

Postgraduate Officer – March Report

Name: Issy Smith

Section 1: General Update

- Continuing talks on Mature students representation and how to best implement priorities for this group
- Further work on the PGTA cause
- Working on the Education Report with Education Officer
- Improving Welcome and Induction for PGs
- PGT/PGR working groups to set priorities for PG engagement for the next year

Section 2: Sabbatical Officer Priorities

1) Research, Masters and Mature students have an inclusive programme of events and activities; feeling valued as members of our community and supporting their wellbeing.

- PG Salsa course in May has been confirmed and tickets are now available on What'sOn Calendar!
- PG Summer BBQ plans not confirmed yet with use of UCL space, but still in planning.
- First workshops held with PGT/PGR academic reps to decide on priorities for PG engagement in the next year. (As part of the SU's Student Life - PG Engagement group)
- PG Summer plans starting to kick off. Volunteering have confirmed their first event.
- PG-related socs (PHD connect, PG(T) society, Online Society, MBA/EMBA Society) affiliated after extensive discussions.
- Discussions had with Welcome and Induction team on future plans for PGT and PGR welcomes, especially with PGR entry becoming termly next year rather than sporadic (to try to create a better sense of 'cohort'). More revamped PGT 101 talks planned and expanded to UCL East too. New website and landing hubs. Inclusion of SU in pre-enrolment comms.

2) Research and Masters students have a respected voice and are able to make informed choices, to better their education.

- PG Rep lunch socials undertaken in February. More to be set up for after Easter.
- Planned meeting between Mature Student key actors (society committee, current officer, incoming network officers) to ensure that the new Mature, Part-time, and Carers Network will be successful in supporting the students it represents in the coming year. Especially as the society has been

disaffiliated as a result of this new network. Will discuss workshops too to pinpoint top 3 priorities for Mature Student experience going forward (guided by recommendations made by several reports already published).

3) Students are financially supported in their time of need, so that they are able to achieve their potential.

Cost of Living working group

- upcoming meeting to review effectiveness of the group and how to improve it/make more impactful (it was a group inherited by previous sabb team when was lead by Welfare and Community Officer who we do not have this year)
- Will look into with the review re-connecting with the UCL counterpart that used to exist.

4) Students who work know their rights and are developed, rewarded and recognised by their employer.

PGTAs

- recommendations by Task and Finish group to go to UMC upon a re-wording. Main findings were that PGTAs are used quite heavily at UCL, their usage needs to be better defined (e.g., not marking dissertations, not being personal tutors), training gaps highlighted too (compulsory, more extensive).
- Doctoral School are coordinating with HR to integrate PGTA opportunities into TalentLink platform to ensure there is one platform to provide work, that it is standardised, and make sure contracts don't fall through the cracks. A couple more months to complete.
- Doctoral School new website to be the home of PGTA FAQs and hub rather than ARENA.

Still need to:

- Get in touch with HR again on the question of pay scales and ensuring other rights like maternity leave.
- Improve FAQs on Arena PGTA Opportunities Hub (which I have just found out has been moved to Doctoral School, so will bring up at next meeting)
- PGR special edition newsletter by SU to include an awareness campaign around PGTAs and the rights they have, as well as signposting.

Update on Student Staff forum that occurred whilst I was on annual leave during vote week needs to be followed up on.

Section 3: Attendance at important Union meetings and events

1) Union meetings attended and main outcomes

Activities Zone: taster membership removal of right to vote in socs/clubs approved to go to UE.

Union Executive: taster membership and voting policy approved.

Safeguarding training

- Interview with Cheese Grater on PGTAs

Section 4: Attendance at important UCL meetings and events

1) UCL meetings attended and main outcomes

Student and Campus Experience: revisiting expanding our sports facilities in a stepped approach.

- Welcome and SU PG support: see main priorities for outcomes.
- Admissions Transformation Programme Board.
- Academic Board Statute 18 Board: working to make disciplinary processes faster and simpler for staff-related complaints to seek resolutions (which are often not achieved at the moment)
- Research Degrees Committee: discussion of paper on PGR set days to be on campus.
- Open Access Textbook Programme: to bring free textbooks to students, programme will be brought to an Education Zone.
- Education Policy Scrutiny Panel: Discussing and defending the replacement for self-extenuating circumstances for an automated process ('free pass')
- Degree Outcomes Steering Group
- Research Intensive Education: discussing how to improve education at UCL, with a research focus. Talked on dissertations and the prep and support required. The challenges of a 1 year masters. How to improve assessment. How to improve UG involvement in research, and our approach to it. Encourage risk-taking, and perhaps adjusting marking scheme to reflect that. Will eventually compile to be recommendations to UMC.
- Meeting with PGR Faculty Reps and Doctoral School: PGTAs, learning difficulty support for researchers, PGR on campus days, and interaction with UCL Careers discussed.
- Quality Standards Committee: main discussion on the new self-certification process.

Section 5: What progress have you made on your assigned policy proposals?

Policy: Commitment to harm reduction

No update.