

ESRC IAA Workshop: Towards Maximising International PhD Students' Experience

Extended Summary

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University
of Glasgow

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Background

According to UKCISA (2016), almost half (48%) of full-time postgraduate research students are international students. In 2014-15, out of the 437,000 international students in the UK HEIs, 125,000 were from European countries while 312,000 came from outside Europe. Moreover, the international education industry in Britain, at £13.6 billion makes it 'the UK's fifth largest export industry within the services sector' (p. 2). There was an observable annual growth of 3-4% among international students in general until 2011. It was reported recently that China sends about 90,000 students a year to the UK; India, 18,500; Malaysia, 17,000; Hong Kong, 16,000; and Singapore, Thailand, and Pakistan about 7,000 each¹. Based on HESA 2014/15 data, of the international PGR cohort, males (55.16%) outnumbered females (44.82%).² Although all UK Universities award PhD degrees, the majority of doctoral qualifications are obtained from 'ancient' or pre-1992 universities recognised as having strong research cultures (www.prospects.ac.uk). Yet, recent developments in the UK may also affect this trend. The recent changes in immigration policies³ and Brexit, in particular, are anticipated to reduce quite radically the number of international students coming to the UK for their education. Based on the visa statistics of August 2016, a reduction of 2% for higher education can now be observed (UKCISA, 2016). The UK is still second to the US in hosting international students, but the UK is in firm competition with Canada and Australia as well as the US who are all strategically drawing international students⁴. According to UKCISA (2016), European countries offering English programmes are increasingly becoming competitors, too. This makes focusing on this area timely.

International students' satisfaction in studying and living in the UK is evident through various reports, surveys and studies. The *Competitiveness Report* published in January 2016 (see UKCISA, 2016) indicates that they are 'more satisfied with their living and learning experience than in any other country'. Likewise, citing the 2012 British Council Report, UK takes pride in being 'the safest place to study' when compared with Australia and the US (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2015, p. 12). According to numerous surveys, a large proportion (85% and above) of international students (UKCISA, 2016) tend to be 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their overall educational experiences. At the same time, the literature also points to the high attrition rates and delays in

¹ <http://institutions.ukcisa.org.uk//info-for-universities-colleges--schools/policy-research--statistics/research--statistics/international-students-in-uk-he/>

² This is almost the opposite of the gender balance for undergraduate where females dominate perhaps suggesting lower take up of PGR by females.

³ <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/article/uuk-campaign-339.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/11/nicky-morgan-international-students-make-us-all-richer-cutting-their-numbers-would-be-a-serious-error.html>

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progression among PhD students (e.g. Church, 2009; Gardner, 2007; Sakurai et al 2012). According to the UKCGE website⁵:

...so few [PhD research] candidates finished on time and ... so many – in some disciplines well over half – never finished at all. But the fault was seen as lying in the students; many were simply not up to the rigorous demands of the research degrees, the highest awarded by the academy.

Since this issue is prevalent across both domestic and international students, it could be argued that the experiences of domestic and international PhD students are less distinct in this area. Yet, with the societal and academic acculturation typically experienced by international PhD students (Elliot et al., 2016; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Zhou et al., 2008), there are likely to be other contributory factors for those experiencing progression delays or attrition.

ESRC IAA Funding

Taking all these into consideration, we (a team from the School of Education, UofG) applied for and received funding from the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account to explore how research-related activities can contribute to addressing the needs of international PhD students and their supervisors with a view to enhancing students' success and maximising their overall international education experience. Addressing these needs contributes not only to making the UK a more attractive destination for postgraduate research students; but more importantly to ensuring the quality of the international PhD experience, in general. A key element of this project was the organisation of a workshop as a platform for gathering the perspectives of selected key stakeholders and end-users on the pertinent issues in international PhD education (i.e. challenges and benefits, provision within and outwith the institutions, and the types and forms of support considered 'essential' but not as yet in existence). By doing so, our project hopes to offer a valuable and long-lasting impact for all concerned.

Overview of the Workshop

Date and Location

The workshop was held on Wednesday 29 March 2017 in Room 201 John McIntyre Building at the University of Glasgow.

