

Postgraduate Research Student Induction

24th September 2024

**School of Life Sciences
and the Environment**



**ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

Today's session



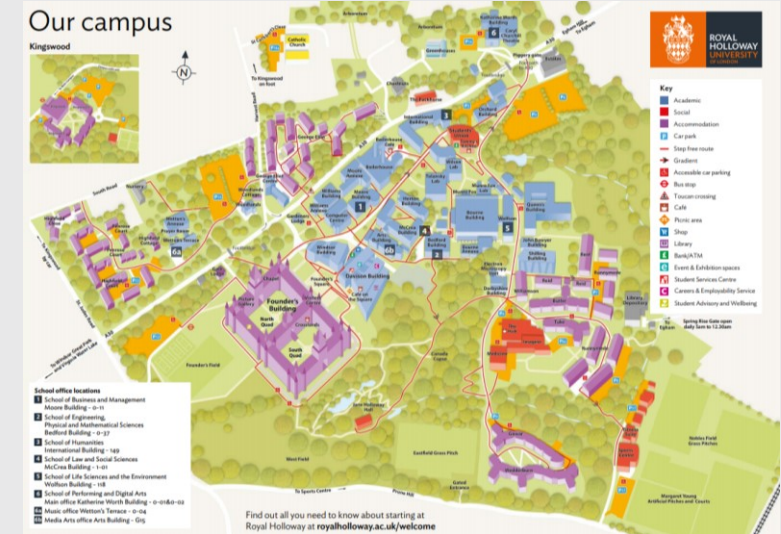
- Welcome from the School Director PGR Education
- School of Life Sciences and the Environment structure
- Links to key references
- Expectations by year - incl. attendance / engagement (Student Route Visa)
- How to work with your supervisor - incl. supervision log / frequency of meetings
- Research training
- Conferences
- Review of academic progress
- Ethics
- Staff Student Action Meetings
- Doctoral School/Wellbeing
- Ways of working
- Roles of PGR student and Doctoral School

Welcome from the School Director PGR Education Dr Rebecca Fisher (r.e.fisher@rhul.ac.uk)



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OF LONDON

- LSE brings together five world-leading departments
- Huge disciplinary coverage from arts and humanities, to social sciences, to clinical research, to natural and physical sciences
- We have students embarking on MSc by research degrees, DClInPsy degrees (Psychology), and MPhil/PhD degrees
- Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) are supported at departmental, school, and college level
- Ambition is for the school to help support interdisciplinary and collaborative research at PGR level
- Whether you are here for one or six years, I hope you will find your time here stimulating, supportive, and memorable



School of Life Sciences and the Environment structure



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Biological Sciences

Prof Robin Williams (robin.Williams@rhul.ac.uk) (MPhil/PhD lead Term 1)

Dr Laurence Bindschedler (Laurence.Bindschedler@rhul.ac.uk) (MPhil/PhD lead. sabbatical Term 1)

Dr Paul Devlin (paul.devlin@rhul.ac.uk)



Earth Sciences

Prof Jürgen Adam (jurgen.adam@rhul.ac.uk) (PGR lead)



Geography

Prof. David Simon (d.simon@rhul.ac.uk) (PGR lead Term 1)

Dr Sasha Engelmann (Sasha.Engelmann@rhul.ac.uk) (PGR lead, on sabbatical term 1)



Health Studies

Dr Anne Majumdar (anne.majumdar@rhul.ac.uk) (PGR lead)

Psychology

Dr Robert Lachlan (Robert.Lachlan@rhul.ac.uk) and Dr Shiri Lev-Ari (Shiri.Lev-Ari@rhul.ac.uk)

Links to key references

Research degree regulations:

royalholloway.ac.uk/students/assets/docs/pdf/general-regulations/2024-25/5.-research-degree-regulations-2024-25-fv.pdf

Code of practice for research degree students and supervisors:

