Developing Postgraduate Research Student Engagement @ GCU

A Case Study

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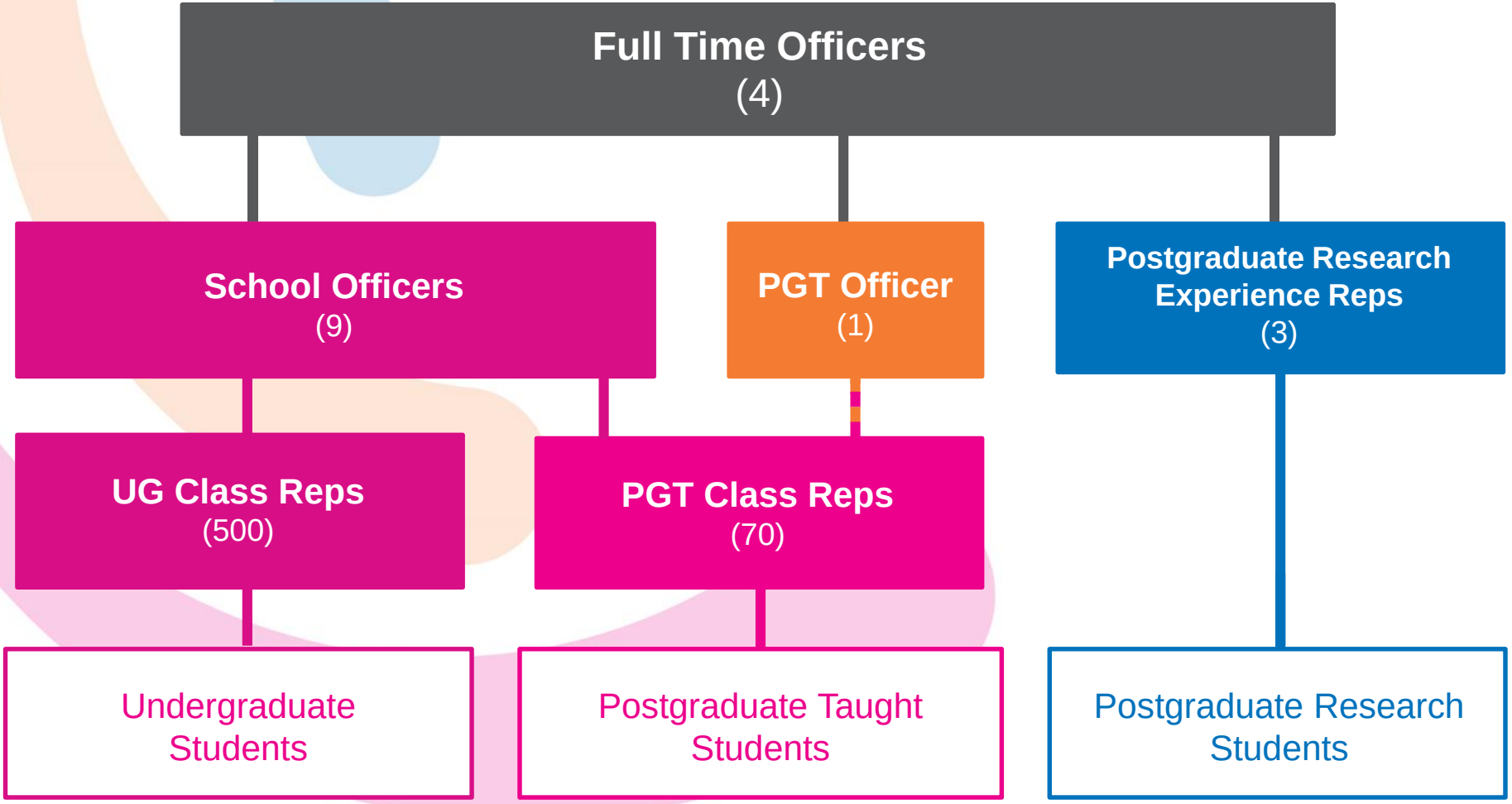
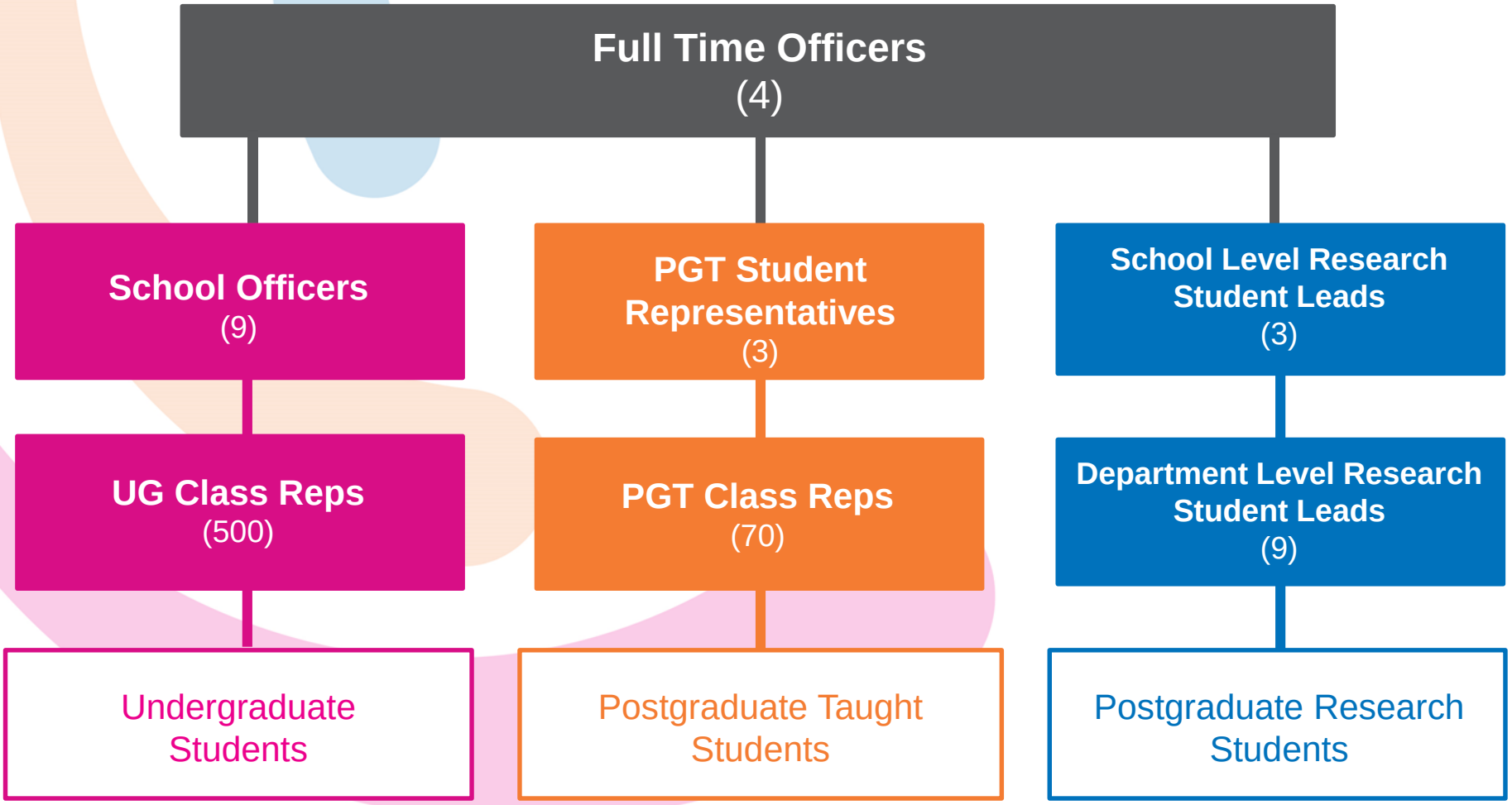
