

Meeting:	Doctoral Council
Location:	1 East Meeting Room, Microsoft Teams
Date & Time:	Monday 11 th March 2024 (13:15 – 14:45)

Present:	
Eva Hawkins	Chemistry Doctoral Rep
Yaqian Li	Social & Policy Sciences Doctoral Rep
Kristi Manda	Psychology Doctoral Rep
Sam Taylor	HSS Doctoral Faculty Rep
Catriona Gray	Computer Science Doctoral Rep
Natalie Corbett	DPRP Doctoral Rep
Elias Marchetti	Mechanical Engineering Doctoral Rep
In attendance:	
Taibah Orpin	Student Voice Coordinator (Postgraduate Representation)
Amber Snary	SU Education Officer
Gitte Sparding	Assistant Registrar (Academic Quality and Standards)
Kylie Smith	End to End Review Project Manager
Peter Swann	End to End Review Project Business Analyst

Item	
1.	<p>SU Update</p> <p>Doctoral Graduation Policy Win! – Policy is not changing, largely due to student feedback on the issue – [Many of them will already know as at the meeting where this was discussed].</p> <p>A lot of work going on in doctoral area – There are two reviews underway, which are looking to improve the doctoral experience. One is looking at the regulations around doctoral studies, and the other is an End-to-End review of doctoral processes. Representatives from both reviews will be here for this meeting, to introduce what is happening and gather feedback. There are also several consultation events happening over the next few weeks (Details have been communicated by email already) so please let your cohorts know about what is happening.</p> <p>Doctoral Rep elections close today! Please help promote these to anyone who would be interested!</p> <p>Education Awards nominations are open – nominate yourself or anyone else who you think deserves to be recognized for their role as a rep. This year, we also have an award for Doctoral Supervisors, so please help spread word!</p>
2.	<p>Professional Development</p> <p>I haven't received any careers advice outside of specific workshops – There haven't been any departmental events. It would be if teachers and lecturers shared their experience and offered careers advice.</p>

Chemistry have had careers talks – Alumni come in and talk about their careers and experience. There is also a summer showcase, where academic staff come in and give similar advice.

We have had one external speaker come in for a careers talk, which was about academia. It would be good to get more careers advice about opportunities outside of Academia, but this seems taboo in the department – they want to keep people in academia.

We had a talk, although it wasn't on a large scale and was focused on academia. When looking at careers outside of academia, I have usually gone to the careers service.

It is hard to get into doctoral skills, and while the sessions are good, they aren't very area-specific. It would be more beneficial to have more specialised training, maybe divided by department or faculty?

People on professional doctorates already have professional experience, so 'placements' are essentially covered by the requirement that all of us are professionals with a relevant day job and experience. There has been a lot of activities through the Institute for Policy Research (IPR), including blogs, activities and guest speakers, which have been good. I have been incredibly impressed at the speakers the IPR have had in, both for webinars and in person. People in the IPR are always willing to give their time and share their experiences.

We have a student led doctoral forum, which has a range of talk from external speakers, which include careers.

We have external speakers come in for various talks and webinars. They are usually connections of our lecturers, and are a good opportunity to learn more about things that you wouldn't usually cover in your PhD.

My cohort would be really keen to do placements. Lots of people want to go into industry. Placements can be problematic for international students with visas, as there is a limit to the number of hours they can work.

It would be good if there were introductory programmes where placements are integrated – this would help support international students in finding placements.

It can also be hard to find appropriate placements.

How consistent is departmental support for placements?

I'm not sure that we would get departmental support for placements.

I know a few people who have done placements, but I don't know how they found these or how they funded them.

This is the same in my department – I know people who have done placements, but there aren't many people who have.

I didn't realise that it was possible to do a placement during a PhD. I'm not sure how this would work with funding, or who would be able to do this.

At Plymouth, they ran micro placements and micro internship.

It would be good to set up more social events to ensure doctoral researchers have a platform to discuss their work in informal, yet academic settings. This is of course, a point for us to work on, within the school of management. If anything can be initiated across departments, in terms of "show and tell" or student-led seminars, that would be lovely as well!

A sentiment across the cohort was, for the doctoral college to be more mindful regarding class timings and accordingly schedule seminars during the semester. There is also feedback (I have experienced this as well- I had attended the seminar about applying to jobs outside academia) about how post the development sessions (from the doctoral development seminars), we do not receive the PPTs or materials and we're unsure as to where we can access that either, because sometimes speakers mention in the seminar that they will be sending across the PPTs.

3. **Doctoral Regulations Review**

There is currently a Task and Finish group working on doctoral study regulations, looking at how we can improve and clarify this documentation.

The group are proposing changes to the regulations, and are consulting staff and students.

Two online Ask Me Anything sessions on proposals to be held Tuesday, 12 March 10-11am; Monday 18 March 3-4pm. Any questions or comments about the changes to regulations can be directed to Gitte Sparding (gs2221@bath.ac.uk), Assistant Registrar (Quality and Standards).

