



Meeting **FACULTY RESEARCH STUDENTS' COMMITTEE**
 Place **Council Chamber**
 Date and Time **Wednesday 19th March 2014, 12.30 pm**

Present	Professor S Wonnacott (Chair) Dr J Doughty Dr I Eggleston Dr A Hill Dr R James Dr J Laird Dr M Watson Miss E Craddock	Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) Department of Biology and Biochemistry Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology Department of Mathematical Sciences Department of Physics Department of Computer Science Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology Student Representative, Department of Chemistry
In attendance	Mr S Gane Dr N Strevett Dr C Yeomans	Graduate School Manager Postgraduate Research Studies Manager Deputy Graduate School Manager

Action**Welcome and introductions**

Dr Neil Strevett and Dr Malcolm Watson were welcomed to the meeting. Dr Ian Eggleston arrived during the item on Chair's Business.

850 **MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

851 **Matters arising (not considered elsewhere)****M839: Student/supervisor working relationships**

Following on from previous discussions at FRSC, the SSLC on 17th March discussed student/supervisor working relationships and student representatives agreed that some students may be uncomfortable documenting issues with their supervision on progress reports. The Graduate School agreed to organise an anonymous survey of PGR students to try and identify any common issues with supervision.

The Graduate School will also make it clearer on the Graduate School website whom students should contact if they are experiencing supervisory problems.

SG

M839: Graduate School Contacts

Faculty information has been updated on the Faculty webpages and Simon Gane will circulate information on Graduate School support for departments to Directors of Studies.

SG

M839: Draft confirmation report guidelines

A summary of information provided to students in advance of the transfer/confirmation process will be provided at the next FRSC meeting.

CY

M839: Updated PhD exam guidelines

These have been posted on the Faculty of Science wiki pages and are sent to all examiners with the PhD thesis. An email has also been sent to all academic staff in the Faculty drawing their attention to the revised guidelines. The Committee was informed that the Dean, Associate Dean and Graduate School Manager meet on a weekly basis to review examiners report forms.

M840: Provision of working spaces for PGR students

Provision of working spaces for postgraduate students was discussed at the March SSLC, and it was agreed that this mostly affects Masters students.

852 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Professor Wonnacott provided a verbal report on the 6th March 2014 URSC meeting.

Award of joint degrees

Professor Wonnacott informed the Committee that a proposal to award joint degrees will go to Council in May. Professor Wonnacott and Dr Neil Strevett will provide an update on the proposal at the next FRSC meeting, including details of partner Institutions eligible to make joint awards with the University of Bath.

SW/NS

Support for First-Time Supervisors

The Committee noted the paper and commented that the candidature form should record if the primary supervisor is taking on a supervisory role for the first time, so that the Graduate School could then ensure that provision of support for first time supervisors is in place. It was noted that the supervisory weightings of the supervisory team should reflect the supportive role expected of the team in such cases.

PGR induction

Dr Neil Strevett and Dr Neil Bannister are reviewing induction activities for postgraduate students, with the aim of staging events throughout out the year. A pilot scheme will be run in October 2014.

PGR Progression Summary

URSC agreed that confirmation later than the usual 12 month period was acceptable for certain programmes in the Faculty of Science, as outlined in the paper submitted to URSC by Professor Wonnacott. No changes were required to QA7 to accommodate this as they would be covered by the use of 'normally'. The Science Graduate School should discuss administration of EngD students in the Faculty of Engineering. The Committee requested that the PGR3 transfer/confirmation form be amended to show the expected date of transfer.

CY

Meeting of Minds

There will not be a Meeting of Minds event in 2014.

PGR Progress Reports

The Committee noted the format of the new 6 monthly progress reports. Although generally regarded as an improvement, Dr James expressed a concern about the value of some of the questions (e.g. question 1 which asks if the report is appropriate at this time). Simon Gane led the discussion on when a report would not be appropriate and the Graduate School will circulate draft guidance notes summarising suggestions made at the meeting.

CY

Emily Craddock commented that at the initial working group meeting it was agreed that the student would be asked to make comments on supervisory provision after

the supervisor had completed their section of the form. However, this was not reflected in the final version of the form

853 **Supervisory weightings**

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that it was useful to have recommended bandings (as previously agreed with the Graduate School Manager, Associate Dean and Dean) but that supervisors should also have the flexibility to set their own weightings within a supervisory team. The Committee commented that proportional weightings may change during the course of a research project and that the administrative processes need to accommodate this.

It was proposed that a paper be written that summarises the Faculty position on supervisory weightings. Simon Gane will draft this paper and will include clarifications on two related points: the position with external supervisors and how supervision is reflected in the work load model.

SG

854 **Administration of confirmation reports**

The Committee discussed the paper outlining administration of confirmation reports and agreed that transfer/confirmation viva should take place within 1 month of report submission and that completed transfer/confirmation (PGR3) forms should be submitted to the Graduate School within 1 month of the viva taking place (which would allow sufficient time for execution and approval of minor amendments to a confirmation report).

The Committee was informed that the SAMIS team are working on an update so that confirmation report submission dates can be recorded and monitored in SAMIS.

Professor Wonnacott requested that this process was introduced to departments by DoS in Department meetings.

DoS

855 **Funding update**

Simon Gane gave a verbal update to the Committee and reported that 2 studentships had been awarded through the NERC GW4DTP, three had been awarded through the BBSRC SWDTP and that £5k of fee waivers were still to be allocated. The EPSRC allocation would soon be announced by Richard Griffiths but the Departmental of Mathematical Sciences had been pre-allocated three studentships. Simon Gane outlined the procedure that the Department of Mathematical Sciences followed to secure this funding and informed the Committee that other Departments could make similar requests if there is an urgent need to offer funding to exceptional students who may be considering going elsewhere.

856 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The 2012/13 Annual Monitoring report for the Department of Physics was noted by the Committee.

The date of the next meeting is 14th May 2014.

The meeting closed at 1.50pm.