

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10:00 23 March 2023, CMR1.0 (HYBRID)

Present	Dan Branch	Academic Director of Graduate Studies (Chair)
	Rachel Dickinson	Senior Faculty Tutor (Arts), Dean of Students Office
	Cherryl Jones	Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager, WP
	Debbi Marais	BGS Member, WMS
	Sotaro Kita	Academic Director, Research Executive
	Liam Medlin	PGR Representative, Sciences
	Wunmi Ogunde	PGR Representative, Sciences
	Hamza Rehman	SU VP (Postgraduates)
	Rebecca Vipond	Doctoral College (Secretary)
	Dorothy Wang	PGR Representative, Social Sciences
In Attendance	Laura Larard	Administrative Officer, Doctoral College
	Michele Underwood	Research Development Manager, Doctoral College
Ref	Item	
012	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Anil Awesti, Sally Blakeman, Ross Forman, Tess Grant, Sara Hattersley, Rhiannon Martyn and Ashleigh Skelhorn.	
013	Declarations of Interest No new declarations were made.	
014	Minutes of meeting held on 21 November 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 (014-BGSEDIWG-230323, Open) were approved . A glossary of Acronyms is provided at the end of this document.	
015	Matters Arising from meeting on 21 November 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial approval has been provided to run a 1-year pilot Doctoral Access Travel Grant with Chancellor's International Scholarships. This will be advertised to 2023 entrants in late spring and the scheme's effectiveness will be reported at the next meeting. The circulation of the pre-application Black Box research project is ongoing. Colleagues who utilise this resource are reminded to contact the PIs in order to collate impact of the project. 	
Chair's Update		
016	Chair's Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair welcomed the new PGR representatives to the EDI working group. 	
Governance		
017	Membership and Terms of Reference The Terms of Reference were upheld. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liam Medlin, Wunmi Ogunde and Dorothy Wang joined the group as PGR representatives. 	
018	Viva Outcomes The Committee received the report (018-BGSEDIWG-230323, Protected) with key points and discussions as below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A breakdown of viva outcomes (pass, minor corrections, major corrections, resubmission) over the past 3 years (19/20 – 21/22) was provided, broken down by Faculty, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. It was noted that viva outcome does not necessarily correlate with overall quality of the thesis. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data which related to less than 5 individuals was not considered to avoid possible identification. • Some non-white PGRs are less likely to receive a pass or minor corrections and are more likely to receive major corrections or resubmission as the result of their viva. Also, some PGRs with declared disabilities are more likely to receive major corrections or resubmission. • Ethnicity and other demographics of examiners may impact the reported data but is not currently collected. • Currently, demographic breakdowns are not provided by faculty or department, which may be useful. It was noted that due to the small numbers of PGRs in some areas, this would have to be handled carefully. • Other factors may be influencing viva outcomes beyond the demographics reported, including country of domicile and English as an additional language. • DC is considering adjusting its PGR Examination advice in view of this reported data. This includes the use of exam advisors, which while currently recommended by DC, is only compulsory when an examiner has no prior experience at Warwick or is new to PGR examining. Practices within the Russell Group vary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When this was introduced (<i>ca.</i> 5 years ago) there was Department pushback about making the role compulsory, leading to different departmental policies about their inclusion. ○ Currently, exam advisors are silent during the examination itself, not reading the thesis or being involved in discussion of content, only joining the post-viva discussion to explain Warwick’s viva protocol when needed. ○ Adding a remit to formally chair the viva, including explicitly considering any biases is being considered. ○ PGRs can formally appeal a viva outcome that they feel is unfair based on examiner conduct. • It is likely that the reported viva outcome data stems from more than just the viva itself, with the overall supervision experience, writing up and viva preparation also being factors. • To better understand what leads to reported viva outcomes, gaining the PGR perspective at key touchpoints (first year upgrade etc.) would be useful, potentially following cohorts through from start to finish to understand their expectations, and see how the factors that affect progress lead to the viva outcome. • Where a viva does not go well, this must be handled delicately as PGRs may not wish to provide detailed feedback. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) DC to consider adding ethnicity and other demographic characteristics to the Nomination of Examiners form to collect data to be compared to viva outcome. 2) DC to present this data to all departments at the upcoming round of departmental visits and open discussions about viva practices. 3) DC to review examiner guidance. 4) DC to consider a post-viva evaluation survey for PGRs and collecting feedback from exam advisors and internal examiners.
019	<p>Inclusive Supervision Practices</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC is undertaking a new project to review PGR supervision at Warwick, with a view to reset expectations for both PGRs and supervisors, and to enable supervisors and wider University support networks to effectively support PGRs as individuals. • This project will be made of three parts: updating guidance, expanding mandatory training, and growing a community of practice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance will be targeted and detailed, providing supervisors with a single point of reference. This will include (amongst other topics) signposting for disabilities and mental health, understanding cultural contexts, supporting writing up and viva preparations. ○ Warwick is currently behind the Russell Group in mandatory supervisor training, so this must be addressed. To be effective this must respond to an appetite for training, which is seen as purposeful by departments and individual academics. ○ The community of practice will enable engaged individuals who want to further their practice and pedagogy to meet and discuss different aspects of supervision, alongside growing a peer support network to help to answer specific questions when they arise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDI aspects are intended to be fully embedded throughout the project, as opposed to being considered as a separate element. The intention is to be able to support PGRs as holistic individuals, including their varying personal circumstances. ● There is a need to manage the expectation of some PGRs that their supervisors alone should know the answer to all questions and concerns, which is not practical. Therefore, managing boundaries, communication, effective signposting and follow up processes with other touch points is vital. ● Building this activity into existing mandatory departmental activities should be considered, such as department meetings and teaching away days. However, it is recognised that the lower number of PGRs compared to taught students (UG/PGT) currently makes inclusion of PGR-specific matters in existing taught activities a challenge. ● Deciding what responsibilities should fall centrally (to DC), and what to departments, including assurance that activities at the department level are completed is to be discussed. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) DC to consider how to personalise signposting to guidance for supervisors whose PGRs have declared particular needs.
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Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion

