

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Postgraduate Research Subcommittee of Senate

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13:00, 11 February 2026, Online

Present	Prof Jonathan Hickman-Heron	Academic Director of PGR (Chair)
	Michael Cavaliere	Student co-Chair
	Prof Kirstie Haywood	Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research (Deputy Chair)
	Sara Hattersley	Nominee of the Head of the Academic Development Centre
	Mark Pulsford	Dean of Students or nominee
	Dr Daniel Franklin	Director of the Postgraduate Certificate in Transferable Skills in Science (PGCTSS)
	Professor Emily Henderson	Director of the Doctoral Education and Academia Research Centre (DEAR)
	Rhiannon Martyn	Head of the Doctoral College (Secretary)
	Dr Damien Homer	Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding / Nominee of
	Kim Robinson	Nominee of Director of EPQ
	Roberta Wooldridge-Smith	Director of Student Opportunity
	Karen Jackson	Nominee of the University Librarian
	Echo Zhou	Deputy Director, Student Experience Division
	Ethan Dommett	Faculty Rep PGR - SEM
	Dr Leda Mirbahai	Deputy Chair (Education), SEM Faculty
	Dr Anna Michalska	Deputy Chair (Education), Social Sciences Faculty
	Dr Claire Bastie	Director of PGR (SEM)
	Prof Stephanie Schnurr	Director of PGR (Social Sciences)
	Prof Özlem Atikcan	DTP Director from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
	Prof Natasha Khovanova (until 2pm)	Members of staff from the University Community assigned by the Senate Nominations Panel
	Dr Maryam Masood	
Attending	Dr Jamie Burford	Chair EDI Working Group
	Tezi Holden	Administration Assistant, Doctoral College
	Tomoni Kimura (until 2pm)	Research Strategy and Development Manager, R&IS
	Rebekah Luck-Owen	Postgraduate Admissions Officer, Postgraduate Admissions
	Gillian Messaoud	PGR Development Officer (EDI), Doctoral College
	Stella Neophytou	Administrative Officer, Doctoral College (Assistant Secretary)
	Catherine Sullivan-Olds	Research Degree Officer, Doctoral College
	Louise Sutcliffe	PGR Development Officer, Doctoral College
	Dr Michele Underwood	Researcher Development Manager, Doctoral College
	Dr Rebecca Vipond	CDT/DTP & PGR Scholarships Manager, Doctoral College
Ref	Item	
018	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Nicola Attridge (PGR Funding Manager, Doctoral College), Prof Andy Clark (Co-Chair of QSS), Will Curtis (Co-Chair of QSS), Carlos Enriques De Salamanca (Faculty Rep PGR - Arts), Stephen Grice (Head of Admissions), Dr Elizabeth Hough (Nominee of the Director of Admissions), Prof David Lambert (Deputy Chair (Education), Faculty of Arts), David Leadley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)), Dr David Lees (Dean of Students / Nominee of), Professor Caroline Petit (Director of PGR – Arts), Maanya Raju (SU VP PG), Marie Sams (Member of staff from the University Community assigned by the Senate Nominations Panel), Mara Silva Hope (Faculty Rep PGR – Social Sciences).	
019	Declarations of Interest No new declarations were made.	

