

IGMM Postgraduate Studies Committee

21st November 2019

Present:

Val Brunton
Kathy Evans
Susan Farrington
Nick Gilbert
Pauline McDonald – (minutes)

Agenda

1. Minutes from previous meeting were discussed and approved.

2. HGU update (Nick)

HGU 4 yr PhD programme has now been advertised; there will be 2 tranches of recruitment, first closing date is 12 January, second is 17 April.

NG reported that HGU has been more inclusive with regard to the teaching programme, and courses are now open to everybody across the Institute. NG confirmed that IT courses were over-subscribed, and may consider running the same IT courses again in the new year. Student administration office have sent an email to IT course participants to request feedback.

BioStatistics Scotland ran the statistics course. NG confirmed that future sessions would now be delivered in-house.

VB reported that students are able to book a one-time appointment via the Institute of Academic Development who can help demonstrate how students can analyse their own data.

Rotation students - NG informed the committee that assessment procedures are more rigorous this year; students are expected to write blogs and present project talks at the end of each rotation.

NG reported that a new space has been set up for seminar blogs and other stories from staff and students at the IGMM.

Action: student admin team to collate IT feedback from course participants.

3. CRUK update (Val)

VB confirmed that the CRUK studentships will be advertised week beginning 16 December, with a closing date of 14 February.

TRACC programme will be advertised in March 2020. The committee briefly discussed the logistics of this programme and agreed that it would be helpful to know how many female applications are submitted.

4. CGEM update (Kathy)

KE confirmed that as CGEM do not have any funded programmes, there are no plans to run recruitment for the next academic year. Students could be admitted to CGEM via external programmes such as Eastbio, Precision Medicine and Translational Neuroscience.

5. Precision Medicine update (Susan)

SF reported that PM are currently advertising ~50 projects. As this may prove to be challenging at the interview stage, supervisors will need to ensure that candidates are suitable for project. Closing date for PM applications is 8 January and interviews will take place w/b 10 February.

SF confirmed that the 4 year students are finding it challenging to obtain 120 credits. SF recognises that there has been a knock-on effect with respect to research training, and has been exploring other avenues of obtaining credits including Student-Led, Individually-Created Courses (SLICCs). However, this would have to be approved by the Board of Examiners and Board of Studies if this alternative approach to obtaining credits were to be incorporated into the programme.

SF reported that the Business School also offer online courses on entrepreneurship which could be another way of students achieving credits.

6. Student administration update (Pauline)

Pauline briefed the committee regarding upcoming report deadlines, training events and committee meetings that are due to take place in the coming weeks.

7. Advertising Precision Medicine and EastBio Studentships (Nick)

NG confirmed that Precision Medicine and EASTBIO projects are being advertised on each Centre across the IGMM.

The committee agreed that Kathy Evans/Adam Jackson/Pauline McDonald should populate information on CGEM website regarding Translational Neuroscience programme.

8. External Review: Bullying and Mental Health (Nick)

NG confirmed that the external review is being led by Cait McPhie (Professor in Physics) and Andy Shanks (Director of Student Health & Wellbeing). Student representatives from POGS due to meet with CM and AS on 28 November to raise bullying and mental health issues within the IGMM.

The committee were generally positive about the review, and hope that the external review will help to identify how we manage student-staff interactions in future.

Action: CM and AS to write a report for Executive Committee (with recommendations/action points) following meeting with students.

9. IGMM early career awards (Nick)

NG confirmed that the IGMM Early Career Awards will be advertised in January and that ~£20k is available to fund PhD students and postdocs. Sources of funding include the Nick Hastie fund, Lady Jardine, the IGMM student budget and CMVM. Committee members were very supportive and endorsed the early career awards scheme.

10. Mental health training (Nick)

NG reported that Paddy Hadoke (College Director of PGR Studies) approached the University of Edinburgh's Academic Committee regarding mental health training for supervisors, and confirmed that this training could not be made mandatory. The committee agreed that it would be good to re-visit this at local level, following feedback from the student external review.

Action: NG to re-visit following outcome of external student review.

11. Website (Nick)

NG gave a brief overview of the IGMM website.

Action: Pauline to add EASTBIO and Precision Medicine student handbooks on IGMM Graduate Research and Training website.

12. Any other business

Use of personal email accounts – The committee discussed staff/students using personal email accounts to send correspondence and agreed that it is more appropriate and professional for staff to use their UoE account.

Action: NG to follow-up.

Online annual reviews submitted via students on external programmes – VB raised concern regarding local PG Directors signing off online annual reviews for ECAT students, as well as other students on external programmes, as they do not follow the IGMM's assessment guidelines. The committee agreed that students on external programmes should be made to feel inclusive and have good support networks established at their host institution (to add value to their student experience) and that there should be consistency when PG Directors sign off annual reviews.

Action: NG to follow-up

Student assessments - the Committee discussed student report deadlines and agreed that the current text in the IGMM student handbook is not specific enough, and should be revised.

Action: NG to revise assessment section of handbook.

Widening Participation – SF raised the importance of this and the committee agreed that this is something the IGMM should be addressing in the future, especially when considering applications.

Action: NG to look at vocabulary of current vacation, internship and PhD Opportunities to be more inclusive.

13. Date of next meeting

The committee agreed that they should meet twice a year and that the next meeting should be scheduled for April/May 2020.