**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES &**

**SOCIAL SCIENCES**

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE

STUDENTS HANDBOOK

2013 – 2014

**WELCOME**

This Handbook is intended to help you start to make the most of your postgraduate research experience at Oxford Brookes University.

We have a large, lively and growing postgraduate community working here in the Humanities and Social Sciences – a group of impressive and dynamic students who are leading the way in cutting-edge research. We are passionate about fostering the careers of our early career researchers during their time here, and ensuring they gain both practical and academic research skills training and leadership experience as integral parts of the doctoral programmes we offer. Oxford Brookes provides both a great place to study and an opportunity to belong to a doctoral learning community which nurtures excellence in research and scholarship. It is a great place to share with academic colleagues in exciting research and learning.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) is an exciting arena for research. There are two Schools, and three Departments, together representing a wide range of opportunities for interdisciplinary work. Throughout the year, various Faculty, School and Departmental events and training sessions will be offered. Please do try to attend: we want the experience of joining in this academic community to represent an enriching and positive learning environment and to involve membership of an intellectual community, with all the opportunities for networking and collaborating that such connections afford.

I’m available throughout the semester to talk to research degree students about their experiences on the course, and about Oxford Brookes life in general. My email is [glen.ohara@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:glen.ohara@brookes.ac.uk) if you’d like to make an appointment to come and see me.

**Dr Glen O’Hara**

**Reader in the History of Public Policy**

**Chair of the Faculty Postgraduate Research Degrees Committee**

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**Introduction**

This ‘Faculty’ section of the Oxford Brookes University Postgraduate Research Degree (RD) Student Guidance provides you with a ready reference: its aim is to help you know what to expect and do as a research student in both your own Department or School and the wider Faculty. The Departmental PGR Tutor [PGRT] and/or PGR Administrator [PGRA] as part of their role in your own Department or School will provide additional and/or specific guidance during your period of study.

In the University section of this Handbook and in your offer letter, and during your Faculty RD Induction, you will have received copies of, or information about:

* the Research Degree Regulations
* the University’s Ethics Policy,
* the University’s Intellectual Property Rights Policy,
* the FHSS Health and Safety Policy.

Please note: these are important documents for reference that describe the stages research students pass through, from initial enrolment through to final examination. You will need to refer to these from time to time, to check up on procedures, aspects of practice and to help you progress through your programme of study. An additional or replacement copy of any of this material is available on the Graduate Office Intranet; further information about the FHSS can be found at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about/faculties/hss>

**Postgraduate Research Provision in the Faculty of HSS**

The following people are involved in organising and managing the postgraduate research provision in the HSS Faculty:

**Faculty PGR Leads:**

Professor Gary Browning, Associate Dean (Research and Knowledge Transfer): gkbrowning@brookes.ac.uk

Dr Glen O’Hara, Chair (HSS Faculty Research Degree Committee): glen.ohara@brookes.ac.uk

Claire Cox - Faculty Research Manager: c.cox@brookes.ac.uk

Ms Maggie Wilson – Faculty Ethics Officer: mvwilson@brookes.ac.uk

**Department PGR Tutors:**

Dr Annie Haight: School of Education: [ahaight@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ahaight@brookes.ac.uk) and

Professor Debra McGregor: dmcgregor@brookes.ac.uk

Dr Nicole Pohl: Department of English & Modern Languages: npohl@brookes.ac.uk

Professor Christiana Payne: Department of History, Philosophy & Religion: cjepayne@brookes.ac.uk

Dr Simon Cooper: School of Law: simoncooper@brookes.ac.uk

Professor Jeremy MacClancy: Department of Social Sciences: jmacclancy@brookes.ac.uk

**Department PGR Administrators:**

Marinka Walker, School of Education: mwalker@brookes.ac.uk

Charmian Hearne, Department of English & Modern Languages; Department of History, Philosophy & Religion:

chearne@brookes.ac.uk

Terri Morris, Department of Social Sciences; School of Law: tmorris@brookes.ac.uk

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE: KEEPING IN CONTACT!**

This is a first principle to observe throughout a doctoral programme of study:

***maintain regular contact with people in your programme of study.***

This includes not only your supervisory team. It includes correspondence with other people, students, academics, and administrators, at a Departmental, Faculty and University level, representing the wider Oxford Brookes research community.

