



QAA



UK Council for **Graduate Education**

A Look at Good Practice from QAA's Special Review of RDPs

The University of Warwick, 6th December 2007

15:10	Development of research and other skills <i>University of Plymouth</i> <i>The University of Northampton</i> <i>Cardiff University</i>
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Prof. Mick Fuller
Head of Graduate School,
University of Plymouth

Development of Research and Other Skills

1. Subject specific research methodologies

- Delivered by faculties and schools, supplemented by exchanges and societies

2. Generic Skills development

- Organised and coordinated by The Graduate School and Staff Development

3. Teaching pedagogy and delivery

- Delivered by Educational Development and Learning Technologies (EDaLT)



Training Needs Analysis



University of Plymouth
Graduate School
Research Student
LOG

Training Needs Analysis

Skills Development Self Audit

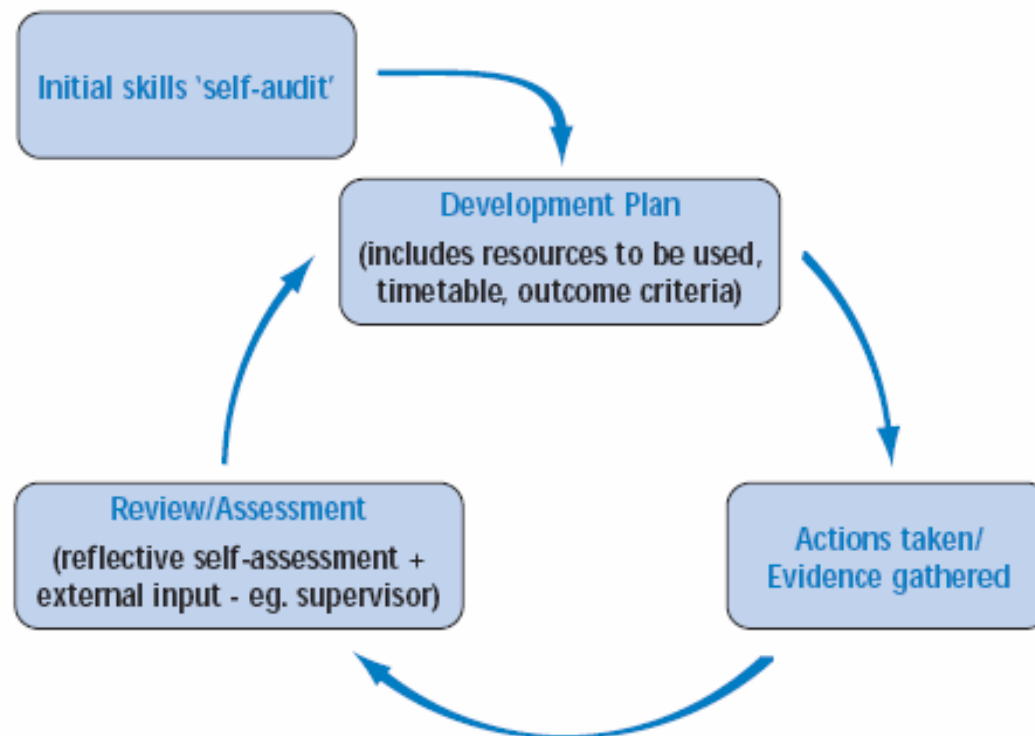
The development of academic, research and key (transferable) skills forms an important part of your degree programme. The following list of skills focuses on more general skills and individual degree programmes may require a different set of skills. In this case, the school may ask you to amend this list.

Please complete the Skills Development Self Audit before your first supervisory meeting at the beginning of your degree programme and then at the times indicated in your Log.

(See Graduate School web site and end of this section for further information on Academic and Key Skill development).

