UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Please find attached the agenda and papers for the Postgraduate Research Committee meeting which will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2017 at 2pm in Lower College Hall. Tea and coffee will be available from 1.30pm.

AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Paper Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Apologies for Absence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Minutes of 12 October 16 & Matters Arising | For formal approval  
- minutes of previous meeting | Paper A |
| 3. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey | To consider the following topics related to PRES  
- Issues identified via PRES in need of additional consideration  
- Improving response rates  
- Changes to the 2017 questionnaire | Paper B |
| 4. Athena Swan | To receive an update from the Dean of Arts and Divinity on the University’s institutional resubmission. | Verbal report |
| 5. Policies and Regulations | To discuss the following updates  
- Published work in a PGR thesis  
- Roles and definitions of second supervisors  
- Senate Regulation Updates | Paper C  
Paper D  
Paper E |
| 6. Papers for Information | For information  
- Update from the Vice-Principal (Proctor)  
- Postgraduate Research Start Dates | Paper F  
Paper G |
| 7. PGR employment expectations | To discuss employment possibilities for PGR students and how we can better prepare students for non-academic employment | |
| 8. Next meeting: Wed 12 April 17, 2pm-4pm, Parliament Hall | | |

Emily Feamster  
Postgraduate Administrative Officer  
Proctor's Office  
17 January 2017
1. Apologies for absence & Welcome to new members
Apologies were noted. The Proctor welcomed new PGRC members Jack Carr (DoRep), Euan Grant (Postgraduate Academic Convenor), Miguel Nacenta (Computer Science), Peter MacKay (English), Clare Parnell (Maths & Stats), Mary Orr (Modern Languages), Jane Brooks (English Language Teaching), Hilda McNae (Library), and Alison Sandeman (Registry). Lara Meischke and James Palmer were also welcomed back following periods of leave.

Members were reminded that papers for PGRC will be sent out two weeks in advance of each meeting to allow time for consultation. Agenda items or proposals were encouraged from members and can be submitted to Emily Feamster (ef54).

2. Healthy and safety for postgraduate research students
The committee received a presentation from Mr Angus Clark, Director of Environmental, Health and Safety Services, on health and safety guidelines for postgraduate research students. Committee members were reminded that the university is required to perform risk assessments both legally and for insurance purposes. It was stressed that risk assessments are meant to protect staff and students, not to prevent travel, and that safeguards can be put in place to allow most trips. PGRC members were encouraged to contact Mr Clark with any questions.

3. Minutes of 13 April 2016 and Matters arising
The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record. The following matters arising were discussed:

- Amendments to the minutes – Members were reminded to submit any amendments to the minutes to Emily Feamster (ef54) in advance of each meeting.
- Progress Reviews – The new policy is now in place and all Schools should be using it. Phase 1 of the MMS update is nearly complete and a demonstration will
be given on 25 October 2016, 11am-12pm in School 5. Work continues on improved automation and reporting.

- Appropriate activities for Independent Learning Week – guidance was circulated by the Proctor following the last meeting.

The Proctor announced that there will be an Academic Forum on 9 November to look at the purpose of academic lectures and effect formats to enhance learnings. All are welcome.

4. Remit and membership

The remit and membership of Postgraduate Research Committee was reviewed. A request was received from Geography and Geoscience to allow a representative from each department to attend PGRC. The Proctor declined the request due to space constraints but reiterated that papers are sent out two weeks in advance of each meeting so that Schools with multiple departments have adequate time to discuss the papers and agree a unified response for the School. It was noted that Divinity will have two representatives this year who will alternate attending. The membership list will be updated accordingly.

5. Postgraduate research priorities

The Dean of Arts reviewed ongoing postgraduate research projects, including postgraduate tutoring, updating and streamlining PGR webpages, continued improvements to support progress reviews in MMS, support for PGR students who start outwith the normal admission cycle and development of the graduate school. PGRC members were asked to consider a number of potential areas for development in 2016/17 and report on which were most relevant for their Schools. Areas of interest include:

- Improved guidance on publication before thesis submission
- Streamlining and improving information provided to external examiners
- Reviewing the policy on conducting Vivas via videoconferencing and updating guidance
- Defining the role of the second supervisor.

PGRC members were also asked to note the following sector and external developments:

- Engagement with the Teaching Excellence Framework – Heads of School have received a lot of information on this and can brief DoPGs.
- Quality Enhancement Framework – reviewers are taking a stronger interest in postgraduate research students.
- PRES 2017 – DoPGs were reminded that the PRES survey will be running again in Spring 2017. It has proven difficult to get good returns on the survey in the past. Strategies for improving participation and results will be discussed at future PGRC meetings.

6. Doctoral students who teach

PGRC members received an update on the work of the PGR Tutoring Working Group. The group has joined up and distilled the existing documents into one policy that covers all the necessary elements. The group has also produced several templates to assist in implementing the new policy.
There was a discussion around the amount of time a postgraduate student may spend teaching, and what role a supervisor should play in ensuring that teaching does not negatively impact on academic progress. The policy has been worded to allow flexibility between different Schools and teaching demands, but no student should spend more than half of their working week on teaching related activities. Additionally, Tier 4 students must not work more than 20 hours per week in any type of employment. DoPGs requested the addition of text that would allow a PGR student’s progress record to be taken in to account when assigning teaching. This was agreed and will be added to the final document. The document will return to Learning and Teaching Committee in November and will then go to December Academic Council for final approval.

7. Papers for Information
Papers for information were received without comment.

8. Supervisor Training
Carol Morris gave an overview of new Epigeum courses that are available to supplement in house supervisor training. Online courses covering a range of topics related to successful PGR supervision are available and will be beneficial to new staff as well as more experienced staff looking for a ‘refresher’. Tokens for each course are available via CAPOD and staff are encouraged to take as many courses as are beneficial to them. For additional information or data on usage at School level please contact capod@.

9. Date of Next Meeting
It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16 November 2016 in Parliament Hall from 2-4 pm (tea/coffee available from 1:30pm).

Emily Freamster
Postgraduate Administrative Officer
17 October 2016
## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
### ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Items:</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apologies for absence and Welcome to new members</td>
<td>• Send agenda items or apologies for absence to Emily Feamster at ef54@ in advance of each meeting.</td>
<td>All PGRC members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remit and membership</td>
<td>• Agree which DoPG will represent the School and notify Emily Feamster in advance of each meeting.</td>
<td>Geography and Geoscience; Philosophy, Anthropology and Film; Divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate research priorities</td>
<td>• Consider how to move forward agreed priorities in 2016/17</td>
<td>Proctor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral students who teach</td>
<td>• Add in a sentence allowing a student’s progress reports to be taken in to account when assigning teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Return papers to LTC and then to Academic Council</td>
<td>Tutoring Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage colleagues to make use of the new training options and contact CAPOD for additional information or to obtain tokens</td>
<td>Emily Feamster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor training</td>
<td>• Encourage colleagues to make use of the new training options and contact CAPOD for additional information or to obtain tokens</td>
<td>All PGRC members</td>
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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES)

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper presents an overview of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, themes identified over the past two surveys (run bi-annually) and suggests possibilities for improving St Andrew’s performance in the 2017 PRES. A summary of a recent consultation and resulting changes to the survey is also included.

2. Action requested

2.1. PGRC members are asked to review the information and be prepared to discuss the following issues:

- How to increase student engagement with School representation and how best to communicate changes made based on student feedback;
- Welcome, Induction and expectation setting;
- Engagement with PRES;
- Helping postgraduate research students feel part of a research culture.

