GRADUATE SCHOOL

Induction for New Doctoral Researchers

Wednesday 9 October 2019
University of Reading

- Doctoral researchers are central to our research mission

- Admit around 400 new doctoral researchers per year across the University -
  Range of countries, backgrounds, ages, disciplinary choices

- PGR experience different from UG and PGT – hence term ‘doctoral researcher’

- University fully committed to helping each of you to fulfil your potential as a professional researcher
Outline

• About the Graduate School
• The life of a doctoral researcher
• The generic skills training programme (RRDP)
• Events and communications
• Q&A session
• Information for international (non-EU) doctoral researchers
The Graduate School
Old Whiteknights House (OWH)
The Graduate School

• Established in Sept 2011

• Hub for all doctoral research activity across University

• PGRs members of Graduate School as well as home School/Department

• Work in partnerships with Schools/Departments to provide you with first class support & skills training
A one-stop shop

- Graduate School Office
  - Queries about the training programme (RRDP)
  - Queries about Graduate School facilities
  - Information about other networking / social events

- Governance of PGR programmes via the Dean of PGR Studies
Doctoral Research Office (DRO)

• Management and maintenance of PGR student registration and records
• Management of PGR-specific immigration compliance, information and reporting
• Dedicated service for PGR students
• Issuing of CAS for T4 via extension and CAS for Doctorate Extension Scheme
• Queries on programme / status / fees payable
• Advice on suspensions
• Letters of attendance for Council Tax, sponsors etc
School/Dept PGR Support Team

• All situated on the 1st Floor of Old Whiteknights House
• Dedicated administrators to support doctoral researchers
• Normally first point of contact for queries
• Work with Directors of PGR Studies and other academics with their allocated School/s
• Based primarily within the Graduate School
• Best to arrange (by email) appointment in advance to help minimise waiting time
• Contacts and their details can be found at: www.reading.ac.uk/gs-schoolpgradmin.aspx
Facilities and access in OWH

• Study space
  – around 60 allocated desks
  – drop-in hot desks
• Seminar & meeting rooms
• Common room and kitchen
• Photocopying, printing, scanning, key books & materials
  • Open from 8am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays
  • House ‘residents’ will automatically have out-of-hours access
  • Other doctoral researchers who require out-of-hours access should email Helen Apted
Key people & information

• Key People
  – Supervisor(s)
  – School / Dept Director of PGR Studies
  – School / Dept Administrator
  – School / Dept PGR student representative
  – Graduate School staff
  – You

• Key documents / information
  – Code of Practice on Research Students (copy in pack)
  – Website
Programme specifications

• Each PhD programme has a formal programme specification
• Sets out entry requirements, learning outcomes, training requirements, progression requirements, assessment, and other things.
• Available on Graduate School website in Policies and Procedures section
The life of a doctoral researcher
The life of a doctoral researcher

- Working hours and patterns different from UG / PGT study
- Work more independently and take more responsibility for your learning
- Expected to spend majority of working day carrying out research, or engaging in training or other School based activities
- Think of yourself as a professional researcher
- If you do have a part-time job, it should not detract from your time for study
Part-time doctoral researchers

- Make up 25% of PGR cohort
- Very diverse group
  - Many working FT or PT and / or have caring commitments
  - Many live significant distance from University
- Sometimes feel end point long way off; lose focus
- Some feel isolated and lack sense of community
- Submission and completion rates poorer than for FTs
- Dr Pam Stuart = Graduate School contact
- Graduate School webpages for PT doctoral researchers
Supporting you

• **A PhD is a challenge** and there will be ups and downs. Experiencing problems is not a sign of failure – **this is normal and to be expected**.

• You don’t have to be at crisis point to ask for help – problems are easier to deal with earlier on.

• Don’t be afraid to ask for advice - a good person to start with is your supervisor, but you can seek help elsewhere: your School Director of PGR Studies; Graduate School staff; Study advice; Student Counselling & Wellbeing; RUSU advice services.