Theme Heading

020	EPSRC EDI Action Plan The Committee received and noted the report (020-BGSEDIWG-230323, Open).
021	QAA Defining, Measuring and Supporting Success for PGRs from Diverse Backgrounds The Committee received and noted the report (019-BGSEDIWG-230323, Open).

Other

022	Any other business There was no other business.
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Next meeting: TBC

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
[2022-2023]			
004 – Membership and Terms of Reference	ACTION The secretariat will put out a call for PGR representation on this working group via EPQ, DC newsletter, ADC, relevant PGR Groups and the SU.	Secretariat January 2023	Complete
	ACTION 1) DC will continue to scope a pilot Doctoral Access Travel Grant	Secretariat March 2023	Complete

005 - Aspects of Accessibility	ACTION 2) DC to promote circulation of Pre-application Doctoral Communications Project	Chair September 2023	On-going
018 - Viva Outcomes	ACTION 1) DC to consider adding ethnicity and other demographic characteristics to the Nomination of Examiners form to collect data to be compared to via outcome.	Chair September 2023	On-going
	ACTION 2) DC to present this data to all departments at the upcoming round of departmental visits and open discussions about viva practices.	Chair July 2023	On-going
	ACTION 3) DC to review examiner guidance.	Chair September 2023	On-going
	ACTION 4) DC to consider a post-viva evaluation survey for PGRs and collecting feedback from exam advisors and internal examiners.	Chair September 2023	On-going
019 - Inclusive Supervision Practices	ACTION DC to consider how to personalise signposting to guidance for supervisors whose PGRs have declared particular needs.	Chair September 2023	On-going

Appendix 1: Acronym Glossary

- **ADC** – Academic Development Centre
- **BGS** – Board of Graduate Studies
- **CIS** – Chancellors International Scholarship
- **CPD** – Continuous Professional Development
- **DC** – Doctoral College
- **EDI** – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- **HEI** – Higher Education Institution, such as Universities, Research Institutes.
- **LCS** – Legal & Compliance Services
- **PGR** – Postgraduate Researcher
- **PI** – Principal Investigator, and academic who is responsible for a particular grant.
- **SU** – Students Union
- **UKRI** – UK Research & Innovations. The main government funding body for Research, made up of 7 Councils
 - **AHRC** – Arts and Humanities Research Council
 - **BBSRC** – Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 - **ESRC** – Economic and Social Research Council
 - **EPSRC** – Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 - **MRC** – Medical Research Council
 - **NERC** – Natural Environment Research Council
 - **STFC** – Science and Technology Facilities Research Council
- **WMS** – Warwick Medical School
- **WP** – Widening Participation and Outreach