

**MDCSG Oct 2023**  
**Wed 18th October, 11:00- 13:00**  
**Roscoe 3.1**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Alex Hinchliffe, Helen Baker, Cathal Rogers, Admos Chimhowu, Richard Cotton, David Bechtold, Jessica Bowler, James Lalic, Georgina Hall, Emma Bramwell, Ansab Ali, Rosie Haynes.

**1. Welcome**

**Noted:** Apologies from Ruth Whelan, Scott Heath and Michelle Munson.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the notes were an accurate record of the meeting.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. PGR Admissions Ethics Question**

**Noted:**

a. that MDCSG had previously requested that an ethics question be added to the PGR application form but that the admissions group had some concerns.

b. that the question was most useful for PGR led projects in HUMS.

**Agreed:**

a. that it was useful for the PGR to speak with their proposed supervisors about ethics as early as possible and so a prompt to do this should be added to the application form and should include a link to guidance re: what we mean by 'ethical considerations' e.g. 'are you submitting your own project? If yes, 'are there any potential ethical considerations [INSERT LINK] in relation to your proposed research?' If yes, 'we recommend that you discuss these with your supervisor before continuing with your applications.' (**ACTION** – HB to feedback to FE).

**b. PGR Admissions System**

**Noted:**

a. that clarity was needed on faculties' position in relation to the new admissions system and the plans to return to it following the proposed 'lift and shift' to its new platform.

b. that the move to the new platform should resolve performance issues but there are still functionality and design issues to be addressed.

c. that FSE have indicated they are happy to return to the new system after the move to a new platform because they felt they now have academic engagement but the group acknowledged that this might be related to faculty knowledge of the system and the higher levels of staff resource in FSE.

d. that in HUMS the preference is to keep the interim system and not return to the new system, even after the move to the new platform.

**AGREED:**

a. that the PGR management group would look at and prioritise the list of outstanding design issues and request that they be resolved before the system is moved to its new

platform (**ACTION** – HB to get the list of issues from FE).

b. that whatever system is used, more staff resource would be required in all Faculties.

#### **c. Visiting Researcher Fees**

**Noted:** that AH was still chasing RQ for an update on approval of the visiting PGR fee waiver for PGRs from strategic partner institutions but had not yet had a response.

**Agreed:** that Faculties should proceed assuming final approval e.g.:

- That the visiting student fee is waived entirely for all PGRs visiting for up to 12 months under University of Manchester strategic partnerships, for example the MMT Global Alliance with Melbourne and Toronto.
- That Faculties can use their discretion and waive the visiting student fee for PGRs visiting for up to 12 months under Faculty / School level strategic partnerships where appropriate.
- All remaining visiting PGRs would be charged a pro rata tuition fee for the period they are at Manchester.
- That all visiting PGRs would follow the requirements as set out within the Visiting Postgraduate Researcher Policy.

(**ACTION** – AH to update the visiting PGR policy in anticipation of final approval).

#### **d. Supervisor Training Expectations**

**Noted:** that the word mandatory should be included.

**Agreed:**

a. that AH would update the wording to affirm that there must be a Faculty defined mandatory element to ongoing supervisor training / professional development (**ACTION** – AH to update and include when circulating the meeting notes).

b. that faculty defined mandatory training should be reviewed and benchmarked as part of the MDCSG annual monitoring exercise.

c. that FBMH would finalise their statement regarding supervisor training expectations and share with the group at next meeting (**ACTION** – DB).

### **3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

#### **i. PGR Voice Survey**

**Noted:**

a. that we were now able to compare data between UoM and Sheffield.

b. that the data showed that UoM results were similar to Sheffield but that the biggest difference was in 'confidence in submitting within the funded period' (Sheffield much higher) which might require some investigation.

c. that in some areas despite scoring lower than Sheffield on the overall satisfaction for a particular theme, e.g., Supervision, when looking at the more specific/detailed questions UoM actually scored higher. Perhaps due to how the survey was structured/presented?

**Agreed:**

a. that as this was the first survey, we should consider 'satisfactory' to be a positive response and try to tackle those areas that fall short of this. In future years, if improvements are made then the bar will be raised higher.

b. that it would be useful to break down the higher level results e.g. positive ratings of 'satisfactory, good and excellent' to understand the results even further for some of the key topics.

c. that longitudinal results showing improvements over time will be highly beneficial to REF 2028 submissions.

c. that Faculties and RDRD would devise action plans and submit by 15<sup>th</sup> December for

review at the January MDCSG meeting (**ACTION** – FACS / RDRD).

d. that the SU would reach out to their counterparts in Sheffield to understand the PGR offer to inform their actions (**ACTION** – EB)

## ii. UKRI PGR New Deal

### Noted:

a. that UKRI had published a response to their call for input on the issues that the new deal for postgraduate research should consider in 2022. This response to the call for input considers the issues raised in the analysis and sets out how UKRI are or plan to respond to them.

b. that they had broken the report down into 8 different areas, none of which presented any immediate concerns. Areas of note:

- **Funding** – a commitment to improve the process and communication of the process around reviewing changes to stipend levels and potential to update the T&Cs for disabled PGRs and those with caring responsibilities which might require some action.
- **Flexibility** – an emphasis on flexible arrangements and part time working which UoM have already introduced.
- **Accessibility** – questions are raised around not needing to have an Masters in order to pursue a PhD which while not a requirement at UoM, it can creep into decision. The report also suggested that UKRI would adopt the revised NERC guidelines for training and recruitment. There is also an emphasis on requiring much more detailed reporting in relation to demographics, which is already on UoM radar, and work continues. MW has escalated the issue to Andrew Walsh.
- **Supervision** – there is an emphasis on supervisor professional development and mirroring the T&Cs that are currently used in project grants in relation to bullying and harassment. Also an emphasis on resolving disputes between PGR and supervisor and they may revise their expectations on this.
- **Boosting support** – they plan to be more explicit in their expectations towards PGR welfare and revise their approach to reasonable adjustments.
- **International** – the report alludes to some confusion at institutions re the cap for international UKRI PGRs but the general feeling was that this is working well at UoM.
- **Careers** – they plan to update their expectations on what institutions need to provide in relation to non-academic career planning.
- **Status of PGRs** – they are going to ensure that PGRs have similar welfare arrangements to staff.

## 4. Recruitment and Admissions

**Noted:** that there were no items to discuss.

## 5. Funding

### i. Bid Updates (Leverhulme/NERC/EPSRC/ESRC)

#### Noted:

a. that the Leverhulme decision was expected in November.

b. that the BBSRC has started it's planning re the renewal of the DTP.

c. that MRC are moving towards a model of Centres for Research Excellence which will include funding for PGRs.

d. that the AHRC had issued a pre-call detailing what is coming up on 23<sup>rd</sup> November official launch (1 lead application per institution).

d. that RC was in discussions with Nation Science Foundation China regarding a programme for PGR and Post-Doc placements at the top institutions in China. A proposal is currently being put together with FSE and FBMH.

**Agreed:** that RC would ask Faculty ADIs to liaise with ADs PGR re the NSFC proposal/scheme (**ACTION – RC**)

## 6. Progression and Assessment

**Noted:** that there were no items to discuss.

## 7. Researcher experience and wellbeing

### i. MDC Excellence Awards

**Noted:**

a. that RDRD were proposing some additional faculty awards and 1 addition category for the MDC Excellence Awards 2024:

- Best contribution to PGR environment – introduce a possible winner per faculty rather than overall winner.
- Best contribution to Internationalisation - introduce a possible winner per faculty rather than overall winner
- *The splitting of the society award into 2 distinct awards acknowledging local community impact and research impact on wider society.*

b. that RDRD were also proposing to simplify the nomination process.

