

Review of Graduate Schools

Report prepared by Ralf St.Clair and Mary Beth Kneafsey
DoGS Forum Convenor/ PGR Service
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Key outcomes and recommendations

1. The Graduate Schools have diverse structures and varied approaches to key issues, but all are functioning effectively and fulfilling expectations
2. Graduate Schools need guidance on the allocation of the £200 skills development funds as soon as possible—this is a crucial resource for their activities
3. Communication with students, staff and supervisors remains a difficult—and unresolved—problem
4. It is difficult to ensure student representation, though this may improve with SRC restructuring
5. Online application procedures need to be refined and developed, ensuring that options are up to date and software functions appropriately
6. At the start of each year students should have access to clearer induction and class timetables
7. Consistent strategies for supervisor training should be introduced and maintained
8. The standard Progress Review is welcomed, but the forms need to be redesigned
9. Equity and Diversity issues, while recognised as important by the Graduate Schools, have little concrete action associated with them. This should be reviewed
10. PGR students should all have access to some degree of teaching experience
11. Attention should be given to ensuring that PGR students have appropriate social and study space
12. It may be helpful to adopt a more systematic approach to encouraging interdisciplinary and collaborative research formats
13. Social Sciences should consider redefining the role of PG Convenors and the Graduate School Board in the light of the other Colleges' practice

Background

When the University underwent substantial restructuring in August 2010 there were profound effects on Graduate School (GS) operations. The number of Graduate Schools changed from nine to four, involving mergers of previously separate structures. At the same time the role of the Graduate Schools changed, with new governance structures making the GS responsible for management and delivery of PGR programmes and for oversight of PGT activity. The actual management and delivery of PGT programmes is the responsibility of the newly created Schools and Institutes.

The University of Glasgow has, for many years, had a continuing, revolving review process for Graduate Schools. These reviews are substantial endeavours, and involve external consultation as well as significant amounts of detailed data. This year would have been the turn of the Graduate School for Science and Engineering (S&E). Given the recent creation of the Graduate Schools and the degree to which they differed from the previous structures the DoGS Forum decided that continuing the existing cycle of reviews was not appropriate. Instead a one-time review of all four GS was conducted in order to record the development of the new organisational arrangements and share good practices. This report is the outcome of that review.

Aims of the Review Process

To enhance the ability of the Graduate Schools to deliver high-quality postgraduate education by:

- Examining the processes developed and implemented to ensure that key functions are delivered efficiently and effectively
- Reflecting upon those processes to identify potential areas for improvement
- Conducting a mutual peer-review of these reflective reports, including robust enquiry into the effectiveness of existing arrangements
- Sharing good practice across the Graduate Schools

Review process

The emphasis of the review was on the extent to which Colleges had been able to develop robust Graduate Schools with appropriate levels of support. It was also hoped that Graduate Schools might be able to learn from each other regarding effective practices for management of what, on the face of it at least, were similar sets of tasks. It was important that the review be relatively light touch to ensure that the Graduate Schools would not be simply conducting four full reviews instead of one. The emphasis of the review documents was upon process and structures, hopefully relieving the Graduate Schools of the requirement to produce deep data and statistics specifically for this review. The review was concerned entirely with PGR structures since responsibility for PGT lies with the Schools and Institutes.

The PGR Service and the DoGS Convenor developed a pro-forma to guide the reviews and ensure that Graduate schools would generate comparable information. The form included ten general statements regarding the expectations of a Graduate School, and the GS were invited to respond to these by describing how they ensured that the expectations are taken into account. The forms were completed by DoGS and Graduate School staff, with a complementary series of student focus groups arranged by the PGR Service.

The DoGS forum met on June 7th 2011 to discuss and compare the information collated during the review. This meeting was minuted by Mary Beth Kneafsey and Ralf St.Clair. Those minutes were combined with individual College responses and student feedback to create this report.

This document reports on the findings of the review regarding the ten expectations statements. The individual GS reports are attached as appendices, as is the report of the student focus groups.

Expectations

1. Graduate School organisation

Graduate Schools will be organised in a manner consistent with demonstrably high quality programmes that recognise University and College strategies

The GS are organised differently in the four Colleges, though all have structures that support high quality programmes. For example, Arts has involvement from PG Convenors on the Graduate School Board whereas Social Sciences (SS) has aimed for a more “executive” style Board with Heads of Schools. The most complex model is the College of Medicine, Veterinary and Life Sciences (MVLS), which has five committees reporting to the Graduate School Board and then a Graduate School Executive reporting to the College Management Group.

The format of the GS reflects the historical patterns of the university as well as the preferences of current administrative and academic staff. The degree of separation between PGT and PGR programmes, and those organising them, varies by College. In most cases there is little distinction at College level with each School having a generic PG Convenor (Arts, MVLS, S&E), but Social Sciences has separate representation from each School for PGT and PGR matters.

It might be worthwhile for Social Sciences to reflect upon whether its structures could usefully be brought into line with the other three Colleges.

Issues identified by all the GS include communication and PG representation. Communication has proven difficult both with students and with staff. There was real concern about information overload for students, who had indicated that they felt overwhelmed with the number of emails coming at them from different sources. There is a similar issue with “noise” for staff, and a real requirement for PG Convenors to manage communication at School level, which is a significant amount of work. The challenges of keeping supervisors up to date have not yet been fully solved.

PG representation has been problematic this year because SRC structures were not yet aligned with the new University structure. Graduate Schools indicated their willingness to involve PG students comprehensively in their decision-making and look forward to addressing this in the coming year.

The staff resource available to the GS varies very significantly. This includes both academic administrators, who are bought out for a wide range of roles in MVLS and not at all in Arts, and front line administrative staff, where MVLS probably has the largest dedicated staff group. It would be useful to attain some clarity about the relationship between workload and staff complement across the Colleges as a guide for appropriate resource allocation, though this will have to vary according to the structure of each GS.

Students in all four Colleges were generally satisfied with the GS organisation and felt that it was effective. There was reference to some lack of clarity at the start of the year following re-structuring, but a general belief that things were settling down. The problems of communication and representation were acknowledged by students.

Overall, the GS have come a long way in ten months, establishing diverse, appropriate and effective organisational structures. There was no indication during this review of any issues that would not be resolved during the continuing evolution of the GS.

2. Student experience: Application and admission

Graduate Schools will demonstrate processes for handling PGR applications in an effective and timely manner, and will implement appropriate and consistent induction procedures.

All GS have developed and implemented application procedures that take advantage of online and electronic submissions. At the moment this requires different software systems to be co-ordinated as information is passed between them, but it is hoped that the Student Lifecycle Project will address this when introduced for PGR (currently anticipated in 2011-12).

All GS reported significant issues with online applications. One of the most significant is found in MVLS, where the drop down menu offering options for enrolment is outdated and does not match current offerings. MVLS also noted there was no flexibility in the system (e.g. for applicants to enter the full project title) due to a restricted character limit. The DoGS has tried to get this resolved (including escalation to VP level) without success and believes it is a significant barrier to recruitment. Other DoGS report issues with document upload and so forth. In order to create a 100% online process, supervisors should ensure that they have electronic signatures.

All GS appreciate the importance of turnaround time between application and issue of an offer, and all have time limits in place. These vary between 10 days and 4 weeks.

A standard University-wide target might be worth consideration. The main reason for delayed turnaround is late response from supervisors, often because they are travelling for academic reasons. It would be useful to have a clear system in place to deal with this issue, designed by PG Convenors/Directors to fit with their own School.

Students are generally content with application and admission, though they raised a few issues for consideration. It would be helpful to have clear timetables for induction and classes in advance of start dates, as well as more flexibility with start dates. There was interest expressed in aligning

induction periods with the UG Freshers' Week. Increased involvement of the SRC in PG induction events would be very welcome to all GS.

3. Student experience: Supervision

Graduate Schools will have a robust process for allocating supervisors (including managing supervisor workload) and dealing with any supervisory issues that arise.

All GS have processes in place for equitable and appropriate allocation of supervisors. Generally the PG Convenor has a leading role in matching supervisors and students, but it is worth noting that MVLS has a panel-based process of allocation. Supervisor workload is theoretically limited to a specific number (around 5-6 FT) in most cases, but there is considerable softness in this limit. As the workload allocations are made at School level, the GS have limited ability to influence allocations unless it manifests as a quality issue for the student.

Progress reviews are the primary mechanism for reviewing supervisory relationships. Overall, there is a low incidence of students changing supervisors.

MVLS has developed mandatory supervisor training, renewable every five years. The other GS support this model, but have not yet had the opportunity to implement it.

Supervision shared between people from different Colleges and Schools/Institutes presents few problems, with GS having developed approaches to sharing workload and resources.

4. Student experience: Progress review

Graduate Schools will have a clear, consistent and equitable process for reviewing the progress of PGR students and ensuring that any issues are addressed, underpinned by a commitment to the principle that the student experience is of primary importance.

The GS are developing and implementing a common framework for PGR progress reviews, with completion through a face to face meeting early in the summer. If there are concerns, a second progress review will be arranged for halfway through the year, in this case towards the end of semester one. An exception here is Arts, which has two reviews a year: the standard annual review and a student-led one. This is currently under review.

The expectations for the content of the review vary widely. SS requires simply some written work, whereas MVLS has specified a 3000 word annual report and panel interview. Despite these variations, there is a common commitment to representing the perspectives of all present and ensuring that students can speak to the review convenor without supervisors present in case there are confidential issues.

New standard forms were piloted this year, and while appreciated, they could benefit from some simplification.

5. Student experience: Equality and diversity

Graduate Schools will demonstrate mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see [Equality Act 2010](#) or appendix 6) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes.

All GS expressed their support for these values, but none had concrete mechanisms to ensure they were upheld. This may be an area for review over the coming year.

6. Student experience: Research training

Graduate Schools will have mechanisms to provide high-quality and comprehensive research training at both basic and advanced levels, and will ensure that students gain familiarity with research approaches broadly and the specialised techniques they intend to use more deeply.

Research training is seen as a central activity for all GS. There is less clarity regarding which aspects should be delivered by GS and which by Schools/Institutes, but the generally accepted approach is for generic skills to be delivered by the GS and the more specialised skills by Schools/Institutes or more specific units.

Research training is introduced to students during induction, and they are informed by email what is available to them. They can then sign up for the most relevant workshops. Some Colleges have mandatory core training, and attendance is usually monitored to ensure that students are taking advantage of the core courses offered. If a student does not need this core training their supervisor can help them to opt out by contacting the DoGS. There is not a great deal of opting out, and it is usually on the basis of having completed an identical course.

All GS have benefitted a great deal from Roberts funding, which has allowed them to expand the quality and quantity of the research training offered. Students are largely content with the courses available to them.

One continuing challenge is raising awareness of the courses with both students and supervisors. Again the GS are struggling with the dilemma of providing enough information to people in an environment that is already saturated.

7. Student experience: Employability and transferable skills

Graduate Schools will ensure that students have access to developmental opportunities for employability and transferable skills, and will maintain evidence of students' attainment in these areas.

Anecdotally, some PGR students may see employability and transferrable skills as less directly relevant than research training even though all GS appreciate its importance. The RCUK recommendation for two weeks per year for each PGR student can be hard to demonstrate in a robust way. MVLS manage this through a points system developed by the dedicated Training and Awards Committee, and S&E list a range of compulsory courses.

There have been attempts to adapt the MVLS online sign-up system to other Colleges, with mixed results. It would be extremely helpful to have this system available to all GS.

Some use is made of external opportunities, with students encouraged to attend courses offered by bodies such as VITAE. SS has specific funding available to support attendance.

Roberts funding has played a vital part in developments over the last few years, and the GS expressed some concern about the viability of transferable skills training when Roberts funding ends.

From a student perspective, teaching experience would be potentially the most valuable contribution to employability skills, and GS may wish to consider mechanisms to ensure that all students get a chance to teach during their PGR education.

There is scope for development of an overall policy on employability and transferable skills with clear expectations for all students and indications of the best way to monitor participation.

8. Student experience: Facilities and resources

Graduate Schools will demonstrate positive management of facilities and resources, and will attempt to fulfil students' requirements wherever possible.

PGR students have two different requirements for space. The first is for individual study space and the second for more social, shared space. In terms of individual study space, the minimum acceptable provision would be a desk with a computer (this could be individual or "hot-desked") and a lockable area of some sort (locker or desk). There is a pressing need to develop more individual spaces in the light of increasing numbers of PT and FT PGR students. This is particularly true for Arts, which is already facing considerable space challenges.

Individual study spaces are managed in different ways by different Colleges. Some have all resources running through the Schools/Institutes, while others, such as SS, manage the desks through the GS but the computers and other resources through the Schools/Institutes. Any system that provides students with the resources they need seems acceptable.

There is currently a University Working Group tackling the question of PG space. One issue for this group is the management of shared SS/Arts social and study spaces in the main building, which requires responsibility to be clearly assigned and potentially a users' group established.

Overall, while both individual and social spaces are barely keeping up with current demand, this could constitute a significant challenge as numbers increase.

9. Student experience: Submission and examination

Graduate Schools will have transparent and appropriate processes to manage the submission and examination process, and to record extensions, suspensions and overall completion rates.

GS reported very few issues with this aspect of their operations. The procedures described in the PGR Code of Practice were implemented and worked well. Time to completion, as well as overall completion rates, were monitored by the GS from Websurf records.

10. Special topic: Opportunities for collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Graduate Schools should demonstrably support collaborative, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary modes of study and research, including partnerships with outside organisation.

All GS strongly supported the potential of inter-disciplinary activities and collaboration, but there is some distance to go in realising this potential. The Kelvin-Smith scholarships were referred to as one very positive development, and there were a number of partnerships with other institutions and industrial partners mentioned.

There are specific programmes to encourage partnerships. In MVLS, supervisors can get rewarded for setting up collaborative PhD arrangements, while S&E provides 20 scholarships annually for students who wish to go elsewhere to study for a period and 28 awards for students to work within industrial settings.

Generally, however, collaborative arrangements tended to be somewhat ad hoc, driven by individual academics. There is great potential for the development of a systematic approach across all four GS.

11. Any other areas of importance to Graduate Schools

Examples of good practice not previously addressed are encouraged here, as well as any specific difficulties Graduate Schools are facing.

The GS identified a number of additional areas of good practice. The creation of a PG Convenors' Forum has proven helpful to one GS, providing a chance for the School Convenors to catch up with developments and learn from each other in a less formal environment.

Offering final year PhDs a chance to co-ordinate and deliver skills workshops for PGR students who are earlier in their studies has double benefits: the final year students get to strengthen teaching and organisation skills and the participants get to learn from people who have recently shared their experience.

Early progress reviews are seen as a great advantage by some GS. Having progress recommendations completed by mid-summer allows ample time for any issues to be dealt with before the next session begins.

It is seen as invaluable to work towards transparency of decision-making within GS, which can sometimes appear opaque to Schools/Institutes and other stakeholders.

The challenges facing GS were also identified. One of the most pressing is the need for clarity regarding the allocation of the extra £200 tuition fee intended to replace Roberts funding, as this is vital income for supporting GS activities.

It is critical to develop an effective way to communicate with students. The existing mechanisms are not working especially well, not least because GS communication is lost in the volume of email students receive. The same applies to student feedback, in that it is difficult to get students involved in the feedback process.

The late employment of Business Development Officers in the Colleges has slowed down development of marketing efforts within the GS, but this should improve in the near future.

Schools/Institutes have varying expectations for the GS, some expecting high levels of resource support, others more concerned with their autonomy of operation. This can make it difficult for the GS to satisfy all expectations, though hopefully this will become less problematic over time as a shared view of the GS mission emerges.

The continuing limits on resources for scholarships in the current year (despite the best efforts of Heads of College and others) has likely had an impact upon recruitment. Potential students appear highly focused on PGR funding opportunities and it may be helpful to develop some consistency of approach regarding the support that can be offered.

