

UKCGE 3rd European Conference



PDP: Development and the Impact of
the York 'Skills Forge'

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Overview

- An introduction to Skills Forge
 - What, why, how...?
 - Guided tour
 - Where its going
- Its impact at York

What is Skills Forge?

- A website
- 'One stop shop' to support Graduate Professional Development (GPD)
- For students, supervisors and administrators

- Centrally supported but *owned by the individual/supervisory team*

Why?



- Roberts' Review "SET for Success"



- QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (precept 20)



- EU Charter and Code for Early Career Researchers

The Joint Statement of Skills

- Provides the foundation on which to build everything



Internal drivers

- ✓ Institution wide framework
- ✓ Measure and improve engagement
- ✓ Streamline administrative processes
- ✓ Information and guidance
- ✓ Student information readily available

How it came to be

- Started as an automotive / DTI project
- Over four years of development
- Now starting its third year supporting GPD at York

The Joint Statement of Skills (JSS)

Introduction

The RSS programme

The Research Councils play an important role in setting standards and identifying best practice in research training. This is the top level of 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 you'll use different mechanisms 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 believe 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.

The JSS is divided into seven sections as shown in the graphic below.

Analysis

There are seven segments in the pie below - one for each section of the Joint Statement of Skills. You'll be awarded a segment when you're happy with one or more of the skills in that section and have no other skills gaps (for more information see the PhD Research Skills tab).



A) Research Skills and Techniques

B) Research Environment

C) Research Management

D) Personal Effectiveness

E) Communication Skills

F) Networking and Teamworking

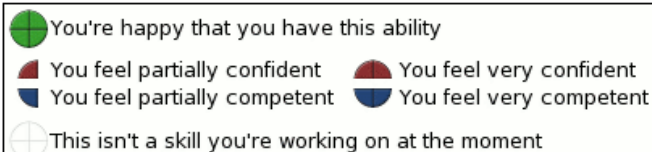
G) Career Management

D) Personal Effectiveness

Instructions

When you start using Skills Forge you should spend a few minutes completing a training needs analysis. Simply identify a few of the skills that you're interested in developing and mark them as "a work in progress". The pie will then activate so that you can click on the graphic to record how you feel about your abilities.

Here is a key:




As you develop your skills you'll hopefully reach a point where you're happy with your ability. When you select "I'm happy I have this ability" the pie will turn green to indicate that you've finished developing that skill for the time being.

There's also a text area at the bottom of the page for any private thoughts, reflection or actions. Your supervisor cannot see these comments.

Please rate your ability against each statement below:

D1) Learning and acquiring knowledge [\[more...\]](#)

- Confidence 
- Competence
- This isn't a skill I want to work on at the moment
 - Yes, it's work in progress
 - I'm happy I have this ability

Students click on the pie segments to provide a subjective rating of their skills

D1) Learning and acquiring knowledge [\[more...\]](#)

Confidence

Competence



- This isn't a skill I want to work on at the moment
- Yes, it's work in progress
- I'm happy I have this ability

Verdict:

You can find your skill gaps by looking for activated pies that are not yet coloured green.

Note: your supervisor can see this screen.

An overview of your skill ratings

- A1) Recognising and validating problems
- A2) Thinking and theoretical concepts
- A3) Knowledge within one's field
- A4) Research methodologies and techniques
- A5) Analysis of one's findings
- A6) Summarise, document, report and reflect
- B1) Understanding the context of research
- B2) Awareness of rights of others
- B3) Standards of good research practice
- B4) Health and safety
- B5) Funding and evaluation of research
- B6) Experimental techniques in research
- B7) Exploitation of research results

Summary of development activities

Training and Courses

Ref	Course Title	Date	Points / Hours	Status
York:GTU:127:650/11-06-08:02	Preparing for Your Viva	11/06/08 09:30	3.0	Place Confirmed
RSS625/22-05/08:02	Filmed Presentations	22/05/08 13:30	3.0	Place Cancelled
RSS626/13-05-08:02	Getting Work Published: chapters and monographs	13/05/08 09:30	3.0	Place Confirmed
RSS672/01-05-08:02	Career Planning	01/05/08 13:30	2.5	Attended

4 record(s) found

Previous [1] Next

Please note that it can be a few days for bookings to appear as confirmed/cancelled by the Graduate Training Unit. However, if you believe that some information is missing or incorrect please [contact us](#).