The easiest, quickest, most efficient way for us to keep in close contact with you is via your student email.

***We therefore expect you to check your student email regularly.***

Oxford Brookes University is now using GoogleMail for all e-correspondence and is easy to access off-site.

Key in [www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/) , click on GoogleMail at the bottom of the page, then key in your student number and password.

**PLEASE NOTE**: We do not usually email to students’ home email addresses. Even if you decide to correspond with your supervisory team directly using a personal email address and/ or Skype….

**YOU ALSO NEED** to check regularly your brookes.ac.uk University email address.

**SO**: We will always strive to keep you up to date about events, activities, deadlines, etc.

**BUT**: it is your responsibility to check that you receive our emails safely. We cannot be held responsible if messages do not reach you when you have not informed us that you cannot access e-mail regularly, and/or have changed address.

Details of seminars, conferences and workshops at Brookes and elsewhere are posted on various VLE, in electronic newsletters, by email and on notice boards in the Faculty.

**RESEARCH STUDENT SUPPORT, TRAINING, REPRESENTATION, FACILITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

There is not one single type of ‘Faculty research student’: some of our research students are mature students; some study part-time; some do not live particularly close to Brookes; some have families and work-related duties. We have a diverse research student body, spanning the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law and Education; we strive to be as responsive as we can to individual needs and circumstances, and yet both encourage and integrate all our students as fully as possible into the activities of the University, Faculty and School or Department. Many research students consider that a research degree involves a very narrow focus. In fact, a broader view is desirable. The University, and grant-giving bodies, therefore insist that students provide evidence of related activities and supporting studies. Examples of these would be research training, attendance at seminars, conferences, lectures etc. both at Brookes and at other institutions. You will be expected to provide evidence of supporting studies at registration, transfer and in your annual report. This evidence is usually listed within your **Personal Development** **Planner,** which every student is expected to share with his or her Director of Studies.

**RESEARCH COMMUNITIES:** a great deal of of the research activity within the Faculty is found in Research Groups or Centres within a School or Department. Most of these communities hold seminar series, lectures, reading groups and dedicated conferences as integral parts of their academic activity. We very strongly encourage you to attend these events. It is an active, and highly positive way to participating in a functioning research culture. Research degree work, by necessity and for some of the time, is a solitary activity. It is, however, self-limiting and often a source of difficulty if research is allowed to generate isolation. Attending these kinds of event is an excellent way to enter the academic life of a community, to meet academic staff, fellow students, or visiting scholars. Participation will give you an idea of the variety of interests and research approaches in your area of study but also perhaps more importantly, will provide an opportunity to present papers, practising necessary academic skills related to research dissemination. Moreover, regular attendance at these kinds of event will contribute towards your programme of `related activities’.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT & REPRESENTATION**: in most departments, research students are also active in providing a support network. They organise an annual conference, a support group which meets regularly, and social events. There is also the opportunity to act as a student representative on the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, chaired by Dr Glen O’Hara. Research students are also represented on the Graduate College at University level - http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/graduate-office/. Each Faculty sends two representatives to this committee and it, in turn, sends representatives to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC), which is the University committee responsible for the environment, regulation and progress of research students. Issues may also be raised at the Faculty Research Student Committee, that can be taken for consideration to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and vice versa. Both the Faculty and the University Research Degree Sub-committees are important for your research work, as they are the committees responsible for approving and monitoring your progress.

Research students in the FHSS have access to Student Support: this is available both at Gypsy Lane Campus, and Harcourt Hill Campus in the Student Help Zone. This includes provision for liaising with other departments in Brookes such as the SU Advice Centre and ISAS, when necessary.

**PGR STUDENT TRAINING**: the HSS Faculty PGR provision includes research method training. This includes three levels of training: The University runs a programme of generic training and information on these events can be found at the following link:

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/brookesnet/graduateoffice/current/research/training

More specific training in research methods will also provided within the Faculty and the School or Department, integrating multi-disciplinary learning and teaching days organised by the PGR Tutors and the Faculty team. The lead co-ordinator for this programme of research methods training and further details of events will appear at the beginning of each academic year.

