Adapting to a Virtual World

Presented by
Dr Lewis Hill – *PGR Development Officer* & Chair of the DRG 2019-20
Ms Maisie Keogh – *Chair of the DRG 2020-21*
Who are we? What do we do?!

• Founded: October 2018, primarily as a specific body to represent PGRs
• Work with university staff to influence policy
• Aim to nurture a strong, university-wide, doctoral community
  ▪ Organise cross-faculty events, both academic and social
• Promote a positive research culture

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PGR Development Officer & Postdoctoral Researcher

Ms Maisie Keogh
Chair of the DRG 2020-21,
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2nd Year PGR
Building a **Doctoral Community, Pre-COVID**

- Very **different demographic** to UG and PGT student groups – **different problems**
- **Less** university general/social support
- **Isolated** by nature of niche research

**COVID INCREASED** importance of doctoral communities…

**but caused MORE challenges**...
DSMS 2020

Doctoral School Multidisciplinary Symposium (DSMS)

Brings together **doctoral students** from across the university to **present their highly specialised research** to a **diverse general audience**.

- First run in 2019
- Originally a 1 day, in person, event.
- 1 Keynote speaker, 36 PGR oral presentations
- 150 registrations.

- Run again in 2020, but with an online format (ZOOM)
- Split over 3 days to avoid Zoom fatigue
- Actually more accessible, much higher audience, 400
- International Keynote presenters – without the cost
- Gave PGRs something ‘fun’ to look forward to
  - both presenters and audience!
PGR Peer Support Program

• Registrations randomly split into groups of between 5-7 other first year PGRs.

• Groups led by an ‘experienced’ PGR volunteer from 2\textsuperscript{nd} year and above.

• Regular, short, virtual mini-meetups such as Lunch break, coffee break?

• 150 of the 300 PGRs were support with the program

Intended for first-year PGRs who arrived in Oct 2020

Few opportunities to meet peers and form a support network in Glasgow

PGRs less likely to receive social support from families

COVID induced isolation on top of normal PGR isolation

Our wonderful PGR volunteers!
“In a group of people from 6 different countries, during my first meeting, one man said

"Do I have to attend this? I thought I had to sign up. I don't want to tell people where I'm from. I always get judged".

After being reassured this was to unite students rather than to judge, he continued to participate.

Fast forward 2 weeks, he is now the first to reply to group messages, recommends new books to others, hasn't missed a single meeting, and constantly tells me how much he enjoys it.”

Olivia Foulds
The Future of the DRG

- Communication Team
- Student Engagement Team
- Doctoral Researchers Multidisciplinary Symposium

Community Building

Coming Summer 2021
PGR Strath Life Blog
Thank you for listening!

We would love to hear from you! Email us at doctoralresearchers-group@strath.ac.uk with any comments, questions or ideas.

@DRGStrath