There will be time for small group discussion and feedback at the PGRC meeting.

3. Consultation

3.1. This paper has previously been reviewed and supported by Academic Monitoring Group.

4. Background / context

4.1. The PRES survey measures student satisfaction for postgraduate research students. Both response rates and results have been well below what we receive on the undergraduate equivalent, the National Student Survey, and below what we expect of ourselves as an institution. Several themes highlighted in the PRES have also been picked up through our own University Led Internal Reviews.

4.2. This paper is submitted to PGRC so the committee can be aware of the issues, and the changes to the upcoming survey, and consider actions that could be taken to improve engagement and results.

5. Further information

5.1. **Author**

Emily Feamster
Administrative Officer

**Presenter**

Lorna Milne
Vice-Principal (Proctor)

27 January 2017
Overview

- PRES is administrated by the Higher Education Academy and runs every two years.
- St Andrews participated in 2013 and 2015 and has signed up for the 2017 survey.
- Registry is coordinating the survey and has been asked to liaise with the PG Academic Convenor about the use of new HEA publicity material.
- The 2017 launch date can be from 1 Feb to 27 April but must close on 18 May with institutional benchmarking reports delivered end July.
- A consultation about the redevelopment of PRES took place last year – outcomes from the consultation are included below.
- PRES was redesigned in 2013 to make it shorter, more focused and more in line with Vitae’s Research Development Framework (RDF) (instructions say it should be 15 minutes to complete).
- Response Rates:
  - 2015 - 36% (386/1070)
  - 2013 - 35% (279)

Reoccurring Themes from last Two Surveys

- Confusion about the role of the second supervisor.
- Difficulties addressing poor relationship with supervisor.
- Lack of library resources.
- Lack of dedicated work space.
- Lack of interdepartmental interaction and opportunities to get involved in the larger research community.
- Lack of guidance on thesis formatting and submission.
- Inadequate School level induction and information for Arts students.
- Not feeling like the institution values and respects their feedback.

Ideas for PRES Improvement

- Information on webpages about why PRES is important and what we do with the feedback. Can we point to any changes that have been made based on feedback from a previous PRES? (eg we heard that PG work space was an issue so we allow PGs in to Martyr’s Kirk. We know this doesn’t solve the problem so we are working to get dedicated PG space via the Grad School?)
- Edinburgh University example - http://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/quality-assurance/student-surveys/postgraduate-research-experience
- University values student feedback. There was a discussion at PGRC last year about splitting off SSSC meetings for PGRs since their issues are so different from UG and PGT. Philosophy gave an example of an event which has been successful for them (lunch or drinks reception with PGRs and DoPG and others with PGR responsibility to discuss issues).
- Can we look at better coverage of PGR issues via the annual academic monitoring process and internal reviews?
- Expectation setting. Can Schools be more upfront about what sort of office space and computer facilities they offer so students know what to expect?
- Not feeling like the institution values and respects their feedback – should we add PRES (and PTES) as regular discussion topics at the PG Exec Rep Forums? What about open forum events with Proctor/Provost/Grad School Director/Pro Deans to discuss concerns and ways of addressing (like forum led by Master and Quaestor about the University strategy plan that was held for staff)?
Scope of Current Survey

- Current areas of the survey include:
  A. Supervision – questions relating to the supervisory relationship including supervisor’s knowledge and skills
    1. My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to support my research
    2. I have regular contact with my supervisor/s, appropriate for my needs
    3. My supervisor/s provide feedback that helps me direct my research activities
    4. My supervisor/s help me identify my training and development needs as a researcher **76% up from 71%**
  B. Resources – questions asking about working space, library provision, etc.
    1. I have a suitable working space
    2. There is adequate provision of computing resources and facilities
    3. There is adequate provision of library facilities (including physical and online resources) **75% up from 72% (significantly below Russell Group average)**
    4. I have access to specialist resources necessary for my research **78% up from 70%**
  C. Research culture – questions on issues around departmental community and research ambience
    1. My department provides a good seminar programme **77% down from 81%**
    2. I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students **73% up from 72%**
    3. The research ambience in my department or faculty stimulates my work **68% down from 69%**
    4. I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department **61% both years**
  D. Progress and assessment – questions about monitoring progress and procedures regarding the thesis
    1. I received an appropriate induction to my research degree programme **72% down from 76% (below Russell Group average)**
    2. I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress
    3. I understand the required standard for my thesis
    4. The final assessment procedures for my degree are clear to me **73% up from 72%**
  E. Responsibilities – questions relating to the student and supervisor responsibilities
    1. My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students **60% up from 59%**
    2. I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student
    3. I am aware of my supervisors’ responsibilities towards me as a research degree student
    4. Other than my supervisor/s, I know who to approach if I am concerned about any aspect of my degree programme
  F. Research Skills – questions relating to tools, methodologies, creativity and research integrity
    1. My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme
    2. My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results have developed during my programme
3. My confidence to be creative or innovative has developed during my programme 75% down from 78% (below Russell Group Average)
4. My understanding of ‘research integrity’ (e.g rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution to others) has developed during my programme

G. Professional development – questions relating to project management and transferable skills
   1. My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme
   2. My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my programme
   3. I have developed contacts or professional networks during my programme 70% down from 73%
   4. I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme

Consultation on PRES 2017 and resulting changes
   • Review prompted by various concerns, including:
     o Relevance of PRES for Doctoral Training Partnerships and Professional Doctorates
     o Timing of PRES
     o Publication of results
   • Outcomes from the consultation:
     o PRES will run annually from 2017, with a flexible start date, running for a minimum of three weeks between the start of February and mid-May.
     o From 2017 onwards sector and mission group quartile scores will be published.
     o More work will be done to investigate how the survey can better evaluate student engagement, professional doctorates, accommodating multiple site students (eg those participating in Doctoral Training Centres), and wellbeing of PGR students, without adding unnecessary length to the survey.
Background
The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey has been running since 2007. The survey was redesigned in 2013 to be more coherent, relevant, and shorter. Following feedback from the sector, a consultation was launched to ensure that the survey remains relevant to the needs of the sector.

Response
There were 84 valid responses received, some of these from within the same institution. This compares fairly well with the 131 institutions that participated in PRES across 2013 and 2015. Of those who responded, 45% were in a non-academic or support role (for example planning, marketing, the survey officer). There were 15 responses from staff in academic roles, and 14 responses from senior staff. In addition, there were nine responses from student or student representatives (typically a students’ union response) and six institutional responses.

Publication of scores
- Publication of mission group averages and quartile information was broadly supported, 62% in favour, with uses for marketing and benchmarking.
- Concerns around whether results would be sufficiently nuanced and whether results for groups of institutions would be meaningful.
- Proposal for publication of selected institutional results was broadly rejected, 55% against, but with support from student representatives and half of senior staff. There was little support from staff in academic roles.
- Concerns were around: gaming of results for better league table positions; lack of nuance in summarised figures; and, loss of focus on enhancement.
- Some respondents favour complete transparency, with detailed results being more useful for applicants than summarised scores.
- Responses suggest around a quarter of institutions may raise concerns at a senior level if publication went ahead, with further discussion and actions needed to prevent a loss of uptake.
- It is recommended that group averages and quartiles are published.
- Rather than rely on mission groups, it is recommended that the Surveys Team explore defining groups based on commonality between institutions.
Survey timing

- Options to move to a flexible survey window were broadly supported, with 63% of respondents in favour.
- Institutions have different wants and needs regarding the timing of PRES, particularly in regard to the potential to run as a yearly survey.
- Recommended that benchmarking will be made as timely as possible, through BOS, institutional reports, and the Reporting Portal;
- Recommended that the Surveys Team explore 2-yearly benchmarking for PRES, and greater optionality for PRES, with further consultation as is needed.
- Recommended that PRES is run annually from 2017;
- Recommended that PRES runs on a flexible survey window, with the same start date as UKES and PTES, but that the end date remains the same to permit earlier reporting;
- Recommended that the PRES survey window remains under consideration.

