What is the Professional Development Framework?

The PGR Professional Development Framework is a policy approved by Senate based on three main areas and six key themes. Its structure is intended to introduce fair and equitable access to professional development no matter your department or discipline.

How does this benefit you as a researcher?

By taking steps to identify and develop specific skills, you will acquire the knowledge and expertise to achieve standards of excellence in your research and in your professional life as you move from your postgraduate programme into future employment or study.

The Framework enables you to:

1. take control and be responsible for your own professional development;
2. review your current skills and identify any areas that you may wish to develop for your research and personally;
3. record development activity in one place and be able to easily identify and book onto/or self-certify activities;
4. recognise all the skills you are already acquiring as part of your research programme.

What is expected of a Doctoral student?

Full-time students will spend at least 10 days per year of registration on activities that support professional development under one or more of the Framework’s themes. This is pro-rata for part time students to six days.

Of the full time equivalent of 10 days:

- Five days (minimum) should be spent on professional development activities specific to your department/discipline – Research Focussed;
- Three days per year must be spent on workshops/training/events/online courses which broaden your skills that are not specific to your academic department, discipline or research area – Transferable Skills;
- Two days (minimum) should be spent on activities where you are attending events and making connections – Conferencing/Networking.

In your annual review process you should include a narrative report of at least 300 words reflecting on your academic, and professional development across a range of the Framework’s themes.

Is it mandatory?

For students who started in or before 2015–16, there is a strong expectation of engagement with Professional Development training, and this will become a formal requirement of your Doctoral programme from September 2017. For those commencing in 2017, engagement with Professional Development is part of your Warwick PhD.

Are there any exemptions for students?

The University doesn’t have a policy for students to exempt themselves from the Framework, however the Framework has been created to support you in your development and will have a flexible approach. It shouldn’t be seen as compelling you to attend a series of courses or workshops that you feel do not add value to your research or skills base and therefore your development needs analysis, and communication with supervisor/s, will allow you to make decisions as to relevant and beneficial activities and opportunities.

There may be instances, for example where you already have professional experience and you may find the Framework useful in the support of recording and reflecting upon past experiences or reviewing additional opportunities.
**What is being recorded?**

With the support of Warwick SkillsForge, you will be able to record your activities and have a ‘transcript’ of all the activities that you have booked/uploaded for your Framework areas: Research Focussed / Transferable Skills and Conferencing/Networking.

For the 300 word annual report you may have procedures directly within your department about how you report these, but you can use Warwick SkillsForge to create the narrative around your activities.

**What role does a supervisor have and how will this help?**

It is expected that as well as supporting research, a supervisor will discuss with you your future plans and signpost any opportunities that may be beneficial.
Supervisor’s will be expected to review annually your Development Needs Analysis (DNA) and have the ability to view the activities you undertake (although there may be some exceptions), and for this to inform the annual meeting where you discuss your professional development.

**What is expected of a non-Doctoral student (e.g. MA/MSc by Research)?**

Non-Doctoral students are welcome and able to engage with the professional development opportunities and activities available, and are encouraged to do so as a means of identifying and supporting your skills. The policy is not mandatory for non-Doctoral students but adopts a best practice methodology for recording and reflecting on your personal and professional development.

Warwick SkillsForge is available via: SkillsForge.warwick.ac.uk or from the web page: https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/professionaldevelopment/pgrdevelopment/

FAQs: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/professionaldevelopment/pgrdevelopment/faq

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