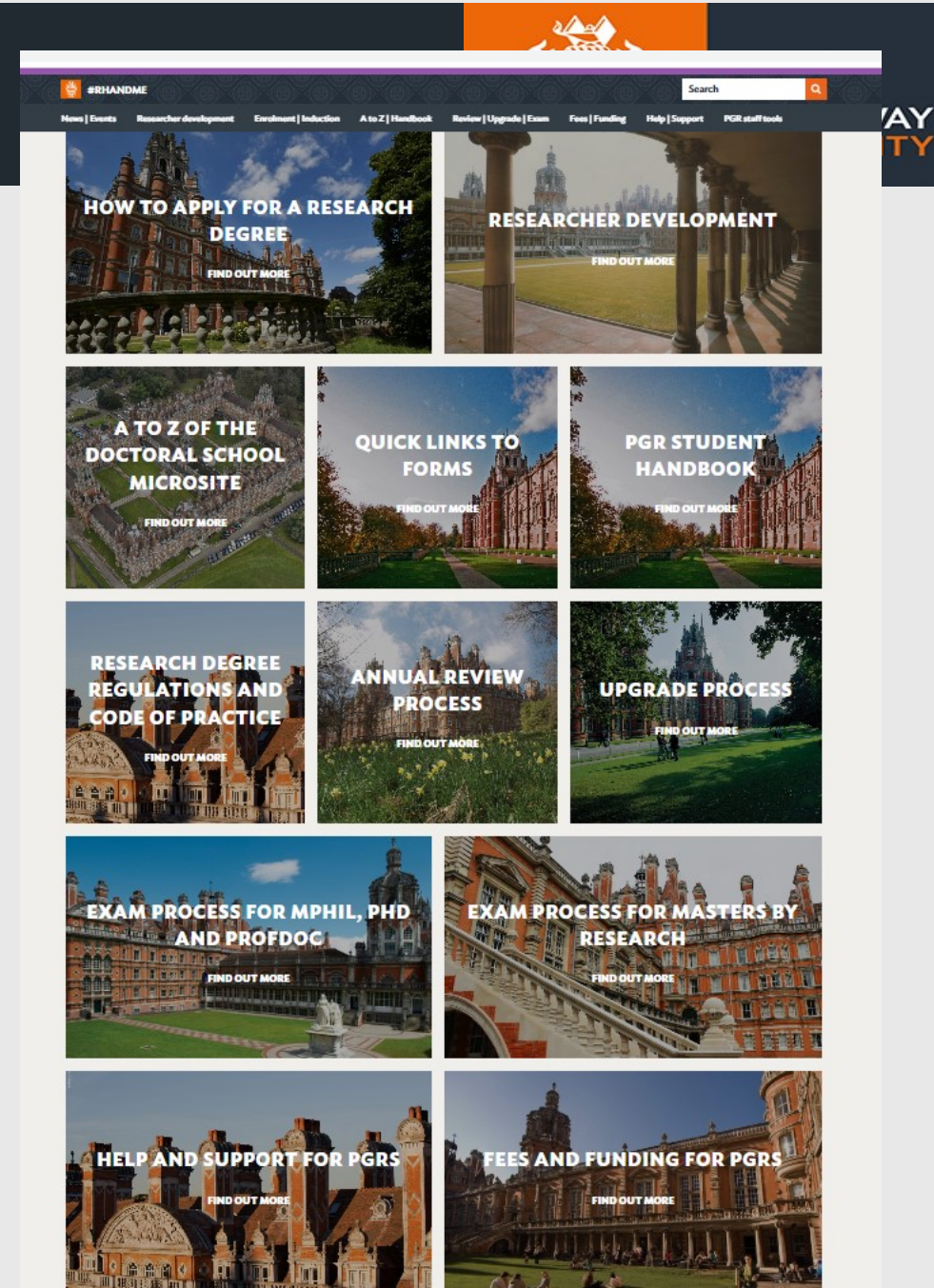
royalholloway.ac.uk/students/assets/docs/pdf/general-regulations/2024-25/9.-code-of-practice-for-research-students-and-supervisors-2024-25-fv.pdf

PGR Student Handbook:

royalholloway.ac.uk/doctorsal-school/pgr-student-handbook/home.aspx

Doctoral School microsite:

royalholloway.ac.uk/doctorsal-school/home.aspx



Expectations by year for MPhil/PhD students (MSc by Research explained at departmental level)



	Your PhD Research	PhD Training, etc.	Career Planning
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A clearly defined research topic ▪ Ethical clearance ▪ A draft of good quality written work ▪ Fieldwork/labwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researcher Development Programme (RDP) ▪ Annual review ▪ Department PhD Annual Conference/Symposium ▪ RHUL Annual PhD conference ▪ Departmental Seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career direction ▪ Workshops to improve your skills ▪ Create a PURE profile
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PhD upgrade ▪ Ethical clearance ▪ Fieldwork/labwork ▪ Analysing data ▪ Writing up the thesis ▪ Writing up publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researcher Development Programme (RDP) ▪ Annual review & upgrade meeting ▪ Department PhD Annual Conference/Symposium ▪ RHUL Annual PhD conference ▪ Departmental Seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External conferences, etc.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysing data ▪ Writing up the thesis ▪ Writing up publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researcher Development Programme (RDP) ▪ Annual review ▪ Department PhD Annual Conference/Symposium ▪ RHUL Annual PhD conference ▪ Departmental Seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CV/job application/post doc ▪ Publications ▪ External conferences



Level of programme	Deadline for upgrade to PhD	Deadline for submission of thesis*
Masters by Research	N/A	1 year (FT – full time)
MPhil	N/A	3 years (FT)
PhD	1st attempt within 20 months (FT) 2nd attempt (if required) within 24 months (FT)	4 years (FT)

* If you are studying part-time, double the period.

As these deadlines are based on the start date on your student record, it is very important that this start date is recorded correctly. If your start date has been postponed, make sure you submit a change of start date form within the first 6 months of your study.

