

IGC Postgraduate Studies Committee

Monday 12th January 2026

Present:

Nick Gilbert (Chair)

Ian Adams

Susan Farrington

Kathy Evans

Alana Johnson (minutes)

Farewell and Acknowledgements

- The meeting began with thanks to Kathy for her years of service, as this was her last meeting before retirement.

HGU Updates (Ian)

- The final intake for the HGU DTP closed yesterday, with approximately 60 applications so far and an expectation of 80-100 total. Interviews and open days are scheduled for February.
- Wendy is organizing a celebration day during welcome week for new students, inviting former HGU students to speak and inspire the new cohort, aiming for a mix of academic and non-academic alumni. Suggestions for alumni invites to include those in publishing, science communication, and charity research, not just academia.
- Replacement funding is still uncertain and dependent on future UKRI calls.

Precision Medicine Updates (Susan)

- Precision Medicine DTP is under renewal, with an expression of interest submitted and deadline in three to four weeks. Only one application per institution is allowed. Title changed to "Precision Medicine: Future Leaders in Health Equalities" to keep branding while reflecting new priorities.
- About 20-22 studentships expected for PM, but IGC participation has been low; reasons discussed include lack of applications or not fitting the criteria. Efforts suggested to increase applications, such as targeted communication through theme leads and anonymous feedback from those not applying. Issues noted with perceptions of the scheme, challenges with integrated courses, and feedback being mainly from previous participants.

CRUK updates (Susan)

- CRUK PhD studentships are ongoing for clinical and non-clinical students, but numbers remain low at IGC. Recruitment processes and cross-institution issues discussed.

Student Admin (Alana)

- Student admin workload remains high, with many applications and ongoing challenges liaising with college admissions regarding visiting student's, particularly regarding project codes and ATAS.
- Recommendation to standardize the use of "Medical Sciences" as the project code to avoid ATAS issues. Supervisors often select problematic codes, causing delays.
- College and university admin inefficiencies and understaffing highlighted, especially as two schools lack administrative support.
- Pastoral support committee system is working, but mentor turnover is high and admin support for tracking mentors and notifying students when mentors leave could be improved with regular checks.

PGR Structure and Future Planning

- With new themes being introduced, discussion focused on devolving PGR director responsibilities: possibly one director, a couple of deputies, and PGR leads in each of the five themes. Spreading the workload is seen as positive, with deputies providing cover, sharing experience, and supporting the new director. Ideas include assigning deputies from different themes, and deputies taking specific roles (e.g., Board of Examiners, pastoral support) for professional development and workload balance.
- Final structure to be influenced by the incoming new PGR director's preferences & Joris.

Student Case Discussions and Support

- General agreement on the importance of proactive support, transparent feedback, and adapting student projects when needed.
- Concerns raised about ensuring students are aware of visa, health surcharge, and cost-of-living expenses before accepting offers; clarity to be improved in offer letters and email communications. AJ will action.
- College policy prohibits paying visa/health surcharge for students, only allowing it for post-docs, leading to difficulties for some international students. Guidance from David Argyle '***The payment of Immigration Health Surcharge and visa costs to postgraduate researchers is not allowed except for a number of special international scholarships schemes which have been explicitly approved by Colleges'***

Date of next meeting – July 2026

