

**Postgraduate Research Executive Forum**

**18th of December 2019, 2:30pm**

**Students’ Association Committee Room**

**Minutes**

1. **Welcome & Introductions**

DoEd welcomed the Committee to the meeting, which is an opportunity for the PGR Executive Reps to raise issues, and for University staff to receive feedback on any projects which aim to enhance the experience of PGR students.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Kate from Social Anthropology, Lucy from Film Studies, Aleksandra from Medicine, Flamina from International Relations and Carine from Art History.

1. **Director of Education’s update**

DoEd is working with St Leonard’s Postgraduate College to set up a Postgraduate Lecture Series, which will enable PGRs to present their research in a lecture-style setting to a mixed audience.

The first lecture will take place in early February, with speakers confirmed. PGR Executive Reps may be asked to advertise calls for abstracts in the future.

1. **Matters arising**
2. **PGR tutor pay check in (AB)**

The policy on PGR tutor pay had been circulated with the agenda. DoEd asked for feedback from PGR Executive Reps about any School-specific issues with its implementation.

Biology: A lot of demonstrators are needed and there aren’t enough of them. The level of pay is generally seen as fair, but tutors would like to see an increase. The representative feels that School practice is in line with the policy.

No further comments; DoEd asked that any further feedback be emailed to her via doed@.

1. **ELIR (CP)**

CP provided an overview of the Enhancement Led Institutional Review, which will take place next semester for the University. Each Scottish University is reviewed every five years. The review team spends seven days at the University (two planning days and five review days). The University must prepare a reflective analysis for the review, which has been completed and sent off. The University is looking forward to the review and to seeing what we are doing well and where we can improve. The aim of the review is to make sure that the University is performing to a certain standard and always enhancing what it offers. The review team will be here in early February and at the beginning of April. They will ask to meet with PGR students and students involved in student representation and will be looking to ensure that students are listened to at St Andrews and have the chance to contribute. The Proctor’s Office may approach some students on the Forum to ask if they can be involved. PGR Executive Reps are asked to note that the PO will only have around 2 weeks’ notice of which students to approach, as the review panel will decide which groups of students they wish to meet.

1. **Old Burgh School (MM)**

Provost: The University is aware that Postgraduate students need more space to work, especially due to the variance in what is offered across Schools. The University is currently developing a space in the Old Burgh School. The plan is to allow students to access the building as soon as possible and to continue to develop the space on an ongoing basis. The hope is to have a family space, so that students with families can bring their children to the space, and it is hoped that a playground will also be introduced. The work spaces will not be allocated to specific students, but the hope is to have similar space monitoring processes to the library. There will also be spaces for group working. The feedback so far has been generally positive, the project has passed the Business Case stage and will progress to a meeting with an architect to discuss what should be in the space. The aim is to use as much of the current furniture as possible to reduce waste, and to have two kitchens instead of one, as well as a quiet space for contemplation, prayer and a bookable space for breast feeding. The Provost emphasised that the current plans are preliminary and asked that the group focus on the needs to have and the nice to haves.

**ACTION: Postgraduate Executive Reps to please provide any feedback to the Provost directly via provost@.**

The DoEd asked the PGR Executive Reps for initial comments.

Divinity: The School of Divinity already has some study space – what additional services will the OBS offer?

Provost: The OBS will also have a library service for delivery of books. The hope is to have “Helpful Wednesdays”, where students can drop in for help with visas or curriculum issues. These sessions will also offer face to face service with Units which have moved to Eden Campus.

Divinity: Support the plans and the provision for families and breast-feeding mothers.

Geography and Sustainable Development: It would be good to have a space that can be booked for social events, possibly with access to the kitchens for potlucks. The Provost agreed that this would be useful, and they are looking at how this could be possible. Social spaces are included in the current plans.

DoEd: Encouraged the PGR Executive Reps to share the plans with other PGR students for feedback.

1. **Updates or comments from PGR Executive Representatives**

Divinity: Finds that no one knows exactly how many PGRs are in Divinity, which makes it difficult to ensure surveys are representative. At present, the PGR Rep has to go through the School President to contact students. The DoEd explained that this is because only School Presidents have the facility to email specific cohorts of students.

The DoEd will speak to IT Services about setting up PGR Executive Rep email accounts (which Maths already has), so that representatives can email PGR students directly. For now, PGR Executive Reps should continue to go through their School Presidents to pass communications to their cohort.

The Dean of Arts noted that representatives can find out the number of PGR students in their School through the School website. This information can also be obtained through contacting the Provost.

**ACTION: DoEd to speak to IT Services about setting up PGR and PGT Executive Rep email accounts.**

1. **Updates or comments from University staff**

No updates or comments.

1. **AOCB**

The Provost thanked the PGR Executive Reps for their hard work this semester, which was echoed by other members of academic staff.