This is a process which involves reflection on your academic development, including the development of appropriate skills. The process is assisted by a 'self-audit' which you should carry out at the beginning of your research programme, at the end of your first and second year, and at the end of your studies. The reflective process (see diagram) involves:

- an initial self-audit in which you reflect on your skills and, where possible, provide evidence for them. The audit may show up gaps which should be filled.
- a 'development plan' which attends to any gaps and deepens existing skills.
- a period during which the plan is carried out and during which you log development and, where appropriate, collect evidence for it.
- at the end of this period, a review of your progress and discussion with your supervisor. (The 'development plan' will almost certainly need to be updated at this stage).
- a repeat of the processes outlined above during your second and third years.
- a final review before you register for your degree examination.



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL'S
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS & CONTRACT RESEARCHERS

2007/2008



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HOW TO USE THIS BROCHURE

This brochure should be used in conjunction with the online booking system which is part of your dedicated web portal (<http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/postgrad/skillsdev>). The brochure gives you an 'at a glance' detail of all of the courses that are on offer this academic year under the following main sections, which are regarded nationally as the main skills categories that research students need to develop:

- Research Skills and Techniques
- Research Environment
- Research Management
- Personal Effectiveness
- Communication Skills
- Networking and Teamworking
- Career Management

At the beginning of each of these sections, we describe what skills research students are expected to develop – and what we hope to offer to help you develop them! We hope you will keep this brochure handy and consult with it regularly to ensure you too benefit from the comprehensive generic training opportunities that are on offer, specifically designed for research students and contract researchers.

The Research Councils play an important role in setting standards and identifying best practice in research training. Below is a joint statement of the skills that doctoral research students funded by the Research Councils would be expected to develop during their research training.

These skills may be present on commencement, explicitly taught or developed during the course of the research. It is expected that different mechanisms will be used to support learning as appropriate, including self-direction, supervisor support and mentoring, departmental support, workshops, conferences, elective training courses, formally assessed courses and informal opportunities.

The Research Councils would also want to re-emphasise their belief that training in research skills and techniques is the key element in the development of a research student, and that PhD students are expected to make a substantial, original contribution to knowledge in their area, normally leading to published work. The development of wider employment-related skills should not detract from that core objective.

(A) RESEARCH SKILLS & TECHNIQUES to be able to demonstrate:

1. the ability to recognise and validate problems
2. original, independent and critical thinking, and the ability to develop theoretical concepts
3. a knowledge of recent advances within one's field and in related areas
4. an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within one's research field
5. the ability to critically analyse and evaluate one's findings and those of others
6. an ability to summarise, document, report and reflect on progress.

(B) RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT to be able to:

1. show a broad understanding of the context, at the national and international level, in which research takes place
2. demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the Data Protection Act
3. demonstrate appreciation of standards of good research practice in their institution and/or discipline
4. understand relevant health and safety issues and demonstrate responsible working practices
5. understand the processes for funding and evaluation of research
6. justify the principles and experimental techniques used in one's own research
7. understand the process of academic or commercial exploitation of research results.

(C) RESEARCH MANAGEMENT to be able to:

1. apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritisation of activities
2. design and execute systems for the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment
3. identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information
4. use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting information.

(D) PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS to be able to:

1. demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn and acquire knowledge
2. be creative, innovative and original in one's approach to research
3. demonstrate flexibility and openmindedness
4. demonstrate self-awareness and the ability to identify own training needs

5. demonstrate self-discipline, motivation, and thoroughness
6. recognise boundaries and draw upon/ use sources of support as appropriate
7. show initiative, work independently and be self-reliant.

(E) COMMUNICATION SKILLS to be able to:

1. write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose, e.g. progress reports, published documents, thesis
2. construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques
3. constructively defend research outcomes at seminars and viva examination
4. contribute to promoting the public understanding of one's research field
5. effectively support the learning of others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities.

(F) NETWORKING & TEAMWORKING to be able to:

1. develop and maintain co-operative networks and working relationships with supervisors, colleagues and peers, within the institution and the wider research community
2. understand one's behaviours and impact on others when working in and contributing to the success of formal and informal teams
3. listen, give and receive feedback and respond perceptively to others.

