Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE

The Graduate School

PGR Training

2024 - 25

https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/pgrtraining

Contents

PGR Training at Northumbria

All postgraduate researchers (PGRs) have access to a **flexible researcher development programme**, organised at University level to provide the skills needed to successfully complete their doctorate. PGR training is mapped against the *Vitae* Researcher Development Framework and supports PGRs in four key areas:

- Knowledge and intellectual abilities
- Personal effectiveness
- Research governance and organisation
- Engagement, influence and impact

At the end of their doctorates, we aim to have supported PGRs to deepen the research and transferrable skills that will not only make them successful independent researchers, but also widen their options for future employment.

To view the programme and register for an event please click here: http://rbscalendar.northumbria.ac.uk/calendar/pdrt
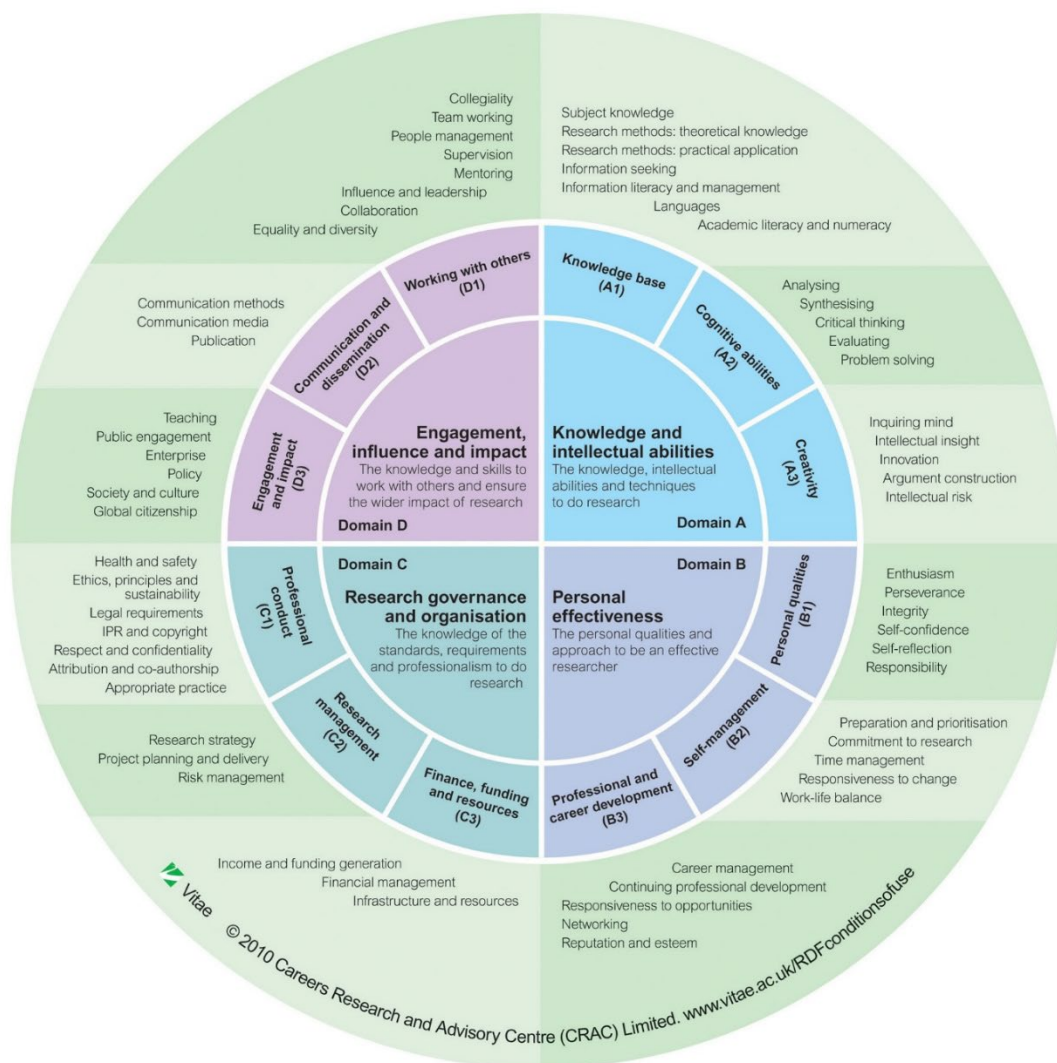
What is Skills Development?