**Agreed:** that RDRD could move ahead with the new categories and simplified nomination process and also rename the research output category to 'research contribution' (**ACTION – GH** to update guidance etc. and circulate nomination details).

## 8. Careers and employability

**Noted:** that there were no items to discuss.

## 9. Activity Reports

### i. Students Union

**Noted:**

a. that there were no comments on the RDRD activity report.

b. the SU gave a verbal update on activity:

- Planning for Lead MCR election process is currently underway.
- UMPA elections begin on October 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Further PGR specific events have been planned e.g. Paint and Sip, Speed Friending and PGR Pizza Social.
- Dedicated PGR programme at the January re-freshers
- Ansa is working with IT on a system for tracking conference funding.

**Agreed:** that Faculty Doctoral Academics could help the SU in promoting all opportunities and that a Researcher Development Representative could attend some of the events to help promote their offering (**ACTION – EB** to share details with Faculty DAs and Researcher Development).

### ii. SEP Update

**Noted:**

a. that SL7 have completed 6 out of 7 workshops with BAU colleagues to review and agree

the milestones/forms required for the new solution.

b. that SL7 are finalising the functional and non-functional requirements for the procurement tender documentation.

c. that a tender panel has been confirmed with representation from SL7 (Helen Baker, Claire Smith), from faculties (Jessica Bowler, Anusarin Lowe, Jon Pittman, Stuart Shields, Melissa Westwood) and colleagues from IT services and the library

d. That the proposed timeline / next steps are:

- 24/10/23 - publication of tender documentation (UoM)
- 16/11/23 - deadline for receipt of any clarification requests (Suppliers)
- 22/11/23 - deadline for response to clarification requests (UoM)
- 23/11/23 - deadline for receipt of final tenders / tender return date (Suppliers)
- 14/12/23 - evaluation and scoring of final tenders (UoM)
- 08/01/23 - 22/01/23 – clarification demo/presentation from top ranked suppliers (Suppliers and UoM)
- TBC – notify tenderers of outcome, contract signature, contract start date (UoM)

e. that there are a number of UoM dependencies that SL7 have identified and are working with project managers to identify the resource required and timeline for the work to be completed:

- CS9.2 – development of the research management area ('consumption functionality') and removal of the customised registration details screen in the current version of campus solutions
- e-Prog/eThesis data migration (including milestones and uploaded docs, theses etc)
- Role Based Access Control (RBAC) - IT services looking at IDAM as a potential solution for managing system roles
- Document management solution -IT services looking at Sharepoint as a solution but this will also be investigated with suppliers
- eThesis goes beyond extended support after June 2024 – library are preparing an options paper if we don't have a new solution before then
- Integration (CS, PowerBI, training catalogue, PURE)

## **10. Any Other Business**

**Noted:** that there was a difficult case in HUMS re a PGR currently in Israel and that AC would talk to RC outside of the meeting.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 22 Nov, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 3.1



## **MDCSG November 2023**

**Wed 22, 11:00- 13:00**

**Roscoe 3.1**

### **Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Alex Hinchliffe, Helen Baker, Cathal Rogers, Admos Chimhowu, Rosie Haynes, Tanya Luff, David Bechtold, Jessica Bowler, James Lalic, Georgina Hall, Ansab Ali.

**For Item 9ii:** Lev Eakins

#### **1. Welcome**

**Noted:** apologies from Georgina Hall, Emma Bramwell, Richard Cotton and Scott Heath.

#### **2. MDCSG**

##### **i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the notes were an accurate record of the meeting

##### **ii. Matters Arising**

###### **a. PGR Admissions Ethics Question**

**Noted:**

a. Fiona Eccles / the admissions group approved the MDCSG suggested changes to the PGR application form e.g. an update to section 6 on application form – ‘research details’...

- Are you applying for an advertised project [No]
- Please provide the proposed area of research or project title [free text]
- Are there any potential ethical considerations [INSERT LINK] in relation to your proposed research?’ [YES/NO]
- If YES, provide content ‘We recommend that you discuss these with your potential supervisor before continuing with your application.
- Form continues with existing question ‘Have you identified potential supervisors?’

b. that the timeline for the introduction of the updates had not yet been confirmed.

c. that the PGR Management group are working on a spreadsheet of all the functionality and design issues with the new admissions system (with input from Fiona) and Faculty PS colleagues are currently reviewing it for any issues that may be missing.

###### **b. Supervisor Training Expectations**

**Noted:** that the FMBH supervisor training expectations document was currently out for local consultation and that DB would share with MDCSG once finalized.

#### **3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

##### **i. Negotiation of stipends for industry funded PGRs**

**Noted:**

a. that the Research Operations Group has questioned whether we should try to negotiate higher stipends payments for PGRs from industry sponsors / collaborators.

b. that following the increase in stipend triggered by UKRI due to the cost of living increases, UoM fund the partners share of the increase (as otherwise contracts would

have had to be renegotiated).

c. that there was a concern that partners could pull out of the arrangements if UoM are the only institution asking for higher payments and we would also be introducing further inequality within the PGR community.

**AGREED:**

a. that the core stipend for industry sponsored PGRs should not be increased but that we could instead ask for an 'enhanced' stipend similar to the top-up £2.5k received by PGRs on CASE studentships.

b. that we could look at other benefits such as maternity and sick leave and ask industry partners to match what is offered for UoM / UKRI funded PGRs.

#### **4. Recruitment and Admissions**

##### **i. Applications Data**

**Noted:**

a. that applications from home PGRs was down in HUMS and BMH.

b. that HUMS felt this was a sector wide issue across HUMs with people deciding to put off PGR study at this time. HUMS are due to meet and discuss how to raise home PGR numbers and were looking at schemes to retain the best candidates.

c. that BMH felt that the reduction in home numbers was a reflection on the current strategy that focuses on international recruitment. Also noted was the concern that BMH are missing out on their first choice home candidates as reflected in the ratio of offers to acceptance but they are reviewing their recruitment cycle timings to try and avoid this drop off.

d. that numbers in FSE were holding strong despite some issues with ATAS and CAS.

**AGREED:** that numbers were ok and the quality of PGRs was good but there was a feeling that we were losing some of the very best candidates to competitors and so Faculties would work with marketing and recruitment colleagues to help retain the best offer holders.

##### **ii. Application and admissions - EDI profile and data reporting**

**Noted:**

a. that HB/MW had met with Richard Quayle, Fiona Eccles and Ian Bradley on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November to discuss the ability to meet future UKRI demographic reporting.

b. that Ian Bradley had confirmed that currently we do not record the data needed so adding further questions will require changes to application form AND registration wizard both of which have a long lead in time (i.e. unlikely to be possible for 2023 entry from a student perspective or 2024 entry from an admissions perspective).

c. that the timeline for UKRI wanting the data is likely 25/26 but that we would need to be able to demonstrate that we had started to collect the data by 24/25.

d. that it would be difficult to translate the questions for international PGRs and we could just focus on the socio-economic status of the country rather than ask more detailed questions.

e. that the Admissions group would look at the UKRI reporting requirements and standardizing the way this is recorded in CS across the institution to allow for easier reporting.

**AGREED:** that MDSCG would review the survey sent to Wellcome candidates and the UCAS forms before further discussions.

##### **iii. PDS Faculty Award Allocations / Budget**

**Noted:** the Faculty budget allocations for the PDS award 2024/25.

## 5. Funding

### i. Bid Updates (Leverhulme/NERC/EPSRC/ESRC)

#### **Noted:**

a. that there hasn't been from Leverhulme yet.