Tier 4 / Student Route visa sponsored by RHUL



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If you are in receipt of a Tier 4 / Student Route visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, it is a requirement of your visa that:

1. you engage with your studies.
2. your supervisor confirms your engagement every two months.

If you have any concerns about your ability to engage e.g. due to illness, please contact the International Student Support Office: InternationalAdvice@rhul.ac.uk

Further details for PGRs with a Tier 4/ Student Route visa can be found at:
<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/help-and-support/international-pgrs.aspx>



How to work with your supervisor



First steps: Arrange your first formal meeting with your supervisor, known as (terms may vary) your main, lead, first, primary or principal supervisor

During your first meeting establish mutual expectations

- Frequency of meetings (typically more frequent at the beginning of your studies)
- General ways of working and communication
 - What do you prepare in advance for each meeting?
 - How do you communicate between meetings?
- Agree your supervisory team (everyone should have, at least, a supervisor, a second supervisor and/or an adviser) and complete the PGR Student Start of Session form.
- Discuss potential training needs. You can use the Training needs and analysis tool to consider needs.

PGR student supervisor arrangements

To be completed in liaison with the principal supervisor and to be returned to doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk within three weeks of the student's start date

Student name	
Student ID	
Department	
Full or part-time	
Start date	
Research Group(s) (if applicable)	
Working short project title	

Please refer to the 'supervisory team' section of our online [guides](#) for information on the supervisory team responsibilities and percentage weighting.

Name	% split of		
Principal supervisor			
Additional supervisory team members			
Name (including title)	Role in the supervisory team	Percentage split where the role is supervisory	Member of Royal Holloway staff (please check)
	Choose an item.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Choose an item.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Choose an item.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Choose an item.		<input type="checkbox"/>

The percentage weighting of all supervisor roles should total 100%
Where members of the team are external, please complete details on page 2

After all key supervisory meetings

- Record supervision meetings using the supervisory meeting log

Record of PGR student supervisory meetings

Student name: _____ Student ID: _____ Supervisor(s) name(s): _____
Mode: Full-time/part-time: _____ Official start date: _____

In accordance with the Code of Practice, regular scheduled supervisory meetings should take place between supervisors and their research students. Meeting frequency: 12 meetings per year in Yr1 and 20 meetings per year in subsequent years (pro-rata for part time students). Students should make a brief record of each formal supervision meeting and to send it to supervisors for approval. It is recommended that both student and supervisor keep

Date of meeting:	Type of contact (visit, tutorial, labwork)	Duration:	Comments/ agreed action points:	Initials Supervisor/student	
01/02/01	visit	30 minutes	Progress good, data collection complete. Write up notes from first case study by next meeting Next meeting 02/02/02	YY	ZZ



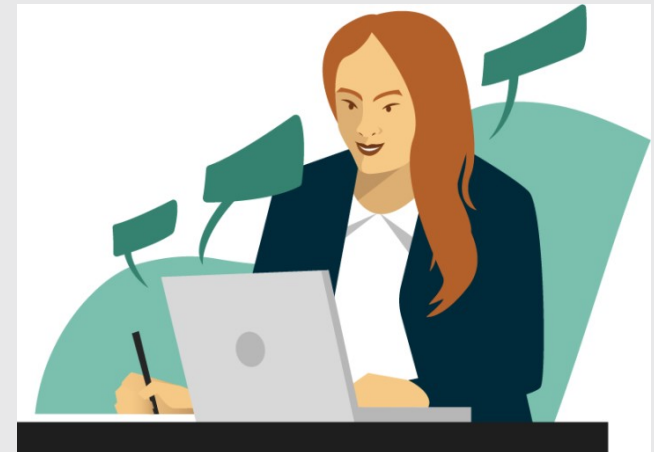
Next steps: Attend the RDP session 'Getting the Most from your Supervisor'

<https://moodle.royalholloway.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1861>

What your supervisor does for you

- Consolidate your research topic/question
- Suggest appropriate reading materials
- Advise on techniques and methods
- Provide feedback on work practices (including written work and oral presentations)
- Identify research ethics queries
- Advise on career development (including conference attendance and publication plans)

- 10 Provides general guidance and advice



TOP TEN HINTS

ON HOW TO MANAGE YOUR SUPERVISOR



1

TAKE NOTES

Write things down or ask permission to record the conversation. There is a fair chance that something insightful will be said that you can't quite remember.



2

SCHEDULE MEETINGS

Your supervisor(s) might not even have full command of their own diaries so don't expect them to manage yours.



3

ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS

Know how much time your supervisor expects to spend with you and place yourself somewhere between "missing, presumed dead" and "stop stalking me"



4

THINK LIKE A DETECTIVE

PhDs are like a complex crime scene. Gather evidence, do background checks, establish alibis, follow up leads and identify prime suspects.



5

GET FEEDBACK

Combinations of coffee, cake, tea and sympathy, might make you feel better, but they aren't a substitute for honest, critical feedback.



6

FOLLOW THEIR ADVICE

This is probably your first PhD but it won't be theirs so follow their advice.



