

So you think you could do this?

Welcome back to the second edition of *pn*. NPC has been kept busy this year with the launch of its new funding charter, and results beginning to show from its survey of postgraduate facilities across the country, all summarised here. This time, there were more articles than could fit into four pages, so some of the longer articles have been abridged, with the full version available on the Web. Welsh institutions will now also be receiving the NPC Wales newsletter inside this one.

Now is the time to ask if anyone fancies taking over this job. My term of office,

along with everyone else's, finishes in August at the NPC Conference. Some older officers will be moving on, but we always need new officers taking their place. If you have any ideas about what NPC should be doing, please think about standing—NPC benefits from a continuous input of new ideas and priorities.

Please keep on letting me know what you think of this, and enjoy the newsletter

Chris Neville-Smith
Communications Officer

Inside this issue...

Below:

- NPC Conference

Page 2:

- Postgraduate Funding Charter
- Hot statistics from postgraduate survey

Page 3:

- NPC Wales launched
- Could you be the next General Secretary?
- Notices

Page 4:

- Next OGM at Cheltenham

NPC Conference 15th–18th August at St. Andrews

The 13th Annual Conference of the National Postgraduate Committee will be held from Thursday 15 to Sunday 18 August 2002 in the University of St Andrews, Scotland's oldest university: www.st-andrews.ac.uk. The theme will be:

PG in the Middle *Perceptions of the Postgraduate*

The Conference will start at 3pm on Thursday 15 August and will end at 11am on Sunday 18 August. It has once again been sponsored by CSU, publishers of *Prospects*: www.prospects.ac.uk.

Who should attend?

Postgraduate students; Officers who represent postgraduate students; Education and representation sabbaticals in students' unions; Staff members in students' unions with an interest in postgraduates; Postgraduate administrators and Graduate School heads; Journalists with an interest in higher education; Others with an interest in postgraduate education.

Who's speaking?

- **Prof David Eastwood**, Chief Executive, the Arts & Humanities Research Board;
- **Andrew Cubie CBE FRSE**, Chair of Court, Napier University and Convenor of the 1999 Inquiry into Student Finance (the Cubie Report);
- **John Beaumont**, Chief Executive of the eUniversity project, the part privately-financed distance learning initiative from the funding councils;
- **Dr Clair Watts**, UK Research Office in Brussels, on the EU's 6th framework programme for research;
- **Prof Nick Harris**, Quality Assurance Agency;
- **Dr Norman Jackson**, Learning & Teaching Support Network, on progress files and students' personal development;
- **Dr Ewan Gillon**, Open University on widening participation to part-time students;
- **Dr Janet Metcalfe**, Project Leader, Funding Councils' Review of Postgraduate Research Training,

presenting the findings of this key review;

- **Diana Woodward**, UK Council for Graduate Education and Napier University, on campus facilities for part-time students;

...and still more to be confirmed.

How do I get more information and a booking form?

A full mailing will be going out to all students' unions during May. A booking form, with details of all the Conference fees, is available to download as a PDF file from the NPC website www.npc.org.uk—just follow the links to Conference. For more information, contact the General Secretary via npc@npc.org.uk.

How do I get there?

- **By train**—the nearest station is Leuchars, 5 miles from St Andrews. A regular bus service shuttles to and from St Andrews from the Railway Station; there are also countless taxis.

See www.railtrack.co.uk for details or, to book, look at www.thetrainline.com or www.qjump.co.uk.

- **By sleeper train service** — there are many special offers, and if you're coming from the London area this is well worth thinking about.
See www.scotrail.co.uk for details.
- **By air** — the nearest major airport is Edinburgh, which is served by low-cost scheduled flights from London City (British European and Scot Airways), London Luton (Easyjet), London Gatwick (Easyjet), London Stansted (Go), Belfast International (Easyjet and Go), Birmingham (British European), Bristol (Go) and East Midlands (Go). There are also flights from London City to Dundee (nearer to St Andrews), operated by Scot Airways.
British European: www.flybe.com
Easyjet: www.easyjet.com
Go: www.go-fly.com
Scot Airways: www.scotairways.co.uk

Future bulletins and updates on NPC Conference will go out first to the NPC's email lists, *postgrad* and *npc* — to join either of these mailing lists, go to www.npc.org.uk/jiscmail.

— James Groves

NPC Launches Postgraduate Funding Charter

After months of debates, NPC finally passed policy to decide its stance on postgraduate funding at the Cranfield OGM. To make a start on this campaign, a postgraduate funding charter has been written to present the case to the outside world. The first edition was produced in time for NUS Conference in April, but suggestions for additions or alterations to future additions are still welcome.

