

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**  
**BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 09:30, THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2022, ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT**  
**TEAMS**

<b>Present</b>	Professor Dan Branch	Chair
	Dr Kurt Debattista	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Rachel Dickinson	Representative of Dean of Students Office
	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 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 Xiaodong (Wes) Lin	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Arts
	Chih-Hsiang Lo	Co-opted student member / Education Officer (Students' Union)
	Professor Graeme MacDonald	Co-opted member of academic staff
	Prof Debbi Marais	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	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
	Ashleigh Skelhorn	CDT Representative from the Social Sciences and Arts
	Professor Mark Steel	Member of academic staff appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
	Michele Underwood	Researcher Development Manager
	Dr Naomi Waltham-Smith	Chair of the Faculty Education Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Professor Martin Wills	Member of academic staff appointed by the Senate
Anne Wilson	Representative from Student Opportunity	
<b>Attending</b>	Nicola Attridge	Finance Manager (PGR Funding)
	Claire Boyes	Admissions Service Manager
	Nicola Ellis-Thomas	Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships)
	Zoi Ioannidou	Representative of PGR SSLC, Life Sciences
	Karen Jackson	Head of Academic Services, Library
	Laura Larard	Administrative Officer (Doctoral College) (Assistant Secretary)
	Rhiannon Martyn	Head of Doctoral College (Secretary)
	Stella Neophytou	Postgraduate Student Development Officer
	David Nicol	Representative of PGR SSLC, WMG
	Rachel Rowntree	Representative of PGR SSLC, Applied Linguistics
	Louise Sutcliffe	Postgraduate Student Development Officer
	Dr Rebecca Vipond	CDT & PG Scholarships Coordination Manager
Yvette Wang	Postgraduate Student Development Officer	

Ref	Item
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001	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
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	Apologies were received from Dr Nikola Chmel, Dr Emily Henderson, Dr James Lloyd-Hughes, Gemma Marakas, Santi Oyarzabal, Dr John Snape and Professor Michael Tildesley.
002	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> No new declarations were made.
003	<b>Terms of reference</b> The terms of reference (paper 003-BGS101122) were received and approved.
004	<b>Membership of the Board</b> The membership of the Board (paper 004-BGS101122) was received and approved. The Chair welcomed new members.
005	<b>Freedom of Information Act: Publication Scheme</b> It was noted that minutes of the meeting of the Board are published on the University website, as part of its Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
006	<b>Minutes of last meeting on 9 June 2022</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 (paper 006-BGS101122) were approved.
007	<b>Matters arising from last meeting on 9 June 2022</b> <b>(a) Fellowship status for graduated PGRs (minute 083(a)-BGS090622)</b> The Chair reported that discussions with Human Resources and the Information and Digital Group were ongoing and will also include the Institute for Advanced Study. It was noted that WBS are keen to move forward; input from other academic departments would also be welcomed. <b>(b) Supporting neurodiverse PGRs (minute 083(b)-BGS090622)</b> The Doctoral College would be taking this forward by considering the preparation and support for supervisors to better understand issues facing neurodiverse PGRs, and via liaison with Disability Services. <b>(c) PGR strategy (minute 087-BGS090622)</b> The Chair reported that the intention was to have a draft PGR strategy available for consideration at the Board's first meeting of the 2023/24 academic year. It is envisioned that the strategy would cover the following areas: size and shape of the PGR population, funding and recruitment, supervision, training and personal development of PGRs, and governance and administration. Consultation with PGRs and colleagues in academic departments would be key to the successful creation of the strategy. <b>(d) Regulation 38 (minute 093-BGS090622)</b> It was reported that the Senate had approved revisions to Regulation 38 Governing Research Degrees following the Board's recommendation. Changes had come into effect at the start of the academic year.
<b>Chair and Secretary's Update</b>	
008	<b>Chair's Business</b> The Chair recognised the significance of the rising cost of living and its impact on PGRs, noting that this would be an ongoing priority for the Board and Doctoral College.
009	<b>Deputy Chair's Business</b> <b>(a) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)</b> The Deputy Chair noted that overall results are slightly lower than last year, as had been expected, but that colleagues in academic departments should be congratulated for their efforts. Comparative data has now been received from Advance HE; a more detailed report on the outcomes will be presented to the Board at a later date.