*(note – following the meeting it was confirmed that the bid had been unsuccessful)*

b. that the 9 FSE CDTs were currently at interview stage with an outcome due in mid-December.

c. that the planning continues for the BBSRC bid and that there had been a suggestion of joint bid with NERC. The group are meeting monthly.

d. that Melbourne call for projects had gone well with a lot of interest.

e. that in celebration of the UoM bi-centenary funding had been allocated for the recruitment of 300 additional PGRs or Fellows (100 in each Faculty recruited over 3 cohort years). Recruitment should be related to UoM/Faculty priorities.

#### **AGREED:**

a. that RW would check what planning had already been done in FSE in relation to a NERC DTP bid **(ACTION – RW)**.

b. that TL would check if RC had asked Faculty ADIs to discuss the National Science Foundation China proposal with their ADs **(ACTION – TL)**.

## 6. Progression and Assessment

### i. Researcher statement of expectations – internal examiner role

#### **Noted:**

a. that as a result of the recent marking and assessment boycott it has been suggested that we strengthen the wording of the Researcher Statement of Expectations in relation to the expectation that academic staff should act as internal assessor / examiner role.

**AGREED:** that MDCSG approved an update to the statement of expectations and agreed that matching wording should be added to the nomination of examiner procedure **(ACTION – MW to feedback wording to Collette and AH to update policy)**

## 7. Researcher experience and wellbeing

### i. AI Guidance / interim Statement

#### **Noted:**

a. that AH has produced an interim statement / guidance on the use of AI for PGRs at UoM.

b. that Researcher Development will look at including AI literacy when addressing the digital skills curriculum.

**Agreed:** that MDCSG approved the guide and AH would publish it to the RDRD website and look at bolstering the definition/examples of 'plagiarism and fabrication' **(ACTION – AH)**

### ii. PGR Complaint Compensation

**Noted:** that there was a recent case in FSE where a PGR complaint was upheld and compensation was awarded but there was no guidance from the complaints team on where the payment should come from e.g. school or faculty.

**AGREED:** that AH would look at the wording of the appeals and complaints policy and suggest some updates in relation to the responsibility for making compensation payments e.g. who exactly should pay **(ACTION –AH)**.

## 8. Careers and employability (no items)

## 9. Activity Reports

### i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports

#### **Noted:**

- a. that there were no comments on the RDRD / Library reports.
- b. that the SU PGR Officer has been working on organising mental health workshops.

**AGREED:** that Ansab would speak to Sarah Littlejohn in relation to the content of the mental health workshops (**ACTION – AA**).

### ii. UMPA Annual Report

#### **Noted:**

- a. MDCSG thanked Lev for his work with UMPA supporting the PGR experience over his 2 terms as president. Particularly for the input into the Supervisor Toolkit and the social events / community building that have been well received by PGR.

- b. that there had been issues reported in relation to the working relationship between UMPA and the SU and that MDCSG is committed to working with the new UMPA president and the SU to resolve these.

## 10. Any Other Business

### i. External Examiner Replacement

**Noted:** that in FBMH, an external examiner had gone on maternity leave during the reexamination process.

#### **Agreed:**

- a. that if the internal examiner thinks the resubmission is satisfactory then they could write a short report for the external to review.
- b. if the internal examiner is not satisfied with the resubmission they should ask the external if they are still able to fully examine the thesis.
- c. If the external examiner disagrees with the internal examiner's report or is unable to continue with the examinations then a new external examiner should be appointed. A 2<sup>nd</sup> internal examiner could be appointed instead but only with permission from the PGR.
- d. that AH will look at the examinations policy and draft some updates to cover scenarios such as this after checking QAA (**ACTION – AH**)

### ii. PGR Comms Framework

**Noted:** that student comms are looking at a framework for comms to PGRs at central and Faculty level. The first stage will be a full audit of all comms that go to PGRs at all levels.

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

Wed 17 Jan 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 3.1

**MDCSG January 2023**  
**Wed 17 Jan, 11:00- 13:00**  
**Roscoe 3.1**

**Notes**

**1. MDCSG**

**Noted:**

- a. Apologies from Richard Cotton, Ansab Ali and Emma Bramwell.
- b. Welcome to Georgina Dalton and Amy Smith.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the notes were an accurate record of the meeting

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. PGR Admissions Ethics Question**

**Noted:** that HB was awaiting Fiona Eccles on the timeline for the implementation of the agreed question on the application form.

*NB: Following the meeting, Fiona has confirmed the update is now with the CS team to action and has been assigned to a developer. Fiona will confirm once live (expected to happen quickly).*

**b. PGR Admissions System Issues**

**Noted:**

- a. that a complete list of issues has been compiled; some have been addressed but no progress on many.
- b. that if PGR returns to using the PGRA from September 2024, then issues will need to have been addressed, and the system reintroduced, by May/June 2024 to allow time for staff training and for Faculties to properly assess staff resource requirements.
- c. that currently there was a difference in opinion across Faculties as to the desirability of returning to PGRA. FSE were keen to return as users had been trained and were happy using it, whilst FBMH and HUMS preferred the interim process.

**Agreed:**

- a. to invite Catherine Schofield (SEP) and Faculty PGRA leads to the next MDCSG meeting to discuss the issues and the timeline for reintroduction of the PGRA (ACTION –HB).

**c. Supervisor Training Expectations**

**Agreed:** that DB will share the FMBH statement of Supervisor Training Expectations ahead of the next meeting (ACTION – DB).

**d. EDI data – Wellcome survey / UCAS forms**

**Noted:** that following discussion at last month's meeting, AH has gathered the UCAS application questions and Wellcome survey questions for review by MDCSG after initial discussion amongst RDRD.

**Agreed:** that RDRD would review the question and bring to the next MDCSG meeting (ACTION – AH)

**e. PGR Complaint Compensation Guidance**

**Noted:**

- a. that following feedback from MDCSG, the appeals and complaints team confirmed

that compensation is calculated using OIA guidance and that It is common practice to include senior academics and PS staff in discussions to determine compensation amounts and where these payments should come from. The legal team can also be consulted.

b. that a statement had been added to the appeals and complaints intranet page but that this wasn't accessible to all staff.

**Agreed:** that AH should add the statement in an appropriate place on the RDRD Code of Practice webpages and share with the group (**ACTION – AH**).

### **3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

#### **i. Annual Monitoring Actions Update**

**Noted:**

a. that in relation to **DASS support for PGRs**, JL has now sent all data from the PGR Voice survey to LPK who is preparing an action plan for review.

b. that there is still a real need to define our requirements and a process for the collection of **PGR destinations data**.

c. that JL will be starting a **review of the President's Doctoral Scholar scheme** in 2024.

**Agreed:**

a. that RDRD would define UoM requirements in relation to PGR destinations data and map it against what is data currently available and look at how other institutions gather their data e.g., exit interviews (**ACTION – JL**).

#### **ii. PGR Comms Audit**

**Noted:**

a. that Gina Dalton was leading on the development of a PGR-specific central comms strategy linking in with local teams.

b. that she was currently conducting an audit of PGR comms across the institution and planning an inbox exercise with PGRs and PGR focus groups.

c. that the local knowledge and reach of the Faculty teams was important but that the communication skills and expertise needed to come from a professional comms team.

**Agreed:**

a. that GD should link up with both the SU PGR officer, UMPA and the Res Dev team (who have been doing work on this already and could feed into the focus groups) (**ACTION – GD / AS**).

b. that once GD had defined her ask, she could attend Faculty PGRC meetings to get feedback from Academics (**ACTION – GD**).

c. that thought be given to other forms of communication, e.g., social media.

