

<b>UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK</b>		
<b>PGR Scholarships Working &amp; Advisory Group</b>		
<b>PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 14:00, 12 February 2026, Microsoft Teams</b>		
<b>Present</b>	Adam Childs	Academic Registrar (Chair)
	Nicola Attridge	PGR Finance Manager, Doctoral College
	Emilie Day	Postgraduate Programmes Administrative Officer, Chemistry
	Nok Hang Hui	Postgraduate Researcher
	Andrea Howard	Research Development Manager, R&IS
	Kay Jones	Doctoral Training Manager, Faculty of Arts
	Chris Moran	Social Sciences Scholarship Management Group Co-Chair
	Vardis Ntoukakis	Director, MIBTP
	Ashleigh Skelhorn-French	ESRC Consortium Manager, Doctoral College
	Rebecca Vipond	Deputy Head, Doctoral College (Secretary)
<b>Attending</b>	Nicola Ellis-Thomas	PGR Scholarships Officer, Doctoral College
	Stephen Grice	Head of Admissions
	Liz Hough	Director of Admissions
	Sarah Jarratt	Centre Manager, HetSys
	Neeha Labba	Management Accountant, Doctoral College
	Vicky Strudwick	Head of Research Culture, IAS
Ref	Item	
011	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from James Kermode (Sarah Jarrat attended), David Lambert, Rebekah Luck-Owen (Stephen Grice and Liz Hough attended), Rhiannon Martyn, Leda Mirbahai and Kate Whiston.	
012	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> No new declarations were made.	
013	<b>Minutes of last meeting on 6 November 2025</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2025 (013- SWAG2526, Public) were <b>approved</b> .	
014	<b>Matters arising from last meeting on 6 November 2025</b> The following matters arising were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on student recruitment: PG Admissions provided a paper to PRS on 11 February relating to course admissions across all departments, which can also be shared with this committee.</li> <li>• Both BBSRC DFA bids were unfortunately unsuccessful. A new CDT bid to Leverhulme is being prepared.</li> <li>• The new Faculty SMGs are now described on DC webpages – link <a href="#">Faculty PGR Scholarship Management Groups</a></li> <li>• Commonwealth fee top-up requests could potentially be supported using any remaining or partial scholarship funds at Faculty SMG level, and that SMGs are well placed to judge whether the recruiting department could instead fund the fee difference directly.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> Secretariat to share PG Admissions PRS report.	
<b>Chair's Update</b>		
015	<b>Chair's Business</b> The Chair did not raise any updates for the Committee.	
<b>Governance</b>		
016	<b>Membership and Terms of Reference 2025-26</b>	

	<p>The Committee welcomed PGR member Nok Hang Hui.</p> <p>It was also noted the <a href="#">Committee Terms of Reference and membership</a> were available on the University website.</p>
<b>Finance and Resources</b>	
017	<p><b>FCCG Report 2025 Q1</b></p> <p>The Committee received the report (017-SWAG2526) and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new risks have been identified in Q1 compared to the previous report.</li> <li>• No concerns were raised by committee.</li> </ul>
018	<p><b>2026 Entry Scholarships</b></p> <p>The Committee received the report (018-SWAG2526) and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 840 applications were received, which is significantly higher than previous years. 232 were nominated by departments and faculty rankings concluded on 12 February.</li> <li>• Allocation panels for each scholarship budget are scheduled for 13 – 18 February, with notification of results by 2 March.</li> <li>• CSC candidates who receive a nomination offer from Warwick must next apply directly to CSC, who make final decisions.</li> <li>• A review of the changes to the process introduced in this cycle will be conducted after results are confirmed.</li> <li>• Round 2 for nomination-led applications is open and will close on 20 May. This includes SJTU-Warwick, Eutopia, WIF/WCF and Collaborative EPSRC DLA funding.</li> <li>• 9% applications were from Home fee candidates and 10% of the total nominated are for Home candidates. This tracks with the current trends in PG admissions in the sector.</li> <li>• This committee endorses moving MWA joint PhD Scholarships to the nomination led process for 2027 entry.</li> <li>• Via their SMG, Social Sciences HoDs expressed that it may be more efficient if each department were told upfront how many awards they are likely to receive to streamline departmental planning and reduce the need for Faculty-level management group oversight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It was questioned how a devolved approach would ensure that <i>the best overall cases</i> are funded, rather than the <i>best cases within each department</i>. The current centralised model ensures consistent candidate-level QA, as opposed to department performance or other metrics.</li> <li>○ Questions were raised about methodology of distributing allocations would under a devolved model, noting that this could become a politically sensitive process about department performance instead of candidate quality.</li> <li>○ A fully devolved model might also disadvantage interdisciplinary proposals, which often rely on cross-faculty consideration.</li> <li>○ Committee members asked whether data could be provided to help assess the potential impact of a devolved approach.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 1:</b> Doctoral College to coordinate a review and feedback form all stakeholders about the new streamlined scholarship process and report to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION 2:</b> Doctoral College to conduct a quantitative analysis of a fully developed approach and report to the next meeting.</p>
019	<b>UKRI Centres of Doctoral Training Updates</b>