020	Minutes of last meeting on 13 November 2025 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2025 (020-PRS110226, Public) were approved with the following changes: Item 011 'research celebration' should be 'research culture week', Claire Bastie was present, and Andy Clark's title is Co-Chair of QSS.
021	Matters arising from last meeting on 13 November 2025 Submission rates will be revisited next year to ensure we are meeting the expectations around submission. The library team are supporting the PGR Society with Research Refresh for the rest of the year, with a plan for next year in hand.
Chair's Update	
022	Chair's Business The Chair reported that the university is considering its international and transnational education strategy, partly in response to the white paper. Some impact is likely in the PGR space, e.g. the relationship with Hongkong Poly U. This work builds upon existing programmes, for example Hong Kong PolyU in the PGT space. The Postgraduate Research Subcommittee has been invited to nominate a representative to join a joint session of Council and Senate as Academic Freedom Champion to consider academic freedom and assurance. ACTION: The Chair to identify an Academic Freedom Champion to represent PRS
023	Secretary's Business The secretary reported that ECRF funding has been secured and a project assistant has been appointed until July. There might be some more funding for the following twelve months so a potential opportunity to go further than originally expected.
For discussion	
024	PRS priorities/strategy The draft document is based on consultations with departments and will go on to ESEC and RC before Senate. Some of the language has been reframed, opening the scope of strand 5 and widening strand 3 to include personal tutors. Points raised included: • A stated outcome of the Dean of Students' institution-wide Personal Tutoring review is that all students will have a named personal tutor, and that includes PGRs. • Care must be taken when using the term student 'success' rather than 'outcomes' because of the UG/PGT context it is also used in. • If the strategy covers pre-admissions, it needs to address the barriers students face to get to a supervisor. • The WAGs have been tasked with adding more ideas, e.g. EDI/GTA placeholders. • The document will be reviewed using holistic language and will include ethics and AI implications on PGR study. • The document will move on from the emphasis on funding as lots of students are not 'funded' in the traditional sense.
025	FAST group on GTA & GTA WAG update The Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) working and advisory group is due to meet on 4th March. Colleagues invested in the area have been recruited to the group to help provide coordinated central governance around the GTA role. The year ahead will involve evidence gathering to set the scene for greater plans in the next academic year. Having more students to teach has prompted a review of how we generate availability of and use GTAs so that we do not have to be dependent on last-minute teaching fellowships. Vice-Provost, Prof Mike Ward, is heading up a group behind a proposal to appoint Graduate Teaching Associates, with a split of 25% teaching-75%

research (they will be given five years to complete their degree). The student co-Chair supports this proposal and anticipates strong demand. One of their concerns is with the 25/75 split because some students already do this. There are already models like this in the sector and in North America. When recruiting Graduate Teaching Associates certain criteria and standards must be applied. Prof Mike Ward has agreed to meet with the GTA WAG to discuss the proposal.

Below is a summary of the committee's feedback on the Graduate Teaching Associate proposal:

Accessibility/parity

- May exclude visa-holders (particularly if the intensity needs to be increased to make the scheme more attractive (when compared to being an FA05 on a GT Assistant contract). For visa-holders it is best to have a full-time student stipend plus guaranteed paid teaching on top.
- Presumably UKRI and other externally-funded stipend holders will be excluded - will this be an issue/are they being denied an opportunity?
- Not all departments will have enough teaching to offer this scheme
- There needs to be parity somehow for those being paid at FA05 as an assistant or as an associate
- There are still PGRs on STP contracts as well as GTAs – this has not been addressed since the GTA contract came into being (put on the back burner). Introducing the GT Associate could add an undesirable third layer of inequity and complexity.
- The list of what they can do looks similar to what FA04 demonstrators do in Chemistry

Funding

- It's not clear what the funding source will be for this and how it will be managed. Is there the potential to be repurposing the Chancellors fund for instance and, if so, is that the right thing to do (does teaching capacity trump excellent research as a driver)?
- Will affordability vary by department?

Teaching support/development

- The final year should be protected for working towards submission – how can we ensure that depts don't pressure the GT Associates to teach to their detriment?
- Do we now recognise teaching development as a core part of doctoral learning?
- All PGRs who teach need more consistent support – not all depts honour the support requirements already in place.

Operational

- How can (already busy) departments/colleagues manage this alongside other work?
- How would it work with GTAs who work across multiple departments
- When would this be introduced to enable optimal teaching capacity/planning? Funding source and practical details will need to be addressed before this.
- What happens if a PGR does not meet the terms of either part of their 'contract' (research progress or teaching performance)?

General

- The current system is flawed in several ways. We should be trying to address before adding another layer of complexity which could potentially add to the problems.
- Support for a pilot of some kind, potentially using existing GTAs.
- It's not clear what is driving this: the student experience, the need to be better equipped to meet fluctuations in teaching demand, and/or the desire to grow PGR numbers with a static scholarships budget.
- We mustn't rush into this.

