UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 09.30, WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2023, ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS		
Present	Professor Dan Branch	Chair
	Dr Nikola Chmel	Deputy Chair of the Faculty Education Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Dr Kurt Debattista	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Dr Ross Forman	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Arts
	Lee Griffin	Deputy Chair
	Sara Hattersley	Representative from the Academic Development Centre
	Dr Emily Henderson	Member of academic staff appointed by the Senate
	Dr Natasha Khovanova	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Professor David Lambert	Deputy Chair of the Faculty Education Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts
	Dr Daniel Matthews	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Professor Davide Nicolini	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Hamza Rehman	Co-opted student member / Postgraduate Officer (Students' Union)
	Professor Stephanie Schnurr	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Professor Mark Steel	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Michele Underwood	Researcher Development Manager
	Professor Martin Wills	Member of academic staff appointed by the Senate
Attending	Nicola Attridge	Finance Manager (PGR Funding)
	Nicola Ellis-Thomas	Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships)
	Adam Child	Academic Registrar
	Mohammed Adly Gamal	PGR SSLC Representative, Education Studies
	Andreana Glendinning	PGR SSLC Representative, Institute for Employment Research
	Dr Elizabeth Hough	Assistant Director (Head of Admissions Services)
	Laura Larard	Administrative Officer (Doctoral College) (Assistant Secretary)
	Rebekah Luck-Owen	Postgraduate Admissions Officer
	Rhiannon Martyn	Head of Doctoral College (Secretary)
	Stella Neophytou	Postgraduate Student Development Officer
	Amey Noolkar	PGR SSLC Representative, Computer Science
	Louise Sutcliffe	Postgraduate Student Development Officer
	Dr Rebecca Vipond	CDT & PG Scholarships Coordination Manager
	Ruth-Anne Walbank	PGR SSLC Representative, English and Comparative Literary Studies
Ref	**Item**	
027	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from Rachel Dickinson, Karen Jackson, Dr Xiaodong (Wes) Lin, Dr James Lloyd-Hughes, Chih-Hsiang Lo, Professor Graeme MacDonald, Prof Debbi Marais, Gemma Marakas, Ashleigh Skelhorn, Professor Michael Tildesley, Dr Naomi Waltham-Smith, Anne Wilson.	

028	**Declarations of Interest**
	No new declarations were made.
029	**Minutes of last meeting on 10 November 2022**
	The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 (paper 029-BGS080223) were approved.
030	**Matters arising from last meeting on 10 November 2022**
	(a) Membership update (minute 004-BGS101122) The Board received and noted the update to membership (paper 030-BGS080223).
	(b) Students' Union update- PGR Support Survey (minute 011-BGS1011622) The Chair reported that he had met with the Postgraduate Officer (Students' Union) to discuss the survey outcomes.
**Chair and Secretary's Update**
031	**Chair's Business**
	(a) CIS Faculty Assessors The Board received and noted the list of assessors nominated by the faculties (paper 031a-BGS080223) and thanked those involved for their contributions in reviewing applications.
	(b) PGR Strategy The PGR Strategy Working Group met for the first time in January. The Chair will be presenting to the Education and Research Committees shortly; and this will be brought back to the Board for wider discussion at its next meeting.
032	**Deputy Chair's Business**
	(a) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) The Deputy Chair reported that benchmarking data had now been received following delays at Advance HE; this should have now been distributed. Results were generally good, with Warwick being placed in the top quartile in most areas including community and support. Consideration is currently being given to the launch date of this year's survey; further updates will be provided to departments in due course.
	(b) ChatGPT The Deputy Chair reported that Education Policy and Quality (EPQ) had published guidance on Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence. A Teams space has been created to discuss these issues; members can contact the Deputy Chair for further information. The Academic Development Centre (ADC) would also be producing guidance. It was noted that concerns seem to be mostly at taught level but there are potential issues at PGR level e.g. at the admissions stage. **ACTION:** Members are asked to report back on any departmental concerns relating to PGR at the next meeting.
033	**Secretary's Business**
	(a) ITLR submission and review The Secretary reported that the Doctoral College Self Evaluation Document (available below the line) had been submitted in December and the full review would take place in April/May.

