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FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT

**PGR Recruitment and Admissions Strategy**

Faculty of Environment has around 280 PGRs (in their standard period of study, i.e., not overtime) and it aims to grow the number to about 400 or by 40% by 2020, see Table 1 below *(note figures below are currently under review for 2017 IPE)*. A good proportion of the current PGRs are international, and the expectation is that a substantial proportion of the 120 additional PGR will also be international. The Faculty currently has a PGR supervision guideline in place <http://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/Documents/PGR/Guidelines_for_supervisors_re_PGR_supervision_numbers.pdf>)

*Table 1. Faculty of Environment PGR cohort targets by 2020 by school.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **SEE** | **SOG** | **ITS** | **FACULTY** |
| -2015 | 170 | 69 | 46 | 285 |
| -2016 | 179 | 74 | 60 | 313 |
| -2017 | 180 | 71 | 65 | 316 |
| -2018 | 188 | 80 | 77 | 345 |
| -2019 | 198 | 92 | 86 | 376 |
| -2020 | 212 | 105 | 89 | 406 |
| Change 15/20 | +25% | +52% | +93% | +42% |

The Faculty has scope for further growth in PGR numbers in terms of available supervision capacity. Current PGR to supervisor ratios are 1.6 in SEE, 1.6 in SOG and 2.0 in ITS. They are below the Russell Group universities figures competing for the same PGR candidate pool. Recruitment of UAFs and other early career academic staff gives potential for growth in the PGR numbers, provided that their involvement in PGR recruitment and supervision is supported and fostered by mentoring of more senior academic members of staff, and that marketing and other efforts will help delivering the increased PGR numbers. This means plans will be developed in schools to maximise the involvement of early career people in the PGR supervision.

Faculty of Environment has highly interdisciplinary character and its research spans the funding areas of the AHRC, ESRC, NERC and EPSRC. While the Faculty is beneficiary of several large RCUK research training investments such as the ESRC White Rose DTP, Leeds York NERC DTP, and EPSRC CDTs on Bioenergy and Fluids, there is no single core source of PGR funding for the Faculty. It is highly likely that overall number of studentships funded by RCUK will not grow, and the competition over them will increase. Recruitment of international PGRs is similarly diverse at the Faculty level.

**Origin of PGR-International**

Of the 100 PGRs that started in the FoE during the period 1 Dec 2015-30 Nov 2016 (54 SEE, 30 SoG, 16 ITS), 28 were international (10 SEE, 13 SoG, 5 ITS), Geographical location and funding were: Chile; Mexico = 2; Thailand; Indonesian Govt = 3; China = 5; Taiwan; Malaysia; Korean Govt = 1; Nigerian Govt = 3; Nigerian Tetfund = 2; Ghanaian Govt = 1; Turkish Govt = 1; Egyptian Govt = 1; Bahrain; 4 – self funded

As it is unlikely that the prioritization of certain funding sources or target markets would be able to grow PGR numbers as expected and support the interdisciplinary nature of the Faculty, the priority in the coming years will be to make better use of under-utilised sources and modes of PGR funding.

**Funding**

The key under-utilised sources of PGR funding for the Faculty of Environment include the following:

* European Union’s Marie Skłodowska Curie international training networks (ITNs) are not yet harnessed to the extent that they could, in comparison to the Faculty’s track record of obtaining research grants from FP7, H2020 and other EU funding programmes. There are examples of ITN success and experience in the Faculty and the University. The use of MSC ITNs will be promoted by organizing information events to academic staff to share peer experience and practical insights, and by organizing peer support for the development of ITN proposals.
* Dual PhD degrees provide another model that can provide complementary PGR funding. The work done earlier to prepare the UniCamp dual degree documentation and solutions will provide a resource for further initiatives, and lesson-sharing across University will provide additional help. A dual award was agreed with UniCamp in Brazil, but is not yet operational due to funding changes in Brazil. A program with SUSTECH in China is starting that includes one year study in Leeds.
* Greater effort can be made to market and target PGR recruitment from middle-income countries such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Mexico that have strong national funding programmes for international PGR training. We are currently taking stock of these funding programmes and will develop marketing and targeting solutions for increased PGR recruitment in light of the results of this work. However, previous countries of origin of PGR-I may not be a reliable guide to future recruitment potential as scholarship programs change (eg, the Brazil’s Science without Borders program has been halted; decline in oil price has affected students from the Gulf).
* The Faculty will also strive to ensure continued university investment in PGR funding so that balanced investment is going forward for UK/EU and international studentships and that the University-funded schemes are consolidated so as to provide balanced support for strategic and excellence-based areas of research.

**Actions**

* Assess supervisory model to spread supervision loads more evenly (Heads of Schools)
* Encourage research clusters/ hubs/ themes to apply for ITNs (Directors of Research)
* Develop partnerships in countries with strong scholarship programmes through the alumni-research-recruitment approach (Alumni Officers, researchers, International Office).
* Develop dual award programs with excellent partners (researchers, International Office).

**International Agreements that are progressing**

* Nanjing (Steve Banwart/SEE)
* Ben Gurion, Israel (Pazit Ziv/Water@Leeds)
* Resilience Development Initiative (RDI), Indonesia, MoU (Jon Lovett/SoG)

In the area of marketing, effort has already been made to ensure that outward web interface portrays gender-balanced image of the Faculty in all schools, to encourage applications from female candidates. The Faculty is already performing above the national benchmark in terms of gender in recruitment, but can further improve its record. Effort will be made that the goals of the Athena Swan and other initiatives for gender-fair and in other ways equitable recruitment will be achieved in the Faculty.

Part-time and work and family friendly arrangements will be highlighted to ensure that the Faculty’s offer is considered manageable by as many potential candidates as possible.

Further effort will also be made to ensure that the international PGR track record and experience is covered in the Faculty’s web and marketing presence visibly and to its best potential.

The Schools of Earth and Environment and Geography each has a space policy which is available to all staff and PGRs on the School intranet pages:

* <http://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/Documents/PGR/WorkspacePolicy_PGR_SEE_2014.pdf>
* <http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/internal/Office_accommodation___space_allocation_in_School_of_Geography_March_2016_Final.pdf>

All three departments use the ‘starters’ database on which new PGRs are entered as soon as their funding is confirmed and this is used for space planning purposes.

This document will be reviewed at the beginning of each academic year.