#### **iii. Admissions Report**

**Noted:**

a. that other institutions have reported a similar trend in a reduction in the number of home PGRs, but that this could be due to the change in EU PGR classification since BREXIT.

b. that no issues had arisen since the data were discussed at the November 2023 MDCSG meeting.

#### **iv. eProg Data – Overdue Milestones**

**Noted:**

a. that the high rate in incomplete attendance milestones could be related to the timing of data capture.

b. that the longitudinal data on annual review completion was good and that any issues in completion were largely picked up and dealt with locally via senior tutors.

**Agreed:**

a. that the attendance milestone data be captured again in February (after the January census) and brought to the next meeting (**ACTION – AH**).

b. that review of the core milestone completion report could be removed from the MDCSG schedule and that RDRD would look at how to incorporate it into the Annual Monitoring exercise in September (**ACTION – AH / RDRD**).

#### **4. Recruitment and Admissions**

##### **i. Distance Learning PhDs / Dual Award Attendance Requirements**

**Noted:**

a. that there had been several cases in relation to the Melbourne Dual Award of PGRs with mitigating circumstances requesting a reduction to their attendance at the partner institution below the level permitted by regulations.

**Agreed:**

a. that the current regulations for attendance requirements as part of dual / joint awards were ok (12 months minimum at each institution).

b. that each residency reduction request should be assessed on the individual circumstances but that they can be supported where the project can continue as originally planned.

c. that often, the type of award we offer when collaborating with external institutions was dictated by the partner organisations but that wherever possible, a joint award is preferable to dual.

d. that HUMS are currently preparing papers to propose a wholly distance learning PhD that MDCSG will discuss when the papers are finalised.

#### **5. Funding**

##### **i. Bid Updates (Leverhulme/ EPSRC/BBSRC/Bicentenary Researchers)**

**Noted:**

a. that EPSRC CDT outcomes are still under external embargo but UoM was successful in 4 CDTs as lead HEI and 3 as a partner HEI.

b. that the Leverhulme bid was not successful.

c. that UoM will partner with Liverpool University on the next BBSRC DTP call.

**Agreed:** that RDRD will put together a one page paper regarding the Bicentenary Researcher funding for discussion at the Feb MDCSG meeting (**ACTION – RDRD / AH**).

##### **ii. UKRI New Deal**

**Noted:** that it is expected that UKRI will increase their stipend for 2024/25 and that rates are usually announced in the Spring.

#### **6. Progression and Assessment**

##### **i. Update to Exams Policy re: Award Dates**

**Agreed:** that the update to policy re: clarification of the award date on PhD certificates was approved and could be reported to the next Senate (**ACTION – AH**)

##### **ii. Update to Resubmission/Reexamination Policy**

**Agreed:** that the additional footnote regarding deviation from policy in relation to reappointment of examiners for a resubmission was approved and could be reported to the next Senate (**ACTION – AH**)

## **7. Researcher experience and wellbeing**

### **i. Adhoc Training Requests**

**Noted:** that ResDev had drafted a process to follow when schools/divisions/departments approach the team for adhoc / bespoke training sessions.

#### **Agreed**

a. that the ResDev Team could look into issuing calls for bespoke training at specific points in the academic cycle as a better way to manage requests **(ACTION – AS)**.

b. that the ResDev team should schedule regular (monthly) meetings with the ADs / PGR Mgrs and Faculty Leads for Student Experience **(ACTION – AS)**

## **8. Careers and employability**

**No items**

## **9. Activity Reports**

### **i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports**

**Noted:** that the activity report should be updated to reference the work of Alison Cox / FBMH DA on the BBSRC training programme for supervisors and research group leaders **(ACTION – AH)**.

## **10. Any Other Business**

**Noted:** that HUMS were currently working through an issue related to UoM systems not updating quickly enough when people transition gender.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 21 Feb 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, Hanson Room (Humanities Bridgeford Street Building)

## **Reserved Business**

### **12. PGR of the Year Nominations**

**Noted:** that MDCSG approved the Faculty nominations for PGR of the Year.

**MDCSG Feb 2024**  
**Wed 21 Feb, 11:00- 13:00**  
**Hanson Room, Humanities Bridgeford Street Building**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Georgina Hall, Amy Smith, Admos Chimhowu, Tasleem Hanif, Tanya Luff, David Bechtold, Jessica Bowler, Scott Heath, Ruth Whelan, Alex Hinchliffe.

**For Item 3i:** Catherine Schofield, Sandra Kershaw, Kirsty Eaton.

**For Item 4i:** Paul Govey, Andrew Simmons.

**1. MDCSG**

**Noted:** Apologies from Richard Cotton, Jared Ruff and Georgina Dalton.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the notes were an accurate record of the January meeting.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**Adhoc Training Requests**

**Agreed:** that Amy would attend faculty PGRC meetings to stay connected with Faculties.

**FBMH Supervisor Training Expectations**

**Noted:**

**a.** that following approval of the update to policy re: supervisor training expectations senate had suggested that the update is communicated to all Supervisors and that this should include links to the training available and links to Faculty training expectation documents.

**b.** that DB had shared the draft FBMH document for wider MDCSG comment but it still needs final Faculty sign off.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that FSE and HUMS could use the draft FBMH statement as a starting point for discussions in their own Faculties and bring drafts back to a future MDCSG meeting  
**(ACTION – ADs)**

**Stipend Increase**

**Noted:** that UoM would increase the minimum stipend for UoM funded PGRs in line with UKRI for 2024/25 and comms had been circulated to PGRs.

**3. Recruitment and Admissions**

**i. PGR Admissions System**

**Noted:**

**a.** that the re-launch of the PGR Admissions system had been delayed and it won't be ready in time for the next recruitment cycle.

**b.** that we will need to continue with the Sharepoint workaround solution and that the temporary resource will need to be maintained until such time as PGRA can be re-launched.

c. that the suggested improvements to the PGRA system would be investigated and where possible implemented before the re-launch.

d. that there were issues with the current workaround system that need to be addressed, particularly in relation to tracking and reporting on the progress of applications, that would be followed up outside of the MDCSG meeting.

**Agreed:**

a. that CS / SEP Board will provide a statement strongly supporting the need for Faculties to continue funding the interim resource required to maintain the workaround system **(ACTION – CS)**.

b. that AH would invite CS to the March MDCSG meeting for an update **(ACTION – AH)**

#### **4. Funding**

##### **i. Bicentenary Researchers**

**Agreed:**

a. that four year studentships with the stipend set at UKRI rates was final.

b. that there was a limit of 100k for PS costs in each Faculty.

c. that PGRs will be charged a nil fee and that FSE and HUMS finance colleagues could liaise with equivalents in FBMH to ensure parity in process.

d. that there was flexibility within the funds for Faculties to set RTSG at an appropriate level for individual projects (which would include funding for travel costs/external training that can't be provided by UoM).

e. that there was no separate central budget for marketing and comms activities and that ideally Faculties should budget for these costs (in consultation with Faculty PGR marketing colleagues) from the 100k for PS costs, though some 2 additional funds could be used for this purpose as long as the number of studentships offered is not significantly compromised.

f. that Faculties would manage their own comms and marketing but that the central team would assist with branding and ensure coordination in terms of launch across the institution.

f. that the bicentenary PGRs would be added to a Student Group in CS to allow for reporting and tracking.

##### **ii. Bid Updates**

**Noted:**

a. that BBSRC and NERC bids were ongoing and they will be submitted as two separate bids.

b. that the Wellcome Trust Discovery and CDA awards allow funding for a PGR studentship.

c. that the ESRC DTP application to the fellowship scheme was successful allowing for 4 postdoctoral fellowships per year for three years.

