

IGC Postgraduate Studies Committee

30th April 2021, 9.30 - 10.30 am, Zoom

Present:

Val Brunton

Kathy Evans

Susan Farrington

Nick Gilbert (Chair)

Pauline McDonald (minutes)

1. Matters arising (Nick)

NG reported that pastoral support committees and the supervisor checklist are matters arising.

2. HGU update (Nick)

There are 10 new students due to start in September, 3 of which are international. NG confirmed that recruitment of international students will continue to run for foreseeable future. The committee agreed that this is good for the University and will be more inclusive when recruiting students.

UKRI funding – the majority of IGC students who applied for extensions got awarded funding.

NG reported that it was difficult to put together teaching activities, as lots of students are still not on site. IGC Early Careers Award will be advertised next week as it is important to keep some continuity and offer schemes to keep up motivation.

3. CRUK update (Val)

There were over 130 applications for CRUK studentships; 3 students were appointed, 1 of which is international. VB confirmed that CRUK do not have restrictions on number of international students recruited, unlike UKRI, which is capped at 1 in 3.

The panel discussed the issue of Pathology students not being monitored/assessed via the Cancer Centre. As there is no representation from Pathology on the CMVM Board of Examiners, it might be considered best practice to monitor students under the Cancer Centre.

Ian Tomlinson has interviewed one of his research assistants and will host her as a part-time PhD student in the next academic year.

TRACC programme –VB does not oversee administration for this programme, but confirmed that recruitment has taken place and students have been appointed for next academic year. IGC are overseeing assessments for students registered at UoE. Current on-programme students are doing well.

4. CGEM update (Kathy)

KE encouraging PIs to apply for external studentships.

The committee discussed the possibility of a part-time student submitting early. NG confirmed that all part-time students can submit after 3 years but will have to pay full-time fees at point of submission. If the Institute is covering fees, the student should arrange for an invoice to be sent to IGC to arrange payment.

Committee members discussed sick leave for students. NG clarified that all students who are on long-term sick leave should submit an Interruption of Studies and supervisors should seek advice regarding sick pay. As there is no contingency funding available for some students who are not part of a core-funded programme, NG emphasised that we have a moral responsibility to continue to support students and would encourage supervisors to approach their Centre Director of Studies for further discussion.

5. Precision Medicine update (Susan)

Recruitment has been successful and over 20 students have been appointed, 8 of which have supervisors based in IGC (4 who are lead supervisors). The committee discussed the Precision Medicine renewal and agreed that IGC PIs should be encouraged to make links with the Karolinska Institute for project collaboration.

6. Student administration update (Pauline)

To date, there will be 24 new students starting this academic year. No EastBio students are heading to IGC for 21/22 intake.

PM will sit on CMVM student mental health strategy review, which is due to take place in May.

PM met with Janette Murphy from pre-arrival/inductions team to discuss welcome/induction events for our students and confirmed that they are happy with our bespoke induction programme. PM confirmed that welcome/induction events will be populated in UoE Events APP and will schedule UoE events into student timetable where appropriate. NG confirmed that inductions will be face-to-face this year, unless covid restrictions prevent this from happening.

Edinburgh Doctoral College Scholarship – closing date is 31 May. Interview panel to be arranged and interviews to be scheduled for end of June. As this is a Deanery scholarship, recruitment will be alternated each year between IGC and Usher.

7. COVID-19 issues (All)

The committee agreed that having the TestEd facility on site will reassure staff and students when returning to the workplace.

8. Supervisory team composition (Nick)

The committee discussed supervisory team composition and agreed that must be mindful that additional supervisors are added to the team if 2 supervisors are in a relationship. NG gave a breakdown of supervisor categories in EUCLID; principal supervisor, co-supervisor (someone must be appointed lead) and assistant supervisor (no limit on how many assistant supervisors can be added). The committee acknowledged that being an assistant supervisor is not a gateway to become principal supervisor. No postdocs can become principal supervisors, this role is for members of staff who are working at PI level or equivalent.

9. Interview panels (Nick)

The committee were in favour of using the list of agreed panel members for student interviews, for structure and quality control purposes.

10. Pastoral Support Committees Pilot (All)

NG informed committee that IGC are going to run pilot for pastoral support committees and, if successful, the scheme will be rolled-out across CMVM. The reason for introducing these committees is to have additional support in place for students, which is not directly linked to academic progression.

The committee discussed and explored the constitution of pastoral committee membership and agreed that 1 PI and 1 post-doc should be allocated to each committee. PG Directors agreed that each committee should be gender balanced and, where possible, the post-doc should be the same gender as the student.

As there is approximately 130 students on site across the Institute, the committee agreed that ~10 committees should be set up to oversee 13 students. Committee members concurred that a gradual roll-out of the scheme would have to be implemented, starting with first year students, moving on to second year etc.

The committee agreed that pastoral committee meetings should take place every 12 months, however, students could request to meet with their committee on an ad hoc basis if required.

NG confirmed that a 1hr training session for pastoral committee staff would be put into place, to help staff deal with different scenarios and ensure they are equipped to signpost students to other helpful support services across the University. As each pastoral committee has a duty of care for each student, they will feedback any concerns to PG Directors in the first instance.

- **Action:** NG to put strategy in place and roll out to PIs and post-docs to conform committee memberships.

11. Student/Supervisor Checklist (All)

To be discussed between PG Directors via email.

12. Student data (Pauline)

Working with UoE analyst to create a bespoke student report for IGC students.

13. Student welfare space (Pauline)

Working with Angela to identify space on site and inform students.

14. Student Concerns (All)

VB's student going on maternity leave and about to submit an Interruption of Studies. VB to contact College to see if she can apply for discretionary funding to cover full/part maternity pay.

15. Any other business

None.

16. Date of next meeting

October/November 2021

LIST OF AGREED PANEL MEMBERS FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

Cancer Research UK Edinburgh Centre

Juan Carlos Acosta

Kathryn Ball

Val Brunton

Susan Farrington

Noor Gammoh

Kevin Myant

Lesley Stark

Centre for Genomic and Experimental Medicine

Chris Boyd

Kathy Evans

Pippa Thomson

MRC Human Genetics Unit

Ian Adams

Javier Caceres

Nick Gilbert

Chris Hayley

Pleasantine Mill

Liz Patton