

PGR AND ECR FORUM GROUP

- Postgraduate Researcher and Early Career Researcher Forum Group

MINUTES FOR THE THIRD meeting of the PGR and ECR Forum group meeting in the 2022-23 academic session held on Wednesday 14th June 2023 at 10:00-12:30 hrs online.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Genevieve	Breau	FEHHS	ECR Representative (Left at 10:30)
Jack	Tomlin	FLAS	ECR Representative (NEWLY APPOINTED MEMBER)
Emem	Ekamen	FBUS	PGR Representative (Left at 11:00)
Alexandra	Stroleny	FBUS	ECR Representative
Osamh	Alshahed	FES	PGR Representative (Engineering)
Abubakar	Ibrahim	FES	Deputising Hope Okon - PGR Representative (NRI)
Stefania	Cerretelli	FES	ECR Representative (NRI)
Bradley	Cory	GSU	President of Doctoral Society
Olivia	Reed	GSU	Academic Communities and Representative Manger
Aradhana	Mehra	RETI, GRE	Head of Research & Enterprise Training Institute, Chair
Paul	Angelo	GRE	Research Development Manager (Left at 10:40)
Harvinder	Birdi	RETI, GRE	Researcher Training Officer, Forum Secretariat
Kate	Southgate	RETI, GRE	Training and Research Programmes Manager, Deputy Chair

APOLOGIES RECEIVED:

Bawan	Ahmed	FEHHS	PGR Representative
Devanshi	Vikamsey	FEHHS	PGR Representative
John	Ibanga	FEHHS	PGR Representative
Louise	Usher	FEHHS	PGR Representative (Health Sciences)
Helen	Elliot	FEHHS	ECR Representative
Charmaine	Brown	FEHHS	ECR Representative
Ling	Bian	FLAS	PGR Lead for Faculty
Hope Cletus	Okon	FES	PGR Representative (NRI)
Emily	Parsons	FES	PGR Representative ((CMS) previously FLAS)
Lizzie	Rodulson	GSU	Democracy & Insight Manager
Krishmi	Karki	GSU	GSU Officer
Kevin	Sanders	GRE, Guest Speaker	Scholarly Communications Manager, Research Development Services

NO RESPONSE RECEIVED TO INVITATION:

Emmanuel	Mogaji	FBUS	ECR Representative-LEFT UNIVERSITY
Sofia	Lachhab	FBUS	PGR Representative
Maimoona	Amin	FLAS	PGR Representative
Georgios	Kampas	FES	ECR Representative (Engineering)
Steven	Harte	FES	ECR Representative (NRI-Deputy)

AWAITING MEMBER NAME/REPLACEMENT CONFIRMED:

n/a	n/a	FLAS	ECR Representative
n/a	n/a	FES	PGR Representative (Science)

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/2. **Items from Chair:**

- 2.1 Minutes of previous meeting 24 April 2023 and matters arising were confirmed.
- 2.2 Actions update was given.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/3. **Research and Knowledge Exchange Board update**

- 3.1 It was noted PA will be moving forward to other responsibilities and this was his last update as representative from the R&KE Board. The Chair thanked for valuable contribution and updates to the Forum over the years.
- 3.2 It was noted that contribution and updates from R&KE Board are valuable to the Forum, as most impact the researcher community. A new representative will be sought, so that updates can continue.
- 3.3 Major focus of the last R&KE Board was still on implementing the Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy, with realignment of research coordination and processes across the university, with a focus on establishing research centres and institutes to improve coordination for the upcoming REF in 2028. The structure is almost finalised, with around 27-28 research centres under 5 institutes.
- 3.4 A recent, mini cycle, REF 2023 assessment of outputs and impact was carried out. The provisional outputs have been submitted and will undergo internal and external assessment. The meeting acknowledged that as the next REF approaches, individuals involved in research may be asked for their active participation. Further communications and announcements regarding REF are expected from Associate Deans and Research England.
- 3.5 The PGR Experience Research Project findings and recommendations were shared from GSU. These were well-received by the Board.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/4. **Operational Matters**

4.1 Open Access for PGRs and ECRs – *itemised at 10:30am*

- 4.1.1 To be rescheduled for another Forum meeting in 2023-2024

4.2 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023 update

- 4.2.1 Two roadshows took place at Greenwich (Hybrid) and at Medway in March to inform PGRs and staff about the PRES 2023, and what developments have taken place on previous suggestions, highlighting areas of good practice from across the faculties, RETI, Library services, Doctoral Society and GSU. Over 60 people attended the roadshows. There were two prize draw winners for taking part in the roadshows.
- 4.2.2 There has been a varying response rate for PRES between faculties (between 30% to 58%), with an overall of ~45%. This has increased over the years, in 2019 it was 41%, in 2021 it was 42.8%.

Table 1: PRES 2019, 2021, and 2023 response rates (%) for different benchmark groups

	Global	University Alliance	Pre-92 universities	Post-92 universities	London universities	UoG
2019	42.4	44.9	44.5	40.2	38.1	41.1
2021	36.1	42.4	35.0	43.0	41.0	42.8
2023	28 *					44.99

** (as of 09 May, source Advance HE)*

Table 2: PRES Response rates (%) by faculty and overall (03 April – 15 May, 2023)

FES	FEHHS	GBS	FLAS	Overall University
30.67	55.36	49.33	57.69	44.99

- 4.2.3 Once the PRES results are known, the data will be analysed by RETI and a report presented to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board and the Forum.

