

The Greenwich Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme – PGRDP

Programme Handbook

September 2016



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Purpose of this document.....

The purpose of this document is to inform you about the University of Greenwich approach to your personal development and skills training whilst you are studying for the award of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the university - an initiative known as the Greenwich **Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP)**. Details relating to the elements and areas comprising the *PGRDP* are contained in five separate annexes at the end of this document, with each relating to a specific 'strand' comprising an important element of the overall development programme. Courses, workshops and events supporting the *PGRDP* will run in parallel with, and complement the skills you develop as you work through your research project towards your degree. It is **mandatory** for you to engage in the strands comprising the overall *PGRDP* initiative, unless the university exempts you from doing so for any part of the programme. As a consequence, you must read this document and understand what is expected of you in terms of developing your skills base. Should you not understand what is required of you in engaging in the Greenwich *Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme*, you should seek clarification from your supervisors in the first instance, your Faculty Director of Research and Enterprise or from the university's Postgraduate Research Office (PGRO).

Why is Skills Development important to you?

Postgraduate research students, such as you, have your own reasons for wishing to engage in a programme of research, which, if all goes well, should lead to you being awarded a higher degree such as a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The traditional view of postgraduate research leading to a doctoral award is achieved through studying a very narrow research topic in considerable depth. Some liken such programmes to being 'an inch wide and a mile deep', or, if you prefer, a 'centimetre wide and a kilometre deep', as shown by the 'I' model in Fig 1a.

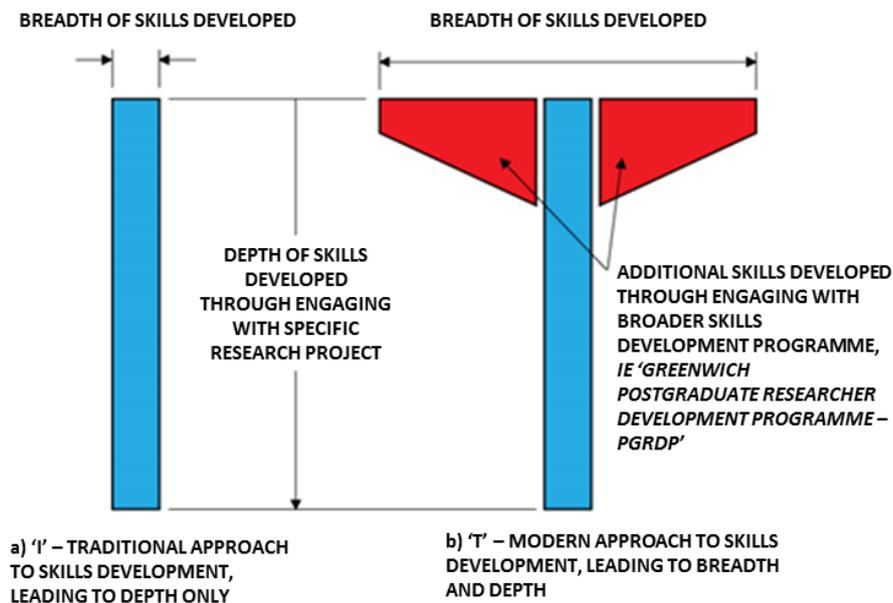


FIG 1. 'T' NOT 'I' - GENERALISED REPRESENTATION OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNDERTAKING DOCTORAL STUDY

To achieve the end goal of such a degree requires students to acquire a very high level of skills that are specific to the narrow area of research being explored. However, given that in the UK some 50% of research degree holders now take up employment in different facets of the world of work, it is clear that the very narrow, highly specific level of skills developed during such studies do not necessarily best prepare you to take up employment in the world of work outside of universities, where the ability to demonstrate a wider range of personal and professional skills is an essential requirement. Therefore, engagement in a meaningful, broad based skills development and training programme, sitting alongside your research programme, is an essential element of modern day MPhil and PhD studies. Therefore, this modern approach to your studies is more likened to the form of a 'T' as shown in Fig 1b). Recognising this, important external bodies have set out expectations on universities to broaden the skills bases of their research students. In response to these expectations, at Greenwich both subject-specific and broader based skills are now developed and practised by research students through engaging, at the first available opportunity, with the five complementary strands of activity comprising the **Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme**, commonly referred to as the **PGRDP**, which is represented in a diagrammatic form in Fig 2. Such is the university's belief that active involvement with this programme will enhance your chances of capitalising on your research degree as a stepping stone to a successful and rewarding career, that your engagement with it is a mandatory component of your studies as you work towards your research degree.

