

# PG Researcher Development Programme Handbook

2022-2023



UNIVERSITY of  
GREENWICH

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## Table of Contents

1. Purpose of this Handbook	3
2. Why is skills development important to you?	3
3. What is expected of the university and you?	4
4. What is the University of Greenwich Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme - PGRDP?	7
5. Exemption from Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP): Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	15
6. Wider university services	15
Annex I	15
Annex II	15

## 1. Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook 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), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or Doctor of Education (EdD) at the university - an initiative known as the Greenwich **Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP)**. Training sessions, 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. You are required to engage with the **mandatory** elements of the 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 with the University of Greenwich PGRDP, you should seek clarification from your supervisors in the first instance, your Faculty Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange, or from the university's Research & Enterprise Training Institute (RETI).

## 2. 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 an MPhil, PhD, or EdD. 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**.

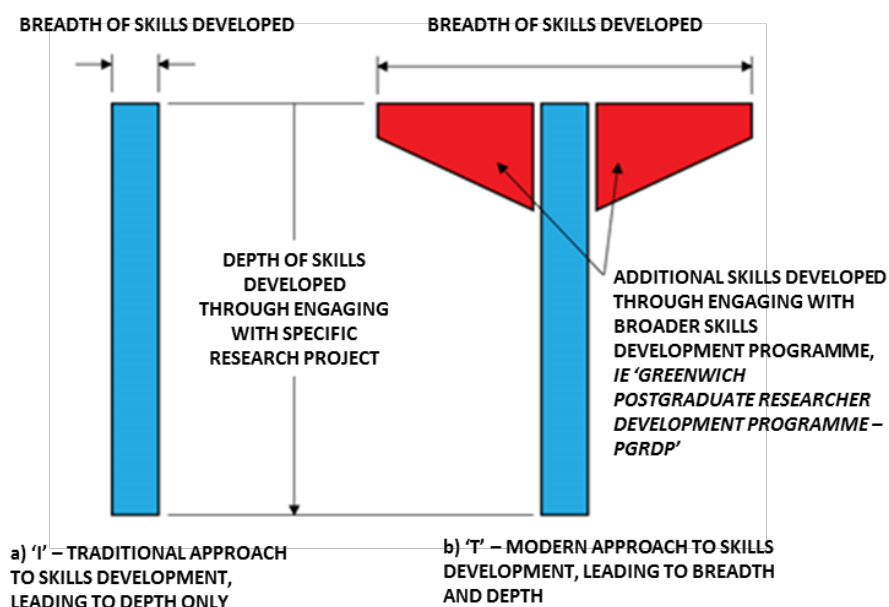


FIG 1. 'T' NOT 'I' - GENERALISED REPRESENTATION OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNDERTAKING DOCTORAL STUDY

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, and across the EU (2018 EU data: approximately 49% go into the private sector, 12% into the public sector and 39% into the HE sector), it is clear that the very narrow, highly specific level of skills developed during such studies do not necessarily best prepare you to a 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 the modern-day MPhil and doctoral studies. This modern approach 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 postgraduate research students. In response to these expectations, at the University of Greenwich both subject-specific and broader based skills are now developed and practised by postgraduate research students through engaging, at the first available opportunity, with the five complementary strands of activity comprising the **PGRDP**, as shown in **Table 1**. 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 **mandatory** (unless exempted from any elements of the PGRDP) as you work towards your research degree.