⁵ <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/article/rewarding-excellence-doctoral-research-supervision-340.aspx>

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Delegates

The workshop delegates were invited with the goal of bringing together delegates representing a diverse range of UK stakeholders and end-users. In total, 37 delegates signed up to attend, including the organisers. Universities represented included University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, University of the West of Scotland, Abertay University, Robert Gordon University, Liverpool John Moores University, UK Beatson Institute, Herriot-Watt University, and Sheffield University. Organisations represented include UKCGE, QAA Scotland, Higher Education Academy (Scotland), and the Scottish Funding Council. Among the delegates there were also 12 international PhD students.

Programme

Impact workshop programme		
09:00 – 09:15	<i>Registration and coffee</i>	Room 201
09:15 – 09:30	Introduction by the SoE team	Room 201
09:30 – 10:10	Keynote a: 'Supporting international research students: Challenges and opportunities' by Dr Rob Daley (Chair, UKCGE – The Postgraduate Student Experience)	Room 201
10:10 – 10:40	<i>Break-out discussions</i>	Rooms 201 & 208
10:40 – 11:20	Sessions 1 & 2: 'Working effectively with PhD supervisors and other staff' by Profs Robert MacIntosh and Kevin O'Gorman (Heriot Watt University)	Room 201
11:20 – 11:50	<i>Break-out discussions</i>	Rooms 201 & 208
11:50 – 12:30	Session 3: 'Gaining professional skills, researcher development, and preparation for a post-PhD career' by Dr Elizabeth Adams (Researcher Development Manager, UofG) Session 4: 'Propellers and barriers along the PhD journey' by Jiska van der Reest (3 rd year PhD student, CRUK Beatson Institute, UofG)	Room 201
12:30 – 13:00	<i>Break-out discussions</i>	Rooms 201 & 208
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	Room 201
14:00 – 14:40	Keynote b: 'Unsticking International Thesis Writers: talking out the unseen challenges' by	Room 201

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	Dr Kay Guccione (University of Sheffield)	
14:40 – 15:10	<i>Break-out discussions</i>	Rooms 201 & 208
15:10 – 15:40	<i>Tea and coffee</i>	Room 201
15:40 – 16:00	Plenary - Reflections and next steps!	Room 201

Keynote A: 'Supporting international research students: Challenges and opportunities'

- Speaker: Dr Rob Daley (Chair, UKCGE – The Postgraduate Student Experience)
- Biography: Dr Rob Daley is the Chair of the UK Council for Graduate Education's working group '[The Postgraduate Student Experience](#)'. Rob also holds the Academic Programme Leader role at Human Resource Development, Heriot-Watt University.
- Summary:
 - Data on UK Research Degrees over the last 5 years, by gender and nationality
 - UK Research Degrees awarded in 2015/2016 - 56% to UK students, 14% to other EU students, and 30% to non-EU students
 - PRES respondents and results
 - Data on what motivates international students to undertake research degrees
 - Data on what international students think of their experience
 - Overall satisfaction
 - Supervision
 - Research Culture
 - Skills Training & Advice
 - Ideas on how to approach supporting international research students
 - Considerations for support: 'a rising tide lifts all boats', each student as an individual, and 'culture, culture, culture'
 - Stage considerations: settling in, getting started, doing research, finishing
 - Supervisory considerations and advice
 - Responsible for ensuring that the student receives support they need, but not for providing it all themselves
 - The developed student is as important (or more so) than the project

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- UKCGE Working Group Project on end of life-cycle support for PGRs
 - Viva preparation
 - Students would like mock viva and concrete information on viva format
 - Viva experiences and challenging elements
 - Useful resources that students' reported using for viva preparation
 - Advice for institutions
 - Raise awareness of viva from early stages
 - Signpost conference/seminar participation
 - Training for examiners
 - Recommend candidates to view examiner report
 - Training for viva and clear guidance on viva process for candidate and supervisors

Sessions 1 & 2: 'Working effectively with PhD supervisors and other staff'