Additional module development

- The development of a module focussing on the experience of doctoral training and relevance to career was supported, 67% in favour, with a strong view it should be optional and pre-populated.
- There were concerns that the proposals as they stand were not sufficiently concrete to give informed feedback upon.
- There were concerns that any additional content should not unduly increase the length and complexity of PRES.
- Whilst professional doctorate students are a distinct cohort, there was a need to evaluate the wider teaching experience of first-year and masters research postgraduates.
- There may be opportunities to use existing practice within the sector to direct any redesign and/or additional module.
- The development of a module focussing on the engagement of research postgraduates was broadly supported, 59% in favour, though with strong concerns around any impact upon the length and complexity of the survey.
- There was a need for more clarity on the focus of any additional engagement module, with institutional priorities including: engagement with skills and opportunities, evidencing activities closely linked with positive learning outcomes, and evidencing wellbeing.
- The ‘Research Culture’ section could potentially be adapted to explore engagement.
- The development of processes or questions to better understand the experience of students located at multiple sites, and particularly those within DTCs/DTPs, was supported, with 63% in favour.
- Any additional question set needed to be optional and automatically routed for respondents, though the potential for more inclusive questions across all PGRs was raised.
- The motivation for this issue was split between, on the one hand, a better understanding of the student experience on each of multiple sites of learning, and on the other hand, a better understanding of which site of learning general student feedback was referring to.
• It is recommended that evidence relating to Professional Doctorates is further explored with participating institutions.
• It is recommended that the applicability of current questions for non-standard cohorts, such as Professional Doctorates and MRes students, is assessed alongside evaluating what questions might usefully measure aspects of their experience not currently covered by PRES.
• It is recommend that measures around wellbeing and engagement, and the current ‘Research Culture’ section of PRES, are evaluated.
• It is recommended that options are explored to better highlight where feedback should be directed from students who experience multi-site learning.
• It is recommended that the administrative processes and reporting better reflects the presence of DTC/DTP and multi-site students
Publication of scores

Publication of quartile and mission group scores

Overall, responses were broadly supportive of the proposal for publication of quartile and mission group scores, see Figure 2. Of those who responded, 62% agreed that mission group quartile scores should be published. Those least positive were staff in an academic role, with 40% (6 out of 15) disagreeing.

Several respondents (9 of 39) thought the publication of quartile and mission group scores would drive improvement and public accountability, and otherwise be useful as a publicly available dataset. Senior staff were most positive, with 86% (12 out of 14) agreeing.

“Have always been frustrated that good Post 1992 HEIs can’t show they outperform the research intensives in many aspects of PRES” (Senior staff)

“Being able to report on, and publicise, our quartile performance against the sector and appropriate mission groups would be a very positive enhancement.” (Institutional response)

It should be noted that several staff (12 out of 39 comments) favoured publication on the basis of it being useful for internal reporting, particularly senior staff (5 out of 11). This is despite quartiles already being available internally, as was stated on the consultation form.

On the negative side, some staff (6 of 39 comments) across senior, academic, and support roles, were concerned that results would be used for league tables and would otherwise increase unhelpful competition. Related to this were concerns about the results being used in a sufficiently nuanced way (8 of 39).

“There are complexities in doctoral provision both between and within the mission groups that require interpretation with the data.” (Senior staff)

“I don’t think it is desirable for institutions to compare themselves to mission groups ... It *would* be helpful to allow institutions to compare themselves to other institutions which have similar kinds of provision” (Academic role)

| Figure 2 Publication of quartile and mission group scores by role within institution |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| All                              | 17% | 6%  | 15% | 37% | 25% |
| Institutional response           | 29% | 29% | 43% |
| Survey officer                   | 8%  | 8%  | 25% | 17% | 42% |
| Non-academic / support role      | 15% | 8%  | 12% | 46% | 19% |
| Academic role (including HoD)    | 27% | 13% | 33% | 13% | 13% |
| Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean)    | 7%  | 50% | 36% |
| Student / student representative | 22% | 67% | 11% |

Legend: 
- Definitely disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly agree
- Definitely agree
Publication of institutional scores

Overall, responses to the proposal to publish selected institutional scores were fairly negative, with 55% of respondents disagreeing with the proposal, compared to 39% in favour. Those least positive were staff in an academic role, with 72% (10 out of 14) disagreeing. In comparison, senior staff were split 50:50, though 36% (5 of 14) definitely disagreed.

“an institution’s overall set of scores would not necessarily be helpful to prospective PhD students because they reflect an aggregate picture from many different students in many different departments.” (Institutional response)

“We value PRES as a developmental tool and this proposal has the potential to create something that feeds into league tables and leads to ‘gaming’ the system” (Senior staff)

Concerns around nuance (15 out of 50) focused on the difference between subjects, size of graduate schools, and response rates - such that simply comparing one with another would be unfair and uninformative. There were also related concerns about: the use for league tables (17 of 50); the relatively low response rate (7 of 50); and a loss of the enhancement focus of PRES (10 of 50).

Students and student representatives were most positive about the publication of quartile and mission group scores, with 89% (8 out of 9) agreeing.

“it allows students and students’ unions to be better able to hold institutions to account on the PGR provision and better highlights areas for concern” (Student representative)

“As a high ranking institution we would be happy with this, I can imagine low ranking institutions won’t be.” (Senior staff)

“once the results of PRES are more publicly available, the more weight it will be given ... Everyone knows what NSS is, but most Heads of School haven't heard of PRES.” (Support role)

Positive comments focused on: need for transparency and accountability; usefulness for raising the profile of PGR study; and, usefulness for potential applicants.

**Figure 3 Publication of institutional scores by role within institution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional response</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey officer</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic / support role</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic role (including HoD)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / student representative</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Proposals

It is proposed that sector and mission group quartile scores are published from PRES 2017 onwards, and that the publication of institutional scores continues to be explored.

The limited extent to which at least some mission groups usefully reflect commonalities between institutions is a valid point. It is proposed that the Surveys Team explore the construction of reporting groups defined around similarities in institutional size, cohort, strategic focus and subject balance.

## Decision

The proposal was agreed by the steering group. For 2017 onwards, sector and mission group quartile scores will be published for PRES.

## Survey Timing

### Moving to a flexible survey window

Overall, responses were broadly positive around moving to a flexible survey window for PRES, with 63% in favour, see Figure 1. Particularly positive responses were received from senior staff, with 78% agreeing with the proposal (22 out of 28), and those on behalf of institutions, 100% (8 out of 8) agreeing with the proposal.

The main driver for a wish for more flexibility in running the survey was the opportunity for joint promotion and co-ordination with other surveys (10 out of 38 comments):

> moving PRES into line with the other two surveys offered by the HEA would be advantageous. Many HEIs run a 'survey session' for all their students and having this additional flexibility would help this university as well as others. (Institutional response)

> This would give us the flexibility we need to ensure that PRES is suitably placed in relation to other institutional activities. (Institutional response)

A more flexible survey window also suggested the potential for increasing response rates (8 out of 38 comments), with joint promotion and being able to appropriately time the survey. Some respondents (4 out of 38 comments) also commented that students on one year research courses and professional doctorates would have had more time to reflect upon their studies.

