Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme

PGRDP

Programme Handbook

Table of Contents

Section 1: Welcome

Welcome to the University of Greenwich Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP). This is a series of training sessions, workshops and events that support your personal development and skills training whilst you are studying for the award of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or Professional Doctorate at the university.

The programme consists of core and optional elements. Please read this document in order to understand what is expected of you in terms of development and skills training. If you need clarification about what is required of you, please contact your supervisors in the first instance, your Faculty's Research office, or the Researcher Development team via reti-training@gre.ac.uk.

Moodle

You can find more information on the programme via the Moodle site: Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme Moodle. Self-enrol by clicking the above link and then entering the enrolment key PGRO.

Schedule

A full schedule of all available researcher training can be found here: RETI Training for PGRs and Staff | Documents | University of Greenwich.

Section 2: Why is skills development important to you?

HESA data[1] for 2022/23 shows that 45% of doctoral graduates who were in employment 15 months after graduation were working in academia. This figure has remained constant (from 44-47%) over the past five years. The 2022/23 reports also tells us that 30-35% went into the private sector (including industry), 10-12% worked in public sector roles, 5% worked in non-profit/third sector, with 2-3% in self-employment / entrepreneurship.

For any of these sectors graduates will need a broad base of skills alongside subject specific expertise. The University of Greenwich provides a programme of training sessions, events and resources to enable you to explore your personal and professional development while you study for your doctorate.

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[1] Graduate Outcomes 2022/23: Summary Statistics - Graduate activities and characteristics | HESA
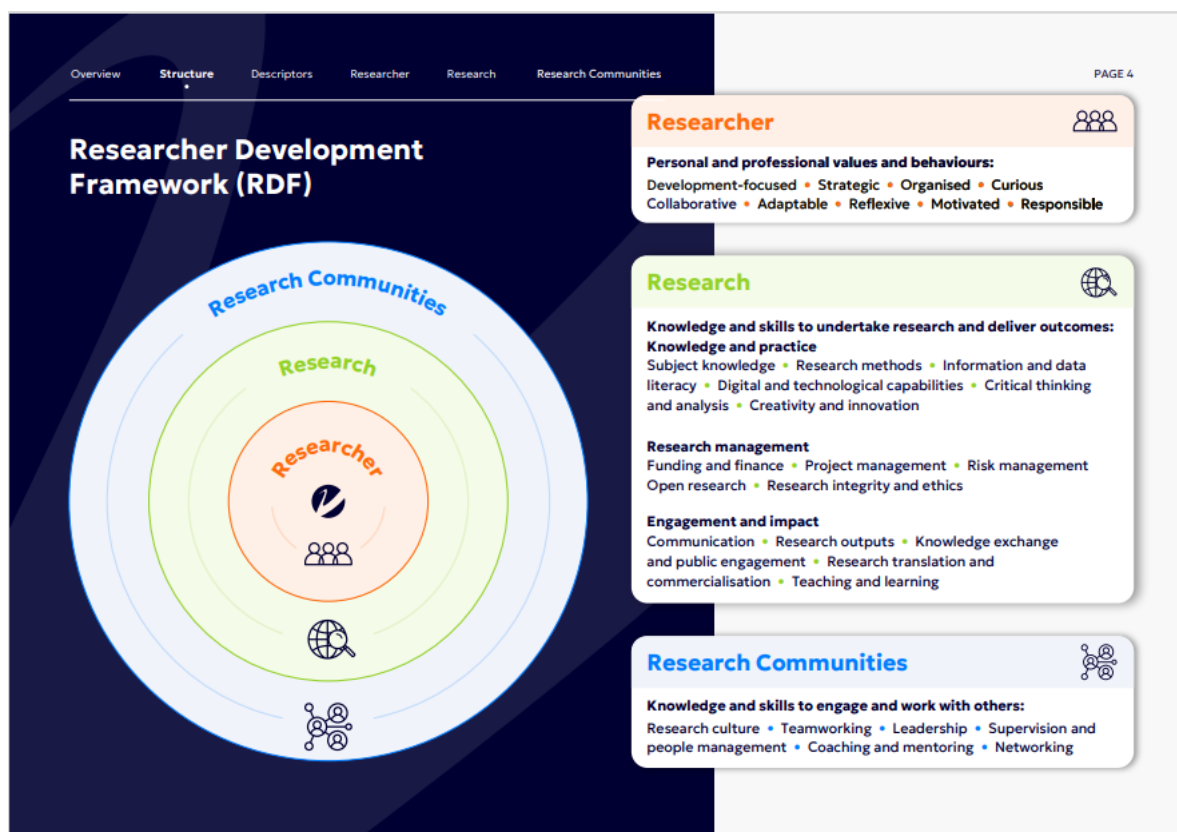
Section 3: Sector-wide practice and the Researcher Development Framework

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)[2] has set out the explicit expectation that higher education institutions that have research degree awarding powers will provide postgraduate researchers with appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development through the advancement of research and other skills.

