



YOUR DMU STUDENT HANDBOOK

**DOING RESEARCH:
GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENTS**

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We intend to open and operate our campus in line with whatever measures may be in place when the new term starts. If coming to Leicester isn't possible in October due to COVID-19 restrictions, you will still be able to enrol remotely. The experience offered on campus will be available to you remotely, and we will support you to join us on campus at the earliest possible opportunity.

Our online support mirrors what we would provide face-to-face, for example:

- You will take part in the Doctoral College induction online, and get introduced to your research degree roadmap, and meet with your peers.
- You will meet with your supervisors virtually and start building the foundations of your thesis immediately, conducting your literature review, fine-tuning your research design and research questions over the first few months.
- You will be able to take advantage of all our development opportunities online, via blended and recorded sessions, to develop your research and allied skills.
- You will have a host of opportunities to engage with the research community at DMU, both informally and formally, as well as with the wider PGR community in the East Midlands.

We fully understand that you will want certainty, but we also know that this is a situation that is likely to change quickly. We are making full preparations to allow us to offer the greatest flexibility we can, while ensuring you have the best experience possible.

The key thing to remember is that you are not alone. There are many points of contact there to help. Below are some tips and key contacts that will be useful during these uncertain times:

1. GETTING STARTED

For those starting their research degree journey, you are required to do the following in the first year of registration:

- **Set up regular meetings with your supervisory team:** Make contact early, and set up monthly meetings. You can contact them more often if you need to. These meetings are critical to developing your research design and research questions, and for identifying key next steps for your research.
- Attend the required **mandatory training**. This includes the following:
 - **The Doctoral College induction:** This is available as a live online event or as a recorded event with further links and resources on the Research Student Community Blackboard site.
 - **Research ethics and integrity training:** This is available as a live online event or an asynchronous package on the **Research Student Community Blackboard site**.

- **Fill out the development needs analysis form:** this is done via our **online form**. Send a PDF version of the form to your supervisory team and arrange a meeting to discuss your development needs with them. They might have additional advice on what you will need.

- **Prepare for your First Project Review:** this is the first milestone that takes place at three months if you study full-time, or six months if studying part-time. It is not a formal assessment, but an opportunity for us to ensure you have an adequate supervisory team in place, and for you and your supervisors to consider your training needs and agree the key activities and outputs that you will need over the following months. This is particularly important for your first formal assessment at the **Probation Review**, for which you will need to submit a report (your supervisors will provide more information on what this will involve).

- **Undergo further in-session English language training if required:** if English is not your first language, you will be required to undergo English Language training run by our **Centre for English Language Learning**. For details please contact **englishlanguage@dmu.ac.uk**.

- At the end of your first year of registration (one year for full-time students and two years for part-time), you will undertake the **Probation Review**. The purpose of this milestone is to demonstrate the progress you have made so far, outline your research design, and detail plans with timelines and outputs to ensure timely submission of your thesis. The review involves an assessor chosen by your

supervisory team and a meeting to discuss your project with the assessor. This is an opportunity for you to gain more insight into your project and your plans going forward.

2. MyRESEARCH AND PROGRESSION

Your progress as a research student is managed through MyResearch. This is our online management tool that tracks key progression milestones.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have shifted all face-to-face activities - supervisory meetings, First Project Review meetings, Probation Review meetings, Viva Voces (oral exams) and other key milestones – to be conducted online. These will return to be conducted face-to-face on campus (for those researchers based in Leicester) when it is safe to do so.

For help with using MyResearch, please see the guidance in the 'information for students' section of the Research Student Community Blackboard site.

It is critical that all MyResearch forms are filled out and submitted to ensure that you are completing these specific milestones. This is the formal log of your PhD journey.

If there are any concerns or questions about MyResearch, contact the Doctoral College at **researchstudents@dmu.ac.uk**.



3. THE RESEARCH STUDENT COMMUNITY BLACKBOARD SITE

As a research degree student, you are automatically enrolled onto our Research Student Community Blackboard site. This is the main site for all our resources and key documents that will support you on your research degree journey.

Resources include recordings, slides, and reading lists linked to workshops and sessions delivered as part of our Researcher Development programme.

To access this site:

- **Visit DMU Blackboard**
- Log in using your DMU IT credentials
- Once logged in, go to the 'My Communities' section on the page (located on the bottom left)
- Select 'Research Student Community'

If you have any questions regarding this site please contact the Doctoral College Researcher Development team at **researcherdev@dmu.ac.uk**.

4. RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

As a research degree student, you are expected to engage with training each year (equating to at least 10 days of development per year of registration). Our researcher development programme focuses on the following seven areas:

- Core knowledge
- Research governance
- Research effectiveness
- Methods and tools
- Personal and professional development
- Engagement, influence and impact
- Writing in academic contexts

You can learn about training opportunities through the **Research Student Community Blackboard site**.

Please also look out for notifications on your DMU email account. We send a monthly bulletin to you at the start of each month, highlighting training activities and opportunities for the upcoming months.

If you have an idea for a useful training session or event, please get in touch with us at **researcherdev@dmu.ac.uk** – we welcome feedback and suggestions from you.

5. ACCESSING LABS AND STUDIO SPACES

We strive to make all spaces safe for use, and safe for students to return to and work in. However, there are constraints on the use of spaces – with government restrictions on social distancing measures, we are not able to work at capacity in our labs or performance and studio spaces.

So long as the restrictions remain, we are prioritising access to those who need it most (for example, those in their final year of data collection) and are establishing rotas, where possible, to ensure that everyone who needs a lab or performance space is able to access it. Please contact your supervisor for guidance on using these spaces, and when you might be able to access them.





6. DOING RESEARCH FROM HOME

You may find yourself doing more research at home due to restrictions on movement and access. Things you can do when working at home include:

- **Literature searching and working on your literature review** – A key component of any research degree project is a literature review. This is the part of the thesis where you situate your research in the broader landscape, looking at the research that has already been done, critically examining it, and identifying gaps or problems that your research might be addressing.
- **Carrying out interviews and other qualitative methods via online streaming** – If you were planning on carrying out interviews or focus groups, it is possible to move these to an online setting. Discuss options with your supervisory team and look to this guidance document for support. If you are making any changes to your research design, or the participants for your research and your recruitment strategy, please also ensure that you have had the required ethics approval for any changes to the original application.
- **Analysing your data** – If you have already collected your data, you can work on analysing it from home. Much of the software used to analyse data (NVivo, SPSS, R, Stata) can be used at home – please contact the ITMS Helpdesk for support (itmshelpdesk@dmu.ac.uk).
- **Creating images and other figures** – If your research requires figures (such as graphs or charts) or maps, you can use the time to create

these figures. If you require specific software to help create these figures, contact ITMS for support.

- **Writing** – This can take place at any stage of the research degree journey and we encourage you to regularly engage with writing. You can take the time at home to work on a variety of different outputs, such as thesis chapters, full draft of a thesis, papers, abstracts, reports, and blogs.

The items above are just a few examples of research activities you can carry out while at home, but we do appreciate many students have care responsibilities and/or work commitments. If you are having challenges managing your research workload, discuss this with your supervisory team.

7. WORKING ON YOUR HOME COMPUTER

When working on a DMU computer, you have the added benefit of extra security and back-up systems should the computer experience any technical issues. When working at home, you have less security and so the risk for loss of data increases. The tips below can help prevent data loss and ensure good security when doing research on your home PC:

- Use the DMU cloud storage. You have access to 1tb of cloud storage. Using your P number and password you can log in to Microsoft OneDrive via MyDMU or log in to OneDrive direct here to access your own personal storage.
- Regularly save any document or file you're working on.
- Set up a back-up system for your PC.

8. SOFTWARE FOR HOME USE

Many of you may rely on key software such as NVivo and Stata to do your data analysis. These would usually be accessed on DMU computers, but in the situation where you need a specific software for home use please contact the ITMS helpdesk on +44 (0) 116 250 6050 or itmshelpdesk@dmu.ac.uk.

If the software is unavailable, please send an email to your supervisory team and copy in the Doctoral College Researcher Development team (researcherdev@dmu.ac.uk). This allows us to understand your needs and look at options to support you.

9. SEEK SUPPORT

At DMU we strive to create an environment that focuses on your health and wellbeing so you can live a healthy, happy and productive life. That includes providing you with resources that support your development and studies, helping you to succeed and achieve your potential.

1. Funding and finances – our student finance team can answer your questions about applying for funding or even just help you with managing your finances. For more information about these services or to book an online appointment, you can find the [contact details here](#).

2. Wellbeing – Healthy DMU is here to support your health and wellbeing while at university, with an online hub that provides quick access to booking appointments, activities and hints and tips about staying well. For more information and resources, visit the [Healthy DMU Hub](#).

