Guidelines for Postgraduate Research Students

Training is increasingly becoming a vital part of the Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) experience. Whatever eventual career path you may follow there are clear advantages to the acquisition of general research skills and transferable employment-related skills. As a PGR (undertaking a PhD or MPhil research degree) you need to reflect how you can use the skills and knowledge you acquire during your research programme in different contexts and apply them to a variety of problems.

Liverpool John Moores University is committed to providing its PGRs with all relevant and appropriate opportunities to identify and develop both specialist research and transferable skills in line with its Postgraduate Research Student Skills Training and Development Framework.

As PGR you will be expected to attend a mandatory PGR induction event within 2 months of your initial enrolment. Part of the event will explore training and development and you will be provided with guidance on the generic skills and competencies expected of researchers and assistance in the identification of relevant training needs.

The University supports the UK Vitae Researcher Development Framework which articulates the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers and enables self-assessment of strengths and areas for further development: http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-Development-Framework.html. You will be encouraged to utilise the Researcher Development Framework to identify where your personal strengths and weaknesses are so that an appropriate skills training/development plan can be implemented to support you during your research programme.

During the first 3 months of your enrolment (6 months for part-time students) you will be working with your supervisory team to develop a research proposal which will be submitted as part of your registration document. As part of this process you, and your Director of Studies, should identify any training and developmental needs which will ensure that you are able to undertake the proposed programme of work effectively and in line with established milestones. Such skills may address gaps in subject knowledge, discipline specific skills, use of IT packages or transferable skills such as time/project management, networking and writing skills or career management.

This process will result in the establishment of a personalised, needs-based skills development plan or Training Needs Analysis. The development of a training plan will be informed by both the practical elements of your proposed research programme and the strengths and weaknesses identified through the Researcher Development Framework.

As research plans often develop and change over time it is expected that your training plan will be reviewed regularly in consultation with your Director of Studies to ensure that training is timely and appropriate. Your training plan should be reviewed at least annually but preferably on a more frequent basis. You should also ensure that any skills training and development is in line with relevant stage of your research programme e.g. transfer from MPhil to PhD, thesis submission, examination etc. You should keep a written record of your training plan and progress so that it can be reviewed and updated as appropriate.