

This report will discuss how the Researcher Development Programme at Warwick provides comprehensive and customized support to enhance the development of its current postgraduate researchers. It begins with an overview of the Researcher Development sector in the UK before exploring the practices, aims and useful stats of Researcher Development Online (RDO) in the current academic year (2023-24).

## Background of Researcher Development in the UK

Work dating from 2002 (including the Research Concordat 2008 and 'Set for Success' Sir Gareth Roberts 2002) paved the way for widespread improvements to the research environment and for the professional development of researchers in the UK. It is widely recognised that researchers have a critical role in delivering innovative and leading work, contributing to local and global challenges and needs. Hence, educational institutions must support, train, and encourage the supply of well-rounded and multi-skilled researchers who can contribute to all employment sectors and are equipped and empowered to succeed in their endeavours.

The Concordat (revised in 2019) states our responsibilities clearly. For example, institutions must:

- Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement, and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.
- Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.
- Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this.
- Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews.

(Note: There are multiple languages at play in this sector including 'Researcher Development', 'Professional Development', 'Transferrable Skills', 'PGR/ECR/Supervisor training' - all meaning the same/similar).

Following the Concordat, a Researcher Development Framework (RDF, Vitae – 2010, currently under revision) was created to tackle the demand for focused attention to the development of UK's researchers. The framework addresses the wide-ranging knowledge, **intellectual abilities**, techniques and professional standards expected to do research and also the **personal qualities**, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.

Such well-rounded approach to development is especially vital in the early stages of a research career, particularly at postgraduate research level. Hence, through our Researcher Development Programme at Warwick, we focus on developing researchers who are not only multi-skilled but also valued and respected for the diversity they bring to the research process. We believe that with the opportunity to access comprehensive training and support throughout their postgraduate studies, these researchers will be equipped to work across various sectors, adapt to change, and manage the increasing pressures of contemporary challenges.

## Warwick Doctoral Colleges' Researcher Development

The Researcher Development programme (more commonly known as RDO), comprises a research-based and evidence-informed curriculum that aims to provide both an in-depth and expansive approach to PGR learning and development. It is delivered by a diverse team of tutors/trainers which include current or Warwick academic alumni with different areas of expertise; internationally recognised facilitators and academic/educational developers (three of which are also trained coaches); one Mental Health and Wellbeing specialist; and a post-doctoral researcher.

**What we deliver:** Our programme is distributed into **key areas** of support (see appendix) following the RDF's notion of offering a well-rounded approach to researcher development and fifteen years of research and evidence-based practice in the field: Accelerator Series (1<sup>st</sup> Year PGRs); Research Practices & Methodologies; Writing Support; PhD Essentials (incl. Productivity & Wellbeing); PhD in a 2<sup>nd</sup> Language; and Planning your Career Path. Each area comprises a series of workshops tailored to specific developmental needs. Given the vast diversity of postgraduate researchers, we recognise that each individual brings their own knowledge and experiences to the research process, so our sessions are offered in a non-compulsory matter - they can 'pick-and-choose' what they wish to develop and focus on. This allows PGRs to steer their own pedagogical/andragogical path; identifying the training they need and that is appropriate to their level of experience and prior knowledge.

**How we deliver:** We run online workshops, which are bespoke to the group in the room (max 18 PGRs). We utilise performance and development coaching strategies to support the PGRs' reflective learning and we use action learning planning as an outcome of every session. By working in the online space, we are sustaining their ability to work globally; supporting PGRs who need to juggle the demands on their time and resources; and have multiple learning and social needs. Albeit being online, the sessions (and facilitators) provide a confidential and interactive space which function as communal and social spaces to support adult learning, but also wellbeing needs. By training in a multidisciplinary and interactive environment, PGRs are also enabled to experience solutions and challenges which occur in their peer's research experience, translate that learning into their own practice where appropriate, and facilitate their ability to work in multidisciplinary teams.

#### **Aims of the Programme:**

- **To deliver a wide range of research-based development training sessions to PGRs** - covering multiple skills learning (i.e. research methods, thesis writing, project management, presenting research), career planning (reflections and actions), and specific needs related to the PGR experience, such as productivity and wellbeing related sessions.
- **To promote an inclusive and accessible space for PGR participation** through key areas of development, topics and themes (i.e. 'PhD in a 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Series' and 'Part-Time PhD') and through format of delivery (interactive online sessions).
- **To facilitate a co-learning environment** by acknowledging the experiences and skills PGRs bring to research processes and **encourage peer-to-peer support**.
- **To allow PGR agency and flexibility** through the delivery of a non-compulsory programme that grants PGRs to steer their own developmental and professional paths.

#### **2023-2024 RD Programme:**

- Delivery of **110** unique workshops (which are repeated throughout the year)
- **2482** PGR Bookings to sessions
- **75% Attendances** per bookings
- Feedback Responses more than **90%** would recommend our sessions (7% maybe); score of **4.67 out of 5** to the question 'was this session a good use of your time' and positive and/or constructive written feedback.
- **Collaboration with colleagues from across the university** including Warwick Institute of Engagement (WIE), Research and Impact Services (RIS), Student Opportunity Careers Team and Academic colleagues from varied disciplines.

*The RDO is currently nationally recognised for the quality and breadth of our delivery. Our booking to turn up rate for sessions is higher than most RD programmes in the sector, with 97% recommending the workshop they*

*had attended (RDO Evaluation Report BGS 2022)*. Utilising a research approach to our programme design, we can respond swiftly to PGR, sector, and internal needs. Our diverse group of facilitators allows us to provide support unseen in other institutions; ranging from Wellbeing for PGRs delivered by a MH specialist, through to support for our International PGRs undertaking their doctorate (PhD in Second language series); and training devised and written for external companies is often piloted at Warwick first.