The QAA is not prescriptive about the way that universities should go about providing these opportunities, but expects them to work with the national framework of personal skills and attributes set out in Researcher Development Framework (RDF) developed by Vitae[3]. The University of Greenwich is a member of Vitae and you can register and access the information and resources provided.

Go to https://vitae.ac.uk/ and sign-up using your Greenwich email address. This is an external website so it is important that you do not use your university password.

Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) 2025

This new structure puts researchers at its heart. The Researcher domain is the entry point to the framework, listing a series of attributes or descriptors that make up the personal and professional values and behaviours to develop as a researcher. Surrounding the Researcher is the actual Research. Here we see the descriptors showing knowledge and skills required to undertake research and deliver outcomes. And round the very outside of the new framework we have Research Communities, which gives descriptors for the knowledge and skills to engage and work with others.

Within the PGR management system, PULSE, you can conduct a Development Needs Analysis (DNA) to determine your current level of confidence in your skills and knowledge within each domain of the Researcher Development Framework. This currently is set up to run using the old RDF and will be updated as soon as possible. You will still find it useful to ascertain your own starting point.

You can access the DNA tool by going to the Professional Development tab in PULSE. The results of your DNA will provide you with top priorities for you to focus on for your skills development. Your supervisors will be able to view the results of your DNA, which can be used to inform discussions at supervisory meetings around training and development needs.

You are expected to keep a record of your research activities, skills and training through the Professional Development tab in PULSE. If you have attended training, which you booked in PULSE, this will automatically appear in your Training and Development Portfolio in PULSE. Any training and development activities you complete that aren't booked in PULSE can be added to your Training and Development Portfolio in PULSE by going to the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab and selecting self-record an activity. Use this feature to add all other training and development activity, including presentations, publications and conferences.

Maintaining a record of your training and development activities will enable you and your supervisors to assess your skills and knowledge development and identify areas that require further development. It also provides valuable evidence of how you have gone about developing yourself and what you have achieved during your studies, forming an evidence base for potential employers on completion of your studies. Your Training and Development Portfolio is visible to the incoming Greenwich Doctoral College, to your supervisors, and can be requested to be seen at any time by e.g. the Faculty, the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, or by an external auditor (which could be at very short notice). Further details are available in the Postgraduate Researchers' and Supervisors' Handbook.

Summary

- Take advantage of the personal skills development provided.

- Use the opportunities provided to grow as a researcher

- Record all evidence of your personal engagement and progress with the PGRDP in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE.

Section 4: Programme Structure

The Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme is designed to help you to:

- Make good progress with your programme of research

- Be well-equipped to face the world of work following you completing your research degree

The PGRDP is delivered through a combination of topics delivered in scheduled learning sessions, in self-directed study modules online or delivered via group events.

Core training is the term used for those sessions that you must attend.

Core training

Strand	Skills	Responsibility for delivery and engagement
Strand 1	Introduction to Research Skills	University organised
Strand 2	Teaching Skills	University organised
Strand 3	Examination Preparation	University organised
Strand 4	Subject-Specific Skills	Your own initiative Faculty / Department / School / Research Group /Supervisors.
Strand 5	Extramural Skills	Your own initiative

Strand 1: Introduction to Research Skills

Introduction to Research Skills provides you with basic approaches and tools for embarking on your programme of research, as well as insight into wider research techniques. Both Research Ethics and Research Integrity are covered here and all PGRs must complete these modules before being assessed for transferring from MPhil to PhD.

Note: Postgraduate researchers on the EdD programme are exempt from Strand 1 – instead, the relevant material is covered by a combination of the taught phase of the EdD, followed by a number of key thesis support sessions, which you should attend during the thesis phase of your EdD. Details of these support sessions are available in the EdD Student Programme Handbook, available on the EdD Moodle page.