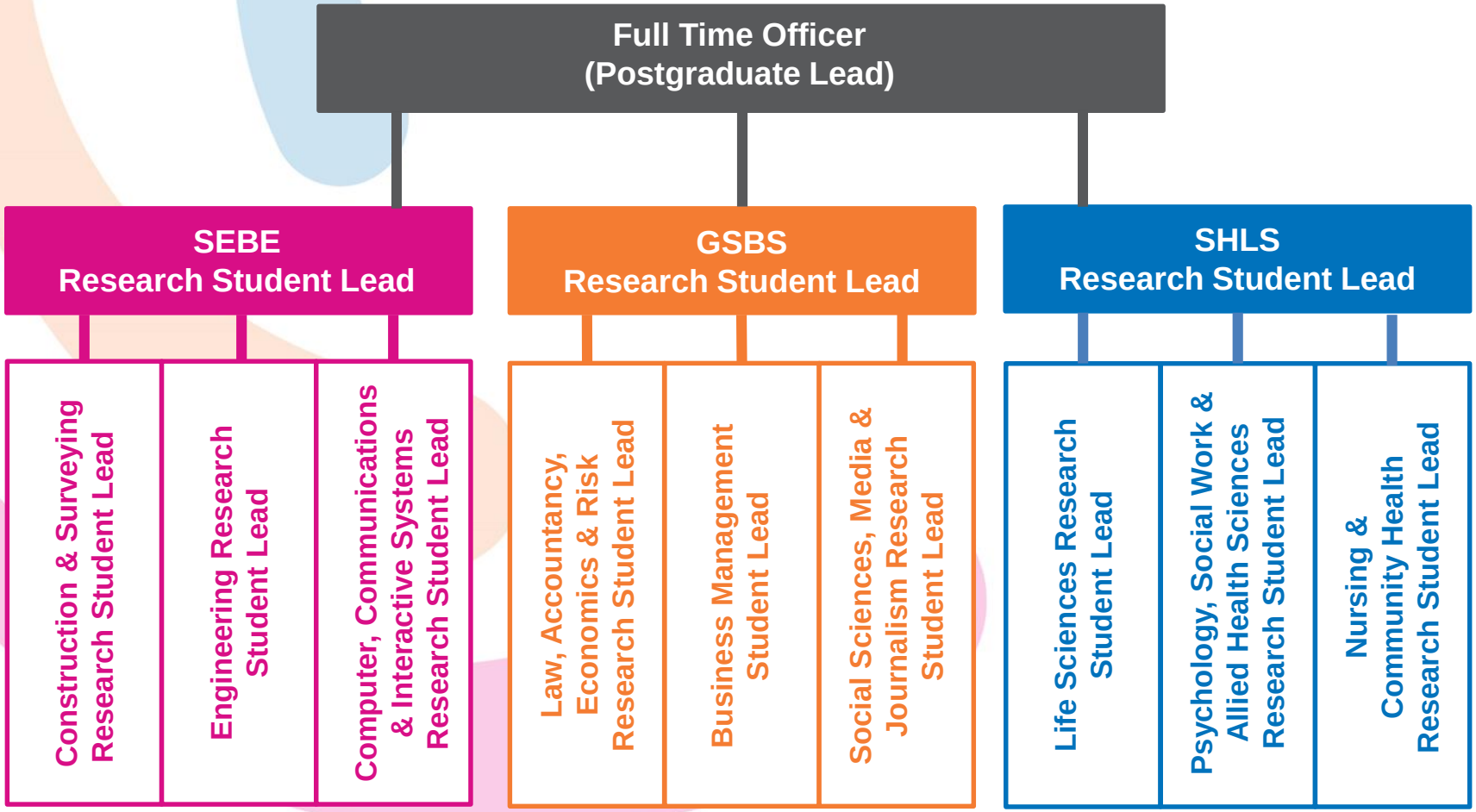
Old Academic Representation Structure