- Speakers: Profs Robert MacIntosh and Kevin O'Gorman (Heriot Watt University)
- Biography: Professor Robert MacIntosh is head of the School of Social Sciences at Heriot-Watt University, whereas Professor Kevin O'Gorman is professor of management and business history and director of internationalisation. Both regularly write about academic life on Heriot-Watt's [It's Not You, It's Your Data](#) blog and [ThePhDBlog.com](#). They also regularly contribute to Times Higher Education concerning PhD life and academic experience.
- Summary:
 - Universities being highly complex social structures'
 - How best to effect induction into the unspoken culture of HE?
 - Personal interest in PhD education
 - 'The PhD Blog' and 'It's not you...it's your data!'
 - Publication of books on Research Methods
 - Regular blog contribution to Times Higher Education pertaining to doctoral experience
 - Career Development Advice

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- Giving advice – formal versus less more formal sense (e.g. PhD student handbook vs blog information)
- Impact of supervisors' experience with their former supervisor(s)
- Top 10 Hints for How to Manage Your Supervisor
- Top 10 Hints for Co-Authoring

Session 3: 'Gaining professional skills, researcher development, and preparation for a post-PhD career'

- Speaker: Dr Elizabeth Adams (Researcher Development Manager, UofG)
- Biography: *Dr Elizabeth Adams* manages professional and career development opportunities for Early-Career Researchers at the University of Glasgow. This includes research integrity training, entrepreneurship, externally accredited programmes (e.g. the [Glasgow Postgraduate Leadership Programme](#)), the [3 Minute Thesis Competition](#) and the annual [Research Staff Conference](#).
- Summary:
 - Structures to encourage engagement
 - International office, pre-arrival support, Graduate School, Induction, course credits, social events, training, progress review
 - Trends and patterns in workshop attendance
 - International students constitute 30% of PGR students in the University of Glasgow; of these, 30% attend workshops
 - Higher population of international students at writing workshops; lower numbers at research integrity training and 3 Minute Thesis competitions.
 - PRES 2015 Data – UofG results
 - International and all students felt supported in various areas including: a) arrival, b) supervisors' support in identifying training needs, c) understanding requirements, d) developing professional networks, e) postgraduate social space.
 - Cohort building
 - Learning beyond academia – 'learning isn't just going on a training course'
 - What are international PGRs (potentially) missing out on?
 - Participation in informal learning opportunities
 - Social component of learning (e.g. building a community)
 - Navigating their way through the system

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- Conference attendance, especially outside the UK. Visa difficulties can pose a problem
- Broader elements of training
- Teaching opportunities
- Next steps
 - A better understanding of opportunities and participation in informal learning communities among international PGR students
 - Further provision of informal support, e.g. Researcher Walking group, mentoring/buddying (PGR and Postdocs), social side of PhD experience

Session 4: 'Propellers and barriers along the PhD journey'

- Speaker: Jiska van der Reest (3rd year PhD student, CRUK Beatson Institute, UofG)
- Biography: *Jiska van der Reest* is a 3rd year PhD student at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute. Originally from the Netherlands, her research focuses on the metabolic adaptations observed in cancer cells, particularly in response to oxidative stress. Jiska loves science itself, but is also fascinated by the field of science as a working environment and tries to advocate for the postgraduate research (PGR) community whenever possible. She blogs for UofG about [PGR support and development](#).
- Summary:
 - Various reasons for coming to undertake a PhD in the UK
 - Administrative barriers
 - Administrative tasks - university structure, bank, flat-hunting, council tax, NHS, money, Who is who?
 - Propellers – availability of advice via SRC, The Advice Centre, International Students support office, UofG app, The Student Room
 - Elusiveness of services, i.e. advice is 'not always found'. Many students come from 'devolved' institutes, via external funders.
 - Other propellers – various support including buddy system, Welcome night, internal communication and First Year Guide
 - Cultural barriers
 - Nuanced meaning of the language – comparing 'what the British say' with 'what the British mean' and 'what foreigners understand'

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- Different religious practices and cultural habits
- Uniqueness of each PhD experience – at times entirely at the ‘discretion’ of the supervisor; this can lead to ‘inequality’ of experience.
- Propellers – working towards aligning expectations between PhD students and their supervisors
- Social barriers
 - Integration, missing home, a sense of isolation
 - Lack of support network increases international students’ vulnerability (e.g. feelings of alienation, anxiety, disconnection, depression)
 - Propellers – peer support (opportunities to learn, support and network) via monthly PhD Forum, annual retreat
 - University of Glasgow’s PGR Blog and Peer support cycle
- International PhD experience is not all struggles!