3. Disability/mental health disclosure and support – we strongly recommend you inform us about any existing disabilities, medical or mental health conditions. By telling us about this, we can make you aware of the support you may need and are entitled to. [Disabled Students' Allowances](#) are government support packages available to UK students who meet the criteria and are designed to pay for the extra costs a student may incur as a result of a disability, medical condition, Specific Learning Difference or mental health condition that impacts your studies.

4. Contacting the [wellbeing and mental health services](#) – to ensure that we direct you to the appropriate service you must first book a Single Point of Access Appointment (SPA), where your needs will be assessed. SPAs are 45-minute appointments that give you the opportunity to discuss your situation with a member of support staff. At the end of the appointment, you will be given an action plan of what to do next. These appointments can be booked via MyGateway.

5. The Disability Advice and Support team are based in the Student Gateway and can arrange support for students with disabilities. Appointments can be made through MyGateway or by emailing disability@dmu.ac.uk.

You can also follow us on Twitter [@DMUwellbeing](#) for tips and information on a range of mental health and wellbeing issues.

Cyberbullying

We are committed to ensuring all students are treated with respect across all online platforms and face-to-face activities. We want students to recognise any discriminatory behaviours either online or offline, and report anything to your personal tutor or [faculty advice centre](#).

What is cyberbullying?

- Spreading malicious and abusive rumours and gossiping
- Emails or texts with threatening or intimidating remarks
- Mobbing (a group or gang that targets you or someone else)
- Harassing you or someone else repeatedly
- Intimidation and blackmail
- Stalking you or someone else online and continual harassment
- Posting embarrassing or humiliating images or videos without consent
- Posting private details online without consent
- Theft, fraud or deception over the internet

What to do if you experience or witness cyberbullying:

- Don't respond to any texts, emails or any other online form of communication that you find offensive
- Save, copy and print the evidence
- Report the incident
- Alert your course team
- Seek advice from DSU

Mandala Project

The [Mandala Project](#) is available to support students who are victims or survivors of sexual and domestic violence and sexual harassment. When you contact the Mandala Project, our responders will discuss your options with you so that you can make decisions about the support you may need. There are a number of ways the project does this, including welfare support, referral to an external partner, a formal report to the university or to the police.

Other useful contacts:

[Leicestershire Police](#)

[National Bullying Helpline](#)

[Show Racism the Red Card](#)

[Stamp It Out](#)

[Stop Hate UK](#)

[Tell Mama](#)

[True Vision](#)

[Victim First](#)



10. STAY CONNECTED TO DMU

One of the challenges when doing research at home is coping with working in solitude. This is a hurdle many research degree students face and the tips below will help you feel a stronger connection to DMU when working off-campus.

Participate in an online event

The Doctoral College, your faculties, and research institutes host events throughout the year. Sign up to attend some of the virtual activities and have the opportunity to chat with peers. Some examples include:

DOCTORAL COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES – this showcases research conducted by DMU staff and research degree students that is linked to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and International Days.

DOCTORAL COLLEGE E-SOCIALS – these are hosted by the Doctoral College Researcher Development team and take place four times a year. This is an opportunity to ‘meet’ your peers and participate in activities.

RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES – many research institutes and schools host research seminar series that are now online. To learn more, enquire with your supervisory team or your Faculty Head of Research Students or Institute Head of Research Students.

Attend a training session

The Doctoral College hosts a range of training activities throughout the academic year, both face-to-face and online. Join us for one of these sessions, build your research skills, and get to know other students working on similar topics. You can learn more about our programme by visiting our **Research Student Community Blackboard site**.

Join the DMU Postgraduate Researchers Facebook community page

This is a social media site set up for any DMU research degree student. This allows you to communicate with other research degree students and participate in activities, share ideas, and ask questions. The page is organised by the Doctoral College, so we will post activities and events there as well. Join **the Facebook page here**.

Sign up for a students’ union group

As a research degree student, you may feel that DSU is designed largely for undergraduate populations, but that isn’t the case. DSU groups and sports teams are open to all students including research degree students. Stay connected to DMU by joining one of the many groups or communities – you can learn more by visiting the **DSU page**.





11. USING THE LIBRARY AND LINKEDIN LEARNING

The Library website offers access to a wealth of online resources, including the **Library Research Portal**. The page provides guides on how to manage your research data, how to maximise your literature searches and how to publish Open Access research.

As a research degree student, you are supported by the Library and Learning Services team who provide one-to-one support online and offer a range of workshops linked to the Doctoral College Researcher Development Programme.

