

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK		
PGR SCHOLARSHIPS WORKING & ADVISORY GROUP		
PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13:00, 22 January 2025, Microsoft Teams		
Present	David Leadley	D-PVC Research (Chair)
	Daniel Branch	Academic Director, Doctoral College (Co-chair)
	Nicola Attridge	PGR Finance Manager, Doctoral College
	Kelly Chennerly	BBSRC MIBTP Manager, SLS
	Jon Coaffee	Director, Midlands Graduate School
	Sharon Howard	Postgraduate Research Manager, DCS
	James Kermode	EPSRC Hetsys Director, Engineering
	Tomomi Kimura	Research Strategy & Development Manager, R&IS
	Natasha Khovanova	Director of Graduate Studies, Engineering
	David Lambert	Director, CADRE & M4C
	Lisa Millard	Doctoral Training Manager, Faculty of Arts
	Jonathan Millar	MRC DTP in IBR Director, WMS
	Vardis Ntoukakis	BBSRC MIBTP Director, SLS
	Vicky Panossian	PGR Representative (Social Sciences)
	Stephanie Schnurr	Director of Graduate Studies, Applied Linguistics
	Ashleigh Skelhorn-French	ESRC Midlands Graduate School Consortium Manager
	Luqman Sudradjat	PGR Representative (SEM)
Attending	Sarah Holcroft	Research Strategy & Development Manager, R&IS
	Andrea Howard	Research Strategy & Development Manager, R&IS
	Rebekah Luck-Owen	PG Admissions Officer
	Rhiannon Martyn	Head of the Doctoral College
	Vicky Strudwick	Head of Research Culture Partnerships
	Louise Sutcliffe	PGR Scholarships Officer, Doctoral College
	Rebecca Vipond	CDT & PGR Scholarship Manager (Secretary)
Ref	Item	
015	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Alan Ashton-Smith, Lara Barzon, Tomo Kimura, Harbeena Lalli, Kate Whiston.	
016	Declarations of Interest No new declarations were made.	
017	Minutes of last meeting on 07 October 2024 The minutes of the meeting held on 07 October 2024 (017-PGRSWAG2425, Open) were approved .	
018	Matters arising from last meeting on 07 October 2024 (a) Training grant approval Doctoral College and R&IS agreed that the PGR Finance Manager can confirm current match for renewal bids, but this does not constitute senior officer approval. Finance office will expect match funding to be at the mandatory minimum and any argument to increase match should be led by the PI, supported by R&IS and DC. R&IS can advise on different scenarios for growth/reduction and support bid writing, obtaining approval and submission. Formal senior officer approval is required for all training grant bids, following the Major Application Checklist.	
Chair's Update		
019	Chair's Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No matters were raised by the chair. 	
Governance		

020	<p>Membership and Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee welcomed the following new members: Stephanie Schnurr (Director of Graduate Studies, Applied Linguistics), Luqman Sudradjat (PGR representative, SEM), Vicky Panossian (PGR representative, Social Sciences)
Finance and Resources	
021	<p>FCCG Report 2024 Q1</p> <p>The Committee received the report (007-PGRSWAG2425, Restricted) and key points and discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no significant changes to note since the previous report. Red RAG ratings mean that we expect to return some funding to UKRI. Budgeting for central running costs often became too generous due to covid and the subsequent change to hybrid delivery. We sought permission to create additional studentships, which was declined by the Research Councils. Amber RAG rating means we are currently anticipating an underspend but are making plans to address this. Successful programmes have won significant industry match funding. RTP actual costs incurred have been lower than budgeted to date. CDTs are confirming that no RTP costs have been miss-assigned to other codes, or if this was over-budgeted in the bid. Some partner HEIs have spent less than was originally budgeted. Additionally, some programmes that renew successfully carry underspend forwards onto future grants. The current financial climate is becoming challenging across the sector. Therefore, underspend could be interpreted as money that is not needed, and match could be reduced in future years. It is important to be mindful about how underspend is understood across teams. Additionally, training grants are usually large and so a small % underspend can have a large £ value. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> CDT staff & PGR Finance to liaise with RTP team about what costs can be assigned to this grant and discuss reallocating budget with EPSRC.
022	<p>2025 Entry Scholarships</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key details and discussions, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC have been tackling an ongoing issue with the scholarship application portal, where some supporting documents have not been automatically importing from UA. The problem has been reported to the system developers via IDG who are working on a fix, but this is yet to be resolved. Department nominators can see all supporting documents for their applicants in UA and DC will import the missing supporting documents for faculty assessment. Chancellor’s International Scholarships: 356 applications submitted, China Scholarship Council: 182 applications submitted, Monash-Warwick Alliance: 18 applications submitted, Doctoral Access (Sanctuary): open for applications until 27 February, Doctoral Access (PATHWAY) to open end of January (awaiting decision on eligibility criteria), Warwick Industrial /Collaborative Fellowships: open for applications.
023	<p>2026 Entry Scholarships Overhaul</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report on progress with plans for changes to central scholarship programmes. Discussions are still continuing with Academic Resourcing Committee on this issue. A formal paper will be tabled at the next meeting</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Members are invited to provide feedback to DC about the current frustrations and suggestions for future improvements to how we administer the central scholarships budget.
024	<p>PGR Insurance</p>