Keynote B: ‘Unsticking International Thesis Writers: talking out the unseen challenges’

- Speaker: Dr Kay Guccione (University of Sheffield)
- Biography: *Dr Kay Guccione* works at the University of Sheffield, where she specialises in [evidence-led design of mentoring and coaching services for researchers](#). Kay investigates different aspects of the researcher experience and uses the findings to create partnerships that help people talk about the things that matter most to them.
- Summary:
 - Role – educational mentoring and coaching design; working with ‘stuck’ students and supervisors; understanding ‘tensions and pitfalls’ in PhD education
 - Writing block
 - Lack of ‘emotional readiness’, ‘a good role model’
 - ‘Waiting for permission’
 - Rationale for thesis mentoring: writing myths and legends
 - How to manage writing tasks, disengagement from other tasks, managing emotions
 - Importance of ‘awareness’, ‘prioritisation’, ‘emotions matter’, ‘proactivity’, ‘planning’ ‘coaching’
 - Structure for thesis mentoring: pairing postdocs and PhD students

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- Induction, objective setting, and coaching conversations
- Formal evaluation, expression of interest and boundaries
- What mentoring is not about
- Outcome for thesis mentoring: what mentors do
 - Facilitate students finding the solutions to their own problems
 - Focusing on issues within the students' control
 - Identification of 'problematic habits or thought processes' affecting student's progress leading to a change in students' work patterns and attitudes
- Effectiveness of thesis mentoring
 - 'Insecurities' is equal to 'vulnerabilities'
 - 'Predictability is a component of trust'
- Supervisors
 - Supervisors' worries and insecurities
 - Life and times of supervision – continuous 'identity appraisal', confusion due to 'rapid identity shifts', importance of professional relationships,
 - Mismatches in expectations leading to feeling of discontent
 - Importance of 'emotionally competent relationship'
 - Supervision process can be characterised by 'uncertainty', 'vulnerability' and 'insecurity'.
- Research on 'enablers and disablers of doctoral progression using the Appreciative Inquiry approach
 - Identifying vulnerabilities, e.g. conflicting agendas, people management, culture
 - On trust building and breaking – an 'ongoing process over time', 'giving trust garners trust', great importance of 'feedback practices', research integrity
 - Relationships, predictability and visibility
 - Trust building and trust erosion through every interaction
 - Supervisors' responsibility to make learning 'more predictable and explicit'
- Recommendations
 - Postdocs formal and informal roles
 - PGR tutor role

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- 'Developing supervision as a professional practice'
- Challenges for the international context
 - Predictability is harder in a different culture?
 - Part of predictability is feeling someone is 'the same' as you.
 - Social relationship building deficit?

Summary of Break-Out Discussions

Break-Out Discussions

Throughout the day there were facilitated group discussions with all of the workshop delegates. Delegates were split into four groups, and the discussions were broken into four parts: 1) Introduction of each member and their personal experience or context of working with international PhD students, 2) Reflection on current provisions provided to international PhD students, including what provisions are available, how effective they are, and, what is working well or what needs improvement, 3) Reflection on future provisions provided to international PhD students, including what we could do differently to address some of the issues highlighted, what resources are needed, how might provisions be adapted for different types of students, what is the role of each stakeholder in addressing these issues, and 4) Conclusions and reporting back of some of the major points identified throughout the day.

Collated Key Themes

Identified critical issues	Potential ways forward
Identified points with respect to PGR students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student voice is critical in raising awareness of the landscape, insight, issues faced by the PGR students themselves. To date, there is a disappointing lack of and/or 'scattered' student voice.• Possibility of mismatch between expectations and assumptions for both PGR students and their	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for active PGR student representation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop 'Student partnership agreements'.- Investigate how to consult and communicate with students more effectively.• Clarify and align student/supervisor expectations to aid research supervision process.

