

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**

**BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP**

**OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13:30 26 June 2023, CMR1.1 (HYBRID)**

<b>Present</b>	Dan Branch	Academic Director of Graduate Studies ( <b>Chair</b> )
	Ross Forman	BGS Member, English & CLS
	Sara Hattersley	BGS Member, Academic & Development Centre
	Cherryl Jones	Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager, WP
	Debbi Marais	BGS Member, WMS
	Rhiannon Martyn	Head of the Doctoral College
	Wunmi Ogunde	PGR Representative, Sciences
	Rebecca Vipond	Doctoral College ( <b>Secretary</b> )
	Dorothy Wang	PGR Representative, Social Sciences
<b>In Attendance</b>	Damien Homer	Head of Disability Services
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Item</b>	
023	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Anil Awesti, Rachel Dickinson, Tess Grant, Sotaro Kita, Liam Medlin, Hamza Rehman and Ashleigh Skelhorn.	
024	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> No new declarations were made.	
025	<b>Minutes of meeting held on 23 March 2023</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 (025-BGSEDIWG-260623, Open) were <b>approved</b> . A glossary of Acronyms is provided at the end of this document.	
026	<b>Matters Arising from meeting on 23 March 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI breakdowns of viva outcomes were provided to all academic departments in the recent round of meetings with the Doctoral College. It was found that a department-level breakdown in EDI data was not useful as most of it had to be redacted to be compliant with GDPR recommendations when handling small datasets. It is not clear if the EDI issues identified at an institutional level are due to the viva process itself or are an outcome of longer-term supervision issues. This matter will be returned to in future meetings.</li> <li>• A university-wide consultation of academic departments and CDTs about the proposed PGR Supervisor Training project is ongoing, after which the Doctoral College will clarify next steps. There is a varied sense of the extent to which this PGR supervision is an urgent issue, but overall, there is general support to do something. This matter will be returned to in future meetings.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chair's Update</b>		
027	<b>Chair's Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no additional items of business raised by the chair.</li> </ul>	
<b>Governance</b>		
028	<b>Membership and Terms of Reference</b> The <a href="#">Terms of Reference</a> were upheld. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership on this working group from BGS will update for start of the 23/24 Academic Year. PGR members are welcome to stay on this working group, but there is no expectation for them to do so.</li> </ul>	
029	<b>Doctoral Access Bursaries</b> The Committee received a verbal the report with key points and discussions as below.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In June 2023, the Doctoral College launched the pilot <a href="#">Doctoral Access Bursary</a> scheme to incoming CIS and MWA scholars. 11 applications were received and reviewed by a small panel consisting of members of Doctoral College staff. 5 applications were approved, and successful applicants were contacted; all have now successfully completed and submitted the required paperwork to transfer the £2,000 bursary to their personal bank accounts. Recruiting academic departments have been contacted to arrange incoming travel for each successful DAB recipient. Of the 6 applications declined, 2 had not met the prerequisite conditions on their course offer (ATAS clearance) and 4 did not sufficiently prove their alignment with the bursary criteria. All declined applicants have been contacted and given the opportunity to appeal.</li> <li>• Measuring the financial impact for the institution is anticipated to be hard to quantify.</li> <li>• To measure the impact of the pilot, the Doctoral College will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask for testimonial from recipients.</li> <li>○ Track both successful and unsuccessful applicants to investigate how this bursary impacts enrolment.</li> <li>○ Track any future PGR Hardship Support Fund applications from DAB recipients.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Aside from repeating this pilot in future years within the Doctoral College, expansion to other schemes should be investigated. Careful consideration of size and shape is required, including not encouraging PGRs who cannot support themselves for the full duration of study to enter a financially unstable situation. It is anticipated that not all departments and/or CDTs may be able to support a similar initiative financially, but at present the Doctoral College does not have the funding to support a university-wide scheme.</li> <li>• DAB is recognised as a demonstrable new PGR EDI action undertaken in 2022/23</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 1:</b> Doctoral College to share the DAB policy and process with academic departments and CDTs.</p> <p><b>ACTION 2:</b> the Doctoral College will ask for testimonial from recipients, track both successful and unsuccessful applicants to investigate how this bursary impacts enrolment and track any future PGR Hardship Support Fund applications from DAB recipients.</p>
030	<p><b>Research Culture</b></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current <a href="#">Enhancing Research Culture</a> fund call deadline is the 3rd of July 2023 (earlier than previous years), supporting small projects (&lt;£10K) and large projects (&lt;£50K). There will be further deadlines for small projects during the academic year.</li> <li>• There may be appetite for this working group to sponsor a small project bid to a future deadline.</li> </ul>
031	<p><b>Reasonable Adjustments &amp; Mitigating Circumstances for PGRs</b></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Doctoral College is being asked with increasing frequency about what measures can be put in place to mitigate disability and other needs for PGRs.</li> <li>• There is a well understood regime for UG and PGT (and staff), but it these do not necessarily translate to the PGR context. For example, PGRs tend not to attend classes as part of their qualification, extensions to deadlines may not be useful, and assessment is through a single thesis. Access to support funding is also inconsistent.</li> <li>• Reasonable adjustments need to be tailored to individuals – if, when provided by DS, they are not relevant or are generic, they can be referred to the head of DS for amendment. We must ensure PGRs feel part of the community and able to access DS like all other students.</li> <li>• DS are often only made aware of situations at the point of crisis – possibly due to the nature of the typical PGR experience meaning they do not want to seek support. However, it was noted that it is must easier to provide a meaningful intervention when the process is started earlier.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DC wants to be ambitious in this area to explore what is possible. For example, could there be a way of signalling disability to thesis examiners?</li> <li>• The process of access to assessments and equipment is analogous for all students, though eligibility to funding is different, further discussion is in item 032.</li> <li>• At present it is not clear is a supervisor is made aware by the institution of an incoming PGR's identified disability at the point of admission or enrolment, which would be the case for UG/PGT. This means that currently, the onus is on the PGR to disclose their disability multiple times.</li> <li>• Potentially including a needs assessment as part of all initial conversations between supervisors and PGRs, regardless of disability status would be useful (Midlands Graduate School CDT intend to pilot this). This also ties to the PGR Supervisor Training project, which has identified training relating to supervision of PGRs with disabilities as a priority area.</li> <li>• There can and should also be pastoral support beyond supervisors, possibly through, mentors/personal tutors, directors of graduate studies, senior tutors and Dean of Students Office.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DC to facilitate DS consultation with PGRs.</p>
032	<p><b>DSA PGR Claims Process</b></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following a recent specific situation highlighted to the Doctoral College, the <a href="#">staff process for supporting UKRI funded DSA for PGRs</a> has been clarified.</li> <li>• Within the UKRI DSA Framework, no distinction between funded PGRs with home or overseas fee status is mentioned, therefore it is reasonable to assume that overseas fee PGRs who are currently funded by a UKRI scholarship are eligible for UKRI DSA support.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">PGR Hardship Support Fund</a> now identifies unforeseen exceptional costs relating to a disability that cannot be funded by other means as ground for an application. This would cover costs that are not eligible through UKRI DSA and/or PGRs who cannot access DSA.</li> </ul>
033	<p><b>PGR EDI Priorities for 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctoral Access Scholarships - 3 per year (ringfenced for Race XChange in 2022). In consultation with this working group, DC need to agree the parameters for these new scholarships in 2023, such as pathways for black students. The PGR Sanctuary and Cara scholarships have also been rebranded as Doctoral Access Scholarships – Sanctuary, bringing to total number of DAS to 7 per year.</li> <li>• PGR Recruitment and marketing strategy including of minoritized groups, home-fee applicants and providing interview guidance. Could this be linked to Warwick Scholars?</li> <li>• Further investigation of the identified EDI differences in viva outcomes.</li> <li>• Clearer and earlier signposting and visibility about upgrade and examination.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> In consultation with this working group, DC to agree the parameters for the new DAS in 2023.</p>
<b>Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion</b>	
<b>Theme Heading</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
034	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At most the recent BGS meeting a question was raised about whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been carried out for a new international joint programme. ISR have agreed to undertake this piece of work, which will be reported back at BGS and this working group. BGS will now be asking for this for all new programmes as a matter of routing governance.</li> </ul>
<b>Next meeting: TBC 23/24</b>	