Training sessions:

- Working towards your doctorate (on campus/online. 4x per year)

    o   Roles and responsibilities

    o   Library support for researchers

    o   Research design, intellectual property and research ethics

- Excelling in your doctorate (on campus/online. 4x per year)

    o   Project planning and time management

    o   Literature review

- Research integrity (online, self-directed study)

Deadlines

You must complete this strand at the first available opportunity following your registration as a postgraduate researcher with the university.

Final completion deadlines are as follows:

| Full-time PGR | One year from date of registration |
| Part-time PGR | Two years from date of registration |

You will be required to report on your engagement and progress with this strand of activity as an integral part of your formal annual progress report (Form RDA4). Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity may result in your progress being deemed unsatisfactory and/or you being prevented from applying for transfer.

Strand 2: Teaching Skills

There are opportunities to support the undergraduate and postgraduate taught teaching function within your faculty, via, for example, tutorials, laboratory / technical demonstrating, supporting seminars. This strand provides the basics of good teaching practice so that you may engage in such activities with confidence.

Engagement in this strand is core (unless an exemption applies to you) and the training is prerequisite to becoming a recognised Postgraduate Researcher Teaching Assistant (PGRTA) in the university (details about this role are available in the PGRTA Handbook).

It is possible to take up the opportunity to engage with teaching-related activities during the course of your research programme to gain experience, irrespective of whether or not you are focused on a career in academia.

- For those who are focused on a career in higher education, the role of PGRTA is a valuable addition to your CV.
- The experience and communication skills gained contribute to other professional career pathways.

This training is not a formal teaching qualification; it is intended to provide you with an insight into good practice and basic skills relating to the teaching, learning and assessment of undergraduate students, and to assist you in any potential role involved in supporting a teaching team in activities such as tutorials, laboratory supervision, etc.

You may start supporting a teaching team as a provisional PGRTA as soon as you are formally registered to engage on Strand 2. If this happens, as someone who is not fully trained, you may only engage in light, introductory duties. Once you have fully completed and passed the Teaching Skills course you can undertake further teaching-related activities.

It should also be noted that, unless you are already an appropriately qualified lecturer in higher education, as a postgraduate researcher you are not permitted to deliver 'front line' lectures.

Training Sessions

Strand 2 training comprises five sessions, four of which are delivered via a Moodle platform, through videos/resources/activities. The fifth element is a microteaching activity which will be conducted through multiple slots/sessions which participants can select. You can register and complete this course during any of the three academic terms. This training is delivered by the university's Academic and Learning Enhancement team (ALE) and is aimed at equipping you to become an effective member of a taught course delivery team. You will learn about 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 (see GOLD, University of Greenwich's Advance HE accredited professional recognition scheme). After completion of the course, you are encouraged to gain further teaching related experience and then apply for Associate Fellowship of the UK Advance HE.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

Aims

- Provide an introduction to teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education
- Provide a platform for critical discussion and reflection on issues around inclusive teaching and active learning
- Help you get prepared for your teaching duties at the University of Greenwich and in Higher Education in general
- Provide a progression route to teaching qualification and employment in the sector

Satisfactory completion of the Strand 2 training will equip you to actively engage in supporting the teaching through demonstrations, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, field trips etc., but not front-line lecturing. More information about what you can expect as a PGRTA can be found in the [PGRTA Handbook](#).

EdD students who have formal teacher training qualifications may be exempt from this strand, further details are available in the EdD Student Programme Handbook, available on the EdD Moodle page and also in Section 7: Exemptions this Handbook.

Deadlines

You must complete this strand at the first available opportunity following your registration as a postgraduate researcher with the university.

Final completion deadlines are as follows:

Full-time PGRs	One year from date of registration
Part-time PGRs	Two years from date of registration

You will be required to report on your engagement and progress with this strand of activity as an integral part of your formal annual progress report (Form RDA4). Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity may result in your progress being deemed unsatisfactory and/or you being prevented from applying for transfer.

Strand 3: Examination Preparation

This strand aims to prepare you for your (i)

- MPhil to PhD transfer

- Final examination for MPhil/PhD/EdD.

Training Sessions

This strand is delivered as training sessions by University of Greenwich academic and professional services staff. The sessions run four times per year online.

