

ARC Practitioner Group Updates October 2023

Admissions Julie Kelly	<p>There isn't a lot to report at this point because the group will not meet until the 20th October (last meeting in June).</p> <p>However, admissions teams have been busy over the summer with another bumpy confirmation and clearing. Consensus being that although that UCAS and systems held up, the return to pre-pandemic A level results caused significant fall out for certain institutions.</p> <p>The upcoming meeting will be interesting for a number of reasons. First, Mark Corver from DataHE will be coming and giving a presentation on the outturn from the 2023/24 admissions cycle. We are also expecting UCAS to come with proposals around international admissions and how the sector deals with the expected rise in applications, ie the journey to a million.</p>
Scotland & Northern Ireland Steven Logie	<p>.</p>
UKVI Jo Wright	<p>.</p>
Assessments Joanne Coward	<p>At our June meeting, we took the opportunity to feed into the work of the OfS Task and Finish group on the B4 condition of registration which relates to the retention of students' assessed work. The session explored the wide variety of assessment used throughout the sector and the issues around retention, particularly for assessment that is group-based, involves third parties, or involves physical artefacts amongst others. We also considered the cost and administrative burden. Since this meeting took place, the Group was consulted on draft OfS guidance. Feedback from the Group and further discussions at the Task & Finish Group has resulted in a revised version which includes the option for the use of sampling for the first time. Feedback on this version will be fed into the next OfS meeting scheduled in early November.</p> <p>We also looked at the use of in-year examination boards with a presentation from Nina Spencer (Leeds Arts University) which looked at their approach, the challenges, issues and benefits they can bring. We also spent time discussing responses to the MAB.</p> <p>We have scheduled 3 meetings for 23-24 with the first taking place on 3rd November. The agenda for the November meeting</p>

	<p>includes discussion on the future of examination boards, led by Dr Charlotte Verney, University of Bristol and on the introduction of the LLE, led by Dr Rowan Fisher, UUK and hopefully a DfE representative.</p> <p>We have said goodbye to both the Deputy Chair, Kathryn Kendon and our Secretary, Susan Watkins. The Group is extremely grateful and appreciative of their commitment and contribution. Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services at Sheffield Hallam is the new Deputy Chair. We hope to appoint a new Secretary shortly.</p>
<p>Postgraduate Rachel Birds</p>	<p>The Postgraduate Practitioner Group held an online 'brown bag lunch' (BBL) on Friday 25th August. The theme for the meeting was making reasonable adjustments for PGRs both throughout their research journey and with particular emphasis on the conduct of the viva. We discussed a range of interesting aspects, including challenges that members had encountered when accommodating reasonable adjustments, degrees of flexibility in our regulations, the importance of the relationship between PGR practitioners and those from student services, training and support for examiners, and the use of independent chairs in vivas. We were happy to welcome colleagues from a wide range of student support services to give their perspectives in addition to those of our regular members.</p> <p>Having tried this wider format for two successive BBLs, we are finding it beneficial to invite colleagues from outside our core membership when the subject matter is of interest across different professional services.</p> <p>The next BBL is planned for Friday 13 October when we will share our thoughts about the very recently published <u>UKRI's New Deal for PGRs</u>.</p> <p>An in-person full day event is being organised for Friday 24 November, in London with venue to be confirmed. We have an agenda coming together and continue to look for speakers on any topic around the broad theme of 'PGR Assessment'. This will build on some of the material we covered in the BBL in August as it was clear that members had much more to share around this topic. In particular, colleagues have already come forward kindly volunteering to speak on (i) recent policy changes and (ii) the use of independent chairs in vivas. We would also be particularly interested to hear case studies around unusual / non-standard thesis submissions as, anecdotally, the community is aware of a range of interesting practice and this would be an excellent opportunity to examine different approaches.</p>
<p>Quality Assurance Jacky Mack</p>	



SROC Chris Carpenter	
Student Casework Lysandre de-la-Haye	
Timetabling Stephen Lopez	