Internal Periodic Review
14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of:
Date of review: 23-25 November 2021
Date of 14 week response: 11 May 2022
Date of year on response: 27 January 2023

The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.
If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed.   Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation number (Priority)	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1 (1)	The review team recommends that the School place excellence in researcher development at the heart of its narrative.		We welcome this recommendation, which is very much in line with the School's vision and trajectory. As highlighted in 2.7(7), we propose an annual open Town Hall session in August, to which all staff supporting PGR students are invited (academic and professional services). This session, along with the regular Staff Student Liaison Committees and the School's supervisor briefing workshops (in conjunction with IAD), will ensure PGR and supervisor needs are highlighted and addressed. Researcher development is also carefully considered as part of the School's annual monitoring report. Finally, in response to this recommendation and the recommendations of the School training working group established ahead of the IPR, the School has now committed to a dedicated training budget to support doctoral researcher development. Budget approval from the College is pending.	Town Hall - Aug 2022 Training budget confirmation – June 2022 Actions to achieve this will be ongoing.
2.1 (2)	The review team recommends that the School review its core training provision and implement a mandatory training programme for all PGR students to ensure equitable access to excellent research and career-relevant training (including core Bioscience skills, employability, and career awareness training).		We welcome this recommendation. The PGR training working group created to support the present IPR report has been reconvened to create a bespoke and mandatory programme for all PGR students to ensure equitable access to excellent research and career-relevant training. A projected budget based on the successful training provision offered to our EASTBIO DTP students is supported by the School and has been submitted to College for approval.	Training budget confirmation – June 2022 Core Training Programme due to be

			Following the support from SBS we have begun to determine the content of the programme alongside the processes/procedures required for delivery and hope to finalise this in the near future. We note that the previous IPR report (March 2016) also recommended development of a more strategic training programme, and that some progress in this direction had already been made ahead of the current report. We now plan to build on this, drawing on learning from established cohort-programmes (such as EASTBIO) to develop a mandatory core training programme, including core Bioscience skills, employability, and career awareness training, for all SBS PhD students.	delivered in the 2022/23 academic year, with additional opportunities available from 2023/24.
2.1 (3)	The review team recommends the establishment of a Training Co-ordinator/Manager/Director role to oversee the training and support needs of PGR students across the School.		This post is welcomed by the local teams and currently under discussion with School and College leadership. We have requested a post be introduced in the 2022-23 academic year, to support an expansion of training options in 2023-24. We note the Panel's suggestion that part of the responsibility be overseeing the training and support needs of student tutors and demonstrators across the School. We refer the Panel to our response to Recommendation 9 (2.7 (9) below). Training and support for student tutors and demonstrators falls within the remits of the Biology Teaching Organisation (BTO) and the Institute of Academic Development (IAD). After consultation, we believe this is adequately covered already and that the comments of the students may have reflected anomalies resulting from the pandemic.	Outcome for recommended post anticipated late 2022, forecast for inclusion in 2023-24 School budget.
2.5 (4)	The review team recommends that the University determine the underlying causes of the gaps in student WP and EDI data and share best practice with Schools and Colleges to address these gaps.		This issue is currently under discussion with College and University level groups. Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Convenor of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee commented, "In terms of EDI, I'm not sure what is meant by gaps in data - [The EDI Committee] publish our EDI student data via EDMARC reports (biannually) and sometimes do a deeper dive into specific issues. In 2019 this was in relation to student admissions and awards. There is work being developed to understand and mitigate any awarding gaps.	EASTBIO EDI data analysis due to be completed by June 2022. New guidance to support sick and parental leave anticipated by June 2022.

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2.5 (5)	The review team recommends that the University establish a set of expectations or baselines in relation to WP and EDI to allow Schools to gauge their relative performance.		This issue is currently under discussion with College and University groups. Comments from Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Convenor of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee are noted in 2.5(4). However, as a Graduate School, we feel that that University-level guidance around WP priorities and the proportional level of representation that we are aiming for, would be helpful. Otherwise, we are being asked to act as 'gatekeepers' to meet targets that we think should properly be defined at University level.	WP and EDI concerns will be discussed at the Graduate School Committee by September 2022. Note: this timeline reflects an impending change in Director of Graduate School.
2.6 (6)	The review team recommends that the School make opportunities and funding to attend national and international		We note the importance of attending national and international conferences for our PGR students, and will publicise the expectation that all PGR students within the	Conference funding due to be