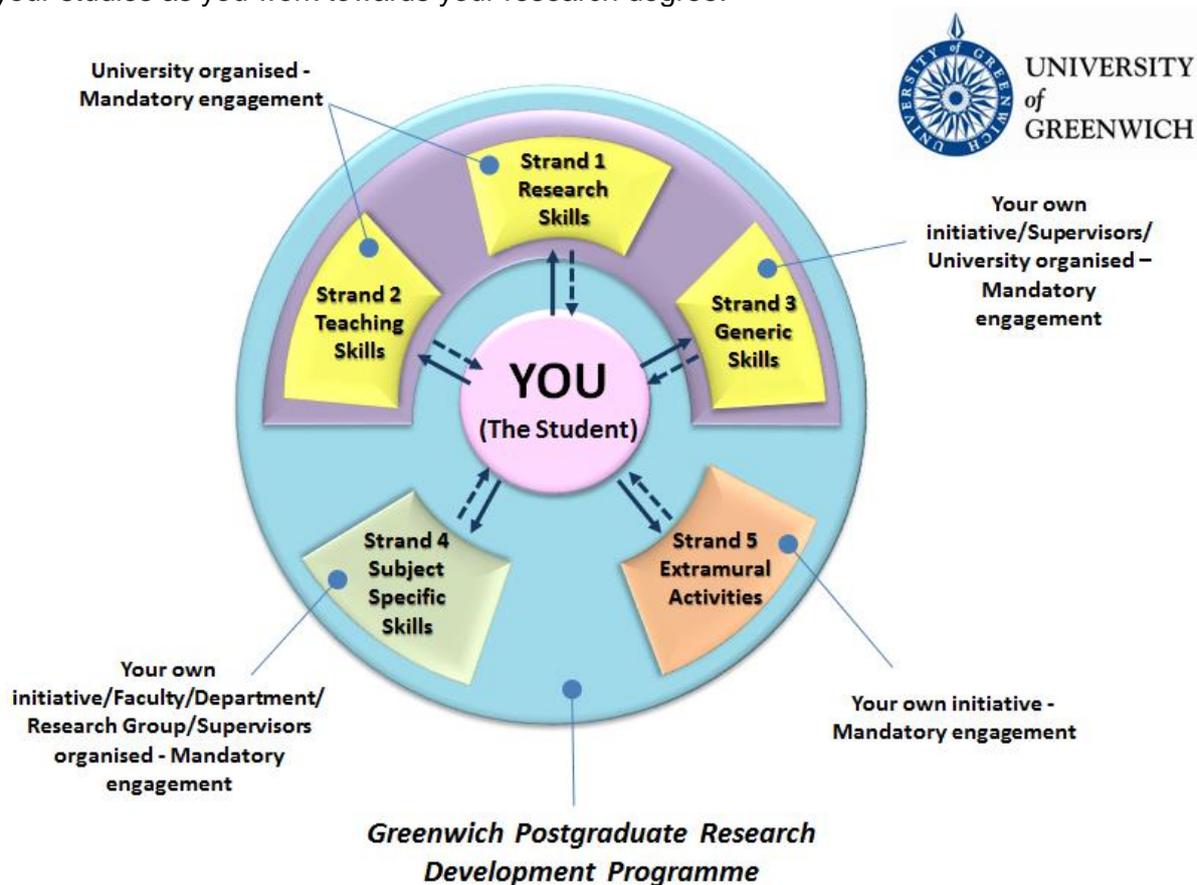
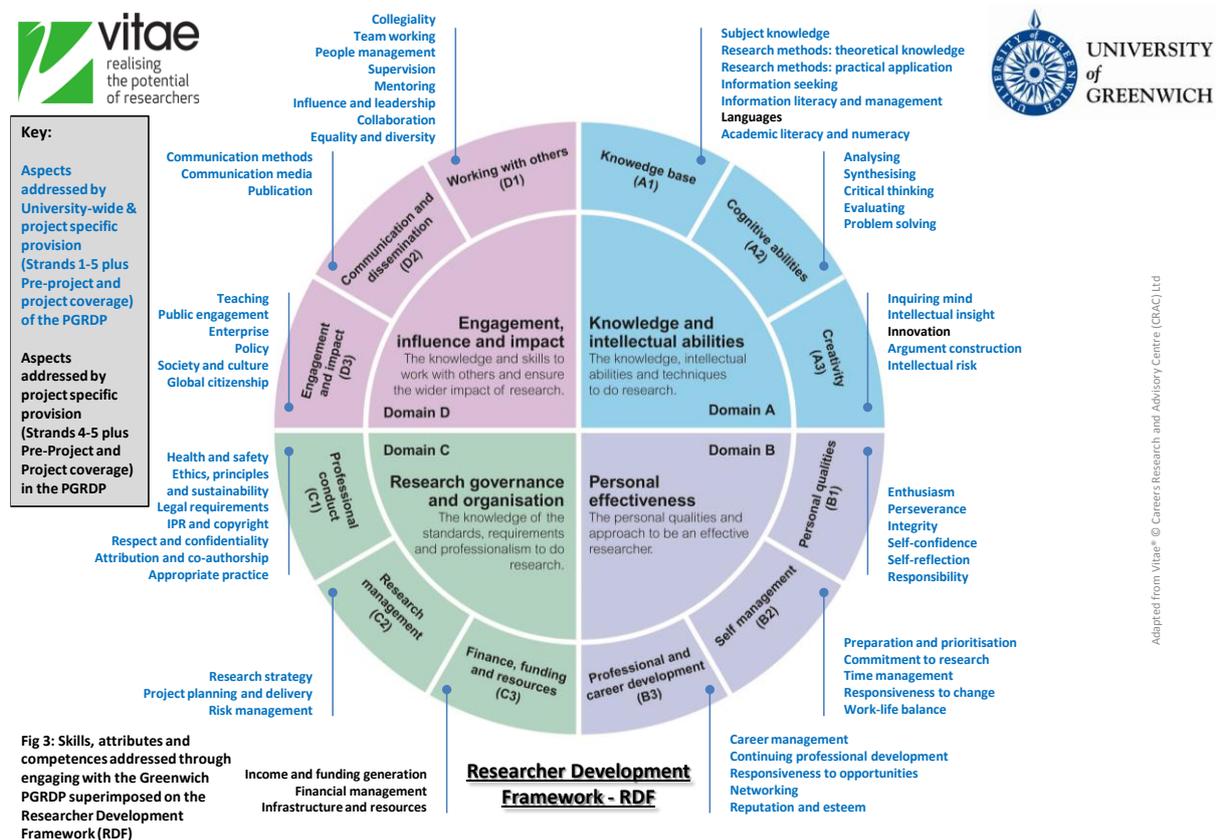