Current Academic Representation Structure



Research Student Leads Structure



Research Student Leads Roles

Department Level

- To communicate and feedback regularly with all the Postgraduate Research Students within your Department.
- To attend and take an active part in Department Research Committee and School Committee Research Committee meetings.
- To communicate regularly with the other Research Student Leads within your School and with GCU Students' Association's Full Time Officer Postgraduate Lead.
- To help with and promote Postgraduate events.
- To help with and promote Postgraduate campaigns.

School Level

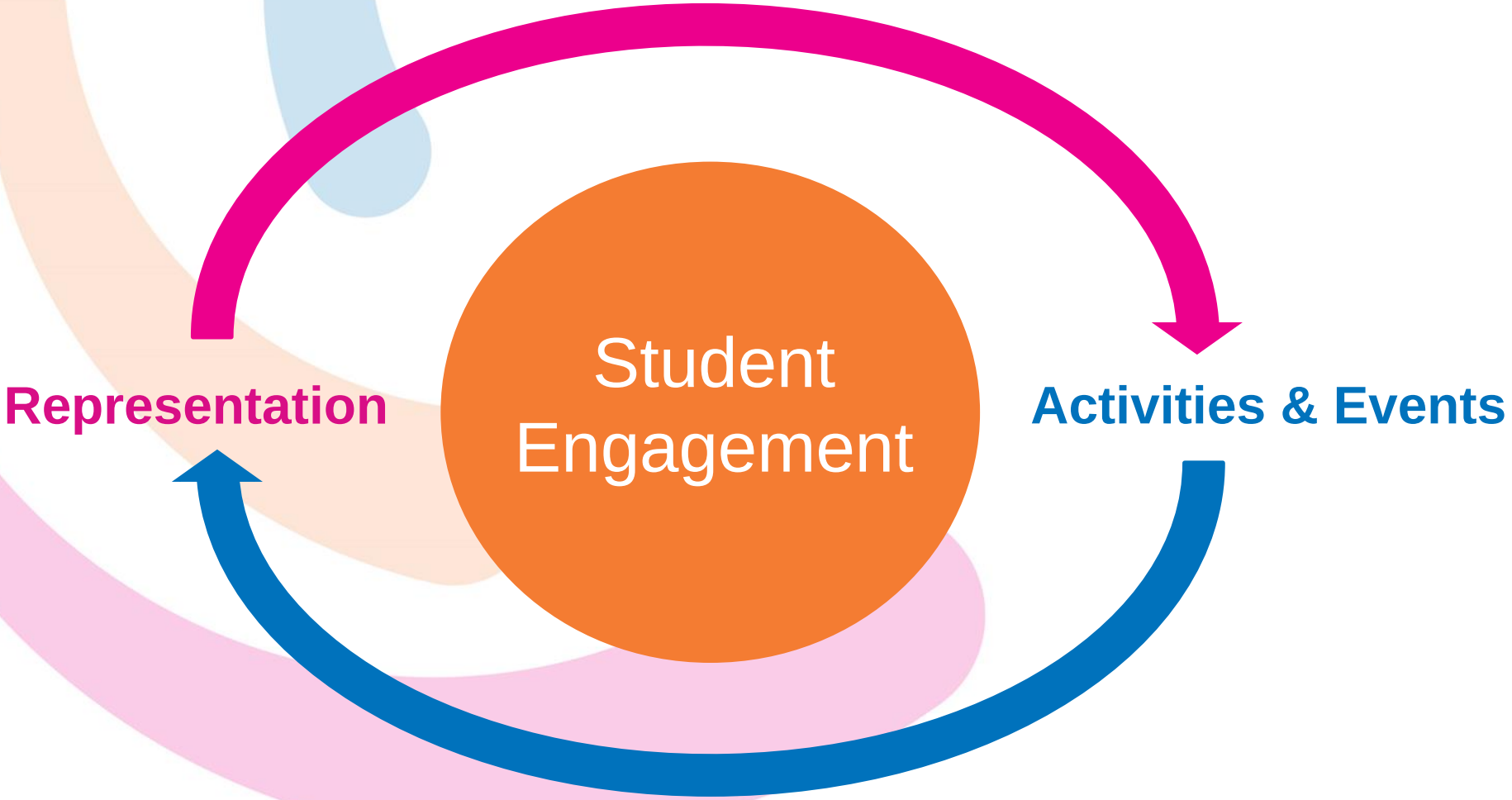
- To support as well as communicate and feedback regularly with the Department Level Research Student Leads in your School as well the other School Level Research Students and Full Time Officer Postgraduate Lead.
- To attend and take an active part in University Research Committee, Research Degrees Committee and School Research Committee meetings.
- To attend and take an active part in Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE) and Student Voice meetings.
- To help with and promote Postgraduate events.
- To help with and promote Postgraduate campaigns.

‘Political’ support for the Research Student Leads is provided by the Full Time Officer Postgraduate Lead.