#### **5. Planning and Quality Assurance**

##### **i. eProg Data – Overdue Attendance Milestones**

**Noted:** that there was a slight improvement in the data but still some areas of concern i.e., over 10% of PGRs with 2 or more overdue attendance milestones.

**Agreed:**

a. that the data would be run again to focus on incomplete milestones after 1 Sep 2023 and AH would circulate to ADs and PGR Mgrs **(ACTION – AH)**.

b. that FBMH would contact the relevant senior tutors to highlight any areas of concern, that in FSE and HUMs MW would write to the HoDs / HoS to highlight concerns **(ACTION AH / MW)**.

## **6. Progression and Assessment**

### **i. ORCID for PGRs**

#### **Noted:**

a. that approval was requested for the plan to transfer management of PGR ORCID IDs from the current eScholar system to Pure, ahead of the eScholar shut-down in June 2024.

**Agreed:** that MDCSG were supportive of the plan.

### **ii. Supervisor Policy Update**

#### **Noted:**

a. an update to the PGR Supervision policy making it clear that PDRAs are eligible to be appointed as a co-supervisor.

b. an update to the PGR Supervision policy stipulating that if a main supervisor leaves the institution and becomes a co-supervisor, a new main supervisor AND internal co-supervisor must be appointed.

**Agreed:** that the updates could be approved with the clarification that PDRAs would need line manager approval to take on the co-supervisor role (**ACTION – AH**).

### **iii. Thesis/ Dissertation Content Warnings**

**Noted:** that HUMS had drafted a thesis / dissertation content warning for where potentially offensive language is included in the content.

**Agreed:** that the wording of the warning was approved and that instruction on use of the statement could be included in the Presentation of Theses and Dissertations policies in the section related to non-compulsory pages (**ACTION – AH**).

## **7. Researcher experience and wellbeing**

### **i. PGR Voice – Action Plans**

#### **Noted:**

a. that action plans had now been received from all areas.

c. that Sheffield will be running the survey again, alongside UoM, in 2025.

d. that Faculties should be involved in the Res Dev efforts to scope out good practice and provision of development and training.

#### **Agreed:**

a. that JL would ensure coordination across faculties, RDRD and DSE where similar actions exist – avoiding duplication of effort and resource (**ACTION – JL**).

b. that action plans from DSE were sparse in some areas and JL would follow this up with Sarah Littlejohn (**ACTION – JL**).

b. that JL could quote details from the action plans in comms.

## **8. Careers and employability**

### **i. PGR Related Promotion Criteria**

#### **Noted:**

a. that the promotion criteria for teaching and scholarship staff was under review and Colette wanted MDCSG to review the Research promotion criteria in relation to PGR activity.

b. that currently the criteria states 'successful engagement in PGR supervision' and it may be helpful to include examples, in a guidance document, of how this could be evidenced, e.g., participation in training and development in relation to the role of supervisor, UKCGE accreditation.

## 9. Activity Reports

### i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports

**Noted:** that the SU Update details the upcoming SU elections and that there were seven candidates for the role of PGR Officer.

**Agreed:** that MDCSG would help the SU in advertising and promoting the election wherever possible and offer further drop-in opportunities for the candidates to speak with RDRD to understand the work of MDCSG (**ACTION – JL**).

## 10. Any Other Business

### i. N8 Next Generation Research SuperVision Project

**Noted:** that York University, in conjunction with UKCGE, were launching a Research England funded project to transform the culture and practice of research supervision and were hosting a free webinar detailing how institutions could be involved. Representative from RDRD would be attending and MDCSG colleagues were welcome to attend also: <https://ukcge.ac.uk/events/the-research-supervision-project>

### ii. SEP update

#### a. eThesis

**Noted:** that an interim solution (integrating functionality into eProg) for when eThesis goes out of technical support would be presented to the Technical Design Authority next week.

#### b. Tender Process

**Noted:** that the tender process had been terminated without finding a suitable vendor and that there were two options going forward. To redevelop eProg or to use a number of different technologies already in use at the University with a new user interface. SL7 will now look at prioritising requirements from a business perspective and technical perspective to see what can be delivered quickly.

### iii. Student Experience Workforce Planning – Annual Evaluation

#### Noted:

a. that the workforce planning group were undergoing an annual evaluation of SEP staffing structures. For PGR this exercise would be led by the PGR Management Group.

b. that the work for the PGR Mgt group would involve anticipating additional resource needs, reviewing job descriptions etc.

c. that the final outcome of this exercise would come to MDCSG for endorsement.

### iv. CDT Programme Approvals

**Noted:** that SH and RW had reviewed and were happy with the new FSE CDT programme approval documents.

**Agreed:** that MDCSG were happy for Melissa to review the proposals and approve by chairs action (**ACTION – MW**).

### v. Feedback from new president (interdisciplinarity)

**Noted:** that the new President was interested in understanding the level of interdisciplinarity in our PGR programmes and RDRD / Research Strategy team would be looking at ways to identify which of our programmes / PGRs are interdisciplinary.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 20 March 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 3.1

**MDCSG March 2024**  
**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> March, 11:00- 13:00**  
**Roscoe 1.003**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Alex Hinchliffe, David Bechtold, Jessica Bowler, Ruth Whelan, Admos Chimhowu, Richard Cotton, Emma Bramwell, Amy Smith, Anusarin Lowe.

**For Item 4i:** Catherine Schofield

**For Item 7i:** Jane Mooney

**For Item 7ii:** Maryam Qaiser, Yuyao Jin

**1. Welcome**

**Noted:** Apologies from Gina Dalton, Ansab Ali, Jared Ruff and Georgina Hall.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Agreed:** that the notes were an accurate record of the meeting.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. Supervisor Training Expectations**

**Noted:**

**a.** that HUMS were supportive with the addition of ethics and risk training as mandatory.

**b.** that FSE DA leadership were supportive but that the proposal still needed to go to the research leadership team to get buy-in at higher levels.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that the priority should be to establish a complete list of all available training and development opportunities in supervision at UoM so that faculties could establish which would be mandatory for their supervisors.

**b.** that all new supervisors at UoM must complete NAP unless that they were adequately experienced in supervision and approval was granted for completion to be waived (but these supervisors would still require training / orientation in UoM process, policy and procedure).

**c.** that supervisor non-engagement should lead to a restriction on applications to funded programmes and potentially, in conjunction with other measure of poor supervisory practice, a complete ban on supervision.

**d.** that P&OD would need to be consulted in regards to final wording on restrictions on supervision for those who fail to meet the requirements of the policy (**ACTION – RDRD**).

**e.** that in order to monitor engagement, a process of Supervisor self-reporting would need to be established with P&DRs being a potential checkpoint.

**f.** that AS was continuing to work on provision for supervisors in the area of PGR disability (including neurodiversity).

**b. PGR Admissions Ethics Question**

**Noted:** that development work was still underway but some technical difficulties had led to a delay. The new question will be added to the admissions form soon.

**3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

No items.

#### **4. Recruitment and Admissions**

##### **i. PGR Admissions System Update**

###### **Noted:**

- a. that the identified required improvements to the interim SharePoint solution could not be done quickly (no clear timeline for implementation).
- b. that CS was currently looking at the timeline for relaunch of the PDRA including time for user acceptance testing with BAU colleagues that may require backfill to help support Faculties.
- c. that the time commitment on BAU resource for testing was not yet clear and that FACs would be kept updated as the timeline and commitment becomes clear.