7

DON'T CAUSE A DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

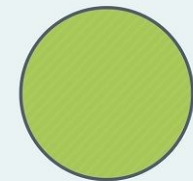
Beware of tensions between your first and second supervisors.



8

DON'T GO OFF-GRID

Radio silence is worrying. Your supervisor is responsible for your progress and you should be worried if they are having to chase you up.



9

BE HONEST

Speak up when you don't understand something, don't agree with something or can't see yourself being able to do something.



10

KNOW WHEN IT'S NOT WORKING

Supervisory relationships sometimes suffer an irretrievable breakdown. Be patient but recognise when all reasonable steps have been exhausted.



@Rob_MacIntosh



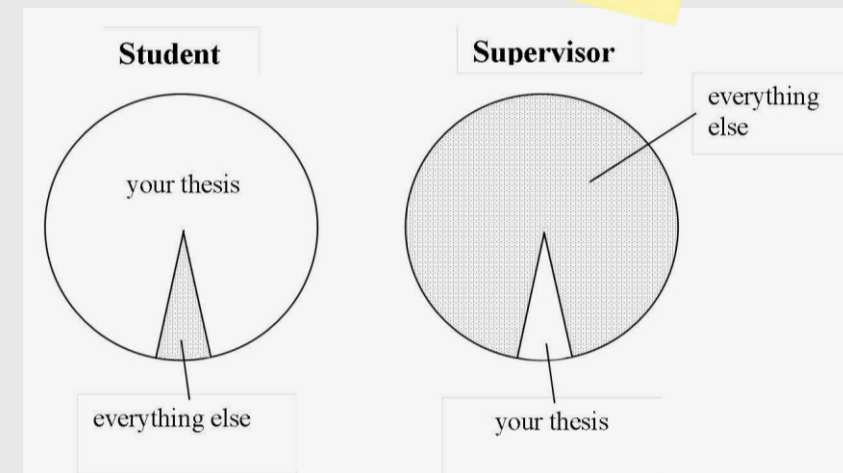
@KDOGorman





What you can do for your supervisor

- Keep in regular contact with your supervisor (**Respond to your emails!**)
- When asking for a meeting, think clearly about what you need and book an appointment to chat
- Follow up a key meeting where decisions have been made with an email outlining key points discussed and action points (supervisory log)
- Keep to deadlines (if not going to meet one, discuss it with your supervisor)
- Send materials promptly, allowing time to read
- Keep to agreed working practices
- Be clear in terms of the guidance you need (never be afraid to ask questions)





All full-time MPhil/PhD students* should attend an average of at least **5** days training per academic year, (2.5 days for part time students) which can be made up of the following (some funders require additional training, please consult your funder agreement).

Researcher Development Programme (RDP, see [Moodle](#)). Details provided at College Induction.

Department-specific training

- Each department (or research group) offers a programme of discipline-specific training, seminars, workshops, and events. Further details will be provided at the departmental induction.

External training, events, and conferences

- Events organised by learned societies, research councils, etc. count towards your training days.

* MSc by Research students welcome to attend too in almost all cases.

Remember to discuss and complete your 'Training Needs Analysis Tool' during your first term. Thereafter keep a 'Research Training Log' updated, as this forms part of your annual review.

Welcome to the Researcher Development Programme





- **Departmental PGR Conferences and Presentation sessions**

Gain experience speaking about your research to peers within your department. Often for MPhil/PhD students presenting at these conferences is a condition of upgrade.

- **Doctoral School Annual Conferences**

Gain experience speaking about your research to peers from a wide range of disciplines.

- **External conferences**

Gain experience speaking to the wider academic community about your work. Often there is a cost associated; speak to your supervisor about how you might fund conference attendance.

Review of academic progress



All full- and part-time students should be formally reviewed at least once every 12 months (referred to in documentation as **annual reviews**). MSc by Research students reviewed during the year.

Each department has specific protocols and expectations for these review meetings. These will be explained in the departmental inductions.

All documents can be found on the [Doctoral School Microsite](#)

The screenshot shows the Doctoral School website. The header includes the Royal Holloway University of London logo and the text 'DOCTORAL SCHOOL'. A navigation menu lists: News | Events, Researcher development, Enrolment | Induction, A to Z | Handbook, Review | Upgrade | Exam, Fees | Funding, and Help | Support. A search bar is located in the top right. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail reads: Doctoral School > PGR student lifecycle > Annual review and upgrade. The main content area features a large image of a red brick building with the heading 'ANNUAL REVIEW AND UPGRADE PROCESS'. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a blue button labeled 'ANNUAL REVIEWS' with 'FIND OUT MORE' below it, and a green button labeled 'UPGRADES' with 'FIND OUT MORE' below it.