For those who had concerns over shifting to a flexible survey window, the primary concern was the availability of data. There was an evident tension between the desire for flexibility and the delay in release of benchmarking results:

> There was a general agreement that the current survey window is too early for some of our students, particularly if we were looking to open the survey up to those on Professional Doctorates. The concern more centrally would be that the flexible window would mean that the data would be available later in the year for comparison and enhancement processes. (Institutional response)

> I agree with the desire for flexibility in launching the survey but think that the June date for release of the figures in problematic. If we leave it too late into the year then we find it difficult
to engage with academic colleagues who are undertaking research leave during this period and/or can be consumed by examination marking. This inhibits our ability to act on results with some haste and in advance of the next academic year. (Non-academic role)

There was also concern from a couple of respondents that a shift to a different timetable would lead to more inconsistency in the results.

Figure 1  PRES should move to a flexible survey window

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All (n=84)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional response (n=8)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / student representative (n=9)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic / support role (n=26)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic role (including HoD) (n=15)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean) (n=14)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey officer (n=12)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Running PRES yearly

The final question in PRES touched on the nature of the survey as biannual, and asked for feedback on the current running of the survey. There were views either side of the debate, this impression reinforced by informal conversations with sector representatives. The drive for running every year comes from a need for more feedback and the ability to include particular cohorts of students:

“For students studying 1-year research masters courses, this would mean we could lose a year of data. Perhaps the frequency of PRES for shorter 1 or 2 year courses should be increased, while longer courses 3-8yr should remain every 2 years?”

“PRES should be run annually. Having it only on a two year basis gives the impression to students, unintentional or otherwise, that PGR feedback is less important than UG (through the NSS & UKES) and/or PGT (through PTES). An annual survey also allows trends to be identified more clearly and means you can get fairly immediate feedback concerning events or initiatives corresponding to that particular academic year.”

Whilst there was support elsewhere for running the survey every two years, it appears that this is linked to a wish for greater flexibility in what areas are explored:
“Overall I feel that the PRES is positive and that every two years is perfectly sufficient. We will intend to run a 1st year only survey and possibly a final year survey in-between - the option of this across the board could be helpful.”

“While interesting from a research point of view, meaningful exploration of this topic would lead to an overly long survey. Perhaps a PRES engagement survey could be run separately in the non-PRES years?”

Sustaining the value of running PRES yearly may be tied to the extent to which the survey is varied to meet particular demands. The key challenges are that different institutions wish to run:

- every year for all students, with standard core questions
- every year for all students, with alternating questions
- every year for particular cohorts, with alternating questions
- every other year, with standard core questions

There are several points to note in deciding on this proposal, which relate to the use of the survey for benchmarking. First, the inclusion of only some cohorts reduces the availability of benchmarking data, as fewer students answer any single question. Second, making sets of questions optional reduces the availability of benchmarking data, as fewer students answer any single question. Finally, if only the data from a single year is included in benchmarking, there may be significantly fewer institutions included in PRES benchmarking than is currently the case, for example see Figure 2.

**Figure 2  Example of institutional participation in benchmarking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions running</th>
<th>PRES 2017</th>
<th>PRES 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>running every year</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>running biannually</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total across two years</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposals**

It is proposed that PRES is shifted to the same survey window as UKES and PTES i.e. running for a minimum of three weeks between the start of February and mid-June. It is proposed that PRES is run annually from 2017.

Given a yearly cycle demands swifter enhancement cycles, HEA Surveys Team will work with BOS to ensure that institutions can broadly benchmark to standard benchmarking groups within BOS from mid-May. The Surveys Team will also work to ensure that benchmarking data are provided in a timely way after the close of the survey.

HEA Surveys team will explore benchmarking on a 2-yearly cycle within the Portal and HEA benchmarking reports, to maximise the value of benchmarking, with further consultation on this as required. It is proposed the HEA Surveys Team will explore options for greater optionality within PRES regarding core scales, again, with further consultation on this as required.

**Decision**

The need to enable enhancement was the priority from the survey. Given the reporting of the surveys is still being developed, and the risk this presents should results not be available in a very
timely way, it was decided to run PRES in a flexible window from the start of February to mid-May.

PRES will be run annually from 2017, with the same core survey across years. Work will be carried out to explore occasional ‘temperature checks’ of wider issues not currently covered by PRES, and core scales will be kept under review. The demographic section will be reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose, with a view to shortening where possible.

Other issues

There were several comments around the interpretation of the ‘Research Culture’ section. Given the diversity of contexts within which students study, and make links to networks outside of their learning environment, more specific questions are not recommended. Analysis of open comments to better inform institutions about how to interpret this section will be explored.

Additional module development

Development of module focussing on the experiences of doctoral training and relevance to career of PGRs

Two key developments were consulted on regarding the future development of PRES. The first was a module focusing on career relevance and doctoral training, partly to address the growing numbers of students taking professional doctorates. Overall there was agreement with this proposal, with 67% of those who responded agreeing there should be a module addressing this within PRES; see Figure 1.

There was particular interest from student representatives, with 89% (8 of 9) in favour, and those in an academic role, with 79% (11 of 14) positive about the proposal.

The key area of concern was that any module focusing on the Professional Doctorate experience, or taught experience in general, should be optional (21 out of 51 comments). Several respondents (8 out of 51) referred to the ability to pre-populate so that students themselves would not be indicating their status, or whether the module was applicable:

Any participants who don't have great English ability will struggle with the nuances of the different routes and types of PGR qualifications and could be more confused than they already do with the current PRES.

It may be best if this was an optional section, or only available to those on career-centred doctoral training, as "traditional academic focus" doctoral training can have a broader career spectrum. (Academic role)

There was some uncertainty when going out to consultation with this question as to the focus on issues of career relevance and taught provision for the PGR population generally or to focus upon professional doctorate students in particular. This uncertainty was reflected to an extent in responses, with several respondents (6 out of 51) wishing to comment on more concrete proposals when available. Whilst one respondent wished to include professional doctorates within the survey without any specific module, several (10 out of 51) commented on the distinct and diverse nature of professional postgraduates:

Doctoral training is key for all students undertaking a research degree and it would therefore be useful to have questions on this aspect of their programme as part of the survey. This would suit to some extent professional doctoral students too although often the nature of their
training is different from those undertaking MPhils or PhDs by research and it would be good if this was reflected in the questions. (Senior staff)

In addition to their more structured programmes, the nature of the student profile is very different (e.g. University staff, senior professionals etc.), meaning that some of the questions are not particularly relevant to specific cohorts. (Institutional response)

Figure 1 Development of module focusing on the experiences of doctoral training and relevance to career of PGRs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional response (n=8)</td>
<td>6% 18% 8% 31% 36%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / student representative (n=9)</td>
<td>13% 13% 25% 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic / support role (n=26)</td>
<td>8% 19% 15% 39% 19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic role (including HoD) (n=14)</td>
<td>7% 7% 7% 29% 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean) (n=14)</td>
<td>21% 7% 21% 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey officer (n=12)</td>
<td>8% 33% 8% 17% 33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The motivation for optionality and integration was partly due to concerns over length and complexity of the survey, with several comments (11 out of 51) raising this issue:

I would be happy for this to be incorporate If it didn't increase the length of the survey. A common feedback from PGRs was that the survey was already too long and onerous to complete (non-academic staff)

We feel that there are other mechanisms for assessing the experience of students on the taught elements of programmes, and that increasing the complexity of the PRES survey to include this, would not, on the basis of the information presented at this point, present over-riding reasons for its inclusion. (Senior staff)

Therefore, an optional module appears appropriate to evaluate issues relevant to professional doctorate students, such as their taught experience and career relevance. However, there are issues with this as a proposal from the evidence.