Scope and Coverage

- Preparing for your transfer from MPhil to PhD (N/A for EdD students)

- Preparing for your final examination

Deadlines

Preparing for your transfer from MPhil to PhD must be completed prior to the submission of your RDA2 form (transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD form)

Preparing for your final examination must be completed prior to the submission of your RDA6a/b form (approval of examination arrangements and thesis submission form)

Plan ahead: aim to complete each of these modules about six months in advance of the submission of the RDA2 or RDA6.

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. Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement with this strand of activity may result in your progress being deemed unsatisfactory, and/or you being prevented from applying for MPhil to PhD transfer or examination, until any lack of engagement has been addressed.

Strand 4: Subject-Specific Skills

No two research projects, and the associated PGR experience, are the same. Your programme and experience will be unique and personalised to you. 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.

Scope and Coverage

The nature of the skills training and development that you need as an individual cannot necessarily be provided centrally from within the university, and must be identified and developed between you, your supervisors and your Research Group/Centre, School and Faculty.

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 postgraduate researcher at the university.

The process will result in an individualised development programme, which could be quite broad, very narrow, or both depending on needs. These needs could include IT skills, the use of specialist software packages, specific health and safety issues, specific research ethics and approval, the use of specialised equipment, analytical skills, higher level research skills, language skills, presentation skills for specialist audiences, a directed course of focused reading, attending relevant subject-specific conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops, talks and exhibitions, visits to specific business organisations, enhancing your network of contacts in your area of research etc.

Deadlines

The identification of your development needs in the area of subject-specific skills should take place with your supervisors shortly after you take up your role as a postgraduate researcher, and should continue on an ongoing basis until you complete your agreed programme of research. Discuss your subject-specific development needs regularly during your supervisory meetings. Your engagement with this strand of skills development is a core requirement. The Faculty Research Degrees committee will expect to see evidence of engagement in this area on the completion of your programme.

Report on the subject-specific skills development in your annual progress reports (RDA4). Ensure that you upload evidence in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE. This will update your Training and Development Portfolio. Failure to demonstrate sufficient engagement may result in your progress being deemed unsatisfactory and/or you being prevented from applying for transfer or examination, until any lack of engagement has been addressed.

Strand 5: Extramural Activities

This is the opportunity for you to use your own initiative to seek out and engage in events that are outside the confines of the main thrust of your research programme but 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.

Scope and Coverage

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 the university to London, which has a high concentration of universities, learned societies, professional bodies, museums etc, 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, Schools and Research Groups/Centres hold many events across all three campuses that will assist you in addressing this strand of activity, for example, inaugural professorial lectures, research conferences and seminars, presentations by professional bodies, talks by external speakers, etc..

Deadlines

Attendance at four such events each academic session over the duration of your research programme should be the expected level of engagement. Report on the extra mural activities in your annual progress reports (RDA4). Ensure that you upload evidence in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE. This will update your Training and Development Portfolio. Failure to engage with this strand of activity may result in your progress being deemed unsatisfactory and/or you being prevented from applying for transfer or examination, until any lack of engagement has been addressed.

Summary

The five strands address a wide range of skills and attributes set out in the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) devised by Vitae shown in Section 3 of this Handbook. 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 competences will go a long way to preparing you for the world of work beyond your research degree, and, for PGRs with previous research experience, engagement will enhance and further your existing skills and knowledge base in a continuous way during the course of your studies.

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.

Record all of your training activities in PULSE if you didn't book via this system.

Fully engage with the PGRDP in a positive and proactive way, and ensure that your Training and Development Portfolio in PULSE is updated on a regular basis. Additionally, it will be this Training and Development Portfolio that can provide evidence to potential employers that you have actively engaged in a comprehensive programme of activities aimed at enhancing your personal skills base.

It is your responsibility to seek out information about when you are required to attend events/sessions and to understand when to accommodate such requirements within your overall programme of work. You can do this by checking when events/sessions are planned, and signing up to attend them through the booking information provided on the Researcher Development schedule.

Section 5: Optional Courses

RETI provides a wide range of optional courses designed to supplement the core PGRDP. All areas of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework are covered in this varied offering, from

well-being courses, to networking, to detailed research methods training. To see the entire offering and to find details of other courses available across the university go to the PGR Training Schedule on the portal. RETI Training for PGRs and Staff | Documents | University of Greenwich.