Community building beyond the students' immediate context remains challenging. The approaches that would be helpful, such as mini-conferences and cross-College meet-ups, are well known, but it would be hard to ensure participation and the scale of the events makes them complex to arrange.

In certain areas the Centre still needs to take into account the structure of MVLS with Schools and Institutes sitting alongside each other below the College, in order for MVLS to obtain accurate management reports etc.

12. Next steps

The issues arising from this report will be addressed by the DoGS Forum and actions summarised in a follow-up note at the end of academic 2011-2012.

Reflective Review of Graduate Schools 2011
Questionnaire
Submitted 1 June 2011

1. Graduate School organisation

Graduate schools will be organised in a manner consistent with demonstrably high quality programmes that recognise University and College strategies

- How does the Graduate School fit within the College Structure, especially with regard to PGT and PGR functions?

The Graduate School is the primary site for accrediting, reviewing, developing and overseeing the College's PGT and PGR provision. The DoGS is a member of the College Management Group and reports to the CMG and College Council on all matters relating to PG studies.

- How is the Graduate School organised overall?

The Graduate School engages both PGT and PGR students. It has a Dean and a Deputy Dean. The Deputy Dean is responsible for the student-facing activities, in particular skills workshop, training, and progress processes. The Graduate School has two formal committees: i) the Graduate Board of Studies ii) and the Higher Degrees Board of Studies.

Membership of the GSB committee is: the Dean of GS, the Deputy Dean of GS, the Dean of Research, the PG School Convenors from the four Schools that comprise the College of Arts, the four PG Students Advisors, the SRC student rep for Arts, and the College's RCMO.

Membership of the HDBoS is the Dean of GS, the Deputy Dean of GS, the Dean of L&T, the PG School Convenors from the four Schools that comprise the College of Arts, the four Students Advisors, the SRC student rep for Arts, and the Colleges Quality Assurance Officer.

These committees meet two to three times a Semester. The minutes are circulated to the CMG as well as to the committee membership.

In addition, the College has a School PG Convenors Forum, attended by the Dean, Deputy Dean, and the four School PG Convenors. This meets twice a semester and focuses on specific issues relating to the PG agenda. This year, issues have included: School PG Structures; PGT Development; PGT Marketing and Conversion. The Graduate School also hosts a monthly meeting with RIO Admissions Staff, to review Admissions processes and troubleshoot any problems. This is attended by the DoGS, College RCMO, the four School PG Convenors, and admissions staff from RIO.

Each of the Schools has a PG Committee, led by the School PG Convenors, with representation from the constituent Subject Areas in each School. The minutes of this – or a summary - are reported back to the DoG with matters arising raised at the GSB.

- Are there staff allocated specifically to the Graduate School?

The Graduate School is supported by the Head of Academic and Student Administration. The Head of Academic and Student Administration manages a small team of College staff, some of whom have a specific Graduate Studies remit; one deals with academic regulations and the awarding of degrees (including appointing of examiners, etc); one works with the DoGS and the

Deputy DoGS on Graduate School matters, including training skills programme administration and the administration of student awards; one works on PG programme development (PIP) and matters relating to the HDBoS. Scholarship matters are managed by the Head of Academic and Student Administration. The Graduate School has a scholarship committee to review scholarship nominations and awards. This is comprised of the four PG School Convenors, the DoGS and Deputy the DoGS.

- How are functions allocated across the staff group?

The Head of Academic and Student Administration allocates tasks across the staff group, according to priorities and work loads.

- Do staff have unambiguous line management?

The College Staff are line managed by the Head of Academic and Student Administration. The Deputy Dean is nominally line managed by the Dean – but it should be noted that this is not a bought-out role. The work load model needs to account for this workload properly.

- How is it made clear to students whom to approach regarding specific issues?

The Graduate School website provides information on Student Advisors, and on office roles within the College Office.

- Where are student records lodged?

In the College Office.

2. Student experience: Application and admission

Graduate Schools will demonstrate processes for handling PGR applications in an effective and timely manner, and will implement appropriate and consistent induction procedures.

- How are PGR applications managed?

PGR applications are completed online – and where they are not, they are digitised and uploaded. The applications are reviewed by a member of the College Staff team with a note made of the materials that are included and those that are missing. This is then forwarded electronically to the appropriate School's nominated PG Administrator. This Administrator then forwards the application electronically to the subject area PGR Convenor. The PGR Convenor is responsible for completing the application form, and getting it signed off by the Head of Subject (delegated by the Head of School). The completed application form is returned to the School PG Administrator, who forwards it to the College Office where a letter is issued with the decision.

- What's the target turnaround time?

3 weeks.

- How is the process monitored and how are problems resolved?

The process is monitored at both College and School Level. The PG School Administrators should prompt subject area PG convenors for a reply after 7 days.

- Are there any particular issues with this process that could be resolved?

In order that the application can be more swiftly turned around it would be useful to a) for key members of School staff to have electronic signatures so the application can be returned electronically and b) the admissions form should be simpler.

3. Student experience: Supervision

Graduate Schools will have a robust process for allocating supervisors (including managing supervisor workload) and dealing with any supervisory issues that arise.

- How are specific supervisors allocated?

By the subject area PG convenor, in consultation with staff members who have particular expertise in the proposed thesis topic, but signed off by the Head of School or their delegate.

- How are requests for changes in supervision managed?

Formal requests are made to the Graduate School and approved by the DoGS.

- Are students given opportunities to review their supervisory arrangements as they settle into their programme?

The AMR processes (6 months and 12 months) allow students to comment on supervisory arrangements, including opportunities to speak to a 'neutral' third party, usually the appropriate School PG convenor about any concerns regarding supervision.

- How is the workload of supervising staff managed?

Staff should have no more than 6 FTE PhD students at any one time.

- Is there a hard limit for the number of PGR students supervised by academic staff?

Yes – 6. But this is not enforced. Staff work load issues are balanced against striving for the most appropriate supervision for PGR students in terms of specific expertise in subject area or methodological approach. The new work load model should allow for greater flexibility in apportioning staff time as appropriate to skills and needs.

- Are there clear guidelines for joint supervision between different Schools and Colleges?

Yes. These are set out in the PGR Code of Practice which is circulated to all students and staff at the beginning of the academic year.

4. Student experience: Progress review

Graduate Schools will have a clear, consistent and equitable process for reviewing the progress of PGR students and ensuring that any issues are addressed, underpinned by a commitment to the principle that the student experience is of primary importance.

- What approach does the Graduate School take to progress reviews?

All students currently have a 6 month and a 12 month review. The 6 month one is student led, reflecting on research progress and training in consultation with the supervisor. The 12 month one is more rigorous. The Graduate School is rolling out the new Annual Progress Review as recommended in the Code of Practice.

Annual Progress Review documents are submitted to the college for scrutiny and follow-up as necessary. The Student Advisors are tasked with reviewing these and responding in the first instance or passing to the DoGS for action.

- How is representation of different perspectives ensured?

Currently, the progress review forms request comments by all members of the panel: student, supervisor, and non-supervisory panel member.

- Is there a face to face meeting, and if so, how is it convened and chaired?

This is being rolled out this year. Students will be reviewed by a panel, normally comprised of at least one supervisor and one staff member who is not in a supervisory role, convened by the Subject PG Convenor, who will have reviewed some piece of work prior to the review meeting. (If the PG Convenor is also the supervisor, a designate will act in the convenor role.) This panel will meet with the student to discuss the work presented, annual work plans toward completion, and training needs.

- How does the progress review allow students to reflect on possible supervisory difficulties?
As a standard part of the annual review meeting, students will be given the opportunity to speak to the non-supervisory members of the panel in confidence without supervisors present. If minor concerns are raised, these may be incorporated into the review documents, and the PG Convenor will follow up with the supervisor; if there are serious concerns that indicate the student would be best served by a change in supervision, the PG Convenor may assist the student in initiating this process (as discussed above in Section 3). Any major concerns may also be discussed with the appropriate PG Advisor.

5. Student experience: Equality and diversity

Graduate Schools will demonstrate mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see [Equality Act 2010](#) or Appendix 6) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes.

- How are protected characteristics monitored?

Every postgraduate application for admission is considered on academic record and ability only.

- How is this data reviewed?

Applications are considered at School level and final approval of admission, or rejection, is given at Graduate School level.

- What actions are taken to ensure that protected characteristics demonstrably do not affect student experience?

All application treated equally and decisions are based on merit only.

- How are students informed of the support available to them?

At induction and in information sent to all students.

6. Student experience: Research training

Graduate Schools will have mechanisms to provide high-quality and comprehensive research training at both basic and advanced levels, and will ensure that students gain familiarity with research approaches broadly and the specialised techniques they intend to use more deeply.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?

The research training provided by the Graduate School is managed by the Deputy Dean, with administrative support of the College Office. A package of training courses running throughout the year is put together, and students are able to sign up to workshops according to needs and interests. A number of workshops are compulsory for all new PGR students (unless by exception). Students are advised that they are expected to complete at least two workshops a year. This is mandatory for AHRC students. The Annual Progress Review form includes questions relating to the completion of training workshops so attendance can be monitored by supervisors/convenors.

Each workshop is monitored by a student evaluation form.

Students sign up by sending an email booking a place to a member of staff in the College Office. It would be helpful if the system was fully electronic and on-line.

Students are informed of the training workshops at the start of the academic year, and again by email announcing each workshop. Places are allocated on a first-come first-served basis, but some workshops are targeted at particular cohorts (e.g. first year of PhD, last year of PhD, PGT students).

Students are also informed of training opportunities outside of the Graduate School, for instance courses run by the Postgraduate Researchers Development unit or seminars run by the ArtsLab in the College of Arts.

- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
By email circulation from the College Office and by notices posted on the Graduate School website.
- How is student participation in the training managed?
Participation in individual training courses is monitored by class attendance records that are compared to the class enrolments; student participation is planned and logged through the 6-month and annual progress review forms.
- What processes are in place for students opting out of this training?
Students who have evidence of acquired skills can apply to the DoGS, with support from their supervisors, to opt out of the essential skills training workshops.

7. Student experience: Employability and transferable skills

Graduate Schools will ensure that students have access to developmental opportunities for employability and transferable skills, and will maintain evidence of students' attainment in these areas.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?
See above – it is managed in the same way. It should be noted, too, that in addition to training provided by the Graduate School many Schools and subject areas also deliver their own training in both research skills and employability and transferable skills. This is alongside the opportunities provided by the Careers Service and by R&E.
- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
By email.
- How is student participation in the training managed?
See above
- How has Roberts funding been applied and how useful has it been?
The Roberts funding has been invaluable in enhancing skills of students across multiple areas, extending their research skills, as well as other professional development. We have used Roberts funding to
 - buy in specialist training providers who have led workshops on publishing, editing, etc.*
 - We have used Roberts funding for specialist workshops led by visiting speakers.*
 - We have used Roberts funding to support student-led training and initiatives relating to activities beyond the focus of any particular PhD project (e.g. establishing researcher networks,*

organising conferences, etc). This operates through a Collaborative Researcher Training Initiative Scheme.

iv) We have used Roberts funding to invite visiting speakers who are also tasked with running student workshops.

vi) We have used Roberts funding for post-doctoral activity – including applying for funding.

v) Finally, Roberts funding has been used to review current activity and plan for how to achieve the best possible training programme after the removal of Roberts funding.

8. Student experience: Facilities and resources

Graduate schools will demonstrate positive management of facilities and resources, and will attempt to fulfil students' requirements wherever possible.

- How are resources for PGR students (including space, computers, basic materials etc.) managed?

Many student resources, such as the Arts study spaces, are managed by the College Office. Some resources, such as the allocation of office space and computers for PGR use, are managed by Schools and Subject Areas, as appropriate, and as these 'local' resources allow.

- How are requests from students handled?

By the College Office.

- Are there any resources that would make a significant difference to students' experience which are in short supply?

More individual offices for PGR students.

More social spaces.

Small-scale funding for research travel and attendance at conferences to give papers (this is particularly challenging for international conferences; given the move to internationalisation, it seems imperative that our students are supported to attend prestigious conferences, to deliver papers.)

- Are there processes in place for making appropriate and strategic allocation decisions for studentships within and between Colleges?

Yes, at least within the College (see note above re. Scholarship Committee) – though we would of course like more Scholarships.

The allocation of PGT studentships and discounts is led by RIO strategy and it would be useful to review this process at the end of this year, to see how recruitment strategy calibrates with academic excellence.

9. Student experience: Submission and examination

Graduate Schools will have transparent and appropriate processes to manage the submission and examination process, and to record extensions, suspensions and overall completion rates.

- How does the Graduate School monitor completion rates?

Record of admission date, student status and progress are recorded in database held in Graduate School

- How are requests for extensions and suspensions managed?

Extensions and suspensions must be requested in writing, plus supporting documents if required, and have approval of supervisors. Approved or rejected by DoGS.

- How does the Graduate School ensure that any external funder requirements are met (e.g. 70% of students submitting their thesis within 1 year of the funding end date)?

Record of progress kept in Graduate School database and reminders sent by email at end of minimum period of study. We recognise that it might be appropriate to review this data on an annual basis to check against the benchmark.

- How are students informed about these processes?

Full information is given on Graduate School webpage and in Guidelines for Research Degrees

10. Special topic: Opportunities for internationalisation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Graduate Schools should demonstrably support collaborative, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary modes of study and research, including partnerships with outside organisations. Students should also be supported and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to work with international partners or study / conduct research internationally.

- What precedents exist for cross-disciplinary study?

Kelvin Scholarships – these are geared toward cross-disciplinary research. Two awarded in Arts this year are focused on Music and Copyright; and Drug Trafficking.

The development of Cross-College PGTs is also evidence of cross-disciplinary activity.

A number of existing subject areas are interdisciplinary e.g. American Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

A number of PhD students are supervised across disciplines (e.g. Film and TV and Theatre; Modern Languages and English Literature).

Students are also invited to apply for funding from the Graduate School to pursue their research in international settings and present their research at international conferences.

- What structures exist to support partnerships with other organisations?

The College has a number of cross-institutional partnerships in place, with students supervised by staff at UoG and by staff in other international partner institutions. The College has been successful in attaining two or three AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards per year. These have enabled partnerships with, for example, The Arches, The Edinburgh Festival, The Edinburgh Film Festival, The GFT, the National Theatre of Scotland, the Shetland Museum, and Mull Theatre.

The College also has agreements for exchange, at PG level, with partner institutions.

Students are also encouraged to pursue opportunities—such as research resources or work placements—with other institutions. For example, the University's MoU with Glasgow Life opens up a variety of opportunities with local arts, culture, and heritage organisations; several of the College's Collaborative Research Training Grants (funded by Roberts funding) have worked with Glasgow Life partners.

- How are students and supervisors made aware of the possibilities for these options?

These tend to be led by supervisors and students.

11. Any other areas of importance to Graduate Schools

Examples of good practice not previously addressed are encouraged here, as well as any specific difficulties Graduate Schools are facing.

Good Practice: PG Convenors Forum: a useful mechanism for sharing information, practice, concerns, ideas, and looking to the future.

Good Practice: Using final year PhD students to deliver some of the Graduate School workshops, esp. where they have benefitted from previous workshop training or secured funding from Graduate School CRTI Awards (e.g. an award for a graduate-led conference in turn led to a workshop being delivered on how to manage a conference). This seems a useful way to further engage the development of doctoral-appropriate skills whilst also maximising the GS training budget. The students were paid a GTA rate, for preparation and delivery.

Challenge: We are currently putting together our training plan for 2011/12 and this should be advertised over the summer. However, as of 1 June 2011, we do not know the extent to which the University will cover the gap left by the withdrawal of Roberts funding. This makes it impossible to actually plan a comprehensive training programme.

Reflective Review of Graduate Schools 2011
Questionnaire
Submitted 24 May 2011

1. GRADUATE SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Relationship with College

The Graduate School is responsible for the support of postgraduate research students across all Schools and Institutes.