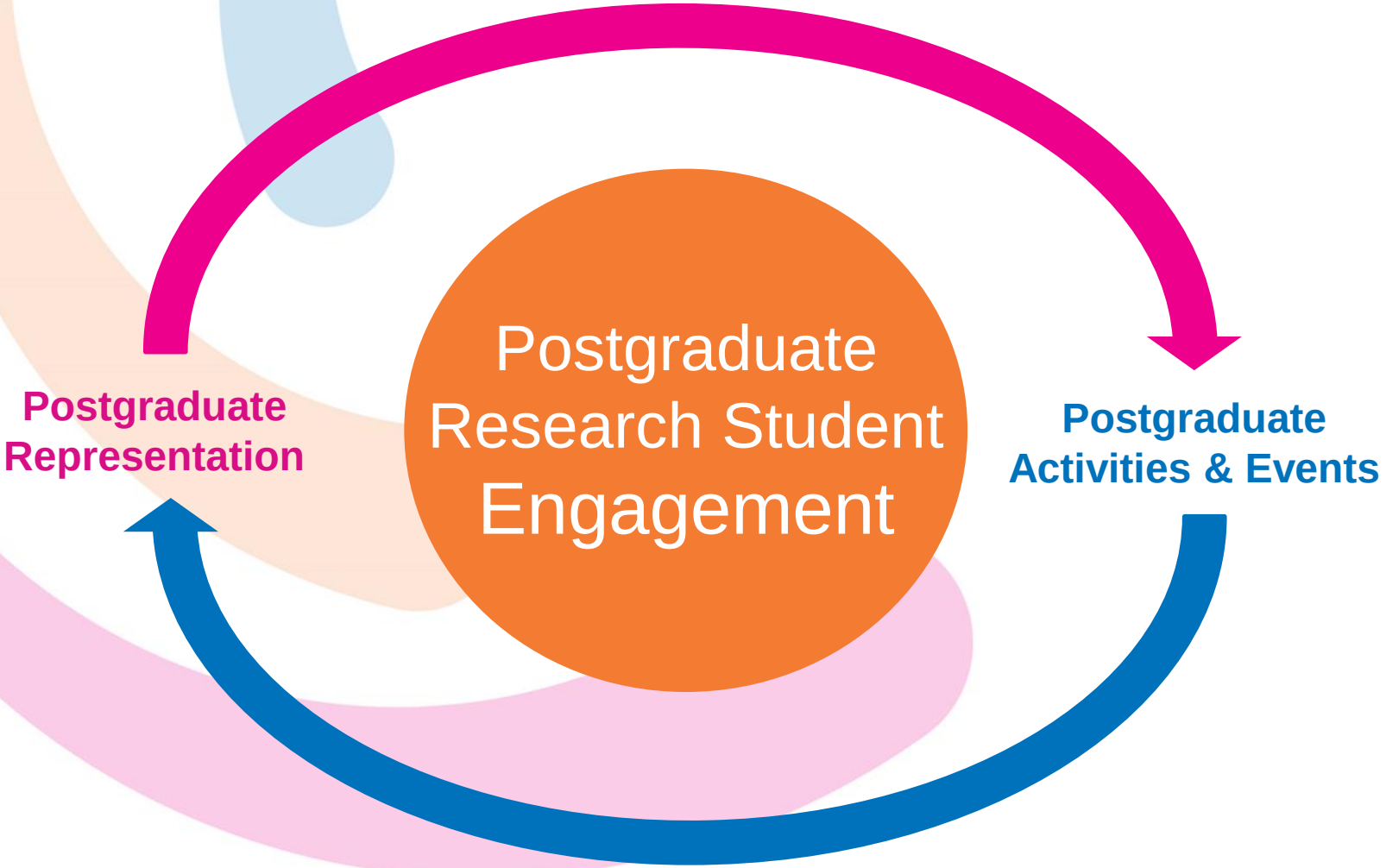
‘Operational’ support for the Research Student Leads is provided by a staff member from the Student Voice Team.

- Research Student Leads Induction Training
- Bi-Trimester Catch-Up Meetings
- Pre-Meeting Support Catch-Ups
- Research Student Leads Facebook Group
- GCU Students’ Association Research Students Flyer
- Handover Documents

Generating Student Engagement



Generating Student Engagement



Over the last two years GCU Students' Association has been running a programme of Postgraduate only social activities and events to provide an opportunity for new and existing Postgraduate Students to meet each other.

- Postgraduate Challenge
- Postgraduate Afternoon Tea
- Postgraduate Burns Night
- Postgraduate Christmas Party
- Postgraduate Quiz Nights
- Postgraduate Film Nights

Looking Back…

- It's an 'Urban Myth' that Postgraduates are not interested in engaging with Students' Associations/ Unions. You can develop engagement with Postgraduates provided you create the 'right offer' for them.
- There is a 'Symbiotic Relationship' between Postgraduate Representation and Postgraduate Activities & Events.
- Developing Postgraduate Student engagement is resource intensive. Additional resources are required in order to develop Postgraduate engagement to a sustainable level.

Looking Forward…

There are a number of challenges and barriers to further developing Postgraduate Research Student engagement at GCU. They include…

- Lack of resources
- Taught/ Research categorisation of students
- 'Utilitarian Approach' to events, communications & marketing