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PGR academic representatives form a very important part of the lines of communication between PGR students and academic staff. It is important to have a representative from our PGR student groups to provide feedback to staff, to committees, to the Doctoral School, and to College more broadly, on what we are doing well and where things can be improved. Seeking individual views are important and we continue to welcome these, but we recognise that not everyone is comfortable expressing their own individual views. PGR academic representatives have the opportunity to provide a voice for all views, allowing staff to gain an impartial understanding of viewpoints, concerns, and feedback from the PGR communities that they represent.

PGR representatives are invaluable in shaping our activities. They help staff understand feedback that is received from students (e.g., through the post-graduate research survey, institutional surveys), how we could better communicate with students, how processes may be improved, etc. Further, they get to question us on our practices, learn about why decisions have been made, and to input into our action plans. We value the contributions at all levels, from if there is feedback needed ad hoc within the department, for representation at Student-Staff Committee meetings (chaired by a PGR academic representation), on School level committees, and College committees. We have seen that we have gained insights into our PGR communities to better understand their views and take on board suggestions to improve research culture, research training, challenges with mental health, the diverse impact of Covid-19, communication, and our processes to support our PGRs. We have the opportunity to work together to strengthen the PGR experience, across RHUL, within the school, and within departments.

PGR representatives often gain valuable insight into our processes, they gain leadership and communication skills through coming to understand the diverse views of their peers and how to clearly and respectfully integrate views (where possible) to communicate to staff. They are part of the team that make their programmes stronger.