3 SCHOOLS

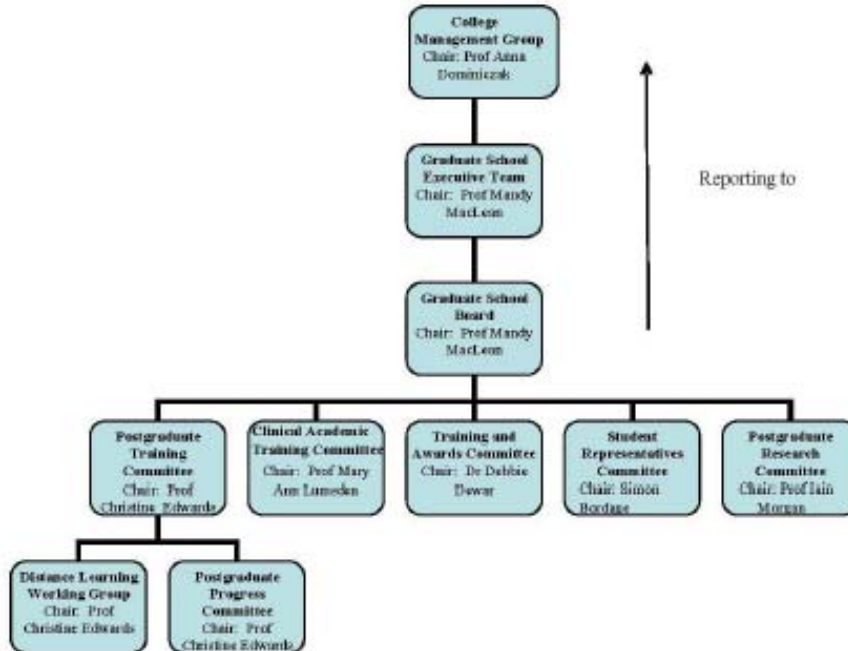
- Life Sciences
- Veterinary Medicine
- Medicine (including Dentistry and Nursing)

7 INSTITUTES

- Cancer Sciences
- Cardiovascular & Medical Sciences
- Biodiversity, Animal Health & Comparative Medicine
- Infection, Immunity & Inflammation
- Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology
- Neuroscience and Psychology (with College of Science and Engineering)
- Health and Wellbeing (with College of Social Sciences)



Relationship with College Management Group



Details of all committee membership and remits can be found on GS website:
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/informationforstaff/>

Organisation

The Graduate School is supported by:

A Dean (Professor Mandy MacLean)

A Deputy Dean for postgraduate research [PGR (Professor Iain Morgan)]

A Deputy Dean for postgraduate taught [PGT (Professor Christine Edwards)]

A Deputy Dean for Internationalisation and CATAC (Professor Mary Ann Lumsden)

The **Graduate School Board (GSB)** is accountable to the College Management Group for policy, procedures and practice in relation to the Graduate School. The Board provides oversight on behalf of the College to ensure PGR and PGT programmes are in-line with the College strategic objectives relating to PG Education. The Board provides reports to, and receives reports from, the College Research & Knowledge Transfer Strategy Committee and College Learning & Teaching Committee. The Board is responsible for ensuring that policy and procedures are followed in relation to higher degrees including progress and selection of examiners. The GSB considers proposals for new PGT development in collaboration with the College L&T Committee. 'Higher degree committee' items are discussed at the end of GSB meetings.

<http://www.qia.ac.uk/colleges/myls/graduateschool/informationforstaff/collegegraduateschoolboard/>

Composition of GSB:

- **Dean of Graduate Studies**
- **Administrative Lead for Graduate School**
- SRC representative with a PGR focus
- SRC representative with a PGT focus
- **Deputy Dean PGR**
- **Deputy Dean PGT**
- **Deputy Dean Internationalisation**
- Postgraduate convenors (see below).
- Others as appropriate

The **Graduate School Executive (GSE)**. Composition: Those emboldened above from GSB plus College Finance Officer and Graduate School Business Development Officer. GSE meets to discuss issues relating to finance and management within the Graduate School. This executive committee will also be charged with defining the agenda for forthcoming GSB meetings and items for discussion at College Management Group. Both GSB and GSE meet quarterly.

<http://www.qia.ac.uk/colleges/myls/graduateschool/informationforstaff/graduateschoolexecutive/>

Postgraduate Convenors

Each School and Institute has an appointed Postgraduate Convenor. Remit:

- PG Research support
- Liaise with Dean and Deputy Dean of the Graduate School with specific responsibility for PGR to develop new PGR opportunities and applications (within Institutes and cross-Institute and College) aligned with University Strategy and KPIs
- Development of Internationalisation Strategy for PGR – liaise with Dean and Deputy Dean of the Graduate School with specific responsibility for Internationalisation
- Recommending the admission of postgraduate students.
- Making provision for the supervision of the student and ensuring that adequate facilities are provided to enable the research project to be carried out
- Appoint student advisors and provide pastoral support where necessary
- Organizing annual assessment identifying problem cases for referral to Graduate School Board
- Attendance at Graduate School Board where appropriate
- Organising away days
- Maintaining records of all students as well as source of funding. Monitoring the welfare and progress of all postgraduate students in consultation with supervisors and taking appropriate action where progress appears to be unsatisfactory, including reviewing supervisory arrangements where necessary.
- Reporting annually to the Higher Degrees Committee on the progress of all students and recommending on the basis of the annual report whether or not the student should be readmitted the following session
- Appointment of internal and external examiners and convenors for research degree vivas after consultation with supervisors
- Ensuring the PGR requirements of the REF can be met
- Developing generic and discipline specific training for PGR students
- PG Taught programme support:
PG Taught programme support:
 - Provide support for PGT co-ordinators
- In co-operation with Institute/School PGT course organisers
 - Liaise with Dean and Deputy Dean of the Graduate School with specific responsibility for PGT to develop strategy and new PGT training courses aligned with University Strategy

- Maintain QA for PGT
- Oversee maintenance of records of all students as well as source of funding (primary responsibility of Course Co-ordinator)
- Working with programme co-ordinators to ensure sufficient resources, financial, staffing and facilities are available of PGT and to enhance best practice between programmes.
- With programme co-ordinators prepare regular updates of business plans for evaluation of programme viability and future opportunities
- Development of Internationalisation Strategy for PGT course co-ordination - liaise with Dean and Deputy Dean of the Graduate School with specific responsibility for Internationalisation
- rationalisation of induction/skills training/teaching components between PGT courses
- Oversee that adequate facilities are provided to enable any research projects to be carried out (primary responsibility of Course Co-ordinator)
- Monitoring the welfare and progress of all postgraduate students in consultation with course co-ordinators and taking appropriate action where progress appears to be unsatisfactory, including where appropriate reviewing supervisory arrangements where necessary.
- Reporting annually to the Graduate School Education Committee on the progress of all students
- Responding to problems with teaching facilities and other factors identified in annual course monitoring reports which are barriers to student satisfaction and teaching success.
- Work with PGT co-ordinators to facilitate transition of those students who wish to progress to PhD study.

Staff allocated to Graduate School.

Current Administrative Staff

Head of Academic Administration	Caroline Mallon
Graduate School Administrator	Lesley Dinning
Graduate School Administrator	Anne Stewart
Graduate School Administrator	Alastair Whitelaw
Graduate School Administrative Assistant	Stephen Bell
Graduate School Administrative Assistant	Alison Dingwall
Graduate School Administrative Assistant	Audrey Hillis
Graduate School Administrative Assistant	Joyce Smith
Graduate School Administrative Assistant/Office Co-ordinator	Catherine Turnbull
Graduate School Administrative Assistant (Garscube Campus)	Jasmin Moroney
Recruitment and Conversion Marketing Officer	Greig Sinclair
Business Development Officer	Karen McCluskey

Allocation of functions.

Annual reports	Alastair Whitelaw
Appeals	Caroline Mallon
College Approval for continuing students	Audrey Hillis
Distance Learning Working Group	Anne Stewart
Graduate School Board	Lesley Dinning
Higher Degrees Committee	Alastair Whitelaw
New PGT programmes	Anne Stewart
PGT Issues	Anne Stewart
Postgraduate research application process	Alastair Whitelaw
Postgraduate research applications (status of applications)	Audrey Hillis
Postgraduate taught programme applications (status of applications)	Recruitment and International Office
Postgraduate Training Committee	Anne Stewart
Publicity material / Marketing and Recruitment Conversion	Greig Sinclair
Roberts' funding	Lesley Dinning
Scholarship advertising	Anne Stewart
Scholarship payment	Anne Stewart
Student data (student numbers, completion rates etc.)	Lesley Dinning
Training and Awards Committee	Alison Dingwall
Internationalisation	Lesley Dinning

Note that due to staff leaving in July remits will be redistributed, however there is currently (and will be) an administrator with specific responsibility for PGR and administrator responsible for PGT. The Marketing & Recruitment Conversion Officer (RCMO) is embedded in the Graduate School and will also develop International marketing opportunities. The Business Development Manager (L&T) [start date June 1st] is a member of the Graduate School team with responsibilities that include new studentship initiatives, funding, budgets and distribution of endowments, scholarship support and International business development.

Line management

Caroline Mallon, Head of Academic and Student Support is responsible for the Graduate School with reporting line to the College Secretary. Lesley Dinning, Graduate School Administrator, is responsible for Graduate School support staff.

Student information.

Students are informed about whom to approach about specific issues at induction and this is reinforced by the postgraduate convenors and follow up emails.

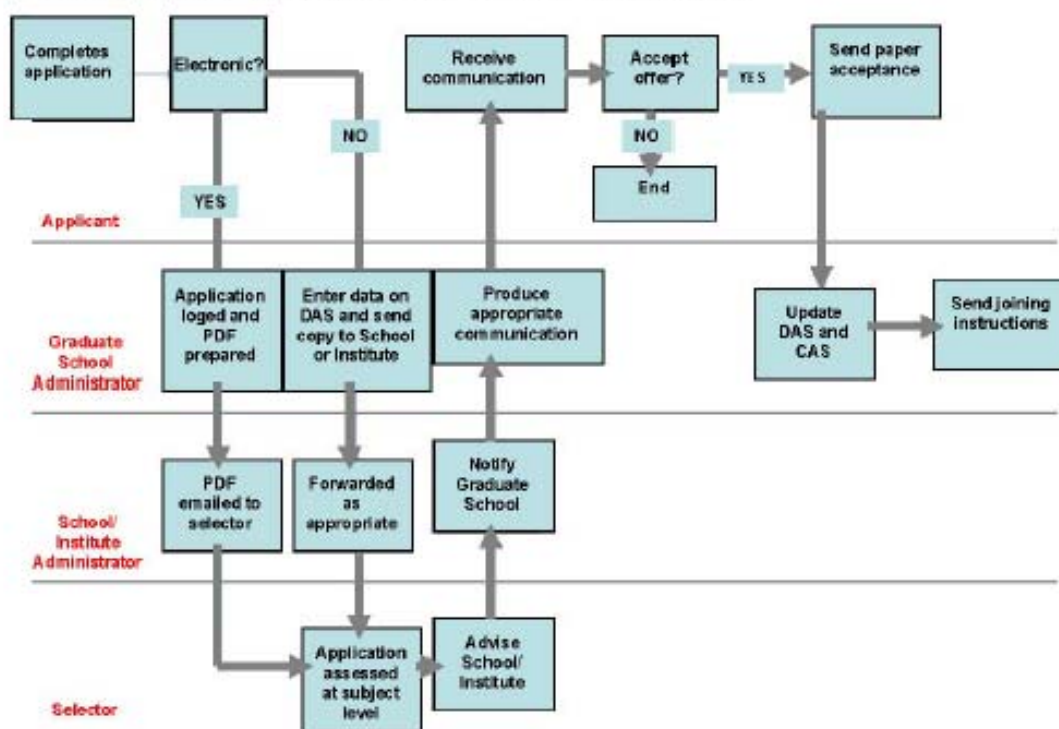
Student records

Individual records for PGR are retained in the main Graduate School office with Veterinary graduate student records being kept at the satellite office at Garscube. The Dental School retain their own records.

Graduate School data bases include Websurf and Je-S. (Note that ex. Faculty data is currently being pulled into one database):

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: application and admission

Applications are managed by the designated administrator within the Graduate School. Currently applications arrive both online and by hard copy and are handled as per university protocol.



Students are advised to consult the online application guide:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_138811_en.pdf

Target turnaround time: 10 days.

Monitoring and Problems.

These are monitored by the Head of Academic and Student Support, Caroline Mallon, the Deputy Dean PGR and Dean. We are currently streamlining the process such that all applications will come in online.

Problems

There is a very outdated drop-down list on the current online application and we have evidence that this has discouraged students (especially international student) from applying. It would appear the problem lies with MIS but remains unresolved.

- Sign off page (P6) on the PGR application. There is currently a section for signatures from supervisor and Head of School/Director of Institute/ PG convener. This could also indicate 'print name'.
- Lack of response from potential supervisors which impacts on the turnaround time. Not all supervisors have appointed deputies to take on the role in their absence.
- Sign off sheets: Project details (account number) are currently not included. Inclusion would be helpful for preparation of admissions letter.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: supervision

General information

First supervisors are normally required to have an equivalent or higher level of qualification than the qualification being undertaken by the supervised student. Supervisors will normally be a member of the academic staff of the University. Where the nominated first supervisor is a probationary lecturer or a member of staff supervising a student for the first time, the co-supervisor should normally be an experienced member of the academic staff of the University and will have joint responsibilities for supervision. Other individuals, such as honorary members and associate members of staff, may act as first supervisors subject to ratification by the Graduate School Board. These individuals are only permitted to supervise higher degree students in the capacity of a co-supervisor. They must have the requisite qualifications and the ratification of the Graduate School Board. At least one member of the supervisory team will be currently engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s). The nominated second supervisor plays essentially a pastoral role and is part of the assessment team (i.e. is an independent academic who is not directly involved in the supervision of the student). The student is made aware of their postgraduate convener and the responsibilities of each supervisor within the team so that he or she knows whom to approach for appropriate advice. Where a student's research is interdisciplinary and therefore requires the supervisory team to come from more than one School or Research Institute within the University, one School or Research Institute is designated as having the primary responsibility for supervision of the student and one College has primary responsibility for administration of the Degree. Care is taken to assign students to supervisors that have adequate research resources during the period of the studentship. With respect to the REF: sole first supervisors will be credited with 100% per student; co-supervisors will be accredited according to agreement with the first supervisor; second supervisors receive no credit.

The responsibilities of the supervisory team are as described by the University Code of Practice for postgraduate research.

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_103328_en.pdf

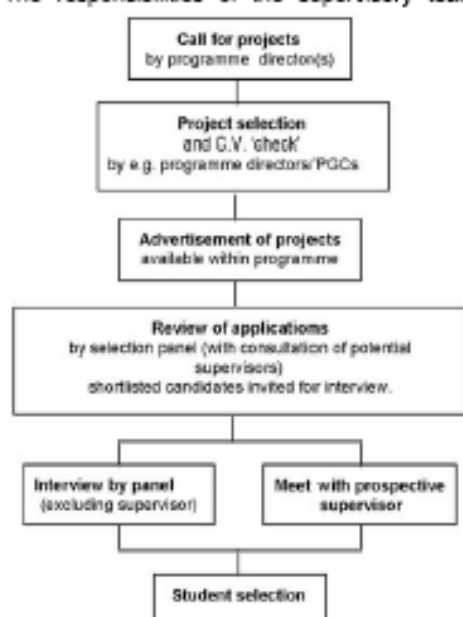
Supervisor selection

Under the old Faculty system, supervisor selection varied and was DTG specific. We have just carried out a survey of both student and supervisor selection with a view to implementing best practice. The proposed new procedure is summarised in the adjacent Figure. There may be local variations of this and this will be revised further for 1+3 and 4 year studentships as the selection of supervisor is clearly student driven and from a pool of carefully selected and vetted supervisors. The student interview includes a ten minute presentation from the student on a research project they have carried out.

