

As the academic year rapidly comes to an end and deadlines become ever more threatening, panic-stricken students run everywhere and "invigilation" is the new buzzword in the postgrad lounge. But don't worry, take a deep breath and keep your head down safe in the knowledge that pretty soon the campus and everything it has to offer will be your domain. When the undergraduates have fled, leaving behind them a pile of discarded revision notes, it will be time for that indefinable creature known as the postgraduate to raise its head and once more become the rightful king of the jungle — yes, it's the summer and there's plenty of sunshine for everyone in *pn*.

In this edition we will find out how our new friend John Wakeford can help postgrads in a crisis, catch up with Margaret Hodge to talk about what the government is or is not doing for you and in true popstars style we launch our nationwide search for the NPC General Secretary 2003/2004. Have a great summer, I look forward to sharing a bottle of NPC wine with you at the annual conference in Worcester.



— Paul Williams
Communications Officer
www.npc.org.uk

WANTED

How would you like to use all the experience you've gained in your union, association or postgraduate committee, work for a national student organisation... and be paid for your time?

The election of the UK's only full-time national officer for postgraduate students, the NPC General Secretary, will take place on 16 August 2003 at the NPC's Annual General Meeting in University College Worcester. The AGM takes place during our Annual Conference (14-17 August 2003) but you do not need to be registered as a conference delegate to attend, or stand, at our AGM.

From 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004 the successful candidate will become the public face of the NPC to liaise with student and government bodies and

the media. As well as general administration the General Secretary will also represent the NPC at NUS National Council, the UK Council for Graduate Education and other national bodies, and take chief responsibility for writing the NPC's responses to public consultations.

Although the position is very demanding the General Secretary will be part of a team of NPC officers (also to be elected at the AGM) from across the UK who will work on behalf of UK Postgraduates.



This is an ideal opportunity for an experienced postgraduate officer to gain valu-

General Secretary for 2003-2004

able experience of representation at a national level. Training and support from the rest of the NPC Executive, as well as past General Secretaries, will be provided. It is not necessary for candidates to have held an NPC position before, though some knowledge of how we work would be an advantage.

The salary for the position will be determined by the NPC's Financial Subcommittee during July and is expected to be at least two-thirds of the starting postdoctoral salary in the pre-1992 universities.

For more information please contact 01524 39238 or send an e-mail to j.groves@lancaster.ac.uk and James Groves (NPC General Secretary (2000-2002)) will be happy to speak to you in absolute confidence.

NPC Talks to the Government

After cancelling their last meeting in February, Margaret Hodge MBE, Minister for Life Long Learning, Further and Higher Education finally met the NPC for the first time on the 22nd of May.

They were joined by NPC's Honorary President, Prof Sir Martin Harris, to convey NPC policies on postgraduate funding directly to a government audience. The main issues included the much-welcomed benefits brought forward by the white paper to help increase the numbers of research students in the UK, and issues arising from the NPC's recent report on postgraduate funding and priorities.

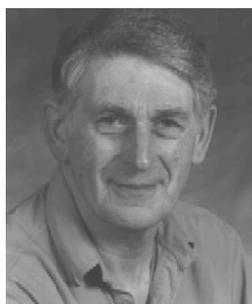
Margaret Hodge was particularly receptive to the recommendation of encouraging Regional Development Agencies to help determine where funding can be better channelled, a mechanism through which postgraduate funding could increase in the future. Other issues raised included the criteria for providing career development loans and the concern that the white paper does not appear to accommodate both taught and research postgraduates, particularly in light of the need to allow graduates to undertake a postgraduate taught degree in order to pursue a research degree. For more information visit:

www.npc.org.uk/features

NPC's New Friend

The NPC have accepted a kind offer from Dr John Wakeford, to provide advice and an invaluable "outsiders" perspective to postgraduate students facing a crisis with their studies or research.

John, who will be speaking at the NPC conference in Worcester, has a long standing academic experience of postgraduates.