Fig 2: The Greenwich Postgraduate Research Development Programme – Responsibilities for Delivery and Engagement

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What is expected of the university and you?

In addition to the reasons set out in the previous section relating to preparing yourself for future employment, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)¹ has set out the explicit expectation that higher education institutions, such as Greenwich, that have research degree awarding powers, will provide postgraduate research students with appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development through the advancement of research and other skills. The QAA is not prescriptive about the way the universities should go about developing such skills in their postgraduate researchers, but expects their various approaches to work in concert with, at an appropriate level, the national framework of personal skills and attributes set out in Researcher Development Framework (RDF) developed by Vitae². In essence, the RDF provides a nationally recognised framework of skills and attributes research students such as you are expected to focus on developing during the course of your studies, and to be able to demonstrate these to an appropriate level on completion of your studies. Therefore, acting in the best interests of its research students, the university supports the aims and objectives of the RDF. This framework is encapsulated by the RDF 'wheel', which is shown in a diagrammatic form in Fig 3.



¹ The Government approved 'watchdog' overseeing the quality assurance and maintenance of standards of undergraduate and postgraduate provision in higher education institutions in the UK

² A Government approved body concerned with the personal development of postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions such as Greenwich

As may be seen from this diagram, the broad range of skills and attributes you should work at developing during the course of your studies may be divided in four main areas, called domains:

- Domain A – Knowledge and intellectual abilities
- Domain B – Personal effectiveness
- Domain C – Research governance and organisation
- Domain D – Engagement, influence and impact

The diagram gives an indication of the range of skills and attributes associated with each domain, and, thereby, those that you should focus on developing. You should not be daunted by this listing as many of these elements will be developed as an integral part of you working through your programme of research and the *PGRDP*, as shown by those skills and attributes set out in the blue text around the periphery of the RDF wheel. It is also important to realise that you are not expected to develop and demonstrate all of these skills and attributes to the same breadth and depth, as this will depend the nature of your own research programme and how you see your future career developing.

You should note that regularly recording and evidencing your engagement with the Greenwich *PGRDP* through your '[Postgraduate Research Student Logbook and Professional Development Portfolio](#)' will enable you and your supervisors to identify areas you need to develop and record evidence of your progress. It will also form a valuable record of evidence of how you have gone about developing yourself and what you have achieved during your studies, thereby forming an evidence base for potential employers on completion of your studies. For these reasons, it is a requirement that you submit a copy of this Logbook and Portfolio for review, with supporting evidence, when you are required to do so, including when you submit your thesis for examination. Should this be considered to be unsatisfactory, you will not be permitted to progress to the examination for the research degree to which you aspire until you have addressed the identified deficiencies.

Given the foregoing sections, the messages to you are clear:

- take the matter of your personal skills development very seriously and take responsibility for your own learning and development,
- engage in and benefit from the Greenwich *PGRDP*, which has been designed with you in mind, and
- record all evidence of your personal engagement and progress with the *PGRDP* using your 'Postgraduate Research Student Logbook and Professional Development Portfolio'.

The remainder of this document outlines the various strands comprising the *PGRDP*, and how you engage with them.

What is the Greenwich *Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme* – *PGRDP*?

The *Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme* is the university's umbrella approach to assisting you to develop the skills and attributes that will help in putting you on the road to:

- making good progress with your programme of research, and
- being better equipped to face the world of work following you completing your research degree

In essence, the *PGRDP* is delivered through a combination of topics delivered in an explicit way and those developed in a more subtle manner as your research programme progresses.

As set out in Fig 2, the Greenwich *PGRDP* comprises of five complementary strands, namely:

- Strand 1 – *Introduction to Research Skills*
- Strand 2 - *Teaching Skills*
- Strand 3 - *Generic and Key Skills*
- Strand 4 - *Subject Specific Research Skills*
- Strand 5 - *Extramural Activities*

Details on the content and coverage of each strand are given in the Annexes that form an integral part of this document. However, an insight into the nature of each strand is given here:

Strand 1 – Introduction to Research Skills – This strand is intended to provide you with basic approaches and tools that will be valuable to you in executing your agreed programme of research, as well as providing you with a valuable insight into wider research techniques beyond your current areas of interest. An underlying theme of ‘professionalism’ is also developed through this strand. The strand will be delivered by a series of face to face lectures and presentations by university staff. Coverage includes topics such as contextualisation (where does your research sit and fit), seeking information, research and project planning, time management, good research practice, research ethics, roles and responsibilities, etc. This strand will also be reinforced by your mandatory engagement in a series of on-line modules, the majority of which will need to be passed before you are permitted to be assessed for transferring your registration status with the university from MPhil to PhD. Further information about this strand is given in Annex 1.