BREAK

026

Supervision working group update

	The Chair reported that department interventions continue as does sharing the supervisor CPD offer and offering them a session of their own choosing to bring together as many academic supervisors as possible. There are also sector-level programmes from UKCGE, RSVP and others. The Code of Practice for supervisors is now live, and the supervision working group will be developing a code of practice for PGRs.
027	Turnitin update The recommendation to use Turnitin for screening theses was approved at a previous meeting. The Doctoral College proposed a method for handling the reports generated by the Turnitin software. They trialled reviewing Turnitin reports with two academic departments to assess the impact on a reviewer's workload, and they also reached out to other universities to ask about their processes. The proposal is for internal examiners to review Turnitin reports along with the candidate's thesis. If the internal examiner has concerns about serious academic misconduct, the examination process will be paused and Reg 11 on Academic Integrity will be applied. If the Turnitin report raises concerns about poor academic practice, the internal examiner should address these during the viva. The Deputy Director and Head of Education Policy and Governance shared the updated Academic Misconduct Sanctions Code of Practice and recommended that this change to the PGR examination process is added to it. The committee agreed to the proposal to use internal examiners in this way. ACTION: The next step is for the Doctoral College to draft guidance for all stakeholders (internal examiners, students and academic departments) to be shared at the May meeting for implementation in the autumn.
028	PRES planning The national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) will be conducted at Warwick this year, after running an internal PGR survey last year. An appropriate slot for the survey has been chosen considering other surveys being conducted at the university. Members were invited to suggest questions that could be added to PRES, being careful not to make the survey much longer than it already is. A suggestion was made to add a question on AI and to find out if other institutions are doing the same. The Deputy Director, Student Experience Division, suggested adding the following: I felt welcomed during my first two weeks at Warwick. What further provision could be added to the welcome programme – either within your department or the University more widely? Comments box. The Director of Student Opportunity suggested that a question be added on what PGRs would seek of work-related learning. ACTION: Any recommendations for questions to be added to the survey to be sent to the Doctoral College.
029	EDI Working group update Work to implement recommendations around mitigating circumstances and reasonable adjustments is ongoing. The working group will be monitoring the impact and advising on further actions to implement. The group will turn its attention next to what EDI goals should be included in the strategy refresh. The Chair and Secretary have embarked on activity to understand points of intersectionality, projects/activities already underway, and the general data picture with the intention of identifying gaps and/or ways to add value so the group can decide what to focus on.
030	Training review update The next meeting of the working group on 3rd March will be held in a workshop style rather than a Teams meeting to facilitate engagement with and resolution of the final recommendations. The final report on the training review has been postponed to the next meeting of PRS.
031	Faculty Student Experience and Education and/or Faculty Research Impact meeting business

	The SEM Faculty representative reported that the last meeting focused on PGR assessment and progression. The Social Sciences Faculty representative reported that there are two working groups, one on Employability and one on Academic Integrity and AI. The latter group has representatives from different departments in the Faculty and has raised concerns about what guidance is given to PGRs who are involved in marking when they come across AI use. The group will review the current policy at university level and produce faculty-level guidance, offering examples of good practice. The student representative from the SEM Faculty was invited to name any issues to be raised by the Doctoral College at SSLC meetings. There will be a meeting with the Doctoral College to discuss Skills Forge.
Items below this line were for receipt and/or approval, without discussion	
032	Reports from working groups a) Scholarships b) Training c) Supervision d) EDI The Committee received and noted the reports (032a-PRS110226, 032b-PRS110226, 032c-PRS110226, 032d-PRS110226).
033	Submission rates The Committee received and noted the report 033-PRS110226.
034	PGR Admissions update The Committee received and noted the report 034-PRS110226. There has been a notable 30% increase y-o-y in PGR applications.
Other	
035	Any other business There was no other business.
Next meeting: Tuesday 26 May 2026, 13:00, Wolfson Research Exchange	