This programme has been designed specifically to meet the needs of Northumbria's PGR community. It provides a range of opportunities for PGRs throughout the duration of their research degree to continue their personal and professional development.
The programme offers PGRs the opportunity to:

- Enhance their individual personal and professional competencies
- Identify their personal training route
- Help them to a timely and successful completion and to thrive in a competitive job market
- Enhance their time and experience at Northumbria University through an interdisciplinary, cohort model of support

It can be useful to think of skills development at the University as being divided into two distinct areas, 'discipline specific' and 'transferable' (sometimes called 'generic') research skills.

Discipline specific training is normally delivered at Faculty/Departmental level, whilst The Graduate School focuses on transferable skills which are relevant to PGRs in all Facuties, **creating an interdisciplinary environment for research training to take place.** The Graduate School concentrates on delivering **transferable skills** sessions focusing on the **personal and professional development** of researchers and the **processes and procedures** that are involved in completing a research degree. Faculties and academic departments focus on delivering discipline specific training and providing a rich academic environment for PGRs. You will develop your own training programme through a combination of these and any external opportunities such as conferences, workshops and publishing.

What are the Training Requirements?
At the end of your research degree, you will need to be able to think about your research, write about your research, talk about your research and plan what you are going to do after your research. You must consider which training to attend and when would be best for you to attend during your doctoral journey; attending all the training on offer here will not get you your research degree, you also develop your research skills through discussions with your peers and attendance at research seminars and conferences. By participating in the wider research culture of Northumbria and taking advantage of the networks that exist within your discipline, you will be able to exploit more opportunities and develop your career as a researcher.

Mandatory Training Sessions
You must attend these training programmes (timescales indicated):
1. **Faculty Induction** (attendance by submission of Project Approval)

2. **Project Approval: Getting Started** (attendance by submission of Project Approval)

3. **Ethics Training** (to be completed before the start of your active research and by Annual Progression Year One)

4. **Annual Progression: Before, During and After** (attendance by submission of Annual progression Two)

5. **Preparing for the Viva: The end is in sight** (attendance before your viva voce, recommended to attend before submission of your thesis)

Planning your Development

There is no set training programme for any PGR. It is your responsibility to access courses and other opportunities as they arise and in fitting with the stage of your research degree. Some training courses are designed to meet different needs at different times of your research degree. You should make sure that your chosen course is correct for your stage and you should not try to complete big chunks of training at the same time.

Assessing your Skills

Before booking onto any training courses you will need to evaluate your training needs with your Principal Supervisor. This should be at least an annual process and will be formally reviewed as part of your annual progression.

PGR Training at Northumbria University – eLearning Portal

Our eLearning Portal on the University's Blackboard site houses details of our training courses, including all mandatory training, guidance, slides and recordings. To access the content from the Student Portal, follow the guidance below.