**PROGRESS IN A RESEARCH DEGREE: MAJOR MILESTONES - ENROLMENT, REGISTRATION & TRANSFER**

Beginning a doctoral programme of study starts with your letter accepting our offer of a place and agreeing with the University’s Terms and Conditions, for the study of a postgraduate research degree.

**Enrolment:** The next step is enrolment. Enrolment is conducted by the Graduate Office, which is also responsible for the organisation of your continued annual enrolment, payment of fees, and administering all stages of the programme through the University’s Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC): this takes a student forward from enrolment through to registration to transfer; it can also include if required change in supervision, study suspension, examination and finally conferment of the doctoral award.

**Registration:** the first major task after enrolment and induction is to register with the University. Registration takes place approximately at three months (or nine months for part-time students) **after** enrolment.

**The period between enrolment and registration is a probationary period. Full time students will normally be expected to submit their work to progress from probationary to full student status within six months of enrolment, part-time students within nine months.**

Students who fail to satisfy the Faculty’s requirements and standards for registration will be referred and permitted to re-submit their work within three months. Students who are unable to meet the registration standards will not be allowed to progress beyond the ‘probationary’ period associated with pre-registration.

Registration provides an important opportunity for the University to ensure that the supervisory arrangements are appropriate, and that the research is feasible within the time stated. It is designed as a safeguard for both students and the University. Registration is backdated to the time of your enrolment. This procedure enables you to prepare for research, to refine your research proposal, and be sure that you are suited to undertaking a research degree. Refining your proposal is an important focus of your initial work as a researcher, and preparation for registration an integral part of your research training.

In order to register with the university, you are required to complete a form (RDSC-R) (please see: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/brookesnet/graduateoffice/current/research/researchdegreeforms>) that requires a detailed research proposal including aims, theory, methods, content, timetable and details of related activities. The form should include details of the research proposal, and a summary of an indicative literature review.

The PGR Tutor will receive a final draft of the RDSC-R prior to agreeing submission to the HESS Committee (Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, a Sub-Committee of the RDSC) for approval and registration, via the Graduate Office. A student cannot progress until this Committee grants its approval of this proposal and any University ethical consent required for the proposed research.

Each PGR Tutor will advise students and their supervisory teams in their own subject discipline as to the exact procedures to complete in preparation for registration. This may include an oral interview and the submission of some written work related to either literature review and/or research design / methodology.

There is also a tight timescale involved in preparation for registration. The student and supervisory team need to make sure that this writing is completed to a satisfactory standard before submission to the HESS Committee. This is usually successfully completed if a carefully observed writing schedule is agreed for the completion of the draft and final versions of the RDSC-R form.

**Transfer:** Transfer from Level M (MPhil/EdD Modules) to D (PhD and EdD thesis): The next major milestone in the progression of the PGR study of programme is to transfer from Level M to D status. The process is broadly the same for M.Phil/PhD, and the EdD. Most doctoral students will register for a M.Phil/PhD which gives the flexibility of transferring to a PhD or deciding to take a shorter period of study for an M.Phil. An EdD student will complete the first taught element in their programme of study at Level M, before proceeding to Level D, and work related to the research thesis awarded by viva voce.

**Transfer to a PhD takes place after approximately 18 months full-time (and 24-26 months for part time) study.** The procedure is similar to that required at registration. Students are required to complete form RDSC-T that includes an 800 word review and report of progress, a statement of further work, and an indication of where the contribution to original knowledge resides in the proposed study. Prior to transfer, however, students will be required to submit a longer version of the progress report to their supervisory team and the PGT, together with a sample piece of writing. In addition they will be expected to attend an oral interview with two or more academic colleagues from the Department or School, organised by the departmental PGT. When this is successfully completed, a student is then allowed to submit their transfer form to the HESS sub-committee.

Where a student is registered for MPhil only, but after studying for some time on the programme decides that they would like to continue and submit for PhD, it is possible to apply for an exceptional transfer to PhD. This request must be fully endorsed by the supervisory team and a full transfer report and RDSC-T application form completed and forwarded to HESS for approval. The probationary period, and registration, is important; it is a point at which all involved can ensure that the research degree is most suited to your needs and that your registration proposal reflects accurately your capabilities and interests.