You will, of course, be expected to continue to refine your research skills as your research programme progresses, to a point where they become quite sophisticated. The form this takes will, for obvious reasons, depend on the nature of your own research project, and, therefore, this refinement process will form an integral part of you developing your subject specific skills as set out in Strand 4 below, along with complementary approaches delivered at the local level by your Supervisor, Research Group, Department and Faculty.

Strand 2 – Teaching Skills – Many postgraduate research students have the opportunity to support the undergraduate teaching function within their Faculty, which could be through tutorials, laboratory demonstrating, supporting tutorials and the like. This strand will provide the basics of good teaching practice so that you may engage in such activities with confidence. Such experience will also provide a good basis in academic practice for those who are focussing on an academic career following their PhD research studies. Such training is prerequisite to becoming a recognised ‘Postgraduate Research Student Teaching Assistant’ in the university, which, in itself, will be a valuable addition to the CV of those who are considering pursuing a career in higher education. Engagement will also enable you to develop your communication skills, irrespective of whether you are required to engage in the teaching function or not. Further details are given in Annex 2.

Strand 3 - Generic and Key Skills – This area is sometimes referred to as Transferable Skills. It encompasses those skills that a professional, irrespective of their discipline, are expected to possess - for example, good communication, presentation skills, good base-line computing skills, critical thinking, team working, networking, career management skills etc. You are expected to develop some of these skills as a matter of course through working with

your supervisors as you progress through your programme of research, whereas the base material for you to develop in other areas will be delivered to you in more explicit ways. There is also an expectation that you will be proficient in using assistive tools such as 'EndNote' and 'Turnitin'. This strand also requires your mandatory attendance at two presentations which are aimed at assisting you to prepare for your MPhil/PhD transfer and your final examination. Additionally, this strand incorporates optional attendance at a short course aimed specifically at improving the standard of English of international postgraduate students. Further details are provided in Annex 3.

Strand 4 - Subject Specific Research Skills - Given that in satisfying the requirements for a doctoral award a student must demonstrate 'an original contribution to knowledge', it follows that no two research projects, and the associated student experience, will be the same. Therefore, your programme and experience will be unique and personalised to you. As a result, you will need to build on the basic research skills developed through engagement with Strand 1, to acquire and develop more in-depth research skills that are particular to you to enable you to progress and succeed with your programme of research. As a consequence of this, individual need and the nature of such skills, along with support in developing in this area, cannot be provided centrally from within the university, but must be identified and developed between you, your supervisors and your Department/Faculty, and they will work with you in this important area of skills development. Further details are given in Annex 4.

Strand 5 – Extramural Activities – In the context of the *PRGDP*, extramural activities means you using your own initiative to seek out and engage in 'events' that are outside the confines of the main thrust of your research programme, but, nevertheless, assist in developing you and your knowledge base. The rationale for this is that by doing so you will **broaden your knowledge base**, learning from observing 'best practice' from first class communicators, as well as providing further opportunities for networking, thereby enhancing your network of contacts. The university is not prescriptive as to how you should engage in such activities, but expects that as you are working towards becoming 'autonomous learner' and a developing professional, you will take the initiative and responsibility to further broaden and develop your knowledge and skills base in this way. Attendance at four such events each academic session over the duration of your research programme should be the minimum level of engagement. Further details are provided in Annex 5.

Collectively, when taken as a whole, the subject matter contained within these five strands address a wide range of skills and attributes set out in the Researcher Development Framework devised by Vitae. This is demonstrated by Fig 3, where the skills and attributes encompassed by the Greenwich *PGRDP* are mapped on to the RDF. From this it follows that your engagement in the *PGRDP* will go a long way towards you acquiring the skills and attributes set out and expected by both the university and external national bodies. Most importantly, the acquisition of such skills, attributes and competences will go a long way to preparing you for the world of work beyond your research degree, or, for more mature students, engagement will enhance and further your existing skills and knowledge base in a continuous way during the course of your studies.

Responsibilities for delivery and requirements for engagement with the PGRDP

As set out in the table below, to assist you to acquire the base material that will enable you to, with practice, hone the skills associated with these the five strands of activity, your full engagement with the whole *PGRDP* initiative is mandatory, unless you are formally exempt from engaging with some parts of the programme.

Strand of <i>PGRDP</i>	Responsibility for delivery	Engagement status
1 – Introduction to Research Skills	University	Mandatory
2 - Teaching Skills	University	Mandatory
3 – Generic and Key Skills	Your own initiative, Supervisors, University	Mandatory
4 - Subject Specific Research Skills	Your own initiative, Supervisors, Research Group, Department, Faculty	Mandatory
5 - Extramural Activities	Your own initiative	Mandatory

Your engagement should start as soon as possible with you undertaking a ‘skills audit’ with your supervisors to determine your current levels of skills, particularly with regard to identifying at an early stage what subject specific skills you will need to develop as an integral part of Strand 4. This process will also determine whether you may be exempt from any element of the *PGRDP* on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL, for which you must provide concrete evidence to support any claim(s) for this. Further details on this process are given in Annex 6.