###### **Agreed:**

- a. that CS would provide Faculties with a letter (or minutes from a meeting) detailing SEP workforce planning group support for retaining the additional resource required to maintain the interim solution **(ACTION)**.
- b. that AH would invite CS to attend MDCSG again in May to provide an update on the roadmap to relaunch **(ACTION)**.

##### **ii. EDI Admissions Questions**

###### **Agreed:**

- a. that the questions related to age, maintenance grants and the Armed Forces could be removed.
- b. that the list should be cross checked with the 'NEON defining widening participation criteria' paper that was presented to PRMG **(ACTION – AH)**
- c. that AH would check with ARC group to check what EDI data they capture **(ACTION – AH)**
- d. that the agreed final list of questions should be checked with UKRI to make sure that it meets their requirements before they are implemented **(ACTION – MW)**

#### **5. Funding**

##### **i. Bid Updates**

- a. that the Bicentenary scholarship paper had been approved by the strategic planning group based on (in relation to studentships) 4 years, no fee, UKRI stipend, RTSG determined by the needs of the project, recruited over 2 cohorts 25/26 and 26/27, preferably to the agreed themes.
- b. that both the NERC and BBSRC DTP bids were being prepared with a deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **6. Progression and Assessment**

##### **i. Recording Oral Examinations**

**Agreed:** that AH would defer the item to the next meeting when Scott Heath could be part of the conversation **(ACTION)**.

##### **ii. Withholding Awards**

**Agreed:** that it would not be possible to withhold awards due to incomplete exit checklist milestones e.g. PGRs not clearing their workspaces.

#### **7. Researcher experience and wellbeing**

##### **i. Researcher Development Interns Evaluation**

**Noted:**

- a. that the PGR res dev interns had successfully completed their projects developing career profiles and online interview resources for PGRs looking to move outside of academia.
- b. that the resources were created with PGR consultation and interviews with PGR alumni.
- c. that a [website](#) has been created in Canva that will be linked to via the Researcher Development website.

**ii. Digital Equity Policy**

**Noted:**

- a. that there is currently no digital equity policy at UoM and the need to create a policy was identified by the Flexible Learning Future of Student Computing group.
- b. that the purpose of the draft policy is to ensure all learners have equitable access to effectively engage with learning and development opportunities.

**Agreed:**

- a. that the policy should include PGR and acknowledge / link to the provision that already exists in this area for PGR.
- b. that the policy should be careful with language in relation to PGR e.g. the term 'programme' means something different from UG to PGR.
- c. that AH would share the slides with MDCSG when circulating the minutes **(ACTION)**
- d. that JH will share the feedback she has received from the disabled student group with MDCSH **(ACTION)**
- e. that JM should consider setting up student / PGR focus groups as the policy develops.
- f. that JM should consider provision for distance learning / off-site students and PGRs in the policy.
- g. that the provision of work/study space for PGRs differed widely across schools and Faculty and from UG/PGT/PGR and this might need to be acknowledged in the policy.

**8. Careers and employability**

No items.

**9. Activity Reports**

**i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports**

**Noted:** that a new SU PGR officer had been elected and RDRD would be meeting with them and Ansab ahead of their official start date on 15<sup>th</sup> July.

**10. Any Other Business**

**Noted:** that The Procedure for Protecting the Interests of Students had been revised and MDCSG had been asked to add any final comment prior to Senate in April.

**Agreed:** that HB would share the draft for comment by email **ACTION HB.**

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 22 May 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 3.1

**MDCSG May 2024**  
**Wed 22 May, 11:00- 13:00**  
**AMBS G.018**

**NOTES**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Alex Hinchliffe, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Admos Chimhowu, Jessica Bowler, Ruth Whelan, Tanya Luff, Georgina Dalton, Amy Smith, Emily Cocker, Georgina Hall.

**For Item 4i:** Catherine Scofield

**1. Welcome**

**Noted:** apologies from Richard Cotton, Scott Heath and David Bechtold.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the minutes were an accurate record of the March meeting.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. Supervisor Expectations**

**Agreed:**

**a.** that FSE will take the recommendations to FLT on 3<sup>rd</sup> June for local approval  
**(ACTION SH).**

**b.** that assuming all faculties approve, the comms could be circulated simultaneously at an agreed date/time in week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> June.

**c.** that faculties will host some faculty-specific expectations/information/context on DA websites but will link out to a central Researcher Development page that will host all Faculty-led masterclass registration links.

**b. PGR Admissions Ethics Question**

**Noted:** that AH had reached out for an update but had not had a response.

**Agreed:** that JB would check the live form to see if the question had been added  
**(ACTION JB).**

**c. EDI Questions**

**Noted:** that AH and MW will meet with a UKRI colleague to review/discuss the MDCSG approved EDI questions before requesting their addition to admissions forms and will report back at a future meeting.

**3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

**i. iCASE Awards**

**Agreed:**

**a.** that we should not be accepting and facilitating UKRI payments to external institutions / PGRs.

**b.** that in the case of the UoM colleague who has moved to Strathclyde we should only consider facilitating payments if a PGR has already been recruited and if there is a collaborative element to the programme; if so the UoM collaborator should be appointed as an external (to Strathclyde) co-supervisor **(ACTION RW to check details).**

**c.** that we need to communicate MDCSG's position to the non-research finance teams

and heads of finance to make sure that these awards are not facilitated in future **(ACTION - RDRD)**.

**ii. Dual Award Proposal with Tohoku University**

**Agreed:**

**a.** that there were many areas that required more clarity before MDCSG could give approval and that all areas of concern would be fed back to FSE for consideration of all points before re-submitting the approval form to MDCSG **(ACTION – RDRD)**.

**b.** that the form, process and guidance for the creation and approval of Dual/Joint awards needed updating so that proposals were fully realised before coming to MDCSG and so that RDRD could assist in the contracts stage **(ACTION – JL/AH)**.

**iii. FBMH Bicentennial Researchers Proposal**

**Noted:** that FSE and HUMS are in the process of working on their plans, which are similar to the FBMH plan shared in the paperwork.

**4. Recruitment and Admissions**

**i. PGR Admissions System Update from PDG**

**Noted:**

**a.** that the demonstration of PGR Admissions functionality for PGR Officers took place on 22 April.

**b.** That funding for backfill had been agreed – each Faculty 1 x G4 for 6 months, extension of central admissions backfill to cover PGRA & other My Manchester admissions activity.

**c.** that PDG would ascertain the numbers of new staff (PS and academic) who will need training/briefing/supporting as well as those requiring refresher training.

**d.** that some volunteers would be required to work with designers on the academic dashboard changes.

**e.** that additional security work was requested for the Portal Platform Project and although 9 out of 10 fixes are now complete, it's likely that the initial release date will be pushed back from end of June to mid-July.

**f.** that CS was waiting to get access to the required technical teams before she can update the list of required system improvements.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that it was sensible for there to be an April 2025 pilot launch (for new applicants in some divisions/departments) before a full launch in Autumn 2025.

**5. Funding**

**i. Bid Updates**

**Noted:** that NERC DTP and BBSRC DTP bids had been submitted and feedback is anticipated next week.

**6. Progression and Assessment**

**i. Thesis / Dissertation Content Warnings**

**Agreed:** that the update / guidance were approved and could go to Senate Research Sub-Committee **(ACTION – AH)**.

**ii. AI Declarations**

**Agreed:** that the update was approved and could go to Senate Research Sub-Committee **(ACTION – AH)**.

iii. **Recording Oral Examinations**

**Noted:** that FSE did not have the capacity to pilot a scheme at this time and might revisit in the future.

**7. Researcher experience and wellbeing**

i. **COVID Expense Fund**

**Agreed:** that the COVID Expense fund should be kept open until September 2024 (to allow for PGRs who had to defer their start date to apply for potential visa extension costs) at which point remaining funds could be directed to the LCSF.

ii. **PGR Comms Strategy**

**Noted:**

a. that GH updated on progress made towards a PGR comms strategy.

b. that GH will work on a report / recommendations for the July MDCSG meeting **(ACTION – AH/GD)**.