Review of academic progress: MPhil → PhD

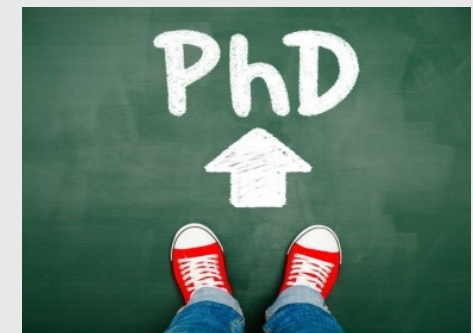
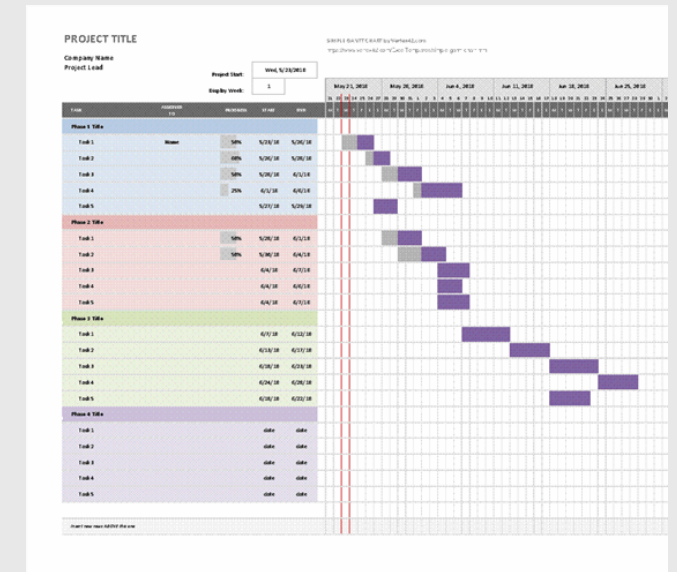


Approximately mid-way in the doctoral programme, you will have an **upgrade meeting** that reviews your progress to date.

- Research degree students who wish to submit for a PhD are required to have a first attempt at an upgrade from the MPhil to PhD programme within the first 20 months of study (Full-time) or 40 months (Part-time).
- Should the first attempt not be successful, students have an opportunity for a second, and final attempt at an upgrade from MPhil to PhD before the end of their second year of study (24 months Full-time) or four years (48 months Part-time).

Each department has specific protocols and expectations for these review meetings. These will be explained in the departmental inductions.

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MPhil



As part of the annual review process, you will need to be able to confirm that you have discussed the ethical implications of your research with your supervisor.

All researchers have a duty to:

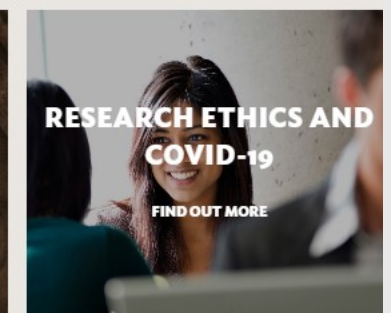
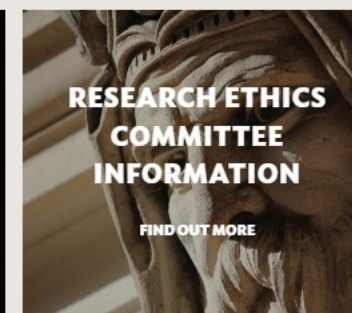
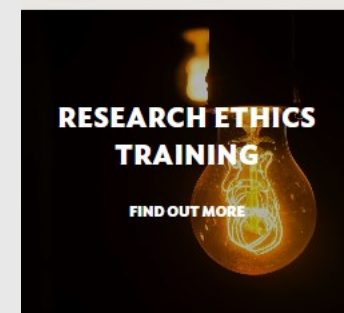
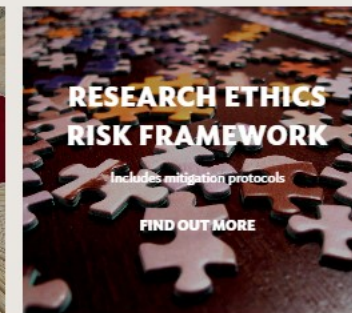
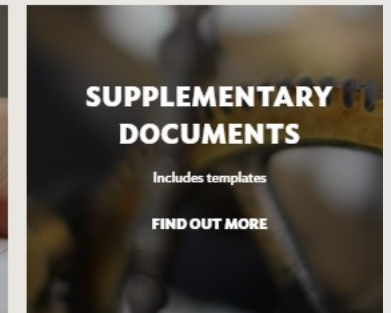
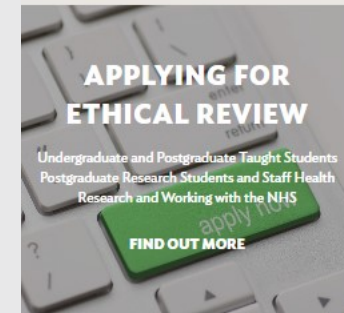
- Ensure that all research is subject to active and appropriate consideration of ethical issues.
- Comply with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, and by employers, funders and other relevant stakeholders.

Full details of the relevant policies can be found on the [RHUL Research Ethics website](#).



