There will be a meeting of the POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE on MONDAY 30 April 2018 at 14:00 in Committee Room 2, University Office.

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AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes from last meeting
3. PGR School update (inc Funding activities EPSRC, NERC, ESRC, UKRI – AI)
4. Next working groups to be established
5. PGR Students with no University of Aberdeen Supervisor
6. Working Group Updates:
   a. Additional Research Costs
   b. Reject codes
   c. Extension and Suspension Criteria
7. Business Improvement update
8. Working Group Report: Monitoring and Progression
10. ELIR – Updates/Issues raised through Staff-Student Liaison committees
11. AOCB and date of next meeting
Postgraduate Research School Update

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides an update from the University-wide Postgraduate Research School including:

- PGR School office location
- PGR Dean
- PGR Funding
- PGR Committee Working Groups
- PGR Training and Development

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The committee is invited to note the information provided.

3. PGR SCHOOL

The PGR School has recently moved to its new home in Crombie Halls. A new dual purpose social hub and interdisciplinary collaboration space for academic staff is currently being furnished. The PGR School will send a communication to students and supervisors when it is open and available for use.

Sustainable production of chemicals and materials from organic waste

Professor Judith Masthoff, Dean for Postgraduate Research Students will step down from post in June 2018 to take up a position as Professor of Computing Science at the University of Utrecht. Interviews for her replacement are scheduled for early May.

4. PGR FUNDING

4.1 LEVERHULME: The University has recently been awarded a Leverhulme Doctoral Centre (1.05 Million) and provides funding for 15 students over five cohorts. The proposal, led by Dr David Dionisi (School of Engineering) and Professor Judith Masthoff (as senior institutional lead) focused on sustainable production of chemicals and materials from organic waste. The first set of projects have been advertised and applications are with project leads for nomination of candidates for interview. Interviews will take place mid-May.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT TRUST STUDENT EXPERIENCE AWARD: The PGR School has been awarded funding from the Development Trust Student Experience Fund to provide scholarships to support PGR students with additional caring responsibilities to attend professional development activities (conferences, training courses, research visits etc). The fund launched in February 2018 and we have allocated all funding to students. The funding decisions prioritised situations in which students would be unable to attend if this funding was not available.
4.3 RCUK DOCTORAL COHORT FUNDING

4.3.1 EPSRC CENTRES FOR DOCTORAL TRAINING

Following an internal selection process, two institutionally led outline proposals (limited by EPSRC demand-management) were submitted to the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training call. Invites to full proposal, to support 50 students over 5 years (with EPSRC providing funding for 40) are expected in early May.

The proposals submitted were:

**Next-Generation Chemical Technologies** - Lead: Professor Marcel Jaspars (School of Natural and Computing Sciences, Department of Chemistry).

**Imaging for precision medicine and health data science (iSCAN)**, Lead: Professor David Lurie (School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, Department of Biomedical Physics) in partnership with the University of Glasgow.

4.3.2 UKRI - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) CENTRE

In addition to the EPSRC CDT call EPSRC is managing the UKRI AI call in response to the Industrial Strategy. Two institutionally led outline proposals have been submitted.

The proposals submitted were:

**Accountable and Responsible AI (CDT-ARAI)**, Lead: Dr Nir Oren (School of Natural and Computing Sciences, Department of Computing Science) in partnership with the University of Dundee.

**Using AI to support person-centred healthcare (AI4PersonalHealth)**, Lead: Professor Ehud Reiter (School of Natural and Computing Sciences, Department of Computing Science) in partnership with the University of Dundee and Robert Gordon University.

4.3.3 ESRC BUSINESS BOOST FUNDING

The ESRC impact Accelerator Account at the University of Edinburgh has been awarded an additional 50K specifically to work with the University of Aberdeen to enhance business engagement with the Doctoral students working in the Social Sciences. Plans will include aligning one of the funding with the Artificial Intelligence call, engaging with the energy sector and working with the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences DTP.