Formerly the director of the school of independent studies at the University of Lancaster, he now specialises in consultancy, research, development and programmes for Higher Education Leaders. "There are few places for students to turn in need of advice like this" said Tim Brown, NPC General Secretary who regularly provides advice to students experiencing difficulties. "We're very grateful for John's kind offer, which will be a complement to our charitable activities."

Postgrads with a Mission & a Vision

The NPC have recently adopted the following Mission Statement: "Our mission is to advance, in the public interest, the education of postgraduate students within the United Kingdom. We shall achieve this by democratically representing postgraduates, contributing to discussions, supporting postgraduate representatives and facilitating communication between stakeholders."

The NPC vision

1. Applicants are assessed by their ability to learn not their ability to pay;
2. Learning and research takes place in an environment which promotes and sustains equality of opportunity;
3. Adequate financial, intellectual, pastoral and social support mechanisms are provided.

Realising this vision would enable the individual student to maximise their own potential to the benefit of themselves, academic knowledge, the economy and society as a whole.

pn is edited by Paul Williams, NPC Communications Officer, and co-edited by Tim Brown and produced by Article Seven. It is sent to affiliates' institutions each term, and is also made available on the NPC web site. 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 psmpaw@bath.ac.uk.

NPC Notices

VACANCIES

OPEN FOR ELECTION AT THE OGM IN ESSEX:

- One Project Officer
- One Finance Sub-Committee position
- Two student positions to the Summer Conference of UKCGE. The conference is usually held over two days in July. Any candidate must be willing to report back at a later date.

MEETINGS

- Scottish subcommittee AGM: 14th June
- Welsh subcommittee AGM: 29th May

All positions for next year's Scottish and Welsh subcommittee will be open.

Please contact the General Secretary for more information

NPC AGM: 16th August

(Annual NPC conference: 14–17 August 2003)

All positions for the Management Subcommittee (except the chair of the Welsh & Scottish subcommittees will be) will be open for election. Details will be posted nearer the time.

If you are handing over office to a new representative before the Conference, please inform the General Secretary well in advance so that voting rights can be confirmed before the elections.

"Access All Areas" in Worcester

The 14th Annual NPC Conference is to be hosted by University College Worcester from 14th – 17th August 2003.

This year's theme is **ACCESS ALL AREAS: Widening participation in post-graduate education**. We welcome anybody with an interest in postgraduate education and in particular, postgraduate students and officers, sabbatical officers and institutional administrators/tutors.

The conference will be discussing some of the current key issues affecting postgraduates in the UK and will provide plenty of opportunities to get your points across. With our conference social events, including the conference dinner on Friday night, we hope you will make the best of your time in Worcester. Be sure not to miss the annual General Meeting on the Saturday (16th August) where you can find out more about the inner workings of the NPC and stand or vote for next year's national postgraduate officers.



We can't reveal everything here, but rest assured that there will be something for everyone. We hope to see you there. The current provisional programme and registration form are available at www.npc.org.uk.

Travel

Worcester has two railway stations, Foregate Street being the closest to the campus, but Shrub Hill is equally accessible. There are two links to the M5 and the campus is sign-posted from Junction 7.

— Sue Barnes, Conference Secretary

New Publication: "Providing for the Postgraduate Market"

The results from an NPC investigation into the interests of postgraduates was published earlier this month. The report brings together the research undertaken by Tim Brown last year while an NPC Project Officer.

In particular it reveals how postgraduates perceive having exclusive facilities catered directly to their needs and also how they feel about segregation from undergraduates. "An interesting response" said Tim Brown "is that facilities for the postgraduate market are on the increase". The NPC plans to follow this report with future guidelines for postgraduate provision. The publication is available freely on the website downloadable at

www.npc.org.uk/essentials/publications

New: "Employed Postgrad Charter"

The NPC has recently produced an Employed Postgraduates Charter to outline the employment rights for postgraduates who teach in post 1992 institutions.

In addition to the charter for pre-1992 institutions this provides a valuable resource which can be used as the basis for a policy at your HE institution.