	No matters were raised by CDTs. Annual Monitoring Surveys were submitted but not discussed (021(a-f)-SWAG2526).
020	<p><b>Faculty SMG Updates</b></p> <p>The committee received a verbal report with key points and discussions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Departments expressed concern about performance relative to others, despite strong overall candidate quality and adequate funding levels.</li> <li>○ The group will consider clear strategic priorities for the next academic year.</li> <li>○ Assessors reported a high workload due to the significant rise in applications, prompting the recruitment of additional faculty-level assessors; the two-stage review process (department first, then faculty) was viewed as overly burdensome and concentrated on too few staff, leading to interest in a more efficient or better-distributed model, though it was noted that the process itself has not changed substantially from previous years. If the DGS role now carries added responsibilities should be reflected in workload modelling?</li> <li>○ Overall PGR course applications are already above last year's total, with further increases anticipated. The committee discussed whether PG Admissions could provide support, such as pre-sifting or triaging applications. Concerns were raised about candidates emerging late in the process, who are typically unlikely to secure nomination; triage could help address this. PG Admissions may be well placed to add value in this area.</li> <li>○ Departments reported that the decision-making process felt opaque, with some assuming that grades were the primary criterion. The committee noted a need for clearer communication of assessment principles and incorporating social inclusion considerations in a more intentional way. Review of ranking criteria will form part of the overall review and feedback exercise conducted by DC.</li> <li>○ The timing of the process remains challenging though no clear solutions have yet emerged.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DC and PG Admissions to further consider a triaging proposal, to report to the next meeting.</p>
<b>Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion</b>	
<b>Subsidiary and Sub-Committee Reports</b>	
021	<p><b>UKRI Monitoring Surveys</b></p> <p>The following reports were provided to the committee but not discussed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) EPSRC DTP</li> <li>b) EPSRC iCASE</li> <li>c) EPSRC Maths</li> <li>d) MIBTP (i-iii)</li> <li>e) MRC DTP</li> <li>f) MGS (i-ii)</li> </ol>
<b>Other</b>	
022	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It was noted that the UK government has set an intention to invest more in research skills and talent development, which should lead to new external PhD funding opportunities. Internally, there is pressure to find savings. This committee noted that PGR scholarships are vital to research efforts, but future commitment to internal scholarships budgets are not yet clear.</li> <li>b) The Pathway programme wish to discuss any positive action for black PhD Scholarships in CDTs. It was noted that MRC DT and NERC Centa have ringfenced scholarships and contact details</li> </ol>

were provide for further discussion. Proactive inclusion of Pathway in new CDT bids was also highlighted.

