PGR AND ECR FORUM GROUP

– Postgraduate Researcher and Early Career Researcher Forum Group

MINUTES FOR THE SECOND meeting of the PGR and ECR Forum group meeting in the 2022-23 academic session held on Monday 24th April 2023 at 14:00-16:30 hrs online via Microsoft Teams.

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/1.   **Welcome and apologies for absence**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bawan	**Ahmed**	FEHHS	PGR Representative
John	**Ibanga**	FEHHS	PGR Representative (left at 15:10)
Genevieve	**Breau**	FEHHS	ECR Representative
Charmaine	**Brown**	FEHHS	ECR Representative (joined at 15:40)
Alexandra	**Stroleny**	FBUS	ECR Representative
Emmanuel	**Mogaji**	FBUS	ECR Representative
Jing	**Bian**	FLAS	PGR Lead Representative
Alexander	**Allman**	FES	PGR Representative (NRI) (Deputise **Hope Cletus Okon**)
Emily	**Parsons**	FES	PGR Representative (CMS)
Stefania	**Cerretelli**	FES	ECR Representative (NRI)
Bradley	**Cory**	GSU	President of Doctoral Society
Krishmi	**Karki**	GSU	GSU Officer
Olivia	**Reed**	GSU	Academic Communities and Representative Manger
Aradhana	**Mehra**	RETI, GRE	Head of Research & Enterprise Training Institute, Chair
Paul	**Angelo**	GRE	Research Development Manager
Harvinder	**Birdi**	RETI, GRE	Researcher Training Officer, Forum Secretariat
Kate	**Southgate**	RETI, GRE	Training and Research Programmes Manager, Deputy Chair
Petra	**Navarro-Clark**	RETI, GRE Guest Speaker	Training and Research Programmes Officer

APOLOGIES RECEIVED:

Louise	**Usher**	FEHHS	PGR Representative (Health Sciences)
Devanshi	**Vikamsey**	FEHHS	PGR Representative
Georgios	**Kampas**	FES	ECR Representative (Engineering)
Steven	**Harte**	FES	ECR Representative (NRI-Deputy)
Joanna	**Miest**	FES	ECR Representative (Science)
Maimoona	**Amin**	FLAS	PGR Representative
Sofia	**Lachhab**	FBUS	PGR Representative
Lizzie	**Rodulson**	GSU	Democracy & Insight Manager
Emma	**Caney**	GSU	Academic Communities Coordinator

NO RESPONSE RECEIVED TO INVITATION:

Helen	**Elliot**	FEHHS	ECR Representative (tentative)
Osamh	**Alshahed**	FES	PGR Representative (Engineering)
Emem	**Ekamen**	FBUS	PGR Representative
Lydia	**O'Meara**	GSU	PGR Mentorship Programme Coordinator, Doctoral Society

AWAITING MEMBER NAME/REPLACEMENT CONFIRMED:

n/a	n/a	FLAS	ECR Representative
n/a	n/a	FES	PGR Representative (Science)

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/2.**Items from Chair**: -

2.1 Minutes of previous meeting 28 November 2022 and matters arising were agreed as confirmed.

2.2 Actions update was given.

2.3 Research and Knowledge Exchange Board update

2.3.1 The board has been discussing the increase in PGR numbers, developing doctorate college, and PGR seminar series.

2.3.2 Innovation funding round taking place across the university and funds are available for application from PGRs and ECRs.

2.3.3 Research Centres are being approved across university. There 27 research centres in place, which will be marketed as a university centre and not set within faculty. New branding and website content is being developed.

2.3.4 REF 2024 – roadshows have taken place; participation has been low so far and members are encouraged to forward any research activities towards these.

2.3.5 It was mentioned that the working group has been set up for a doctorate college and a PGR representative is requested to come forward if interested to sit on the board.

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/3.   **Operational Matters**

3.1 Online Registration – *itemised at 2:30pm*
New online registration system launched last week, direct website, improved user interface, actions are clearer and relevant for Programmes, non-standard starts – work is being done for this group, fees not requested during exam period. Positive feedback, easy to use. Further enhancements have been requested for PGR student users; student declaration page should have a link to PGR Regulations, Student Union page a link to Doctorate Society to be added, removal of any unnecessary modules for PGRs.

3.2 RETI Training 2022-23
RETI training schedule is available online via Portal, Research Tab
Feedback from PGRs on new online asynchronous Epigeum training (Becoming a Researcher; Research Methods; Research integrity) and Lunch n'Learn. It was highlighted that RETI has delivered several new training areas this academic year and any feedback from forum or faculties is welcomed. New Supervisors online training from an external provider is comprised of ten modules and RETI is monitoring its uptake and feedback. Feedback received so far is very positive.

