

Scrutiny Panel Submission Document – 2019/20

Guidance:

- Your report should be 1000 words or fewer. You should write in all three sections, but it is up to you to decide how much weight to give each section.
- Your report should be submitted ten working days before the date of the Scrutiny Panel. This needs to be done by emailing: lee.mundell@nottingham.ac.uk
- You will have two minutes at the beginning of each Scrutiny Panel to supplement your report with a verbal statement

Officer:	Postgraduate Officer
Date of Session:	05/03/2020

Objectives:

This section is for you to track your progress on the objectives you set at the beginning of the year, based on your manifesto. The 'context' section of the document can remain the same for each panel.

#1: Improve the careers and employability service to Postgraduates to ensure that they get relevant information and training through an increased number of workshops, supplemented by increasing the number of relevant job listings by July 2020.	
Context:	There's no real framework for PG specific training or job roles at the moment offered by the careers service. This objective aims to change that by providing Postgrads with skill workshops benefited for them whilst providing relevant job listings that include either a master's degree or further rather than the current provision.
Progress since last report:	I had a meeting on the 17 th December as previously planned in my last report. This was a very useful and productive meeting as I firstly met some key contacts in the careers department who could not only help me pursue this objective further but provide more clarity on all the services the careers department provide which is of benefit for the Postgraduate members.

	<p>Many of the proposals I mentioned in that meeting had already been discussed before or done to some extent however one of the biggest outcomes of that meeting was to set up a workshop for Postgraduate taught students on how they can get the best of their master's qualification on their CVs. This session will be organised during the Postgraduate Awareness Week next semester and will provide Masters students the ability to attend this workshop and strengthen their CVs due to their qualifications.</p> <p>For Postgraduate Researchers, there was a Networking Brunch as mentioned in my last report where the team invited businesses and Postgraduate researchers to have a brunch type event to allow networking and more information about the types of roles available. I was not able to attend the event due to an EEAR (Education Enhancement and Assurance Review) panel but advertised the event.</p> <p>I also met with the Employability Education and Projects Officer in the careers department to further discuss ways in which we can provide a better experience for Postgraduates when it comes to the careers department. This was a great meeting as we managed to highlight key issues, spoke further on the makeup of the Postgraduate Taught workshop and also their timeline and plans for their events which would greatly help Postgraduates in their career and employability prospects.</p> <p>In addition to this, I have another meeting scheduled with the careers team to advertise some roles I have found which are looking for candidates with at least a Masters level qualification as well as a small few that quote a PhD as a desirable trait. I am also going to investigate the need to do a survey which is linked to careers and employability for Postgraduates to identify any gaps or areas where we as a Students' Union could do more to support or PG members.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p>	<p>First step is to have another meeting to discuss my findings on the job listings I have found which are much more suited for Postgraduates to apply for and find the right way of distributing that information to the members.</p>

	<p>Another step is the Careers and Employability working group which are next meeting in April for myself to attend and share the insight I have collated and to plan out the next steps of the workshops and support on any events which will be of use to Postgraduates.</p>
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#2: Investigate the current provision for dissertation and research supervision and formulate Students' Union recommendations for Postgraduate dissertation support by July 2020.

<p>Context:</p>	<p>Every year the same issues arise with structural and other problems with dissertation for postgraduates. Insight report states quite clearly there is a missing link between effective communication between supervisor and students as well as how depending on the course you're in, your structure can be either a lot better or worse than your peers on other courses.</p> <p>My aim in this objective is to basically do a full review with all the information currently out there as well as creating new data to see exactly where the problems lie and what could be done to change this or at least propose what the findings state for future recommendations for implementation.</p>
<p>Progress since last report:</p>	<p>I attended the vital meeting on the 18th December which the terms of reference was finalised, PTES (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey) and PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) was discussed, the dissertation research project concluded with a report (this was PGT level not PGR). The meeting also discussed the approved projects such as the need to employ a level 5 admin lead for PGT and the leadership of PGT at faculty level. All of this feeds into the current objective of PGT dissertation but in a much wider envelope.</p>

	<p>I mentioned the need for clearer structure when it comes to the research part of PGT during the last semester of their studies and the increase in more PGT students need to be adequately resourced with more provisions to make sure they have the right amount of support during the research/dissertation period.</p> <p>I also that the most important outcomes were learning outcomes. Some 60 credit assessments required students to make an application and to produce a literature review and presentation on top of their 20000-word dissertation. My research has identified instances of very different expectations for students across similar modules and I highlighted the need for change in this structure.</p> <p>One major point I raised was directly linked to a plan I wanted to make for this objective. Currently, there is no University level documentation which highlights the responsibility of the supervisor and the student. This needs to change and I felt the Students' Union would find it useful if students knew what to expect from their PGT research project and staff responsibilities by having this university wide document and agreement.</p> <p>I was going to run a survey for the dissertation research projects for PGT members but the findings would not be as useful until during the summer when they are doing the actual project. Therefore the data I am going to be using will be previous year's data and PTES to collate a report along with discussions with the University and Union members in relevant roles to provide me with the necessary insight for myself to produce key recommendations.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p>	<p>The next key important meeting in regards to this is the PGT teaching and learning committee sub-group which is due to take place on the 23rd March. This meeting will lay the groundworks of the actions and comments I've raised in the previous meetings.</p> <p>I also am going to meet with the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Student experience in the faculty of arts to further discuss the research dissertation project, the recommendations for the review</p>