Expectations for progression: normally, a full-time research student reaches the standard of an M.Phil., after 2 years, and a Ph.D., within three years. This assumes that a full-time student will spend 35 hours a week on their research and a part-time student 15 hours a week.

The following minimum and maximum periods of registration apply:

**M.Phil. Minimum Maximum**

Full-time 2 years 3 years

Part-time 3 years 4 years

**MPhil/Ph.D**.

Full-time 3 years 5 years

Part-time 4 years 6 years

Students are not normally permitted to suspend during the first year of enrolment or before registration. If you are unwell or exceptionally a problem arises which prevents your work from progressing, it is possible to apply for a period of suspension to your registration for up to one year in the first instance and no more that for two years during the course of the whole programme. If progress with the programme has been delayed for a valid reason, exceptionally an application for extension to the maximum period of registration for up to one year at a time may be submitted. The application for extension must be made before your original registration expires. In both cases, a formal application must be made with the full support of your supervisory team and Dept/School and submitted to HESS for consideration.

The RDSC may also terminate registration if, for instance, unsatisfactory progress has been reported. There are then set procedures for reinstatement. But please note that all applications to the RDSC must be seen and approved first by your Director of Studies and the PGR Tutor in your own Department or School.

**MANAGING SUPERVISION & SUPERVISORS: WHAT TO EXPECT**

**The Supervisory Team:** A Director of Studies takes the principal responsibility for your research supervision and is the main source of information for academic matters directly related to your thesis. He or she is also your primary supervisor. As a rule, you will see your Director of Studies more frequently than your other supervisors. We also appoint a second and sometimes a third supervisor for each research student, usually to expand the area of expertise available and to provide a more secure intellectual framework. This supervisor may be internal to Brookes or a specialist in another institution.

**The Supervisor(s)**: It is essential that the relationship between research student and supervisor(s) is productive and positive. It should be based on openness, respect and trust. It is therefore important to have an open discussion of the nature of the relationship to make sure expectations are met and misunderstandings avoided. If there is any disquiet about this relationship, both students and supervisors should have an opportunity to discuss this. Supervisors should make sure that their students are aware of how contact (outside pre-arranged meetings) can be made and both sides should ensure that e-mails or phone calls are answered as soon as possible.

The role of the supervisor is to facilitate the progress of the work; the role of the student is to provide evidence of that work, either in chapters, articles, papers, summaries of reading, reports on progress etc. ‘The work’, in this context, is the data collection, analysis, independent thought and other intellectual effort related to the research.

Regular written work is essential in building up a structured thesis: it helps you engage critically with your material and enables your supervisor to make constructive comments. The final writing up of your investigation is then made much less laborious. The support offered by supervisors should not stop there. They also should help their students in gaining access to academic networks, through encouraging conference, course and seminar attendance both within and outside Brookes.

**Supervision:** Supervisors should review and critically comment on your work within two weeks of receiving it. However, your supervisor(s) may sometimes have pressing deadlines of their own (such as undergraduate assessments) and may not always be able to respond in time. Equally, if you submit a substantial amount of work (e.g. several chapters, or a draft of the thesis) then you and your supervisor need to negotiate a reasonable timescale for feedback.

Meetings with your supervisor should be regular, though this will be determined by the stage of the research and whether you are studying part-time or full-time. Full-time students should expect to receive supervision from their Director of Studies of up to 44 hours of supervision per year; part-time students for up to 22 hours (including preparation for meetings and reading of drafts as well as contact time), though this will obviously vary depending on the stage of research; for example, with more supervision at the beginning and end than in the interim period of the research study. A minimum of six meetings per academic year is, however, essential to maintain contact. If you have a second or external supervisor, you would expect to meet him or her typically once a year at least. Approaches to working with your supervisory team will involve tutorials and supervision that often includes both the external/second supervisor as well as your Director of Studies, and occasionally only one or the other supervisor, and this should be agreed as part of on-going planning for supervision.