The last NUS Conference turned out to be rather successful in making NPC's voice heard. For the first time, substantial policy on postgraduate funding was debated and passed on the main Conference floor, and there were more NEC candidates than ever before who included postgraduates in their manifestoes. However, it remains up to NPC to ensure that these policies are acted on.

NUS Conference was only the first of many audiences this charter is aimed at. It is also intended to go to bodies such as the DFES, the Education Select Committees, the Comprehensive spending review, and so on. With a concise statement of NPC's position readily available to all, it is hoped that the student funding campaign won't be stopping with the traditional 18-21 year old undergraduate home student.

— Chris Neville-Smith

THE KEY POINTS OF THE CHARTER

- **All postgraduates deserve access to financial support.** Postgraduates should have to finance their living costs at the point of entry, no matter what programme they are studying. The student loans system should be extended to include postgraduates.
- **An end to stealth fees.** Institutions are prohibited from charging additional fees for undergraduates but many charge excessive premium fees for postgraduates. This should stop. Hidden course costs,

such as library charges and bench fees, should be phased out.

- **Fairer funding for undergraduates.** Almost all postgraduates were undergraduates once, and many begin their postgraduate courses carrying over debt from undergraduate courses. Undergraduates should be adequately financed. In particular, commercial interest rates would hit postgrads very hard and should be opposed.

Full charter available at:

www.npc.org.uk/page/1020453869

Hot Statistics and More...

In the last edition of *pn* you may remember it saying 'watch this space' for information of an online survey being set up to research the postgraduate opinion on certain aspects of academic and social life. The questionnaire has since been set up and can be reached at www.npc.org.uk/feedback. Further to this some preliminary results have been processed from the first 700 responses. It's still not too late to respond, please do encourage your institutions to take part if you haven't done so already.

Some of the most interesting statistics are listed below:

- **Would you prefer to live with postgraduates only or in mixed accommodation if you had the choice?**
55% Postgraduate only, 15% Mixed, 27% No Preference.
- **Do you feel there is a segregation between postgraduates and under-**

graduates at your institution?

66% Yes, 31% No

- **Would you encourage your institution to find ways of overcoming any segregation of postgraduates?**
60% Yes, 36% No
- **Do you find it easier/harder to socialise and integrate with other postgraduate compared to undergraduates?**
18% Easier, 54% Harder, 28% No difference
- **Do you think postgraduates can integrate with undergraduates (eg. in students union, clubs, societies) if encouraged to do so?**
85% yes, 12% no.

Such results do indicate to some extent that there is a lack of community identity for postgraduates to be able to have support within their own peer group. It does

appear also that too much segregation would not be encouraged. This will be vital information for setting out appropriate guidelines to create appropriate balance.

Please also note that there is another more detailed survey put together now for institutions to respond to, which can be downloaded also from the features archive at www.npc.org.uk/features. This questionnaire has been put together to seek the response from postgraduate representatives or staff working in relation to postgraduate needs. Please do send a response if you are in such a position since we are seeking information from as many institutions across the UK as possible.

— Tim Brown, NPC Project Officer

Full report available at:

www.npc.org.uk/page/1014841159

NPC Wales Launched

The NPC's Welsh Subcommittee, *Pwyllgor Cenedlaethol Ôl-Raddedigion Cymru* – National Postgraduate Committee Wales, finally held its inaugural meeting in the Graduate Centre of University of Wales, Cardiff on Saturday 16 March. Delegates were present from Bangor and Cardiff, and apologies were received from Lampeter, Swansea and several other students' unions across Wales.

The meeting was very productive, and it was agreed that another one-day meeting should be held on a Saturday in May or June, hopefully with a larger attendance! We elected two officers - David Manning (manningdj@cardiff.ac.uk) as Chair and Ian Hibble (hibblei@cardiff.ac.uk) as Vice-Chair. The position of Treasurer was left vacant — David Manning will assume the role *pro tem*.

It was agreed *PCÔ-R Cymru – NPC Wales* should pursue a number of issues, including:

- **Assembly Learning Grants.** The Assembly's draft proposals exclude postgraduates from these. We decided to submit a document on this matter to the Assembly's Higher Education division, and also to submit a petition to the Assembly if at all possible.
- **The Rees Report – one year on.** The majority of recommendations relating to postgraduates seem not to have been acted on, including student loan eligibility and access to benefits during the writing up period of research study. We agreed a document should be submitted to the Minister, asking what progress there has been.