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
[2022-2023]			
004 – Membership and Terms of Reference	<b>ACTION</b> 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	<b>ACTION 1)</b> DC will continue to scope a pilot Doctoral Access Travel Grant	Secretariat March 2023	Complete
	<b>ACTION 2)</b> DC to promote circulation of Pre-application Doctoral Communications Project	Chair September 2023	On-going
018 - Viva Outcomes	<b>ACTION 1)</b> 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
	<b>ACTION 2)</b> 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
	<b>ACTION 3)</b> DC to review examiner guidance.	Chair September 2023	On-going
	<b>ACTION 4)</b> 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	<b>ACTION</b> DC to consider how to personalise signposting to guidance for supervisors whose PGRs have declared particular needs.	Chair September 2023	On-going
029 - Doctoral Access Bursaries	<b>ACTION1)</b> Doctoral College to share the DAB policy and process with academic departments and CDTs.	Secretariat September 2023	On-going
	<b>ACTION 2)</b> the Doctoral College will: ask for testimonial from recipients, track both successful and unsuccessful applicants to investigate how this bursary impacts enrolment and track any future PGR Hardship Support Fund applications from DAB recipients.	Secretariat January 2024	On-going
031 - Reasonable Adjustments & Mitigating Circumstances for PGRs	<b>ACTION</b> DC to facilitate DS consultation with PGRs	Secretariat September 2023	On-going
033 - PGR EDI Priorities for 2023/24	<b>ACTION</b> In consultation with this working group, DC to agree the parameters for the new DAS in 2023.	Chair September 2023	On-going

## Appendix 1: Acronym Glossary

- **ADC** – Academic Development Centre
- **BGS** – Board of Graduate Studies
- **CDT** – Centre of Doctoral Training
- **CIS** – Chancellors International Scholarship
- **CPD** – Continuous Professional Development
- **DAB** – Doctoral Access Bursary
- **DAS** – Doctoral Access Scholarship
- **DC** – Doctoral College
- **DS** – Disability Services
- **DSA** – Disabled Student’s Allowance
- **EDI** – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- **EIA** – Equality Impact Assessment
- **HEI** – Higher Education Institution, such as Universities, Research Institutes.
- **ISR** – International Strategy Relations
- **LCS** – Legal & Compliance Services
- **MWA** – Monash-Warwick Alliance
- **PGR** – Postgraduate Researcher
- **PGT** – Postgraduate Taught student
- **PI** – Principal Investigator, and academic who is responsible for a particular grant.
- **SU** – Students Union
- **UG** – Undergraduate Student
- **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