First, whilst teaching and assessment forms a centre of many professional doctorate programmes and respondents commented on a need for greater evaluation of taught provision and training (13 of 51), this applied for the wider student cohort, who typically experience very directed taught provision and training. Second, several respondents (6 out of 51) stated that the extent to which a
professional doctorate programme is orientated around career, and the purpose of the doctorate with regard to career, varied, such that uniformity could not be assumed.

There is some indication that greater use in analysis needs to be made of the distinction between different types of students, as there was not awareness that this can be done in PRES. Comments also indicated that some institutions have developed modules to survey their professional doctorate students, or a fusion of PRES and PTES. Therefore, it appears there may be templates that, with the consent of participating institutions, could be used as a basis for a professional doctorate section within PRES.

**Development of module focussing on the engagement of PGRs with their study**

As with the preceding proposal, the feedback around the proposal for an engagement module balanced the desire for more information regarding the PGR experience and the length of the survey. Overall, a majority were in favour, with 59% agreeing with the proposal; see Figure 2. Of student representatives, 78% (7 out of 9) were in favour, as were 64% (9 out of 14) of senior staff.

Whilst many comments were favourable to the proposal, respondents (13 out of 47 comments) raised a diverse range of aims for the engagement section, including: preventing disengagement, engagement with skills and opportunities, reflecting on self-directed learning, evidencing activities closely linked with positive learning outcomes, evidencing wellbeing and community.

The need for further clarification, and potentially more consultation, regarding the particular items being considered for inclusion was raised by several respondents (7 out of 47). It was suggested by three respondents that UKES items may be appropriate for inclusion; however, the need for careful consideration of items was raised as a concern by several respondents (10 out of 47):

> The nature of engagement varies between disciplines (e.g. sciences, humanities, practice-based art and design), and between full- and part-time study. It would therefore be important to frame questions which encompass all disciplines and relevant methods. (Institutional response)

> Given the apparent lack of data and conceptual development in this area, for postgraduate research, it seems premature to try to measure it. (Senior staff)

> It is key that students are aware of what the terms used in surveys mean. For example, student understanding of independent learning seem to vary significantly. (Senior staff)

Rather than develop a standalone module, some respondents (7 out of 47) thought that existing areas of the survey could be modified or added to, in particular the “Research Culture” section. This overlaps with a significant concern around the potential increased length and complexity of the survey (12 out of 47):

> We are open to exploring whether questions relating to ‘staff-student engagement’ could factor into the PRES as part of a new set of questions exploring student engagement with campus life, but only if the PRES is not significantly compromised by length and complexity increases. (Student representative)

> Ideally, other questions currently in the PRES should be deleted to make space for the more relevant additional engagement questions. (Survey Officer)

> If [the survey] gets longer still then I would have concerns about the motivation for students to complete. (Non-academic support role)
This question touched on issues of both students studying at DTCs/DTPs, and those studying across multiple institutions outside of that structure. There was broad agreement with the proposal, with 63% of respondents positive about it; see Figure 3. The relatively high proportion of ‘neither’ responses, at 18%, perhaps reflected a lack of clarity at this stage. Those in an academic role were particularly positive about this proposal, with 74% in favour.

Regarding DTC/DTP students, several respondents (13 out of 46 comments) stated that any specific set of questions needed to be optional. Students were uncertain on whether they studied at a DTC/DTP level, as one Survey Officer commented “we don’t have any DTC/DTPs but 5% of our PhD students in PRES 2015 thought they were part of a DTC/DTP.” Two respondents commented on the need to pre-populate the DTC/DTP flag (which was a possibility for PRES 2015). However, one also commented that they would be interested in whether students outside DTPs/DTCs felt they were benefiting from the provision, even if not directly affiliated (reflecting a strategic push for DTC/DTP provision to be more inclusive).

The complexity of provision led some respondents to question the ability of the survey to gain detailed data that was useful around this area. Some respondents (5 out of 46) commented that current research council processes and DTC/DTP evaluations sufficiently covered this area. However, seven respondents raised the issue of multi-site provision more generally. Several respondents (10 out of 46) argued that issues caused by multi-site provision could be at least partly addressed through co-ordination between institutions and the HEA:

The AHRC DTP model attaches students to a lead or host institution, and ensuring that these students are surveyed once should be relatively straightforward. It would be more difficult to
gather feedback relating to the provision of supervision (and other forms of support) by supervisors at second or third institutions. (Senior Staff)

This is crucial for the future of PRES; many of our DTEs cover multiple HEIs and know to which students are referring within their responses is of utmost importance. Otherwise the data is nearly meaningless. Better protocols also need to be developed between HEIs within DTEs to ensure that visiting students are not requested to complete PRES at multiple HEIs. (Institutional response)

It is useful to consider what institutions wish to understand with regard to multi-site provision. Several comments (10 out of 46) referred to a better understanding of provision and the experience of students across multiple sites. For some this appeared related to having better access to a broad comparison between DTC/DTP students and those not in centres, whilst others tended more towards gaining a greater understanding of how students at multiple sites varied across each of those sites. Conversely, some respondents (4 out of 46) referred to the need to better understand what particular feedback was referring to, when given by students located across multiple sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 3</th>
<th>PRES should enable better understanding of the student experience across institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All (n=84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5% 14% 18% 37% 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional response (n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13% 13% 13% 25% 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student / student representative (n=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33% 22% 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-academic / support role (n=26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4% 15% 15% 46% 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic role (including HoD) (n=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47% 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior staff (e.g. PVC, Dean) (n=14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21% 21% 29% 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey officer (n=12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% 25% 17% 33% 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Definitely disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly agree
- Definitely agree
Proposals

- Rather than develop modules for PRES through a programme of cognitive testing and development, it is proposed that development focuses on working with partners and building on current best practice.
- Explore with participating institutions the distinct areas of experience that should be evidenced for professional doctorate students, and build upon current practice with regards to evaluating that experience
- Explore the potential for benchmarked measurement of the experience of teaching and assessment for particular cohorts
- Evaluate whether certain questions within PRES are currently less applicable to professional doctorate students, masters students, and first-year PhD students through quantitative analysis of PRES results
- Explore whether there exist suitable measures around wellbeing and engagement that could be used within PRES
- Evaluate the fitness-for-purpose of the ‘Research Culture’ section of PRES
- Explore how PRES might enable students at multi-site institutions to highlight where problematic, or exceptional, aspects of provision are occurring
- Explore with participating institutions ways of improving processes for defining which students experience provision across multiple sites, and ensuring that PRES is only delivered once to each student
- Explore improvements in the reporting of student experience located across multiple-sites, and comparisons between DTC and DTP students

Decisions

Further work will be carried out with institutional contacts around the areas of engagement, professional doctorates, and accommodating multiple site students. This will be an ongoing programme of work to develop suitable measures. This will partly depend on the developments of the survey platform scheduled to take place after 2017.