(G) CAREER MANAGEMENT to be able to:

1. appreciate the need for and show commitment to continued professional development
2. take ownership for and manage one's career progression, set realistic and achievable career goals, and identify and develop ways to improve employability
3. demonstrate an insight into the transferable nature of research skills to other work environments and the range of career opportunities within and outside academia
4. present one's skills, personal attributes and experiences through effective CVs, applications and interviews.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS IN DATE ORDER

October 07	8	10:00 - 12:00	Preparing to Teach
	17	10:00 - 12:00	Preparing Effective Poster Presentations
	24	10:00 - 12:30	Introduction to Electronic E-Resources
	24	10:00 - 12:30	Managing Working Relationships
November 07	5	10:00 - 12:00	Risk Management for Research Students
	5	13:30 - 17:00	Getting Started in Office 2007
	7	09:30 - 16:30	Getting Started with Quantitative Research
	7	14:00 - 17:00	Project Management
	8	10:00 - 12:30	Introduction to Electronic E-Resources
	15	10:00 - 12:30	The Transfer Process
	15	14:00 - 15:30	An Introduction to Career Planning
	20	10:00 - 12:00	An Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods
	21	10:00 - 17:00	Introduction to SPSS - Part I
	27	13:30 - 15:30	Giving and Receiving Feedback
	28	10:00 - 12:00	Research - Owning and Using
December 07	3	13:30 - 17:00	Getting Started in Office 2007
	10	13:30 - 17:00	Introduction to Excel 2007
January 08	9	10:00 - 17:00	Introduction to SPSS - Part 2
	17	09:30 - 12:30	Creating and Working with Long Documents
	22	13:30 - 15:30	Presentation Skills - Part I
	23	15:30 - 16:30	Career Planning - How Your Personality Type can Impact on Your Career Decision
	30	14:00 - 15:30	Job Searching Techniques
	31	09:30 - 16:30	Developing Professional Writing Skills
February 08	1	09:30 - 12:30	Excel 2007 Further Features
	6	14:00 - 15:30	Effective CV Writing
	12	13:30 - 15:30	Presentation Skills - Part 2
	13	14:00 - 15:30	Surviving Job Interviews and Assessment Centres
	14	13:30 - 16:30	Word 2007 Enhancing Your Documents
	19	13:30 - 15:30	Negotiation Skills
	27	13:30 - 16:30	Rapid Reading
March 08	4	09:30 - 16:30	Writing Up and Completing the PhD
	19	09:30 - 12:30	An Introduction to Applying for Research Funding
	19	14:30 - 17:00	Preparing for the Viva
	28	10:00 - 12:30	Going Global
May 08	1	10:00 - 12:00	Preparing Effective Poster Presentations
	1	13:30 - 16:30	Creating Web Pages with SharePoint Design
	2	10:00 - 13:00	Endnote Bibliographic Referencing for Beginners
	6	09:30 - 12:30	Creating and Working with Long Documents
	13	13:30 - 17:00	Your Words or Other Peoples'
	14	10:00 - 11:00	LaTeX (Introduction)
	16	10:00 - 16:30	Impact Factor!
	16	14:00 - 17:00	Endnote Bibliographic Referencing for Beginners
	20	10:00 - 12:30	The Transfer Process
	21	10:00 - 12:30	LaTeX (Part 2)
	28	10:00 - 12:30	LaTeX (Part 3)
	30	10:00 - 13:00	Endnote Bibliographic Referencing - Advanced
	30	10:00 - 12:30	Preparing for the Viva

Disability ASSIST Services (DAS) supports disabled students across the campuses. We are based at the Plymouth campus, located in the fully accessible Babbage building.

As an established assessment centre we can offer independent needs assessments and advice for students referred under the Disabled Student's Allowances scheme throughout the South West.

The word disability covers a wide range of circumstances. These may not necessarily require support. We offer a range of support options which will depend on what you need to study effectively. This can include advice on accommodation, provision for exams and applying for the Disabled Student Allowance.

IT SERVICES

IT Services provides a wide range of facilities and services designed to help you while you are a student at the University. These services may change frequently in order to take advantage of advances in technology. IT Services runs introductory and some advanced courses in the use of the major systems and software packages that the university provides and supports.

Visit the IT services website for more details: <http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/it-train/intranet.htm>.