Other Development Activities

Record type	Activity Title	Date	Points Awarded	
Other development	Polish Level 1	Apr 9, 2008	2	Edit / Delete
Other development	UK Grad conference	Mar 2, 2008	5	Edit / Delete
Other development	York Award	Sep 21, 2007	*	Edit / Delete

3 record(s) found

Previous [1] Next

* These records are still awaiting final points allocation. If you're a supervisor then please click to edit the record, award points as



Supervision Meeting

Meeting title/summary	Third supervision meeting
Start Date / Time	5-5-2008, 16:15
End Date / Time	5-5-2008, 16:15
Date of previous supervision	4-4-2008, 16:15
Actions completed or still ongoing since the last supervision meeting	Finished literature review and have started work drawing up a project plan. The pre- and post- questionnaires are drafted and have been given to my supervisor, Tony, for review.
Student comments	I'm happy with my progress to date although a little worried about the amount of work still left to do. As such have decided to finish a detailed project plan. Have completed four hours of training this term. Communication skills are definitely improving.
Supervisor comments	You've made excellent progress to date. Be aware of your time commitments and ensure the questionnaires don't take up too much time. Draft questionnaires look very good indeed, well done.
Future actions and agreed training	Finish project plan by the end of May. Have agreed to organise focus groups covering a broad cross section of people to help establish public opinions.

THIS RECORD IS LOCKED

The record contents cannot be updated.

The owner of the form

1. Mr Test Student (SELF) on 9 May 2008, 00:56

I've read and I agree with the contents of this form, add my signature.

A supervisor

Required signature

About the calendar

The calendar displays all of your records from throughout Skills Forge. This is private to you, although note that certain records (such as supervision meetings) might be available to your supervisor.






Use the arrows below to change the month that is displayed and click on any entry within the calendar to view the associated record.

◀ May ▶ ▶ 2008 ▶▶








Is your calendar empty?

Click on an item in the key shown below if you would like to add a new record to your calendar.

Key to calendar icons

-  Action
-  Note / Memo
-  Taught Course
-  Development Activity
-  Meeting

Calendar

28-Apr-2008	29-Apr-2008	30-Apr-2008	01-May-2008  13:30-16:00: Career Planning	02-May-2008	03-May-2008
					04-May-2008
05-May-2008  16:15: Supervision meeting	06-May-2008	07-May-2008	08-May-2008  15:30: Run through UK Grad presentation	09-May-2008	10-May-2008
					11-May-2008
12-May-2008	13-May-2008  09:30-12:30: Getting Work Published: chapters and monographs	14-May-2008	15-May-2008  09:00-00:00: Karen's out of the office	16-May-2008  00:00-17:00: Karen's out of the office	17-May-2008
					18-May-2008
19-May-2008	20-May-2008	21-May-2008	22-May-2008  13:30-16:30: Filmed Presentations	23-May-2008	24-May-2008
					25-May-2008

Your PhD Timeline (to-do list)

Use this timeline as a guide to the sorts of things you should be thinking about at various stages throughout your PhD. Be aware that there will be additional activities and obligations within your department that are not included on this list.

This guide is based on the [University Policy on Research Degree Programmes](#)

[On Arrival](#) | [First year](#) | [Second year](#) | [Third year onwards](#)

On Arrival

Meet your supervisors

- ◆ View all your [user associations](#) on Skills Forge

Think about how you want your PhD to progress [\[more...\]](#)

- ◆ Start by reviewing your [PhD Research Skills](#) and completing a 'Training Needs Analysis'

Every year

Progress review - ongoing [\[more...\]](#)

- ◆ The [skills summary](#) will show you where your skill gaps are
- ◆ Make changes to your ability ratings using the [PhD Research Skills](#) tab
- ◆ Go to the [development activities](#) tab to find and record development activities that address your training needs
- ◆ You can set yourself [action points](#) in the diary



Welcome to Graduate Professional Development at York

New Students / Supervisors

- ◆ [About Skills Forge & Dates of Induction Sessions](#)

Diary

- ◆ [View my PhD to-do list](#)
- ◆ [View my activities for this month](#)
- ◆ [Record a supervision meeting](#)
- ◆ [Set an action point](#)

Skills

- ◆ [Assess my training needs](#)

Development Activities

- ◆ [Book a place on a course](#)
- ◆ [Record my own development activity](#)
- ◆ [Record my thoughts about a non-GTU course I've attended](#)

Reports

- ◆ [View my current course bookings](#)
- ◆ [View my development summary](#)
- ◆ [View my skills summary](#)
- ◆ [View my meetings summary](#)



Announcements

We need your feedback!