Royal Holloway requires that research ethics review should be undertaken for research when it involves:

- People (e.g. research participants, human tissue, secondary data about people)
- Animals
- Environment and/or society more generally
- Cultural artefacts
- Risks to you, other members of your team, or research collaborators



Staff Student Action Meetings



The School is committed to ensuring that it is an effective, fair, and supportive environment for its postgraduate researchers.

We are keen for your voice to be heard in order to help us shape our provision and the School's strategy.

PGR Student Staff Action Meetings will take place termly and will be attended by postgraduate representatives from each of the five departments. These are chaired by a Student Rep, supported by the Doctoral School.

The sign-up to be a student rep is open now until 6th October.

[Sign up to Be a Course or Senior Course Rep \(rhul.ac.uk\)](http://rhul.ac.uk)



SSC Reps may also be asked to get views from their peers and to represent these at other College, School and Department forums.

Ways of working...



RHUL has returned to in person teaching and meetings, but we have learned through COVID-19 that some things are still better to deliver online, allowing for increased accessibility.

- Download Microsoft Teams: some meetings may still take place online only, or blended.
- Supervision meetings should be face-to-face, except for in exceptional circumstances (e.g., supervisor or student completing field work, on research leave).

If you have any concerns talk to your supervisor or adviser. You can also approach your PGR Department Lead/Deputy Lead. I also welcome students (in my role as DPE) to approach me directly with any questions or concerns.

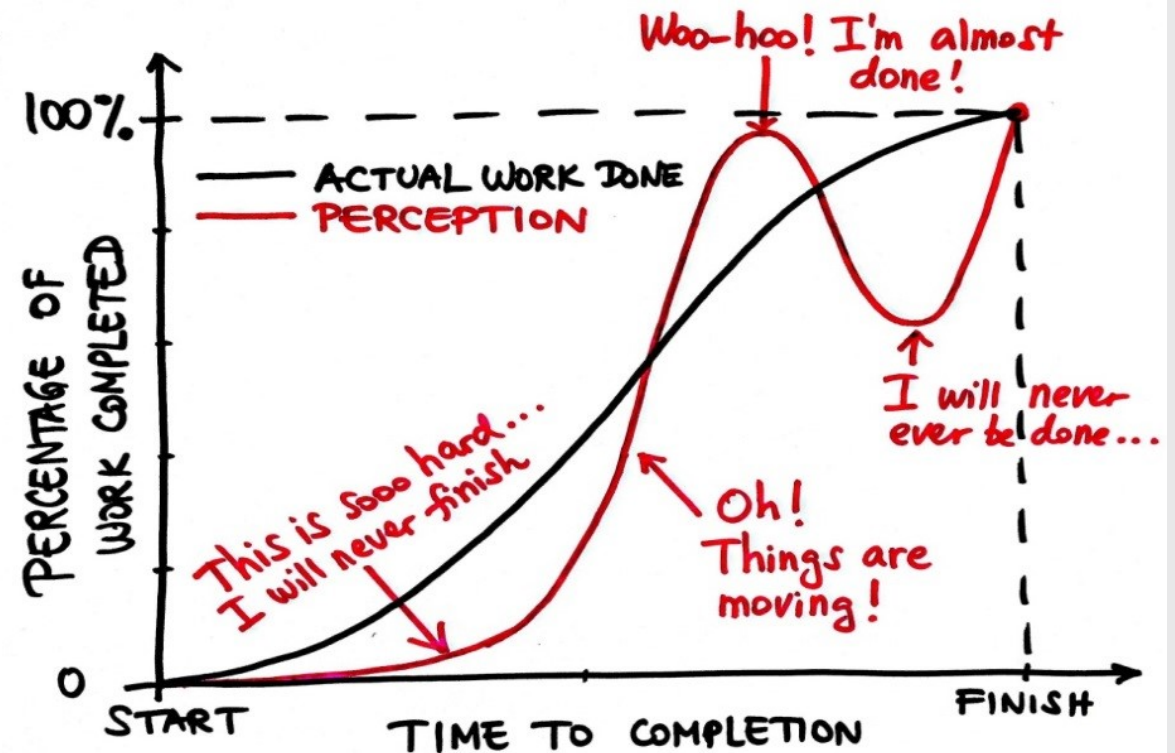


What if things get difficult?



