**Faculty of Humanities**

**Fieldwork and Conference Support**

In 2011, PGRC worked together to develop a Faculty Fieldwork Policy. The main intention of this was to ensure that fieldwork support was ring-fenced across the board and that all schools had a systematic and transparent method of allocating these funds.

PGRC has had a number of discussions over the last year around supporting fieldwork activity across the schools and in March last year it was agreed that this policy be reviewed. PGR Directors were invited to report on the policy was currently being implemented within their school. Directors were also asked to comment on any general issues their school was experiencing around fieldwork support. Following this, Faculty put together a summary of which was considered at PGRC.

It was clear from the review that the Faculty Fieldwork policy was not being fully implemented across the schools. Although all schools did have ring-fenced funds, Directors reported that some elements of the policy were not practical. For example, the banding model set out in the policy was not useful and as a result most had abandoned this. Schools also felt that the restriction of the fieldwork having to be for a period of more than three months was unhelpful.

In addition to this, it was suggested that consideration might be given to broadening this support to include all activity that is considered crucial to a student’s PhD programme. For example, support for conference attendance, placement activity, or supporting a visiting/exchange programme.

Taking these issues into consideration, Faculty proposes that rather than having a prescriptive Faculty-wide policy on the support and allocation of these funds, PGRC agrees a set of *principles* around fieldwork/conference support that must be adhered to through schools locally developed policies.

As a starting point, PGRC is asked to consider if the following principles would be workable within each of its schools:

1. That each school within the Faculty must have a pot of ring-fenced money to support fieldwork and/or conference activities for PGR students and this must be agreed annually by the Head of School. This information will be considered via the Annual Monitoring exercise and through the usual budget setting exercises.
2. There must be a transparent policy relating to available support that clearly articulates to students the mechanisms for its allocation and any relevant school deadlines. This mechanism must allow for those registered on programmes where fieldwork/conference attendance is a compulsory component being treated as a priority group.
3. That reference to the availability of these funds be made in student handbooks but that it be made explicit that such support is not an automatic right and would be considered on a case by case basis.
4. Schools should refer to RCUK fieldwork costings for up to date guidance on the appropriate levels of support to offer.
5. That in order to be eligible for support, students must
   1. be fully registered on a PhD programme
   2. have explored other forms of funding for fieldwork/conference attendance prior to applying to the school for this support
6. Retrospective applications would be considered, where there were justified reasons.
7. Schools may also wish to ring-fence support for conference attendance, placement and exchange activity and these funds must also be accessed using the principles set out in points 1-6 above.
8. That these principles be adhered to as a matter of course and that any deviation from this must be presented to PGRC for discussion.

April 2015