How to access Blackboard from the Student Portal

Navigate to the University Home Page (www.northumbria.ac.uk), scroll to the bottom of the page and click on **Student Portal** under 'Useful Links'.
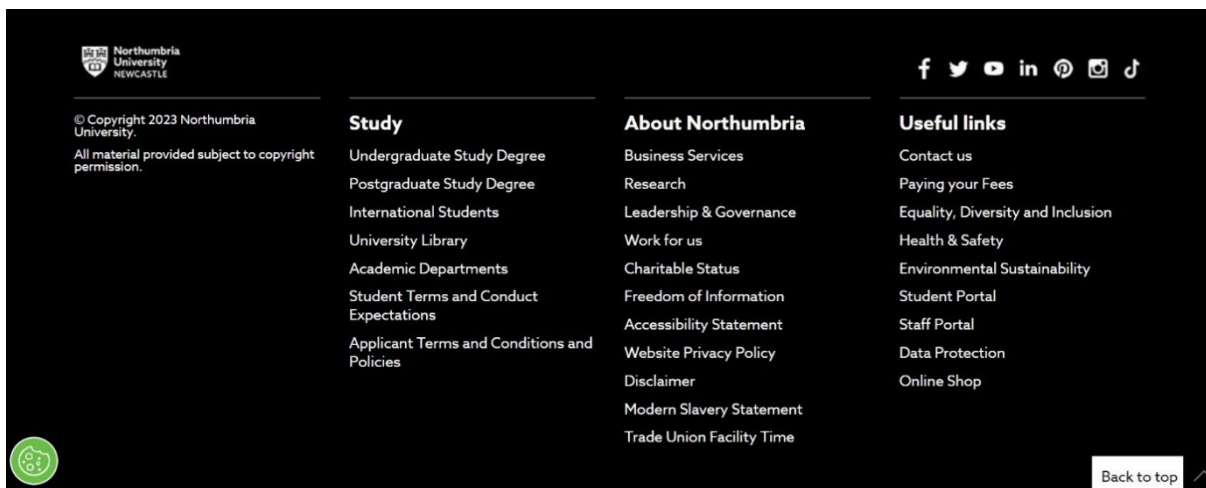
Click on the **Blackboard** link in the Student Portal menu. You will be redirected to the Blackboard site.
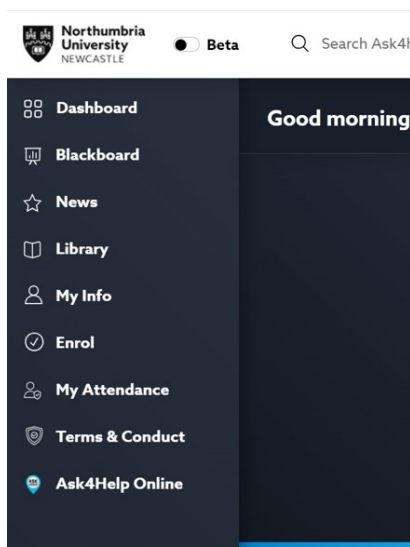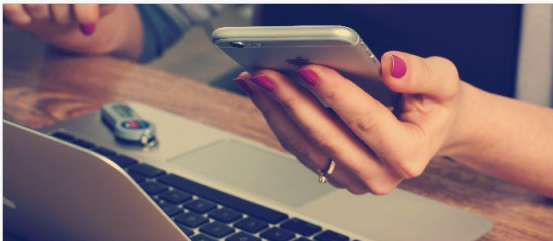
How to self-enrol onto the eLP organisation site

On Blackboard, click **Institution Page** from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen
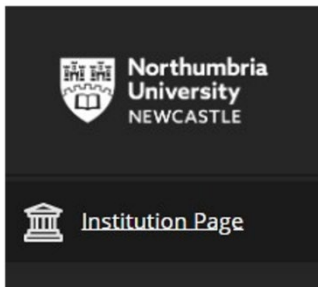
Scroll down and choose the option **Self-Enrol on Student Organisations**

You will be directed to a new page, then click on the **Search for Organisation** button
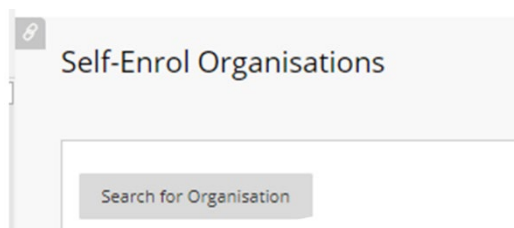
Type in 'RDN0001' into the search criteria as below, and click **Go**

Select the organisation by clicking the radio button. The option will now be highlighted in yellow. Click the 'submit' button to proceed. A new page will appear informing you that you have been added to the organisation site.