The charter covers a number of basic entitlements that the NPC believes should be available to postgraduates employed within HE institutions, these include; fair and equal access to employment opportunities, adequate study time, full induction training, nationally agreed pay levels and pay for all responsibilities and work undertaken. Visit: www.npc.org.uk/essentials/publications for the full charter.

NPC Responds to the Bologna Declaration

The NPC has been asked by the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB) to send a response on the Bologna Declaration which aims to standardise degree programmes across Europe.

One concern is that this may affect the standards of UK degrees.

For the full response visit:
www.npc.org.uk/features

For more information about the declaration visit:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/bologna_en.html

NPC Treasurer Speaks with the AHRB

This February the Arts and Humanities Research Board held a Research Strategy Seminar on "Issues in Masters Programmes in the Arts & Humanities".

NPC's Tim Roll-Pickering sent the following report:

The day began with Professor Geoffrey Crossick, Chief Executive of the AHRB welcoming the announcement that the AHRB would be granted Research Council status, as detailed in the government's recent Higher Education White Paper. Speakers, including Peter Williams, Chief Executive of the Quality Assurance Agency, gave details to show how MSc. programmes had developed and how they now fit into the post

Bologna framework and the European Credit Transfer Scheme.

I was asked to introduce the discussion on "What students want from masters programmes" to express the postgraduates point of view. I supported this with consultations collected via the *postgrad* Jiscmail discussion list and the NPC OGM in Cardiff. The discussion sessions which also included "How master's programmes can prepare students for research" and "How master's programmes can prepare students for professions" were very productive and the NPC's opinions gave an invaluable insight into the AHRB's work from the student's perspective.

 the national postgraduate committee

The National Postgraduate Committee is an independent charity that represents and promotes the needs of UK postgraduates on a national and international stage voicing your opinions to the funding councils, review boards, academic bodies, the media, the government and other relevant bodies. Comprising postgraduate representatives from over 40 institutions and managed by an elected full time general secretary and a team of elected part time officers the NPC forms a national support network issuing UK universities and colleges with up to date guidelines and advice on current affairs. These range from recommended provisions of facilities to the instigation of learning contracts. Through regular OGMs and mailing lists the NPC fulfils the role of a national postgraduate forum providing formal responses to government and non-government papers and proposals. The needs of students in Scottish and Welsh institutions are also catered for by the NPC's Scottish and Welsh Subcommittees.

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

Treasurer: Tim Roll-Pickering,
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Scottish Subcommittee:

Chair: Chris Stuart, chrisscotts@yaho.co.uk

Vice-chair/Secretary: Jim Ewing,
7823561E@student.gla.ac.uk

Treasurer: David Smaith, david.smith@totalise.co.uk

Welsh Subcommittee:

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

Vice-chair/Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Natasha Hirst, natashahirst@yahoo.com

Finance Subcommittee:

Tim Roll-Pickering, Stuart Purdie, Natasha Hirst, Martin Gough, Tim Brown, Chris Neville-Smith, James Groves. One position vacant.

Constitutional Subcommittee:

Chris Neville-Smith, Peter Campbell, Alex Lewis, Tim Brown, James Groves, Chris Stuart

Affiliations for the year 2002-2003 at time of going to print:

Aberdeen	Leeds
Anglia	London Institute
Aston	LSE
Bath	Manchester
Birkbeck	Nottingham
Bristol	Open University
Cardiff	Oxford
Coventry	Queen Margaret
Cranfield, Cranfield	Sheffield
Durham	St. Andrews
Edinburgh	Surrey
Edge Hill	Sussex
Essex	Swansea
Glasgow	UCL
Gloucestershire	UMIST
Hull	ULU
Imperial	Warwick
Institute of Education	Wolverhampton
Kent	Worcester
Lancaster	York

Affiliated recognised bodies:

The Mature Students' Union
The National Union of Students
Council for International Students (CIS)

Associated bodies:

National Union of Students (NUS) special regions - NUS Scotland, NUS Wales and NUS-USI Northern Ireland
Coalition for Higher Education Students in Scotland (CHESS)
UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)