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<p>supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD students can feel a sense of isolation particularly if from a different culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of checklist/questionnaire for comparing students' and supervisors' expectations. • Form student-led local support groups (This may require university support with financial and logistical assistance.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student buddy/mentor system - Create or develop PhD community – pursuing formal and informal activities (online activities, social networks and events, academic support, etc.). - Also, consider other networks outside the PhD community (volunteering, sports, local groups).
<p>Identified points with respect to PGR supervisors</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective supervision and supportive relationship and environment for students • Perceptions of disparity in training and support provision both within and across institutions. Lack of induction and ongoing training for supervisors. • Lack of recognition of excellent supervisors' work • At times, tension between student and supervisor may occur. Students may be reticent in coming forward for a range of reasons – cultural, confidence, language, power dynamics, etc.. • A means of giving constructive feedback on supervisors' performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal systems for student feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify expectations and assumptions - Make them feel supported. - Informal interaction with students, e.g. get experience reviewing an article/manuscript. • Develop supervisor competences and quality of supervision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing support for PhD supervisors, e.g. provision of induction and regular training for PGR supervisors. • Recognition of excellent supervisory practice, e.g. awards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward staff who improve student experience although this may be difficult to evaluate and measure. • Provide more effective mentoring and support systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent party that students can take concerns to without fear of prejudice. - Student feedback built into annual/progress review. • Institutions may organise their own guidance on feedback-giving, with appropriate 'case studies'.
<p>Identified points with respect to institutional resources</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction – Information overload leading to potential misunderstanding and 'missed' information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced presentation of what is useful for individual students and students in general. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide 'staggered information' located in one place at key stages is a more strategic approach. - Employ a more creative presentation of these resources – by developing effective social media and networking strategies. - Use 'critical incidents' as they can potentially transform

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official resources, e.g. student handbook, PGR Code of Practice – while helpful documents may also pose problems. - These resources are sometimes difficult to find on university webpages. - Students do not always necessarily know how to access provision at the time they 'need to know' - Whom to ask for help/when/where? • Supporting both PGR supervisors and students - Enhancing communication with PGR students. - Enhancing communication with other PGR supervisors. • Adequate training provision for students • Better data and better use of available data 	<p>dry material to real life. - Track student engagement with materials via Virtual Learning Environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient signposting is indispensable. Both informal and formal information can be strategically provided. – These resources can be helpful in navigating bureaucracy and administration, e.g. regulations, processes, people, financial issues, requirements, graduate school structures. • Develop and maintain contact with students (by various parts of the university) to pre-empt problems, throughout the application cycle e.g. in the post-offer letter/ pre-arrival stage. - Providing more 'spaces' for these types of discussions to take place, e.g. creation of internal and external networks for supervisory staff. • Ensure that appropriate training and development opportunities are provided and are accessible. • Data analysis of PRES (cross-sectional, longitudinal) – are there access issues? - better use of data collected through 'annual review forms'? - How are PRES data used? Are focus groups needed?
<p>Support for (international) PGR students</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing (and English language) support for PGR students. Students will be assessed based on the overall quality of their writing and their ability to convey complex information in English. • International student support (anticipate potential issues). • More subtle issues in relation social and academic acculturation/behaviour, e.g. pastoral support, personal and professional behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While support is continually given, PGR students need to recognise that it can be a 'painful social process'. - Feedback is a type of formative support. Students need to engage with the process and not to avoid feedback. • Support with respect to visas, arrival, settling in. (Improve application pipeline.) • Dedicated systems of formal/informal pastoral support.
<p>Additional (and optional) support for PGR students</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating forums for supervisor/student discussion and supervisor/supervisor discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor(s) or Schools can organise informal writing sessions as part of community-building that aim to provide mutual (academic, social, practical) support for students.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other forms of training and development, including post-PhD career guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An avenue for discussing relevant issues affecting their studies, supporting each other and building a community to promote a sense of belonging. • GTA training and development opportunities; • GTA employment opportunities • PGR seminar series
<p>Other relevant points</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that a degree of unconscious bias exists around 'what is a PhD student?' • Encouraging students to pursue 'a third space' • Diversity and variation with the procedures, regulations, and practices both across and within institutions. • Complexity of PGR students' needs • Remaining challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting students engaged (those who want to be) - Who takes responsibility? - Which types of support to prioritise? - Clearly defined remits and responsibilities • Tensions between non-EU visa rules and employment /development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal and opaque practices with respect to job vacancies. (This is particularly relevant to those who need to work to top up their financial support.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What PhD students, especially international PhD students, are not familiar with tends to be overlooked. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is critical to acknowledge their background, their experience and capability in supporting them. • Students may benefit from pursuing a 'third space' as a means of integration, forging connections, informal means of acquiring skills and potentially bridging the academic and social spheres. (*Institutions can have a role in creating this social space through guidance and support.) • Connections, synergies between institutional and student-led activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective communication strategies - Coherent approach • Systems and support to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration/bureaucratic elements - Cultural elements - Social elements - Academic elements • Ongoing trust-building between stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailored, explicit provision - Permanent staff, transparency and sustainability - Critical role of admin staff members • Mostly outwith institutional provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career advice within the university