How to navigate to site once enrolled

From the main Blackboard menu, click on the **Organisations** tab
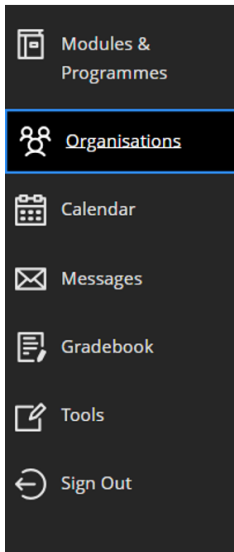
Click on the **PGR Training at Northumbria University** link.
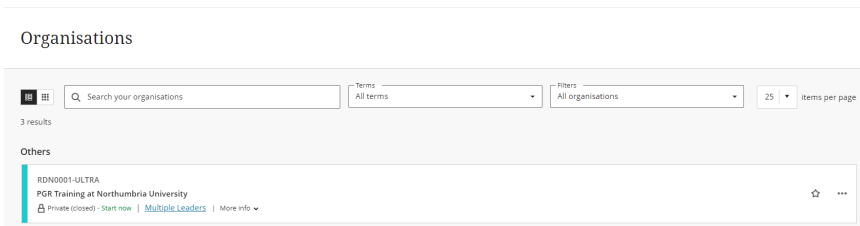
If you do not have this option on your screen, please refer to the self- enrolment instructions on Page 3 of this guide.

Click on the **Courses for Postgraduate Research Students** link
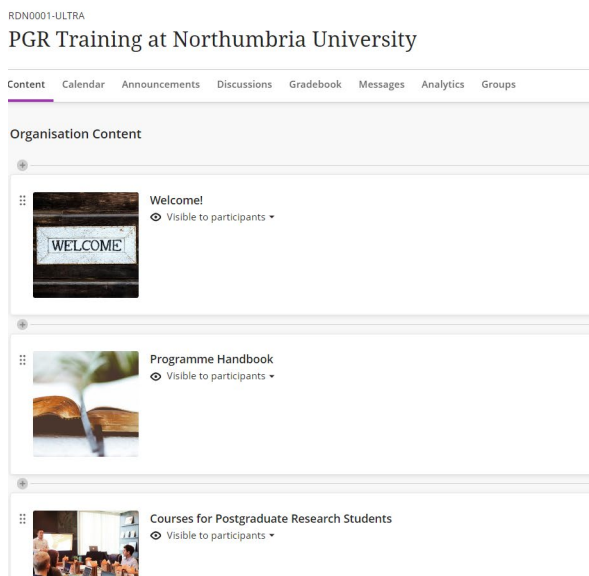
PGR Training
Mandatory Sessions

Faculty Induction

RDF Domain(s): **Research Management (C2)**
Professional conduct (C1)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students in their first year**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**

The session will provide an overview of what resources and support is available to postgraduate students within the Faculty - as well as what expectations the Faculty will have of them.

Arts, Design and Social Sciences

Business and Law

Engineering and Environment

Health and Life Sciences

Aims and Objectives

- Receive an introduction to the Faculty
- Learn about policies and procedures in both the Faculty and the University
- Meet key staff in the Faculty and other new students

Project Approval: Getting Started

RDF Domain(s): **Research Management (C2)**
Self-management (B2)
Knowledge base (A1)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students in their first year, prior to Project Approval submission**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

At the beginning of their course, students undergo Project Approval to monitor their progress using an online task within e:Vision. This session will go through the criteria to pass project approval, timelines, responsibilities and what to include. In addition, we will touch on the panel experience itself.

This session also covers a demonstration of the online submission system, to guide students who are approaching their Project Approval submission date on how to upload their work, and an opportunity to ask any questions on the functions of the online system. This course is mandatory – all first year students should attend before their project approval submission deadline.