	(b)	**Scholarships 23/24 progress**
		Chancellors International Scholarships – fast track offers have already been made and Faculty assessment meetings would be held later this month. Initial feedback on the fast-track process had been positive and further feedback would be sought from departments.
		China Scholarships Council – the deadline for holding an unconditional offer had been extended to 15 February due IELTS delays but could not be extended further.
		Race Xchange Scholarships – the application deadline is 28 February for this joint venture with Coventry University which would work on a cotutelle model. A total of 7 awards (4 funded by Coventry and 3 funded by Warwick) are available for May 2023 entry for applicants developing leading research on improving access and participation for minority ethnic students in postgraduate research in the UK.
		Doctoral Access Scholarships – Sanctuary – the application deadline is 27 February. The University continues to work closely with the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA).
	(c)	**Welcome events**
		The Doctoral College had held an in-person welcome event in November which was well attended. A hybrid event is planned for 28 February. Further information on the planned Festival of Doctoral Research will be provided in due course.
	(d)	**Researcher Development update (MU)**
		The Researcher Development Spring programme had launched in late January, with a lot of interest in sessions, particularly from new PGRs. Sessions with the aim of clarifying language around research/professional development and transferable skills will be delivered in late March/early April to support PRES.
		The Researcher Development Manager is working with the Research Operations Sub-Group to map all research training/support available to PGRs across the University. Departments will be contacted to ensure that all available opportunities are represented.
	(e)	**Strike action**
		The Doctoral College were not expecting significant disruption on the PGR examination process as a result of strike action based on previous experience. It was expected that academic departments would manage any impact on individual PGRs by rearranging vivas where necessary.

	Students' Union Update	
034	**Students' Union update**	
	The Postgraduate Officer (Students' Union) reported on the following areas of work:	
	- Review of current GTA framework post-pandemic; planning to survey PGRs to gather views and experiences - Community based work - Follow up from PGR cost of living survey	

	Faculty Updates	
035	**Faculty updates**	
	The Deputy Chair of the Faculty Education Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine reported that the Committee had provided feedback on the proposed Student Experience Strategy in relation to consideration of PGRs and student consultation.	

	PGR SSLC Business	

036	**Advanced training/core modules**
	AG highlighted the issue of lack of PGR access to modules (delivered by departments other than their own) which would be beneficial to their research. It was noted that some PGRs can access modules and other opportunities via Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), but that PGRs not registered with a CDT were potentially missing out on development opportunities.
	The Chair noted that this was a known issue and researcher training would be an element of the proposed PGR strategy. A consolidated list of training provided to research staff is currently being created as part of work led by the Research Operations Group. However, that work will not capture academic modules offered by departments and there is a need to provide a consolidated list to PGRs and departments.
**Items for approval/discussion**
037	**Supervision**
	The Researcher Development Manager set out the internal and external context for the Doctoral College's focus on supervision in line with the ITLR theme; "enabling PGRs to thrive: with better supervision and supported supervisors", as set out in paper 037-BGS080223 (tabled). The following actions are planned:
	- Supervisory guidance (with focus on inclusivity); - Supervisory training; - Community of practice; and - Governance and management of supervision
	It is not the intention to create additional bureaucracy, but important that supervisors feel supported to enable PGRs to thrive. Ongoing conversations will take place with academic departments to learn from existing best practice, seek volunteers to join the community of practice and understand where greater input from the Doctoral College would be beneficial. It was noted that it would be important for academic departments to be seen to be leading in this area to help with the culture change aspect, and that small actions can be highly effective.
	ACTION: Members are asked to report back at the next meeting on areas where departmental colleagues would welcome Doctoral College support .
038	**PGR Admissions 2023/24**
	The Assistant Director (Head of Admissions Services) reported on PGR applications data for 2023/24 entry (as set out in 038-BGS080223, tabled); although the number of applications had fallen, it was expected that acceptances would not be adversely affected due to a higher number of offers.
	The Assistant Director (Head of Admissions Services) introduced the Postgraduate Admissions Officer who had recently been appointed with a particular focus on PGR admissions. The Postgraduate Admissions Officer would be available to departmental Directors of Graduate Studies as a key point of contact and would be able to support PGR admissions strategy more generally.
039	**EDI working group**
	It was reported that the minutes of the last meeting of the working group were available below the line.
040	**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023**
	The Postgraduate Student Development Officer reported that the Doctoral College will be running the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey between 17 April – 9 May. The Board considered the proposed institutional questions and were broadly supportive but noted that the reference to training in the second question should be clarified.
	The Postgraduate Development Officer would discuss the issue of opportunities available to PGRs with the Postgraduate Officer (Students' Union) separately, noting that existing questions may be sufficient.
	The Chair asked members to encourage the PGRs in their departments to respond as the survey is a valuable source of feedback, noting that engagement may be lower this year due to planned strike action.

