Research Training Policy

RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME (RTP)

It is recognised that postgraduate research study is both challenging and demanding. Today, a Postgraduate Research Student is expected to gain the skills needed to become a competent researcher in their chosen discipline and at the same time develop a range of transferable skills which will broaden their future options in the workplace. The RTP aims to help you to do this by offering a range of development opportunities to attend, participate and learn from. The outcome and impact from these activities will be reflected on and collected in the form of an E-Portfolio and ultimately through the production of the thesis.

The RTP is a compulsory element of being a Research Student at the University and must be completed prior to submission of the thesis. Whilst placing an emphasis on research skills and the identification of specific training needs, the RTP is also about the development of a range of researcher attributes, from engagement with research philosophies to making plans for beyond completion. The RTP at Leeds Beckett reflects good practice guidelines associated with Research Student development nationally (QAA) and is directly linked to Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (https://www.vitae.ac.uk) . We aim to offer quality research training that is relevant and appropriate across our disciplinary areas and that meets the needs of our diverse students.

Starting from the point of enrolment and working with your supervisors, all Research Students are expected to summarise skills and competences they already have and to identify specific areas for future training. This process directly informs the completion of a training needs analysis (TNA) and the generation of a personal Training Plan. Generating your plan may involve a skills audit to indicate levels of competence across a range of research skills required for your area of study and to identify activities which will allow you to improve your skills. You should review your plan regularly with your supervisors to assess the progress you are making and in order to identify new needs as these emerge. It is a University requirement that you report on your Research Training activities at Confirmation of Registration (CoR) and Annual Progression meetings. The RTP is compulsory for all full time/part time research students studying on and off campus. This includes, MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorates. Research students studying a Master of Research will not be expected to undertake a separate RTP as this particular programme has a proportion of research training included. However, our MRes students are welcome to access any research training opportunities that are deemed necessary and appropriate for their studies.

Building a portfolio of research training evidence

Your RTP portfolio and accompanying Training Plan is a record of activities and related evidence that demonstrates how skill acquisition and appropriate researcher development requirements have been overtaken. Detailed content of the RTP portfolio differs across disciplines and subject areas and that is why discussion and agreement about content with supervisors is a crucial part of the process. Please remember that you cannot submit your thesis until you have had your portfolio agreed and signed off by your supervisory team.
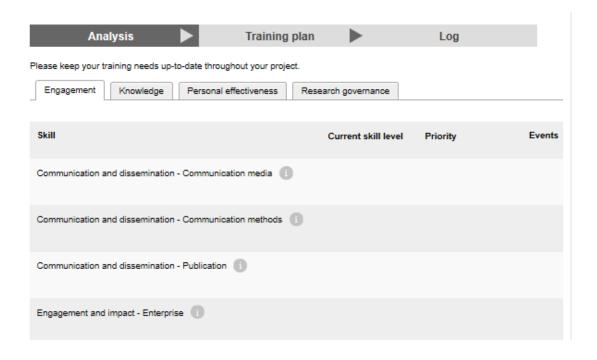
We recognise that Research Students require key training at different points during their period of registration and the Graduate School promotes and provides research training practice on that basis. The RTP offers a range of workshop and seminars, generic and subject specific designed to develop your skills as a research student. Based on Vitae's Researcher Development Framework we have mapped our development provision to the four domains, (A) Knowledge and intellectual abilities, (B) Personal effectiveness (C) Research Governance and Organisational (D) Engagement, Influence and Impact. You will find workshops and seminars at School and University level and, in line with School specific policies, opportunities to attend internal/external conferences as appropriate.

What happens next?

- Training Needs Analysis process is explained at induction and following this, students complete the 'Analysis' section on SAM that appears on the students Doctoral Research Project page.

- Student creates a Training Plan on SAM in discussion with their supervisor (and informed by the skill level and priorities indicated from the Analysis)
- Your Training Plan will be discussed at Confirmation of Registration meetings (CoR).