Aims and Objectives

- Explore what is required to be included in the project approval submission
- Understand the e-vision system and how to submit the project approval
- Discuss the panel meeting and be aware of what it contains
- Understand the requirements for a research degree at Northumbria

Ethics Training

RDF Domain(s): **Professional conduct (C1)**
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students in their first year**
Delivery: **Instructor-led, via the Ethics Team, contactable at ethicssupport@northumbria.ac.uk**

This training session is designed to be used as an overview of research ethics and the ethics review procedure to be followed by academic staff and students to ensure that research is carried out to the highest ethical standards. It will cover general principles of research ethics and governance, research ethics approval procedure, and guidance sources

Aims and Objectives
- understand the principles of Informed Consent
- consider the safety and wellbeing of all participants (including the researcher)
- consider the rights of the research participants and the obligations of the researcher
- consider anonymity, confidentiality, data protection and records management

Annual Progression: Before, During and After

RDF Domain(s): **Research Management (C2)**
Self-management (B2)
Knowledge base (A1)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students in their first and second year**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

Each year students undergo annual progression to monitor their progress, consisting of submitting a series of documents which are then discussed at a formal progression panel.

PGRs should attend preferably between the passing of their project approval and the end of their first year, but students can attend anytime before their AP2. This course is mandatory – all students should attend.

Aims and Objectives:
- Explore what is required to complete the annual progression submission.
- Explore the panel meeting itself and gather experiences from students who have been through a progression point, such as project approval.
- Understand the requirements for a research degree at Northumbria in the context of the annual progression.

Preparing for the Viva: The End is in Sight

RDF Domain(s):	**Creativity (A3)**
	Professional conduct (C1)
	Knowledge base (A1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students in their final year**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

Don't know your word count limit? Unsure what a viva involves and who will be there? This half day workshop will provide practical advice and information about university procedures around the viva and submitting your thesis. You will have the opportunity to hear from experienced examiners on what viva experiences have been like. It will demystify the process for you so that you feel confident entering the exam room.

Aims and Objectives:
- Gain an understanding of the University procedures involved in submitting your thesis and arranging your viva
- Gain an understanding of what to expect from the viva and how to prepare for it

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3 Minute Thesis® Competition – Information Session

RDF Domain(s):	**Engagement and Impact (D3)**
	Personal Qualities (B1)
	Knowledge Base (A1)
	Communication & Dissemination (D2)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students in their second/third year**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Information available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is an academic competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia for research students. Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) celebrates the exciting research conducted by PhD students, cultivating students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills. The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

This session will provide an overview of the requirements of the competition and how you can apply to take part. Over twenty students entered the competition last year, with the winner going forward to the national quarter-finals. Prizes are given for first, second and third place with the top three also being entered into the North East regional competition.

Aims and Objectives:
- Developing research communication skills
- Developing public engagement awareness

An Introduction to Research Impact

RDF Domain(s):	**Engagement and Impact (D3)**
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

What is research impact and why is it important? How could you make a difference to society or the economy from your research in the future? From REF to research funding, building your career to making a difference in the world, find out more about research impact.

Aims and Objectives
- Explain what research impact is and why it is important in higher education
- Access resources to further develop your knowledge of research impact
- Develop your own ideas about how to create impact from your research

Bounce – Real Resilience for Researchers

RDF Domain(s):	**Personal Qualities (B1)**
	Self-management (B2)
	Cognitive Abilities (A2)
	Working with others (D1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students in their second year**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**

It's tricky enough to adjust to change and challenge at the best of times, and the need for real resilience is heightened by the nature of research, its constant challenge and the fact we spend a lot of time at the edge of competence and knowledge. In this interactive workshop, you'll learn and practice fundamentals of resilience, so you can respond effectively, even to a research degree.

Aims and Objectives:
- Learn about helpful perspectives on the inevitable ups and downs
- Derive a personalised view of resilience, based on your experiences
- Have models for personal bounce and problem solving
- Have proven methods to address difficulty and motivate yourself to engage and persevere
- Learn from working with others and providing mutual support

Career Planning for Postgraduate Researchers

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional and Career Development (B3)**
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at the beginning of their doctorate**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures, will enable you to consider your career journey and set career goals, whether you are just starting out or about to complete your PhD studies.