The Graduate School adheres to the University Code of Practice for postgraduate research problem solving.

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_103328_en.pdf

Students can discuss their supervision at any time. Any problems with supervision are addressed by the second supervisor in the first instance. If a problem cannot be resolved at that level, he/she will consult their postgraduate



convenor. Should a satisfactory outcome not emerge, students would then consult the Head of School or Director of Institute. If the issue is not resolved at this local level the Dean of Graduate Studies is consulted.

Workload of supervisors will be monitored by the new University of Glasgow workload model as part of the performance and development review. Workload is also monitored at School and Institute level by the postgraduate convenors in first instance. Concerns are directed to the Head of School or Director of Institute in the first instance.

Number of PhD students per supervisor. For first supervisors, our revised College strategy is to set an upper limit of 5 full time PhD students including those students who are engaged in writing up activities. However we appreciate that some laboratories are supported by numerous postdoctoral assistants and so requests to supervise more than 5 are reviewed by the GSB on a case by case basis. Where there is joint supervision students will be registered in one College and the first supervisor clearly identified.

Supervisor training

As part of our aim to improve the standard of supervision of PG students, the Graduate School runs courses for academic supervisors. It is a requirement that all supervisors of postgraduate research students participate in a workshop. The requirement extends to relevant associate/honorary members of staff involved in supervision and examination. This is mandatory for new supervisors but also aimed at more experienced staff to make them aware of any new procedures within the College and to ensure that they are adopting best practice. Certification is on a 5 year renewable basis for these staff and a letter of attendance is issued to participants.

All supervisors are alerted to developments in research training through the Graduate School, often via their Postgraduate Convenor. Supervisors themselves are monitored by their own students.

We also encourage supervisors to make use of the resources published by Vitae and Premia

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/14862/Supervising-a-doctorate.html>

and other appropriate resources

e.g. http://www.postgrad_resources.btinternet.co.uk/supervisor-resources00-intro.htm

and to attend national training events where possible (e.g. those coordinated through the UKCGE or the Missenden centre) <http://www.ukoge.ac.uk/events/eventsarea/Supdev> and

<http://w.missendencentre.co.uk/seminars.htm>.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: Progress review

Progress review

The College review process is described below and allows representation from several perspectives. Staff involved: first supervisor, postgraduate convenor and one independent academic. The students can raise any concerns about supervision as described above but also at the panel interview. See: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/informationforcurrentstudents/postgraduateannualreviewprocesses2010-11/>

Postgraduate Annual Review Processes. Instructions to students:

Year 1

- Literature review required ideally after first 3 months. This should be completed in 10pt Arial font, 1.5 line spacing (2 cm margin). Includes a literature review (4 sides A4 maximum), with an outline project plan for the first (hypothesis led) studies (0.5 page maximum with identification of any potential hurdles/pitfalls) and a maximum of 40 references. To be sent to supervisor for assessment and comment (half a page maximum) and subsequently submitted to postgraduate convenor and assessors. It will also be included with Annual Report. It is recognized that for some students, particularly overseas, this may not be achieved within the first three months but must be included in the annual report. The supervisor should use their discretion to set a suitable time frame for completion for individual students.
- Presentation – all students are required to deliver a presentation, either oral or poster, by the end of their first year, normally at a lab meeting/seminar series attended by the supervisor and assessor. An oral presentation should be around 15 minutes long. The time of year for these presentations may vary between different Institutes and Schools.
- Research Training Programme – Throughout their studies students are encouraged to gain 20 credits, and should aim for at least 12 in the first year although more can be attained in Year 1. However, it is recommended that courses related to thesis preparation (e.g. "Preparing for your viva" and "Writing your thesis") are carried out in their final year. Credits can be attained by attending the Graduate School's Research Training Programme courses and courses offered by IT Services, the Staff Development Service and Research & Enterprise. External courses can contribute towards 25% of the credit total. If students experience difficulties in registering for courses they should inform the Graduate School immediately by emailing: mvls-gradschool@glasgow.ac.uk Popular courses may be offered on multiple occasions.
- Annual Report should be completed by students and supervisors by 30 June and passed to PG Convenor in first instance. Any student starting after January will be permitted to delay submission of their annual report

until 31 August. The format for this will be an approximately 3000 word report in the style of a journal appropriate to your discipline and suggested by your supervisor. It should therefore contain an abstract, an introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion (the latter two may be combined). In addition there should be a 500-1000 word section at the end of the report detailing the following year's work with potential pitfalls and solutions identified.

- Panel interview - composed of the second supervisor and one independent academic who is not directly involved in the supervision of the student. To be organized at Institute/School level with the postgraduate convenor between July and the end of September

Year 2

- Presentation – all students are required to deliver a presentation, either oral or poster, by the end of their second year, normally at a meeting/seminar series attended by the supervisor and assessor. An oral presentation should be around 15 minutes long.
- Research Training Programme – see Year 1.
- Annual Report should be completed by students and supervisors by 30 June and passed to PG Convener in first instance. Student additionally writes a scientific report (6 – 10 pages maximum is recommended) summarising progress since the last report (see year 1 for guidance).
- Panel interview - composed of the second supervisor and one independent academic who is not directly involved in the supervision of the student. To be organized at Institute/School level with the postgraduate convenor between July and the end of September.

Year 3

- Presentation – all students are required to deliver a presentation, either oral or poster, by the end of their second year, normally at a lab meeting/seminar series attended by the supervisor and assessor. An oral presentation should be around 30 minutes long.
- Research Training Programme – see Year 1.
- Annual Report should be completed by students and supervisors by 30 June and passed to PG Convener in first instance. The student should complete a scientific report with a note of progress over the year, and include a thesis plan when submitting the annual report.
- Panel interview - composed of the second supervisor and one independent academic who is not directly involved in the supervision of the student. To be organized at Institute/School level with the postgraduate convenor between July and the end of September.

Thesis pending period

- Final year interview - Students within a year of the absolute thesis submission deadline will be interviewed specifically on their progress in thesis writing (in the case of MSc in one year this may be dealt with at the progress review). This will be arranged by their postgraduate convenors. Normally the final year interviews will be arranged at least 8 months prior to the recommended submission deadline.
- Intention to submit form– An Intention to Submit form will be submitted to the MVLS Graduate School Office three months prior to the intended submission date.
- Submission – It is mandatory for all full time PhD, MD and DDS students to submit within 4 years of commencing their period of research. Any extensions or suspensions of study should be formally requested with a letter sent to the Graduate School, c/o Mr Alastair Whitelaw.

The Graduate School adheres to The University of Glasgow Furth of Glasgow policy <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/postgraduateresearch/researchfurthofglasgow/>

5. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: equality and diversity

The Graduate School demonstrates mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see Equality Act 2010) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes. This is carried out as per University policy. <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/equalitydiversity/equalitydiversitypolicy/>
Students are informed about support available at induction and this is reinforced by the postgraduate convenor. See also: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/informationforcurrentstudents/supportservices/>

6. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: research training

Students are made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow by the supervisor/postgraduate convenor and by email circulars from Graduate School.

Student participation in the training is managed by the supervisor and postgraduate convenor and assessed by the Annual review process.

Training in research methods and the use of specialist equipment, together with safety aspects such as fire precautions, pathogen handling and fieldwork safety are dealt with locally by the Postgraduate Convenors. Specialist training is provided by members of the supervisor's laboratory including postdoctoral staff and experienced technicians. Postdoctoral staff are encouraged to contribute to the supervision and training of the student wherever appropriate. Students are encouraged to visit other laboratories within the College or, occasionally, at other institutes to gain training in the use of specialized techniques or equipment. Supervisors actively encourage students to publish their work. Students are also actively supported to attend conferences. The College has a rich and varied seminar programme delivered by both external and internal speakers. Attendance and participation is viewed as an essential training element. Most Schools and Institutes have developed schemes that invite designated external speakers to lead small-group PG research discussions and presentations.

Roberts funding allocated to MVLS Graduate School has been used to fund a wide variety of courses provided under the Research Training Programme (RTP) and other training opportunities co-ordinated by the Training and Awards Committee. The RTP is designed to provide training for PGR students in skills categories identified by the Research Councils. See: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_184351_en.pdf

Research training.

In recognition that training in statistics is essential across all research disciplines in MVLS a major portion of the Roberts allocation this year has been used to fund the delivery of statistics courses by the Robertson Centre for Biostatistics and staff in the College of Science and Engineering. Large numbers (approximately 200) places have been taken up on these courses indicating there is a significant demand by PGR students for statistics training. The Training and Awards committee recognised the need for PGR students to acquire skills that maximize and facilitate analysis of large datasets and therefore a course on Programming for biologists run by Computing Science was funded. There was excellent uptake of this course and for a course on Geographical Information Systems. In order to facilitate research networking of PGR students and postdoctoral researchers each Postgraduate Convenor has been allocated £500 to facilitate such activities within their own institute.

7. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: employability and transferable skills

Postgraduate Research Training Strategy

The MVLS Graduate School provides a programme of skills training to its PGR students. This is underpinned by a credit system which encourages students to plan and undertake their training in consultation with their supervisory and assessment teams and their Postgraduate Convenor. Students are expected to attain a total of 20 credits over the duration of their study period. Credits can be gained from courses in the research training programme and from other opportunities with a clear skills training element, examples being conference presentations, student committee representation, public engagement activities. Students in their first year must include a 'personal development plan' along with their literature review/project plan due at 3 months after starting in which they describe the training they require/plan to do over the first year to achieve 12 credits. For all students the annual progress report form includes their personal development log detailing the courses they have attended and the other skills training they have undertaken along with the credits obtained. The annual progress assessors review the extent to which training has been achieved. If there is a lack of evidence that appropriate training has been undertaken this is discussed with the student at the annual progress interview and a plan is requested outlining how training will be enhanced. The supervisor is also made aware of the need for additional training by the Postgraduate Convenor.

This system is detailed in the booklet: 'Research training programme and personal development planning for graduate and postdoctoral researchers'. http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_184351_en.pdf

This booklet describes our programme of courses and training opportunities available. These cover a broad spectrum of skills and has been developed in the light of the Research Councils' 'Researcher Development Statement' for postgraduate students.

As discussed above, the new College Graduate School has a dedicated 'Training and Awards Committee' and, with the postgraduate convenors, is responsible for promoting this process to supervisors and students. Our aim is to produce well-trained scientists who can function effectively in fundamental or applied research either in academia or in industry. Consequently, we seek to generate in our postgraduates a clear understanding of the research process and a broad base of both research and transferable skills.

Any mandatory training requirements (e.g. 'Use of radioactive chemicals', 'Laboratory Safety', Statistics) are adhered to scrupulously. RCUK advises that a period equivalent to two weeks per year should be dedicated to under-taking training and development. This minimum criteria are either already met or are exceeded for all PhD students in the College, not just those with research council support. All supervisors are updated with these training requirements on a regular basis.

In addition to those itemised in our skills booklet, we have introduced further training courses that will provide training in public engagement and entrepreneurial awareness. For example, 'Enterprise and Entrepreneurship',

'Consultancy Skills for Researchers', 'Business, Beyond the Bottom Line', 'Making an impact with your PhD', 'Networking' and 'Stepping Out'. We also have a novel initiative, (supported by our recent successful bid to the Chancellors Fund) with the Glasgow Science Centre for a PhD student internship to develop an event at the Glasgow Science festival I 2012. Students will be given the opportunity to present at Glasgow's Café Scientifique (pioneered and run by Mandy MacLean for seven years). We also encourage students to apply for the following competitions/courses: Enterprisers, BBSRC Biotechnology YES, Environment YES and Big Idea business plan (see below).

All new students attend a compulsory College Induction Programme that includes topics such as Introductions to the Graduate School and to Training in PG research, Basic Safety/Introduction to First Aid, Computing Facilities, Use of the University Library, Computerised Literature Searching, Introduction to Reference Manager and EndNote, Oral Presentations & Communication, Research Ethics in the Biosciences, Demonstrating on UG Courses, Science Outreach, University Research Funding, Intellectual Property & Industrial liaison. As mentioned above, PG students are offered a wide range of skills training courses some of which are compulsory.

Vitae and Scottish Collaborations:

We encourage our researchers to attend a GRADschool career development course, either nationally (organised by Vitae (<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/>) or locally (Glasgow or Edinburgh local GRADschools). The Graduate School has made it a requirement for all Research Council or Wellcome Trust-funded postgraduates to attend a Vitae school in their 2nd or 3rd year of study. We also promote other Vitae events such as the part time researchers' conference or careers in academia through regular email bulletins and we have close links to the Vitae Scottish hub for sharing of practice and training places across Scottish institutions.

Biotech YES and enterprise training:

We promote biotech YES to our researchers and they are encouraged to enter the Glasgow University in-house enterprise training courses and competitions, including the 2 day residential 'enterprise and entrepreneurship course', which has been supported by the BBSRC for the past two years. These events involve a series of external speakers, including CEOs from biotech spin-outs, patent attorneys and representatives from the BBSRC and Scottish Enterprise.

Roberts funding allocated to MVLS Graduate School has been used to fund a wide variety of courses provided under the research training programme and other training opportunities co-ordinated by the Training and Awards Committee. The Roberts allocation has been used to buy skills training courses from providers within Glasgow University and from external agencies where Glasgow University providers could not be easily identified. These include: vocal and presentational skills; assertiveness; emergency first aid; designing posters. There has been excellent take-up of these courses with demand exceeding initial provision and during the year additional courses have been added to the programme. In addition to courses offered in the Research Training Programme, Roberts money has been used to provide travel costs for students attending UK GRAD school courses out-with Glasgow. In order to provide opportunities for training in science communication Roberts funds were used for 13 PGR students and postdoctoral researchers to attend a two and a half day introductory course on science communication, science journalism and dealing with the science media. In excess of 500 training places have been funded by the Roberts allocation. Without this funding it would not have been possible for MVLS Graduate School to provide the range of research and skills training to the large number of PGR students in MVLS that have taken advantage of the opportunities.

8. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: facilities and resources

Resources for PGR students (including space, computers, basic materials etc.) are managed by the PhD programme co-ordinator and/or supervisor and overseen by the Director of Institute or Head of School.

Requests from students are handled by the supervisor in the first instance and any issues can be further discussed with the postgraduate convenor.

Students consistently request more desk space with dedicated computer availability. Provision of this would improve the students' experience.

9. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: submission and examination

Completion rates

Completion rates are now monitored using the data stored in WebSurf. A query is available which calculates the period of time between the student's official start date and the submission of their thesis. Final year interviews for all students in their writing up year have proved useful in keeping completion rates high.

Requests for extensions and suspensions are managed by the Graduate School Board under Higher Degree Committee items.

The Graduate School ensures that any external funder requirements are met (e.g. 70% of students submitting their thesis within 1 year of the funding end date). The Graduate School checks that the funder requirements for RC DTG funded studentships are met.

Students are informed about these processes at induction, by the supervisor, postgraduate convenor and on university websites.

10. SPECIAL TOPIC: opportunities for collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Precedents for cross-disciplinary study.

The College structure lends itself to cross-Institute collaborations. When projects are selected (see Figure 2), the call for projects always encourages cross-Institute, co-supervised projects and these are looked upon favourably (e.g. MRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, College studentships). We also encourage cross-disciplinarily in our MRes programmes. For example we have a BBSRC funded MRes DTG that funds projects that involve the integration of whole animal biology with systems biology. Wherever possible The Graduate School engages with other Colleges to foster collaboration and cross-College activities. We participate in the Kelvin Smith scheme.

Supporting partnerships with other organisations

The Deputy Dean for Internationalisation and the Graduate School Administration with responsibility for internationalisation, deal with furth of Glasgow applications, and requests for joint degrees etc with international institutions.

Students and supervisors are made aware of the possibilities by email from The Graduate School and the Graduate School website.

There is an incentive scheme operating to attract international students whereby the supervisor gets 25% of the fees for consumables. This was adopted from the old Faculty of Medicine and resulted in a 300% increase in international student numbers over a three-year period.