Wellbeing of PGRs was raised as an area also not covered by the survey and that is of significant concern to the sector, both within and outside the consultation. A wellbeing scale will be included in the 2017 survey as an optional measure, to explore the landscape of wellbeing across the sector.

Demographic categories will be reviewed to ensure they accommodate the Professional Doctorate cohort.
Welcome
This survey asks about your experiences of your postgraduate research programme. Your responses will be combined with those of others to help inform your institution about the experience of postgraduate researchers, helping to improve future support. The results are also used nationally to help advise policy and improve the postgraduate research experience across the sector.

Many thanks for your participation.

Data Protection
All data collected in this survey will be held securely. All participating institutions have agreed not to identify any individuals when reporting their results both internally and externally, and to use their best efforts to ensure that no individuals can be identified by implication. The full PRES dataset will be available to the Higher Education Academy and selected third parties in order to conduct national level research and analysis.

Some information held by your institution, for example age, is attached to your response so that you do not have to provide it again. This data helps your institution and the sector better meet the needs of postgraduates like you. [DELETE if not applicable]

Please confirm below that you have read the data protection statement and consent to the data being used in the way described (if you do not consent then please close this browser window to exit the survey).

- I have read and understand the data protection statement
- I consent to my responses being used as described in the data protection statement

Notes for completion
If a question does not apply to you, or you cannot offer any opinion on it, then please leave blank or mark “Not applicable”. The questionnaire should take around fifteen minutes to complete. When you arrive at the final 'thank you' page, you will know that your responses have been recorded on our database.

Where “programme” is used in the questionnaire, this refers to your whole programme of study at your institution, for example MRes in Sociology, PhD in Physics, etc.

After each section you will be asked for any further comments on the issues covered, to enable staff to gain a better understanding of what has gone well and what has worked less well. Please do not identify yourself or other individuals (including staff) in your comments. If you have a complaint or need support with any of the issues raised within the survey, please contact [the relevant service at your institution].
Once you click 'continue' you will be directed to the first section of the survey.

### Supervision

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about supervision?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to support my research</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I have regular contact with my supervisor/s, appropriate for my needs</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. My supervisor/s provide feedback that helps me direct my research activities</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My supervisor/s help me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If you have any additional comments about supervision, please write them in here:

### Resources

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about resources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I have a suitable working space</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. There is adequate provision of computing resources and facilities</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. There is adequate provision of library facilities (including physical and online resources)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I have access to the specialist resources necessary for my research</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If you have any additional comments about resources, please write them in here:
5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the research culture? (Note: Where we have used the term ‘department’ please answer with respect to your centre, school, institute or other unit where you are primarily based or attached for your research.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My department provides a good seminar programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other research students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The research ambience in my department or faculty stimulates my work</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I have opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. If you have any additional comments about the research culture, please write them in here:

---

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about induction, progression arrangements and assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I received an appropriate induction to my research degree programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I understand the required standard for my thesis</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The final assessment procedures for my degree are clear to me</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. If you have any additional comments about induction, progression arrangements and assessment, please write them in here:
### Responsibilities

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about responsibilities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I am aware of my supervisors’ responsibilities towards me as a research degree student</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other than my supervisor/s, I know who to approach if I am concerned about any aspect of my degree programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. If you have any additional comments about feedback mechanisms and student/staff responsibilities, please write them in here:

### Research Skills

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about research skills development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results have developed during my programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. My confidence to be creative or innovative has developed during my programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My understanding of ‘research integrity’ (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during my programme</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. If you have any additional comments about research skills development please write them in here:

Professional Development

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I have developed contacts or professional networks during my programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. If you have any additional comments about professional development, please write them in here:

Opportunities

15. Please indicate which of the following opportunities you have experienced during your research degree programme (select all that apply):

- Agreeing a personal training or development plan
- Receiving training to develop my research skills
- Receiving training to develop my transferable skills
- Receiving advice on career options
- Taking part in a placement or internship
- Attending an academic research conference
- Presenting a paper or poster at an academic research conference
- Submitting a paper for publication in an academic journal or book
- Communicating your research to a non-academic audience
16. Please indicate whether you have taught (or demonstrated) at your institution during your research degree programme.

- Yes
- No (go to question 17)

16 a. **If yes**, to what extent do you agree that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Did you receive formal training for your teaching?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

**Overall Experience**

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution’s expected timescale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. If you have any additional comments about your experience of your research degree programme, please write them in here. For example, what would further improve your experience?
Personal Outlook

This set of optional questions is about your general wellbeing and personal outlook. This section is exploratory research and will be used to gain a wider understanding of issues around wellbeing for research postgraduates across the sector.

19a. For each of the following statements, to what extent do you agree or disagree that, overall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Definitely agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I am satisfied with my life nowadays</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I am satisfied with my work-life balance</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. there is someone I can talk to about my day-to-day problems</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I feel my research degree programme is worthwhile</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19b. Have you considered, for any reason, leaving or suspending your postgraduate course?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Prefer not to say

19c. If you have any additional comments about your personal outlook, please write them in here.

If you have any concerns about the issues raised in this, or any, section of the questionnaire, details of support services are given at the end of the survey.
20. The main motivation for me pursuing a research degree programme was:

- My interest in the subject
- Improving my career prospects for an academic/research career
- Improving my career prospects outside of an academic/research career
- I was encouraged by a former academic tutor/supervisor
- The funding was available
- It felt like a natural step for me
- I felt inspired to work with a particular academic
- Professional development or training
- Other (Please specify)………………………………………………………………

21. What type of career do you have in mind for when you complete your research degree?

- Academic career in higher education (either research and teaching, or teaching only)
- Research career in higher education
- Research career outside higher education (e.g. in a private research organisation, a charity or in an industrial environment)
- Teaching (at a level below higher education)
- Returning to or remaining with employer who is sponsoring your degree
- Returning to or remaining with employer who is not sponsoring your degree
- Self-employment (including setting up your own business)
- Any other professional career
- Not sure or not decided yet
- Other (Please specify)………………………………………………………………
### You and your programme

19. I am currently registered as doing:

- PhD (including DPhil)
- Professional doctorate (e.g. EdD, EngD, MD, DBA)
- PhD by published work
- New Route PhD
- MPhil with transfer to PhD
- MPhil
- Master by research
- Other (Please specify) .................................................................

19 a. If you are a doctoral student, is your training programme provided through a Training Centre (e.g. Doctoral Training Centre, a Doctoral Training Partnership or a Centre for Doctoral Training)

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

22. I am:

- 25 years old or younger
- 26-30 years old
- 31-35 years old
- 36-40 years old
- 41-45 years old
- 46-50 years old
- 51-55 years old
- 56 years old or older
- Prefer not to say
23. I am:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify) .....................................................

24. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

24 a. **If yes**, please indicate which of the following apply (select all that apply):

- A social/communication impairment such as Asperger’s syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder
- Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- Deaf or serious hearing impairment
- A long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
- A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or ADHD
- A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above
- Prefer not to say
25. Please select which of the following most closely matches your primary discipline:

- Clinical Medicine
- Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
- Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
- Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
- Biological Sciences
- Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science
- Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematical Sciences
- Computer Science and Informatics
- Aeronautical, Mechanical, Chemical and Manufacturing Engineering
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Metallurgy and Materials
- Civil and Construction Engineering
- General Engineering

- Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
- Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
- Economics and Econometrics
- Business and Management Studies
- Law
- Politics and International Studies
- Social Work and Social Policy
- Sociology
- Anthropology and Development Studies
- Education
- Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
- Area Studies
- Modern Languages and Linguistics
- English Language and Literature
- History
- Classics
- Philosophy
- Theology and Religious Studies
- Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
- Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
- Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

26. *** Which Department do you belong to? *** This is a question for each institution to map their departmental structure. The format of this question is a drop down list and question wording can be changed or deleted. If you wish to compare your results with previous years in BOS, please test your question wording carefully to make sure that you can access the information you need.
27. I am currently registered as studying:
- Full time
- Part time

28. What year of your research degree programme are you in?
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Other (please specify) ..................................