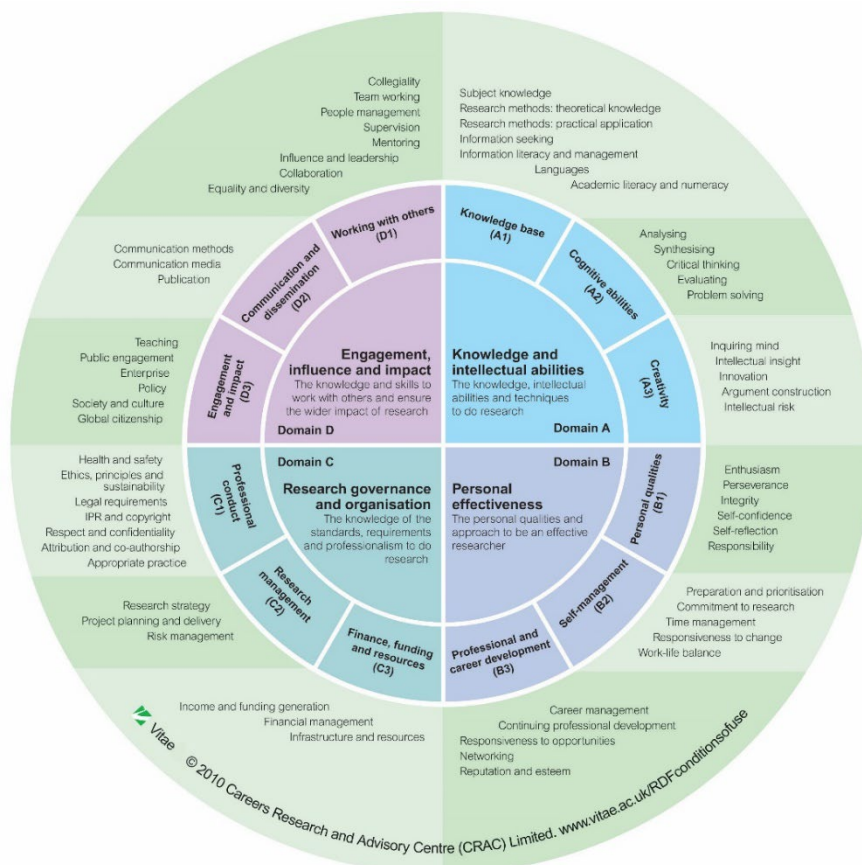
**Table 1: The Greenwich Postgraduate Research Development Programme (PGRDP) – Responsibilities for Delivery and Engagement**

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Responsibility for Delivery and Engagement</b>
Strand 1	Introduction to Research Skills	University organised – <b>mandatory</b> engagement
Strand 2	Teaching Skills	University organised – <b>mandatory</b> engagement
Strand 3	Examination Preparation	University organised – <b>mandatory</b> engagement
Strand 4	Subject-Specific Skills	Your own initiative; Faculty/Department/School/Research Group/Supervisors – <b>mandatory</b> engagement
Strand 5	Extramural Skills	Your own initiative – <b>mandatory</b> engagement

### 3. 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)<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/> has set out the explicit expectation that higher education institutions, such as the University of 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 that 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 Vitae<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/> (as the University of Greenwich, UoG, is a member of Vitae, you can register and access information available from Vitae). In essence, the RDF provides a nationally recognised framework of skills and attributes postgraduate 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 postgraduate 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 2**.



**Fig 2. Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)**

<sup>1</sup> The Government approved regulatory body overseeing the quality assurance and maintenance of standards of undergraduate and postgraduate provision in higher education institutions in the UK

<sup>2</sup> A Government approved body concerned with the personal development of postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions such as the University of 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 into 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. 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 on the nature of your own research programme and how you see your future career developing.

Within the 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. 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 and will recommend appropriate training sessions. You can also use your results to conduct a more focussed search for training sessions based on the skills you are looking to develop. 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. This will enable you to add all other training and development activity, including presentations and publications. Maintaining a record of your training and development activities will enable you and your supervisors to continually 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, thereby forming an evidence base for potential employers on completion of your studies. The Training and Development Portfolio is visible to the Research & Enterprise Training Institute, as well as 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 Research Students' and Supervisors' Handbook at:

<https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/gre/research-students-supervisors-handbook>

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 University of Greenwich PGRDP, which has been designed with you in mind, and
- record all evidence of your personal engagement and progress with the PGRDP in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE. As detailed above, you only need to do this for training and development that was not booked using PULSE.

The remainder of this document outlines the various strands comprising the PGRDP, and how you engage with them. RETI has also organised various 'optional' training sessions (see **Annex I**) that complement the mandatory provision. It is your responsibility to engage with these activities, as appropriate.

## 4. What is the University of Greenwich Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme - PGRDP?

The Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme is the university's umbrella approach to assist 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. These involve both face-to-face and online interaction.

