1. Apologies for Absence & Welcome to New Members

The Proctor took the opportunity to issue a formal vote of thanks to Dr Colin Alison for his dedicated service as Pro Provost for Science over the last few years.

2. Minutes of 13 May 2015 and Matter Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record. The Proctor updated members on the following:

**PGR Tutor Training:** as a follow up to the PGR Tutor Training Workshop held in May and discussions that took place at the Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC) and Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC), the Proctor reminded members that all Schools must provide School-level training for new tutors. Members confirmed that these training sessions had taken place at the start of the 2015/16 academic year.

3. Remit and Membership

The remit and membership of PGRC was reviewed and deemed to be appropriate. The Proctor outlined the relationship between PGRC, LTC and the Academic Business Committee and described how business moves through the three committees.

4. Postgraduate Research Priorities

PGRC received a summary of the strategy priorities for postgraduate research over the next year and were asked to keep these themes in mind as useful points of focus over the next year. Some of the priorities had been identified as recommendations from the ELIR review while others were linked to the current Enhancement Theme.

5. Enhancement-Led Institutional Review

PGRC received the final Technical Report and considered the commendations and recommendations from the ELIR team. Key recommendations regarding PGR students included more contextualised support for PGRs who teach and more training for PGR students who may not choose an academic career. A draft action plan would now be submitted to the Academic Monitoring Group and the Proctor’s Office would be hosting an away day to consider how to progress key action items.
There was further discussion about how to help develop transferrable skills for students who may not end up in academic positions. The Dean of Arts & Divinity highlighted the range of courses available through CAPOD and encouraged DoPGs to support students wishing to take these courses. The question of additional funding for transferrable skills training arose. It was noted that there were several sources of funding available including competitive funding from CAPOD for student organised events. In addition, applications could be made to the Enhancement Theme for projects fitting the current theme of student transitions. There were also some opportunities available through the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH), see http://www.sgsah.ac.uk/, including an internship scheme. It was noted that the SGSAH produces a regular email newsletter. The Pro Dean (Postgraduate Research) would ensure that relevant DoPGs were on the email distribution list.

6. Student Satisfaction Survey

The Dean of Arts & Divinity reviewed key themes arising from the 2014-15 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). The survey closed with a response rate of 36% and while this was lower than might be hoped for, it did provide enough information to get a sense of student satisfaction. The University was placed above the sector average for the most part, but below the top quartile in several areas. Key areas for improvement included: School-level induction; supervision; support for skills development; and creating a culture where students feel listened to and valued. It was also noted that the method for accessing the survey, (individual links sent to students from an external email address with links not included in reminder emails), was unhelpful and a better method should be found for future surveys if possible.

Supervision
The Proctor initiated a discussion about supervision and asked what processes were currently in place to ensure good supervision within Schools. Following discussion, it was agreed that the University should consider further how to reward good supervision and better support struggling supervisors. It was noted that although CAPOD provided a course for new supervisors there was a need for continuing support. A request was made not to refer to this as new supervisors training as it could discourage some colleagues from attending who might otherwise benefit from attending.

With regard to the recording of meetings between students and supervisors, it was noted that the School of Modern Languages has had success with a Student/Supervisor Report Form which students complete following each supervision meeting and send back to the supervisor for approval. The School reported that this helped to manage the expectations of the student and supervisor, and created a record of the discussion and agreed actions. It was agreed that the the Proctor’s Office should disseminate a copy of this to all members.

Induction
There was a brief discussion about each School’s induction arrangements for new PGR students which highlighted the many different approaches used. It was agreed that DoPGs would send details of their induction programmes to the Proctor’s Office so that these could be shared with all members.

Student Data Reports
There was a discussion about providing DoPGs with regular reports on changes of circumstance or other problems that arose in their School, which could summarise problems across a period of time and highlight trends. Although DoPGs should be made aware of problems as they arise it was agreed that this could be helpful.

7. Working Group Reports

PGRC was asked to consider preliminary reports from the PG Change of Registration and Location of Studies Working Groups.

PG Change of Registration
It was noted that the PG Change of Registration Working Group had been working to update the policy on the transfer of students between postgraduate degrees so that it was in line with actual practice across the University. In particular, the Working Group considered movement from an MLitt to an MPhil...
or PhD degree. It was pointed out that particular care must be taken with regard to MPhil status as these degrees were currently identified as research degrees in the University’s statutory reporting to the Scottish Funding Council and a change could result in a reduction in future funding. The Pro Dean (Postgraduate Research) agreed to do more work on the paper following the discussion and to bring it back to the next PGRC along with updated Senate Regulations reflecting the proposed changes.

Location of Studies
Members of PGRC supported the proposed Location of Studies Policy which conflates policies for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students. It was noted that the policy would now be submitted to Academic Council for formal approval.

8. Academic Monitoring and Review

PGRC was asked to note the current structures for monitoring the success of research degrees and discuss whether any additional evidence was required as part of the annual monitoring process. PGRC members were satisfied with the current level of evidence considered by the Academic Monitoring Group.

9. Papers for Information

Circulated and noted.

10. Discussion Topic

The Dean of Arts & Divinity asked members to consider and discuss what types of supervisor training might be beneficial. Suggestions included:

- Labelling training sessions as Master Classes so that supervisors of all levels feel welcome.
- A workshop on how to be a critical friend and provide critical feedback in a way that would be accepted by the student.
- A critical incidents workshop where supervisors could discuss problems they have encountered and share ideas for how to address those problems.

It was noted that CAPOD currently offers a workshop for internal examiners which receives positive reviews. It was suggested that a quick guide for internal and external examiners could be created to highlight key responsibilities. It was noted that the DoPG in the School of Physics & Astronomy was working with CAPOD to develop a course on non-biased interviewing – this may be of interest to DoPGs and supervisors.

The Dean of Arts & Divinity agreed to discuss the list of suggestions with CAPOD and work on developing additional supervisor training events. Details of future events will be brought back to PGRC for information.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 25 November 2015 at 2pm in Parliament Hall (tea/coffee available from 1:30pm).
## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING

**HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2015**

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<tr>
<th>Agenda Items</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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• Ensure relevant DoPGs are on the SGSAH email distribution list                                                                                           | For noting PGR Pro Dean         |
| Student Satisfaction Surveys             | • Give thought about developing guidelines for Schools on how to communicate the value of the PRES to students  
• Survey circulation: consider better ways of circulating survey link.  
• Remove “New” from title of “New Supervisor Training”  
• Share Modern Languages Supervision Report  
• Consider encouraging record keeping for all supervision session  
• Consider how the university might count good supervision towards promotion  
• Send school PGR Induction slides to PG Admin Officer (ef54@)  
• Student Services to follow up with schools with low awareness of support available  
• Consider sending out regular reports of PGR issues in schools to the DoPG                                                                 | Proctor PG Admin Officer Dave Evans DoPGs Proctor DoPGs Lara Meischke Academic Registrar |
| Working Group Reports                     | • Change of Registration – More thought needed on MPhil section. Edit and bring back with updated Senate Regulations  
• Location of Studies - approved                                                                                                                                  | PGR Pro Dean For noting         |
| Discussion Topic – Supervisor Training    | • Arrange Master Classes for continuing supervisor training, including a “Critical Incidents Workshop”  
• Establish more guidance for internal and external Viva examiners                                                                                           | Dean of Arts PGR Pro Dean      |