**Recommendations and actions arising from the EEF funded Project**

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There are three main recommendations:

***Self-improvement (self-help)***

Recommendation 1: To improve awareness of well-being among PGRs by improving visibility of resources currently offered and producing new resources designed for and targeted at PGRs.

***Peer support (mutual help)***

Recommendation 2: To facilitate a supportive peer-to-peer PGR community by offering PGRs opportunities to support each other through the sharing of personal experiences within a programme of formal and informal activities.

***Institutional support (supervisors, faculties and professional services)***

Recommendation 3: To enhance the institutional environment to proactively manage the quality of the experience of PGRs as well as ensuring parity of experience.

Excellent communication underpins all three recommendations.

**ACTIONS**

*Self-improvement*

1. **Provide more ‘off the shelf’ and tailored resources online**

* How to manage common problems such as anxiety and stress
* ‘Getting started’ with supervision to facilitate discussion between new PGRs and supervisors on preferences of supervision style (to foster greater PGR autonomy)
* How to achieve better work-life balance among PGRs (challenging the idea that long working hours lead to greater productivity)

1. **Improve visibility of resources already available/currently offered at departmental, faculty and institutional level**

* University Mental Health Policy
* Revamp specific Enabling Service leaflets
* Services offered by Enabling Services, including information about triage, expectations (Drop-In Team to discuss solutions with students) and no extra cost to students

1. **Introduce self-help workshops specifically for PGRs**

* Practical tips and techniques on recognising problems and managing stress
* Conversational groups facilitated by a counsellor (where appropriate)

1. **Offer further training/personal development**

* On theories of effective learning
* What is expected at transfer/confirmation stage (submission and viva)

*Peer-support*

1. **Set up a dedicated fund for the Doctoral College to allocate small sums of money for specific inter-disciplinary PGR social and/or outreach activities led by PGRs with PGRs**
   * Promote as sense of self-worth by being part of worthy group activities
2. **Introduce a faculty-level buddy scheme (e.g. matching new PGRs with second years).** 
   * ‘Getting started’
   * Share practical knowledge of local processes
3. **Improve communication between PGR societies, the University (Faculty Graduate Schools and Doctoral College) and SUSU to support social initiatives already taking place and ensure opportunities reach all PGRs.**
   * Help tackle feelings of isolation
4. **Promote more effectively relevant events among PGRs via the Doctoral College website, the Researcher tab and social media**

* Enabling Services events (e.g. mindfulness, stress-busting skills)
* SUSU events (e.g. Stress-less Fest, You Are More Than…)
* Local and institution-wide events (e.g. departmental seminars and the Festival of Doctoral Research)

*Institutional support*

1. **Ensure PGRs receive consistent information on University policies and procedures**
   * Review and enhance autumn induction content
   * Set up spring inductions
   * Systematic sign-posting to resources
   * Pastoral support handbook
2. **Enhance institutional policies/guidelines**

* Clarify the pastoral responsibilities of the supervisory team (to be incorporated in the student and supervisor handbooks)
* Develop and introduce a policy or guidelines for disability/learning difficulty support for key milestone assessments and final examination

1. **Deliver training for supervisors**

* How to recognise if a PGR needs more support or is experiencing mental health problems
* Consider offering a PDU course on pastoral care

1. **Set up a network of PGR pastoral tutors**

* e.g. trained staff in Mental Health First Aid

1. **Strengthen PGR support at research group level**

* Hold staff-PGR away days
* Include PGRs in research group meetings

1. **Enhance career planning support at faculty/departmental level.**
2. **Protect social/common room space in faculties to encourage a sense of community and informal socialisation**
3. **Investigate if a process to share critical confidential information/data between Enabling Services and faculties can be introduced**

* PGR consent

1. **Develop a process whereby PGRs can give anonymous feedback on their experience after terminating their studies**

* Consider setting up an anonymous online survey

1. **Provide more written resources to Faculty Graduate Schools**

* Consider adapting the PAT handbook