



USI VP Postgraduate Affairs / Leas-Uachtarán do Chúrsaí Iarchéime

This document provides a brief overview of the key aspects of the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs role. The day-to-day functions of any elected role will change in line with the key priorities at the time, and the policies which the role is mandated to carry out which change from year to year in line with the Annual Congress.

Key aspects of role

The key aspects of the role of Vice-President for Postgraduate Affairs are as follows:

Direct responsibility for USI's work on policy relating to postgraduates, as well as engagement with postgraduates across all cycles (Taught, Research Masters, PhD, etc.).

Assisting the vice-president for campaigns with matters in campaigns relating to postgraduate issues, as well as the creation and coordination of campaigns in cooperation with the VP Campaigns.

Chairing the Postgraduate Working Group, a meeting of elected SU Officers and engaged postgraduates to discuss local and national matters concerning postgraduates.

Committees/Boards

Eurodoc – Eurodoc is a European-wide organization representing those working towards doctoral qualifications (PhD cycle). Generally each country has two seats, often occupied by one organization, but in the case of Ireland, one seat is held by USI, while the other is held by IFUT. The AGM occurs around July/August and meetings thereafter occur roughly every six weeks. Different meetings occur between organized working groups, much like in USI.

Student Survey – Student Survey.ie is the group behind the national survey taking place every two years. The VPPGA sits on their PGR Studentsurvey committee to discuss issues such as relevant questions, data collection/analysis, and rollout/advertising plans. The PGR Studentsurvey in specifically affects postgrads in a research capacity, while the standard Studentsurvey is used to record data for those participating in Taught Masters. The function of the Student Survey.ie PGR Committee is to ensure successful rollout of the survey and efficient interpretation of data, the committee meets once per quarter.

National Framework for Doctoral Education Advisory Forum (HEA) – A forum based around the education of those pursuing PhDs in Ireland, this forum discusses a variety of issues such as funding and research programmes. The forum meets at least twice in a year, and more if

it is felt additional meetings are necessary. Usually the first meeting for a newly elected USI member takes place around October, with a second meeting around April.

Research and Graduate Education Committee – This committee advises the government on how best to implement strategy in the postgraduate sector. The forum meets at least twice in a year, and more if necessary. The first meeting will likely be around November, with a second meeting in March or April.

Campaigns and Events

The VPPGA is specifically responsible for organizing and delivering the Postgraduate Symposium, an annual event for postgraduates across all fields to network, discuss research, and attend talks on a variety of subjects such as postgraduate mental health and academic integrity in research. This event usually occurs in the Spring around late February/early March. The exact date is decided in cooperation with the VP Campaigns.

The VPPGA also has a responsibility to feed in on campaigns being run by USI to ensure that postgrads have been considered in the planning of any campaigns.

Additional Connections

The #ResearchMatters Campaign is a competition that USI conducted alongside the IRC, as the event would usually have presentations of research with a prize for the best presentation as decided by a judging panel. #ResearchMatters is a remote digital campaign that encourages video submissions of research for three winners (1 primary winner, 2 runner ups). This campaign is an excellent means of engaging research postgrads and promoting both USI and the IRC.

NStEP – The National Student Engagement Programme aims to drive higher student engagement across institutions, ensuring students are equipped to discuss policy and implementation on their campuses. The VP for Postgraduate Affairs works with NStEP on tailoring training and delivery to postgraduates (both taught and research) to ensure they have effective representation in their study and work.

SIPTU – USI collaborates with SIPTU on issues regarding the representation of postgraduates in Ireland (researchers, workers etc.) previously this group drafted and launched the Postgraduate Charter in Spring 2020. This group discusses how best to represent postgraduates at the national level between the two organizations.

IRC – USI collaborates with the IRC (the Irish Research Council) in terms of policy and ensuring that those in receipt of IRC funding are held to a fair standard in all respects, while also discussing issues directly affecting postgraduates such as supervisory committees and funding.

If you would like any more information on this role, please contact Adam on postgrad@usi.ie