29. I currently:
- Am in the taught stage of programme
- Am planning or doing my research
- Am writing up my thesis
- Have submitted my thesis and I am awaiting my viva
- Am making amendments to my thesis following my viva
- Am awaiting to graduate
- Have graduated
- Other (Please specify)..........................................................

30. I am:
- Primarily a face-to-face learner (for example: based at my institution)
- Primarily a distance learner
31. When you started your course, did you consider yourself to be fluent in the language you are taught in?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

31 a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have received appropriate support for your language needs?

- Definitely disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly agree
- Definitely agree
- Not applicable

31 b. If you have any further comments on the support for your language needs provided by your institution, please provide them here:

33. Where do you consider to be your permanent home?
[Country list]

34. What is your ethnic group? (Please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background):

- White or White British
- White or White British: Gypsy or Traveller
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Black or Black British: African
- Any other Black background
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed: White and Black African
- Mixed: White and Asian
- Mixed: Any other Mixed background
- Arab
- Any other ethnic background
- Prefer not to say
35. Are you currently in paid employment?

- Yes
- No

35a. **If yes**, how many hours of paid employment do you undertake in a typical week (term time)?

- 1-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- More than 30 hours

36. How do you fund your tuition fees?:

- Self-funded (including family or other personal contributions or loans)
- Part self-funded, part externally funded
- Externally funded (including funding body, university, employer, government)

---

**Thank you**

Thank you very much for your time in completing this questionnaire. If you have a complaint or need support with any of the issues raised within the survey, please contact [the relevant service at your institution].
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
CASE FOR A REVIEW OF THE GUIDANCE ON PUBLISHING PRIOR TO PHD SUBMISSION

Introduction
The purpose of this paper is to propose an amendment to the policy on publication prior to postgraduate research thesis submission. The proposed change clarifies current practice rather than introducing new regulations or processes.

Action requested
Postgraduate Research Committee is asked to review the proposal and either provide feedback for amendment or approve it to advance to Academic Council.

Consultation
This issue has been discussed previously at both Postgraduate Research Committee, a Postgraduate Research Student Executive Representatives meeting and at Academic Business Committee. The suggested reworking was drafted in conjunction with the Dean of Arts and Divinity, Dean of Science and PGR Pro Dean.

Context
Repeated requests have come from both Directors of Postgraduate Studies and postgraduate research students for clarification on the policy regarding publication prior to thesis submission. The current policy states:

With the exception of submissions by portfolio, single- or multi-authored papers may not be directly reproduced or repeated as a standard chapter, however, they may be included as appendices. It is permitted to include chapters based on published work in the thesis, as long as the relevant publication and collaborations are acknowledged.

While the current policy accurately expresses the University’s stance, additional detail about exactly what is acceptable would be useful to staff and students.

Recommendation
It is recommended that the text in Section 1.1 of Assessment of postgraduate research students be amended to read:

With the exception of submissions by portfolio, single- or multi-authored papers may not be directly reproduced or repeated as a standard chapter, although they may be included as appendices. However, chapters based on published work may be included in a postgraduate research thesis, as long as:

i. the relevant publication(s) and collaborations are acknowledged and cited;
ii. the author of the thesis is the major contributing author to the publication(s);
iii. the material is integrated into the structure and narrative of the thesis.

Next steps
If approved by PGRC, this paper will be submitted to Academic Council for discussion and final approval. Following approval by Academic Council, the policy will be updated for the 2017/18 Academic Year and Schools and students will be notified of the change.

Further Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Feamster</td>
<td>Alan Dearle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Administrative Officer</td>
<td>Dean of Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 January 2017
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

THE ROLE OF SECOND SUPERVISORS

Background
Both students and DoPGs have expressed concern over the role and requirements of the second supervisor. Schools have different models for the use of second supervisors and the nomenclature, definitions and expectations vary widely. The wide variety of approaches can lead to confusion, especially among the students, about the level of support that can be expected from a second supervisor.

Additionally, questions have also arisen over how to handle supervisory relationships when the supervisor has left the university but wants to continue to be involved in the PhD project.

With these issues in mind, PGRC members are asked to review the current policy statement below and consider how the policy might be updated or clarified.

The current policy reads:

1. Definitions and requirements
There must always be one clearly identified point of contact for the student, this will generally be the principal (or main) supervisor who will be part of the supervisory team. Supervision of research degree students should involve at least two people.

At least one member of the supervisory team will be currently engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s), so as to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments. Breadth of experience and knowledge across the supervisory team will mean that the student always has access to someone with experience of supporting research student(s) through to successful completion of their programme.

Principal supervisor
A member of the academic staff of the University appointed to supervise a research degree student. The principal supervisor normally will have relevant research expertise in the proposed study area. Principal supervisors are normally full-time members of academic staff in the post of lecturer and above. Exceptional arrangements for other academic staff may be allowed by agreement with the Pro Dean.

Second supervisor
A member of the academic staff who primarily acts as a mentor to the student. They will provide advice and support independent from the principal supervisor as necessary and may also provide pastoral support. The second
supervisor may also provide appropriate specialist subject expertise in the research area; provide continuity of support when the principal supervisor is absent and/or act as a mentor to the principal supervisor when the principal supervisor does not have the required experience of supporting a research degree student through to graduation.

**Joint supervisor**
May be appointed when the research expertise required to support the student spans two or more research areas and therefore the supervision of the student is shared between two members of academic staff. The proportions of supervision are normally agreed at the start of the arrangement, 50:50, 70:30 etc.

**Industrial supervisor**
An individual who is responsible for the local supervision of a student whilst they are on an industrial placement. This individual will not normally be the principal supervisor

**For consideration**
Postgraduate Research Committee members are asked to consider and discuss:

1. Whether the definitions currently in the policy accurately reflect arrangements in your School?
2. If some confusion could be alleviated by employing different terminology (eg Supporting Supervisor rather than Second Supervisor)?
3. Are any additional options needed (eg Pastoral Supervisor)?
4. Whether it would be beneficial to include a category of External Supervisor to accommodate situations where individuals who are not full-time members of academic staff are involved in the supervision of a postgraduate research student?

**Further Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Feamster</td>
<td>James Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>PGR Pro Dean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 January 2017
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
SENATE REGULATION UPDATES

Proposal

To change the wording of option F of the possible outcomes from a first PhD viva so that it is possible, with the student’s agreement, to be awarded an MPhil without resubmission, where the work is of sufficient standing. A related change to option G offers a student the option to withdraw from studies after failing their first viva if they do not wish to rewrite their work for MPhil.

Rationale

(a) The proposal for F allows students to accept an MPhil where appropriate without having to undertake a rewrite that is not in their best interests.
(b) Each year there are several cases in which a student, with little time left, declares they are unable to submit work to PhD standard but could submit to MPhil standard. The introduction of the proposed option would allow for this without the complexities of re-registration at the last minute.
(c) The PG Re-Registration Working Group intended the proposal to be an option last year, but there was a drafting error which meant that Option F cannot be awarded. Option G is also redundant as phrased.

