

Minutes of Department of Computing PGR Strategy Meeting (November 1st 2011)

Present: Ian Hodkinson (year 1 cohort mentor 2011), Naranker Dulay (PG tutor), Krysia Broda (DPS), Susan Eisenbach (HOD), Amani El-Kholy (PhD Administrator)

1. Minutes of meeting held on May 2011 The minutes were accepted. There were no matters arising. The minutes will be placed on the doc website in the staff access area.

Action KB

2. Scholarships

There was a discussion regarding various possible scholarships for October 2012. It was agreed to wait until after the budget planning in December before deciding on any Departmental scholarships. The Department applied for 3 China scholarships and SE will chase the College for a date when these might be confirmed. The fees for these would be paid by the China scholarship and bursaries would be payable from people's PRF funds. It was agreed for one teaching scholarship to be advertised.

Action KB and SE

For now, it was decided we should retain the 3 year norm for a DTA award. However, Jane Williams sent a questionnaire concerning department strategic use of funds for PhD students, answers to which may be used at Faculty level in some way.

3. Communications workshops

These will be going ahead on Wednesdays November 23rd, 30th and December 7th. So far, only a few students had signed up, but it now looks we will easily get the requirement for 12 students.

4. Mentoring. What does it entail?

Although the College has a precept that requires PhD students to have a mentor there is no consensus over what a mentor should be. Some say a coordinating role, others a problem solving role. We will try a coordinating role. IH will have an initial meeting with all new PHDs this year, with lunch. He will invite last year's reps to talk on the workshop, the student wiki, GSEPS courses, research seminar meetings by, and for, PhD students.

Action IH

5. Items arising from the PGR Research Quality Committee meeting 18/10/11

We were reminded that minutes of the PGR staff student meetings should be put on our website and be visible to PhD students and staff. Some departments operate a buddy scheme for PhD students, but we did not think was needed in Computing. We would see how the new cohort mentoring works.

PhD Precepts: The PhD precepts require a 6 month report (not large, but signed by student and supervisor). We need to instigate this at 18 and 30 months. We currently have reports at 3 month (milestone), 9 month (milestone), 12 month update and 24 month (milestone) 36 month (if not submitted). Some way will be found to enhance the monthly logs at 18 and 30 months.

We are setting up a cohort mentor scheme. Currently we have one starting for October 2011 entrants and will roll it out to previous years during the Spring term.

Academics should be reminded to fully comment on the outcome of the admissions interview. There should ideally be 2 academics present. Note that College requires staff to attend an appropriate workshop if they are inexperienced in selection. Also, that academics who have not completed probation, OR who have not supervised a PhD student to completion should attend the "supervising research students" workshop and have a second supervisor.

Academics will be reminded they should inform Amani of events dates such as interruption of studies, examination date and outcome. The former is important as if not fully reported it can affect our completion rate.

The 4-year completion rate has recently reached 80%, but may be slipping again. Academics should be reminded that the College can refuse a student entry after 4 years.

Action KB and ND

6. PRES survey

The PRES survey was considered, and it was noted that Computing had a rather low turnout (25%). The results were marginally lower than the College average except on "access to appropriate facilities" and "opportunities to develop transferable skills". We will encourage greater participation in the next survey in 2013. The main critical comments were about the environment, in particular the working space. Mention was made of coffee machines, water, refrigerators, microwaves etc. *Perhaps we should consider providing water, at least in summer?*

7. AOB

There was no AOB.