**Access to PGRDP Moodle site:** The PGRDP Moodle site can be accessed via <http://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13108> You will need to self-enrol by clicking the above link and then entering the enrolment key **PGRO**

As shown in Table 1 the PGRDP comprises of five complementary strands, details of which are given as follows:

- [Strand 1 – Introduction to Research Skills](#)
- [Strand 2 - Teaching Skills](#)
- [Strand 3 – Examination Preparation](#)
- [Strand 4 – Subject-Specific Skills](#)
- [Strand 5 - Extramural Skills](#)

**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 and/or online training and will need to be completed before you are permitted to be assessed for transferring your registration status with the university from MPhil to PhD. **Note: Apart from the online training on 'Information compliance', postgraduate research students on the EdD programme are exempt from this Strand 1 training** – instead, the relevant material here is covered by a combination of the taught phase of the EdD, followed by a number of key thesis support sessions, which students should attend during the thesis phase of their EdD. Details of these support sessions are available in the EdD Student Programme Handbook, available on the EdD Moodle page.

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/Centre, Department/School, Faculty.

### Training Sessions

The training sessions of this strand comprise of a combination of presentations/workshops, as well as university online courses. The sessions will be delivered by professional services staff of the university and external providers where appropriate. The training sessions will run four times a year, and delivered at the Greenwich/Medway campuses, and/or online. Booking information for the sessions and access information on the university online courses will be available on the PGRDP Moodle site.

### Scope and coverage

This includes sessions under two block sections and online courses as follows:

- **Working towards a doctorate** (on-campus/online)
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Library support for researchers
  - Research design, intellectual property and research ethics
- **Excelling in your doctorate** (on-campus/online)
  - Project planning and time management
  - Literature review
  - Research integrity
- **Information compliance for researchers** (online courses)
  - Information Security Awareness: <https://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22826>
  - Data Protection (including GDPR) <https://moodlecurrent.gre.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=31758>

For the next scheduled offerings please go to [https://docs.gre.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf](https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf)

### Timescale for engagement

You are required to engage with this strand at the first available opportunity following your registration as a postgraduate research student with the university, and complete your formal engagement within your **first year of study for FT students** and within your **first two years of study for PT students**. 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) that you are required to submit to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for consideration. 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, until any lack of engagement has been addressed.



**Strand 2 – Teaching Skills:** Many postgraduate research students have an opportunity to support the undergraduate and postgraduate taught 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 doctoral research studies. Such training is prerequisite to becoming a recognised 'Postgraduate Research Student Teaching Assistant' in the university (<https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/gre/pgрта-handbook>) 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. 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 5 and Annex II of this Handbook.

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 as a provisional PGRTA. You may do so only on the express understanding that you are registered and engaged with the course. Under this circumstance, because you are not fully trained for this activity, you may only engage in 'light, introductory duties'. Beyond such an initial engagement, you will not be permitted to undertake any further teaching related activities until you can provide evidence that you have met the requirements of, and completed the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) course, thereby making you a recognised PGRTA. It should also 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.

### **Training Sessions**

This strand takes the form of a course comprising of six sessions (delivered at Greenwich/Medway campuses, and online), and a series of online activities, which will be organised and delivered by the university's Academic and Learning Enhancement team 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 (see [GOLD](#),

University of Greenwich's Advance HE accredited professional recognition scheme) 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 Advance HE.

### Scope and coverage

The overall content of the training 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 and inclusive pedagogy
- Engaging students in lectures
- Small group teaching
- Developmental assessment and feedback
- Teaching skills Drop-in (optional)
- Microteaching

To complete the strand, all sessions of the course must be attended, unless stated otherwise, as well as the successful completion of the course assessment.

For the next scheduled offerings please go to [https://docs.gre.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf](https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf)

### Timescale for engagement

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 for FT students** and within your **first two years of study for PT students**. You are required to report on your engagement with this strand of activity in the annual progress report (Form RDA4) you submit for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. 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, until any lack of engagement has been addressed.

**Strand 3 – Examination Preparation:** This strand aims to prepare you for your (i) MPhil to PhD transfer, and (ii) final examination for MPhil/PhD/EdD.

### Training Sessions

This strand will be delivered as training sessions by professional services staff of the University of Greenwich, supported by specialist input from others where appropriate. The sessions will run four times per year, and delivered at the Greenwich/Medway campuses, and/or online. Booking information for the sessions will be available on the PGRDP Moodle site.

### **Scope and Coverage**

This strand includes sessions on preparing you for your MPhil to PhD transfer, and preparing you for your final examination for MPhil/PhD/EdD. Further details are provided below.