11. ANY OTHER AREAS OF IMPORTANCE TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Examples of good practice

As we have brought together three Graduate schools we have been able to implement best practise in all areas. For example in assessment, skills training, student and supervisor selection an incentive schemes, all described above. In particular, implementation of the credit-based system for skills training ensures that students are acquiring generic and research specific skills in areas deemed necessary by the research councils.

Other examples of best practise include interviewing students in their writing-up period, rigorous recruitment processes and procedures for dealing with problem cases.

Challenges

Re-organisation of the activities of the administration teams from the three old Graduate Schools teams has been very challenging.

Late appointments of both the RCMO and Business Development Manager to assist the Graduate School. This has led to delays in our marketing and budgeting strategies.

Where supervisors have been given associate status with another Institute/School within the College, our PGR students are being counted twice and this causes errors in student numbers. This is being addressed but is not yet resolved.

There is a very outdated drop-down list on the current online application and we have evidence that this has discouraged students (especially international student) from applying. It would appear the problem lies with MIS but remains unresolved.

Reflective Review of Graduate Schools 2011
Questionnaire
Submitted 1 June 2011

1. Graduate School organisation

Graduate schools will be organised in a manner consistent with demonstrably high quality programmes that recognise University and College strategies

- How does the Graduate School fit within the College Structure, especially with regard to PGT and PGR functions?
- How is the Graduate School organised overall?
- Are there staff allocated specifically to the Graduate School?
- How are functions allocated across the staff group?
- Do staff have unambiguous line management?
- How is it made clear to students whom to approach regarding specific issues?
- Where are student records lodged?

General Structure of the College: The College Office for Science and Engineering consists of the Office of Head of College, and a number of service areas (including Finance, HR, Academic and Student Administration and Research and Business Development). The **Academic and Student Administration** service area supports undergraduate and postgraduate students for the whole of their lifecycle from application to graduation, and is led by the **Head of Academic & Student Administration** (Mrs Pat Duncan). Two of the Deans are responsible for academic leadership within this service area, namely: the Dean for Learning and Teaching (who directs and leads academic issues in undergraduate and aspects of taught PGT courses, and chairs the **Board of Learning & Teaching**); and the **Dean for Graduate Studies** (who directs and leads academic activities in postgraduate activities and chairs the **Graduate School Board**). A third Dean leads **Research & Knowledge Transfer**.

Organisation of the Graduate School: The Graduate School is a main operational area located within Academic & Student Administration of the College Office and its service functions are led by the **Head of Academic and Student Administration**. It also has a dedicated **Graduate School Administrator**, who reports to the Head of Academic and Student Administration. The **Graduate School Administrator** works closely with the **Dean of Graduate Studies** as the Chair of the Graduate School Board. A **Recruitment, Marketing & Conversion Officer** supports the Graduate School to help it grow its overseas student numbers (through the development of a marketing strategy, the development of marketing materials, including specific conversion activities for PGT and increased web presence. The Graduate School structure and reporting structure is shown in **Appendix 3B**.

The **Graduate School Board** membership also includes **Postgraduate Student Representation** as well as the **PG Conveners from the Schools**. Most Schools have a single representative on the Board for Graduate Studies, although two of the larger Schools (Engineering and Computing Science), that have large numbers of MSc programmes, have two convenors, **see Appendix 3C**.

Close links are maintained with the Deans of Learning & Teaching and Research. Reciprocal arrangements exist between the Deans, such that The Dean of Graduate Studies is a member of the College Learning and Teaching Committee, and vice versa. The Dean of Graduate Studies is also a member the College Research Committee and the College Management Committee. This ensures a cohesive approach to areas of overlap including Board of Studies Business and The Research Excellence Framework.

The Graduate School Administrator works with the senior secretaries (2 part-time posts) to ensure that workflows and task allocation are managed well. The Graduate School Administrator and the Head of Academic and Student Administration have harmonised the processes, inherited from the 3 Faculty Graduate Schools and have developed standard operating procedures which support applicants, students and staff whilst also maintaining compliance in both academic and legal terms. Line management is clear for all staff within the Academic and Student Administration team.

Student Interface: Students are informed at Induction events about the structure and function of the Graduate School. Information is also disseminated through the Graduate School Convenors and Post Graduate Representatives. The Graduate School offers an “open door” service and students are encouraged to visit the Graduate School, arrange appointments with the Graduate School Administrator or email directly to Graduate School Administrator or generic graduate school mailbox. All PGR students have been issued with the University PGR Code of Practice. The **Graduate School** has also developed a **PGT Code of Practice** in consultation with the **Board of Learning & Teaching**, and this will be published in July 2011. In this document the responsibilities of the Graduate School, the Convenor, The School, the Supervisor Team and the Student are all clearly defined.

Student Records: PG student records are physically located in the Graduate School Office, where electronic updating of **PG Websurf** records is also undertaken.

2. Student experience: Application and admission

Graduate Schools will demonstrate processes for handling PGR applications in an effective and timely manner, and will implement appropriate and consistent induction procedures.

- How are PGR applications managed?
- What’s the target turnaround time?
- How is the process monitored and how are problems resolved?
- Are there any particular issues with this process that could be resolved?

The **College Graduate School** has created an application process map, harmonising best practice from the three former Graduate Schools.

In brief, the Graduate School receives student online applications (**GOLA**) electronically, which are reviewed by the **Graduate School Administrator** to ensure that all appropriate documentation has been received, using a Check List. If documentation is missing the student is contacted and the online application system is updated to reflect this. The student application is forwarded to the appropriate **Graduate School Convenor** where an academic decision on admission is made. This decision is communicated to the Graduate School Administrator. A College tracker system has been developed whereby all applications are added to it using the **GOLA** unique identifier.

The Graduate School has set a 10-day turnaround timescale for completed applications being sent to the School and returned from the School. Once the School decision about an application is received an ‘Admissions Offer’ letter is prepared indicating either an unconditional or conditional offer or a rejection letter. At this point, a hard-copy and electronic student file is created in the Graduate School and **Direct Admissions System** (DAS) is updated.

The Admissions offer or Rejection letter decision is based upon academic criteria and excludes reference to funding, although it is explicit in the letter that the student is responsible for securing their own funding (unless they have been appointed to specific scholarship(s)). If the applicant either accepts or declines an offer, then **DAS** is updated accordingly. Unconditional Offers are entered into **WebSurf** and student is sent a letter containing information regarding use of **WebSurf** for registration.

All international students who have accepted an unconditional offer are issued with a **Certificate of Acceptance of Studies** (CAS) by the Graduate School to assist in obtaining a visa for study abroad. This involves the Graduate School interacting with **UKBA Sponsor Management System**. The University has Highly Trusted Sponsor status, and therefore has a legal responsibility to ensure that we are compliant with UKBA regulations. The Graduate School is responsible for issuing **CAS** to all new PGR students, to existing PRG students for visa extensions and to PGT students requiring visa extension (but not for admission of new PGT students).

The workflow is reviewed daily by the senior secretaries and load allocated to staff. Problems are escalated to the Graduate School Administrator, if appropriate. If the Administrator cannot resolve issues (s)he will discuss, in the first instance, how to address these with the Head of Academic and Student Administration and the Dean of Graduate Studies, if required.

Potential Problems & their Resolution: The present processes work well but do require using different software systems and ensuring that the correct unique identifier for applicants is clearly noted. If this is not adhered to, there are potential problems of misidentifying students.

The introduction of Campus Solutions to provide a single system from application, admission, scholarship award, progression, examination and graduation will enhance management information and inform future strategy more effectively.

3. Student experience: Supervision

Graduate Schools will have a robust process for allocating supervisors (including managing supervisor workload) and dealing with any supervisory issues that arise.

- How are specific supervisors allocated?
- How are requests for changes in supervision managed?
- Are students given opportunities to review their supervisory arrangements as they settle into their programme?
- How is the workload of supervising staff managed?
- Is there a hard limit for the number of PGR students supervised by academic staff?
- Are there clear guidelines for joint supervision between different Schools and Colleges?

As stated, all applications are sent by the **Graduate School** to the **Graduate School Convenor** in each School. The Convenor, with authority from the Head of School, will identify potential supervisors. All supervisory teams must include an academic member of staff who holds the same or higher degree as that for which the student is studying. Split loads within the supervisory team, including the weighting attached to second supervisors are defined by the School(s), on a case-by-case basis.

Changes to supervisors are managed using the recommendations as listed in the **University Postgraduate Research Code of Practice (PGR-CoP)** Section 4.7-4.11 and are handled on a case-by-case basis. Students have the opportunity to request a change of Supervisor, with justified reasons being supplied in writing to the relevant Postgraduate Convenor and Head of School. If this cannot be settled within the School, the Dean will resolve disagreements.

As stated, the student is also assigned a second supervisor by the School. The role of the second supervisor may be academic but should also be that of a mentor (providing a mechanism to resolve issues without resort to the Head of School or Dean). The student also has access to the SRC for advice. The student may also use the University Complaints procedure:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_165329_en.pdf#page=38&view=fitH,285

The **University PGR-CoP** outlines broad supervisory practice. As stated, the Graduate School has also developed a **College PGR CoP**, which provides more detailed guidance on these issues and which will be published in July 2011. In this document, student progression and the opportunity for the student to discuss supervision at his/her annual progression meeting, is formalised.

The workload of all staff is managed by the Head of School. The Graduate School would only become involved in this process if it received information indicating that student(s) were unhappy with the quality of quantity of supervision being offered.

All **Heads of School** and **Graduate School Convenors** are aware of the **College of Science and Engineering** policy to encourage cross-School and cross-College multi-disciplinary research through the appointment of joint studentships. If students are admitted with supervisors from different Colleges, one of the supervisors and their College takes primary responsibility for the student with an appropriate split of the FTE, see University PGR-CoP, Section 4.9.

The Graduate School is also responsible, as the administering University, for the **EngD in System Level Integration**, which is a joint award of the 4 partner universities. Supervisors in this instance may come from any of the partner institutions and in some cases will not involve any GU staff. All such students are admitted and examined through our Graduate School.

4. Student experience: Progress review

Graduate Schools will have a clear, consistent and equitable process for reviewing the progress of PGR students and ensuring that any issues are addressed, underpinned by a commitment to the principle that the student experience is of primary importance.

- What approach does the Graduate School take to progress reviews?
- How is representation of different perspectives ensured?
- Is there a face to face meeting, and if so, how is it convened and chaired?

- How does the progress review allow students to reflect on possible supervisory difficulties?

The purpose of the annual progress review is to:

- Determine whether a PGR student should progress to the following year of research study and gauge the feasibility of completion within the timescale allotted;
- To provide an opportunity for the PGR student to present aspects of their work and achievements for the session;
- To provide an opportunity for the PGR student to raise any issues about their research experience, including supervision, access to facilities and transferable skills training;
- To provide the PGR student with the experience of defending his/her work in a viva;
- To provide an opportunity for the School to feedback advice on personal and academic development and performance to the PGR student;
- To set and agree clear academic and developmental goals for the coming year's study;
- To maintain and develop a dynamic research environment and community.

Prior to a review meeting the student and supervisor complete an **Annual Review Form** that both parties sign. The student will also be asked to provide a technical report, which together with the **Annual Review Form**, is the information presented to the **Review Team**.

The nature of the **Annual Review Form** and the **Review Team** and the timing of the progression examination have been agreed by the **Board of Graduate Studies**, and will be published in the College PGR-CoP. The **Review Team** consists of an **Assessor**, with some knowledge of the area of work of the student but not involved in the supervision, and a **Convenor** whose role is that of ensuring consistency across a number of reviews. The progression review is a face-to-face examination between the student and the **Review Team** and covers the items listed above. The outcome of the review is a Review Panel form that is completed at the end of the meeting. The student may request that the **Supervisor(s)** be present during the **Progression Examination**.

All Review outcomes are passed to the Graduate School via the **Graduate School Convenors** to add to each student's record and are used to inform the individual student's attendance status for the following session.

The Graduate School is involved in entering appropriate ESRC, NERC, STFC, BBSRC & EPSRC scholarship information into RCUK's JES records system. This is necessary to monitor studentship profiles of award, auditing for completion rates and a number of other surveys carried out during the year. All RCUK scholarships must now be added to the JES system.

5. Student experience: Equality and diversity

Graduate Schools will demonstrate mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see [Equality Act 2010](#) or Appendix 6) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes.

- How are protected characteristics monitored?
- How is this data reviewed?
- What actions are taken to ensure that protected characteristics demonstrably do not affect student experience?
- How are students informed of the support available to them?

All admissions, progression and examination decisions are based wholly on academic merit. No other grounds may be applied. The Graduate School will question any decision that is returned which has not been based on this criterion. The College PGR Code will include the following statement:

“In the context of the Equality Act 2010, the Graduate School, The College, Schools and Supervisors should all consider carefully “protected characteristics” and provide sufficient allowance for individuals who have particular requirements related to race, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc.”

The University policies relating to Equality and Diversity will also be referenced <http://www.gla.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/> together with the Student Disability Service <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/disability/>

All students are made aware of student support services on admission to the University. Where a student chooses to disclose a disability they are referred to the Student Disability Service in the first instance.

The **Graduate School** and the **School** in which the student is based will take on board any recommendations from the **Student Disability Service**, which may affect day-to-day study or the examination process.

6. Student experience: Research training

Graduate Schools will have mechanisms to provide high-quality and comprehensive research training at both basic and advanced levels, and will ensure that students gain familiarity with research approaches broadly and the specialised techniques they intend to use more deeply.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?
- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
- How is student participation in the training managed?
- What processes are in place for students opting out of this training?

One of the **Graduate School Convenors** (Dr Monika Harvey) from the **Graduate School Board** has responsibility for developing the **College Research Training Programme**. This was carried out in consultation with the **Graduate School Board Postgraduate Representative** and **School Postgraduate Representatives**, in an open consultation. All courses are advertised on the **College Graduate School Web Pages** with an on-line booking system in place. Once courses are full all applicants are placed on a reserve list.

In general the Graduate School Board expects each Graduate School Convenors, in conjunction with the Graduate School, to keep the postgraduate student community informed of all opportunities available to students in each school.

Both the **Graduate School** and the **Graduate School Convener** from each School provide access to opportunities available beyond Glasgow. The Dean of Graduate Studies has funds available to promote such courses (provided by external providers). PGR students can access these by a direct approach to the Graduate School or alternatively, some courses, including for example Expeditions Skills (required by GES for fieldwork) are organised by group email to all students and academic staff.

Each School has a dedicated webpage for postgraduate students on which academic staff can post research opportunities to the web page via the local Principal Web Publisher.

Students must keep a Research Development log that will provide a record of training that has been undertaken in each area of the research development statement (RDS) as well as provide evidence of how a student has developed skills in this area through practical experience. Practical experience could involve:

- Attendance at a Conference, reading group or seminar attendance, presentation or organisation;
- Writing for a student-led publication (e.g. eSharp);
- Undertaking Graduate Teaching Assistant or demonstrating work;
- Acting as a student representative for their School, College or the Students' Representative Council;
- Taking part in or organising a public engagement activity (e.g. through the Glasgow Science Festival, Researchers in Residence programme or similar);
- Other activities, as discussed and agreed with supervisor.

7. Student experience: Employability and transferable skills

Graduate Schools will ensure that students have access to developmental opportunities for employability and transferable skills, and will maintain evidence of students' attainment in these areas.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?
- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
- How is student participation in the training managed?
- How has Roberts funding been applied and how useful has it been?

A **Graduate School Convenor** of **Graduate School Board** has been assigned to develop research training with particular emphasis on 'transferable skills'.

At the start of the academic year the Graduate School organises Orientation and Induction Days separately for PGR and PGT students. This is repeated in January for both PGT (January start) and PGR (registered after 1 October).

The transferable skills compulsory and optional courses listing has been developed since the start of the academic year (see below) following consultation with the **PGR Graduate School Representative** and the **School Postgraduate Representatives**. In addition to the training offered by each School, there are a number of College courses which are either Compulsory or Optional.

