

Internal Periodic Review of:

Date of review: 23-25 November 2021

Date of 14 week response: 11 May 2022

Date of year on response: 8 March 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.		<p>Following the 14-week response, updates to our actions are noted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Town Hall</u>: also highlighted in 2.7(7), the first annual open Town Hall session was held, to which all staff supporting PGR students were invited (academic and professional services). Unfortunately attendance was low. The team have reassessed best practices for advertising events such as these. The 2023 session will primarily focus on recruitment and be held shortly after the scholarship calls are made. • Researcher development was carefully considered as part of the School's annual monitoring report, and was submitted as standard for 2021-22. • The School committed to a reduced training budget to support doctoral researcher development. Elements of the programme will be developed and announced throughout 2022-23, and expanded in the following academic years. 	<p>Town Hall – held 14.09.22</p> <p>2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report – PGR elements submitted 20.07.22</p> <p>Training budget confirmed 04.10.22</p>
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).		<p>Following the 14-week response the School met and discussed the PGR training budget request. As noted in item 1, the requested budget was partially awarded. A training programme has been created covering the core elements requested from the IPR working group. The remaining of the training have been delayed to future years' due to the limited funding granted. In particular, the proposed internship scheme, popular with the IPR working group, is due to be rolled out in March 2023 with competitive funding available. The amount of funding for internships is planned to steadily increase in future years dependent on the volume of applications and student feedback.</p>	<p>Training budget confirmed 04.10.22</p> <p>Internship scheme in progress, due to be</p>

				announced March 2023.
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.		<p>This post was welcomed by the local teams. Unfortunately, due to competing priorities, the School was unable to support the request and it has not been included in the College budget request for 2023-24.</p> <p>Following this feedback, the Graduate School have been slowly implementing the various elements of the training programme using the resources currently available within the local team and colleagues at IAD and the Careers Service. A review of our local resources is planned for Q3 of 2023.</p>	School planning confirmed 08.02.23
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.		<p>This issue is currently under discussion with College and University level groups.</p> <p>Within the School we have collected EDI data for the EASTBIO programme over 3 intakes of ~65 students per intake. As part of the grant's mid-term review, held between May and November, this data was reviewed and best practices shared with the Graduate School.</p> <p>New policies to support sick and parental leave for University-funded students have been introduced which encompass all University funded students. Guidance has been drafted by the Doctoral College with active participation from the School. It is anticipated these initiatives will allow better data collection amongst impacted groups.</p>	<p>EASTBIO EDI data assessed 30.11.22</p> <p>UoE sickness and family leave policy announced and implemented 01.08.22</p>
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.		<p>This issue is currently under discussion with College and University groups.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>WP and EDI concerns will be addressed at the Graduate School Committee by May 2023</p> <p>Note: original timeline impact by change in Director of Graduate School and extended</p>

				EASTBIO mid-term review deadline.
2.6 (6)	The review team recommends that the School make opportunities and funding to attend national and international conferences available and widely communicated to all PGR students.		<p>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 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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) the Graduate School Committee agreed to an increased budget request 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. The School request was denied for 2022-23, however, has been included in the 2023-24 request as part of the training programme discussions.</p>	Budget for 2022-23 confirmed 04.10.22, awaiting outcome of 2023-24 budget request.
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.		<p>Planned events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual away-day: Due to change in change in Director of Graduate School during the summer months and competing priorities the 2022 event was cancelled. A 2023 event for select members of the Graduate School Committee to discuss PGR strategy and highlight areas of focus has been planned for 2023. • Annual Town Hall: reported in item 1. • Meeting for all administrators of PGR programmes started August 2022. Anticipated these will be bi-annual. 	<p>Annual away-day cancelled for 2022, to be started in 2023.</p> <p>Town Hall – held 14.09.22</p> <p>First PGR administrator meeting held 31.08.22</p>
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		<p>Tutoring and demonstrating roles are managed by the Biology Teaching Office, with Ann Haley (Academic Administrator) responding on behalf of the team:</p> <p>“On our wiki page:</p>	Response from BTO 13.06.22

	<p>they all feel they have an equitable opportunity to apply for work.</p>		<p>https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/intranetpublic/Demonstrating+and+Tutoring we have a link entitled: Policy for recruitment and support of demonstrators and tutors. This is a university policy.</p> <p>Within SBS, we employ a mixture of demonstrators who have delivered a course before and those who are new to a course, so that there is some continuity between years.</p> <p>We also have a website where we advertise posts, particularly where large numbers of demonstrators are required for our early year courses.</p> <p>All PhD students will receive the same communication from the Graduate School about the wiki page above.”</p>	
<p>2.7 (9)</p>	<p>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.</p>		<p>As noted in our previous response we feel the comments made by the students during the review may have reflected anomalous experience during the pandemic. We are continuing to monitor the situation, and to request further action if needed.</p> <p>The BTO feedback from Ann Haley (Academic Administrator) regarding this item:</p> <p>“We offer our own Demonstrator training. As long as someone has been offered a demonstrating role, then they are invited to the course ahead of taking up that role. We do not limit the numbers, other than you need to have a role. We do not train those without a role due to the need to pay them. However, we put our course on twice a year to catch those who need to complete it ahead of semester 2 courses.”</p>	<p>IAD meeting with Graduate School on the 6 May. Additional meetings on an annual basis are anticipated.</p>
<p>2.8 (10)</p>	<p>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.</p>		<p>This recommendation is impacted by 2 major building projects that are currently ongoing or in abeyance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Nucleus project (phase 1)</u>: building work completed. The new building includes group study rooms; breakout pods and social learning spaces; private/secluded study spaces alongside events spaces (indoor and outdoor). • <u>Building a New Biology project</u>: The New Darwin project is under consideration by the University, and dependant on planning permissions. The School will closely monitor the situation and advise staff and students when appropriate. 	<p>Nucleus opened January 2023.</p> <p>New Darwin approval and potential timeframe TBC.</p>

	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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated School budget for the implementation of a PGR internship scheme. The scheme was announced mid-March and the Graduate School has received positive feedback from students. • Recognition and support to expand training for across all School PGR programmes. • Renewed efforts to build closer working relationships between the various CDT/DTP administrators who support Biological Sciences PGR students, with the introduction of a joint planner for better event/training management.