The Library has also developed a guide on how to access **LinkedIn Learning**, a platform that has more than 15,000 video tutorials supporting learning across many areas. It can keep track of your course history and recent activity, certificates of completion and you can download content to watch offline too. There is also scope to link these achievements to your LinkedIn profile if you have one, so once you earn a certificate it can be posted on your profile and seen by potential employers.

If you have questions about accessing books or journal articles, LibChat is available online via the **Library Research Portal** or you can contact them directly by visiting their **Contact Us** page.

12. KEY CONTACTS

Below is a list of key contacts and their roles. Please get in touch if you have any questions:

DOCTORAL COLLEGE LIFECYCLE TEAM

Supports you and your progression through your research degree journey. Contact the team for support using MyResearch, queries about milestones and other key processes linked to your research degree.
researchstudents@dmu.ac.uk

DOCTORAL COLLEGE RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Supports you and your skills development through your research degree journey. Contact the team for questions relating to training and researcher community events.
researcherdev@dmu.ac.uk

FACULTY HEADS OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

Arts, Design and Humanities (ADH):
Dr Alissa Clarke
a.clarke@dmu.ac.uk

Business and Law (BAL): Dr Adam Fishwick
adam.fishwick@dmu.ac.uk

Computing, Engineering and Media (CEM):
Dr Lipika Deka
lipika.deka@dmu.ac.uk

Health and Life Sciences (HLS): Dr Kim Watts
kim.watts@dmu.ac.uk

INSTITUTE HEAD OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

Institute of Architecture: Beniamino Polimeni
beniamino.polimeni@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of English: Anna Blackwell
anna.blackwell@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of History: Serena Dyer
serena.dyer@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Art and Design: Claire Lerpiniere
clerpiniere@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Drama, Dance and Performance:
Alissa Clarke
a.clarke@dmu.ac.uk

The Centre for Urban Research on Austerity:
Merce Cortina-Oriol
merce.cortina-oriol@dmu.ac.uk

Centre for Local Governance Research Centre:
Mark Roberts
m.roberts@dmu.ac.uk

People Organisation and Work Institute:
Chibuzo Ejiogu
chibuzo.ejiogu@dmu.ac.uk

The Centre for Enterprise and Innovation:
Oluwasoye Mafimisebi
oluwasoye.mafimisebi@dmu.ac.uk

The Institute for Applied/Sustainable Economics:
Zheng Wang
zheng.wang@dmu.ac.uk

The Institute for Evidenced-Based Law Reform:
Jenny Lander & Laura Enonchong
phd.law@dmu.ac.uk

The Finance and Banking Research Centre:
Frank Kwabi
frank.kwabi@dmu.ac.uk

The Centre in Accountability Governance and Sustainability: Richard Werner
richard.werner@dmu.ac.uk

Marketing: Amy Takhar
amy.takhar@dmu.ac.uk

Institute for Allied Health Sciences Research:
Neenu Singh
neenu.singh@dmu.ac.uk

Leicester Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation:
Mohamed Elsayy
mohamed.elsawy@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Health, Health Policy and Social Care:
Kay de Vries
kay.devries@dmu.ac.uk

Institute for Psychological Science: Scott Yates
syates@dmu.ac.uk

Institute for Research in Criminology, Community, Education and Social Justice: Scott Yates
syates@dmu.ac.uk

Centre for Reproduction Research: Scott Yates
syates@dmu.ac.uk

Mary Seacole Research Centre: Kay de Vries
kay.devries@dmu.ac.uk

Cinema & Television History Institute:
Tracy Harwood
tharwood@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Creative Technologies: Tracy Harwood
tharwood@dmu.ac.uk

Media & Communication Research Centre:
Tracy Harwood
tharwood@dmu.ac.uk

Media Discourse Centre: Tracy Harwood
tharwood@dmu.ac.uk

Music, Technology & Innovation – Institute for Sonic Creativity: Tracy Harwood
tharwood@dmu.ac.uk

Centre for Computing & Social Responsibility:
Feng Chen
fengchen@dmu.ac.uk

Cyber Technology Institute: Feng Chen
fengchen@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Energy & Sustainable Development:
Mark Lemon
mlemon@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Engineering Sciences: Mark Lemon
mlemon@dmu.ac.uk

Institute of Artificial Intelligence: Feng Chen
fengchen@dmu.ac.uk



**De Montfort University
The Gateway
Leicester
LE1 9BH, UK**

T: +44 (0)116 2 50 60 70

☎ 0797 0655 800

E: enquiry@dmu.ac.uk

W: dmu.ac.uk