SHEEC

Scottish
Higher Education
Enhancement Commitee

QAA
Scotland

Focus On: The Postgraduate Research Student Experience

Focus On projects link the outcomes of Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) with a developmental approach to enhancing policy and practice in the Scottish sector.

The Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Experience is divided into four priority strands:

1. Training and support for postgraduate students who teach (PGWT)

2. Support for staff who supervise research students

3. Building a research community for PGRs

4. Student representation for PGRs

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/focus-on

Training and support for postgraduate students who teach (PGWT)

Two key pieces of work related to this strand:

We conducted a project to produce a Statement of Expectations for the support of PGWTs. This was intended to provide institutions with a practical tool to benchmark, evaluate and enhance their provision in this area, using approaches tried and tested by colleagues in the Scottish sector and beyond.

A short film titled "What I Wish I'd Known When I Started Teaching" outlining what they wish they'd known when they started teaching/demonstrating, covering range of institutional and discipline perspectives. This can be viewed on the Enhancement Themes YouTube channel.

Support for staff who supervise research students

The sector were consulted to gain insights into current practice around the support offered to staff who support research students. Such support often takes the form of professional development resources, delivered as part of a professional qualification, such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP).

Videos

Nine short videos were provided by University of Glasgow discussing a variety of supervisory topics. To further enhance this part of the project, we produced two additional short films:

Developing Effective Supervision Practice

Supporting Industry–Based Research Supervisors

Webinars

Two webinars aimed at staff who supervise research students were organised.

Setting expectations: clarifying roles, preferences and working practices

Supporting your student to complete: some ideas about motivation and how to manage the thesis writing process effectively.

Recordings of the webinar presentations can be accessed at **www.enhancemenetthemes.ac.uk/focus-on**

Building a research community for PGRs

A project was conducted on what 'research community' means and how we can best provide a sense of community to PGRs to enhance their experience of postgraduate study. This project was led by colleagues at the University of Glasgow. You can see an overview of the project at **www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/focus–on**

Student representation for PGRs

Focus group

An informal focus group was held with PGR student representatives from across the sector and highlighted enormous diversity in ever aspect of the PGR representation structure. Suggestions on how enhance practice in this area can be found on the Focus On website as well as resources from a dissemination event held in 2017.

Work with sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland)

sparqs are organising a working group on PGR Student Representation and are particularly keen to hear for students and staff working in Graduate Schools and Students' Associations, and current PGR students.

Please contact **admin@sparqs.ac.uk** if you would like to be involved.