Section 6: Booking

RETI Training courses can usually be booked using PULSE, but some courses are provided by external organisations and have their own booking systems.

A full overview of what is available and where to book each offering can be found as follows:

- Full PGR Training Schedule: RETI Training for PGRs and Staff | Documents | University of Greenwich.

Follow the core programme using the PGRDP Moodle:

- PGRDP Moodle site, Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme Moodle, self-enrol by clicking the above link and then entering the enrolment key PGRO

Section 7: Exemptions

The PGRDP programme is core. Engage as soon as possible by working with your supervisors to determine your current skills and experience. Identify what subject-specific skills you will need to develop as an integral part of Strand 4.

You may be exempt from any element of the PGRDP on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL.

Exemption by Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

The university has a well-defined accreditation policy whereby students of all levels can be exempted from certain areas of study through them producing hard evidence of recognised prior learning (RPL) Recognition of Prior Learning | Documents | University of Greenwich. Please use the RPL form given by this link to apply for exemption from aspects of Strands 1 or 2 where hard evidence exists to support the claim. You need to demonstrate that you already possess the necessary knowledge/skills/attributes when seeking RPL, through the provision of evidence. Where this is agreed, you will not be required to undertake training in that area. The process for the RPL for Strands 1 and 2 is given below. The RPL process does not operate in relation to Strands 3, 4 and 5.

Exemption from Strand 1

To be granted an RPL exemption for Strand 1 you will need to complete an RPL form available from the form https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/recognition-of-prior-learning-student-guidelines

and submit along with evidence to show that you already possess the required skills. This needs to be submitted for each element of the Strand, as appropriate. 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 RETI Training reti-training@gre.ac.uk.

Exemption from Strand 2

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

- A Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PgCertHE) qualification from a UK university

- Undertaking a PgCertHE from a UK University

- Completion of the University of Greenwich GOLD process (awards fellowships of Higher Education Academy)

- Associate Fellow or a Fellow of Higher Education Academy (AFHEA, FHEA)

- A minimum of three years' UK HE teaching experience

- An academic teaching contract from a UK University

In addition, the following categories of PGRs can apply for exemption 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 PGRs, who are in established positions in employment, where it is not possible for them to engage in the teaching function of the university.

- Those who hold a PGCE Further Education (FE) qualification from a UK university. RPL requests will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

To apply for RPL for Strand 2 training you will need to complete an RPL form available from https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/recognition-of-prior-learning-student-guidelines and submit evidence electronically to RETI Training reti-training@gre.ac.uk.

Exemption for Direct PhD researchers and Doctorate by Published Work:

Direct PhD researchers are exempted from undertaking the training on 'preparing for your transfer from MPhil to PhD' on Strand 3.

Doctorate by published work PGRs are exempted from undertaking Strands 1 and 2 training of the PGRDP. Within Strand 3, they are exempted from undertaking the training on 'preparing for your transfer from MPhil to PhD'.

Important Note

RPL co-ordinators from the Researcher Development team and from Academic and Learning Enhancement (ALE) will assess each RPL submission, as appropriate, for exemption and inform the students of the outcome in a timely manner.

You cannot be considered to be exempt from any part of Strand 2 Teaching Skills on the basis that you believe you already possess a required level of skills. It is your responsibility to make an application based on the evidence as set out above. A decision will then be made on whether or not to award the RPL. Please work with your supervisors to prepare any case for consideration under the RPL process.

If you are a postgraduate researcher who is officially classified as studying overseas and are unable to attend an element of the on-campus/online training, or have extenuating circumstances, please contact the Researcher Development Team at reti-training@gre.ac.uk for information on potential alternative options.

Section 8: Health and Safety

The University takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously. Both staff and students have a duty to take care of their own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by their actions at university. You must co-operate with university staff to help everyone to meet their legal requirements. Please ensure you familiarise yourself with our Health and Safety Policy.

Anyone experiencing an injury, listed disease, dangerous occurrence or 'near-miss' incident should submit a report as soon as possible using the online reporting system. Please check the Student Handbook for details.

Section 9: Student Centres and Getting Help

The University of Greenwich has a wide range of services for all students, including PGRs. Find out what you need to know about accommodation, employment, Greenwich Students Union, student finance, student wellbeing, library services, IT services and more via the Student Centres on each campus, or use the Digital Student Centre.