There are a wealth of books to guide you through this process, including the following:

Patrick Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft and Write a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Marian Petre and Gordon Rugg, *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2010)

Estelle Phillips and Derek Pugh, *How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2010)

**MANAGING SUPERVISION & SUPERVISORS: RECORD KEEPING**

It is good practice for students and supervisors to organise at each session the date and time for the next meeting, or to agree a day or week in which contact should be made to arrange the next meeting. The meetings usually take place in your supervisor’s office. They should take place in an environment conducive to open discussion and free from interruptions where possible. Meetings should allow an exchange of ideas and a discussion of issues. They should also provide time for both sides to raise matters, and not be monopolised by either party. An agenda is a useful item, determined by the needs of the research available and agreed by both the student and supervisor(s) in advance.

Both supervisor and student should always keep a report on each supervisory meeting, agreed by student and supervisor(s). This should record the issues discussed at meetings, and the agreed programme for the next supervision. This report can be particularly useful when important issues have been raised. In addition, students should always keep a record of their own work – of reading, sources consulted, supporting studies (e.g. gallery visited or seminar attended), which should be available to the supervisor at meetings.

**Supervision record keeping:** it is recommended that a doctoral researcher should keep a research diary in which to record the main stages of work as it progresses, and include in this journal a reflexive account of ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ responses to the work of research. This is in addition to a record of the supervision tutorials (agenda and notes of the tutorial).

To download a copy of either the full-time and part-time Personal Development Planner Diary go to: <https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/graduateoffice/research/training/plannerm>

**Academic Adviser:** In addition to your supervisors, it is possible to have academic advisers, specified on your RDSC registration form. These identified colleagues are able to give occasional help on specialist issues. The formal assigning of an academic adviser is also a specific aspect of provision in a professional doctorate, and this colleague will take a more particular interest in the progression of a student through their programme of study. Students can also consult other sources of information and help within the Faculty and the University as appropriate. To this end, the supervisor(s) should introduce students to the diversity of skills and interests within the Faculty.

**CONTINUING WITH A PGR DEGREE: ASSESSMENT, MONITORING & EVALUATION**

**Annual Review**: an annual review of progress is completed in each academic year. This includes:

1. A report written by the student on their progress and activities throughout the year. This report is sent to the PGR Tutor.
2. A report on your progress is written by your Director of Studies, which is sent to the PGR Tutor.
3. A piece of recent and relevant writing form the student should be submitted for completion of a Turnitin analysis and report. The VLE for submission for the Turnitin Report is set up by the Graduate Office but Directors of Studies should ensure students appropriately follow the procedure for submitting a piece of work for Turnitin. The purpose if this exercise is to ensure that you are referencing your work correctly and avoiding any inadvertent plagiarism

In addition each student is required to attend an annual progress interview with the PGR Tutor and this may include a member of the supervisory team. Those students who have been interviewed at the Transfer stage of progression in the same academic year will not be required to attend an annual progress interview.

**Supervision issues and concerns**: the relationship between a student and their supervisor is, to a certain extent, a personal as well as professional process that is very intense: we strive to emphasise professional standards at all times. Most research students have a productive, enjoyable time as they progress through their course in the School. However, it can happen, very occasionally, that a student or a supervisor may raise concerns about the progress of the supervised research.

If you do have issues of concern, you should contact the PGR Tutor for your Department/School, who will attempt to resolve concerns in complete confidentiality. You may also wish to contact either of the Research Student Representatives on the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, again in confidence.

So: If there are issues of concern, you should contact the PGR Tutor and/or you may write a confidential report, with your Annual Report, to the Chair of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, Dr Glen O’Hara.

If you think you have a grievance against the University in relation to supervision, resources or administration then it is best at first to discuss this either with the PGR Tutor, or the Chair of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee, Dr Glen O’Hara.

If this cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, then you may submit a written statement of grievance to the Faculty Dean, and then to the Academic Registrar, in accordance with the University Student Complaint Procedure. A Complaint Committee shall be convened to hear the case and recommend action where if appropriate. See also the University’s Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research leading to the award of the University’s degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy for further details.