Progress in the area of your skills development should be kept under regular review at formal progress meetings with your supervisors, and, particularly with regard to Strand 4, making changes to accommodate developments with your research programme. All of the foregoing should be formally recorded in your ‘Postgraduate Research Student Logbook and Professional Development Portfolio’, the proforma for which is available at:

<http://www.gre.ac.uk/research/current/logbook>

You should note that your engagement with the *PGRDP* will be monitored, and if insufficient effort and engagement is evident on your part, you will not be permitted to progress with your programme of research. So, the best way to avoid this is to fully engage with the *PGRDP* in a positive and proactive way, and ensuring that your Logbook/Portfolio is updated on a regular basis. Additionally, it will be this Logbook/Portfolio that will provide evidence to potential employers that you have actively engaged on a comprehensive programme of activities aimed at enhancing your personal skills base.

The content comprising each of these five strands will be delivered in different ways and, as set out in Fig 4, over different timescales as appropriate to the subject matter, and when it is considered most timely for you to receive it.

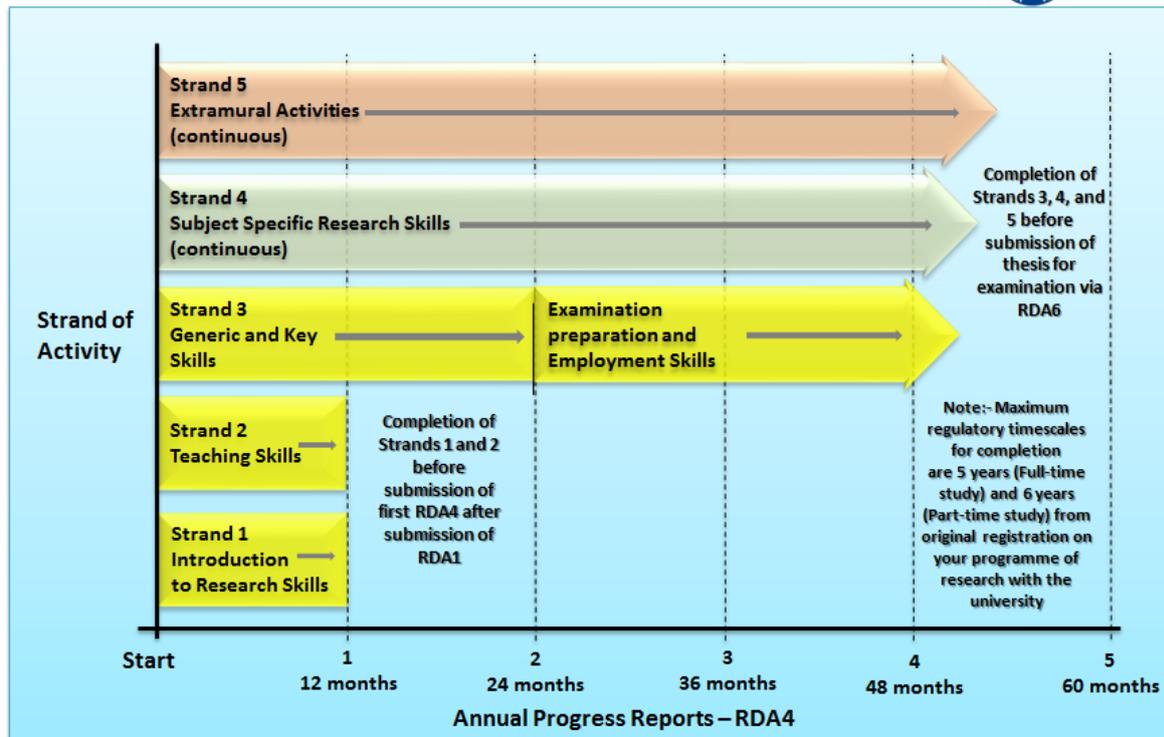


Fig 4: Timescales for engagement and completion of strands of activity comprising PGRDP

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Therefore, it is your responsibility to seek out information about when you are required to attend events, to understand when your involvement is required and to accommodate such requirements within your overall programme of work. You can do this by checking when lectures, courses and events are planned, and signing up to attend them through:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

It is your responsibility to check this page on a regular basis so that you do not miss any events you are required to attend. It is also your responsibility to make arrangements to attend these events.

..... and remember - **‘Practice makes Perfect’**

You should realise that by simply attending the various events and activities associated with the five strands comprising the *PGRDP* you will not acquire the skills or attributes associated with the subject matter being addressed. Skills have to be developed through practice, and only by practising until you can do something instinctively when faced with a given set of circumstances, can you truly claim that you have acquired a particular skill. Recognising this, you should also realise that the content of the sessions and events comprising Strands 1, 2 and 3 of the *PGRDP* have been specifically designed to provide you with the basic points, scope, good practice etc. for you to then practice developing and refining your skills in these particular areas. In short, you should not look at attending these events as a means of instantly acquiring skills, because attendance alone will not achieve this, rather attendance is a means

by which experienced staff may deliver initial material to you that will then enable you, through continual practice, to develop and hone your approach to developing your personal skills base. To achieve this, you should take every opportunity to practice your skills development as you work through your programme of research. In this area of career development, the old adage of '**practice makes perfect**' is particularly true. So, follow this advice, and, remember, do not be afraid to ask your supervisors to assist you with this aspect of you developing your skill base – help is at hand!

