



University
of Glasgow

Building a Research Community

Presenters: Elizabeth Adams, Mary Beth Kneafsey,
Jennifer Boyle

QAA Focus On: The Postgraduate Research Student Experience

**INSPIRING
PEOPLE**





University
of Glasgow

Initial Questions

- Is there a *consensus* around what constitutes a 'research community'?
- What does a *successful* research community look like?
- What is the *purpose* of a research community?
- Where do/should the *boundaries* of the research community lie?



University
of Glasgow

Consultation Process

- Telephone interviews with 10 members of staff
- Five PGR focus groups (approx. 45 participants in total)
- Telephone interviews with 10 PGRs



University
of Glasgow

Key Points

- Supervisors
- Physical Space
- Building Academic Identity
- PGR Training
- Online Communities
- PGR Representation
- Centralised Communities



University
of Glasgow

Supervisors

- 'The first port of call'
- Identified by both staff and PGRs as playing a crucial role
- Codes of practice can establish ethos and build a culture of involvement

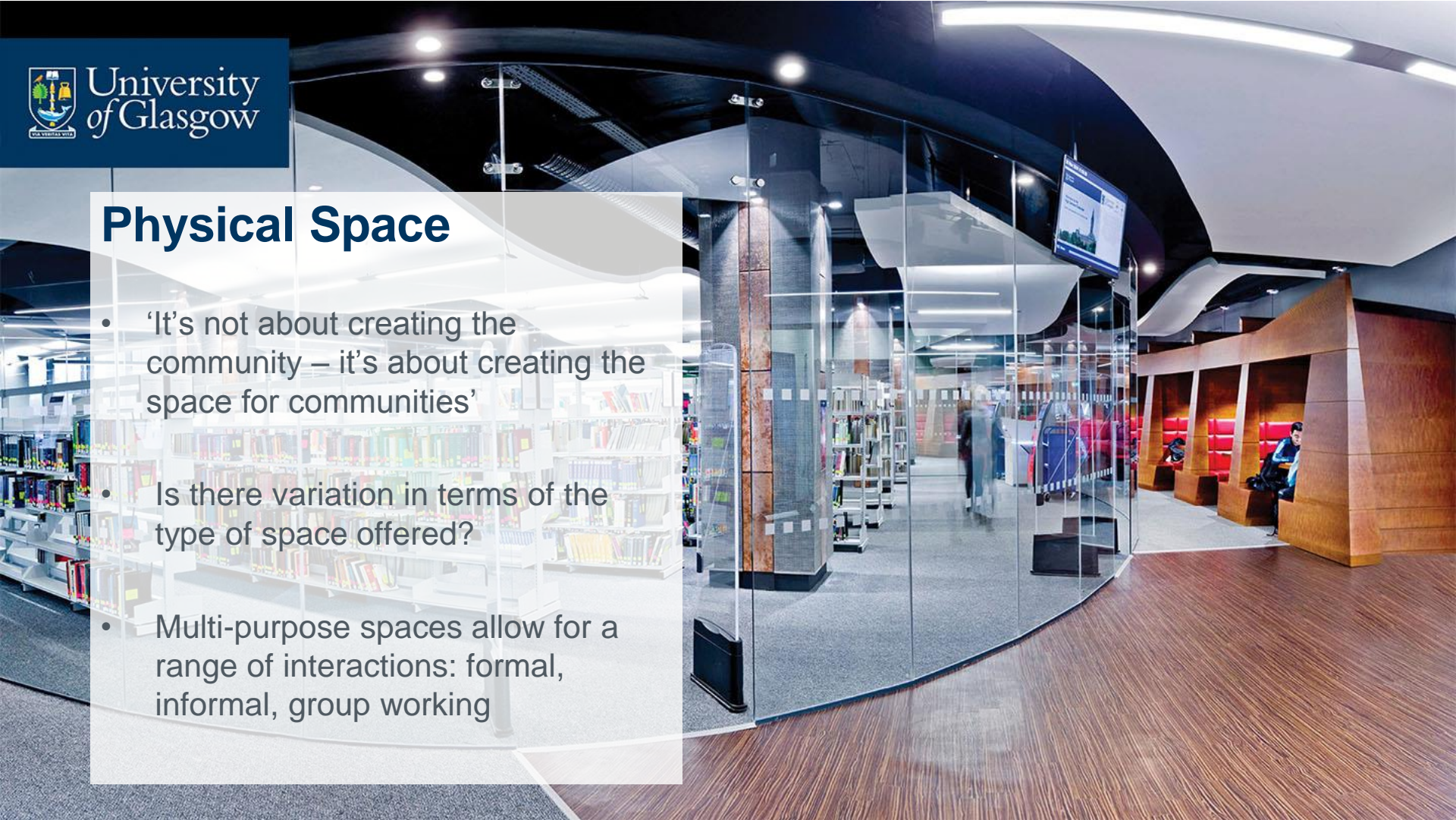




University
of Glasgow

Physical Space

- 'It's not about creating the community – it's about creating the space for communities'
- Is there variation in terms of the type of space offered?
- Multi-purpose spaces allow for a range of interactions: formal, informal, group working





University
of Glasgow

Building Academic Identity

- 'Working shoulder-to-shoulder'
- Staff and PGR interaction is vital
- Codes of practice for PGWT can establish the importance of the role and ensure openness to all





University
of Glasgow

PGR Training

- ‘Get outside your own research bubble’
- Opportunity to interact with other PGRs is as valuable as the content of the training itself
- Training should cover the entirety of the PGR experience: issues such as managing mental health, as well as subject-specific skills





University
of Glasgow

Online Communities

- 'Joined Twitter for academic reasons and found a feeling of community'
- Online communication can play a vital role in the research community
- An active online presence, and offering online space, enables distance and p/t researchers to maintain links with the community





University
of Glasgow

PGR Representation

- 'Worried that not going to things might make me look invisible'
- How can PGRs make themselves seen and heard?
- Sub communities could be created for underrepresented groups.
- Regular feedback could be sought from all PGRs





University
of Glasgow

Centralised Communities

- 'Outside the research group'
- Cross institutional organisations, or temporary groups created by a focused activity
- Is there scope for PGRs to create and lead their own centralised communities? Can lessons be learned from how centralised communities unite members?





University
of Glasgow

Questions to Consider

- How can you facilitate the creation/growth of the research community in the 6 areas discussed?
- Feedback from researchers is invaluable: how do you go about obtaining it?
- Research communities are characterised by their diversity. How do you ensure that everyone can be involved?





University
of Glasgow

With thanks to:

Abertay University; Liverpool John Moores University; Robert Gordon University; Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities (SGSAH); Scottish Universities Physics Alliance (SUPA); Columbia University, New York; University of Warwick; Lund University; University of St Andrews; Doctoral Training Centre, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – and all PGRs who gave us their time.





University
of Glasgow

Elizabeth.Adams@Glasgow.ac.uk
MaryBeth.Kneafsey@Glasgow.ac.uk
Jennifer.Boyle@Glasgow.ac.uk

INSPIRING
PEOPLE





qaa.ac.uk



enquiries@qaa.ac.uk



+44 (0) 141 5723420

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2015

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