**ETHICS – GETTING IT RIGHT FROM START TO FINISH**

Increased demands for greater public scrutiny and accountability have meant that studies involving human participants are to be formally reviewed by individuals who are independent of the research. Ethics review procedures at Oxford Brookes are designed to monitor the implementation of the University's Code of Practice in individual research studies, to maintain high ethical standards in the research undertaken by staff and students and to ensure that the dignity, rights, safety, inclusivity and well-being of all participants are given primary consideration. Doctoral research has to comply therefore with University standards of ethics in research. We are committed to maintaining high ethical standards in the research undertaken by staff and research students. The University has developed a Code of Practice for the Ethical Standards for Research Involving Human Participants and has established a University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) to promote good practice and to conduct formal ethics review of research. A section of the University web-site been set up as a resource for further information on research ethics and to assist with the process of applying for research ethics approval to UREC. Please refer to the Oxford Brookes ethics website (http://www.brookes.ac.uk/res/ethics/students) for further guidance.

Research students and research ethics review: it is University policy that all research carried out by research students which involves human participants must be submitted for research ethics review. Research ethics review is carried out by UREC or, for those conducting research on patients, staff, carers or a study on NHS premises, by an NHS Research Ethics Committee.

**Which projects need research ethics review?**

All projects carried out by students registered for an MPhil, MPhil/PhD, PhD, LLM by Research or Professional Doctorate which involve people as research participants require research ethics review and approval. This includes projects where:

* only a part of the research involves people as participants;
* contact with participants is through email or letter;
* participants are contacted outside the UK.

**At what stage is ethics review required?**

Please note that students must have full ethics approval before any attempt is made to recruit participants and collect data. Research ethics review can take up to six weeks to complete and students should allow sufficient time for this in planning their work. It is preferable that the UREC committee grants an ethics consent before registration is completed, or at the least, an appropriate application to UREC has been submitted.

**What is the process for research ethics review?**

You must submit your application for research ethics review on the **UREC Form E2U.** Applications to UREC should first go through Faculty ethics review procedures and be signed off by the **Faculty Research Ethics Office, Maggie** **Wilson** (mvwilson@brookes.ac.uk). UREC has a multi-disciplinary membership so make sure the lay description of the research method is just that, so that it can be completely understood by members located in another discipline. Students whose research involves patients, carers or staff in the NHS (i.e. students who plan to gain access to their research participants through the NHS) should apply to the appropriate NHS research ethics committee. Further details describing the procedure for submission of a complete copy of the ethics application (original, signed E2U form plus supporting documents, such as draft questionnaires or interview schedules, and any necessary letters of permission) are available at www.brookes.ac.uk/res/ethics/students.

Research ethics should always be seen as an integral part of your research, so it is important that your discussions with your supervisors include this at an early stage, as part of the research design process, and throughout. The FREO can give additional advice and support and you can book an appointment with her prior to submission of the E2U. of permission to carry out the research. Guidelines for the preparation of participant information sheets and a template for consent forms are also included on the web-site.

**PGR STUDENT ENTITLEMENTS: RESOURCES, ALLOWANCES & MONEY**

We offer a range of physical facilities across the faculty. PGR students have access to the Faculty’s shared hot-desking PC workstations in room B1.12 of the Buckley Building. To access this room the door code is 1 & 2 together, then 4. You will also have access to a small meeting-room contained within room B1.12.

The Buckley Building is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, throughout the year. If you intend to use this room outside these hours, you need to apply for a 24 hour access card. To arrange a swipe card you need to complete an application form, which can be obtained from and must be approved by Brian Rivers, Facilities Manager for the Faculty (bkrivers@brookes.ac.uk)

You will also have access to room BG.02, a University pooled computer room for all Postgraduate students (Postgraduate taught course and research students). This room is open from 8:30am - 4:30pm. Outside these hours it can only be accessed by swipe card. Similarly, you have access to the Smetham Room at Harcourt Hill Campus, which is a pooled computer meeting room.

To arrange a swipe card for BG.02, you will need to complete an application form, which can be obtained from and must be approved by Jill Organ, Graduate Office, Buckley Building, B2.01 (e-mail [jorgan@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jorgan@brookes.ac.uk)). If you intend to use this room outside normal opening hours, you need to make it clear on your application that you are applying for a 24 hour access card.