041	**Doctoral Access Bursary**
	The CDT & PG Scholarships Coordination Manager highlighted the issue of PGR scholarship holders who must either decline their offer to study or take on high-risk debt due to the costs of immigration/arrival. The Board considered a proposal (set out in paper 041-BGS080223) to provide a one-off payment to support applicants in the most need to take up their offer of study. The initial proposal is to offer this payment to Doctoral College-funded applicants from countries of low income.
	It was noted that the proposal contains an element of financial risk as funding will be available pre-enrolment, but that the risk was low. The mechanism for making payments to applicants was currently being developed.
	The Board approved the proposal to introduce the Doctoral Access Bursary for PGRs joining the University in 2023/24, noting that further consideration would be given to widening the eligibility criteria in due course. The Doctoral College guidance should refer applicants to the availability of CARA funding to assist with the cost of relocating dependents, noting that this cost could not be covered by the bursary at this stage.

042	**PGR examinations update**
	    a) **Submission rates**
	        The Board received the latest PGR submission rates (paper 042a-BGS080223). It was resolved that submission rates would be presented to the Board on a termly basis in order to track on time submission throughout the academic year.
	
	    b) **Examination outcomes**
	        The Board received the latest PGR examinations data (paper 042b-BGS080223), noting that it represents a fairly basic representation of the data and some categories (e.g. disability) contain a small number of PGRs so further analysis may be required to draw clear conclusions. It was resolved that the data be made available to the EDI Working Group at its next meeting for consideration of next steps.
	
	        The consideration of reasonable adjustments in the PGR examination process was discussed. It was agreed that the Doctoral College would review/reissue guidance. Further consideration may also be given to the appointment of examination advisors in such cases.
	
	    c) **Covid impact statements**
	        The Board approved the proposal to extend the end date for the submission of Covid-19 impact statements to the end of September 2024, as a final end date noting that this would apply to full-time PGRs whose registration started during 2021/22, as set out in paper (042c-BGS080223).

*Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion*
043	**ITLR Self Evaluation Document – Enabling Postgraduate Researchers to Thrive** The Board received and noted the paper (043-BGS080223).
044	**PGR strategy outline** The Board received and noted the paper (044-BGS080223).
045	**BGS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group minutes 21 November 2022** The Board received and noted the minutes (045-BGS080223).
046	**CDT Management Committee minutes** The Board received and noted the minutes (046-BGS080223).
047	**Collaborative PhD 2023/23 update** The Board received and noted the paper (047-BGS080223).
**Other**
048	**Any other business**

(a)	**IAS salon – 27 March** EH informed members of the upcoming [IAS salon: Connecting Research at Warwick on Doctoral Education and Academia](#) on 27 March.
**Next meeting: 09:30, THURSDAY 8 JUNE 2023, LOCATION TBC**