- Preparing for your transfer from MPhil to PhD (**EdD students do NOT need to engage with this session**)
- Preparing for your final examination, including viva (oral examination)

For the next scheduled offerings please go to [https://docs.gre.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf](https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf)

### **Timescale for engagement**

Timescales for completion are given as follows:

- Training on '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)
- Training on '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)

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. 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.

Further details on timescales on progression and examination can be found in the University's Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Awards, <https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/academic-regulations-for-research-awards>

**Strand 4 – Subject-Specific Skills:** No two research projects, and the associated student experience, are 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, training cannot be provided centrally from within the university, but must be identified and developed between you,

your supervisors and your Department/School/Faculty, and they will work with you in this important area of skills development.

### **Scope and Coverage**

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/Centre, Department/School 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 postgraduate 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, specific research ethics and approval, 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 specific 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 of subject-specific skills should take place with your supervisors shortly after you take up your role as a postgraduate 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 you. 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 it should be evidenced in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE, which will also 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:** 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 an ‘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.

### **Scope and Coverage**

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 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, Departments/Schools/Faculties and Research Groups/Centres hold many events across all three campuses that will assist you to address this strand of activity, for example, inaugural professorial lectures, research conferences and seminars, presentations by professional bodies, talks by external speakers etc.

### **Timescale for engagement**

Your engagement with this strand of activity 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 Faculty Research Degrees Committee, and evidenced in the Completed Activities section under the Professional Development tab in PULSE, which will also update your Training and Development Portfolio. Attendance at four such events each academic session over the duration of your research programme should be the expected level of engagement. 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.

Overall, Strands 1-5:

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 (RDF) devised by Vitae <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/researcher-development-framework-rdf-vitae.pdf>. This is demonstrated by Fig 2 in Section 3 of this Handbook, where the skills and attributes encompassed by the University of 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 competences will go a long way to preparing you for the world of work beyond your research degree, and, for students 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. All of the foregoing should be formally recorded in PULSE.

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 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 on 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 Moodle site.

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 and not be afraid to ask your supervisors to assist you with this aspect of you developing your skills base – help is at hand!



## 5. Exemption from Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme (PGRDP): Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In order to assist you to acquire the base material that will enable you to, with practice, hone the skills associated with 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.

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 II**.

## 6. Wider university services

Information on a range of university services, such as accommodation, employment, Greenwich Students Union, student finance, student wellbeing, library and information services etc. can be found at

<https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/gre/workshop-2-enhancing-the-postgraduate-research-pgr-student-experience>

## Annex I

Additional 'Optional' Training Sessions: The Research and Enterprise Training Institute has organised a range of additional training sessions for our postgraduate research students (PGRs). Details of the sessions are given in [https://docs.gre.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf](https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0035/296882/pgr-and-staff-researcher-training-schedule-2022-2023.pdf) and details for booking on these sessions are provided on the Moodle site.

## Annex II

### 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) <https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/recognition-of-prior-learning-student-guidelines>. Please use the form on this weblink to apply for exemption from aspects of Strands 1 or 2 where hard evidence exists to support the claim. In short, the key is for the student to demonstrate that they already possess the necessary knowledge/skills/attributes where seeking RPL through the provision of evidence. Where this is agreed, the student will not be required to re-train 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, and this is not negotiable.

**Exemption from Strand 1:** To be granted an RPL exemption for Strand 1 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 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](mailto:reti-training@gre.ac.uk)

**Strand 2 exemption:** 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 students 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 students, 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 this Strand you will need to complete a RPL form available from <https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/recognition-of-prior-learning-student-guidelines> and submit this along with the evidence electronically to RETI Training [reti-training@gre.ac.uk](mailto:reti-training@gre.ac.uk)

#### **Important Note**

RPL co-ordinators from Research and Enterprise Training Institute (RETI) and Academic and Learning Enhancement will assess each RPL submission, as appropriate, for exemption and inform the students of the outcome in a timely manner.

#### **Exemption for 'Direct PhD students' and 'Doctorate by published work':**

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

**Doctorate by published work** students 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'.

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.

Postgraduate research students who are officially classified as studying overseas and, for justifiable reasons, find themselves unable to attend an element of the on-campus/online training, or have extenuating circumstances, should contact the Research & Enterprise Training Institute [reti-training@gre.ac.uk](mailto:reti-training@gre.ac.uk) for information on potential alternative options.

## Contact us

### **Research & Enterprise Training Institute**

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