Dear Sponsor

Recruitment of University of Sussex Postgraduate Researchers (2023)

You may be aware that the University and College Union (UCU) is currently engaged in a marking and assessment boycott as part of a dispute with university employers over pay and working conditions. This is a national dispute which began on 20 April 2023 and is scheduled to continue until 30 September 2023.

The action affects 145 universities, including the University of Sussex.

The boycott is affecting all forms of assessment and examination related activity at all levels of study where staff are exercising their right to take part in the boycott. This means some student work might not be marked until the boycott ends.

There will be University of Sussex postgraduate researchers (PGRs, e.g., doctoral students) who are unaffected by the boycott, and will have had their viva voce examinations and awards confirmed, but there will also be:

- Some PGRs who have submitted their thesis but are awaiting their viva voce examination.
- Some PGRs who have completed their viva voce examination and have submitted corrections that are awaiting consideration.
- Some PGRs will be awaiting final confirmation of their award by the Research Degree Exam Board.

Once the boycott ends, all outstanding viva voce examinations will be scheduled, resubmissions and corrections will be assessed, and the University Research Degree Exam Board will confirm final awards.

The impact of the boycott is understandably unsettling for our PGRs, including those who are sponsored and in receipt of funding that may be subject to conditions. Such conditions may include the repayment of funds where the PhD has not been completed within a specified period of time. We hope the information provided here will help to explain the situation to you and reassure you that degree outcomes will be available as soon as marking and assessment is complete.

Thank you for your understanding.

Professor Jeremy E Niven
Dean of the Doctoral School