- **AHRB Postgraduate Review.** It was agreed that the NPC's submission to this review should highlight the lack of guaranteed support by AHRB for postgraduate study in Welsh, Welsh Literature and Celtic Studies.
- **PCÔ-R Cymru – NPC Wales publicity and communications.** It was agreed to try and produce a bulletin/newsletter in time to advertise the next meeting. There should also be a dedicated section of the website for *PCÔ-R Cymru – NPC Wales*, and a *jiscmail* email list.
- **Bilingualism.** All meeting agendas and minutes will be produced in Welsh and English; where possible, Wales-specific documents on the website will be available in both Welsh and English.
- **Recruiting new affiliates.** The NPC has relatively few affiliates in Wales; this needs to change. Hopefully the advent of *PCÔ-R Cymru – NPC Wales* will encourage all unions to affiliate to the NPC.

The next meeting of NPC Wales will be held on the 18th May in the University of Swansea.

If you have any queries about *PCÔ-R Cymru – NPC Wales*, contact either one of the officers or the NPC General Secretary.

Full article available on the website at:

www.npc.org.uk/page/1016563302

NPC Wales website at:

www.npc.org.uk/wales

www.npc.org.uk/cymru

Fancy Being the next NPC General Secretary?

The position of NPC General Secretary, the only full-time national officer dedicated to postgraduate students, will be up for election at the NPC's AGM in St Andrews on Saturday 17 August. The incumbent has served the maximum two years allowed, which means there'll definitely be a new General Secretary to take the NPC into 2002/2003.

We hope very much there'll be healthy competition for the position at the AGM. It offers a unique opportunity to engage in postgraduate issues at UK level as well as administering a national student organisation. The salary will be set by the NPC Financial Subcommittee during July, and will be notified to the *npc* email list.

If you would like to know more about the position, feel free to contact the incumbent, James Groves, in confidence at any time. His contact details are on the back of this newsletter.

pn is edited by Chris Neville-Smith, NPC Communications Officer, and co-edited by James Groves and produced by Article Seven. It is sent to affiliates' institutions each term, and is also made available on the NPC website. Contributions from everyone are welcome, from NPC Officers to postgrads with no involvement with NPC but who have something to say. If you are interested in contributing to future issues, please contact the editor at c.j.neville-smith@durham.ac.uk.

NPC Notices

Adrian Furse has resigned as NPC Treasurer. A replacement Treasurer to serve until the AGM on 17th August will be elected at the Cheltenham OGM. Anybody wishing to stand should contact James Groves for information on how to stand and what the job involves. In the meantime, the job of Treasurer shall be discharged by Alex Lewis.

Craig Buchanan has stepped down as Chair of NPC Scotland after a year in office. NPC Scotland gave a vote of thanks for Craig Buchanan and elected Chris Stuart as a replacement Chair. Jim Ewing was elected to replace Chris Stuart as Vice Chair. Elections for next year's Chair, Vice Chair/Secretary and Treasurer

of NPC Scotland will be elected at the next meeting of NPC Scotland, due on 8th June at Robert Gordon University. All Scottish affiliates to NPC have one vote.

The position of NPC Wales Treasurer is currently vacant. This will be elected at the next meeting of NPC Wales in Swansea on the 18th May. All Welsh affiliates have one vote.

Note: Any person may stand in any of these elections.

The next OGM will be on 25th–26th May in the

Cheltenham campus of the University of Gloucester. This will include further discussion of the NPC postgraduate funding policy, including international and part-time postgraduates. All suggestions of what this policy should contain are welcome.

Finally, all positions on the Management, Finance and Constitutional Sub-Committee (except NPC Scotland and Wales positions), will be up for election at the AGM on 17th August. Information on how to stand will be confirmed closer to the elections. In the meantime, potential candidates are encouraged to speak to the person currently holding the position on what the job involves.

Cheltenham venue for next NPC meeting on 25/26 May

The next Ordinary General Meeting of the National Postgraduate Committee will take place on the afternoon of Saturday 25 May 2002 in Fullwood House, Park Campus, University of Gloucestershire, PO Box 220, The Park, Cheltenham, GL50 2QF. A location map of how to find the Park campus is at:

<http://prospectus.glos.ac.uk/images/range/campusmap.jpg>

while a detailed map of the Park campus, pointing out the location of Fullwood House, is at:

<http://prospectus.glos.ac.uk/images/pdfs/campusmaps.pdf>

The meeting will start at 2pm and will aim to finish by 6:30pm. People will be meeting from 12 noon for lunch. If you'd like to have lunch, you'll need to let us know in advance and a fee of £4 will be charged — email the General Secretary at npc@npc.org.uk if you're interested.

