

PGR Admin Network table discussions:

Wellbeing;

- Concerns about significant increase in interruptions due to anxiety/ stress/ mental health
- Peer support/ buddy system for PGRs i.e. for new international students
 - o Advice on how to adopt
 - o Recognition for mentors
- Guidance on who to contact if a student is in crisis, for admin and academics
 - o Tendency to be shared with those {staff} already in the know
 - o Confusion on who provides what i.e. differences between counselling/ DASS/ Occupational Health
- Completion rate push is impacting on students
 - o Anxiety/ stress
 - o Interruptions/ extensions
 - o More consistent approach to extension applications
 - o University targets
 - o Circumstantial support required for academics – not very robust
- Training for admins/ academic staff on how to deal with student issues (anxiety/ stress/ depression/ appropriate referral)
 - o Ask for support at the right time – i.e. not respectively asking for maternity leave
 - o Issues with supervisors doesn't always come to light until the end as some students feel it may jeopardise their PhD
 - o International students are under particular pressure, either because of sponsorship or cultural expectations, and also culturally are less likely to disclose problems/seek help
 - o More information on referral routes
 - o Colleagues are unclear about the limits of their responsibilities
 - o Training should be compulsory (Australian style mental health first aid training)
- Student welfare team in each school needed
- Promotion of Bullying Policy and The Dignity in The Work Place
- External mental health first aid course for PGR admins
- Awareness of services and processes to follow i.e. how can we use the atrium more?
- Proactive support – identifying issues earlier
- PGR students tend to be more likely to need support because this level of study lacks structure and students have to be more self-driven
- Support needs may be hidden because there are not the same checks (attendance) as on a taught course
- PGR wellbeing strategy
 - o Promote wellbeing as a positive rather than wait for the student to reach crisis point
 - o Proactive rather than reactive support
 - o More consistency across the board needed i.e. consistent support provided
 - o Well-being work should be led at Faculty/university level for consistency, rather than piecemeal interventions at school level

- Build wellbeing into the routine
 - eProg
 - signposting
 - raising concerns (traffic light system)
 - using milestones
- Information campaign – target at different points
- Intro week for Jan/ April/ July starters – nothing available
- Pastoral role for students by year, build in an academic for this role e.g. on personal issues rather than academic performance
 - PG tutor = disciplinary co-ordinator
- Students need to know who to go to
 - Define roles clearly to students
 - Make communication clear
 - Send handbook again a couple of months after registration
 - Communicate to students of the services available
 - Move timing of support/well-being messages away from the beginning of semester one; pre-Christmas break was suggested as optimum time
- Run a PGR specific session on anxiety/ wellbeing in groups rather than 1:1
 - Create an environment where students feel comfortable talking
 - Students don't have offices/ desks – no sense of cohort/ group
 - Wellbeing workshops
- International Society have their own counselling service for international students
- Counselling service to have an online session that academics could access as they don't have resource to come out
- Supervisors are the ones who have daily contact with students and don't always notify someone
- Make sure that female students have at least one female panellist
 - Academics don't know who to direct students on to e.g. support administrator
- Use PG reps to identify someone who is willing to talk about their problems/ issues or inform them about resources available to pass information on about support available; i.e. in a social event
 - Workshop for students (maybe through reps?) on well-being and support, delivered just before Christmas (Unismart theatre, currently used for undergraduates by some schools, could be aimed at PGRs)
- Promote more PGR events within faculties to make students feel connected
 - Coffee mornings
 - Social Events
 - Rep-meetings
 - Buddy system
 - Facebook groups
 - Contact with other students before arrival
 - Peer support
- Advertise wellbeing information in Faculty/ School communications e.g. Newsletters
 - Formal introduction to welfare officers
 - Put welfare resource info. In the handbook

- Develop a culture of collective responsibility for mental well health
- Tips currently contained in newsletters from Claire Hughes could be brought together into an online resource
- Student experience office doesn't address PGR
- Welfare should be separate from experience
- Support for students when they return as well as at crisis point
- Issue of DASS nor reporting back to after staff/ academic has referred the them [the student]
 - What the recommendations are
 - The feeling that DASS don't have enough knowledge of PGR programmes
- Have an independent advisor i.e. from another school

CDTs

- Raising awareness of CDT
- Integration of CDT/ other PGR students
- Administrator in post prior to the bid succeeding in order to plan
- More information given to Schools/ departments

eProg

- Updating pathways
 - Apply to all milestones that milestones are on
- Risks
 - Training catalogues
 - CS
- Student access to eProg through My Manchester
- Issues with rolling out new software and discontinuing old software
 - Only limited testing with actual users
- Issues with Sharepoint
- Concerns with introducing too many new systems at the same time