

SSLC Meeting
Tuesday 7th December 2021
Remote Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Mary Cryan – Deputy Head of the Graduate School
Lindsey Fox – Graduate School Manager
Patrick Hudson – IGS Senior School Co-ordinator
Ionela Mocanu – PPAR representative
Traiko Dinev – RAS representative
Ricky Zhu – AIAI representative
Arthur Brazinskas - ILCC representative
Anna Hadjitofi - IPAB representative
Dan Wells - NLP representative
Kim Stonehouse - ICSA representative

This meeting was conducted as an open forum and representatives were asked in advance to bring any issues or discussion points with them to be raised with other students in attendance or IGS staff.

1. General feedback

- a) Overall feedback was that students are disappointed that more in person events, for social reasons, cannot happen but understand it is difficult for these due to the ongoing COVID restrictions.
- b) Various institutes, like AIAI, had some welcome events early in the year which helped but more recent similar events have become remote.
- c) Advice from the school is that larger events are possible but risk assessments and school approval are required. IGS can help with any request like this and can advise on what is necessary.
- d) The school will again this year contribute funding to various student led events (e.g boards games and ILCC Cookies). The school is not sure when these will be able to begin due to on-going COVID restrictions.
- e) Students acknowledged that IGS providing welcome lunches for new students was a good initiative and those students who attended really appreciated these.
- f) The school arranged two Firbush events in October/ November 2021 and a discussion was had to see if students would be happy to pay a little bit extra each to potentially have further Firbush trips. The school has limited resources for student events so additional deposits from students (£40 instead of £20 for example) could help the IGS budgets stretch a bit further.
- g) ILCC reported that language lunches and reading groups are not really happening remotely any more.
- h) IPAB seminars – attendance is low with these being remote and engagement is poor which is frustrating for the student who take the time to prepare and present their work.

- i) There were a couple of comments relating to new students arriving in Edinburgh and having accommodation issues. Edinburgh is notoriously difficult to find affordable accommodation at certain times of the year. It was suggested that guidance relating to accommodation could be sent to students alongside their welcome guidance to help prepare and advise students further on what options they might have.
- j) Some students had mentioned issues with GPU libraries/ installations and this is something which has been raised in previous SSLC meetings and will again be reported to the computing support team. One particular issue which was reported to the computing support team was not responded to and the student had to rely on help from their supervisor to resolve the issue.
- k) There have been a number of non-payments for teaching contracts which has affected a number of our PGR students. This has been raised with Neil Heatley and the Director for Teaching and the plan is to organise the TSP recruitment for 2022/23 in early summer so all contracts can be issued before autumn. For students who are having problems this year, one piece of advice from Neil Heatley is that they should check their "TSP email account" (a different account to their student one) as there may be emails there needing a response. If there is nothing outstanding to that account (after checking), they should chase with the ITO and the course organiser for their work.
- l) PGR office space was commented on a few times throughout the meeting.
 - a. One comment related to a specific shared office reaching its maximum capacity and concerns from the students using this space that they may come in one day and there will be no space for them to work. If this happens this should be reported to IGS so they can manage the allocation of students to the office and help prevent any potential issues like this.
 - b. Some students in shared offices have asked about potentially being allocated dual monitors in these offices. This will not be possible as the school does not have the budget for this. If a student has funding for an additional monitor this would need to be used at home. A request for a fixed desk to use dual monitors would likely not be approved.
 - c. There was a query as to why some CDT students are located in shared offices. Due to equipment constraints of a specific CDT cohort some students were required to be allocated fixed desks and for the best use of space within the building it was decided they would be allocated to shared offices.
 - d. It was also mentioned that some of the shared desks appear to be 'claimed' by specific students in shared offices. IGS do not encourage this but cannot do anything about this problem if they are not notified.
 - e. In general feedback on how the shared offices are working is welcome as this is a new policy and if improvements can be made then the school will consider these (where possible).
 - f. There was a conversation relating to office etiquette and whether or not the school should impose specific rules for each office to follow. This would relate to eating food and noise for example. The group were in favour of leaving things as they currently are. The school does have a PGR Office

Etiquette Charter which outlines expected behaviours so the students were reminded this exists in case any student wanted to read this.

Office Etiquette Charter:

<https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/policies/student-desk-allocation-policy/pgr-office-etiquette-charter>

Action – IGS to add accommodation guidance to welcome packs.

Action – Action: MC to discuss GPUs with Boris Grot to see if we can provide any extra support.

Next meeting TBA