Compulsory courses:

- Induction;
- Fire Safety and First Aid;
- First Aid Fieldworkers (GES students only);
- Library Skills (students new to Glasgow only);
- Tutoring and Demonstrating;
- Careers;
- Scientific Writing;
- Presenting with Impact.

Optional courses (attendance compulsory for at least 2 courses):

- Entrepreneurship;
- Project Management;
- How to be an effective researcher;
- Statistics (SUPA) course;
- Culture;
- Science for the Public;
- Oral Preparation.

The transferable skill fits with the overall research training offered, including the use of outside guidance as '**The Researcher Development Statement**' (RDS) launched by Vitae. This involves "*championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes*", and is endorsed by the University of Glasgow as well as by national organisations and funding bodies. RDS sets out the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers. All information about Research training and transferable skills is located on Graduate School web pages

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/scienceengineering/information/students/professionaldevelopment/>

8. Student experience: Facilities and resources

Graduate schools will demonstrate positive management of facilities and resources, and will attempt to fulfil students' requirements wherever possible.

- How are resources for PGR students (including space, computers, basic materials etc.) managed?
- How are requests from students handled?
- Are there any resources that would make a significant difference to students' experience which are in short supply?
- Are there processes in place for making appropriate and strategic allocation decisions for studentships within and between Colleges?

The **Graduate School** administers the "lifecycle" of postgraduate students (including admission, registration, matriculation, induction, training, progression and examination) in the College for approximately **600 PRG students**.

As stated, **Heads of Schools** and **Graduate School Convenors** assign the **Supervisory Team**, whose responsibility it is to provide appropriate facilities for a student both for experimental and associated office needs. The School provides resources for Conference attendance and small items of consumables. Students can also raise issues of resourcing and space via the **Postgraduate Representatives** who can bring major issues to the attention of the Graduate School Board.

The **Graduate School** has developed a **Mobility Award**, enabling students to travel in the UK and abroad to work for periods of three to four months (covering travel and accommodation), enabling students and their supervisors to develop new collaborations with other leading groups.

The **Graduate School** has awarded a number of Scholarships this year, listed below:

- Kelvin Smith (3 awarded to College);
- SORSAS (2 awarded);
- China Scholarship Council (13 awarded through **The Graduate School and the College Management Group**);
- SISCA (5 awards Fee Tuition Discount);
- College Scholarships (9 awarded).

The total number of applications for these scholarships was over 140. Competitions for the SORSAS, China Scholarship Council, SISCA and College Scholarships are managed through the Graduate School Board (with additional membership from College Research Committee as appropriate). Our aim is to strategically rank and fund the highest quality scholars.

Strategic investments have been implemented with the agreement of the Head of College to support underlying objectives of the Corporate Plan such as the **Bank Studentships** for the School of Chemistry.

The **College of Science and Engineering** has over 25 FTE of students co-supervised by academics in the **College of Medicine, Veterinary and Life Sciences**. We are submitting a joint BBSRC proposal with MVLS (with the University of Strathclyde). We also run a joint EPSRC-BBSRC funded CDT (in Proteomic and Cell Technologies, lead by Professor Jon Cooper). There is thus a strong line of communication with **MVLS Graduate School** through their Dean.

9. Student experience: Submission and examination

Graduate Schools will have transparent and appropriate processes to manage the submission and examination process, and to record extensions, suspensions and overall completion rates.

- How does the Graduate School monitor completion rates?
- How are requests for extensions and suspensions managed?
- How does the Graduate School ensure that any external funder requirements are met (e.g. 70% of students submitting their thesis within 1 year of the funding end date)?
- How are students informed about these processes?

The Graduate School has produced an 'examination' process based upon 'best' practice of the previous 3 Faculty Graduate Schools and enhanced by experience of the initial College processes.

The Graduate School reviews completion rates on an annual basis, utilising start dates and submission data e.g. all full time students who are approaching 4 years from the start of their date of study will receive notification from the Graduate School several months in advance to support timely submission. These letters will be copied to the relevant supervisor and Postgraduate Convener.

All extension requests now utilise the guidelines contained in the **University PGR-CoP, Section 7.12 - 7.18**. Suspension of studies also follow the guidelines of the **University PGR-CoP, Section 5.15 - 5.21**. Following approval of either extensions or suspensions the individual student **Websurf** records are updated accordingly.

All new and continuing registered students for Session 2010/11 received an electronic and hard copy of the University PGR-COP, and this has been linked to the Graduate School Web pages. All students were also emailed to advise them of the electronic version of the PGR-CoP together with a general statement of its contents.

The Graduate Office also has various publications and DVDs to assist students in writing their thesis and training for the viva.

Examples of these are:-

- DVD University of Glasgow – Preparing for your VIVA;
- How to survive your Viva: author Rowena Murray: Publisher Open University Press;
- Successful Research Careers: authors Sara Delamont and Paul Atkinson: Published by Open University Press;
- The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research: authors Gordon Rugg and Marian Petre: Publisher Open University Press;
- The Doctoral Examination Process: authors Penny Tinkler and Carolyn Jackson: Publisher Open University Press.

10. Special topic: Opportunities for internationalisation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Graduate Schools should demonstrably support collaborative, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary modes of study and research, including partnerships with outside organisations. Students should also be supported and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to work with international partners or study / conduct research internationally.

- What precedents exist for cross-disciplinary study?
- What structures exist to support partnerships with other organisations?
- How are students and supervisors made aware of the possibilities for these options?

Internationalism & Partners: The Graduate School liaises, via the Dean of Graduate Studies, with a number of the partner Universities in China. The CMG made the decision to support up to 16 Chinese Scholars, with tuition fee waivers, as part of the University's Internationalisation plans. Thirteen scholarships have been awarded by the China Scholarship Council.

The Graduate School is involved in preparation of the MOU and studentships between Glasgow and University of MacQuarie University, NSW, Australia (a Universitas 21 partner). The Graduate School administrator has visited Macquarie to establish closer relationships with the Faculty of Sciences. New programmes are being developed with GSA/AASC which involve liaison with the Senate Office and the Collaborations Group.

The Graduate School has provided 20 Scholarships to enable PGR students to spend between 3-4 months working in International Centres of Excellence. The aim is to promote excellence and international collaboration.

Precedents for Cross Disciplinary Study: The CDT for Proteomics and Cell Technologies is lead from the College of Science and Engineering in collaboration with MVLS and has major contributions from staff in the School of Engineering for supervision of postgraduate students and the 5 MSc studentships associated with the centre.

Supporting Partnerships: As noted earlier the Graduate School is responsible for the admission, progression and examination and award of degree for the EngD-SLI which is awarded by 4 Universities.

The Graduate School has also provided seed funding to support over 28 Industrial Awards, resulting in the flow of ca. £1M of Industrial funding into the College this year (see below).

11. Any other areas of importance to Graduate Schools

Examples of good practice not previously addressed are encouraged here, as well as any specific difficulties Graduate Schools are facing.

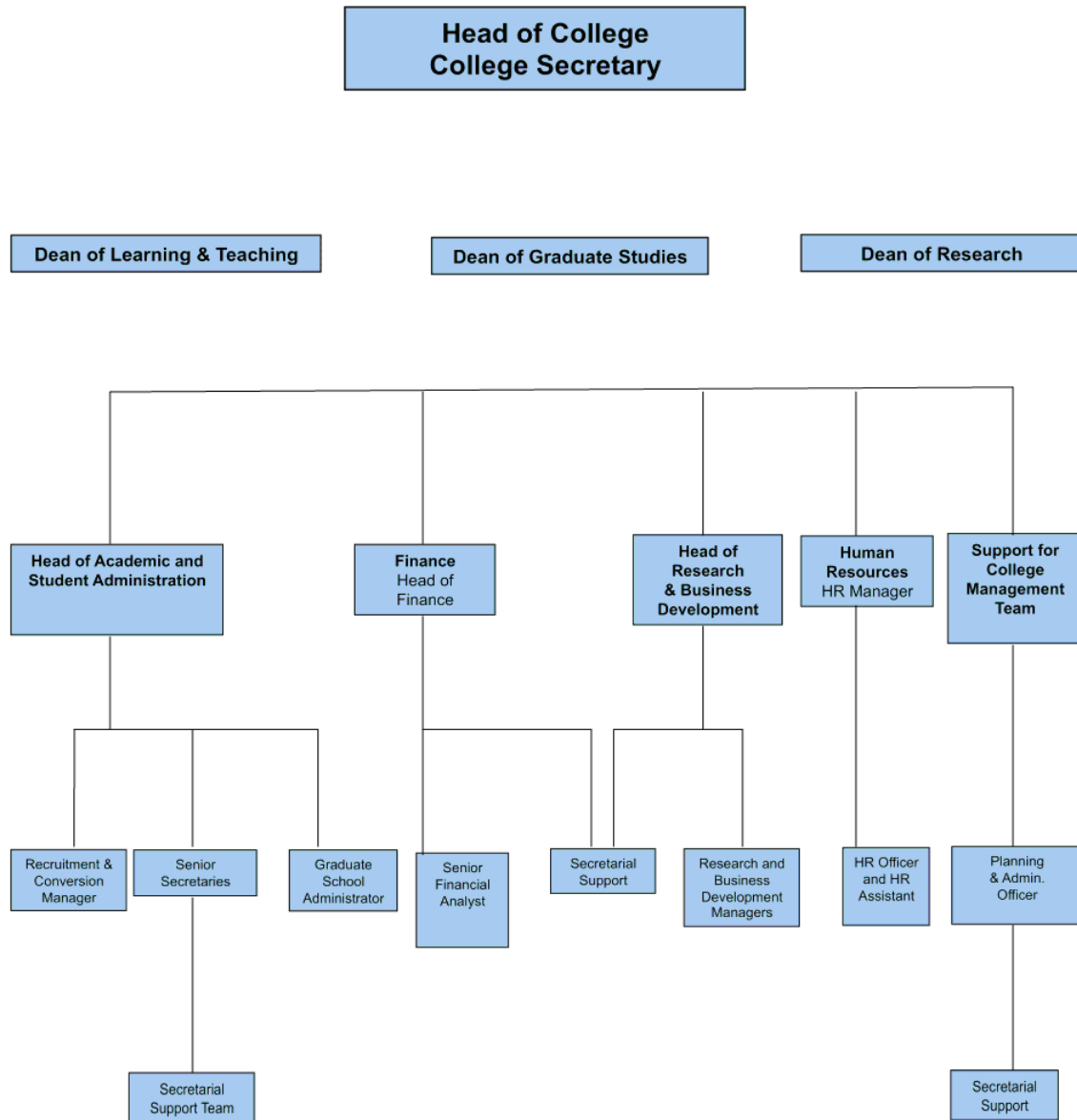
The Graduate School administration has prepared a number of 'good' practice processes and associated documentation including Admission of PGR students, Examination of PGR students. The Graduate School Board, has developed a new PGT College Code of Practice and has under development of a College PGR Code of Practice.

The Graduate School has been particularly keen to work with individual academics who have industrial partners willing to support PhD studentships. This call has resulted in 28 new Industrial studentships being created in less than 3 months. The financial budget for the College for these scholarships is approximately £1.2M over 3.5 years (£330K p.a.).

The College has made very good use of Roberts funding for provision of Transferable Skills but is concerned at funding of these activities for 2011/12 and beyond.

The Graduate School has advised the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Head of College that the £200 per student per year identified by the EPSRC in its DTG award for 'Personal Skills Training' to the College may not be made available as it is distributed to the University as part of the tuition fee. We need to develop a mechanism by which this component flows back to the Graduate School.

Appendix 3B Graduate School structure and reporting structure



Appendix 3C: The Board of the Science and Engineering Graduate School and its Functions

A **Graduate School Board** has been established comprising the School Conveners, representing each of the seven schools in the College. An internal management structure has been established involving Deputies, drawn from the Conveners, appointed for PGR (**Professor Susan Waldron**, GES), PGT (**Professor David Watt**, CS) and for Internationalisation (**Dr Graeme Cooke**, Chemistry).

Professors Waldron and **Watt**'s roles also carry the remit of developing policies to assure quality and uniformity of experience within Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR) programmes.

Dr Monika Harvey (Psychology) has been appointed to the University's Researcher Development Committee and has a particular responsibility for developing policies on English Language Training, and Transferable Skills).

Student representatives for PGT and PGR have been appointed. In addition, each school has a PG representative and although these do not sit on the Board they have an advisory role.

Professor Jon Cooper: Dean of Graduate Studies, Chair of Board

The Graduate School Conveners

Professor David Watt: Deputy for PGT, Graduate School Convenor for Computing Science (PGT) and Chair of the University Academic Standards Committee;

Professor Susan Waldron: Deputy for PGR and Graduate School Convenor for GES (PGT & PGR);

Dr Graeme Cooke: Deputy for Internationalisation and Graduate School Convenor for Chemistry;

Dr Monika Harvey: Graduate School Convenor for Psychology, member of University Researcher Development Committee with responsibility for Training and Transferable Skills;

Dr Paul Siebert: Graduate School Convenor for Computing Science (PGR);

Dr Domenico Gallipoli: Graduate School Convenor for Engineering (PGR);

Professor Peter Kropholler: Graduate School Convenor for Mathematics and Statistics (PGT & PGR);

Dr Craig Buttar: Graduate School Convenor for P&A (PGT & PGR);

Dr G Green: Graduate School Convenor for Engineering (PGT);

Mr A Munnoch: Postgraduate Research Student representative;

Mrs P Duncan: Head of Academic and Student Administration

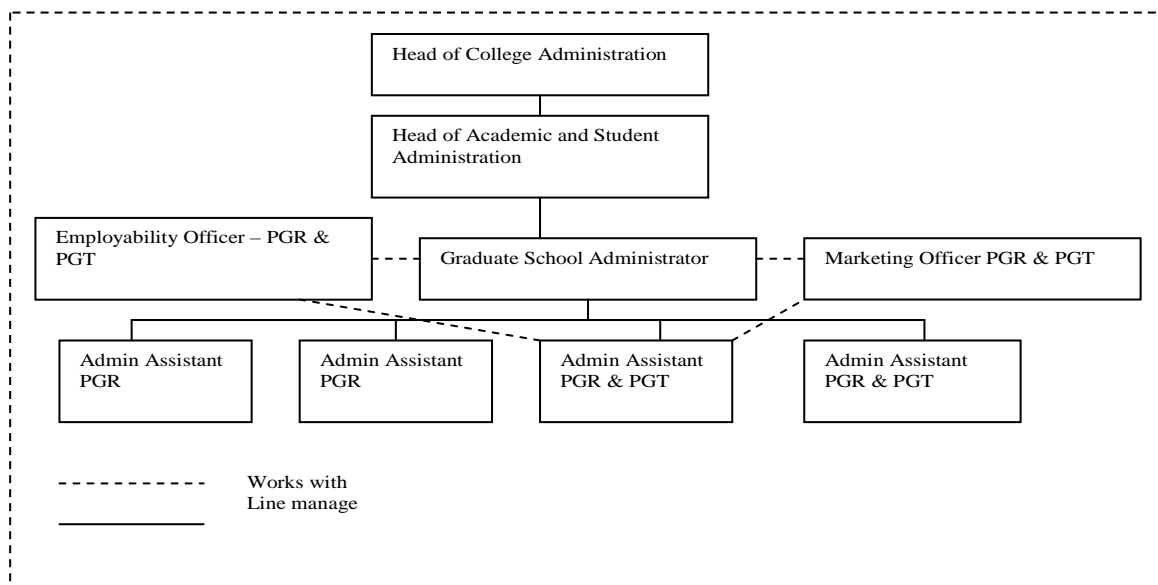
Mr TW Mathieson: Graduate School Administrator

**Reflective Review of Graduate Schools 2011
Questionnaire
Submitted 1 June 2011**

1. Graduate School organisation

Graduate schools will be organised in a manner consistent with demonstrably high quality programmes that recognise University and College strategies

How does the Graduate School fit within the College Structure, especially with regard to PGT and PGR functions?