POSTGRADUATE SOCIETY

It's a busy and, especially in the case of research, lonely life as a postgraduate student, and when the need arises for a bit of advice or companionship we are often "too busy" to find the time to look for it.

The Postgraduate Society has been set up to provide representation within the Student Union, for postgraduates, and also organise social get-togethers, such as the lunchtime exchange and the occasional excursion. As a new society we need your input and involvement to help us to develop! If you would like to become a member please contact Michelle Jolley, Society Chair, in the first instance (at the present time we are required to charge a nominal fee of £2 for membership, which we are unable to avoid).

Contact e-mail: PGSoc@plymouth.ac.uk



EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDERS AND CONTACTS FOR RESEARCHERS

THE UKGRAD PROGRAMME

The role of the UK GRAD Programme is to ensure that all postgraduate researchers are fully equipped and encouraged to complete their PhD and to make a successful transition to their future careers. UKGRAD recognise that doctoral researchers are some of the country's most talented individuals: you have the potential to make a significant difference to the economic competitiveness of the UK. The UK GRAD Programme has a key role in enabling you to realise your potential.

UKGRAD offers a 'Just for Postgrads' website - their extensive website provides advice and guidance on:

- Managing yourself: evaluating your skills and setting personal objectives;
- Managing your research: time management, managing your supervisor and understanding support mechanisms;
- Planning your career: building a career plan and effective networking;
- Launching an academic career: publications and project management;
- Marketing yourself to other employers: CVs and applications and interview techniques.

GRAD courses - If you are looking for inspiration, skills and motivation to help you to complete your research effectively, and an opportunity to think about your next move, then a UKGRAD course is for you. GRADschools can help you improve your personal effectiveness, project management abilities and communication skills, leaving you better equipped to complete your doctorate. Attending a GRADschool can also help you to think about your future career options.

The University of Plymouth strongly encourages all research students to attend a UKGRAD school, irrespective of funding status. Here is a typical comment from a previous UKGRAD participant:

"The GRADschool was an amazing experience which helped me to develop both as a researcher and as a person" PhD student, University of Warwick.

Visit The UKGRAD programme website for more details: <http://www.grad.ac.uk>



THE UK HERD PROGRAMME

Background

Since the Concordat on Research Careers in 1997, there has been a slowly increasing level of activity in support of contract researchers and post doctorates in UK Universities, particularly with respect to their career development. Following "SET for Success" (the "Roberts Review") in 2002, substantial extra resources were made available to the HE sector to support research staff and students' professional development, leading to a rapid expansion of the community of stakeholders in researcher development. There has been a concomitant increase in the number of initiatives, activities and organisations with a role in developing researchers.

In order to consolidate and streamline the many initiatives supporting researcher development, various activists have come together to establish UK HERD.

Mission

UK HERD's overall mission is to enhance research capacity and performance by fostering better management, better professional development and better career structures for researchers. It aims to do this by:

- acting as a forum for co-ordinating activity and sharing knowledge and expertise between those responsible for their development
- providing a resource for HEIs (and other bodies that fund and/or employ researchers)
- contributing to policy making and influencing key decision makers.



RESEARCHERS IN RESIDENCE

Researchers in Residence is a placement programme funded by the UK Research Councils and the Wellcome Trust. The scheme enables PhD students to work alongside teachers and pupils in schools. There is no financial cost to the schools as all of the costs are met by the project. There is no charge for research council funded students, but a fee does apply for non-research council funded students.

Who are Researchers in Residence?

Researchers working on a PhD, at the cutting edge of research, but willing to make a contribution to making school science more relevant and exciting for young people. The researchers are enthusiastic and excellent role models who can help with anything from projects and investigations, to careers advice.

What do Researchers in Residence do?

They will work with teachers and pupils in a secondary school, providing them with a different perspective on science. But how is down to the researcher and the school. How about getting the researcher to help your classes with their science investigations or projects, helping on field trips and science fairs, or setting up a 'murder mystery' forensic science activity?

How long are Researchers in Residence in school?