• Your School/Dept. should have a PGR rep – usually a 2nd or 3rd year doctoral researcher

• PhD Parents: If you have children or other caring responsibilities you may wish to join the Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/PhDParentsUoR/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/PhDParentsUoR/) to connect with other PhD parents. Bilingualism Matters provides research-informed advice on raising bilingual children ([www.reading.ac.uk/celm/bilingualism-matters](http://www.reading.ac.uk/celm/bilingualism-matters)).
RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT
Reading Researcher Development Programme (RRDP)

A broad development programme, complementary to School-based research training. Approximately 90 course titles on offer, delivered by more than 90 specialist trainers:

- skills for delivering your own specific research project
- setting your project or methodology in a broader research context
- sharpening generic research skills
- learning to communicate research
- building personal effectiveness
- researcher citizenship
Reading Researcher Development Programme (RRDP)

• Delivered by academics from across the University, other specialists and external trainers – breadth of expertise

• Taking only those courses which narrowly help you to deliver your project is a lost opportunity – broad offering – the cost of attending as a professional would be considerable

• But don’t go overboard – project manage your time
Planning and managing your development (1/2)

A doctorate sets you on a path to becoming an independent researcher. Planning and implementing your own development as a researcher and as a professional is a critical part of that.

- Personal development planning through the Learning Needs Analysis: Reflect on skills you have & those you need using template on Graduate School website - discussion with your supervisor – select appropriate courses to meet needs – plan agreed by School/Dept Director of PGR Studies
- Use the Learning Needs Analysis to plan and review your development on an ongoing basis
Planning for your development (2/2)

Minimum training requirement:
Year 1: 5 sessions (FT) 3 sessions (PT)
Years 2 & 3: 3 sessions (FT) 2 sessions (PT)
Year 4:
In progress reviews you will be asked to report on how your training has met the needs you identified and has addressed gaps in your knowledge.
The Learning Needs Analysis is taken into account in formal reviews of progress and Confirmation of Registration.
Practicalities - timetabling and booking

- Majority are in University term time
- RRDP sessions take place throughout the week
- Some sessions aimed at all students; some sessions streamed
- Details & timetable of all courses on website
- Can book for current term only, but the RRDP Training Brochure outlines all courses for entire year
- Requesting a place does not guarantee a place, as some courses are over-subscribed
- Many RRDP sessions repeated several times per year
- Please contact us with questions – always use university email and provide your student number (different to username)

Personal and professional development programmes

- Leadership Programme - with Henley Business School
- Sprint Women’s Development Programme (pictured)
- Preparing to Teach (run by CQSD). All PGRs who engage in a T&L activity should attend the one day programme. Request a place via Graduate School booking pages on the RISIS
Language support (1/2)

Producing a thesis in English if this is not your main language is a **major feat**!

More than simple proficiency – you are learning the academic discourse of your specific discipline.
Language support (2/2)

Support is available...

International Study and Language Institute
Academic English Programme (AEP) - offers a wide range of different classes to all students

ISLI and Graduate School
New series of thesis writing courses just for doctoral researchers organised by the Graduate School and ISLI together. Detailed information at www.reading.ac.uk/gs-thesiswriting.aspx Any questions, contact: Joanna John – j.john@reading.ac.uk

If any aspect of your use of English language is affecting progress do address this. The University has the resources and support to help you.
Online provision

Available via Blackboard during your studies: ‘Research Skills Master Programme’

• Research methods in various broad disciplines
• Intellectual Property and copyright
• Getting published
• Research ethics (Good research practice / research with humans in health and social sciences)
• Career planning
• Conferences
• Statistical methods for research

Compulsory University online training

• In year 1 - copyright training
• Year 2 onwards - training on the deposition of an electronic copy of your thesis
Statistical Advisory Service

- Advice for doctoral researchers on specific statistical aspects of their research e.g. project design, statistical analysis.
- This service is free to all doctoral researchers from all departments and at any stage of study.
- Appointment only service.
- For full details refer to the SAS Guide.
Other things we do – championing doctoral research

Fairbrother Lecture
May 2020

Annual Conference
17 June 2020

Competitions

Fairbrother Lecture 2015 - How effective is counter-radicalisation? Dr Nadya Ali
Other things we do – online community

When exciting things happen in your research
When you achieve milestones
When you solve a problem.... tell us!