How is the Graduate School organised overall?

The admin support structure, above, underpins the committee structure convened by the Dean of Graduate School:

Graduate School Board

PGR Committee

PGT Committee

Student Development Committee

See appendix 4A for remits and membership

The Graduate School also works with the College International Student liaison Officer and International Development manager.

Are there staff allocated specifically to the Graduate School?

The admin assistants are located in the College Student Support Office. In addition to supporting the UG and PG student experience staff, in the office are involved in a number of other activities including: Purchasing and requisitioning for the College; admin support for the College research training courses; course and programme approval processes; support for HASA, Employability Officer, Marketing Officer and International Development Officer

How are functions allocated across the staff group?

Responsibility is allocated by function and not by School. Staff have direct responsibility for a number of functions however they work as a team and cover for each other during vacation, sick leave or when there are peaks in activity for a particular function.

How is it made clear to students whom to approach regarding specific issues?

Information is published on the Graduate School webpage.

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/collegeadmincontacts/>

Students are emailed if changes are made or additional guidelines are published.

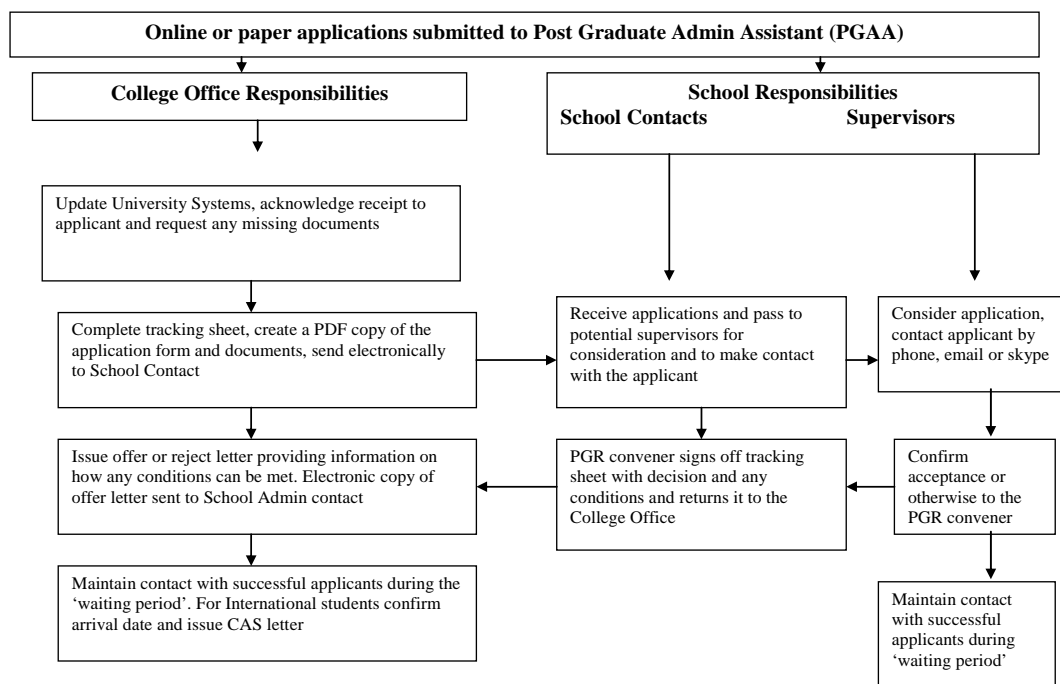
Where are student records lodged?

PGR Student records are currently held in the College Office in Florentine House. We are in the process of moving to an electronic filing system so in future student records will be held in the College Office shared drive.

2. Student experience: Application and admission

Graduate Schools will demonstrate processes for handling PGR applications in an effective and timely manner, and will implement appropriate and consistent induction procedures.

How are PGR applications managed?



What's the target turnaround time?

The target turnaround time is 4 weeks from the date that full documentation is received by the Graduate School. Applications will be sent if they contain a research proposal and at least one reference.

How is the process monitored and how are problems resolved?

Regular meetings are held with the admin staff to identify backlogs or other issues and these are dealt with as they arise. PGR Directors have the opportunity to raise issues at PGR Committee meetings or directly with the admin team, who also liaise with School PGR admin contacts.

Are there any particular issues with this process that could be resolved?

On the whole the process runs pretty smoothly. Most of our applications are now submitted online which minimises data input. There can be bottle necks when scholarships deadlines are near and the team are processing a large number of applications within tight deadlines. It can take longer than 4 weeks when a school has difficulty allocating a supervisor or when there is some discussion with the student, for example, in connection with funding or the research proposal.

3. Student experience: Supervision

Graduate Schools will have a robust process for allocating supervisors (including managing supervisor workload) and dealing with any supervisory issues that arise.

How are specific supervisors allocated?

Supervisors are allocated by Heads of School in accordance with their interest in the research topic of the applicant and their availability (workload related) to provide supervision. The admissions administrator asks for an indication of the supervisory load at the outset and this is recorded on the student's records.

How are requests for changes in supervision managed?

Requests for changes in supervision are made to the PGR Committee via the PGR Director. The DoG can become involved in discussions with and between students and/or supervisors and serious issues with supervision are dealt with by the University complaints procedure which is published in the PGR Handbook

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_180069_en.pdf

Are students given opportunities to review their supervisory arrangements as they settle into their programme?

First official opportunity to review supervision arrangements is at the annual progress review.

How is the workload of supervising staff managed?

Supervisor workload is managed by the Head of School or other direct line manager.

Is there a hard limit for the number of PGR students supervised by academic staff?

The guidelines are 6 FTE per supervisor but this can vary depending on research, managerial and teaching commitments

Are there clear guidelines for joint supervision between different Schools and Colleges?

The College follows the Code of Practice in this regard. One supervisor is nominated as lead supervisor, and any income is split proportionally to effort between the Schools involved.

4. Student experience: Progress review

Graduate Schools will have a clear, consistent and equitable process for reviewing the progress of PGR students and ensuring that any issues are addressed, underpinned by a commitment to the principle that the student experience is of primary importance.

What approach does the Graduate School take to progress reviews?

Annual progress reviews are compulsory for all PGR students including those registered as part-time and writing up. Progress forms are populated by the Graduate School and sent to school contacts in March to allow them to arrange for the progress reviews to take place before the end of May. Guidelines for Schools on organisation of progress reviews are published on the web.

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_196053_en.pdf

Following the review the convener completes the form to confirm, or otherwise that the student be allowed to register for the next year of study. Issues with progression are highlighted on the form and any decisions required by the PGR Committee are considered at the final meeting of the academic session.

How is representation of different perspectives ensured?

Supervisors and students have separate parts of the review form to complete prior to the review – these are the Student Self Assessment and the Supervisor Report. Both parties must sign to say that have read the others' comments as part of the review.

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/#d.en.191160>

Is there a face to face meeting, and if so, how is it convened and chaired?

Students are expected to attend a face to face meeting. The supervisor(s), the student and at least one other member of staff not directly involved with the student (e.g. Head of School/subject or PGR Convener) should normally form the review panel. The convener of the review panel should not be one of the supervisors.

Any student not able to attend their review should seek approval from the PGR Committee for their review to be conducted remotely. This will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and will not be allowed to happen on two or more consecutive years. It should be noted that for international students, the progress review functions as a UKBA mandated "proof of attendance."

How does the progress review allow students to reflect on possible supervisory difficulties?

The progress review form provides space for students to comment on their supervisory arrangements, and during the progress review meeting supervisors are asked to withdraw to allow for a confidential discussion between the student and the progress review convener. Students also have the opportunity to submit confidential comments to the Graduate School with regard to their relationship with their supervisors.

5. Student experience: Equality and diversity

Graduate Schools will demonstrate mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see [Equality Act 2010](#) or Appendix 6) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes.

- How are protected characteristics monitored?
- How is this data reviewed?
- What actions are taken to ensure that protected characteristics demonstrably do not affect student experience?
- How are students informed of the support available to them?

For PGR admissions, monitoring information never forms part of the documentation upon which applications are evaluated. Applications are assessed against clear criteria: Qualification; references, English language proficiency; research proposal. The Graduate School recognises the need to develop its monitoring mechanisms for protected characteristics.

Within the College office team, all staff have participated in equality and diversity training and are particularly attuned to responding to applicants and students from a wide variety of countries and those with disabilities. Creating an office culture which supports diversity has been a priority for both former faculties and our experienced staff fully understand the importance of treating all students equally.

Students have the opportunity to contact the DoGS if they feel the need to go beyond their supervisors and head of subject with particular concerns.

PGT students receive information about available support through programme handbooks and for PGR, through the College PGR Code of Practice which highlights sources of information and support. Web pages 'for current students and staff' contain links to a number of student support services; the Graduate School can consider whether more content and/or links should be added for the future.

We have just responded to an FOI request concerned with reported incidences of racism and racial abuse over the last five years with a nil return.

6. Student experience: Research training

Graduate Schools will have mechanisms to provide high-quality and comprehensive research training at both basic and advanced levels, and will ensure that students gain familiarity with research approaches broadly and the specialised techniques they intend to use more deeply.

How is the range of research training open to students managed?

Research training is introduced to PGR students during the research training week which takes place during the first week of the semester. Full information is on the web

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/graduateschool-researchtrainingprogramme/>

How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?

Opportunities are circulated as notices come in from outside agencies, usually by email. This will be amended and strengthened during the coming year as the DTC becomes more effective and influential.

How is student participation in the training managed?

Training is compulsory for all students unless they are granted an exemption by their supervisor.

What processes are in place for students opting out of this training?

Students can apply for exemption by completing a request form which has to be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/graduateschool-researchtrainingprogramme/>

7. Student experience: Employability and transferable skills

Graduate Schools will ensure that students have access to developmental opportunities for employability and transferable skills, and will maintain evidence of students' attainment in these areas.

How is the range of research training open to students managed?

Transferable skills training events funded by Roberts are approved by the Student Development Committee and published on the web. Students and supervisors are advised when this has been done. Participation in the events has been disappointing this session, so we are looking at different ways of communicating with students. A Graduate School Facebook has been launched and we are hoping that this will improve participation in skills training events and begin to create a Graduate School community

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/employability/graduateschooleventsandtraining/>

How is student participation in the training managed?

We had hoped to be able to use the online booking system created by MVLS but were unable to do so. Students contact the College office to register for courses and events or to claim expenses and approved RLI funding.

Attendance at courses is fed back to the College Office by the course organisers. If students register for events and subsequently fail (3 times) to attend they are not allowed to attend future events.

How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?

Expenses of up to £50 are available to students who want to attend training events beyond the University of Glasgow. Students are encouraged to visit the Vltae UK website for information about events they can attend

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/employability/graduateschooleventsandtraining/eventsandcourses/eventsandcourses2010-11/50approxtravelreimbursement-toattendskillstrainingevents/#d.en.190772>

How has Roberts funding been applied and how useful has it been?

Details of our initiatives can be found on the web

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/genericskillsfunding/>

The Roberts funding has enabled us to offer a range of opportunities to Schools and students. The College internships have been particularly successful allowing us to employ two students to support PG marketing and conversion activities, and to launch a Graduate School Facebook in an effort to improve our communication and engagement with students and begin to create a Graduate School community. If funds permit in 2011/12, the Graduate School hopes to continue and develop the successful initiatives from 2010/11.

8. Student experience: Facilities and resources

Graduate schools will demonstrate positive management of facilities and resources, and will attempt to fulfil students' requirements wherever possible.

How are resources for PGR students (including space, computers, basic materials etc.) managed?

PGR study space is generally allocated by the College Office. Some Schools still allocate space to their own students but the aim is to centralise this completely from session 2011/12. Schools are responsible for providing computers and basic materials for their students e.g. paper, printing and photo copying facilities.

How are requests from students handled?

Requests for changes to study space are handled by the College Office. Requests for other resources are dealt with by Schools.

Are there any resources that would make a significant difference to students' experience which are in short supply?

There is a need for more dedicated central study space for PGR students. The standard of accommodation varies across the College and students are based in a number of buildings throughout the campus. This arrangement is not conducive to providing the dynamic interdisciplinary and multicultural experience that is vital for the research culture of the University. It would make a significant difference to the student academic and social experience if they could study and network with each other in a central area.

It is challenging to ensure that Schools recognise within their resources that all full-time PGR students should have PC equipment of an appropriate standard.

Are there processes in place for making appropriate and strategic allocation decisions for studentships within and between Colleges?

Yes. To date there has been open competition between Schools for cross-College support and indeed for cross-College scholarships such as the Kelvin-Smith, but in the future the College is planning to manage allocation of scholarships to Schools more directly. This will not be allowed to affect the quality of applications.

9. Student experience: Submission and examination

Graduate Schools will have transparent and appropriate processes to manage the submission and examination process, and to record extensions, suspensions and overall completion rates.

How does the Graduate School monitor completion rates?

The Graduate School uses central information from the PGR office to monitor completion. Currently we are concerned that most students assume a fourth, write-up, year is a “right.” This can be problematic for funding and other reasons, and in the future we would like to support three year completion more actively.

How are requests for extensions and suspensions managed?

Students complete a request form approved by their supervisor which is then approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_176279_en.doc

How does the Graduate School ensure that any external funder requirements are met (e.g. 70% of students submitting their thesis within 1 year of the funding end date)?

RCUK funded students whose supervisors have a concern about their progress at the end of the second year are required to attend an interim review in January of the following session. At the end of the third year all students who have not submitted, are allowed to register as writing up students for the following year, on submission of a writing up plan.

How are students informed about these processes?

Students are advised of the processes during their progress reviews

10. Special topic: Opportunities for internationalisation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Graduate Schools should demonstrably support collaborative, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary modes of study and research, including partnerships with outside organisations. Students should also be supported and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to work with international partners or study / conduct research internationally.

What precedents exist for cross-disciplinary study?

The College has been awarded 9 interdisciplinary scholarships funded by the University Kelvin Smith awards

What structures exist to support partnerships with other organisations?

In previous years there have been a number of CASE scholarships, and we are developing joint PhDs. One of the best examples of this activity is the Scottish Economics Consortium, a joint training model that may have influenced the design of the DTC in Scotland.

How are students and supervisors made aware of the possibilities for these options?

Generally they arise out of disciplinary collaboration at the level of the individual academics, and become formalised over time. However, any information the Graduate School receives about such opportunities is circulated to the PGR Directors in the School and more widely.

11. Any other areas of importance to Graduate Schools

Examples of good practice not previously addressed are encouraged here, as well as any specific difficulties Graduate Schools are facing.

Examples of good practice

- Conducting annual progress reviews during April and May to ensure that issues with progress are dealt with at the final PGR meeting of the session.
- Academics and admin staff in the College and in Schools worked together on the process of awarding DTC scholarships across 14 pathways
- The graduate school commitment to transparency with Schools with regard to the decision making process

Difficulties

- Managing the different expectations from Schools
- Unclear resourcing with regard to scholarships and budgets
- Creating a professional student support office environment that is fit for purpose for both staff and students
- Creating a graduate school community when study space for students is spread across a number of different and diverse locations
- Anticipating the effect of the SLP on process and procedures for PGR students

Appendix 4B: Graduate School for the Social Sciences Committee Structure

Graduate School Board

The Graduate School Board is accountable to the College Management Group for policy, procedures and practice in relation to the Graduate School. The Board provides oversight on behalf of the College to ensure PGT and PGR programmes are in line with the College strategic objectives relating to PG education.

The Board receives reports from the College Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy Committee, College PGT Committee and College PGR Committee.

