



NUS Activities in Action: Student Activities for Postgrads.



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The National Postgraduate Committee.



- To advance in the public interest, the education of postgraduate students within the United Kingdom.
- Three Visions;
 - ability to learn not their ability to pay
 - environment which promotes and sustains equality of opportunity
 - financial, intellectual, pastoral and social support mechanisms.

Student Activities for Postgrads – Session Objectives.



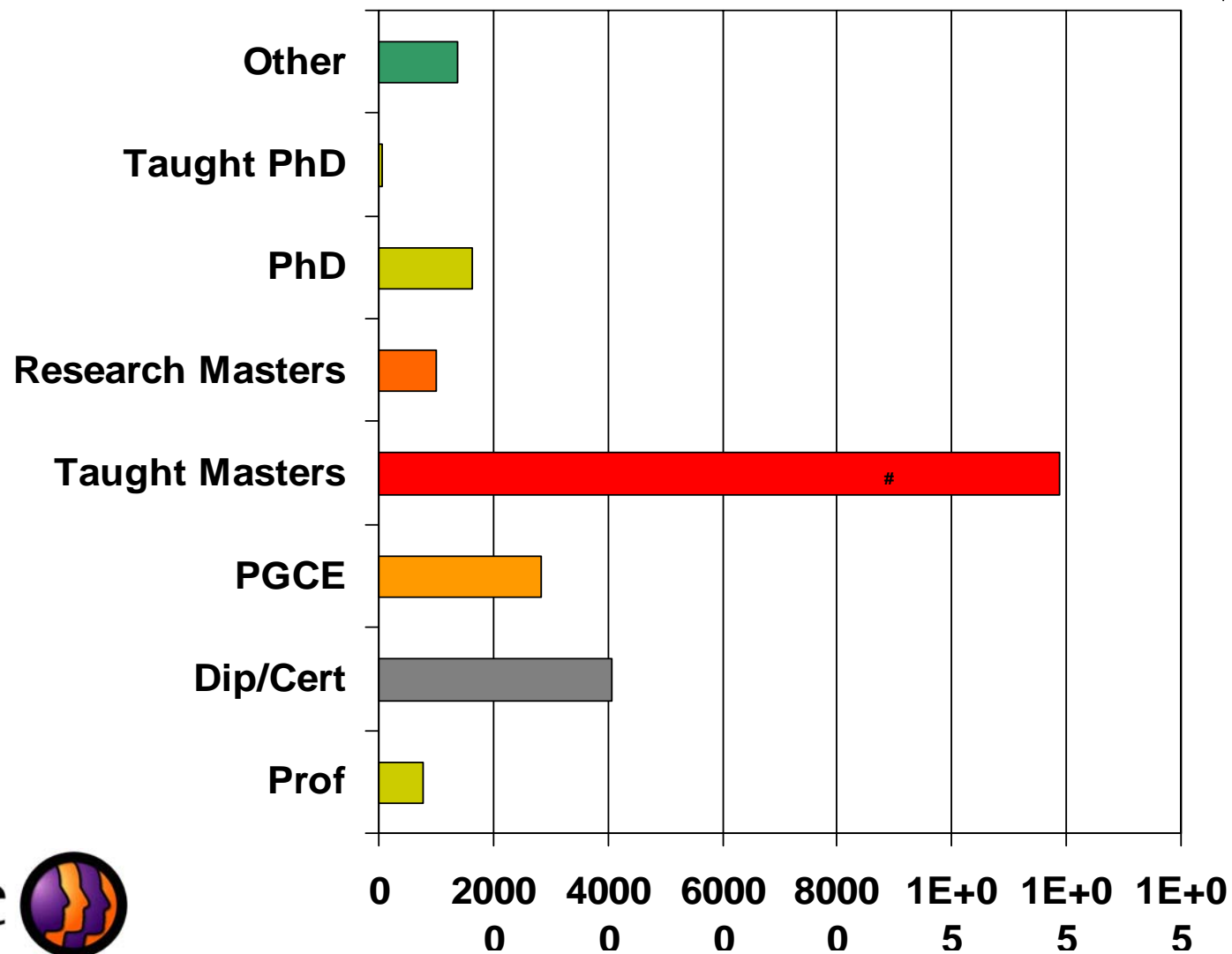
- Who is a postgraduate student?
- Issues affecting engaging postgraduates.
- Encouraging involvement.



Who is a postgraduate Student?

- Students taking courses who already have a first degree or equivalent.
- Diverse student body:
 - Taught and research, Part-time and full time, Distance learning, Vocational courses such as PGCEs, Conversion courses assuming no prior knowledge, Top-up courses to broaden 3rd year UG course, Specific professional courses ...

Postgraduates 2002/03 by Aim (HEPI, 2004).



How many Postgraduates are there?



- 58% of postgraduates were part-time.
- 31% were from outside the UK.

Key differences between undergraduate and postgraduate.



- Nature of their studies,
- Semi-staff status,
- Funding and fees issues,
- More likely to be international,
- Mature, distant or part-time,
- More isolated,
- Different social and welfare needs,
- Don't feel part of the Union.



Postgraduate Issues

- Increased workloads and time pressure,
- Reservation to join UG dominated groups but need to socialise,
- UG timetable of most clubs and societies.
- Union is perceived as UG.
- Accommodation – off campus, with family.
- Self-funding.
- But ... some already involved – find out why.

Encouraging Involvement – U/G P/G divide?



- Postgraduates teaching – interacting with their students.
- Encouraging shared interests – highlighting activities (Sport, academic, cultural).
- Society officers aware of different needs of PG students (commitment, family, weekends, time).

Encouraging Involvement – the Summer term.



- Postgraduates through whole year – academic needs and social support.
- Working with Graduate Schools and departments to run social activities.
- Finding social space and networking opportunity for postgraduates.
- Supporting PGs running activities themselves.

Encouraging Involvement – Promotion.



- Raising awareness of shared interest groups (LGBT, Religious, Cultural).
- Induction and Freshers Week (Raising awareness of societies and union).
- Encouraging postgraduates to run activities themselves (financial support).
- Email, forum and departmental information.

Encouraging involvement – Disability.



- Informal aspects of an induction programme can present issues which may not be anticipated because of the voluntary aspect of social events and the idea that they are not essential for academic success.
- Who checks out the accessibility of a social environment?
 - See: <http://www.premia.ac.uk>

PAVE – Postgraduate Active Volunteering Experience



- Birmingham University Guild of Students project enabling postgraduate students to get involved in voluntary community experience.
- Practical experience, reflection and an option of staff support - voluntary experience tailored individually with flexible development programme.
- Students can choose to go directly into a placement such as Childline, buddying a Granny, conservation, committee work, have one-to-one support or take part in group discussions and training.
- Time commitment voluntary projects dependant on individual time constraints but ideally at least a term and take part in a minimum of three skills development sessions.

Student Activities for Postgrads.



- Variety of student with different needs and requirements.
- Highlighting activities - promotion.
- Widening access – training officers PG needs.
- Supporting self-direction – officer and staff support.



Affiliating to NPC

- Joining the National Postgraduate Committee will benefit your postgraduates by supporting the NPC in representing postgraduate students nationally and locally and to lobby successfully on issues such as council tax exemption for writing up students.
- You will also benefit from a network of other officers all interested and seeking support on the best ways to enhance the postgraduate experience.



Further Resources

- <http://www.npc.org.uk/essentials> or Resource Folder.
- <http://www.npc.org.uk>
- General Secretary, available through npc@npc.org.uk
- Mailing lists: <http://www.npc.org.uk/jiscmail>