A **video demonstration** of the Training & Development section in SAM under 'Guides' titled 'System Demo - Video (Sept 2020)'. The information relevant to training starts 33 mins in and finishes at around 42 mins)

How long will it take?

As you develop your skills your needs will change and this will be reflected as your progress through the programme of study. Therefore, it will be expected that you will be continuing with the RTP until you reach the 'writing-up phase'. However, you must have completed the RTP prior to the viva voce examination.

- To submit, email your Director of Studies to inform them that your RTP is complete on SAM (remember this represented via the 'Log' section) and ready for them to assess and review.

GETTING STARTED: RESEARCH STUDENT SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS (TNA)

Your research is unique and as such your skills development will be individual to you. There is no right or wrong approach but to help you understand your strengths, weaknesses and development needs a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) will be undertaken within the first month mostly likely at the first meeting with your supervisor(s). You will have already had an introduction to the RTP at the University Induction so you should have some ideas of about the types of training and development activities available.

The TNA covers the four broad domains of the Researcher Development Framework. In completing the TNA you need to analyse whether you think;
- you already have the particular skills
- areas where you think you need more development
- and new skills required

Don't forget to account for the knowledge and skills gained at Induction and Development Day 1.

The TNA is completed using the Analysis tool that can be found via SAM under the Development section of your Doctoral Research Project.

Your current skills level should be assessed to indicate gaps using a rating scale from 1 to 5 (1 indicating no skill to 5 very confident). The development needs should then be rated by priority, for example, low, medium or high.

Need further help

Vitae has developed various materials to help you identify and fulfill your skills development. You may find the following ones particularly useful in and making the most of your research training programme.

Professional Development Advice Sheets: breaks down each of the 63 professional development areas from the RDF to explain why this topic is important and how you can improve in that area. May be particularly useful to those who are considering how to fulfil specific criteria.

Professional development planning for researchers online course (PDP ROC) short online course, developed for researchers who want to make the most of opportunities and create new ones, covers all stages in the process. You can dip and out of the five modules of the course

Lenses focus on particular themes when identifying their skills training needs including getting started, leadership, enterprise, intrapreneurship, teaching, engineering, employability, mobility and information literacy

As well as talking to your supervisors there is a Student Development Officer within the Graduate School who can provide general advice and can be contacted via email resarcherdevelopment@Leedbeckett.ac.uk

HOW TO FULFIL THE CRITERIA

There are several means by which you can progress your skills to meet the criteria. Some of the more popular are:

- attending training events – internal and external*
- reading
- conversations
- presenting your work at conferences,
- networking

You may even have some creative ideas on how to approach it or find that some are naturally met through the course of studying for a PhD (such as time management). Essentially there is no prescribed way providing it allows you to develop the skills you need.

*You can find some of these listed under 'Where to find training and development opportunities' further below

COLLECTING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR DEVELOPMENT

Your TNA is the basis of your development and training. The next stage is to develop a means to record, evidence and reflect on of the training and development opportunities you have undertaken. A reflective diary is a personal account of your research process, your responses to information received, and records of ideas you may have considered. These can be typed directly in SAM as notes and saved with any other documents you to wish to use as evidence. This is the point where along with your analysis and attendance at events, the 'Log' in SAM develops to become a portfolio; an E-journal and source document of your experiences and achievements, both positive and negative. It may contain useful information such as:

- Reflective notes to remind you of conversations with other researchers
- Attendance dates and materials from a workshop/conference along with your notes and opinions of what you have learnt
- Extracts or cross reference to research work
- Mind mapping notes on a specific issue
- Presentation or copy of a poster given and any feedback

Therefore, it should contain a record of your thoughts, experiences and feelings about your research work as it develops and not just a list of facts. The portfolio, E-journal might also include reference to planned activities arising out of this experience or provide solutions to specific problems you have encountered previously.