You will often be able to talk to your supervisor, but if not you also have an academic adviser or someone on the PGR Lead team

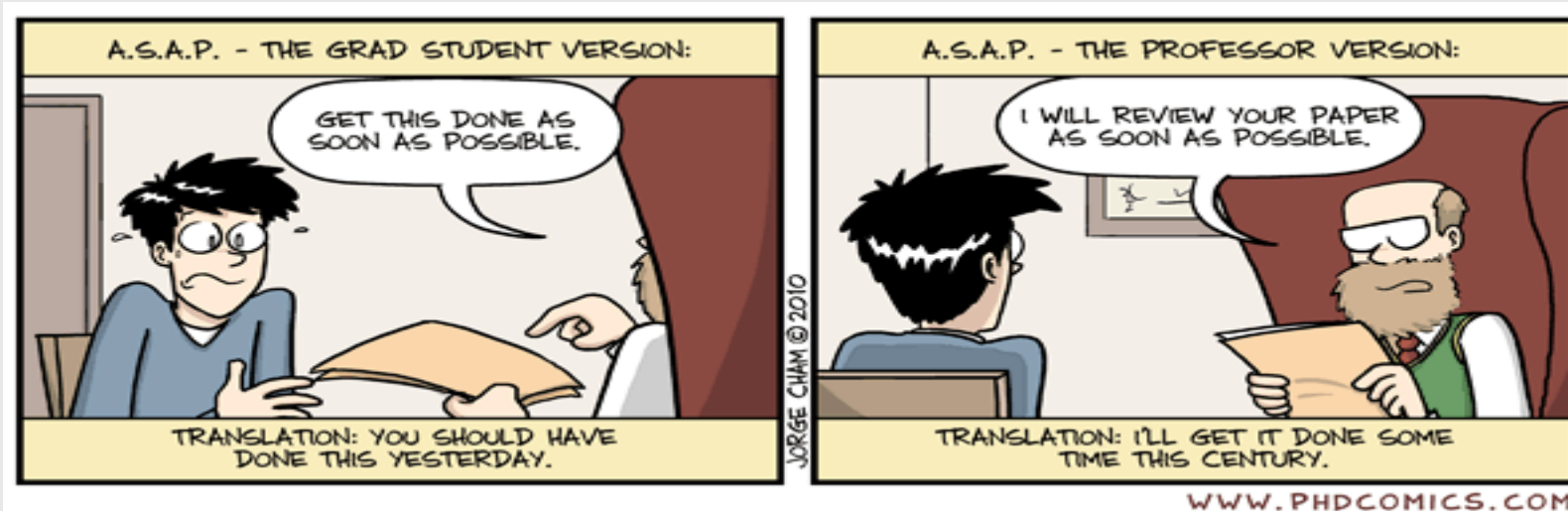
Be sure to let someone know ASAP if you are finding anything difficult




Things to keep in mind...



- **Supervisors will ask questions!**
 - It does not necessarily mean that you got things wrong... they may want you to justify your point (good viva preparation as well)
- **If something is unclear, you should ask for clarification**
- **Establish common meaning of things**



The different roles of a PGR student



Researcher

As a researcher, you belong to your department and have your **supervisory team** as your key contact and support