Aims and Objectives:
- Explore your personal career priorities, circumstances and strengths to help refine your career direction
- Work with others to consider the value of a PhD in the labour market
- Review opportunities for development and set smart goals to be achieved throughout your research period
- Understand what support is available and know where to find further resources

Careers in Academia

RDF Domain(s): **Professional and Career Development (B3)**
Knowledge Base (A1)
Personal Qualities (B1)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures, will provide insight into the variety of academic careers, covering lecturing and research posts as well as other opportunities within HE institutions. You will hear from current employees about their experiences of life in academia.

Aims and Objectives:
- Consider whether Academia is for you and how to progress
- Explore how to market yourself in Academia
- Ask questions and learn from each other

Careers outside Academia

RDF Domain(s): **Professional and Career Development (B3)**
Personal Qualities (B1)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures, will look at careers outside of academia and explore how to market your skills to alternative employers.

Aims and Objectives:
- Consider the types of roles in which your PhD skills and experience can be applied outside of an academic environment
- Discover resources for further exploration of potential career opportunities
- Learn from the experience of PhD graduates who are using their skills in non-academic roles

CVs and Applications

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional and Career Development (B3)**
	Personal Qualities (B1)
	Communication & Dissemination (D2)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures (Careers), will look at the fundamental principles of creating effective written applications.

Aims and Objectives:
- Content and presentation of business and academic CVs
- Understand how to tailor your CV for different roles and employers
- Know what makes a cover letter persuasive
- Be able to match your skills to job descriptions and person specifications when completing application forms
- Ask questions and learn from each other

How to be an Effective Researcher

RDF Domain(s):	**Self-management (B2)**
	Personal Qualities (B1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students in their first year**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**

A one-day workshop for postgraduate researchers in the first year of their doctorate. Drawing on the experience of their first few months, the course approaches the PhD as a project and addresses issues of planning, time and resource management, collaboration and self-management. This includes overcoming procrastination and making the most of the supervisor and student relationship.

This is a workshop focused on learning through practice, reflection and discussion and requires participants' contribution throughout.

Aims and Objectives
- Reflect on your experiences of the early stages of your PhD process
- Work extensively with your peers, learning from each other throughout
- Develop your awareness and practices in relation to:
  - Time management, prioritisation and overcoming procrastination
  - Your PhD as a research project and therefore how to manage it
  - Supervision and effective collaboration
  - Reflection and learning from experience

Introduction to Open Research at Northumbria

RDF Domain(s):	**Knowledge Base (A1)**
	Cognitive Abilities (A2)
	Research Management (C2)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session will introduce you to some key principles and practices of Open Research, which aims to increase transparency in the research process, and make the outputs of research free to access and use.

We'll look at support for Open Research at Northumbria, including what is required of researchers, and what you can choose to do to make your research more open.

Aims and Objectives
- Introduce key principles of Open Research
- Develop knowledge of support for open access publishing, including the repository, OA funds and publisher agreements
- Develop knowledge of support for open data, including the Figshare platform and research data management
- Develop knowledge of responsible use of metrics and transparency in how research is assessed
- Provide information on how to register for, and use, ORCID

Job Interviews

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional and Career Development (B3)**
	Personal Qualities (B1)
	Communication & Dissemination (D2)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures (Careers), will help you to develop your confidence in performing well at job interviews.

Aims and Objectives:
- Know what to expect from different styles of interview
- Know how best to prepare for an interview
- Understand what employers are looking for
- Tips for performing your best on the day
- Ask questions and learn from each other

Postgraduate Researcher Introduction to Teaching

RDF Domain(s):	**Cognitive abilities (A2)**
	Professional and career development (B3)
	Working with others (D1)
	Engagement and Impact (D3)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students who wish to teach in higher education (not demonstrating) Includes optional workshops on the eligibility criteria to work towards the professional status of Associate Fellowship of the HEA (AFHEA).**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**

Are you a Postgraduate Research student who is planning to apply for or who has gained a contract to teach and support learning at Northumbria University? This programme is designed with a particular focus on the Northumbria Teaching and Learning context and our approaches and policies; the expectations of you in this role and how to provide great quality academic practice; and how to ensure that all your learners experience the very best teaching, learning and assessment. It is a mandatory requirement for anyone contracted as an Associate Lecturer. Separate training is available for Demonstrators.

