources is high at 88% and 89% respectively. However once again there is considerable variation between the Schools and Institutes. Given the diversity of the PGR community across a number of sites issues of working space are largely addressed at local level.

### **Key area 3: Research culture**

The Graduate School is keen to develop its cohort building activities, however due to the widespread location of students across the campus this has proved challenging.

It is appreciated that cohorts may be discipline-specific or interdisciplinary and the Graduate School is keen to promote activities that develop a sense of community. Within the DTP programme a number of initiatives have been running successfully including themed events which are facilitated by a member of academic staff who has been assigned as the “leader” for the cohort of students at the beginning of their programme. As mentioned in Section 1, the Graduate School has been successful in attracting Chancellor’s funding to host a Science Den event, which will follow the Dragon’s Den format to provide students with the opportunity to pitch for funding to a group of senior academics and external partners.

The Graduate School also provides resource through researcher development funding opportunities for student-led activities. A small cohort of students was funded to attend a bespoke training event on spatial statistics.

### **Key area 4: Progress, Assessment and understanding of roles and responsibilities**

The Graduate School’s online progress system has been remodelled to ensure students are monitored on a more regular basis through periodic reviews at three, six and nine month periods. It is intended that this will provide more consistent feedback to students and timely detection of educational problems which allows early intervention and a better outcome. It is a mandatory requirement for students to complete a training needs assessment and they are encouraged to work with their primary supervisor to clarify mutual expectations at an early stage. The online system now interfaces with the official training record of each student to allow immediate access to the student’s programme of training within the online system.

The supervisory team’s role and responsibilities is clearly communicated both on the Graduate School’s website and Moodle.

### **Key area 5: Research skills**

The Graduate School continues to develop and expand its portfolio of generic skills training offerings with a number of new courses being introduced each session. This year there were additional training opportunities through a suite of research skills training modules for PGR students in bioinformatics and imaging.

**Key area 6: Teaching opportunities**

Teaching opportunities through the Graduate Teaching Assistant programme continue to be advertised through the biannual induction sessions. Opportunities for teaching would largely be promoted through the Moodle site with the Graduate School liaising directly with the institutes and schools on their current GTA provision.

Lesley Dinning  
Graduate School Administrator  
12/01/2015



## **Science and Engineering Graduate School PGR Report 2014/15**

### **1. Introduction / Summary Statement**

In 2014/15 the CSE Graduate School built on existing successes. PGR numbers increased to 611, strengthened by initiatives such as the new Centres for Doctoral Training - which we supported by establishing a new 4 year PhD with Integrated Study. PGR participation in University and Graduate School-level training increased, and to support increasing student engagement in professional skill development we developed a number of new training opportunities, for example, Mathematica, grant funding, and effective time management. The Graduate School Residential was again a success (as evidenced by participant feedback), which is crucially important as it helps build the PGR community. We continued to improve local procedure, for example, implementing a more robust extension process.

PGT experience appears to be an already acquired skill of many PGR applicants. Thus PGR success can depend on ensuring PGT is integrated in the Graduate School provision. The importance of PGT in the Graduate School was recognised through the development of a PGT-specific committee and College-wide events such as a PhD transition information event. Our sharing of research culture with the other student cohorts extended further than PGT, for example, holding a research showcase conference day for our vacation scholars (all undergraduates), and in scoping work for the pop-up makerspace (for the wider University student and staff innovation). Some of these developments will also inform activity in 2015/16. There was also a new Dean of Graduate Studies and new Graduate School Board members (conveners and student representative).

### **2. Summary Report from Graduate School Board or PG Committee Business**

Business items included the following:

- A review of the Graduate School Strategy – it was ultimately decided that this would be completed in 2015 in order to align with the revised University and College Strategies.
- Approval of the PhD with Integrated Study in Integrative Sensing and Measurement which was subsequently approved by DoGS/RPSC.
- Approval of an MPhil award which was also subsequently approved by DoGS/RPSC.
- A review of extensions and periods of leave of absence (it is considered it would be useful to benchmark the data with other Colleges and that further work needs to be undertaken in order to determine how best to reduce the requirement for extensions).
- A review of the way PGR applications are processed at School-level in order that processing time is improved.
- A review of the PG Convener role in order to ensure that School conveners are able to contribute at a strategic level. A shared job description has recently been agreed.
- The PGR refund policy (this is still a pending item and the Graduate School considers that this should be revised but this would require wider agreement).
- Joint development – along with the Dean of Learning and Teaching – of a specific PGT committee, the remit of which is to review the overall provision of PGT programmes in the College and to advise to the College Learning and Teaching Committee, College Graduate School Board and College Management Group.