4.3.4 NERC DTP

The NERC DTP call is open (submission deadline 16 May 2018). The Schools of Biological Sciences and Geosciences will lead a bid in collaboration with the Universities of Dundee and Queens Belfast. The PGR School is supporting as required in particular around cohort development.

4.3.5 SGSAH AND SGSSS STUDENTSHIP COMPETITIONS

Following an internal selection process, 15 students have been nominated for SGSAH scholarships. The panel noted the quality of applications this year was significantly enhanced. Decisions are expected by May 2018.

Schools involved with the SGSSS have nominated students for the SGSSS competition with decisions expected May 2018.
4.4 NON-RCUK STUDENTSHIP COMPETITIONS

4.4.1 CARNEGIE
Following an internal selection process, five outstanding students have been nominated for Carnegie Scholarships (applications from Engineering, Psychology, Chemistry, Politics and IR and History). Decisions are expected by May 2018.

4.4.2 ELPHINSTONE
Applications for Elphinstone scholarships closed on 31 March with across all disciplines excluding Law, Biological Sciences and Engineering. Schools are in the process of shortlisting and interviewing candidates.

4.4.3 ABERDEEN-CURTIN ALLIANCE
Applications for Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance studentships closed on 10 January. Students have arrived and took part in induction on 17 April 2018. Moving forward, the PGR School recommends an earlier closing date for 2018/19 scholarships.

5 PGR Committee Working Groups - Student-Supervisor Statement of Expectation
The UCTL approved the recommendation to integrate the statement of expectation outlining student and supervisor responsibilities developed by the working group of the PGR committee into the Code of Practice, subject to Senate approval. Senate considered and approved the proposal on 21 February 2018.

6 Training and Development
6.1 PGR Induction
Induction for PGR (January start) students took place on 17 April (rescheduled from 02 March due to adverse weather) in the PGR School (Bishops Table and the Old Library in Crombie Halls). Approximately 70 new students attended. The PGR School have worked with Professional Services Support teams to provide more induction information online for students to access at any stage during their study period. PhD supervisors and PGR coordinators were also invited to the Marketplace session (stands/showcase of support available to PGR students and an opportunity to meet the teams involved).

6.2 PhD comics - Jorge Cham
The PGR School welcomed Jorge Cham, founder of PhD comics to the University of Aberdeen on 23 March as part of a Scottish tour. Jorge delivered a lecture on ‘The Power of Procrastination’ to over 200 PhD students and academic staff. He also delivered a workshop on communication skills to PhD students.

6.3 PGR course attendance
The PGR School together with professional services teams across the University coordinate and deliver a large programme of training courses and workshops for PGR students. There is an ongoing issue with course attendance where some students repeatedly fail to attend or cancel their place very close to the start of a course, or sometimes even once a course has started. Most courses in the programme have large waiting lists (often in excess of 50 students) yet we cannot offer places to individuals so close to the start time. In an attempt to manage non-attendance, the PGR School over books courses to try to ensure places are filled and at times we will encourage students to simply turn up to see if there is a free place.
PGR courses are free for students to attend but are not free to run; there is considerable staff time involved in developing, delivering and administering such courses. Additionally, failure to attend (where there is no valid reason) does not represent the professional behaviours we would want our PhD researchers to exhibit.

At present we have no mechanism to penalise students who fail to attend, but do keep records and feed these back to schools. The PGR School is exploring new ways to deliver training to support the wide range of students we have, including distance, off-campus and part-time. A new approach would be inclusive and more cost efficient in the longer –term.

6.4 RKEC-RTSC

The Research Training sub-committee of the Universities Scotland Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee will hold the Fourth Annual Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum on 14 June 2018. The forum is open to researcher developers, members of the RTSC parent committee, academic postgraduate coordinators, Graduate School leads, Pool leads, QAA Scotland, SFC and will focus on ‘Supporting and Enhancing Researcher Mental Wellbeing in Scotland’.

L. Leiper

Postgraduate Research School Manager

20 April 2018