	<p><b>(b) Higher Education Achievement Reports (HEAR)</b> The Deputy Chair noted that HEAR transcripts will be available for PGT students from Jan 2024 i.e. for those starting this academic year.</p>
010	<p><b>Secretary's Business</b></p> <p><b>(a) Visiting PGR students</b> The Secretary reported that the Fees Working Group had considered a proposal to make the current zero fee pilot for visiting students permanent. The Fees Working Group resolved to continue the pilot this academic year with a view to making it permanent next summer, to ensure that the number of visiting students doesn't increase to an unmanageable level post-covid.</p> <p><b>(b) UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) financial audit</b> The Doctoral College would be involved in the UKRI financial audit, with several training grants and individual student records under scrutiny as part of a wider exercise involving Research and Impact Services.</p>
<b>Students' Union Update</b>	
011	<p><b>Students' Union update</b></p> <p>The Postgraduate Officer reported on the results of the PGR Support Survey (paper 011-BGS101122), noting that it is not currently possible to present data at department-level. Free text comments would be shared where appropriate and follow up discussions would take place with SSLCs.</p> <p>Issues arising from the survey included financial issues, supervisory relations, childcare, social life/careers and accessibility/support.</p> <p>The Students' Union recognise that the University had increased financial support, which was appreciated, but noted that responses to the survey demonstrated that this did not alleviate financial concerns in light of the increase in cost of living.</p> <p>Sara Hattersley noted that the survey results align with some of the feedback received via the PGR teaching survey considered by the Board in 2021/22 (paper 094-BGS090622). A follow up survey focusing on workload and marking had been launched and results would be shared with Board in due course.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Doctoral College would respond to the issues raised at the next meeting and welcomed the Students' Union taking PGR views into account. The Postgraduate Officer looked forward to working with the Doctoral College on these issues going forward.</p>
<b>Faculty Updates</b>	
012	<p><b>Social Sciences Grand Challenge</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that the Grand Challenge would include consideration of PGRs in relation to new facilities, the future of programmes etc. It was noted that it may be useful to ask both faculty Grand Challenges to report to the Board on PGR issues in future.</p> <p>The Chair also noted that the ESRC DTP was currently going through the recommission process.</p>
013	<p><b>Science, Engineering and Medicine (SEM)</b></p> <p>The Board received the report from the Deputy Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (SEM) (paper 013-BGS101122).</p>
014	<p><b>Arts</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chair of the Faculty Education Committee (Arts) noted that the Faculty is looking at building community across departments and would welcome input from other faculties who wished to share experiences.</p> <p>The challenges of supervising interdisciplinary PGRs were noted; proposed changes to examination guidance would be beneficial in this regard (item 023-BGS101122).</p>

PGR SSLC Business	
015	<p><b>Inclusion for part-time PGR students</b></p> <p>The Representative of PGR SSLC, Applied Linguistics shared their perspective as a part-time PGR, outlining the positive contributions and alternative perspectives that part-time students can bring to the University. Although generally a positive experience, the Representative noted the issues of missing out on some opportunities due to other commitments and welcomed the chance to join events during evenings and weekends.</p> <p>The Chair noted that if the University wishes to increase PGR numbers it will be necessary to think in different ways and consider non-standard programmes. The experience of part-time PGRs varies across the University; it would be beneficial to consider ways to bring the community together.</p>
Items for approval/discussion	
016	<p><b>BGS Priorities 2022-23</b></p> <p>The Board's main priorities for the forthcoming year are the creation of a PGR strategy (to be completed by September 2023) and engagement with the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR). Other priorities continue on the work of previous years as set out in paper 016-BGS101122.</p> <p>The development of a PGR strategy will link to the Doctoral College's ITLR cluster theme – enabling PGRs to thrive. The Doctoral College welcomes the ITLR and the opportunities it will create to consolidate existing work, consider how provision can be developed in future and increase the visibility of PGRs in the wider community. The ITLR self-evaluation document will consider what the Doctoral College does directly as a service provider as well as its influence on other areas of the institution who provide services to PGRs.</p> <p>PGRs, academic and relevant professional services department will be consulted in relation to both ITLR and strategy development. The Chair encouraged departments to ensure that PGRs are considered in discussions about ITLR wherever possible.</p> <p>The Board approved the priorities for 2022/23.</p>
017	<p><b>Cost of living</b></p> <p>It was reported that the University has provided over £1 million of additional funding to funded PGRs consisting of a stipend increase of 10% to all PGRs who receive their stipends via the University in addition to the annual 3% increase. The Board welcomed the speed at which the University processed additional payments following the announcement.</p> <p>The PGR Funding team would be analysing grants in light of the 10% stipend uplift, noting that this may impact the size of future funded cohorts. It is expected that all research councils will require institutions to prioritise supporting current students over the recruitment of new students.</p> <p>The <a href="#">PGR Hardship Fund</a> provides funding to PGRs who are experiencing unforeseen exceptional circumstances during their studies. Colleagues are asked to ensure PGRs are aware of the assistance the Fund can provide.</p> <p>The Postgraduate Officer (Students' Union) noted the costs faced by international PGRs prior to arrival to Warwick e.g. visa, travel, health surcharges. The Chair noted that this was a complicated area as PGRs are not yet enrolled, but that the Doctoral College is investigating what support could be provided.</p>
018	<p><b>Supervision</b></p> <p>The Doctoral College will be establishing a working group to consider support and training for supervisors and would welcome input from PGRs and academic departments. The working group will report to the Board in due course.</p>
019	<p><b>Researcher Development (Online) Three-year evaluation report</b></p> <p>The Researcher Development Manager reported on the evaluation of the Researcher Development (Online) (RDO) programme as set out in paper 019-BGS101122. In addition to the standard offering, ongoing conversations take place with departments where appropriate to identify any specific areas in which PGRs</p>