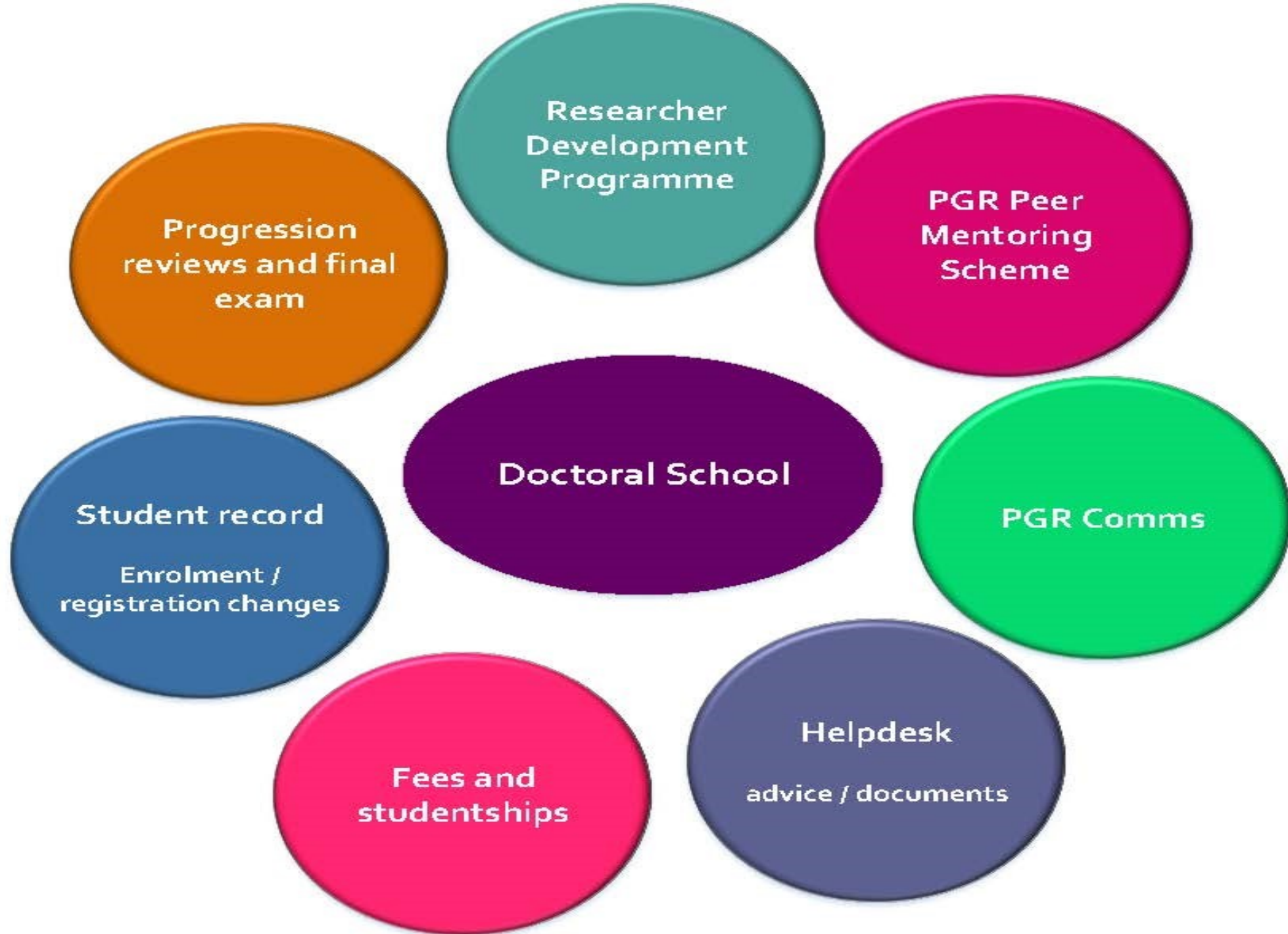
Student

The **Doctoral School** provides a centre of PGR expertise to support you through your student journey from induction through to award



Staff member

As a member of teaching staff, your key administrative support will come from your **academic school**



Researcher
Development
Programme

PGR Peer
Mentoring
Scheme

Progression
reviews and final
exam

Doctoral School

PGR Comms

Student record
Enrolment /
registration changes

Helpdesk
advice / documents

Fees and
studentships

There is a Researcher Development Programme, Doctoral School training on this!

Annual Leave

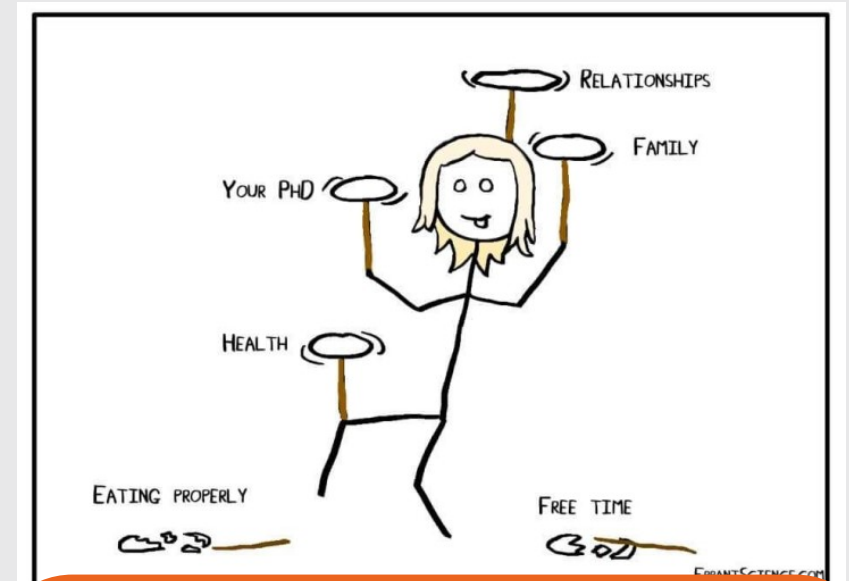
Students are entitled to **8 weeks annual leave**, inclusive of bank holidays and College discretionary days.

- Plan chunks of leave (not just an afternoon... although this could be good too!).
- Discuss your plans with your supervisor in case they think of something you hadn't considered (timing impact key point of your studies)

Support networks

These are crucial to supporting you throughout your studies. Make time for friends, family, and loved ones.

- Support is also offered by the [RHUL Wellbeing team](#)



It is important to practice Academic Empathy. Everyone has a lot going on. We do not know what is going on for that person. This also means, we need to go easy on ourselves when you feel you haven't accomplished all you wanted to!



Look out for upcoming events:

LSE PGR coffee and cake

Brewing Brilliance

PGR student networking



[LSE PGR Network | General | Microsoft Teams](#)

- Next steps



Biological Sciences (PhD + MSc by Research)	Earth Sciences (PhD and MSc by Research)
Date: Wednesday 25th September Time: 11am-1pm Venue: Queens Building	Date: Wednesday 25 th September Time: 10-12 am Venue: QB 205
Geography	Psychology
Date: Tuesday 24 th September Time: 11am – 12:00pm Venue: Queen’s Building 205	Date: Monday 23 rd September Time: 11am – 1:00pm Venue: Wolfson 252
University induction for PGR students	
Wednesday 2 nd October Time: 2-4 pm Venue: Moore auditorium	