REVIEWING YOUR DEVELOPMENT

Your plans and activities should be regularly reviewed by you and your supervisors because your needs will change the further you progress into the programme of study. The portfolio, E-Journal will develop over the course of your research degree programme into an excellent reference point, demonstration of your competencies and the skills gained and a major resource for crafting your Curriculum Vitae for the future.

SUBMITTING YOUR RTP PORTFOLIO

It will be expected that you will be continuing with the RTP until you reach the 'writing-up phase'. However, you must have completed the RTP prior to the viva voce examination as you cannot submit your thesis until you have had your portfolio agreed and signed off by your supervisory team.

To submit, email your Director of Studies to inform them that your RTP is complete on SAM and ready for them to assess and review.

WHERE TO FIND TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Core training
The following training is considered core and must be completed

- Development Day 1
- Risk Assessment
- Copyright
- Ethics
- Equality and Diversity

Development Day 1 takes place the day after induction (you should have already attended it) and the others usually within the first 6 weeks of study (and/or as advised during induction). You will need to book your place via SAM as usual.

MyBeckett

MyBeckett is the University's virtual e-learning environment and is available from the Leeds Beckett homepage. You will be able to access your email account and your personal storage area on our University IT servers. Additionally, upon enrolment the Graduate School will add you to the 'Research Training Programme' which appears on Module tab. Here you will find guidance as to what is expected each year, recordings of past training and videos on various development topics such as literature reviews, reference management and academic integrity. If you do not have access to this module please email ResaercherDevelopment@LeedsBeckett.ac.uk

SAM

All training offered by the Graduate School must be booked through SAM. You can login here using your username and password. Please note that staff members who are also studying must log in as a student for the research related workshops to be visible. **Also, our attendance policy requires that you cancel any training you have booked but are no longer able to attend 48 hours in advance; otherwise your school may be charged.**

Leeds Beckett University is a member of the North West and Yorkshire Training Group along with University of Bradford, University of Chester, University of Huddersfield, University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University and Manchester Metropolitan University.

As part of this scheme postgraduate research students are able attend a selection of workshops offered across the group. These opportunities will be emailed to students via their student email.

Skills for Learning

Our Library's Skills for Learning is a collection of resources to support the learning and teaching of academic skills. It includes resources on topics such as Reflection, Time management, IT, Maths, Teamworking and Writing.

Vitae

Vitae are an international programme managed by CRAC (the Careers Research & Advisory Centre) which, in partnership with a number of agencies, works to support the skills development of researchers in the UK. The resources available are aimed at research staff and students. In particular it introduces the Researcher Development Framework and details how it can be utilised to its best effect. There is also general advice on studying for a doctorate and how to access further support, an online member community and details of any events held by Vitae. To access the resources you need to sign up using your University email address www.vitae.ac.uk

Getting started with Vitae…for doctoral researchers

Vitae researcher booklets advice and exercises to work through as well as podcasts

Careers

In addition to developing your research skills, you should be thinking about your future. The Employability & Progression team is here to help you enter and succeed in student and graduate employment by combining an Employment Agency (Job Shop), a Careers Advisory Service and an Employer Engagement team into one. They can help you with making career choices (including careers within and outside of academia), find temporary employment whilst studying, meet graduate employers and access graduate vacancies, and prepare for applications, interviews and assessment centres. They offer a wide range of online careers resources, including information developed specifically for research students. They also offer support for up to 5 years after you have left Leeds Beckett. You can find out about careers workshops and employer events/fairs happening on campus, book individual careers appointments, and access careers resources by logging onto MyHub – myhub.leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Research Society

The Leeds Beckett Research Society is responsible for facilitating and encouraging social contact amongst the student population. It organises regular social events and an annual symposium where students are able to present their research. It also acts as a channel for feedback on behalf of research students at the University. Contact can be made in the following ways

 Email: ResearchSociety@LeedsBeckett.ac.uk Facebook: LeedsBeckettPostgraduateResearchSociety

Twitter @LBResearchSoc