20-Feb-2008 16:00

To help us plan for the 2008/09 programme, the GTU are planning to hold some Focus Groups ([see the schedule](#)).

Have the training courses you have attended been appropriate for your needs in terms of the subject, mode of delivery, timing and length? If you have any ideas about how provision could be improved and would like to take part in one of the groups please contact Rachel Bullen on rjb9@york.ac.uk.

Those who take part in a focus group will get a book token, courtesy of the GTU, to thank them for their time.

Learn about GPD and Skills Forge

1-Sep-2007 08:00

A programme of induction sessions are open to all first year Postgraduates. The sessions will introduce you to Graduate Professional Development and Skills Forge, and will show you how to get the

What's next?

- Email notifications
 - When there's new content to look at
 - When a form has been electronically signed
- File uploads
 - Evidence
 - Thesis chapters
- Many more ideas

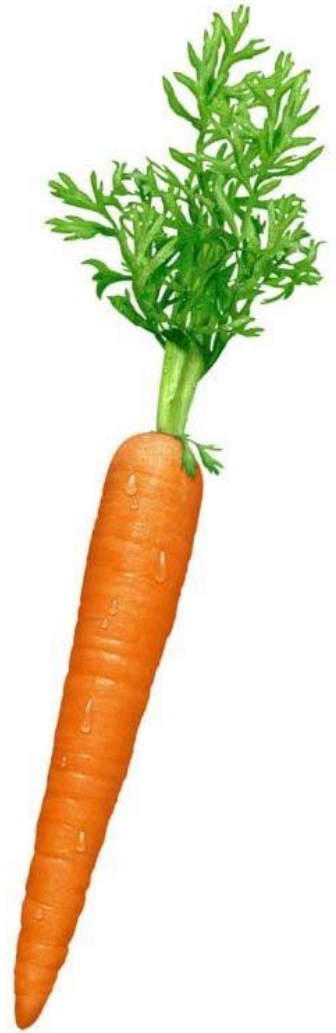
The impact at York

- Improved engagement – **70% of our first years are using the system**
- Has encouraged good practice
- Reduced administration hours
- Response and feedback is positive



Student engagement

- Promotional mix:
 - Printed handbook given to all students
 - Induction sessions
 - Graduate Fair
- Making things easier
 - “One stop shop”
 - Information and guidance



Student engagement

- Departments with 'champions' fare much better
- Provision of a centrally supported system has helped smaller departments
- They're coming back to us with ideas
- Design note: Less is more



Supervisor engagement

- Design note: Less is **definitely** more
- Have tried a grassroots approach
- Introducing automatic email notifications
- Concerns about time commitments eased when benefits are recognised



Is this available to other HEIs?

- Yes

For More Information

jc153@ohm.york.ac.uk
01904 43 2833

<http://www.skillsforge.co.uk/>

The Graduate Training Unit
gtu@york.ac.uk



For More Information

This presentation is available at

http://www.skillsforge.york.ac.uk/UKCGE_2008.ppt

References / web links

- Skills Forge: <http://www.skillsforge.co.uk/>
- This presentation: http://www.skillsforge.co.uk/UKCGE_2008.ppt
- SET for Success – Report of the Sir Gareth Roberts Review: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Documents/Enterprise_and_Productivity/Research_and_Enterprise/
- QAA Code of Practice, Section 1: Postgraduate Research Programmes
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section1/>
- The European Charter for Researchers:
http://europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf
- RCUK Research Careers and Diversity Strategy: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm>
- Leitch Review: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm
- The Worry Report: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file32802.pdf>
- The Joint Statement of Skills: <http://www.ukgrad.ac.uk/jss/>