**LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS OF TRAINING NEEDS & SUPERVISION DISCUSSION POINTS**

This document should be completed by students and discussed with supervisors, normally within four-six weeks of registration, and a copy sent to the School / Department Director of PGR Studies. It should be updated at annual review meetings or when new needs become apparent.

This plan forms a living document which should be revisited regularly and evolve over the course of the PhD. It provides suggestions for critical discussion points between a doctoral researcher and their supervisor and a document for planning and discussing personal development. Not all discussion points will apply equally in all cases, but the selection here includes a number of areas which have featured in student queries.

The template consists of four sections:

1. Getting started: induction and settling in
2. General expectations of the doctoral researcher
3. Expectations of supervision relationship
4. Planned personal development and training

*This document is not intended as rigid template but should prompt discussion which will build a strong working relationship and encourage the student to take ownership of the research project and their own development.*

1. **Getting Started: induction and settling in**

Suggested completion once, within 4-6 weeks of student starting.

Potential discussion points for first or early meetings between supervisor and doctoral researcher include:

* Local and university-wide induction. Does the student know how to access the induction events they should attend? (Some subsequent points may be covered at inductions.)
* Introductions to key staff. Does the researcher know who it is critical they meet? If the supervisor cannot introduce them, does the student know how to do so?
* Key facilities, systems and resources. Does the researcher know the key systems, facilities or resources they will be expected to use in the initial period and how to gain access?
* Relevant H&S and ethics information. Is there local health and safety training the student needs to attend?
* Monitoring of progress procedures and broad ‘road map’. Does the student understand key School-based and University level milestones in how their work will be monitored, such as annual reviews and confirmation of registration?
* Other issues impeding settling in.
* More broadly, it may be helpful to discuss the student’s initial expectations and understanding of doctoral level study and how it will differ from previous study.

Further relevant information can be found in section 3 of the University's Code of Practice on Research Students <https://www.reading.ac.uk/doctoral-researcher-college/student-policies-procedures/code-practice-research-students>

Discussion notes here:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **General expectations of the doctoral researcher**

This section should be revisited regularly.

It is important that a new researcher has a plan for how they will manage doctoral study against other life, work or family commitments, that they have a realistic plan for spending the time they need to on study, and that they understand their own ownership of the research. It is useful for the supervisor and student to discuss the degree to which the student can engage with and benefit from broader research culture (e.g. departmental seminars), particularly where mode of study presents limitations.

Potential discussion points for early stages and periodic revisiting include:

* Student to take responsibility for their own development.
* Student to have a plan for how, when and where they will study.
* Student to engage in School and University culture.
* Student to take the initiative to raise problems or difficulties.
* Outside constraints on the student’s time (e.g. fixed working hours or family commitments.)

Discussion notes here:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Expectations of Supervision Relationship**

This section should be revisited regularly.

It is important that expectations are managed on both sides and discussions take place on how the student / supervisor working relationship will work. Understandings of how the relationship will work should be seen as evolving and not rigid or contractual; the changing circumstances and life circumstances of both parties should be considered.

Potential discussion points for early stages and periodic revisiting (at least annually as needs change) include:

* How often and when you will meet? Will this be different at different research stages? At a minimum, researchers should meet their supervisor at least once a month.
* How will you record the supervisory meetings – who will take notes of meetings (some use a word template to record progress, issues and agreed timelines/actions)? Does note taking by the student impede the discussion?
* How will you review an ongoing project plan?
* How will you manage differences of view about the direction of research? (Students may need to be reassured that this is normal and that they can express disagreement with their supervisor.)
* Where the student needs expert help not provided by the supervisor (e.g. on particular methodological, statistical or analytical techniques) how will this be guided and supported? (see also section 4 training.)
* How and when feedback on work might be provided; students may need to understand that this is fluid and could differ at varying points of the PhD, or at points of the year where the supervisor may have other commitments such as exam marking or study leave.
* Split of supervision between multiple supervisors. Does the student understand the load between different supervisors and any restricted roles?
* Other constraints on the supervisors’ time.

Further relevant information can be found in section 3 of the University's Code of Practice on Research Students <https://www.reading.ac.uk/doctoral-researcher-college/student-policies-procedures/code-practice-research-students>

Discussion notes here:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Planned personal and professional development**

Engagement in school / department training and the Doctoral and Researcher College’s training programme (the Reading Researcher Development Programme – RDDP) will be reviewed in annual progress reports and at Confirmation of Registration. Please note the University does set a minimum level of expected engagement. For full-time students, this equates to taking at least five sessions during the first year, and at least three in each of the second and third years.  Part-time students are required to take the same number of sessions but spread over a longer time period.  Students who are registered by distance / off campus should attend face to face courses when visiting campus and online RRDP courses at other times and complete a minimum level of training. For some students who already have acquired a range of research skills, or have experienced a working career before studying for a PhD, the minimum level of engagement may be reduced in exceptional circumstances.