Doctoral Regulations Review

Background

- All doctoral degrees are subject to University regulations, policy and processes
- Regulation 16 covers important aspects of doctoral study, including
- Admissions
- Registration
- Examination

- Awards
- A Task and Finish Group, chaired by Prof Joe Devine, has reviewed the doctoral regulations to
- Improve accessibility and user-friendliness
- Respond to external requirements
- Align with sector developments
- Standardise across doctoral programmes
- Strategic approval to proceed with proposals and conduct consultation by University Doctoral Studies Committee in Jan 2024
- Consultation targeted at Students, Academic Staff, Professional Services Staff
- Areas for consultation: Viva voce outcomes, writing-up status, MPhil assessment criteria, registration periods, suspensions for work placements, minimum admission criteria, hardbound theses

High-level summary of proposals

- Align viva voce outcome recommendations across doctoral degrees (where possible)
- Introduce new viva outcome category “major changes” (3-6 months)
- Create institutional-level criteria for transfer to “writing-up” status and remove “writing-up (administration)” status
- Rename “writing-up” to “submission pending”
- Create more detailed assessment criteria for MPhil exit awards
- Standardise minimum admissions requirements across doctoral degrees (qualifications and English language)
- Extend maximum period of registration for part-time PhD students (to make 50% FTE)
- Standardise min and max periods of registration across ProfDocs (where possible)
- Reframe re-registration to use for exceptional cases only
- Allow mode of study changes (PT/FT) up to 6 months before end of time
- Remove requirement for submission of hardcopy theses
- Remove MPhil as entry award

This review is trying to make processes more consistent across the University in a way which works for all doctoral programmes.

Some of these changes will only affect future doctoral students, but some will apply to current students.

4.

Doctoral End To End Process Review

This review is looking at doctoral milestones and processes.

A feedback session has been run, and a survey has been sent out, but responses from doctoral students have been low so far. Please help spread word of these opportunities to input to your cohort, as we would love to have more input from doctoral students in this review.

This review is looking for input on:

Joining the University of Bath:

- Thinking about the admissions process when you joined the University, what went well, what could have been better?
- What improvements could we make that would improve the admissions experience for doctoral students?
- Did you feel you had an adequate induction? What went well? What could we improve?

Doctoral Studies at University of Bath

- What do you love about your experience as a doctoral student at Bath?
- What are your biggest frustrations as a doctoral student at Bath?
- Do you understand the academic milestones and the requirements of each stage? Are there any milestones you feel need adjusting or more clarification?
- Do you know where to go to get information about on milestones and requirements?
- What professional development do you feel you need over the course of your studies?

I was a UG here so already knew my supervisor before I started.

In my department, next years PhD's are invited to the Showcase event, where they get to meet supervisors and the rest of the cohort. They get to meet people pre-induction.

Was also an UG at Bath, and knew my supervisor beforehand – they were part of the reason I decided to study at Bath. It was a good induction, it went through the basis of joining, but I think that the department and faculty introduced the SU a bit late – as it was in the fourth week. There was not enough talking about social opportunities when you start. This could possibly start before induction.

One rep has heard of someone showing up without a supervisor at the university, or this seems to be a rare occurrence.

On integrated PhD programmes, a lot of the induction is done during the taught component, but a lot of what you learn is not relevant for the first 12 months. After this, there is very little when you progress to the PhD stage.

I was in the first cohort of the programme – we were the guinea pigs. It would have been good to have a mentor to help signpost. Peer mentoring for PhDs could be better – it wasn't offered when I was a first year.

Careers and professional development seems to be ad hoc and not that structured or integrated.

On my programme, no one has studied at Bath before, and the group is very international. We had a smooth induction, which takes place during the august residential, and really helped the transition onto the programme. The residential was very intense, and the cohort aren't sure that they retained all the information. It would be good to have a refresher on key points. Although there is online access to a lot of the doctoral college training sessions, some struggle to attend these due to the time difference. During the taught phase, there was originally no personal tutors, although a DoS has now been appointed for the taught stage, who acts as a personal tutor.

I like the freedom given to researchers, there is so much support for you to do what you want to do – good open communication with supervisors and other academics, and freedom to discuss ideas, and the opportunity to be challenged.

It can be challenging to build a doctoral community across all of the departments – I would like to bring people together more. There isn't enough change for interactions outside of our own initiatives. There were times when we are in offices by ourselves.

There are PhDs who organise socials, but it depends on people taking the initiative to do this. My department is split between two buildings, and there is not much interaction between the two groups of offices. It would be good to have more social interaction, so you know people at other events.

I am in a building with several departments. There are student seminars each week, where people can talk about research.

It would be good to have channels where doctoral student can get together, both in person and online, maybe broken down into different years of the doctoral journey. When you are further into your research, you often lose contact with other researchers. Having little contact with other researchers affects your sense of belonging.

The 10 West 5th Floor commons is a social space for doctoral students.

It is really hard to create a sense of belonging when people are scattered and remote, but it is really important. It would be great to build more of a community.

Doctoral experience is closely related to supervision.

	<p>Doctoral students are treated as if we are at the same stage. Students near the end of their studies are pushed towards training and activities which are geared towards people near the start of their journey, when we already know how to do this. This comes from supervisors, the Doctoral College, and the CDT. It would cost more, and take more time, but it would be good to have tailored training based on individual needs.</p> <p>Collaborative spaces are good – the 4 East charging station – which has a coffee machine, hot water, tea, and space to meet and chat, help build a community within the department. It also help us to make connections. The department also run coffee morning and other event. Perhaps this model could be adopted by other departments?</p> <p>Milestones are made clear in the induction. There is step by step candidature guidance, although people were less sure about the ethics reports. More people have struggled with confirmation. A lot of people haven't progressed as much as they thought they would have by that point, so can find it quite stressful. Clearer guidance around what happening if you fail the candidature viva would be good, as this can take a long time to resolve.</p> <p>Confirmation is an exam, and there is some information in the regulations, but this guidance could be clarified in the review currently underway.</p> <p>Word of mouth info and tips are often used, and there isn't much guidance beyond this.</p> <p>During the induction, we were told there would be example of forms made available, but this never happened.</p> <p>Professional doctorates don't have a confirmation exam. Would this be useful, as it is a major check in point before the final thesis submission?</p>
5.	<p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> <p>DAY DATE MONTH 202X (00:00 - 00:00)</p> <p>Location: TBD</p>