With all this engagement, RDO is creating a professional learning community, with PGRs supporting and contributing to the wider knowledge available. *We would argue that this is a model which could support the wider training/ transferrable skills/ academic/ professional development delivery across Warwick. It would allow for wider institutional/ departmental contributions, co-ordinate promotion and administration from a central space, allow and engage hub and bespoke disciplinary training where appropriate.*

#### References:

*SET for Success: The report of Sir Gareth Roberts' Review*, 2002. Available at: [robertsreview\\_intro.pdf \(ioe.ac.uk\)](#)

The Concordat to Support the Development Career of Researchers, 2019. Available at: [Researcher-Development-Concordat\\_Sept2019-1.pdf \(researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk\)](#)

Vitae Researcher Development Framework, 2010. Available at: [vitae-researcher-development-framework-rdf-full-content-graphic-2011.jpg \(1868x1865\)](#)

# Appendix: Warwick Researcher Development Programme (2023-2024)

Research Practices & Methodologies
Research Methods Series
Quantitative data collection and analysis
Inspecting Data Bases
Advance Quantitative data analysis: Regression, Anova, and Manova
Qualitative Research Part 1 – Epistemologies and data collection
Qualitative Research Part 2 – Methodologies and analysis
How to write Qualitative research findings?
Graphical representation of qualitative and quantitative data
Mixed- Methods research design, data collection and analysis
Meta Analysis Research: a how to guide
Involving experts as contributors to the research process
Further Sessions on Practices and Methodologies
Fieldwork Abroad: How to plan and what to expect
Qualitative Research Practices: Interviewing and Oral History Methods
Reflexivity for Researchers
Visualising your Research
A (complete beginners) Guide to Data Handling
Creativity in Research
Active Listening for Interviewing

Planning your Career Path
Using SkillsForge for your Professional Development
What role do you want? Searching for a career that is best for you
Develop your Career Strategy to get the job you want
What do Employers Want? Selling PhD to employers outside academia
Networking with Employers during your PhD
Creating Positive Working Relationships: communication styles
Preparing for Leadership - Building teams and producing results
Academic Interviews - making an impact
Dealing with Rejection in Academia
What can you do with your Research Degree?
Marketing your Skills - CV Building
Developing your LinkedIn Profile
Deconstructing Job Adverts
Finding Research Funding
Writing Proposals and Abstracts
Research Grant applications
Advanced Writing: Writing an article for publication

PhD Essentials
10 Things I wish I'd known at the Beginning of my PhD
Hopes, Fears, and Challenges- starting your PhD
Research Planning for your First Year
Preparing for your Upgrade
Preparing for your Viva
Thesis Submission - all things you must not forget to do
Protect your Intellectual Property
Research Ethics and Integrity
Conferences, Public Engagement & Outreach (Sub-Theme)
Research Poster Design
Conferences: making the most of the event
Using Storytelling to communicate your research
Presenting your Research
Creating a Networking Strategy for Conferences and Events
Dealing with Social Anxiety (particularly in Conference Season)
Being a Conference Chair
Video Editing & Filming Made Easy
Writing for non-academic audiences
Design for Academics 1
Design for Academics 2
Writing for Social Media
Research Impact
Productivity & Wellbeing (Sub-Theme)
Increase your Productivity
Get prepared, get organised - starting your PhD
Part-time PhD - Part time responsibilities: How to juggle work, life & research
Part-time PhD - Seven Steps for PhD Completion ( middle/ late stage)
PhD Middle years – charting and preparing for the next 18 months
Goal Setting
Tackling Perfectionism
Increasing your Self-Confidence
Dealing with Impostor Syndrome
What Resilience means for Researchers
How to Have Difficult Conversations
Dealing with Transitions
Facing your Fears in Academia
How to Deal with Low Mood
How to Deal with Stress
How to prevent burnout during your PhD
Emotional Intelligence for Researchers
How to navigate uncertainty in research (and personal life)

Accelerator Series - 1st Year PGRs
Speed Reading
Note Taking
Literature Reviews: where to start?
Supervisor & PGRs: Building Successful Practice
Time Management
Introduction to Project Management

Writing Support
Writing Series
Academic writing: what is it and how to prepare for it
Writing Sentences: starting strong
Paragraphs: the building blocks of your thesis
Finding, reading, and quoting research
Representing other research fairly, organising your reading, filling the gap
Long documents: practical tips, structuring your work, signposting
Writing Introductions and Conclusions
How to respond to feedback
Writing Proposals and Abstracts
Writing and Giving Conference Papers
Advanced Writing: How to Edit Effectively
Advanced Writing: Writing an Article for Publication
Writing tips: (45-60min)
Writing Hypotheses: the conditional, the future perfect, the subjunctive
The passive voice: what is it and when should I use it?
Punctuation: an overview
Academic Hedging: advantages and pitfalls
Focus on Style: How to be more Concise
Focus on Style: How to be more Detailed
Focus on Style: How to Sound more Sophisticated
Focus on Style: Differences between British & American Writing
Extra Writing Support
Get your Writing Organised - Stage 1: storyboards
Get your Writing Organised - Stage 2: signposting & mapping
Making your thesis easier to read for your examiner
Get your Writing on Track

PhD in a 2nd Language Series
PhD in a 2nd Language: things to consider
Navigating Communication Challenges in English
Navigating Writing and Reading Difficulties
Conferences & Networking
Presenting in Another Language
Editing and Proofreading
Communicating with your Supervisor