

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)

Action Plan

This action plan summarises the response from Glasgow Caledonian University to the review under the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) method conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) as part of Phase 1 of the Scottish Quality Enhancement arrangements 2022-24. The review was conducted on the 6 December 2023 and the subsequent report was [published](#) by the QAA on the 13 February 2024.

The QAA expressed confidence in the University's progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to ensure arrangements are in place for managing academic standards and the quality of our student learning experience. The QESR team identified two areas of good practice and made only one recommendation for action.

The good practice included our proactive response to the challenge of generative AI, which has become more prominent across the HE sector in recent years; and our support for mental health and our strong commitment to student wellbeing, which was positive and a reflection of our ongoing developments and enhancement activities in this area since ELIR 4.

The one recommendation was around the postgraduate research student (PGR) experience with the review team recommending we address support and expectations for PGR students to ensure consistent provision and experiences across all schools and discipline areas.

The Education Committee on behalf of Senate has primary responsibility for overseeing the actions arising from the outcomes of the QESR and progress on good practice. There continues to be close interlink with the Research Degrees Committee to promote and oversee the quality of the student experience within research programmes and where appropriate oversight by Research Committee in accordance with their respective terms of reference.

This action plan was initially approved by the Education Committee (1 May 2024), Research Committee (8 May 2024) and noted by Senate (5 June 2024), liaising with the Research Degrees Committee, as required.

Action plan updated November 2024 with revised timelines.

Progress updates noted by Research Degrees Committee, 8 October 2024
Education Committee, 6 November 2024

Action Plan

Recommendation: Postgraduate research students: *Satisfaction among postgraduate research students is relatively low, particularly on the University's London campus (GCU London). This is a consequence of challenges related to tutoring responsibilities, lack of suitable study spaces and inconsistent experiences related to supervisory teams. The University should address the support for, and expectations of, postgraduate research students to ensure common levels of provision and consistency of experience within all Schools and subjects.*

Recommendation to be addressed	Planned actions	Timeline(s) Revised timelines in blue (where applicable)	Lead/Committee(s)	Update note, end of September 2024
Enhance our PGR students' overall satisfaction of their experience.	1. Build on the results of PRES (2023) and QESR outcomes to understand the underlying issues in the broad areas that have been identified as benefiting from enhancement at both the Glasgow and London campuses. The aim is to develop targeted interventions that can successfully address the causes. Themes identified include: research culture; our students' sense of community; health and wellbeing support for our PGR students; and consistency of experience and provision across Schools, subjects and campuses.	April – September 2024 Implementation of recommendations: from September 2024.	Research Degrees Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/ procedure reviews and updates e.g. a) PGR student attendance and engagement, b) sickness absence and c) continuation fees (in progress). • SCEBE and GSBS's first PGR conferences (March, April) and 3MT competition (June)- all held very successfully. • Changes to research academic governance- ongoing. • Revised Researcher Development networks- in progress. • Work with RPABs on the importance of students' timely completion- ongoing. • Graduate School input to relevant university-wide initiatives e.g. Race Equality Charter application, Disability project, LGBTQIA+, Induction, Cybersecurity etc.

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	<p>2. Director of the Graduate School to facilitate meetings with key stakeholders in Schools, GCU London, Professional Services and the Students' Association using PRES results and QESR recommendations as a basis for discussion to identify recommendations for action.</p>		Director of Graduate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held with ADRs, Yunus Centre, SPGRTs, GCU London, Student Association, Academic Registry. • Grad School Away Days held, August 14-15. Range of contributors (academic staff, student reps, external contributor). • PGR-specific sessions on mental health and wellbeing, career planning (4x0.5 day workshops) to be held in tri A 2024/25 in partnership with Student Life. • Series of Supervisor CPD sessions on the theme of EDI/ inclusive supervision planned, 2024/25. Each session focused on a protected characteristic and sessions to be co-created with the GCU community. • Business as usual plans for 2024/25- complete for tri A, in progress for tri B. • Graduate School input to University plans on induction.
	<p>3. A recommended action plan, with deliverables for consideration by University Executive Group.</p>		Director of Graduate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining focus of the Graduate School- working paper for UEG- in progress.
	<p>4. An oversight group with cross University representation, including from the Student Association, will be set up to provide direction and guidance on delivering the action plan.</p>		PVC Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QESR steering group has had oversight of the development action plan. • The PVC Research's Senior Research Leaders Group has been updated on progress and providing a steer where needed. • Existing academic governance is now being utilised rather than creating a new, separate group. RDC to oversee with URC and

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				Education Committee to receive updates as required.
Address challenges related to tutoring responsibilities.	5. Convene a task and finish group to produce guidelines on appropriate teaching responsibilities for postgraduate research students who teach (who are not academic staff members). Group membership will include representation from: the Graduate School, ADSL, Academic Schools/GCU London, People Services, QAE and Students' Association.	April – September 2024 August 2024- January 2025	Research Degrees Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short life working group established with ADSL and QAE (August 2024).
Enhance the provision of suitable spaces for our PGR students.	6. Monitor the new study spaces created at GCU London now accessible to PGR students and continue to seek feedback from GCU London Student Council.	New spaces created February 2024	Director of GCU London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing.
	7. Undertake a review of current study space for PGR students in Glasgow with a view to developing a business case for future investment and enhancement of the PGR	Review- by December 2024 Implementation from 2025/26.	Director of the Graduate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial meetings with Estates held. Analysis of notes from earlier review of PGR office space by PVC Research. Topic covered during Graduate School Away Days (August 14-15th). Estates masterplan. Proposal for interim solution currently under

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	student physical environment.			development led by Estates (if approved by Infrastructure Group, implementation for 2025/26).
Enhance the consistency of support to our PGR students.	8. Director of Graduate School to review existing support for PGR Supervisors, and identify areas for enhancement and implementation from 2024-25.	April – September 2024 Implementation from September 2024.	Research Degrees Committee	In progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI sessions for Supervisors being planned for delivery in tri A and B (noted above) • Replace Research Degree Leaders network with a new, inclusive Supervisors forum. • Implement a programme of enhanced supervisor CPD and create a Sharepoint site with resources, enhanced guidance on SOPs etc. (in progress, to launch in October)