	<p>require support. Attendance is increasing across a number of departments; those departments that are exceptions tend to have a strong offering of their own e.g. via Centres of Doctoral Training, and the Postgraduate Certificate in Transferable Skills in Science (PGCTSS).</p> <p>Several in-person events have taken place recently, but feedback suggests that many PGRs prefer to use the online space to enable attendance outside of usual working hours and from anywhere in the world. The provision will continue mainly online with a small number of in-person events specifically targeted at new PGRs to help develop communities.</p> <p>It was noted that it was key to the programme that PGRs are partners in the learning process, with PGRs working as tutors and following a coaching development method. Feedback shows that PGRs consider the RDO as a safe space to learn and gain support.</p>
020	<p><b>PGR scholarships 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Project Officer (Postgraduate Scholarships) reported on the revised assessment process for Chancellor's International Scholarships, timescales for other PGR scholarship competitions and the launch of the new Warwick Doctoral Access Scholarships as set out in paper 020-BGS101122.</p> <p>The Scholarships team is currently investigating ways in which financial support can be provided to international scholarship offer-holders from low-income countries/backgrounds to assist with the cost of travelling to the UK to take up awards. The team would welcome any information on similar schemes currently in operation in academic departments.</p> <p>The Scholarships team is looking to include a more explicit consideration of both equality, diversity and inclusion and interdisciplinarity. These will be built into the scoring of applications. Feedback on how this could be achieved would be valued.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair thanked the Doctoral College for its previous work supporting postgraduate taught scholarship competitions now that this responsibility had been transferred to <a href="#">other teams</a>.</p>
021	<p><b>Review of work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</b></p> <p>The Secretary presented a paper summarising EDI activities from 2021/22 and setting out a proposed approach for the EDI working group for 2022/23 (paper 021-BGS101122). The working group would report back to the Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the proposals set out in the paper, noting that it would be beneficial to focus on the key stages of the PGR experience.</p>
022	<p><b>Review of PGR leave policies</b></p> <p>The Board reviewed the following policies at the request of the Policy Oversight Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Leave</li> <li>• Paid Sick Leave</li> <li>• Parental Leave</li> </ul> <p>The Board approved the policies set out in paper 022-BGS101122, noting that the Doctoral College will update and amend as necessary in response to future UKRI requirements.</p>
023	<p><b>PGR examination guidance</b></p> <p>The Board approved the proposals to amend the Guide to Examinations of Higher Degrees by Research as set out in paper 023-BGS101122 in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure of the guidance</li> <li>• Remove discrepancy between Faculties</li> <li>• Alternative thesis formats/inclusion of published material</li> </ul>
<b><i>Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion</i></b>	

024	<b>Covid extensions</b> The Board received and noted the paper 024-BGS101122.
025	<b>Minutes of CDT Management Committee 10 October 2022</b> The Board received and noted the paper 025-BGS101122.
<b>Other</b>	
026	<b>Any other business</b> There was no other business.
<b>Next meeting: Thursday 9 February 2022, 09.30, venue tbc]</b>	