4.3 PULSE SkillsForge Management System and RETI Training bookings update

- 4.3.1 No update to report.

4.4 Forum Membership renewal for 2023-2024

- 4.4.1 Thanks were given to all members for their contributions to the Forum over the year.
- 4.4.2 Members were requested to confirm if they are continuing to represent their faculty or department for the next academic year. **ACTION:** Where members are not continuing, could they forward names of replacement.
- 4.4.3 This will be followed up with faculty research support teams and confirmed by email.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/5. Discussion Matters

5.1 RETI Training – suggestions for 2023-24

- 5.1.1 RETI was launched in 2018 and subsequently implemented a revised training schedule based on previous training efforts. The primary aim was to develop more comprehensive training for various individuals, including PGRs, supervisors, ECRs, and senior academics. Input was gathered from different sources, including Forum, meetings, and personal discussions, which aided in expanding and refining the RETI training schedule.
- 5.1.2 Additionally, RETI vets the selection process for external training providers, who offer a variety of training options. External training providers deliver many of the training sessions, as well as internal facilitators, including professional services and academic staff members.
- 5.1.3 Some training is asynchronous, allowing participants to access and complete it at their convenience. Other training sessions are live and delivered through a scheduled programme. This information is shared through an annual schedule circulated to all, along with monthly updates.
- 5.1.4 After a span of five and half years, it is essential to reflect and assess the current state of training, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- 5.1.5 In addition, the university is undergoing a scoping exercise to determine the feasibility of establishing a Graduate college. This college would serve as a comprehensive resource hub, encompassing various aspects such as international compliance, finance, accommodation, well-being, alumni etc. to support PGRs throughout their journey. The outcome of this exercise is yet to be determined but will shape what training RETI will deliver going forwards. Some Forum members are involved in the scoping process.
- 5.1.6 In order to gather feedback on RETI Training to identify gaps, areas of growth etc, RETI has been attending faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meetings. Faculty members expressed the need for more advanced training on bid writing. Additionally, there is a demand for increased focus on training related to research impact, with discussions underway to collaborate a

more comprehensive approach. Furthermore, there is interest in providing training on leadership skills. There is RETI training available for staff members, specifically focusing on research leadership. However, there is a plan to explore further and expand the training to include leadership at various levels and collaboration skills. Time management and project management training was emphasised as crucial areas for ECRs, but also applicable to all staff and PGRs. Another suggestion was to conduct a PGR student survey to understand their career aspirations and align the training plan accordingly. Potentially collaborating with the Doctoral Society and leveraging destination surveys from the alumni office will be helpful. The overall information will be collated and further discussions/consultation to be held with the Doctoral Society and the faculties. Forum attendees were invited to provide feedback on the existing training to inform future development. **ACTION:** Members are requested to bring forward any new ideas and suggestions for training from their faculties.

5.2 Faculty PGR/ECR and Greenwich Students Union members update and feedback (All)

5.2.1 FBUS

No update reported

5.2.2 FEHHS

No update reported. A PGR conference taking place in FEHHS and apologies from members have been received.

5.2.3 FLAS

No update reported

5.2.4 FES

No update reported

5.2.5 GSU

No update reported

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/6. Items for information

6.1 HR Excellence in Research Award

Plans have commenced for the development of HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan 2022-25. The aim is to implement the Action Plan progressively to promote good research culture and environment and help our research community. A working group has been approved for this purpose. The draft terms and conditions for the working group have been presented at the R&KE Board. The first meeting of the working group is planned for the upcoming academic year to finalise the terms of reference and determine timely completion of the action points on the Action Plan. Updates on the progress of the working group and its benefits will be provided to the members of the Forum.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/7. Any Other Business

7.1 Update on the London weighting for PGR students

The Chair provided an update on the pay increase for London weighting for PGR students, stating that the matter has become complicated and is being further examined by the DVC of Research Knowledge Exchange. Feedback from students experiencing issues with London weighting was collected. Some students were receiving the allowance, while others were not, despite being based at Greenwich or Avery Hill as per the terms and conditions of the VC scholarships. All relevant information has been shared and a resolution is being awaited. **ACTION:** to raise it at the next Research and Knowledge Exchange Board meeting.

7.2 Digital Student Centre

It was announced that starting from September 2023, PGR students will be required to submit their queries through the Digital Student Centre instead of emailing the Training and Research Programme Officers. Queries will be directed to relevant staff members who can provide swift responses if the answer already exists in the knowledge base. For queries that require more detailed responses, they will be forwarded to a member of the RETI team. However, training queries will still be sent to the existing RETI Training email account. The purpose of this transition is to improve monitoring of student queries, enhance response rates. The project is being led by the Information and Library Services and Student and Academic Services, with more information and communications to be released in August before the full launch in September. RETI requests patience during the transition period and anticipates increased efficiency and effectiveness in handling student queries in the long term.

RF/RETI/22-23/F3/8. **Forum Meetings** - schedule for academic year 2023-24

There will be one meeting per term online - dates as confirmed:

1. PGR ECR Forum 1 Mon 27 November 2023 | 10:00-12:30 | Online
2. PGR ECR Forum 2 Wed 20 March 2024 | 14:00-16:30 | Online
3. PGR ECR Forum 3 Wed 5 June 2024 | 14:00-16:30 | Online

Forum [Terms of Reference and Members list](#), and the approved [Minutes](#) are available from the Research Tab on the Portal.