Good luck!

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme - PGRDP

Overview of Strand 1 – Introduction to Research Skills (Lectures/presentations and on-line)

This annex outlines the coverage of Strand 1 of the Greenwich *PGRDP*, which is focussed on developing your *Research Skills* from an introductory level. This strand will be delivered as a holistic course of six weeks duration throughout an academic term, along with your engagement with a complementary suite of on-line modules.

• Lectures/Presentations

The face to face element of this strand will be delivered through a combination of formal lectures and presentations by active research staff of the university, supported by specialist input from others where appropriate. The suite of lectures as presentations will run twice per year, with start dates in October and February. Delivery of each course will be at the Greenwich/Avery Hill and Medway campuses.

Scope and coverage

- Working towards a Doctorate – roles and responsibilities
- Contextualising your research – sources of information
- Research design and analytical techniques
- Intellectual property and research ethics
- Project planning and time management
- Good research practice and continuing professional development

For further information on this element of the Strand 1, and the next scheduled offerings go to:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

Timescale for engagement

Your engagement with this strand of activity is mandatory. You are required to engage with this strand at the first available opportunity following you registering as a research student with the university, starting with Lecture 1, and complete your formal engagement, and any assessment(s) associated with it, within your first 12 months of study. As a result, you will be required to report on your engagement and progress with this strand of activity as an integral part of your first formal annual progress report (Form RDA4) that you are required to submit to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for consideration. Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity within your first year may result in you being suspended or withdrawn from your studies.

• On-line ‘Research Skills Master Programme’ (Epigeum)

You will be required to build on the information gained by attending the suite of lectures and presentations referred to above by engaging with a complementary programme of on-line modules relating to the same broad topic areas. The scope of coverage of these modules is

shown below and the courses and information concerning this element of the overall strand is given at:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

Online Research Skills Master Programme (Epigeum) for Research Students	
Course	Status
Part 1 - To be completed before submission of RDA2 for all MPhil/PhD, MPhil and within the first year of study for PhD Direct students	
Video: Introduction to the Research Skills Programme	Mandatory
Managing your Research Project	Mandatory
Research Methods in Literature Review	Mandatory
Research Methods in the Arts & Humanities	Mandatory completion of the most appropriate module closest to your academic area of study
Research Methods in the Social Sciences	
Research Methods in the Sciences	
Ethics 1: Good Research Practice	Mandatory
Ethics 2: Research with Humans in the Health & Social Sciences	Mandatory
Working with your Supervisor	Mandatory
Intellectual Property in the Research Context	Mandatory
Part 2 - To be completed before submission of RDA6 for all students	
Selecting a Conference, Presenting & Networking	Mandatory
Getting Published In the Arts	Mandatory completion of the most appropriate module to your academic area of study
Getting Published In the Sciences	
Career planning in the Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	Mandatory completion of the most appropriate module to your academic area of study
Career planning in the Sciences	

Timescales for engagement

From the table above you will see that you are required to engage with these modules under your own initiative, and pass the above associated end test, for the specified modules as a pre-requisite to making a formal request to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee to upgrade your formal registration with the university from MPhil to PhD (Form RDA2). Evidence of this is will be required. Failure to do so will result in your request being delayed until you have addressed any shortcomings on in this area. Students who are registered for PhD Direct, are required to complete the modules comprising Part 1 within 12 months of initial registration. The remainder of the modules must be completed by all students **before** your supervisors make an application to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for approval of arrangements for your final examination (Form RDA6a). Again, failure to complete this step

will result in such consideration, and possibly your examination, being delayed until the deficiency has been addressed.

Evidence of successful completion of all required modules must also form an integral part of your Postgraduate Research Student Log and Professional Development Portfolio.

Development of Advanced Research Skills

The development of advance research skills will depend on the nature of the specific research project, which is a matter for you and your supervisors to address. Refer to Strand 4 at Annex 4.

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme - PGRDP

Overview of Strand 2 – Teaching Skills (Teaching, Learning and Assessment)

This annex outlines the coverage of Strand 2 of the Greenwich *PGRDP*, which is concerned with developing *Teaching Skills*. Whilst the university appreciates that your career path and plans may not be focussed on becoming a university lecturer, many postgraduate research students take up the opportunity to engage with teaching related activities during the course of their research programme so that they may gain experience on this front. Regardless of your future career path, engagement in this strand is mandatory (unless you are exempt from this requirement), since the communication skills you will acquire through attending will be vital to your future role as a professional. You should understand that completion of this strand will not provide you with a formal teaching qualification in higher education, as it is only intended to provide you with an insight into good practice and basic skills relating to the teaching, learning and assessment of undergraduate students. However, it is intended to assist you in any potential role involved in supporting a teaching team in activities such as tutorials, laboratory supervision etc. Note that you may start supporting a teaching team in such activities as soon as you are formally registered to engage with this strand. It should be noted that, unless you are already an appropriately qualified lecturer in higher education, as a postgraduate research student you **are not permitted** to deliver 'front line' lectures.

