**Research Academic Representative Forum (RARF)**

**Date: Thursday 19th June 2025**

**Time:** 18:00- 19:00
**Location:** Online

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|  | WelcomeAttendeesEH (Emina Hogas, Deputy President EducationCB (Charlotte Baker, Representation Coordinator)RepsLD (Lorraine Debron) PGT repGS (Grace Sofan) PGR rep for Biomedical Research | No actions |
|  | Update on objectives1. Working with Union President Camille Boutrolle to increase the PGR London stipend as this hasn’t increased in a long time. A survey was sent out to all PGR reps for data to use in the survey. Hugh Brady has been consulted on the initial paper and has sent feedback and the paper is currently being sent to external stakeholders for signatures and feedback before sending to UKRI.
 | No actions |
|  | Democracy Review1. EH updated on the review & that hopefully there will be a postgraduate engagement focus. EH also noted there will be not fifth officer trustee with the DPFS role being removed but would have tailored staff support to support postgraduate students and there are plans to incorporate postgraduate roles within constituent unions.
2. EH asked reps how in touch they felt with their CU? LD stated as a rep she does but acknowledges those that aren’t don’t and you have to search for information. GS stated that she doesn’t meet with her Union but sees officers on CUs in the meetings. EH reiterated that the democracy review will add a role to the CU to increase community building and event support. RCSU are already implementing this and this in practice will replace the FoNS AWO role as it has not been filled.
 | No actions |
| 3. | Other* EH is doing some work on Graduate Teaching Assistant pay after Aero raised their work in making sure within Aero it was fair across faculties & departments. Moving forward we want to map this out to make sure its standardised and GTA pay is currently vague on the website.
* There has been a change in spaces available at South Kensingston
* There is going to be new councelling spaces in South Kensington
* A PGT Rent Guarantor scheme is going to be trialled for next year, with a small fee to sign up to ensure students can gain housing and make monthly payments instead of months of payments upfront.
* ICU Representation Team are refreshing PGR supervision guidelines/mutual expectations documents between staff & students, and are lobbying for EDI training being created & opportunities for students to raise minor issues and ensure there are opportunities for supervisors to reflect.

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| 4. | Updates from reps* MRES reps all met and a lot of feedback was raised there. The only issue that LD felt still needed to be raised was that there is a gap in safety with students not seeing risk assessments for studying and not aligning with the health & safety policies of the University. LD stated that the level of experience determines how safe you are in the lab. Risk assessments are in place but students don’t see them & they are not updated. They are also outdated, physical & not digitalised. Action for EH to discuss with FoNS.
* GS isn’t sure if there is representation at every FoM PG course. Overall most are happy with their placements and things are better with supervisors. A lot of students are worried that they are not meeting supervisors expectations or expectations of students have been lessened. GS has experienced little response to surveys and students issues many feel are personal so are hesitant to raise and worried about observations. EH stated we could do some messaging about how to communicate with supervisors & raise concerns if they feel like they are not performing.
* EH stated that ICU are creating a space to log module feedback and specific issues with a specific PGR focused section and space to advertise what we are doing to support students.
 | Action for EH to discuss risk assessment issue with FoNS. |
|  | Updates on last meetings actions1. EH & RM to find out more about department SSCs for FoM and why these are not taking place. EH to meet with JV to see what we could introduce. EH to send RM notes on meeting – COMPLETED
2. EH to raise with LL regarding study/teaching balance with increase in UG students. - COMPLETED
3. EH to talk to Charlie and Katya to discuss next steps with PGR teaching pay. - COMPLETED
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