Next steps

If approved by PGRC, this paper will be submitted to Academic Council for discussion and final approval. Following approval by Academic Council it is recommended that the amendments come in to immediate effect as there is no detriment to students.

James Palmer (Pro Dean PGR)
Clare Peddie (Pro Dean PGT)

1 December 2016
WHAT SENATE REGS SAY (with context)

D. that the thesis be not accepted in its present form but that the candidate be given the opportunity to revise the thesis or portfolio and resubmit it within twelve months from the date of intimation to the candidate of the decision of the Examining Committee —
this recommendation meaning that the candidate must resubmit a corrected thesis, pay a re-examination fee, and be re-examined, though the examiners have the right to waive a further oral examination.

E. or that the thesis not being of sufficient merit, the candidate may resubmit the thesis within twelve months for a further examination for the award of MPhil - this recommendation meaning that the candidate must resubmit a corrected thesis under the regulations for the degree of MPhil, pay a re-examination fee, and be re-examined, though the examiners have the right to waive a further oral examination; this recommendation may be offered to the candidate at the same time as recommendation 9G as an alternative option, but may not be the only recommendation at the first presentation of the thesis.

F. that the thesis not being of sufficient merit, the candidate may be awarded the MPhil (research), MSc(Res) or MSt(Res), where so qualified. This may not be the recommendation at the first presentation of the thesis; or

G. that the thesis be rejected and no award made. This may not be the recommendation at the first presentation of the thesis.

PROPOSED CHANGE (in bold, with commentary in italics)

D. that the thesis be not accepted in its present form but that the candidate be given the opportunity to revise the thesis or portfolio and resubmit it within twelve months from the date of intimation to the candidate of the decision of the Examining Committee —
this recommendation meaning that the candidate must resubmit a corrected thesis, pay a re-examination fee, and be re-examined, though the examiners have the right to waive a further oral examination.

E. or that the thesis not being of sufficient merit, the candidate may resubmit the thesis within twelve months for a further examination for the award of MPhil - this recommendation meaning that the candidate must resubmit a corrected thesis under the regulations for the degree of MPhil, pay a re-examination fee, and be re-examined, though the examiners have the right to waive a further oral examination; this recommendation may be offered to the candidate at the same time as recommendation 9G as an alternative option, but may not be the only recommendation at the first presentation of the thesis.

F. that the thesis not being of sufficient merit, the candidate may be awarded the MPhil (research), MSc(Res) or MSt(Res), where so qualified. This may only be offered as an alternative to 9D and the student must be given two weeks from the date of the viva to decide which option to accept; or
ie rather than undertake major corrections, someone whose work was good enough could just accept the award of MPhil.

G. that the thesis be rejected and no award made. This may only be offered as an alternative to 9E and the student must be given two weeks from the date of the viva to decide which option to accept.

ie rather than rewrite for an MPhil, the student could just give up.
PURE
From 2nd February all research postgraduate students will be given access to their own account on Pure. This will enable students to establish an institutional profile on the university web site, log their research activity including publications, talks, posters and prizes, build a CV based on their activity, engage with the open access and open data agenda, develop impact for their research and develop good practice habits for a future career in academia. Students will receive an email welcoming them to the system in early February with training offered in March.

ResearchFish
The next annual collection period will run from 6th February – 16th March 2017. All Je-S registered RCUK funded research students will be invited to make a submission and will be contacted via email in late January to invite them to set up a Researchfish account or update their existing profile. A guidance leaflet will be circulated via the gradskills regular memo to all students (see attached). The University of St Andrews is involved in a pilot to transfer publication data from Pure to Researchfish automatically, where identifiable publications already linked to research students in Pure will have been uploaded on their behalf. All students will still be required to log in and commit their submission during the collection period.

New PGR Policies
PGRC members are reminded that new policies on Fieldwork and Length of Study have been approved and are now in effect. Students have been notified of the changes. The new policies and any supporting documents can be found on the Policies and Regulations page.

Co-tutelle Supervision
The Academic Monitoring Group recently received an update report on the University’s collaborative activities. It was stressed that joint supervision arrangements must be in place from the start of every co-tutelle agreement. DoPGs are asked to please ensure that adequate joint supervision arrangements are in place for any student in their School undertaking a co-tutelle degree.

QAA Focus On: the postgraduate student experience
Each year, QAA Scotland determines a topic for the Focus On programme of work in collaboration with the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC). Focus On topics are drawn directly from the outcomes of Enhancement-led institutional Review (ELIR) to support the enhancement of policy and practice in the sector and provide a link between the outcomes of ELIR and the enhancement of practice.
In the final year of the ELIR 3 cycle, 2015-16, aspects of the postgraduate student experience were identified as areas for development in 4 out of 5 institutions reviewed. Across the ELIR 3 cycle, from 2012-16, aspects of the postgraduate student experience were identified as areas of development in 13 out of 18 ELIRs. Within these areas for development, the following themes arose. (The numbers in brackets indicate the number of institutions for whom this was an aspect of the area for development).

• Training and support for postgraduates who teach (8)
• Support for staff with research student supervision requirement (including staff workload allocation and research supervisor training) (5)
• Oversight of the postgraduate student learning experience (3)
• Developing a research community (3)
• Managing the quality of student support in the context of increased postgraduate student numbers (3)
• Monitoring and enhancement arrangements (2)
• Postgraduate student representation (2)
• Equivalence of the postgraduate experience across an institution (2)
• Induction (1)
• Consistency of information for postgraduate students (1)

During October, QAA Scotland undertook a scoping exercise with the sector to identify institutional priorities around the postgraduate student experience in order to tailor the work appropriately to meet the needs of colleagues working on enhancement in these areas.

Based on the feedback received, Focus On 2016-17 will concentrate on the postgraduate research student experience and will consider the following:

• training and support for postgraduate students who teach;
• support for staff with a research supervision requirement;
• student representation;
• building a research community.

This aim of this project is to help enhance practice around training and support for postgraduate students who teach; oversight of the postgraduate student learning experience; equivalence of the postgraduate experience across institutions and consistency of information for postgraduate students. The project will conclude with a full day conference in May 2017. St Andrews will send representation to this event, and relevant information will be fed back to PGRC.

Emily Feamster
Postgraduate Administrative Officer
Proctor’s Office

27 January 2017
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

START DATES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

1. Introduction

1.1. Although the majority (76%) of postgraduate research students commence studies at the start of the academic year, currently students can start in any month except July and December. From August 2017, the number of start dates will be reduced to five: August, September, October, January and May. Requests for exceptional cases can be made to the Pro Dean PGR.

2. Action requested

2.1. The Committee is asked to note this change.

3. Consultation

3.1. The proposal was approved by the Academic Business Committee in December 2016 following discussion with Directors of Postgraduate Research at a DoPG lunch and at the Postgraduate Research Committee.

4. Background / context

4.1. Five entry points were selected based on an analysis of entrant data over the past five years. The current model of ten entry points is at odds with the rest of the sector. The majority of peer institutions offer only two or three start dates.

4.2. Reducing the number of entry dates will allow PGRs timely access to training and induction programmes run by CAPOD and to scholarships at the start of semester. The May start date may be withdrawn from 2019 if the number of starters is found to be very low. Reducing the number of entry points will also lead to administrative efficiencies and will enable a more streamlined approach to the timing of annual progress reviews.

5. Next steps

5.1. The change to PGR start dates will be communicated to Schools with a request to implement for incoming 2017-18 research students.

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Assistant Registrar
18 January 2017