When planning and selecting courses from the RRDP, you should consult the Doctoral and Researcher College Training and Support Guide available in Blackboard. Timetables and booking information are available at <https://www.reading.ac.uk/doctoral-researcher-college/training-and-development/reading-researcher-development> Please note that only courses for the current term are available to book (via the RISIS webportal).

Further information on the *Vitae* Researcher Development Framework (RDF) can be found at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/234301/Researcher-Development-Framework.html>.

**TABLE 1: RRDP course attendance & School / Department training**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge / Skill Domain**  (From Researcher Development Framework) | **Student needs as identified by student (in discussion with supervisor)** | **Selected course titles from the RRDP**  (timetables and booking information for the current term are available on the Doctoral and Researcher College website, as detailed above) &  **School / Department Training** | **Date Course attended / learning outcomes** |
| **DOMAIN A: KNOWLEDGE & INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES** | | | |
| **A1: SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE**  (includes subject-knowledge, research methods, information seeking, languages, academic literacy & numeracy) |  |  |  |
| **A2: COGNITIVE ABILITIES**  (Includes analysing, synthesising, critical thinking, evaluating, problem solving) |  |  |  |
| **A3: CREATIVITY**  (Includes inquiring mind, intellectual insight, innovation, argument construction, intellectual risk) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge / Skill Domain**  (From Researcher Development Framework) | **Student needs**  (as identified by student and supervisor) | **Selected course titles from the RRDP**  (timetables and booking information for the current term are available on the Doctoral and Researcher College website, as detailed above) &  **School / Department Training** | **Date course attended / learning outcomes** |
| **DOMAIN B: PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS** | | | |
| **B1: PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS**  (Domain includes enthusiasm, perseverance, integrity, self-confidence, self-reflection, responsibility) |  |  |  |
| **B2: SELF-MANAGEMENT**  (Domain includes preparation & prioritisation, commitment to research, time management, responsiveness to change, work-life balance [including performing well in assessments) |  |  |  |
| **B3: PROFESSIONAL & CAREER DEVELOPMENT**  (Career management, continuing professional development, responsiveness to opportunities, networking, reputation & esteem) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge / Skill Domain**  (From Researcher Development Framework) | **Student needs**  (as identified by student and supervisor) | **Selected course titles from the RRDP**  (timetables and booking information for the current term are available on the Doctoral and Researcher College website, as detailed above) &  **School / Department Training** | **Date course attended / learning outcomes** |
| **DOMAIN C: RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION** | | | |
| **C1: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**  (Includes health & safety, ethics, legal requirements, IPR & Copyright, respect & confidentiality, attribution & authorship, appropriate practice, research integrity) |  |  |  |
| **C2: RESEARCH MANAGEMENT**  (Domain includes research strategy, project planning & delivery, and risk management) |  |  |  |
| **C3: FINANCE, FUNDING & RESOURCES**  (Domain includes income & funding generation, financial management, and infrastructure & resources) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge / Skill Domain**  (From Researcher Development Framework) | **Student needs**  (as identified by student and supervisor) | **Selected course titles from the RRDP**  (timetables and booking information for the current term are available on the Doctoral and Researcher College website, as detailed above) &  **School / Department Training** | **Date course attended / learning outcomes** |
| **DOMAIN D: ENGAGEMENT, INFLUENCE AND IMPACT** | | | |
| **D1: Working with others**  (Domain includes collegiality, team working, people management, supervision, mentoring, influence & leadership, collaboration, E&D) |  |  |  |
| **D2: COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION**  (Domain includes communication methods, communication media, publication) |  |  |  |
| **D3: ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT**  (Domain includes teaching, public engagement, enterprise, policy, society & culture, global citizenship) |  |  |  |

**Table 2: Training provided by other University units and external organisations**

For example this can include: self-teach courses including LinkedIn Learning; asking for one-to-ones with key researchers; particular stretches of reading around a topic; local courses from other institutions; external training using an RTSG; peer learning among other PhD students; practice based (e.g. offering to give a talk); networking; training available through their employment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KNOWLEDGE / SKILL** | **Student needs**  (as identified by student and supervisor) | **Training from other University units, e.g. ISLI, or external organisations/ institutes** | **Date course attended / learning outcomes** |
| **ADDITONAL TRAINING NEEDS, NOT COVERED IN SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT OR DOCTORAL AND RESEARCHER COLLEGE PROVISION** | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AND DEVLOPMENT (EU / INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS)** | | | |
|  |  |  |  |