	<p>and the PGT level 5 admin role as this will be influential when it comes to supporting the PGT dissertation project.</p>
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<p>#3: Improve access to the Students' Union's postgraduate related information by creating new tailored content and improving existing digital platforms by July 2020.</p>	
<p>Context:</p>	<p>Digital content for the University and Union is as wide as it is confusing sometimes, this is particularly the case for Postgraduate students who don't have one place where they can locate all their digital content.</p> <p>From the moment they are accepted, then welcome week and throughout the year, the digital information that is displayed for them is not what it could be and so I aim to change this.</p>
<p>Progress since last report:</p>	<p>This project has mainly halted due to the democracy review as if the Postgraduate Officer role had changed, I would have wanted to have a different structure in place which would have been more relevant and appropriate for the role. I am still writing the story board for the video but have decided that the confect should be recycled each year for the Postgraduate Network so that future generations can also benefit from the video.</p> <p>I have also come up with a new plan to better the digital structure currently available for Postgraduates by playing with the idea that the</p>

	<p>core information should not just be on the website but on the Moodle page too.</p> <p>I am also a member of the Handbook working group by the University Of Nottingham and in the last meeting which was on 28th February, made edits to the survey going out to students on what information they would like to receive in their handbooks by making a section of the report more inclusive for Postgraduates as there was no section for them to identify key issues they didn't have at the start of the year and also there was before no way to tell if the survey was done by an undergraduate or postgraduate when filling it out and asked for this to be changed as we can better create a handbook more tailored for the right audience.</p> <p>I have also set up a meeting with SU advice but it is not due to take place for another 2 weeks to discuss the document outlining key information useful for Postgraduates.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p>	<p>Have the meeting with SU advice and collate the information in that meeting on the useful areas which will be of use to Postgraduates when creating a basic guidebook document.</p> <p>Finish creating the storyboard for the video and come up with a timeline of when this should be done by and accessed to all the members of the Postgraduate Network.</p>

#4: Developing the postgraduate community in the Students' Union by increasing and improving the promotion of opportunities to get involved in sports and societies and investigating the potential provision for celebrating Postgraduate Research Excellence by July 2020.

<p>Context:</p>	<p>Postgraduate engagement has been low for a number of years and my aim is to get Postgraduates more engaged in the Union weather it's through sports, societies or different types of events.</p> <p>The provision for celebrating research excellence is in regards to seeing what academic events there are to celebrate the research done my Postgraduates and have the ability to have an event to share ideas, network and insight into the research provision.</p>
<p>Progress since last report:</p>	<p>I had a meeting with the Head of Strategy, policy, performance and impact in the research and innovation centre. I was given approval for funding for the LINK conference and a budget in order to run the conference which includes hiring of a conference centre, catering, marketing and more. I also set up a team of people both form the University and the Union to help deliver and plan for the conference.</p> <p>A plan has been created along with multiple different options of how we want to structure the actual event. I had multiple meetings with the LINK team to firstly plan the main outcomes of what we want to get out of the conference and any useful information which we can share with the main body of students which will be there (Postgraduate researchers). A provisional week has been set for the conference which is the week commencing on the 11th May.</p> <p>For the Postgraduate Network committee, the members have now been elected and some have had the relevant training and still waiting on the other members to complete their online training. I have been unable to fill in the remaining two roles as I was told due to the new implementations being put in place for elections there was no more scope to run by-elections and the only way to appoint new members was an AGM. I felt that I needed to decide with the committee how we want to tackle this rather than make the decision myself and so this is on the agenda for the next committee meeting we have.</p> <p>For creating a sport and activities themed events embedded in the campaign week, I had to delay my plans to run the awareness week due</p>

	<p>to firstly conflicting with the democracy review and the referendum, and secondly because not all the committee would have had the relevant training to help run the week campaign with me as it is for the benefit of the Postgraduate Community.</p> <p>The Awareness week is currently being planned for the same week as the LINK conference due to the alignment it has but again this could be scheduled to change due to marketing requests, spaces for programs and events.</p> <p>There was the annual winter survey which was done over the Christmas period which I managed some specific Postgraduate focused questions on representation especially in sports and societies. I just received the report which analysed the responses last week and provided me with some very useful insight to go forward with the awareness week but also how to better engage and provide opportunities for Postgraduates in sport, societies and volunteering.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p>	<p>Further analyse the responses of the winter survey and set up a meeting with the insight department to discuss the responses and key themes. Also how to put this into practice.</p> <p>Continue to keep moving forward with the LINK plan, setting up the right network of people, highlighting potential guest speakers, marketing material and more. Keep meeting with the team regularly to ensure progress is being made.</p> <p>Finalise a date for both the LINK committee and for the Postgraduate Awareness Week.</p>