**8. Careers and employability**

**9. Activity Reports**

**Noted:** no comments on the RDRD report and a verbal update from the SU.

**10. Any Other Business**

i. **Equality Charter Actions**

**Noted:** that RDRD will pull together all actions relating to PGR and circulate them for input ahead of the meeting on 1 July **(ACTION HB)**.

ii. **Georgina Leaving**

**Noted:** a huge thank you to Georgina Hall for her work in the RDRD team and best wishes for her new Australian adventure.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 19 June 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, AMBS 4.020

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

**12. MDC Excellence Awards**

**Agreed:** that neither Supervisor of the Year winner were suitable for submission for the Times Higher Award.

**MDCSG June 2024**  
**Wed 19 June, 11:00- 13:00**  
**AMBS 4.020**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Alex Hinchliffe, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Admos Chimhowu, Scott Heath, David Bechtold, Jessica Bowler, Ruth Whelan, Tanya Luff, Amy Smith, Phoebe Harding-Walker, Emma Bramwell.

**1. Welcome**

**Noted:** Apologies from Richard Cotton, Emily Cocker and Jared Ruff.

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the previous meeting**

**Noted:** that the minutes were an accurate record of the May meeting.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. Supervisor Expectations**

**Noted:**

**a.** that the comms template had been redrafted following discussion at the previous meeting and consultation with the central comms team.

**b.** that the template covered all the key messages that should be included in any comms but that Faculties were free to change the layout / wording.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that the release of comms would be coordinated across the institution **ACTION – AS to share chosen date for comms with FACs**

**b. EDI Questions for Admissions / Application Form**

**Noted:**

**a.** that MW and AH had met with UKRI to discuss future EDI reporting.

**b.** that UKRI had confirmed that questions should focus on all protected characteristics (other than marital status).

**c.** that UKRI confirmed that the proposed questions agreed by MDCSG exceed current & immediate future UKRI reporting requirements.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that AH would now review the questions alongside the existing application form and create a final version **ACTION – AH to draft.**

**b.** that AH would contact Fiona, Richard Quayle and Ian Bradley about initiating the development work required to have the data integrated into CS **ACTION - AH**

**e. Bicentennial Researchers**

**Noted:** that the Bicentenary Researchers announcement had been paused until Autumn.

**Agreed:** that the launch would need to be as early as possible in the Autumn **ACTION - MW to feedback to SLT.**

**f. Incomplete and Overdue Attendance Milestones**

**Noted:**

**a.** that since looking at the overdue attendance milestone data in February and writing to HoS to try and improve engagement, the data had got worse in many areas.

b. that the latest data had been shared with Faculties who have identified individual supervisors to contact.

**AGREED:** that AH would run the data again, after the UKVI checkpoint on July 16, for further discussion at the July meeting if there is little or no improvement **ACTION - AH**

### **3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

#### **i. Annual Monitoring**

**Noted:**

a. that the structure and content of the MDCSG annual monitoring process was currently under review.

b. that it had previously been agreed to move the AM meeting to September to align with the review of OfS / APR Deep Dive data.

**Agreed:**

a. that in order to accommodate all the various areas for consideration, the topics should be split thematically and reviewed biannually.

b. that for September 2024 the focus would be on:

- PGR Experience, Research Culture and Representation
- PGR Supervision
- PGR Change or Circumstances
- PGR Appeals and Complaints

c. that for September 2025 the focus would be on:

- Recruitment and Admissions
- Faculty Specific Programmes
- Progression and Assessment
- Outputs and Employability

d. that the papers for the meetings would include the metrics (where available) for the topics under discussion, plus the data relating to the metrics considered at the deep dive/ APR, which would be reviewed at every AM meeting.

#### **ii. National Natural Sciences Foundation China – PGR Mobility Opportunities**

**Noted:**

a. that as part of the UoM China strategy the Internationalisation team were proposing an initiative with National Natural Sciences Foundation China regarding funded mobility opportunities to Tsinghua, Peking University and Shanghai Jiao Tong Universities.

b. that it was not yet clear whether these opportunities would become Dual awards or standalone placements.

c. that the expectation is that these opportunities will be managed by Doctoral Academies, which raised concern about resource and capacity within these teams.

d. that export control restrictions often limit which PGRs can actually travel to china to take up these opportunities.

e. that any new Dual Awards would still need to be approved via existing processes.

f. that the Internationalisation team should discuss potential International HEI collaborations with MDCSG/DAs prior to making any agreements.

**Agreed:** that TL would feedback MDCSG's comments to the Internationalisation team **ACTION – TL.**

### **4. Recruitment and Admissions**

**i. PGR Admissions System Update**

**Noted:** that CS had provided a brief written update stating that system designers had now met with PGR admissions officers to gain insight into their requirements and would now be collating all feedback and looking at ways to engage with academic colleagues.

**Agreed:** that AH would invite Catherine to the next MDCSG meeting for an update

**ACTION – AH.**

**5. Funding**

**i. Bid Updates**

**Noted:**

**a.** that there had been a call from MCSA doctoral networks for new doctoral programmes formed by partnerships of universities across Europe and beyond.

**b.** that there will be webinars about the call in July that MDCSG members can attend.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that HB would share the call with the group for further consideration **ACTION – HB.**

**b.** that MDCSG will discuss interest in responding to the call at the July meeting

**ACTION - AH**

**6. Progression and Assessment**

**i. PhD and MPhil Regulations**

**Noted:**

**a.** that the PhD and MPhil regulations have undergone review via PROG.

**b.** that the new format was now in line with the UG and PGT regulations for consistency across the institution.

**Agreed:** that the updates were approved and could go to Senate **ACTION - AH**

**ii. Placements vs Internships**

**Noted:** that as part of the work reviewing the Change of Circumstance Policy RDRD were revisiting definitions of both Placements and Internships and how they should be managed.

**Agreed:**

**a.** that the definitions of mandatory / optional placements and internships were correct and could be included in policy **ACTION – AH to draft.**

**b.** that the university should not accept and process payments from external companies to support the extension/interruption of a PhD programme for purpose of internships.

**iii. Thesis / Dissertation Content Warnings – Process for complaints**

**Noted:** that academics in SALC had raised concern about how complaints about the content of PhD thesis by external readers are handled and had recommended that MDCSG discuss a process for handling future complaints.

**Agreed:** that any complaints received shall be referred to the ethics and governance team for assessment prior to any action being taken and that AH would contact the team for advice before developing a process / timeline **ACTION - AH.**

**7. Researcher development, experience and wellbeing**

**i. University Language Centre Academic Writing Courses**

**Agreed:** the group agreed with the proposals presented in the paper.

**8. Careers and employability**

No Items

**9. Activity Reports**

**i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports**

**Noted:** that the new SU PGR Officer would be joining soon and that EB would be in contact with MDCSG members to set up introductory meetings.

**10. Any Other Business**

**i. Partial Fee Waivers**

**Agreed:** that partial fee waivers for self-funded international PGRs are permitted.

**ii. REC / Athena Swan deep dive / actions**

**Noted:** that MW has had a request for a brief report on 'the uptake and impact of targeted scholarships on diversifying the PhD profile, reviewing eligibility criteria as necessary' for the Athena Swan and REC deep dive.