Scope and coverage

This strand takes the form of a course comprising of six 3 hour sessions (delivered at both the Greenwich/Avery Hill and Medway campuses), and a series of on-line activities, which will be organised and delivered by the university's Educational Development Unit (EDU), and is aimed at equipping you to become an effective member of a taught course delivery team. Attendance will induct participants into what constitutes effective practice and what the university and the higher education sector expects in teaching, learning and assessment. It will provide you with a foundation on which to initiate further development within the professional development framework (GOLD) of the university. After completion of the course, you are encouraged to gain further teaching related experience and then apply for Associate Fellowship of the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA). The last session of the course will introduce you to the GOLD framework and the processes involved to achieve this. As such, achieving this status will be an outward sign that you are taking important first steps in preparing for academic practice, should this meet with your future career aspirations.

The overall contents of the course may be gauged from its aims:

- To provide an introduction to teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education
- To develop an understanding of the critical role of assessment and feedback in learning and teaching
- To develop classroom and laboratory management skills
- To equip participants with a range of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods
- To develop knowledge of, and implement learning technologies used in teaching
- To provide a progression route to a teaching qualification and employment in the sector

These aims will be met through the delivery of separately themed presentations for each of the six sessions comprising the overall course, namely:

- How we learn
- Assessment and Feedback
- Delivery Strategies
- Microteaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- The UKPSF and GOLD Professional development framework

To pass the strand all sessions of the course must be attended, as well as the successful completion of the course assessment.

For further information on this strand, and the next scheduled offerings, go to:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

Timescale for engagement

Your engagement with this strand of activity is mandatory. You are required to engage with this strand at the first available opportunity following you registering with the university, and complete your formal engagement, and any assessment associated with it, within your first year of study. You are required to report on your engagement with this stand of activity in the first annual progress report (Form RDA4) you submit for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and evidence such in your Postgraduate Research Student Log and Professional Development Portfolio. Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity may result in you being suspended from your studies, until any deficiency has been addressed.

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme – PGRDP

Overview of Strand 3 – Generic and Key Skills

This annex outlines the coverage of Strand 3 of the Greenwich *PRGDP*, which is concerned with *Generic and Key Skills*. This area of your skills development is sometimes referred to as Transferable Skills on the basis that they are those skills a professional is expected to possess, irrespective of the discipline and role in which you will be operating. Your engagement in this strand is mandatory, since the development of these skills is important regardless of the direction of your future career path.

Scope and Coverage

This strand includes a variety of modes of engagement, including formal presentations, areas developed through engagement with your supervisors/Faculty and drop-in sessions etc.

- **Personal Skills – acquired through working with supervisors and within Faculty**
 - Critical and analytical skills
 - Research and note taking skills
 - Oral presentation skills
 - Working in teams
- **Assistive Tools – acquired through working with supervisors and within Faculty**
 - End note
 - Turnitin
- **Career Management Skills – acquired through a formal presentation and drop-in sessions by the Employability and Careers Service**
 - CVs and covering letters
 - Application forms
 - Interview techniques
 - Assessment centres
- **Examination Preparation – organised by Postgraduate Research Office**
 - Preparing for transfer from MPhil to PhD
 - Preparing for your oral examination, including thesis requirements, submission and viva (oral examination)
- **English Language Support for International Postgraduate Students**
 - This support takes the form of a short course aimed specifically at assisting postgraduate students improve their standard of English. Attendance at this course, which is accredited by the British Council, is optional, but strongly recommended for international students who consider they would benefit by attending.

For further information on this strand, and the next scheduled offerings go to:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

Timescales for engagement

Your engagement with this strand of activity is mandatory. You are required to complete your formal engagement with the different elements comprising this strand, and any assessment associated with them, by:

- **Personal Skills** – within two years of starting research degree, and report accordingly in your second annual progress report (Form RDA4) you submit for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee
- **Assistive Tools** – within two years of starting research degree, and report accordingly in your second annual progress report you submit for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee
- **Examination Preparation and Career Management Skills** – before:
 - (Relating to MPhil/PhD transfer process) preparing paperwork for Form RDA2 and attending MPhil/PhD transfer viva
 - (Relating to MPhil/PhD examination process) before submission of thesis for examination (Form RDA6a)
 - (Relating to career management skills) before submission of Form RDA6a
- **English Language Support**
As soon as possible according to need.

Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity may result in you being suspended from your studies, until any identified deficiency has been addressed.

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme – PRGDP

Overview of Strand 4 – Subject Specific Research Skills

This annex outlines the coverage of Strand 4 of the Greenwich *PGRDP*, which is concerned with developing your *Subject Specific Research Skills*. This strand of activity cannot be organised centrally, because it is concerned with developing those subject specific skills that are important to you in pursuing and successfully completing your research project. Accordingly, the elements comprising this strand will be individual and personal to you. Given this, the direction of and opportunities for engaging in such activities rest with your Supervisors, Research Group, Department and Faculty, as appropriate to the 'home' of the academic discipline in which you are studying.

The direction of your individualised plan under this strand starts with an in-depth audit between you and your supervisors on the base-line levels of skills you already possess on commencement of your research, and then the subsequent identification of those areas and skills that are important to develop if you are to successfully complete your programme of research. This appraisal and identification of needs should take place with your supervisors shortly after you start as a research student with the university. The process will result in an individualised development programme, which could be quite broad, very narrow, or both depending on needs. Such needs could be very different, for example, take the form of developing your IT skills and use of specialist software packages, specific health and safety issues, use of specialised equipment, analytical skills, higher level research skills, language skills, presentation skills for specialist audiences, a directed course of focussed reading, attending relevant subject specific conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops, talks and exhibitions, visits to business organisations, enhancing your network of contacts in your area of research etc.