Timetabled to be an effective introduction to teaching in university, before the start of the semester, the programme is designed to prepare postgraduate researchers for employment by the university to contribute to:

- Seminars, tutorials, workshops
- Occasional lectures
- Laboratory and other practical sessions
- Field trips
- Assessment and marking activity
- Feedback sessions
- Examination invigilation

Aims and Objectives:
- Understanding Northumbria University and the wider higher education infrastructure and strategies and your contributions to it
- Preparing your teaching, learning and related activities to effectively engage, include and respect all students
- Ensure your effectiveness as a professional and confident colleague in a wider team of academics
- Use reflective practice to continuously improve your work and build your own CPD

Practical Demonstrating – Engineering and Environment

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional Conduct (C1)**
	Working with others (D1)
	Knowledge Base (A1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate Research Students who are supporting undergraduate students undertaking lab work.**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This course will consider the role and responsibilities of being a demonstrator, inside or outside of a laboratory. The course is specifically aimed at those wanting to act in this role or have some experience of being a demonstrator. This is primarily for the faculty of Engineering and Environment.

Aims and Objectives:
- Consider the roles and responsibilities of being a demonstrator
- Understand health and safety guidelines relevant to this role

Practical Demonstrating – Health and Life Sciences

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional Conduct (C1)**
	Working with others (D1)
	Knowledge Base (A1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate Research Students who are supporting undergraduate students undertaking lab work.**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This course will consider the role and responsibilities of being a laboratory demonstrator. The course is specifically aimed at those wanting to act in this role or have some experience of being a laboratory demonstrator. This is primarily for the faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

Aims and Objectives:
- Consider the roles and responsibilities of being a demonstrator
- Understand health and safety guidelines relevant to this role

Research Philosophies and Paradigms

RDF Domain(s):	**Cognitive Abilities (A2)**
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session will introduce key terms in research philosophy and how these apply to key meaning systems within research. This workshop aims to provide attendees with a concept map of key philosophies informing natural and social sciences and cognisance of the key elements within 'meaning systems' that apply to their own research projects.

Aims and Objectives:

- Discuss the nature of knowledge and originality
- Consider different philosophical paradigms appropriate to your research
- Discuss with other research students the nature of research and the epistemologies that underpin it

Unconscious Bias

RDF Domain(s):	**Professional Conduct (C1)**
	Working with Others (D1)
	Personal Effectiveness (B1)
Who the session is for:	**Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery:	**Instructor-led**
	Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This workshop will help you to understand and begin to minimise the potentially harmful effects of unconscious bias. Using thought-provoking activities and discussion, you will gain a better understanding of unconscious bias, how it affects you, your relationships and your decisions at work.

Aims and Objectives

- Understand what unconscious bias is
- Explore some of the effects of unconscious bias
- Develop an awareness of how the effects of unconscious bias can be reduced

University and College Union (UCU) Information Session

RDF Domain(s):   **Professional Conduct (C1)**
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
                           Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session will introduce students to UCU, which is the body that represents the interests of academic and postgraduate educators across the nation.

Aims and Objectives
- How UCU can work for you
- How it can protect you
- How you can make a difference in the workplace

Using Networking and LinkedIn to Develop your Career

RDF Domain(s):   **Professional and Career Development (B3)**
                           Creativity (A3)
                           Communication & Dissemination (D2)
Who the session is for: **Postgraduate research students at any stage**
Delivery: **Instructor-led**
                           Slides available via the Researcher Development eLearning Portal

This session, led by Graduate Futures, will explore the benefits and challenges of networking, including effective use of LinkedIn.