3.3 PULSE SkillsForge Management System update

3.3.1 Good feedback has been received through user testing. Most changes have been accommodated and further areas will be looked into as the project develops. The system will be rolled out in May 2023, launch communications and user guidelines will be sent out. Good feedback has been the increased visibility of progress for students as well as the transfer stage is much clearer.

3.3.2 All training history will be made available in the next academic year. Supervisor training will be linked with the Horizon system so that relevant training is updated in the systems. Pulse will also be linked with Banner system so that other areas of the university can see relevant information on student progress.

3.3.3 There will be personalised notifications for key academic milestones and training requirements to make students and supervisors aware of their activities and deadlines.

3.3.4 Transition period will be closely monitored and manually intervention may be needed to adjust timelines where necessary.

3.3.5 PGRs are encouraged to participate in user testing and feedback to highlight any improvements to the system.

3.3.6 Examination method (online or in-person) can be requested in the system.

3.3.7 The system is low risk in going down during integration and ongoing.

3.4 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023

3.4.1 Thanks to presenters from RETI, faculties, GSU, Doctoral Society, Library services. There were examples of good practice shared, as well as feedback on "You said, we did", where we have improved services from PGR feedback from the last PRES. There are two prizes available to win.

3.4.2 At the moment response rate is at around 29%. We have another 12 days or so to go. All members are encouraged to spread the word in faculties and PGRs to also participate in the survey. The Doctoral Society will send out communications to their distributions.

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/4. **Discussion Matters**

4.1 Faculty PGR/ECR and Greenwich Students Union members update and feedback (All)

4.1.1 FBUS

    4.1.1.1 Nothing reported.

4.1.2 FEHHS

    4.1.2.1 There have been some compliance training notification emails been received, which have now been addressed. It was highlighted that any Information Compliance (Security Awareness and Data Protection) course emails sent by ILS to be forwarded to RETI as there are current discussions taking place on this.

4.1.3 FLAS

    4.1.3.1 Registration and RETI programme emails to be re-worded and not to be too harsh.

4.1.4 FES

    4.1.4.1 Strike action in relation to PGRs (EP)
    PGRs responding to strike action election organised by GSU – there was misinformation that part-time students could not vote on the voting system/website. It was mentioned that RETI is not involved in the strike action communications.

    4.1.4.2 Computing and Mathematics Sciences (CMS) transition to Faculty of Engineering & Sciences (FES).
    Because of the move of CMS to FES, PGR students have been experiencing that the university has been slow in communicating guidance on changes and the new faculty support staff for PGRs in CMS. There are unclear areas in this transition; contacts for pay roll, faculty research administrator (at Medway), RETI programme support is placed to support PGR students in Greenwich and Medway. RETI has communicated last summer about the changes on contacts for FRDC and RETI Programme Officer/s.

4.1.5 GSU

    4.1.5.1 VC scholarship salary for Greenwich may not include London weighting – Further investigate outside the Forum and then to be taken to RK&E Board in May 2023.

4.2 PGR students Cost of Living (AM)

This was taken to the R&KE Board to discuss if PGRs can access hardship fund. The follow-up from the R&KE Board was that because of the complexity of the situation regarding international students and UKVI requirements, there needs to be differences in the hardship fund between home and international students. One of the conditions for obtaining a UK visa is that an international student should have the means to live in the UK. This said, if an international student is in need of

accessing the hardship fund, they should be encouraged to come forwards and discuss their situation with the <u>Student Fees and Funding</u> team in Student and Academic Services. This needs to be reviewed further as the international visa regulations apply that students have funds to study aboard.

4.3   PGR students Induction feedback
4.3.1   PGRs are encouraged to provide ideas or feedback for induction. It was highlighted that the mentoring scheme is helpful for students. Help with training and Moodle site would be useful.

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/5. **Items for information**
5.1   HR Excellence in Research Award 6-year review outcome and future plans
HR Excellence in Research Award: [Summary Report 2019-2022](#)
HR Excellence in Research Award [Action Plan 2022-2025](#)
5.1.1   Faculty and GSU is requested for nominations names for HR Excellence in Research Award for inclusion in the Working Group.

5.2   Covid 19 Scheme
5.2.1   Final update on scheme – feedback has been successful, there have been 112 approved extensions awards and 124 financial awards (between £1500-£600).
5.2.2   Although the Covid scheme will not run again – there is support for PGRs who want to mention the impact of Covid on their research in their thesis. For any financial support PGRs to contact Student Finance.

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/6. **Any Other Business**
6.1   None to report

RF/RETI/22-23/F2/7. **Forum Meetings** - schedule for academic year 2022-23

There will be one meeting per term online - dates as confirmed:

1. PGR ECR Forum 1 Mon 28 November 2023 | 10:00-12:30 | Online
2. PGR ECR Forum 2 Mon 24 April 2023 | 14:00-16:30 | Online
3. PGR ECR Forum 3 Wed 14 June 2023 | 10:00-12:30 | Online