	<p>The Committee received a verbal report with key details and discussions, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion between R&IS and Insurance Services about when PGRs are and are not covered by different types of insurance is ongoing. Further updates will be reported. • This particularly affects PGRs who go on placements/internships with external organisations, subject to a collaboration agreement which usually includes clauses about insurance. In some cases, PGRs may need to consider personal insurance. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Secretary to investigate what PGRs are told about insurance cover when they join the University. 2) Chair and co-chair to follow up with other committees and colleagues as necessary.
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025	<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal report with key details and discussions, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral Access Bursary paper was reported to ASC on 29 October 2024. The proposed expansion was not approved at this time and instead provision will be considered in the 2026 Entry Scholarships Overhaul. • A new scholarship for research into Widening Participation in Doctoral Education has been endorsed. Interested candidates will apply through the ESRC Midlands Graduate School open round first, but if they are not successful, a Doctoral Access (WP) Scholarship can be funded from the central scholarship budget. A successful candidate would be expected to be supervise in SELCS under the DEAR Centre.
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Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion

Subsidiary and Sub-Committee Reports

Other

026	<p>Any other business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) RTSG support for high-cost research. The standard University scholarship RTSG allocation is £5K per scholarship. Some areas of research see much higher costs (ca. £40K). RTSG funds are generally higher in externally funded programmes, such as CDTs. Where departments wish to support high costs projects, the burden to fund the additional costs lies with them, wither through research grant income or other avenues. Consideration of additional support for high-cost PhD projects will be included in the 2026 Scholarship Overhaul. 2) The PGR Paid Internship staff policy has been reviewed, to include provision for internships that are available only and exclusively through doctoral training programmes, such as MGS and M4C. 3) Only the Doctoral College are authorised to send scholarship offer letters for EPSRC DTP/DLA and iCASE/iDLA training grants and recruiting departments must not send their own funding letters to candidates. It is a funder requirement that candidates are informed of and accept the unique terms and conditions for these scholarships in a consistent manner, regardless of which academic department candidates will be entering.
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Next meeting: 12:00, 2 April 2025 (Microsoft Teams)

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
[2022-2023]			
154-Matters Arising	ACTION 1: Doctoral College to lead a working group on PGR Recruitment.	Secretariat, December 2023	Complete

158-DC/CDT Consultation	ACTION 2: Doctoral College can advise when consortium processes are equivalent to Warwick processes in order to reduce duplication for PGRs and supervisors.	Secretariat, on-going	Complete
[2023-2024]			
166-Matters Arising	ACTION 1: Doctoral College to collect data on how often WIF reallocations are required and if the initial allocations process needs changing.	Secretariat, Autumn 2024	Complete
	ACTION 2: URSS is part of Student Experience, could it become embedded into a “Pathways to PhD” new scheme? It was noted that there is not enough funding for URSS. Stats and Physics top-up URSS bursary. Some Warwick UG go to alternative universities for their summer schemes. DC to investigate, could URSS be increased/rebranded/ increased funding?	Secretariat, Autumn 2024	Complete
167-Chair’s Business and Actions	ACTION 1: Email David Leadley with thoughts on the split between rebids and bidding for new ideas.	Members, Autumn 2024	Complete
170- PGR fee income	ACTION 1: Add discounting and waiving of overseas fees to the next agenda.	Secretariat, Autumn 2024	Complete
174-UKRI Audits	ACTION 1: decide what will improve the administrative burden of auditing UKRI training grants for ineligible costs (e.g. additional staff capacity in the DC or RIS).	Secretariat, Winter 2024	Complete
[2024-2025]			
004-Matters Arising	ACTION 1: PGR Scholarships ASC paper to be reported to the next meeting.	Secretariat, April 2025	On-going
	ACTION 2: Department R&IS contacts must be informed as soon as a WIF is awarded to minimise delay in contract negotiations.	PGR Scholarship Officer, November 2024	Complete
	ACTION 3: Doctoral College to discuss with CDT leads and R&IS how to ease the internal approval process so that R&IS colleagues have more capacity to work on the content of bids with PIs, instead of spending excessive time on gaining approvals.	Secretariat, January 2025	Complete
006-Membership & TORs	DECISION: The Committee approved the 2024/25 Terms of Reference.		
	ACTION 1: The Secretariat will recruit additional department and PGR members to the committee.	Secretariat, January 2025	Complete
007-FCCG Report	DECISION: The Committee recommended future financial reports include the central scholarships budget (BGCTS-AW).		
009-Doctoral Access Bursary	DECISION: The Committee recommended the Postgraduate Research Subcommittee of Senate approve the paper to be presented to the Academic Strategy Committee on 25 November 2024.		
	ACTION 1: Discussion of overseas government scholarships where the stipend is less than the UKRI minimum to be added to the next meeting agenda.	Secretariat, April 2025	On-going
	ACTION 2: Secretariat to report back to this committee about the outcome of the Academic Strategy Committee discussion.	Secretariat, January 2025	Complete
021- FCCG Report 2024 Q1	ACTION: CDT staff & PGR Finance to liaise with RTP team about what costs can be assigned to this grant and discuss reallocating budget with EPSRC.	Members, April 2025	On-going

023-2026 Entry Scholarships Overhaul	ACTION: Members are invited to provide feedback to DC about the current frustrations and suggestions for future improvements to how we administer the central scholarships budget.	Members, April 2025	On-going
024-PGR Insurance	ACTION 1: Secretary to investigate what PGRs are told about insurance cover when they join the University.	Secretariat, April 2025	On-going
	ACTION 2: Chair and co-chair to follow up with other committees and colleagues as necessary.	Secretariat, April 2025	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
DEAR: Doctoral Education and Academic Research
DC: Doctoral College
DCS: Department of Computer Science
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
PGR: Postgraduate Research Student
PGR-SWAG: Postgraduate Research Scholarships Working and Advisory Group
PI: Principal Investigator
R&IS: Research and Impact Services
RAG: Red Amber Green
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
UA: Universal Admissions Course Application System
UKRI: UK Research & Innovation
URSS: Undergraduate Research Support Scheme
WIF/WCF: Warwick Industrial Fellowships / Warwick Collaborative Fellowships
WMS: Warwick Medical School
WP: Widening Participation