<p>5. Improve the holistic support for those transitioning into the postgraduate community by mapping out current welfare provision and investigating potential bespoke mentoring opportunities for postgraduates by July 2020</p>	
<p>Context:</p>	<p>There is no specific Welfare provision for the needs of just the Postgraduate Students. Postgrads vary in their different needs and requirements for welfare and so this the first part of this objective investigates the possibility of a better bespoke welfare service for them</p>

	<p>or ways In which the current system can be improved for the needs of Postgraduates.</p> <p>The second half is in regards to a mentoring service for Postgraduates like the Global Buddy scheme to provide a better transition into university like for Postgraduates.</p>
<p>Progress since last report:</p>	<p>I had a meeting with insight about the PG mentoring scheme as mentioned before in my last update. Meeting was useful in figuring out the key issues but in important factor was raised in that the last time there was a survey which included this in for Postgraduates was very long ago and the data as of now would not be a true reflection of how the majority of Postgraduates feel.</p> <p>For the welfare aspect, there was a winter survey as mentioned earlier in the report and they key theme of that report was welfare and representation for Postgraduates. The report initially has been indicative of my feelings and the insight I gathered at the beginning of the year which was PGTs were much more positive in their feelings for welfare and representation unlike the PGR counterpart. This does not mean that the PGT population feel like the provisions are great by any means but simply was more positive when compared to PGR.</p> <p>The key theme was that Postgraduates felt most of the events for sport and societies were aimed for the undergraduate population. PGR welfare continues to be one of the biggest issues, taster sessions and programs seemed to be based around undergraduate schedules and not enough effort has been taken into account to support both the PGR and PGT community in welfare, communication, representation and finally resources/facilities.</p> <p>I had a meeting with the international co-ordinator to discuss a plan of action which will change the structure of the global buddy's scheme as it will allow a specific new regime of training for Postgraduate mentors to appropriately support the postgraduate mentees.</p> <p>Also joining the welfare network for a Postgraduate Pizza welfare event which will aims to get Postgraduates together to enjoy a movie and</p>

	<p>pizza in the welfare hub whilst being able to talk to me and welfare network on any issues they are facing.</p>
Next steps:	<p>Continue to analyse the responses and key findings from the winter survey and meet again with the insight department to use this report to advance the potential need for a welfare program for postgraduates and a better monitoring system especially for those who are home students and therefore cannot be part of global buddies.</p> <p>Meet with the international co-ordinator to put a plan in place of the new training structure and what we want it to look like.</p> <p>Continue to support and advertise the PG welfare pizza event and plan a Postgraduate wellbeing café with the welfare network as a collaboration.</p>

Remit:

Here you can write about any projects you have been working on, or meetings you have been to that you think are of particular importance to your remit.

Meeting	Outcome for students
Graduate School	Meeting to discuss the implementation of the LINK conference and also information on travel grants for Postgraduate researchers.
Anti-Casualization group and UCU	A step closer to making sure all faculties and schools are implementing the new principles in the spirit of which they were formed

EEAR Maths	Was involved in a panel which examines the school on how well they are performing on all areas
Handbook Working Group	An opportunity to shape what information will go onto handbooks and whether there should be one school and university wide or just the latte.
PG meeting with the school of Arts	A key issue has been raised on PhD students in their thesis pending year having to pay a fee for registration to be classed as a student. More information to follow after a meeting with Student Services.
Student Digital Capabilities	Worked on filling the gaps identified in the provision to support students in developing their digital capabilities.
Senate Effectiveness Review	Shaping the way senate is shaped and run which affects the student reps in the senate program

Project	Outcome for students
LINK conference	Approved funding and agreement for the LINK conference to take place
Postgraduate Awareness week	A week which does two things, highlights the key issues postgraduates face at the University Of Nottingham and provide tangible outcomes on addressing the issues. Also putting on events and programs to help support postgraduates.

Policy:

This section requires you to report on progress made to policy attached to you through Union Council. You only need to update your actions taken. If more policy gets passed throughout your tenure, please add it to the report.

Policy	Postgraduates who Teach
Officers Responsible (PT & FT)	Postgraduate Officer Education Officer
Policy Resolves	A project is currently taking place within University of Nottingham Human Resources in collaboration within UoNSU and UCU, in order to establish a fairer contract for Postgraduates who teach and demonstrate on a part time basis.
Actions taken since last Scrutiny Panel	Met with the hourly paid teaching sub-group again and had another anti-casualization meeting to discuss the implementation of the principles and for each faculty to provide more data on the amount of people doing demonstrator work and teaching affiliate work in the faculties. Also discussions about the on-going strikes was also discussed along with setting up another meeting which will finalise the implantation of the new principles.