DIRECTORS OF PGR STUDIES: BRIEFING FOR NEW POST-HOLDERS

Job Description
Hopefully you will already be familiar with the generic job description. However, if you have not seen this, it can be found at:

http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/sdpgrsresponsibilities.pdf

Code of Practice and other Policy documents
You should familiarise yourself with the Code of Practice for Research Students and be aware of the related policy documents. These are all available on the Graduate School website, in the section 'Information for supervisors and staff'.

http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/supervisorsandresearchstaff/gs-sr-home.aspx

More generally, the Graduate School website has a large amount of relevant material about PGR study and is a very useful resource. It is worth spending a bit of time familiarising yourself with its content relating to types of PGR programmes, different modes of study, training and development opportunities for PGR students, and English language support.

Working with your designated PGR administrator
On taking up your post, you should arrange to meet your designated administrator/s. You need to agree with him or her to agree how you can best work together on a day to day basis, so that he or she can provide you with effective support. Several of the administrators support more than one Department / School so you need to appreciate that they may have other demands on their time. The administrators work together in the School Support Team, primarily based on the first floor of the Graduate School, and they are generally able to provide cover for each other in the case of holidays and sick leave. Your administrator will be line-managed by either Cat Hale or Katie Saxelby-Smith (the Joint Heads of the DRO). If you have any concerns about the level of support you are getting you should contact either Cat (c.hale@reading.ac.uk) or Katie (k.saxelby-smith@reading.ac.uk).

Main tasks
Recruitment
Recruiting and retaining an increasing number of high quality doctoral students is central to the University’s mission and its standing as a leading research intensive university. It is your responsibility to encourage staff in your School to agree to supervise high quality prospective students whose research interests align with theirs. You should ensure that the admissions process
within your School / Department works effectively, with no unnecessary hold-ups. We know that responding to prospective students as soon as possible is a key factor in ensuring acceptances.

Jon Lloyd (j.d.lloyd@reading.ac.uk), the PGR Recruitment and Marketing Officer, is based within the Graduate School and is very happy to provide you with advice and support in relation to recruitment and marketing.

**PGR Target Setting**

Around September each year, I contact Heads of School and School Directors to ask them to set their PGR recruitment target numbers for the following session and the remainder of the planning period, by a deadline in late October. Detailed instructions and further contextual information will be provided at that time.

**Admissions**

You should agree with your administrator how you will handle, and respond to, new enquiries and applications. As noted above, it is important that these are processed as soon as possible. You should ensure that supervisors are aware that, where they are contacted directly by prospective students, they should either forward the email to you or copy you into their response to the student.

**New students’ induction**

Working with your administrator, you should arrange an induction meeting for new students starting in the Autumn Term. At that event, you should cover all the necessary School-related information. You should ensure that your students are told to attend the University-wide induction / welcome meeting run by the Graduate School (usually in the first week of October – you will be advised on the date and location well in advance of the event), where they will be told about the Graduate School, the RRDP training programme, other support available, events, etc.

Although numbers might not warrant further induction meetings for students starting later in the year (e.g. January or April / May) you should ensure that you provide the necessary information to late starters following their registration. The Graduate School runs its central induction events in January and early May, as well as in October.

**Graduate School desk allocation**

In addition to student hot-desking facilities, the Graduate School has 60 desks available for student usage. These are allocated for longer term usage for a maximum of one year at a time. The majority of these desks are allocated to students in the Arts & Humanities and some Social Sciences who do not have sufficient space in their own Schools / Departments.

Students are notified at the start of each academic session of the date by which they have to submit a request (usually in early November). Part-time students can apply provided they are willing to share the allocated space with another student whose working pattern complements theirs. Copies of the requests are forwarded to the relevant School / Department Director, who is asked to rank the cases in terms of priority need. The Graduate School then assesses the requests, the ranking, and the overall PGR student numbers in the School / Department, in making allocations.
**Suspensions, Extensions, Requests to change status, etc.**

These types of request will come in from students throughout the year. There are specific forms which should be completed to make cases to the Graduate School for approval. Your School / Department administrator has copies of forms. You should ensure that you are aware of the regulations relating to Tier 4 students and the maximum number of days that they are allowed to suspend their studies and remain in the UK (currently 60 days). Rachel Willis in the Doctoral Research Office in the Graduate School can answer any queries.