### 3. Summaries of feedback from other mechanisms

In addition to PRES, the Graduate School received valuable feedback from mechanisms such as the following (with an example of feedback in brackets):

- A survey on the Graduate School residential. The residential is designed to create collegiality among the first year PhD cohort in Science and Engineering and to allow participants to engage with activities which aim to mirror some of the requisite skills required in graduate research (96% of participants would recommend the residential to other students).
- A survey of careers training (students do not consider that changes are required to the current provision - although a higher response rate would increase the value of this).
- Student representation at the Graduate School Board meetings and through the Student Liaison Group who review current provision and generate ideas for developing the Graduate School community (e.g. intended enhancements include podcasts, a revised statistics training programme, new training workshops etc).
- The Strategic Advisory Board (who offered feedback on the planned Makerspace and Industry Days).

### 4. Issues arising / New Initiatives

Developments for this period include:

- First intake of students under the new Centre for Doctoral Training in Integrative Sensing and Measurement (with Edinburgh).
- Establishment of four year PhD with Integrated Study which it is considered will enhance recruitment both as part of the CDT and beyond this.
- International Doctoral Training Centre in Applied Photonics (led by Heriot Watt).
- One hour annual progress meetings held by Schools every January to provide students with information about the process/deadlines.
- Development of a training needs assessment form in view of RCUK recommendations.
- The highest number of PGR students since the inception of the Graduate School at 611 and the highest number of new recruits at 214.
- Information evening for current PGT students to learn about research study.

The following are among the events organised by the Graduate School in 2014/15:

- A well-received and well-attended residential at the Burn in Edzell as highlighted above (all 38 spaces were filled for the first time this year - consideration needs to be given to running more than one residential each year if the intake continues to increase).
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Science Slam event took place in July 2015 and was again 'sold-out'. This event, at which 8 students present their research in a 'unique' way is now an established part of the Graduate School calendar. The presentations were particularly strong this year and one of the students has gone on to Scottish final of Famelab.

Examples of new funding successes are:

- Obtaining over £300,000 in industry funding as part of a matched College-funding/industry scheme (supporting companies include BAE Systems, Stryker Ireland, Huntsman and Oxford

Instruments).

- Obtaining two IAPETUS funded studentships.
- Funding from the Scottish Government Hydro-Nation to support an international student.

## **5. PRES Action Plans / Updates**

### **Introductions / Comments re Key Performance Indicators or areas of special interest**

The Graduate School is extremely pleased with the results of the 2015 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and, in particular, with the progress made in the overall satisfaction rating (82% to 89%). Further, there has been an increase in the satisfaction ratings for all questions without since the 2013 Survey (the average increase is 6.2%). The most significant increases are in the following key areas: receiving an appropriate induction (from 67% to 82%), the provision of feedback by supervisors (82% to 90%), and the understanding of the formal requirements and deadlines for the formal monitoring of progress (71% to 87%). This represents important progress in a number of areas and the already demonstrated improvements will be consolidated over the coming year.

#### **Key Area 1: Supervision**

Science and Engineering has performed strongly in terms of Supervision, particularly in relation to the provision of feedback by supervisors. The area which is rated lower than others is 'My supervisor helps me identify my training and development needs' (although this has improved from 66% to 76%). The following actions have been identified in order to address this:

- All-School meetings chaired by the Dean will take place in January/February 2015 and will include information on the training agenda.
- An external speaker will be invited to speak at one of a planned short series of lunchtime seminars for supervisors.
- It is also considered that it would be useful to collate resources for supervisors but that this should be discussed further with the Learning and Teaching Centre in order that there is no duplication of efforts.

