Focus On: The Postgraduate Student Experience

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Introduction

- Postgraduate research students have to navigate a challenging journey along which learning and research are inextricably combined.

- Students must grapple not only with their own independent study, but also with the need to develop appropriate research and employability skills.

- In order to thrive, they need to develop effective relationships with supervisors, mentors and peers.
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Engaging Postgraduate students to promote and enhance their own learning, and their wider learning experience.

http://enhancementthemes.ac.uk/focus-on/postgraduate-research-student-experience

Activities and Outputs: (Number 6 of 7)

work with students’ associations and sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) on student representation for PGRs

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Focus On: The Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Experience (2016-17)

Priority areas are:

• Training and support for postgraduate students who teach

• Support for staff who supervise research students

• Building a research community for postgraduate research students

• Student representation for postgraduate research students
Challenges

• Ownership of the rep system

• Relationship with institutional staff
  Colleague versus student - Student issue versus staff issue

• Individual versus collective
  What is the collective experience and how can you draw on it?

• Lack of basic understanding of the PGR experience / key issues

• Lack of infrastructure

• Making the role relevant

• No coherent cohorts - Inductions
Areas for Development

- Developing Appropriate Representation Structures
- Developing an Enhancement Agenda
- Support and Training for PGR Reps

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Training Materials

- sparqs recently produced programme specific materials for PGT representation:

  Training for Taught Postgraduate Course Representatives

This was the result of a 2 year project.

The student learning experience is very different for this group of students compared to the student learning experience of undergraduates. This was reflected in the materials.
Next Steps

Looking to set up a working group made up of students and staff from:

- Graduate Schools
- Students Associations
- PGR student body
- Subject specific
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For any further information on the support available from sparqs around the Postgraduate Student Experience then please contact:

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Thank you!