@UniRdg_PhD
www.facebook.com/GraduateSchoolReading
Other things we do – social and networking

**Breakfast Club**
9:00-10:00, 5 November 2019
Graduate School (OWH)
Meet other doctoral researchers over a free breakfast

**Seasonal Celebration**
4 December 2019
Mulled wine, mince pies, food, novelty jumper competition and a Graduate School quiz
See also.....

• Student Wellbeing (Carrington Building)
• Study Advice
• Institution-wide Language Programme (learn another language)
• Career-focused RRDP sessions and online training courses
• University Careers Service
• Outreach and volunteering opportunities including: student ambassadors, Students in Schools scheme, STEM ambassadors, RUSU (students’ union) volunteering schemes
• RUSU – Reading Students’ Union
www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool

www.facebook.com/GraduateSchoolReading

gradschool@reading.ac.uk

Please contact us with questions

Always use your University email you@pgr.reading.ac.uk and provide your student number
Discussion Group

Tuesdays 11am-12pm, Graduate School, room G12
Topics: Managing academic pressure, increasing concentration and motivation, being productive
prevent procrastinating and making progress with your research.
Dr Alicia Peña Bizama, C.Psychol., AFBPsS
gradschoolwellness@reading.ac.uk
Online Resources

New blog
“Keep fit for your doctoral studies”: resources to increase productivity, motivation and resilience to achieve your goal.
To access the blog go to https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/keep-fit-for-your-doctoral-studies
You can email gradschoolwellness@reading.ac.uk with suggestions of topics you would like to see covered.
INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS
Immigration and Tier 4 Visas

• In most cases your CAS was issued to you for 4 years and 7 months.

• This is the maximum period of time which the University will sponsor your Tier 4 visa. This period covers submission, viva examination and a period of Minor Corrections (up to 3 months).

• The Tier 4 visa is linked to your course and not to you as an individual.
• It’s a joint effort (You and the University) for ensuring you stay compliant with the conditions of your Tier 4 Student Visa and with UK law.

• As the sponsor of your Tier 4 visa there are some things which we are required to know and that you are required to adhere to – unfortunately failure to do so would result in the withdrawal of sponsorship of your Tier 4 visa.

• Enrolment and re-enrolment – it is a requirement that all students complete enrolment at the start and then re-enrolment each year thereafter.
• If stated on the back of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card that you need to register with the Police, this must be done within 7 days of your arrival.

• We are required to monitor your engagement with your studies – you should have a minimum of one face-to-face meeting per month with your supervisor.
• We must know your overseas and UK addresses – if you change your address please update it on the RISIS web portal, update your Police Registration certificate (if applicable) and also report it to the Home Office.

• If you change Immigration category/receive a new type of visa you must bring the original new visa to the DRO so we can take a copy for your records (and we won’t need to sponsor your Tier 4 visa anymore).
Working Rights

• As per the conditions listed on your Tier 4 visa, you are only permitted to work up to 20 hours per week during term-time.

• All year round is considered term-time for PhD students (you have an allocation of 40 working days per academic year to use as holiday).

• A ‘week’ is defined by the Home Office as a period of 7 days from Monday – Sunday, you must book the whole week off in order to work more than 20 hours that week.

• This includes both paid and unpaid work, including voluntary work.
Travel

• To attend a conference or summer school

• To undertake data collection in home country or another country

• To take holiday – 40 working days (8 weeks) are permitted per academic year
• Before you book any travel you must ensure the correct forms are completed, that the absences are logged with the relevant persons and the appropriate travel document(s) are obtained from the Doctoral Research Office – Visa and/or re-entry letter.

• Forms are available on the Graduate School website, Doctoral Research Office or from your PGR administrator, just tell us which one you need.

• Don’t travel without first checking and completing the paperwork.

Have a good Trip!
Ensure you are in the know
(about Tier 4 Immigration information)

• Summary of key points on your memory stick

• University Tier 4 compliance document available online

• Information sheets available outside the Doctoral Research Office

• Staff available inside the Doctoral Research Office

• Immigration Team – immigration@reading.ac.uk

• Doctoral Research Office – dro@reading.ac.uk
THANK YOU