**Monitoring of Progress**

It is a formal requirement that each PGR student’s progress is assessed at least once a year, and there is an agreed process for doing this, with template forms which should be used. Your administrator will have copies of these, and they are also available on the Graduate School website. Most Schools run this during the Spring term each year but we do allow for some variation in process, and in specific questions asked / information required from students, provided the standard requirements are met. The process must be completed by the start of September at the latest. A guide for staff on Monitoring of Progress is available on the Graduate School website: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/graduateschool/pgrmonprogress_goodpracticeguide_oct17.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/graduateschool/pgrmonprogress_goodpracticeguide_oct17.pdf)

**Annual Evaluation of Supervisory Arrangements**

The Graduate School sends out a survey in May each year to all PGR students asking them various questions about their satisfaction with their supervisory arrangements. The completed forms are returned directly to the Graduate School as many students are concerned about raising issues within their Schools / Departments. The Heads of the DRO read through the completed forms and identify any where students have raised significant concerns that require following up. They contact the students for further information and ask if they can speak with the relevant School / Department Director in confidence.

**Examiner nominations**

The Doctoral Examinations Officer, Sean Semple who is based in the Graduate School ([s.seemple@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.seemple@reading.ac.uk)) requests nominations from Schools (via the relevant administrator) once students have sent him their completed Intention to Submit form. This should done around four months before the student is due to submit. The administrators contact the supervisors to request nominations, and should copy in Directors. Nomination forms must be signed off by the Director, or Head of School / Department, before being returned to Sean. It is essential that nominations are submitted before the student submits in order to avoid any unnecessary delays to the examination process.

**Studentship competitions**

The Graduate School runs a number of studentship competitions throughout the year. Details of all of these can be found on the Graduate School website funding pages. A number of these competitions require Directors to submit nominations on behalf of their School.

a) International studentships. One full-award and six fees-only awards are made each year, and are available for students studying in all areas apart from those based in Henley Business School. Directors are contacted in early October and need to identify, in consultation with the Head of School, two candidates (ranked in priority) to nominate for the competition (by a
deadline in early March). Candidates must have received an offer of admission by the University by the time the nominations are submitted.

b) China Scholarships Council. The University supports two awards each year, in an arrangement whereby we pay the fees and a small training grant, while the Chinese Scholarship Council cover the living costs. The awards have to be made in the areas of climate and environmental change, agriculture and food security, or health and well-being. Directors are contacted in November each year and asked to nominate any Chinese applicants who are considered to be strong candidates for these Scholarships (by a deadline in late February).

c) Felix Scholarships. Unfortunately, Reading currently only has one PhD Felix scholarship to offer each year (along with five Master’s scholarships). We are allowed to nominate up to 20 candidates, of which up to five can be for the PhD award, to the Felix Trust who make the decision as to which candidates will receive awards. Applicants need to have been accepted for a place, and completed a Felix short application form available on our website, by the end of January. Directors are sent copies of applications in early February by the Graduate School and, following discussion with School PGT Directors, need to submit up to four nominations (in ranked order), with only one of these being for the PhD award, by a March deadline.

Annual Doctoral Conference and associated competitions

The Annual Doctoral Conference is held in June each year. It is important that Schools do not arrange to hold their own conferences on the same date. The date of the University-wide conference is set a year in advance and Directors are notified (it will be on June 20th in 2018). In January each year, the Graduate School sends out a call for entries for the various competitions that are associated with the conference. For most competitions (Three Minute Thesis, Poster, Image, Research Life in Pictures) the call goes directly to students. It is helpful if Directors promote the competitions within their Schools / Departments and encourage students to enter. The call for nominations for the PhD Researcher of the Year goes to Research Division Leads and School / Department Directors, who jointly identify a nominee for each of the relevant research division/s. School / Department Directors are responsible for submitting the selected nomination to the Graduate School by the March deadline.

Fairbrother lecture

This is a public lecture given by a PhD student usually in March each year, with the aim of showcasing the excellence and relevance of postgraduate research at Reading. It attracts a large audience from within and outside of the University. Directors are contacted in early September to nominate any suitable candidates for their School (by a deadline in mid-October). The subsequent selection process not only identifies the student who will give the lecture but also a number of shortlisted entries who take part in a visual showcase of work which is displayed at the event.

November 2017.
## Annual Calendar of Tasks

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Arrange School / Department induction events for new students</td>
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<td>Receive call for nominations for Fairbrother Lecture</td>
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<td>Receive request for PGR recruitment targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Receive call for international studentships competition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deadline for nominations for Fairbrother Lecture</td>
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<td>Deadline for PGR recruitment targets</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Receive call for China Scholarships Council nominations</td>
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<td>Receive allocations for desks in Graduate School</td>
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<td>Return ranked list for desks to Graduate School</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>Receive call for PhD Researcher of the Year nominations</td>
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<td>Receive applications for Felix nominations</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Deadline for China Scholarship Council nominations</td>
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