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Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)

Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2026 at 14:30 on MS Teams

Present

Professor Jennifer Quint (ECRI Academic Deputy Director) [Chair]
Dr Alexis Barr (Institute of Clinical Sciences)
Professor Charlotte Bevan (College Consul)
Dr Linda Cremonesi (Physics)
Professor Martin Dallimer (Centre for Environmental Policy)
Dr Ilaria Dorigatti (School of Public Health)
Professor James Flanagan (Surgery and Cancer)
Professor Saskia Goes (Earth Science and Engineering)
Chris Harris (Associate Director (Strategy and Operations), ECRI)
Dr Sarah Martin (Crick Doctoral Centre)
Professor Miriam Moffatt (NHLI)
Robin Mowat (Centre for Academic English representative)
Professor Kevin Murphy (Brain Sciences; Immunology and Inflammation; Infectious Disease; Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction)
Dr Dario Paccagnan (Computing)
Professor Martin Rasmussen (Mathematics)
Professor Vahid Shahrezaei (ECRI Academic Deputy Director)
Professor Alan Spivey (Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience))
Dr David Taborda (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Dr Jeffrey Vernon (Faculty Senior Tutor (PGR) representative)
Dr Rudiger Woscholski (Chemistry)
Emma Rabin (Assistant Registrar: Partnerships, Monitoring and Review) [Secretary]

In Attendance

Professor Laki Buluwela (Faculty of Medicine Lead for Doctoral Degrees) for item 4.4
Jenna Collinson (Project and Network Manager, ECRI) for item 4.1
Dr Magdalena Jara (Principal Teaching Fellow, ECRI) for item 4.1
Chris Kerr (Education and Quality Assurance Manager, Faculty of Natural Sciences) for item 4.5
Dr Mike Streule (Director of Education and Student Experience Strategy, Faculty of

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Engineering) for item 4.3

Annette Fitzpatrick (Head of Assessment Records)

Part 1 – Preliminary Items

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Professor Pier Luigi Dragotti (Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

Dr Mazdak Ghajari (Dyson School of Design Engineering)

Dr Parastoo Hashemi (Bioengineering)

Emina Hogas (ICU Deputy President (Education))

Dr Jun Jiang (Mechanical Engineering)

Professor Cleo Kontoravdi (Chemical Engineering)

Professor Alex Michaelides (Business)

Dr Iro Ntonia (CLCC/CHERS)

Dr Tony Southall (Life Sciences)

Scott Tucker (Deputy Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting [PRQC.2025.21]

2.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2026.

2.2 The Committee noted the action list [PRQC.2025.22].

It was suggested that PRQC should be kept informed about the implementation of the new mandatory training in research security for PGR students, particularly the communications to students and departments about this change.

3. Matters arising

3.1 No additional matters were raised.

Part 2 – Matters for Consideration

4. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2025

4.1 Institutional level PRES action [PRQC.2025.23]

4.1.1 The institutional plan was presented to the meeting. It was reported that the plan had been developed through discussions with the PRES Task and Finish Group and other forums in the university.

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4.1.2 The plan has focused on two themes to ensure efforts can be concentrated on achieving progress in these areas.

4.1.3 The first theme is empowering departments to tackle poor supervision. Some actions that will be undertaken in this theme include:

- Working with Employee Relations to build policy and support for departments to identify and address cases of poor-quality supervision
- Creating a PGR exit survey to capture students' experience of supervision
- Creating dashboards to allow departments to monitor milestone completion rates

4.1.4 The second theme is empowering students to make the most of their research degree. Actions identified to support this theme include:

- Creating a new course for PGR students on essential skills for their degree
- Analysis of financial options to address stipend concerns
- Refresh of the PGR student handbook
- Create a physical hub at South Kensington to act as a community space for students

4.1.5 A working group will be set up by ECRI to deliver the planned actions.

4.1.6 The following points were raised in discussion:

- Departments are tracking milestone completion but centralised dashboards would make this task simpler
- Any training course for students needs to be up-to-date and focussed. Further discussions would be needed as to whether to make the course compulsory.
- Research students are distributed across multiple campuses so it would be good to have physical hubs across other sites as well. ECRI is on the list for space at White City but there is no timeline at present.
- Some departments in Medicine have run exit surveys but noted that students can still be reluctant to raise issues and there is no clear route for departments to tackle issues that may be reported.
- Cost of living concerns could be tackled by increasing the stipend but this would reduce the number of studentships available overall. It was felt that the university should be ensuring that its own facilities (e.g. catering) are less expensive than off-site options.

4.1.7 The departmental action plan templates should be reviewed to ensure there it is transparent who has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the identified actions.

Action: Scott Tucker

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4.1.8 PRQC approved the action plan. The plan will also be submitted to the Education and Student Experience Committee for information.

4.2 **Imperial Business School PRES 2025 action plan [2025.24]**

4.2.1 It was reported that the main focus for the next PRES will be increasing the number of responses as only nine students participated in the survey.

4.2.2 The low scores for research culture and wellbeing were discussed with the SSC who were unable to offer insight into the possible causes but this will be kept under review.

4.3 **Faculty of Engineering PRES 2025 action plan [PRQC.2025.25]**

4.3.1 The faculty noted student wellbeing as an increasing concern with departments. This was felt to reflect external pressures such as cost of living and internal pressures such as concerns about completion.

4.3.2 Actions are being discussed with the departmental wellbeing advisors. They are being encouraged to take a more proactive approach to PGR students and ensure this cohort is aware this support is available to them as well as taught students.

4.4 **Faculty of Medicine PRES 2025 action plan [PRQC.2025.26]**

4.4.1 It was reported that Medicine had matched or increased scores from previous surveys. Four themes were identified from the departmental action plans: supervision; research culture and community; wellbeing and inductions. Good practice will be captured and shared between departments to support developments.

4.4.2 The faculty will be investigating variable response rates between departments. Funding is available to address the causes which is hoped to impact the upcoming PTES as well as the next PRES.

4.5 **Faculty of Natural Sciences PRES 2025 action plan [PRQC.2025.27]**

4.5.1 It was reported that supervision scores remain steady and community scores had improved. The faculty has introduced a termly DPS(Research) meeting which will discuss lower scores for research culture and how to address these.

4.5.2 The other focus will be on campus resources – particularly at White City and Silwood Park which has also been raised in other fora. Better signposting for physical and online resources may help but workspace availability is a significant issue.

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Part 3 - Items for note

5. Any Other Business

5.1 No business was raised.

6. Dates of future meetings

6.1 Meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams as follows:

- Wednesday 13 May 2025 – 14.10 – 16.30