

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10:30 21 November 2022, CMR1.1

Present	Dan Branch	Academic Director of Graduate Studies (Chair)
	Anil Awesti	Race Equality Taskforce
	Sally Blakeman	Student Engagement & Experience (Education)
	Rachel Dickinson	Senior Faculty Tutor (Arts), Dean of Students Office
	Ross Forman	BGS Member (English & CLS)
	Sara Hattersley	BGS Member (ADC)
	Sotaro Kita	Academic Director, Research Executive
	Hamza Rehman	SU VP (Postgraduates)
	Ashleigh Skelhorn	BGS Member (MGS)
	Rebecca Vipond	Doctoral College (Secretary)

Ref	Item
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001	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Tess Grant, Debbi Marais, Rhiannon Martyn, Cheryl Jones.</p>
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002	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>
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Chair's Update

003	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>No Chair's Business was noted.</p>
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Governance

004	<p>Membership and Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key details and discussions as below. A glossary of Acronyms is provided at the end of this document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of working group is progressing from the work done in 2021-22. • Providing personal testimony is recognised as very difficult and can be re-traumatising. Members will not be asked to do this, but instead to focus on recommending a coherent set of practical actions. • Specific examples of inappropriate behaviour or traumatic experiences can be safely reported using Report and Support. Alternatively, members can raise individual matters that are within the prevue of this working group with the chair. • The work of this group needs to be pro-active, as opposed to reactive and always reliant on feedback. • This group should be an example of best practice when discussing EDI matters and can then provide guidance to other groups on conducting this type of business. • There needs to be a better flow of information to PGRs on what actions are taken. • There are some matters over which DC and BGS has direct oversight, but others where we are restricted to making recommendations. For example, DC has direct oversight of about of 50% PGR funding. • This working group recognises the width of EDI-related matters and the interdependence of different forms of EDI. • This group intends to consider inclusivity in the widest sense and to be data/evidence led. • From previous data analysis, DC has identified two EDI characteristics to focus on: race and disability. • The working group requires more PGR representation but is mindful of not asking marginalised PGRs to contribute without appropriate remuneration. <p>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.</p>
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Aspects of Accessibility

The Committee received the report (005-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected) with key points and discussions as below. A glossary of Acronyms is provided at the end of this document.

- This meeting covered recruitment processes and practices, and how to support EDI initiatives at the start of the PGR pipeline
- [UKRI have stated](#) that they want HEIs to operate in a life-cycle approach with EDI matters.
- This work links clearly with the Inclusive Education Model
- We need to focus on how to spend existing resource more effectively as opposed to plans which rely on provision of additional resource.
- We need to consider how to best provide support for disabled applicants through the application process, including international disabled students (e.g. meeting language requirements).
- DC can provide comparative EDI data to PIs at different levels (university, faculty, department).
- EDI 2-page statements seem to be standard in PGR funding bids, though EDI is also expected to be embedded throughout the design of PGR programmes.
- Recruitment law does not apply to PGR scholarships – ratified by LCS. Any actions must be data-led and contextualised by student voice.
- Funding bid writers can and should connect to Social Inclusion taskforces when constructing EDI statements.
- A menu of recruitment initiatives that PIs can make use of is provided:
 - Anonymising applications
 - Ringfencing scholarships
 - Guaranteed interviews, while balancing interview biases
 - Breaking down CV and research proposal requirements into clearly described components
 - Pre-application clinics
 - Application assessor training
- Multi-partner programmes can also incorporate EDI strategies from partner organisations.
- Connecting to potential PGR applicants from marginalised backgrounds is recognised as a challenge.
- Doctoral Access Travel Grant – PGR scholarship holders who cannot meet the costs of immigration must either decline their offer to study or take on high-risk debt.
 - DC is looking at how to support PGR applicants in the most need.
 - There is no WP-type data to rely on.
 - The mechanism of getting funding to applicants in-country is undefined.
 - Currently, DC is looking to target CIS applicants from countries of low income (plus context around the individual), though the opportunity will be circulated to all.
 - There will be a short application form to complete, asking for self-declaration on how candidates meet the defined criteria.
 - Currently we will not be able to support the costs for dependants
 - Barriers to rolling out a PGR-wide scheme
 - PGRs often hold more than one offer
 - Financial risk – sending money out before lots of students arrive.
 - Budget beyond use of underspend has not yet been discussed or approved
- Pre-application Doctoral Communications Project
 - How to handle informal pre-application conversations. Usually no framework/process is in place. Who is being encouraged/discouraged and on what grounds?
 - DC will circulate the advice generated more widely via BGS to prompt department buy in.
 - DC will also work closely with the project PIs to capture impact case studies.
 - This should fit into revised guidance for supervisors – plus CPD.

DECISION: The working group **recommended** it has oversight of EDI statements in any new PGR funding bids, such as the upcoming EPSRC, ESRC, Leverhulme and UKRI AI CDT call.

	ACTIONS: 1) DC will continue to scope a pilot Doctoral Access Travel Grant 2) DC to promote circulation of Pre-application Doctoral Communications Project
<i>Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion</i>	
Theme Heading	
006	SU PGR Survey The Committee received and noted the report (006-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
007	Enhancing my Research Culture Project The Committee received and noted the report (007-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
008	MIBTP EDI Project Report The Committee received and noted the report (008-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
009a	MRC DTP EDI Strategy The Committee received and noted the report (009a-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
009b	MRC DTP EDI Appendix The Committee received and noted the report (009b-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
010	NERC CENTA Ringfenced Scholarships The Committee received and noted the report (010-BGSEDIWG-211122, Protected).
Other	
011	Any other business There was no other business.
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
005 - Aspects of Accessibility	DECISION The working group recommended it has oversight of EDI statements in any new PGR funding bids, such as the upcoming EPSRC, ESRC, Leverhulme and UKRI AI CDT call.		
	ACTION 1) DC will continue to scope a pilot Doctoral Access Travel Grant	Secretariat March 2023	On-going
	ACTION 2) DC to promote circulation of Pre-application Doctoral Communications Project	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