#### **Key Area 2: Resources**

A high percentage of students conveyed satisfaction with their working space and access to specialist resources (at 89% and 88% respectively). With issues of space and capacity, limited improvement in this area in the short term is challenging. However, the most pressing issues in relation to workspace, and its quality, which have been identified in the School of Chemistry are being addressed by the Head of College.

#### **Key Area 3: Research Culture**

Whilst the satisfaction with the induction quality has considerably improved (from 67 to 82%) we will seek to further improve this. For example:

- Greater clarity on the purpose of the Graduate School/School inductions and the information that will be covered by personal emails prior to the event.

- Ensuring that School inductions align in terms of content (the programmes for 2015 entry will be shared and best practice followed).
- The stalls event held as part of induction 2015 will be reviewed and it will be ensured that students engage more with this.
- Further consideration will also be given to accommodating the needs/expectations of Human Geography students from the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences (who it is thought constitute the reason for the lower satisfaction for induction in this School compared to others).

One area which requires action is the provision of appropriate non-academic support on arrival (this currently stands at 61%). With many aspects of non-academic support – from accommodation, to information about the Graduate School, to orientation for international students, to registering on my campus - it is difficult to isolate which strands should be reviewed and improved. We will draw on the insight our Student Liaison Group may offer to help here.

The provision of School-level seminar programmes will also be improved. Schools are currently making efforts to ensure 50/50 gender balance in speakers. Input will be sought from the student representatives on the programmes, and seminar information will be added to the Graduate School webpages in order that students can attend seminars organised by other Schools. These actions will create opportunities for students to become involved in the wider research community beyond their department (current satisfaction rating at 68% and a target of 75% for the next PRES).

The Graduate School needs to improve its provision of interdisciplinary activities and events (although it is possible that events such as the Water Innovation event, the makerspace, horizon scanning training will result in an improved score in the next PRES without further action). This is an area the Student Liaison Group has also identified for improvement and this will be discussed further. In the interim, the School of Computing Science, in particular, is working hard to encourage students to mix with other students beyond their own group (they seem to be less willing to engage than students from other Schools) and encouraging those who would not normally be involved to undertake various 'jobs' within the School (eg Athena Swan Committee, event organisation, acting as a student representative).

The percentage of respondents agreeing that there is adequate provision for social space for PG students is 66%. As a result of space capacity issues it is relatively difficult for Schools to identify social space for their students. It is clear that social space for PG students should be included under the plans for the campus redevelopment but difficult to envision how any improvement can occur here in the short-term.

#### **Key Area 4: Progress, assessment and understanding of roles and responsibilities**

It is clear that more students understand the requirements and deadlines for the formal monitoring of progress and that the addition of School-level meetings every January to explain the process is contributing to greater clarity.

Understanding of the student's and the supervisor's roles and responsibilities has increased to 91% and is higher than the University and Russell Group averages.

In relation to the University valuing student feedback, which has improved from 55% to 65%, regular meetings will be held between student representatives and School conveners, and the

existing possibilities for providing feedback will be reiterated to students (for example, as part of the Juno Committee in Physics and Astronomy).

### **Key Area 5: Research Skills and Professional Development**

A high percentage of students consider that their confidence in being creative or innovative, their ability to manage projects, understanding of research integrity, and to communicate effectively to diverse audiences has developed during their programme (at 82%, 84%, 88% and 82% respectively).

### **Key Area 6: Teaching opportunities**

Satisfaction in this area has increased to 65% but further improvement is required. An audit of School-level provision will be proposed and undertaken in conjunction with the College Learning and Teaching Committee.

### **Conclusions or Summary Points**

The fuller action plan, of which we have presented key summaries, will be discussed with our Student Liaison Group and we will work with them to ensure that provision is enhanced in order to ensure that when next considered we have maintained our provision that is excellent and improved less-strong areas. Such reflection is important to ensure we offer a world-changing Graduate School.

### **6. Graduate School Review Action Update**

Our next Graduate School Review will take place in 2017.

## College of Social Sciences January 2016 Graduate School PGR Report

### 1. Introduction

A significant development for the Graduate School was the introduction of compulsory training needs assessment for all first year PGR students. The Graduate School produced a Guide to Doctoral Training and Training Needs Assessment which was issued to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students and their supervisors in September, this will be reviewed in June 2016. More information can be found here [http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_415603\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_415603_en.pdf).