That's down to you and the school, but it needs to add up to about 25 hours, usually spread over a number of visits, many schools opt for 6 or 8 half day visits, some prefer full days, but that's for negotiation too! The placements can be arranged for any time during the school year to create flexibility for both the teacher and the researcher. Sheffield Hallam University will supply all the necessary information and support material to make the placement a success. The researchers may choose to return to their former school, others opt for a school close to their university.

What should I do now?

The earlier that schools and researchers are put in touch with each other, the quicker the placement details can be sorted out.

For more information and to register with the project visit www.researchersinresidence.ac.uk.

RESEARCH COUNCILS UK (RCUK)

RCUK is a strategic partnership through which the UK's eight Research Councils work together to champion the research, training and innovation they support. Their web site is at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk>.



THE NATIONAL POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE (NPC)

The National Postgraduate Committee is a charity to advance, in the public interest, postgraduate education in the UK. They are made up of postgraduate student representatives from educational institutions. The NPC aims to promote the interests of postgraduates studying in the UK, while remaining politically non-aligned. The Committee holds an annual conference, and publishes various guidelines and codes of practice. Visit their website (<http://www.npc.org.uk>) for more details.



The GTA Course is designed to help support and develop your skills in teaching, learning and assessment. Weekly [sessions](#) cover subjects such as presentation and demonstration skills, group work, feedback and assessment techniques. After an introductory session using computer conferencing software, [online activities](#) run in parallel to the fortnightly sessions, supported by the [course tutors](#).

Who is the GTA course for?

The course is primarily aimed at postgraduate researchers, graduate teaching assistants, and technicians who have teaching duties in the University of Plymouth and its Partner colleges. In fact, **all** staff who have some teaching responsibilities are very welcome. It is especially helpful if you will be teaching whilst you are doing the GTA course. (External applicants are also welcome, but should contact [Jon Yorke](#) before registering.)

Monitoring and Recording

- Logbook
- Annual Monitoring report
- Transfer report
- Final Thesis
- Diploma supplement

RESEARCH SKILLS

Subject Specific Skills Training completed (can be APL'ed if for example registration was preceded by an appropriate masters course)

Course Title	Module Code	Date Attended	Performance Pass/Dist or %	Credit rating and level
(Add lines as appropriate)				

Verified by Director of Studies
 Name Signature Date

Generic Skills Training completed

Course Title	Joint Research Councils Skills Statement category	Date Attended	Location of Course
(Add lines as appropriate)			

Verified by Graduate School Skills Training Officer
 Name Signature Date

Other Skills Training completed (e.g UKGRAD School; English/Foreign Language) and/or conferences/meetings attended

Title	Location	Organisers	Date Attended
(Add lines as appropriate)			

Verified by Director of Studies
 Name Signature Date

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Seminar/Conference/Performance presentations

Title of Paper or Performance	Title of Meeting & location	Poster or Oral paper	Date	Published* or not published
(Add lines as appropriate)				

Verified by Director of Studies
 Name Signature Date

PUBLISHED REFEREED/EDITED PUBLICATIONS

* Give the full bibliographic reference (including Journal ISSN No., DOI (Digital Object Identifier) and Web address if appropriate)

Verified by Director of Studies
 Name Signature Date

Michelle Jolley
Second year research student

I found the thought of a PhD Thesis quite daunting until I attended the course Project Management. The course helped me to break the project down over 3 years, making it much easier to handle as well as giving myself and my supervisors a guide to what was expected of each of us over the coming years.

Writing and publishing is an inevitable part of completing a PhD and something which can be particularly scary for those new to the process. I found the course Impact Factor very informative, teaching me how to use systems that I hadn't heard of as well as teaching me new skills for identifying and writing for specific journals appropriate to my career.



Helen May
Fourth year research student

I attended the skills programme entitled The Transfer Process and found this to be an excellent and extremely worthwhile workshop. It enabled me to clarify and solidify my research interests in terms of what I had achieved up to that point and how I wanted to take my research forward. The workshop offered a reassuring and supportive environment in which to share and discuss these ideas with fellow students and this too helped me to identify the key themes that I wished to develop within my research.