**Next meeting: 05 May 2026 14:00-16:00 (Microsoft Teams)**

### DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
<b>[2025-2026]</b>			
006-SWAG2526 Membership and Terms of Reference 2025-26	<b>ACTION</b> Secretary to let colleagues who were previously on the membership know what changes have been made to the membership.	Secretary 12 February 2026	complete
007-SWAG2526 FCCG Report 2024 Q3	<b>ACTION 1:</b> Report back to group in more detail on student recruitment.	Secretary 05 May 2026	complete
	<b>ACTION 2:</b> Find out and update group on both the BBSRC DFA bids	R&IS 12 February 2026	complete
008- 2026 Entry Scholarships	<b>ACTION:</b> Information on the new Faculty Scholarship Management groups to be shared including who the members are and how they operate.	Secretary 12 February 2026	complete
010- Commonwealth Scholarships	<b>ACTION:</b> Becky Vipond to send details to Kate Whiston and others in the group for discussion.	Secretary 12 February 2026	complete
014-Matters Arising	<b>ACTION:</b> Secretariat to share PG Admissions PRS report.	Secretary 05 May 2026	complete
018-2026 Entry Scholarships	<b>ACTION 1:</b> Doctoral College to coordinate review and feedback form all stakeholders about the new streamlined scholarship process and report to the next meeting.	Secretary 05 May 2026	complete
	<b>ACTION 2:</b> Doctoral College to conduct a quantitative analysis of a fully developed approach and report to the next meeting.	Secretary 05 May 2026	complete
020-Faculty SMG updates	<b>ACTION:</b> DC and PG Admissions to further consider a triaging proposal, to report to the next meeting.	Secretary 05 May 2026	On-going

### Acronym Glossary

**AHRC:** Arts and Humanities Research Council  
**ASC:** Academic Strategy Committee  
**BBSRC:** Biology & Biological Sciences Research Council  
**CADRE:** Centre for Arts Doctoral Research Excellence  
**CDT:** Centre of Doctoral Training  
**CIS:** Chancellor's International Scholarship  
**CSC:** China Scholarship Council  
**DEAR:** Doctoral Education and Academic Research  
**DC:** Doctoral College  
**DCS:** Department of Computer Science  
**DFA:** Doctoral Focal Award  
**DGS:** Director of Graduate Studies

**DLA:** Doctoral Landscape Award  
**D-PVC:** Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor  
**DTP:** Doctoral Training Programme  
**EPSRC:** Engineering and Physical Science Research Council  
**ESRC:** Economics and Social Sciences Research Council  
**FCCG:** Financial Control and Compliance Group  
**HEI:** Higher Education Institution  
**IBR:** Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences  
**iCASE:** Industrial Cooperative Awards in Science & Technology  
**IDG:** Information Digital Group  
**iDLA:** Industrial Doctoral Landscape Award  
**ISR:** International Strategy and Relations  
**M4C:** Midlands4Cities Doctoral Training Programme  
**MGS:** Midlands Graduate School  
**MIBTP:** Midlands Integrative Biosciences Training Partnership  
**MRC:** Medical Research Council  
**MWA:** Monash-Warwick Alliance  
**PGR:** Postgraduate Research Student  
**PGR-SWAG:** Postgraduate Research Scholarships Working and Advisory Group  
**PI:** Principal Investigator  
**QA:** Quality Assurance  
**R&IS:** Research and Impact Services  
**RAG:** Red Amber Green  
**RG:** Russel Group  
**RTP:** Research Technology Platforms  
**RTSG:** Research Training Support Grant  
**SELCS:** School for Education, Communication and Learning Sciences  
**SEM:** Science, Engineering and Medicine  
**SJTU:** Shanghai Jao Tong University  
**SLS:** School of Life Sciences  
**SMG:** Scholarship Management Group  
**UA:** Universal Admissions Course Application System  
**UKRI:** UK Research & Innovation  
**UoW:** University of Warwick  
**URSS:** Undergraduate Research Support Scheme  
**WIF/WCF:** Warwick Industrial Fellowships / Warwick Collaborative Fellowships  
**WMS:** Warwick Medical School  
**WP:** Widening Participation