Aims and Objectives
- Know the key elements a LinkedIn profile and how to improve its impact
- Understand the variety of ways in which LinkedIn can be used for career research and for networking
- Ask questions and learn from each other's experience

Housekeeping

How to Register for an Event
To register for an event visit the online booking system here:
http://rbscalendar.northumbria.ac.uk/calendar/pdrt

If you are no longer able to attend a session, remember to cancel your booking via the online booking system, with as much notice as you are able. If you fail to attend a session without notifying us, an email will be sent to you and will copy in your supervisor notifying them of your absence.
If you fail to attend then you run the risk of your future bookings being cancelled, and you may not be able to apply for benefits such as the Conference Bursary Scheme.

Communications
You must check your University email account regularly as **the programme is subject to change and additions throughout the year**.

Etiquette
The programme is delivered by a mixture of internal staff and external providers. Many staff volunteer their time to ensure a rigorous support system is in place for research students. As such please ensure that you show them courtesy by being prompt, arriving at least five minutes before the start of the programme.

Opportunities for Involvement

New Provision
Have you identified an area of training that you feel should be provided but is currently unavailable? If so please contact graduateschool@northumbria.ac.uk to help us develop training in the future.

Other Resources

University Library
The University Library has a wide range of resources and help to support you at every stage of your research, as postgraduate research students, early career researchers and academic staff. The Library provides detailed training online and face-to-face throughout the academic year as part of their Researcher Development Programme. For more information visit:
http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/info-researchers/res-dev

Faculty and Departmental Training
Training also takes place within each Faculty; this is usually specific and may be closely linked to your area of research. Speak to your supervisor to see what training is available.

Northumbria Students Union
Each department has a PGR Representative who sits on Faculty and University wide committees. To find out more about representation in your department please visit: https://mynsu.co.uk/student-voice

Graduate Futures
We're here for you whatever stage you're at with your study and career plans. We want you to achieve your ambitions and will support your journey, helping you plan a route towards your goals. Find out more at www.northumbria.ac.uk/careers

- Get one to one support
  We offer a blended approach to specialist careers guidance, employability advice and careers clinic appointments via either video chat or face to face.
- Self-help resources
  Access a range of resources to help you with your career planning, research, job search strategy and applications. Find information on student and graduate jobs and further study in the North East, UK or internationally.
  - Books - a collection of resources is based at City Campus Library and limited stock at Coach Lane Campus Library. Reference copies are available along with items you can borrow on your smartcard.
  - Careers Online (opens in a new window) - resources on a variety of topics, including CVs & Job Applications, Interviews & Psychometric Tests, Job Hunting, Explore Options & Further Study, Research Careers Sectors, and Global Careers.
  - JobsOnline - sign up to view part-time, casual, graduate and volunteering opportunities. Registering is quick and easy and you'll receive job alerts for new postings direct to your inbox.
  - Careers events - discover what's now and next in the jobs market by visiting our careers fairs, workshops and employer talks. Find out about the culture of an organisation, meet recruiters face-to-face and stay one step ahead.

Graduate School Bursary Schemes

There are currently two bursary schemes available to postgraduate research students (i.e. those registered for an MPhil, PhD or Professional Doctorate):

- Postgraduate Conference Bursary Scheme
- Postgraduate Research Events Support Scheme

Vitae and the Researcher Development Framework

Vitae is a national organisation which champions professional and career development for researchers. Vitae's website and courses provide excellent resources to help research degree students assess and develop their personal effectiveness, networking and team working, communication and career management skills.   The University is a member of Vitae so all researchers are advised to join by visiting the Vitae website and setting up an account www.vitae.ac.uk

Recording your Research Training

We recommend you record training events on your e:Vision "Research Training" plan, as they happen. It is important to keep these records up to date as this will be a mandatory part of your Project Approval and Annual Progression tasks. You should discuss your training requirements with your supervisor throughout your course.