The OGM itself will form part of a programme of events in Gloucestershire that weekend, in-

cluding policy workshops on the Sunday morning and a social event on Saturday night. You're welcome to join us, whether it's just for the OGM or for the whole weekend. In particular, we welcome reps from institutions not presently affiliated to the NPC; this meeting is a great way for you to see what we're like and what we do!

Items on the agenda include:

- the proposed new QAA institutional audit regime, details of which are at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/inst_audit_hbook/circular_CL0802.htm
- the NPC's new postgraduate funding charter;
- the new joint NPC/NATFHE/NUS charter for postgraduates who teach;
- an update on NPC Conference 2002;
- elections for the positions of NPC Treasurer (the incumbent having resigned on 14/4/02) and NPC Project Officer (one vacancy is available).

Items proposed for workshops on the Sunday include:

- the writing up period of research study, and writing up students' access to benefits and student status;
- students on professional training courses (e.g. training in law, accountancy, etc) and how the NPC should be representing their needs;
- a progress report from Tim Brown on his research into campus facilities for postgraduates.

Accommodation is available on the Saturday night at a cost of £25 per person, but numbers are limited and we need to know names as soon as possible. Email the General Secretary at npc@npc.org.uk. If you want a room for the Friday night also, rooms are very limited but we'll see what we can do — again, email npc@npc.org.uk.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Cheltenham on the weekend of 25/26 May.

the national postgraduate committee

The National Postgraduate Committee is an independent organisation that aims to enhance the quality of postgraduate education in the UK. It is governed by delegates for over 40 affiliated student unions across the country, and is managed by a Sabbatical General Secretary and volunteers managing non-sabbatical posts.

The Committee democratically represents its members through meetings and an Annual Conference, and also provides information to its affiliates through these meetings and its publications. By responding to papers and proposals of Governmental and non-Governmental organisations, and by keeping in close contact with the National Union of Students and the lecturer's unions, NPC campaigns for the interests of postgraduates on many issues. The needs of students in Scottish and Welsh institutions are also catered for by the NPC's Scottish and Welsh subcommittees.

General correspondence to:

General Secretary:

James Groves
The Graduate College
University of Lancaster
Lancaster
LA2 0PF
Tel: +44 (0)1524 592173
Fax: +44 (0)1524 594218
npc@npc.org.uk
<http://www.npc.org.uk/>

Honorary President: Martin Harris

Chair: Alex Lewis, ajl987@bham.ac.uk

Treasurer: Alex Lewis (acting treasurer)

Conference Secretary: Stuart Purdie, sdjp@st-andrews.ac.uk

Minutes Secretary: Colin Beveridge, colin@beveridge.com

Communications Officer: Chris Neville-Smith, c.j.neville-smith@durham.ac.uk

Equal Opportunities Officer: Ian Hibble, hibblei@cardiff.ac.uk

Project Officers:

Tim Brown, t.brown@eim.surrey.ac.uk

Ibi Erekosima, ereks46@hotmail.com

Sam Hardy, shardy@bio.warwick.ac.uk

One position vacant

Ordinary Executive Officers:

Sue Barnes, s.barnes@worc.ac.uk

Amanda Slinn, amanda_slinn@hotmail.com

Scottish Subcommittee:

Chair: Chris Stuart, 96003472@napier.ac.uk

Vice-chair/Secretary: Jim Ewing

Treasurer: Stuart Purdie

Welsh Subcommittee:

Chair: David Manning, manningdj@cardiff.ac.uk

Vice-chair/Secretary: Ian Hibble

Treasurer: To be elected

Finance Subcommittee:

Martin Gough, George Moreton, Adrian Furse

Constitutional Subcommittee:

Peter Campbell, Ruth Chandler, Chris Stuart, Rachel Yould

NPC Affiliates:

Aberdeen	London Institute
Anglia	Manchester
Aston	Napier
Bath	Nottingham
Birkbeck	Oxford
Birmingham*	Plymouth
Bristol	Queen Margaret UC
Cardiff	Queen Mary
Coventry	Robert Gordon
Cranfield (Cranfield site)	Roehampton
Durham	Salford
Edge Hill	St Andrews
Essex	Staffordshire
Glasgow	Surrey
Gloucestershire	Sussex
Hull	Swansea
Imperial	UCL
Institute of Education	Warwick
Kent	Wolverhampton*
Lancaster	Worcester
Leeds	York
ULU	

*: Affiliation for 2001-2002 to be confirmed.

Affiliated recognised bodies:

The Mature Students' Union
The National Union of Students