**Agreed:** that Faculties would send their brief report to MW **ACTION - FACS.**

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 24 July 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, AMBS G.018

**MDCSG July 2024**  
**Wed 24<sup>th</sup> July, 11:00- 13:00**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Melissa Westwood, Alex Hinchliffe, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Amy Smith, Jessica Bowler, David Bechtold, Richard Cotton, Anne-Marie Walsh, Elly Cartwright, Adil Ashraf, Amanda Aspinall.

**For Item 4:** Catherine Schofield

**For Item 7:** Jessica Grundy

**1. Welcome**

**Noted:**

- a. Apologies from Scott Heath, Admos Chimhowu.
- b. Welcome to Anne Marie Walsh (HUMS PGR Manager), Elly Cartwright (MDCSG Director, Adil Ashraf (SU PGR Officer), Amanda Aspinall (PGR Coordinator – RDRD).

**2. MDCSG**

**i. Notes from the Previous Meeting**

**Noted:** the notes from the June meeting were confirmed to be an accurate record.

**ii. Matters Arising**

**a. EDI Application Questions**

**Noted:** that the questions had been finalised and AH has reached out to Fiona Eccles to discuss where and how to position them on the application form. Once agreed RDRD will work with Ian Bradley on how to make them reportable.

**Agreed:** to share the questions with Faculty ADs for social responsibility (**ACTION - AH**).

**d. Bicentennial Researchers**

**Noted:** that MW reported back to SLT that the launch of the Bicentennial Researchers scheme would need to be as early as possible in the Autumn but she had not yet received any further information.

**c. Overdue eProg Attendance Milestones**

**Noted:** that there had been no improvement in the data in relation to PGRs with two or more outstanding attendance milestones in eProg.

**Agreed:**

- a. that all 3 faculties would raise the issue with relevant colleagues to try and improve the numbers (**ACTION – FACS**).
- b. that AH would run the data again just for the last 3 months and share this with FACS (**ACTION – AH**)
- c. that RDRD would reach out to the data team to check the set-up of the PowerBI report to ensure it provides the data we need (**ACTION – AH**).

**d. MCSA Doctoral Networks**

**Agreed:** that UoM would not respond to this call on this occasion but would consider future calls.

**e. Thesis / dissertation content - complaints process**

**Noted:**

- a. that the research governance team are undertaking a review of their research misconduct procedures which will include looking at informal routes for raising concerns. They are going to extend this procedure to include complaints related to research outputs so that complaints about thesis/dissertation content can be funnelled through to the same process.
- b. that a revised version of the process is expected before the end of the year and will

come to MDCSG for consultation.

### **3. Planning and Quality Assurance**

#### **i. Student Intake and Insight Report**

**Noted:**

- a. that all applications, offers and acceptance are up on the same week last year (except FBMH offers for home slightly down (-3%)).
- b. that home recruitment for HUMS and FSE was under target but was compensated for by international recruitment.
- c. that the performance indicators in table do not accurately reflect the data being presented.

**Agreed:** that RDRD would feedback that MDCSG were concerned that the performance indicators were no reflective of data / narrative (**ACTION – RDRD**).

#### **ii. Tohoku Dual Award**

**Noted:** that following previous MDCSG discussion revised paperwork had been received. JL has provided further feedback to FSE. The programme will be approved by chair's action one this feedback had been addressed.

#### **iii. RAINZ CDT**

**Noted:** that, pending sign off by SH, the programme was approved by MDCSG (**ACTION – AH**).

#### **iv. New Collaborative Programme Approval Process / Form**

**Noted:**

- a. that the process / form had been rationalised and separated into sections and a matrix with detailed information of the different aspects of a collaborative PGR programme had been added to the form. Approval signatories remained the same.
- b. that Faculty strategic approval was still the first part of the process but that Faculty colleagues are encouraged to reach out to RDRD early in the process to ensure that all aspects are addressed in advance of the paperwork coming to MDCSG.

**Agreed:** that the new process / form were approved subject to the addition of a PGR experience and welfare section on the form (**ACTION – JL**).

### **4. Recruitment and Admissions**

#### **i. PGR Admissions System Update**

**Noted:**

- a. that launch of the PGRA was still on schedule to take place in March 2025.
- b. that some of the updates and improvements previously requested by MDC will be addressed prior to the launch but that some of the more complex updates might need to follow after.

### **5. Funding**

#### **i. Bid Updates**

**Noted:** we are still waiting to hear the outcome of the BBSRC and NERC DTP bids

### **6. Progression and Assessment**

#### **i. Policy on Progress and Review**

**Noted:** that the updates to policy regarding the responsibilities of, and the appointment criteria for, independent internal assessors was approved (**ACTION – AH**).

#### **ii. Supervision Policy**

**Noted:**

a. that AH would check with FSE and contact the business engagement services team regarding business relationships that can develop between supervisors and PGRs.

b. that AH would include the draft updates in the next full review of the Supervision Policy scheduled for the start of the next academic year and bring it back to MDCSG following further consultation **(ACTION – AH)**.

**7. Researcher development, experience and wellbeing**

**i. Manchester Prime**

**Noted:**

a. the Manchester Prime platform that had been successfully developed for the delivery and management of training / CPD to large numbers of University and NHS Clinical staff who contribute to the medical programme.

b. that the platform utilised eForms to record attendance and feedback, and was able to issue certificates in real time upon completion of an evaluation.

**Agreed:**

a. that the platform could be used in a similar way to manage and monitor Supervisor CPD across all Faculties.

b. that AS would contact JG to discuss further **(ACTION – AS)**.

**ii. PGR Carers Funding**

**Noted:**

a. that P&OD are developing a central scheme for Staff with caring responsibilities that will provide up to £500 for additional caring costs incurred due to professional and career development activity.

b. that PGRs in some areas have access to such schemes but currently, they are not available to all PGRs.

c. that HUMS have committed to roll out the scheme across all 4 schools.

d. that the University were also considering offering subsidized nursery places to PGR parents but were not sure of the numbers of PGRs this might apply to.

**Agreed:**

a. that MDCSG were supportive of such a scheme for PGR carers where funding allowed.

b. that MDCSG were also supportive of subsidised nursery places for PGR parents but that a lack of capacity was likely to be the biggest issue and at the moment it was not possible to get an accurate understanding of how many PGRs would be interested in such a subsidy.

**Action:** MW will discuss development and funding of a carers policy for PGRs with P&OD, EDI and Faculty SR colleagues

**8. Careers and employability**

**Noted:** No Items to discuss this month.

**9. Activity Reports**

**i. RDRD/SU/Library Reports**

**Noted:** No comments on the RDRD or Library reports.

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **i. Supervisory Practice UKCGE**

**Noted:** that DB had spoken with Owen Gower, the director of UKCGE, about

- UKCGE accreditation and how it could be a metric for REF 2029
- Mapping provision to the good supervisory practice framework
- Institution franchising accreditation? Already working with Glasgow but expressed interest in getting involved.

### **ii. UMPA Survey**

**Noted:** that UMPA had conducted a survey of PGRs in relation to experience and welfare. The survey had over 300 respondents. UMPA are now collating and anonymising data and a report will be shared with MDCSG in the next academic year.

### **iii. Heads Meeting**

**Noted:**

**a.** that at a recent meeting it was noted that UoM was falling in University rankings and that the citation index was a contributory factor.

**b.** that ongoing discussions are likely to include quality vs quantity of publications and PGRs' need to publish.

### **iv. New UoM 10-Year Strategy**

**Noted:** that the new UoM President will be developing a new 10-year strategy to launch in Oct 2025 and that he would be meeting with research colleagues (MDCSG /RSSG) at 3pm on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2025.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Wed 18 September 2024, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 3.1.