Frequency: Once per semester

Convenor: Dean of Graduate Studies

Membership: Academic deputies
Dean for Research
Dean for learning and Teaching
Heads of School
College Employability Officer
SRC Representative
PGR and PGT student rep
Others as required

In attendance: Graduate School Administrator
Head of Academic and Student Administration

1. To provide coordination and oversight of all GS matters
2. To promote, implement and monitor compliance with University and College strategies and policy related to PG students
3. To oversee the provision of generic and research skills training for PGR and PGT students
4. To review progression and conversion strategies and their effectiveness
5. To contribute to the definition of University and College strategies and policies in relation to PG students
6. To determine the strategic allocation of PGR scholarship funds for cross-college schemes
7. To maintain a high-quality, distinctive Graduate School environment by overseeing all aspects of the postgraduate experience within the College from induction to graduation
8. To work with Schools and other College Graduate Schools to enhance practice in all areas of Postgraduate delivery
9. To oversee on PG recruitment and publicity activities (with RIO) including maintaining Graduate School web pages
10. To coordinate reporting on PGT and PGR matters with committees and university services
11. To set and review strategies for participation in the Scottish Social Sciences Doctoral Training Centre

College PGT Committee

To discuss, advise and make recommendations to College and Schools on all matters relating to PGT programmes across the College, including educational policy, strategy and resource issues in relation to the development and enhancement of Learning and Teaching activities for PGT students.

Frequency: Twice each semester

Convenor: Dean of Graduate Studies

Membership: PGT Director for each School
College Quality Enhancement and Assurance Officer
College International Student Learning Officer
College Employability Officer
College Student Recruitment and Marketing Officer
College SRC Convenor or alternate
1 PGT student representative from each School

In attendance: Graduate School Administrator

Reporting: To College Management Group for Resource issues, otherwise to Graduate School Board and College Council

1. To contribute to and implement the College Learning and Teaching plan, including setting College PGT policies
2. To disseminate and recommend implementation of good practice in relation to PGT Learning and Teaching with reference to the development and delivery of key themes identified in the University's Learning and Teaching strategy.
3. To review, develop and progress the implementation of PGT strategies and action plans, e.g. employability, retention, internationalisation
4. To highlight and promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment which enhance the student learning experience and promote effective and efficient use of resources
5. To respond to consultations, to disseminate information and to implement recommendations for College Graduate School Board, Education Policy and Strategy Committee, Academic Standards Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and the Research Planning and Strategy Committee
6. To develop and maintain effective communications about PGT matters with staff and students in the Colleges and Schools
7. To receive reports and to review and disseminate best practice in relation to student advising, student progress, appeals and complaints from PGT students
8. To function as the Board of Studies for all College PGT provision and report decisions to Graduate School Board
9. To support School applications for external accreditation and re-accreditation
10. To ensure appropriate training is provided for PGT supervisors and programme coordinators

College PGR Committee

To discuss, advise and make recommendations to College on matters relating to postgraduate research programmes across the College, including educational policy, strategy and resource issues in relation to the development and enhancement of postgraduate research provision.

Frequency: 2 times each semester

Convenor: Dean of Graduate Studies

Membership: PGR Convenors from each School
Director of Graduate Training
College Employability Officer
College Student Recruitment and Marketing Officer
College SRC Convenor
5 PGR Students

In attendance: Graduate School Administrator, Head of Academic and School Administration

Reporting: To College Management Group for Resource issues, otherwise to Graduate School Board and College Council

1. Ensuring that policy and procedures are followed including progress and selection of examiners for all postgraduate research degrees
2. To develop and maintain effective communications about PGR matters with staff and students in the Colleges and Schools
3. To highlight and promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment which enhance the student learning experience and promote effective and efficient use of resources
4. To respond to consultations, to disseminate information and to implement recommendations for College Graduate School Board, Education Policy and Strategy Committee, Academic Standards Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and the Research Planning and Strategy Committee
5. To regulate the delivery of PGR programmes across the College
6. To manage and regulate supervision practices and supervisor allocation
12. To ensure appropriate training is provided for PGR supervisors and programme coordinators
13. Receiving and reviewing annual progress reports and approving extensions, suspensions and other requests resulting from the annual progress review and reporting decisions to the Graduate School Board

College Student Development Committee

To discuss, advise on and review College-wide aspects of postgraduate education and training not directly related to specific academic areas. This committee is expected to take a broad overview of the student experience from initial application through to graduation, including progression and transferable skills provision.

Frequency: Twice each semester

Convenor: Dean of Graduate Studies

Membership: College Quality Enhancement and Assurance Officer
College International Student Learning Officer
College Employability Officer
College Student Recruitment and Marketing Officer
Director of Graduate Training
Researcher Development Officer
College SRC Convenor or alternate
1 PGT student representative from each School
Other individuals responsible for broader student development may be co-opted where appropriate

In attendance: Graduate School Administrator, Graduate School Admin Assistants

Reporting: To College Management Group for Resource issues, otherwise to Graduate School Board and College Council

1. To develop, lead implementation of, and review strategies for transferable skill development
2. To make recommendations to PGT and PGR committees regarding core research training
3. To develop a cohesive and coherent approach to student experience from initial interest to graduation
4. To explore strategies for increasing recruitment and progression of postgraduate students
5. To make recommendations on matters affecting the broad postgraduate experience as they arise

Reflective Review of Graduate Schools 2011
Questionnaire
Submitted 1 June 2011

1. Graduate School organisation

Graduate schools will be organised in a manner consistent with demonstrably high quality programmes that recognise University and College strategies

- How does the Graduate School fit within the College Structure, especially with regard to PGT and PGR functions?
- How is the Graduate School organised overall?
- Are there staff allocated specifically to the Graduate School?
- How are functions allocated across the staff group?
- Do staff have unambiguous line management?
- How is it made clear to students whom to approach regarding specific issues?
- Where are student records lodged?

N/a

2. Student experience: Application and admission

Graduate Schools will demonstrate processes for handling PGR applications in an effective and timely manner, and will implement appropriate and consistent induction procedures.

- How are PGR applications managed?
- What's the target turnaround time?
- How is the process monitored and how are problems resolved?
- Are there any particular issues with this process that could be resolved?

The application process is easy and streamlined. The fact that the process is centralised (for the parts that we know of) makes it a student friendly system. The turnaround time seems to work well and the conversion emails, materials and invitations are good and targeted.

We'd encourage more involvement with the SRC in terms of inductions and whether activities for PGs can be incorporated into Freshers' Week. In this vein, it would be beneficial for a representative to be invited to speak at induction events, where these are organised at College level. We are aware that there was interest from Science & Engineering in having the SRC involved in their College level PGR Inductions. Also in regard to induction processes it would seem some prioritising of key messages needs to be done to avoid overloading new students with information that they can access at a later date. For example, given the choice between a message from the SRC or Postgraduates' Society would be more useful at the induction stage than a presentation on Intellectual Property.

3. Student experience: Supervision

Graduate Schools will have a robust process for allocating supervisors (including managing supervisor workload) and dealing with any supervisory issues that arise.

- How are specific supervisors allocated?
- How are requests for changes in supervision managed?
- Are students given opportunities to review their supervisory arrangements as they settle into their programme?
- How is the workload of supervising staff managed?
- Is there a hard limit for the number of PGR students supervised by academic staff?
- Are there clear guidelines for joint supervision between different Schools and Colleges?

From the SRC perspective it is hard to give details of graduate school processes, however the following questions arise with relation to supervision:

How clear is the process of allocation to students?

Are their clear demarcations between the responsibilities of first and secondary, etc. supervisors? This is not meant in terms of a strict policy on what each supervisor might do, more whether students are aware within their own supervisory arrangements of what they can expect. This is potentially more important where a student's supervisory arrangement crosses College boundaries.

4. Student experience: Progress review

Graduate Schools will have a clear, consistent and equitable process for reviewing the progress of PGR students and ensuring that any issues are addressed, underpinned by a commitment to the principle that the student experience is of primary importance.

- What approach does the Graduate School take to progress reviews?
- How is representation of different perspectives ensured?
- Is there a face to face meeting, and if so, how is it convened and chaired?
- How does the progress review allow students to reflect on possible supervisory difficulties?

Expectations are key in this area. Students need to know in advance what the review process will look like and the timescales involved. As detailed above the student experience is of primary importance and this can be serviced by managing the student's expectation in a positive way. For example, a PGR student that contacted the SRC was told that the Progress Review process would involve the writing of a first year report; this was agreed with the supervisory team as due at the end of July to fit with the first year plan of work that the student had developed with their supervisors. This date was then moved to the end of June with little notice allegedly due to a College level decision that all reviews must be completed before a certain date.

If this is the case for other Colleges it would be useful to review whether such College-wide decisions really serve the individual needs of a given PGR student, or if other external considerations mean that this decision must stand, then this expectation must be clearly articulated from the beginning.

5. Student experience: Equality and diversity

Graduate Schools will demonstrate mechanisms to ensure that no protected characteristics (see [Equality Act 2010](#) or Appendix 6) will affect students' selection, admission, progress and completion of programmes.

- How are protected characteristics monitored?
- How is this data reviewed?
- What actions are taken to ensure that protected characteristics demonstrably do not affect student experience?
- How are students informed of the support available to them?

N/A

6. Student experience: Research training

Graduate Schools will have mechanisms to provide high-quality and comprehensive research training at both basic and advanced levels, and will ensure that students gain familiarity with research approaches broadly and the specialised techniques they intend to use more deeply.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?
- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
- How is student participation in the training managed?
- What processes are in place for students opting out of this training?

From a student perspective it would seem that students are broadly aware of the research training that is offered.

In terms of promoting opportunities outside of the University, perhaps run by Research Councils, the main route is through email lists from the Research Council named contact or through Research & Enterprise.

Who formulates the message does not seem to be important to students; it is the point at which the student finds the information which is more important. Through a series of PG Forums the SRC held this term one of the issues that arose more generally was the use of email and the potential use of Graduate School Websites. Student suggested that making better use of the graduate school websites as a place to advertise this training and other opportunities and as a bookmark that student would consider looking at on a regular occasion (it is noted that some colleges do use their website more than others). Also software exists where the input to the new and events sections of a website could be distributed as an e-newsletter with little hassle.

7. Student experience: Employability and transferable skills

Graduate Schools will ensure that students have access to developmental opportunities for employability and transferable skills, and will maintain evidence of students' attainment in these areas.

- How is the range of research training open to students managed?
- How are students made aware of opportunities beyond the University of Glasgow?
- How is student participation in the training managed?
- How has Roberts funding been applied and how useful has it been?

GTA activities would seem to be a consideration in this section of the review. There seems to be little interaction between Graduate School/College's and the LTC in terms of statutory training but also further training. The GTA Module ran this year with c.15 GTA's from across the University, with the move to professionalisation in HE Teaching this situation must surely need to change in light of the amount of teaching provided by GTAs at the University.

In terms of Roberts Funding, on the whole this seems to have been applied in line with the ideals for which it was allocated. This type of researcher led activity needs to be further encouraged, in terms of the skills developed in writing bids, and carrying out projects.

Also postgraduate representation can be considered in terms of transferable skills, we currently promote and reward undergraduates for fulfilling representative functions and helping share their own HE experiences however do we do this coherently with our PGs? The view from the SRC would indicate we do not.

8. Student experience: Facilities and resources

Graduate schools will demonstrate positive management of facilities and resources, and will attempt to fulfil students' requirements wherever possible.

- How are resources for PGR students (including space, computers, basic materials etc.) managed?
- How are requests from students handled?
- Are there any resources that would make a significant difference to students' experience which are in short supply?
- Are there processes in place for making appropriate and strategic allocation decisions for studentships within and between Colleges?

Requests from student appeared to be handled well within the graduate schools. However, we are unclear what mechanisms students have for making these requests. Do Colleges/Subject Areas/Schools operate Staff Student Liaison mechanisms for PGs?

Further this lack of formal mechanisms applies to spaces; the postgraduate study space in the Main Building which houses PGR offices and general work areas does not appear to be managed by anyone in the aftermath of the restructure. Under the faculty structure this space had a Users Committee, this has fallen away. Ensuring that users of spaces, whether that be computer clusters, study spaces or office space, is vital if that space is to be used effectively.

Further to this space in general is a difficult issue. PGRs in different subject areas may have access to an office, a hotdesk or none of the above. The allocation of dedicated postgraduate space would make a significant difference to students to some areas, especially as this would encourage them to collaborate when working and would in some cases make them feel less isolated.

9. Student experience: Submission and examination

Graduate Schools will have transparent and appropriate processes to manage the submission and examination process, and to record extensions, suspensions and overall completion rates.

- How does the Graduate School monitor completion rates?
- How are requests for extensions and suspensions managed?
- How does the Graduate School ensure that any external funder requirements are met (e.g. 70% of students submitting their thesis within 1 year of the funding end date)?
- How are students informed about these processes?

Students can be unclear as to submission and examination procedures. At PGR level materials like a student handbook with details of policies relating to them and their academic unit would be useful if they do not exist already. For example this handbook could contain the details of how theses are examined.

Students, in some areas, funded by external organizations tend to have very little interaction with these organizations beyond application and enrolment. What mechanisms exist within Graduate Schools/Colleges to explain the requirements of these funders to students at relevant time periods?

10. Special topic: Opportunities for internationalisation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary activities

Graduate Schools should demonstrably support collaborative, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary modes of study and research, including partnerships with outside organisations. Students should also be supported and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to work with international partners or study / conduct research internationally.

- What precedents exist for cross-disciplinary study?
- What structures exist to support partnerships with other organisations?
- How are students and supervisors made aware of the possibilities for these options?

Student interest in cross-disciplinary working tends to drive this activity, which is positive in terms of the move toward interdisciplinary interaction in external organizations e.g. research councils, and also research-led development.

Resistance to this agenda can sometimes come from the supervisory team or research group as a whole as the demand for completing work to a schedule or keeping PGRs focused on their own research competes with the potential benefits of international and/or cross disciplinary collaboration.

Within the University there is still a need to foster a spirit of interdisciplinarity across academic units. Again from PG Forums, students articulated a desire to see what was going on in other subject areas or schools – this information can be difficult to obtain outside those units.

11. Any other areas of importance to Graduate Schools

Examples of good practice not previously addressed are encouraged here, as well as any specific difficulties Graduate Schools are facing.

The SRC are keen to develop postgraduate representation structures in the next academic year, and the code of Practice for PG representation. This also mentioned in section 8 in regard to facilities and resources. It is unclear whether student representative structures exist at PG level and how these map onto SRC structures and how effective engagement with the PG community can be achieved; however this is something we are looking to work on in the next academic year.

Appendix 6: Excerpts from the Equality & Diversity Policy

'We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can reach their full potential and have a real choice to participate in and contribute to our activities and processes, without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.'

'The aim of this Policy is to:

- i) Challenge discrimination, to promote and implement equality measures, to progress social justice and to strive to ensure that no one is disadvantaged
- ii) Achieve equality of opportunity by removing any potential discrimination for:
 - Disabled people
 - Gay and bi-sexual men and women
 - Transgendered and transsexual people
 - Black and minority ethnic people
 - Women
 - People of faith and of no faith
 - People in relation to their age
 - Part-time workers

How we intend to do this:

- By creating an organisational structure to develop and support the implementation of equality and diversity measures
- By mainstreaming equality and diversity into our policy and planning processes'

'The Scotland Act defines **equal opportunities** as "the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions." It means providing relevant and appropriate access for the participation, development and advancement of all individuals and groups.' [emphasis added]

'**Diversity** recognises the value of difference, which can provide an organisation with staff who possess a unique range of attributes and characteristics. These include diversity in age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, marital status, political belief, socio economic background, colour, nationality and ethnic origin. By understanding, recognising and involving diverse staff groups we can maximise our success as a leading University in our approach to, and treatment of all groups of employees and students.' [emphasis added]

'The Equal Opportunities Commission defines **mainstreaming** as: "the integration of equal opportunities into all policy development, implementation, evaluation and review processes". This means building equality into the everyday activities of the University and assessing what we do and the impact upon specific groups. Equality should not be addressed as an afterthought but should be considered from the outset when developing a policy or a practice.' [emphasis added]

Policy quoted from: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/equalitydiversity/equalitydiversitypolicy/>
Accessed: 28/04/2011