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Feedback for the Workshop

Structure

Delegates were offered evaluation forms to complete by the end of the day and 17 provided feedback. Feedback was collected anonymously.

Summary of Feedback

- 100% of delegates rated the workshop as good (4) or excellent (5) on a 5 point scale (Mean rating = 4.7)
- 100% of delegates rated the relevancy of workshop to their professional life as good (4) or excellent (5) on a 5 point scale (Mean rating = 4.6)
- Can you tell us why you gave this rating?
 - Relevancy to their work in supporting PGR students and providing provisions
 - Discovered/learned new ideas for their work
 - Part of their job to learn more about this topic
 - The workshop provided a range of perspectives
 - Well organised, useful information sharing, meeting other people, good mix of speakers and group discussions
 - One said it did not meet all expectations, all other responses were positive
- Why were you motivated to attend this workshop?
 - Relevant to work with clients, supervisors, students, etc.
 - To know more about how to help PGR students/overcome challenges
 - To explore new ideas/take back new ideas with them
 - Theme fit with their research
 - General interest
 - They were invited
 - Key area of the Scottish HE sector
 - Professional networking
 - Location of the workshop
- What were the most useful aspects of this workshop?
 - Combination of discussion groups along with presentations (6)
 - Group discussions (5)
 - Everything/general/overall format (3)
 - Specific presentation mentioned (2)

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- Data provided (1)
- What aspects of your professional practice/or study may change or adapt as a result of attending today's workshop?
 - Gained new ideas/general increase in knowledge (5)
 - Not sure yet (2)
 - Improving student/supervisor relationships
 - Improving supervisor training & recognition
 - Identified gaps in current provision
 - Being more inclusive
 - Use of signposting
 - Policy and strategy at a university level
- Any further comments (please share your positive experiences and let us know what you feel we could do better)?
 - Seven delegates expressed gratitude and complimented the organisation of the workshop
 - Two additional positive comments included suggestions for improvement
 - More time for structured discussion
 - More time for questions between presentations

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Exemplary Quotes

Can you tell us why you gave this rating?

- “Very relevant as I work with international PGRs all the time! Very well organised - good mix of speakers & group discussion & valuable input from PGRs too”

Why were you motivated to attend this workshop?

- “Postgraduate research and international students' experience are currently key areas with the Scottish Higher Education sector. I wanted to hear different views about this.”

What were the most useful aspects of this workshop?

- “Interspersed discussion groups really embedded learning from the excellent presentations”

What aspects of your professional practice/or study may change or adapt as a result of attending today's workshop?

- “I have identified gaps in the supervision course I teach, e.g., preparation for viva, that I will add in future”

Word Cloud

As a part of the feedback collected, participants were asked to provide 4/5 words that convey how we best *maximise international PhD students' experience*? 16 participants noted themes/words that captured the day. These were used to create the following:

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- University of Sheffield coaching and mentoring programmes for PgR supervisors and students: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring>
- Griffith University Expectations in Supervision Questionnaire: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/higher-degrees-research/current-research-students/supervision/expectations-in-supervision-questionnaire2>
- UK Council for International Student Affairs, with advice for international students studying in the UK: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk>
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en>
- Twitter feed from our event: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/internationalphd?src=hash>