In response to the refresh of the University of Glasgow 2020 vision and to address feedback from the post REF reviews, the College has undertaken to re-shape its PGR strategy to reflect the core measures which will evidence our world-class quality. A PGR Strategy Workshop was held in December to consider how we collectively achieve the aspirations of the University by considering the future profile of our PGR community and address the challenges around recruitment, funding and supervision. The outcome of the workshop has been a roadmap of key activities and actions to enable us to achieve the standards set out in the strategy document. A series of short and medium term actions will be taken forward over the next 6 – 12 months and will include a review of our model of supervision, the introduction of a Research Training Certificate and working with external organisations to create collaborative arrangements.

An Induction Programme will be offered in February for students with a start date of January and those who arrive in the UK after the September Induction.

### 2. Summary Report from Graduate School Board and PGR Committee Business

#### Improving Thesis Submission Rates

A good cause email will be sent to all PGR students in September and June of each session reminding them of their responsibility to inform the Graduate School if they believe that illness or other adverse circumstances may affect their responsibility to submit the thesis on the expected date. It was agreed that supervisors would be reminded of their responsibilities to meet students regularly and highlight problems of engagement at an early stage as retrospective applications for suspensions and extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The application forms will be revised to show that further extensions and suspensions will not be granted unless the student circumstances have changed.

#### PGR Study Space

A survey of Russell Group Universities confirmed that the College has a generous policy for providing designated study space for full-time PGR students for 4 years unfortunately the PRES results did not

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reflect this and the Board recognised that study space provision had been a sensitive matter in the recent past.

Designated study space is provided for a maximum of three years by most other Universities and in some cases designated study space is not guaranteed and only 'hot desk' facilities are provided.

The proposed co-location of IHW, and the Schools of SPS and Education offers an opportunity to incorporate a PGR Hub and study space, although the design process is not yet underway. In this connection, the Board noted that careful student consultation was vital in development of the designated study space in order to manage expectations.

### **Review of Annual Progress Review for Session 2014**

It was agreed that students who are admitted in January would have a progress review in September rather than May to allow more time to assess their progress.

### **PGR Induction**

The Board agreed to organise a second induction programme for February 2016 which would target students who have arrived or registered after the September 2015 induction.

The Board agreed to look into revising all PGR induction activity after appointment of the new Research Training Director, expected in December 2015.

### **Part-time Distance Students**

Acceptance of part-time distance students will continue to be considered on a case by case basis until a decision on how to manage this is made by the VP Research.

## **3. Summaries of feedback from other mechanisms**

### **Core Research Courses**

Students are requested to complete feedback questionnaires via moodle and responses are considered during the exam board meeting. Student uptake on completion of the questionnaires is low and this will be an area for development. There are currently no other formal feedback mechanisms in place.

## **4. Issues arising / New Initiatives**

(enhancements, developments, collaborations, events, funding successes)

The College continues to invest in PGR scholarships and a total of 48 College funded scholarships and three LKAS scholarships were awarded for session 2015. It also provides a dedicated conference fund to enable our PGR community to organise events and give papers at leading national and international conferences. We have invested in the development of research training, by expanding our researcher development programme, and have also appointed a new Director of Research training. We play a leading role in the Scottish Graduate School for Social Science, which provides us

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with an over increasing number of ESRC funded scholarships (26 for session 2015) and are currently engaged in the re-commissioning of this body and are working with our partners in the SGSSS and in the AHRC and MRC to ensure the success of the new bid.

### 5. PRES Action Plans / Updates

#### Introduction

Overall satisfaction rates for the College remained static for 2013 and 2015 respondents and just below the Russell Group Average of 83%.

The University of Glasgow (UoG) response rate was 53% of the PGR population, compared with 57% in 2013. The average Russell Group response rate was 40%. The Schools of Law and Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) plan to take a more proactive approach with their students to encourage completion of the next survey. The Graduate School will look for ways to encourage more students across the College to complete the survey.

#### Key Area 1: Supervision

The College overall has continued to improve in this area and is above the University and Russell Group average however there is variation between Schools and some room for improvement. The introduction by the Graduate School of a compulsory Training Needs Assessment procedure should increase the scores for this area. The procedure which has been piloted for session 2015 will be reviewed in June 2016. More information can be found on the Graduate School website.

