

Guidance

- Your report should be 1000 words or fewer. You should write in all three sections, but it is up to you to decide how much weight to give each section.
- Your report should be submitted one week before the date of each Scrutiny Panel. Completed reports should be emailed to r.nadeem@guild.bham.ac.uk or l.gill@guild.bham.ac.uk
- You will have two minutes at the beginning of each Scrutiny Panel meeting to supplement your report with a verbal update.

Officer:	Rebecca Cutler - Postgraduate Officer
Date of panel:	04/11/2020

Written Statement action plan

This section is for you to track your progress on your written statement priorities, as outlined in your action plan. The “context” section of the document can remain the same for each panel.

Written Statement Item #1	
Standardise inductions for postgraduates	
Context:	Postgraduates at the University of Birmingham are a very diverse community, with many international, mature, part-time and distance learning students, as well as many with caring, work and/ or other responsibilities. A standardised induction means all postgraduates can get off to a well-informed and successful start to their time as a postgrad at Birmingham, regardless of their personal contexts.
Progress:	Attended inductions for PGRs and PGTs in several Schools/ Colleges and hosted several PG Welcome events. I have reflected on my experiences of participating in these and what questions students asked at the start of their study. From here, I have had conversations with postgraduate-focussed student experience staff, and with the PGT and PGR Directors, to discuss how we can implement a standardised induction for postgrads.

Written Statement Item #2	
Postgraduate specific Speak Week	
Context:	Only 12% of responses in Autumn 2019 Speak Week were from postgrads, meaning that the Guild doesn't have up to date substantial information on what postgrads want or need
Progress:	<p>Examined data from Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, PGT pre-arrival focus groups, and considered experiences and feedback from students and university staff. Worked with Student Voice and Comms teams to discuss themes, questions, format and incentives for the survey. Decided on five themes: Motivation, Transition, Situation, Representation, Communication and written questions for these themes</p> <p>Update Dec 2020: 372 postgrads completed the Speak Week survey, marking a 438% increase in PGT responses and a 635% increase on PGR responses from last year. The data is now being analysed and a report written, to be shared with PG leads/ management and Graduate Research Board, Graduate Taught Board, PSEC.</p>

Written Statement Item #3	
Increase Study Skills sessions for postgraduates	
Context:	To provide postgraduates with timely and appropriate study skills sessions to support and improve assignments
Progress:	<p>The Graduate School is running several study skills sessions for PGTs in Semester 1 which I am supporting the promotion of, and we have decided a calendar of sessions for the rest of the year based on assessment periods and the requirements of postgrads at different times of the year. I am also having conversations with the Research Skills team in the Library and BEAR, who support PGRs with data management and processing, about delivering sessions to support PGRs.</p> <p>Update Dec 2020: I have adapted this in my current action plan. I believe that the issue I am trying to address with this point is that students don't know about study skills sessions, who runs them or when. I am planning to open conversations in the New Year with</p>

	<p>Student Services about the possibility of a calendar of events for postgraduates, which can include study sessions, to create a single resource for PGs to find something to engage with - whether academic, social or something else.</p>
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Role and responsibilities

This section is for you to write about any projects you have been working on or meetings you have been to that you think are of particular importance to your remit.

Meeting / project	Outcome for students
<p>Postgraduate Student Engagement Committee</p>	<p>Discussed ideas on how to deliver manifesto points to students Discussed the work of the Guild regarding Welcome</p>
<p>Graduate Taught Board/ Graduate Research Board</p>	<p>Updated on manifesto and Welcome plans Represented student voice to boards Updated on Guild work</p>
<p>Research Committee</p>	<p>Advocated for more student representation on the Birmingham PhD review group</p> <p>Update Dec 2020: Opened a conversation about application data ahead of December meeting to ensure racial bias in PGR applications is monitored and addressed as part of the review.</p>

Ideas and policy

This section is for you to report on progress made to ideas and Guild policy that you have been mandated to work on. You only need to update your actions taken. You can also add ideas or policy as they are passed through the year.

Idea / policy	Action taken since last Panel
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Idea / policy title	Short update on progress since last Scrutiny Panel

Other student issues, meetings or projects to note:

- **Birmingham PhD Review - joined Birmingham PhD Review group, first meeting 03/11/20**
- **Launched 'Brum with a Brew', a regular online catch up event open to all postgraduates to take a break from research/ study and network with fellow PGs**
- **Liased with university regarding withdrawal of January start dates on some PGT courses to ensure wellbeing and success of impacted students**
- **University Council**