Timescale for engagement

As set out above, the identification of your development needs in the area subject specific skills should take place with your supervisors shortly after you take up your role as a research student, and should continue on an on-going basis until you complete your agreed programme of research. Your needs in this respect should be a matter of regular monitoring by both you and your supervisors. The matter should feature as a regular item for discussion at progress meetings with your supervisors, and the elements comprising your personal development plan in this area should change and develop with time according to your progress and needs. It should be noted that if the outcome of your initial appraisal on this particular front is that no activities are required in this area of personal development; this will not be accepted by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, on the basis that everyone, irrespective of their standing point, has the capacity to develop themselves in this respect. Therefore, your engagement with this strand of skills development is mandatory.

You should report on your engagement with the activities comprising this strand of the *PGRDP*, and associated progress, in every annual progress report (RDA4) you submit for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, and evidenced as such in your Postgraduate Research Student Logbook and Development Portfolio. Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement may result in you being suspended from your studies, until any identified deficiency has been addressed.

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme – PGRDP

Overview of Strand 5 – Extramural Activities

This annex outlines the coverage of Strand 5 of the Greenwich *PGRDP*, which is concerned with *Extramural Activities*. The purpose of this strand is to broaden and develop your knowledge and skills base, through **you taking the initiative** to engage in events outside of the confines of the main thrust of your research programme. The university is not prescriptive as to how, what and the length of time you should devote to engaging in such activities, but by being proactive on this front you will broaden your knowledge base, learn from observing both good and poor practice, and provide networking opportunities, thereby broadening your network of contacts etc.

Given the proximity of Greenwich to London, which has the greatest concentration of universities, learned societies, professional bodies museums etc in the world, you are superbly positioned to take advantage of many of the events they stage. Many of these events, presented by experts in their field, are aimed at presenting complex ideas and subjects to the public at large, and, through attending, you will learn much about how you can go about doing the same, thereby enhancing your ‘public engagement’ skills. Closer to home, the university and its constituent faculties, Departments and Research Groups hold many events across all three campuses that will assist you to address this strand of activity, for example, inaugural professorial lectures, school research conferences and seminars, presentations by professional bodies, talks by external speakers etc.

Timescale for engagement

Your engagement with this strand of activity is mandatory and should occur on a continuous basis for as long as you are engaged in your programme of research. Therefore, you should report on your progress with this strand of activity in every annual progress report (RDA4) you submit for consideration by the Research Degrees Committee, and evidenced as such in your Postgraduate Research Student Logbook and Development Portfolio. Failure to engage with this strand of activity may result in you being suspended from your studies, until any identified deficiency has been addressed.

Engagement in this strand of activity should involve attending no less than four such ‘events’ during each academic year.

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Exemption by Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

The university has a well-defined accreditation policy whereby students may be exempted from certain areas of study through them producing hard evidence of recognised prior learning (RPL). In short, the key is for the student to demonstrate that he/she already possesses the necessary knowledge/skills/attributes associated with a particular subject matter. Where this is agreed, the student will not be required to relearn the subject matter. Therefore, where such evidence exists, an RPL system operates with regard to elements of certain strands of the PGRDP. The RPL process does not operate in relation to the whole of Strands 3, 4 and 5, and this is not negotiable. The RPL process can apply to Strands 1 and 2 where hard evidence exists to support the claims of the applicant for exemption from aspects of a particular strand. For further information, go to:

<http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108>

To be granted an RPL exemption for **Strand 1** you will need to submit evidence to show that you already possess the required Research Skills. The evidence will need to be demonstrated by previously published research papers, formal publications, previous equivalent training at the postgraduate research level etc. and submitted electronically to postgraduate_training_courses@gre.ac.uk.

To be granted an RPL exemption for **Strand 2** you will need to submit evidence to match one of the following

- A PgCertHE qualification from a UK university
- Undertaking a PgCertHE from a UK University
- Completion of the University of Greenwich GOLD process
- Associate Fellow or higher of the HEA
- A minimum of three years UK HE teaching experience
- An academic teaching contract from a UK University

In addition, the following categories of students are exempted from this course:

- Those who are undertaking their research at an approved overseas institution (therefore not engaging in teaching related activities with University of Greenwich students)
- Part-time students, who are in established positions in employment, where it is not possible for them to engage in the teaching function of the university.

To apply for RPL for this Strand you need to download the application form from the PGRO Moodle page, under the Strand 2 section, and submit the application form along with evidence electronically to the course leader, Danielle Tran via email to D.F.Tran@greenwich.ac.uk

Once the course leader has received your application, it will be sent to the relevant Faculty based committee which will then oversee and endorse the claim, if appropriate. Failure to contact the course leader and submit the evidence two weeks before the start of the course will

result in the claim automatically being rejected. Only electronically submitted evidence will be considered.

Important Note

No student will be considered to be exempt from any part of the PGRDP on the basis that they believe they already possess a required level of skills. It is for students to make an application based on hard evidence, and for others to make a decision on whether the case is well found and RPL is recognised. Therefore, applicants are advised to work with their supervisors in preparing any case for consideration under the RPL process.