	conferences available and widely communicated to all PGR students.		School should attend at least 1 national and 1 international conference (or equivalent) during their PhD studies. This should address the perceived reticence of some Supervisory teams to support such attendance. The majority of our PGR students have access to funding which can support attendance at conferences. Additional funds are available from many learned societies, and from some studentship funders by application (eg. Darwin Trust). We will publicise these opportunities better to our PGR students. For those with a research training support grant (RTSG) of less than £5,000, and who do not have access to travel funding from their funding body (approximately 75 students) we recommend the Graduate School Committee request an increase in the Graduate School budget to cover the cost to attend both a national and international conference for each impacted student. Funding would usually be limited to those students who are presenting orally or posters rather than registration only. We would anticipate an annual cost of £60,000.	considered by the Graduate School Committee in May 2022, deadline for School budget request 19 May 2022.
2.7 (7)	The review team recommends that the School establish a forum or annual event where staff supporting PGR students can discuss issues and share best practice.		Planned events: - Annual away-day during the summer period for members of the Graduate School Committee to discuss PGR strategy and highlight area to focused on during the academic year. - Annual open Town Hall session in August where all staff supporting PGR students are invited to attend (academic and professional services). We anticipate this will include general updates for the new academic year. - Regular meeting for all administrators of PGR programmes. Frequency to be confirmed.	Annual away-day anticipated in July-August 2022. Town Hall session anticipated in August 2022. PGR administrator meeting anticipated in June 2022.
2.7 (8)	The review team recommends that selection criteria/guidelines for all tutoring and demonstrating roles be published and prominently communicated to students to ensure they all feel they have an equitable opportunity to apply for work.		Tutoring and demonstrating roles are managed by the BTO. While we feel the comments made by students during the review may have reflected anomalous experience during the pandemic we have contacted Louise Hann, current manager	Response from BTO anticipated by June 2022.

			for these activities, for feedback. We will work with BTO to alleviate the concerns raised.	
2.7 (9)	The review team recommends that the University allocate the appropriate resource to the IAD to ensure that it can meet the training requests of PGR students who teach.		This issue was fed back to IAD colleagues and raised at the Doctoral College. IAD has responded as follows: "The recommendation is that the University allocate additional resources to the IAD so that we can meet the training requests of PGR students who teach on the basis that students can't access this provision at the moment due to limits on capacity. While pleasing to hear that the panel feel we should be allocated additional resources, this is not a picture we recognise and we do not agree with or support this recommendation. Fiona Philippi (IAD Acting Head of Researcher Development) discussed this recommendation with the colleagues who lead this provision for us. In summary, for workshops IAD is usually able to accommodate all those wanting to attend, including those on waiting lists. IADs run extra sessions where demand is particularly high. For the Introduction to Academic Practice course (that leads to HEA Accreditation) IAD does have to turn some people away because they don't meet the eligibility requirements (e.g. amount of teaching they are doing) and may operate a waiting list. Where eligible applicants are turned away due to lack of spaces in one semester IAD prioritises their application for the following semester so that no one has to wait more than one semester for a place. IAD also prioritise applications from final year PhDs." Therefore, we feel the comments made by the students during the review may have reflected anomalous experience during the pandemic. Our plan is to monitor the situation going forward, and to request further action if needed. SBS meet with IAD annually to discuss student support. The next meeting is May 6th and this recommendation will be discussed.	IAD meeting with Graduate School on the 6 May. Additional meetings on an annual basis are anticipated. Response from BTO anticipated by June 2022.
2.8 (10)	The review team recommends that the School and College work together to optimise student social and office space in the new School and College estate developments.		This recommendation is impacted by 2 major building projects that are currently ongoing or in abeyance: • Nucleus project (phase 1): building work currently underway, anticipated completion in late 2022. The new building will include group study rooms; breakout	Nucleus project anticipated complete in late 2022.

		pods and social learning spaces; private/secluded study spaces alongside events spaces (indoor and outdoor). • Building a New Biology project: works currently halted due to funding restrictions following the pandemic. It is expected planning permissions will be amended and resubmitted to the University court.	Projected timeline for New Biology project dependant on planning permission approval. The School will closely monitor the situation and advise staff and students when appropriate.
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review.	We have shared the report of the review panel with our student representatives, and have discussed the report in detail with them (as part of the Graduate School Committee).	
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review?		