

DRG
Doctoral
Researchers
Group

Presented by

Dr Lewis Hill – *PGR Development Officer*

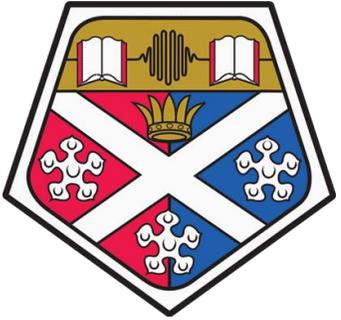
& Chair of the DRG 2019-20

Ms Maisie Keogh – *Chair of the DRG 2020-21*



Adapting to a Virtual World

Who are we? What do we do?!



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- **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**



Dr Lewis Hill
Chair of the DRG 2019-20,
Department of Physics,
Faculty of Science,
PGR Development Officer &
Postdoctoral Researcher



Ms Maisie Keogh
Chair of the DRG 2020-21,
Department of Biomedical
Engineering,
Faculty of Engineering,
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**.

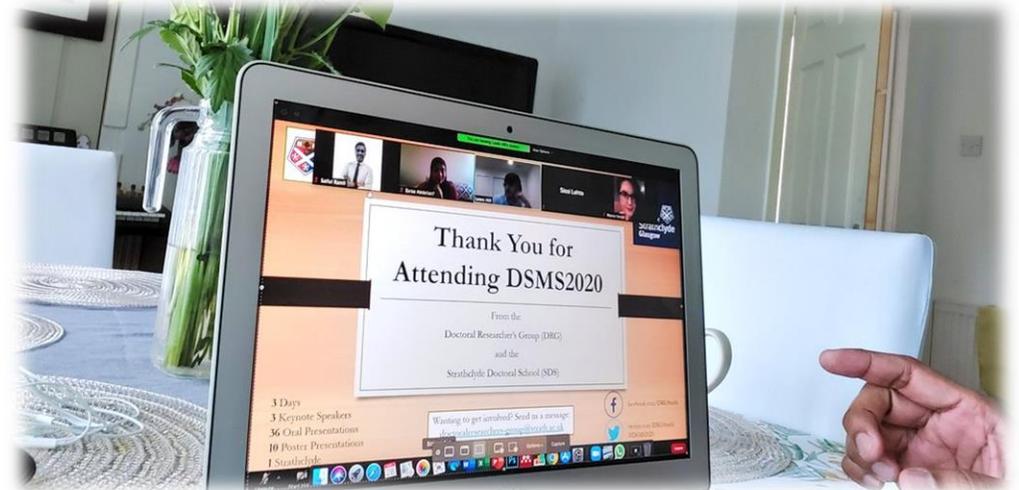
- First run in 2019
- Originally a 1 day, in person, event.
- 1 Keynote speaker, 36 PGR oral presentations
- 150 registrations.

- 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!



2019 – In person

2020 – Online

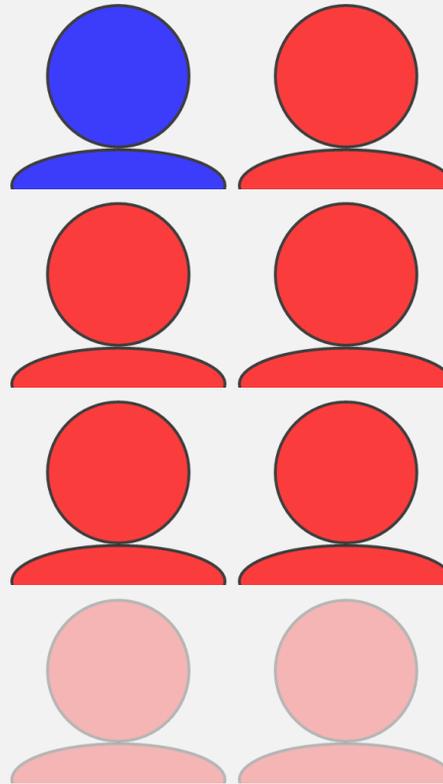


PGR Peer Support Program



Our wonderful PGR volunteers!

- 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**



- Registrations randomly split into groups of between 5-7 other first year PGRs.
- Groups led by an 'experienced' PGR volunteer from 2nd year and above.
- Regular, short, virtual mini-meetups such as Lunch break, coffee break?
- 150 of the 300 PGRs were support with the program

Benefits of Peer Support

- Tackle isolation
- Break down departmental and faculty barriers
- Mutual support
- Connect to international students
- Place to vent!
- Group problem solving

"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

