

**1392 Motion for Adequate Workspace and Overnight Storage Facilities to be provided for Postgraduate Students on Campus (amended)** Passed 24 October 13

Proposer: Jessica Woolley (PHI PG)

Seconder: David Hall (HIS PG)

**The Union notes that:**

- 1) There are 308 PGR Students currently based within the Arts buildings.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) The University regulations require Research Students to maintain a satisfactory level of "attendance and engagement" with Campus-based activities which includes "physical presence" and "working with fellow students" (General Regulations 13.1-9).
- 3) Not all Schools based in Arts 1 and 2 provide dedicated workspace / storage facilities for their PhD students.<sup>2</sup>
- 4) PhD Students without School-specific facilities have to work in either the Library or the Graduate Study Centre (Arts 01), if they are to work on Campus.
- 5) Neither the Library nor the Graduate Study Centre has sufficient working areas or overnight storage facilities to accommodate these students.
  - a. The Graduate Study Centre contains 60 computer 'hot-desks' and 4 laptop spaces shared between 289 Postgraduate Research Students from HUM and SSF.<sup>3</sup>
  - b. The main Library is shared between all 14,199 members of the university.<sup>4</sup>
  - c. The Library's 16 PGR Carrels are shared between 1072 Postgraduate Research Students from across the university.
  - d. Overnight storage of books and study materials is forbidden in the main Library and the Graduate Study Centre.
- 6) Writing a PhD thesis can involve referencing hundreds of sources, many of which will be books. For many PhD Students, daily transportation of their work to and from Campus is not an option due to the sheer quantity of their source material.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures are taken from UEA's 2012-13 Factsheet. This total includes PGR students from AMS, FTM, HIS, LCS, LDC, MUS, PHI, PSI, DEV, ECO and LAW. It excludes ART students, who are based in the Sainsbury Centre.

<sup>2</sup> For example PHI, HIS, AMS/LDC, and FTM do not have dedicated PhD workspace or storage facilities.

<sup>3</sup> This excludes ECO PhD students who have their own desks within their School.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Postgraduate' study room on floor 01 of the Library is meant for the use of taught postgraduate students only.

- 7) In addition, some Schools do not provide overnight storage facilities or dedicated workspaces (aside from an assigned 1-2 hour 'slot' in an office) for PhD students who are working as Associate Tutors.<sup>5</sup>
- 8) In the 2012/13 academic year the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Graduate School Student Committee discussed this issue several times, taking action to ensure maximum availability of the limited space available in the Graduate Study Centre whilst acknowledging that the provision was not sufficient for the demand.

**The Union believes that:**

- 1) A guaranteed quiet working area is a basic requirement for a PhD student to work on Campus.
- 2) Overnight long-term storage facilities are also necessary for PhD students whose research requires access to a large volume of books and physical study materials.
- 3) All research students are entitled to adequate workspace and storage facilities, and access to these facilities should not be dependent upon which School they are in.
- 4) The lack of adequate workspace and overnight storage provided for PhD students who are employed as Associate Tutors adversely impacts the quality of education and pastoral support provided to Undergraduate students.
- 5) The lack of equal access to adequate workspace and storage facilities has a negative affect on PhD students' experience, and their ability to successfully complete their studies.

**The Union resolves to:**

- 1) Lobby for all postgraduate students at UEA to have equal access to adequate workspace and overnight storage facilities on Campus. The Academic Officer and Postgraduate Officer will raise this with the University in every appropriate forum, and will report back to the Union Council regularly throughout the year.

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<sup>5</sup> In some Schools, 100% of the Undergraduate Seminar Teaching last year was provided by Associate Tutors (e.g. PHI).