[http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_415603\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_415603_en.pdf)

Supervisor training sessions are being scheduled for March, May and June led by the Dean and some of the School PGR Directors.

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/graduateschool/studentsandstaff/informationforpgrsupervisors/>

The School of Education has introduced a PGR Supervisors Forum aimed at being a space for the exchange of supervisory experiences, ideas and support within the School. The School of Law produced Guidance for Doctoral Candidates for session 2015 which sets out the essential information for students and provides supervisors with the information needed to advise students on all aspects of the PhD programme.

#### Key Area 2: Resources

The percentage of College respondents agreeing they have suitable working space has improved since 2013 although again there is variation between Schools, most notably Law and Education increased by circa 25% and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) down by 17%. IDS has recently acquired a new building which will be made available to students in late 2015 which features a dedicated PGR area including offices, social and break out space. The school is also pursuing increased library opening hours for all students



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A survey of other Russell Group Universities indicates the College has a generous policy of allocating designated study space for full-time students for 4 years and students will be made aware of this prior to the next survey. Problems with the MacGregor Building could account for the decreased score from Adam Smith Business School (ASBS) students in this area.

In addition to what Schools are currently providing, the Graduate School offers funding for conference attendance for full and part-time students in the final and penultimate year of study.

### **Key Area 3: Research Culture**

Satisfaction with Induction programmes has increased in all schools however the College score is below that for UoG and Russell Group. The Graduate School is introducing a second induction programme to be run in February of each session for January starts. This approach is replicated by the School of Education. SSPS are planning a School wide induction for the first time to promote interdisciplinarity.

The Schools of Law and IDS plan to promote the seminar series currently running more widely to students and encourage greater involvement in these. ASBS intend to encourage research clusters, of which PhD researchers are now part, to host regular seminars.

Providing opportunities to become involved in the wider research community continues to be a challenge for the Graduate School and although scores have improved since 2013 we are below the UoG and Russell Group in this area. In addition to what Schools are currently providing, the Graduate School offers funding for conference attendance for full and part-time students in the final and penultimate year of study. Discussions with Schools about creating a more cohesive Graduate School Community will continue through the PGR Committee.

### **Key Area 4: Progress, assessment and understanding of roles and responsibilities**

The understanding of requirements and deadlines for monitoring progress was consistently high across all Schools and the College score was higher than the UoG and Russell group returns. The Graduate School is currently working with other Colleges to develop an online progress review system and this will be introduced in session 2016.

Understanding of their own, and supervisors responsibilities also scored highly, improving since 2013 and work continues across all Schools to provide students and supervisors with advice and guidance in this area. For example, the Graduate School has created a web page for supervisors bringing together information on processes and procedures relative to the student journey. The School of Law produced Guidance for Doctoral Candidates described elsewhere and IDS will offer a more formal School Induction specifically for their students.

### **Key Area 5: Research Skills and Professional Development**

Scores in this area were on a par with the UoG and Russell group returns and in general have improved since 2013. The appointment of a 1.0 FTE College Research Training Director is imminent

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and a review of the College research training programme will be high on the agenda of the academic appointed.

Most Schools run School and subject based skills and professional development courses and the Training Needs Assessment process will sharpen the awareness of supervisors to the need for specific training and development as standard across the College. Students from IDS are provided with funding to attend courses on the main campus

### **Key Area 6: Teaching opportunities**

Satisfaction with support for teaching has improved significantly since 2012 however the College score is the lowest in the Institution and circa 10% below the UoG and Russell Group score. Work is underway in all Schools to address this issue. ASBS has introduced teaching scholarships. The School of Education does offer teaching opportunities to PGR students however these limited due to the need for teachers on UG Education programmes to be registered with the GTC. In IDS the PGR Director and Head of School have been working together to offer more teaching opportunities to the PGR cohort. The School of Law run GTA application training sessions as well as a workshop on applying for academic positions. SSPS has implemented a new School policy on GTAs as part of the wider changes to the University's extended workforce policy and is establishing a GTA Committee to provide a dedicated forum for discussion of GTA issues amongst staff and students.