Room BG.05, on the ground floor of the Buckley Building is the Postgraduate Research Student Common Room. You are free to use this room but should be aware that it can occasionally be booked out for events. The ground floor of the Buckley Building offers several rooms, all of which can be booked, that are available for research students. There are 2 seminar rooms which hold up to 50 people (BG.10 & BG.11); a common room (BG.05); a large meeting room (BG.01) and a smaller meeting room (BG.04). All room booking requests for rooms BG01, BG04, BG05, BG10 and BG11 should be e-mailed to: [buckleybookings@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:buckleybookings@brookes.ac.uk)

**Student Entitlements**: Full-time research students (as indicated on their PIP page) can now apply for Faculty funds to support research-related expenditure [allowance] of a maximum of £150 per academic year. Part-time students and those in the "writing up" stage of their research degree (i.e. paying the continuation fee, which generally starts in the 4th year for full-time and the 7th year for part-time PhD students) can apply for a maximum of £75 to support their research-related expenses. Students in “submission” or on “approved temporary suspension” (as indicated on their PIP page) are not eligible to apply for these Faculty funds.

These funds can be used to support a range of research-related expenses, including: travel, accommodation, subsistence and registration costs associated with conference attendance or visiting an archive, printing and photocopying expenses, and stationary and software costs. You may apply for research-related expenses not listed here providing it is approved by your Director of Studies and the relevant PGR Tutor (please note, these funds cannot be used for inter-library loans – requests for these must be sent to and approved by the relevant Head of Department). It is entirely up to you how you choose to use your annual allowance.

For example, you may wish to use your entire budget on a single type of expense (e.g. printing) or alternatively use your allowance on a range of research-related expenses (e.g. printing, photocopying, conference attendance). Please note, once you have used your annual allowance you will not receive further Faculty funds until the start of the next academic year. Furthermore, you cannot carry over any unspent money from one academic year to the next.

To ensure that you don't lose your year’s allowance, claims for expenditure (see below) must be processed before the end of the financial year. This means that they need to be received no later than 1st June each year.

The procedure for claiming research-related expenses has two stages:

1. First, all requests for Faculty funding support must first be approved using the **Research Student Expenses Application** Form. This form, together with the Research Students Expenses claim form, are circulated to all research students by the PGR Administrators. This must be signed by both your Director of Studies and the relevant PGR Tutor. Once your application has been approved please forward it onto the relevant PGR Administrator who will keep a record of what has been approved.

2. Second, reimbursement of expenses can be claimed using the Research Student Expenses Claim Form. Please remember to attach all receipts and sign the claim form as the claimant. Forms that are not supported by receipts will not be processed. Completed claim forms should be forwarded onto the relevant PGR Administrator for processing.

**Using your allowance for printing support**: if you wish to all/part of your allowance for printing costs you will first need to complete the **Research Student Expenses Application Form** as outlined above. Once this has been approved by your Director of Studies and the relevant PGR Tutor you will need to top up your individual printing account in person at Computer Services Reception (Gipsy Lane Campus) or at one of the University’s libraries. You will then need to complete the Research Expenses Claim Form as outlined above, making sure that you attach a receipt which states the amount that has been credited to your account.

**Using your allowance for photocopying support:** if you wish to all/part of your allowance for photocopying costs you will first need to complete the Research Expenses Application Form as outlined above. Once this has been approved by your Director of Studies and the relevant PGR Tutor please forward the form onto the relevant Research Administrator who arrange for your photocopying card to be processed (the requested amount will be credited to the card). You will then be emailed once your card is ready for collection. Each card will be provided with its own pin number and can only be used in the University’s libraries. Please note you will not need to complete a **Research Student Expenses Claim Form** when using all/part of your annual allowance for a photocopying card. However, your expenditure will be recorded and deducted from your annual allowance.

While there are no deadlines for applications and bids related to student entitlements, allowances or additional resources: these can be made at any time of year. An application should be considered "approved" once a signature has been obtained from the PGR Tutor. **But please** note as previously stated: to ensure that you do not lose your year’s allowance, claims for expenditure must be processed before the end of the financial year – claims are due in by **30th June 2014**)

**Additional Funding:** External funding for research students in the Faculty is linked to the nature of your work, which may for example be available from the **Economic and Social Research Council** **(ESR**C) and/or the **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).**

There are other possible sources of funding which is intended to offer additional support to full time students engaged in doctoral study. The Research Coordinator for each Department should be able to offer advice about subject-specific bodies, e.g. the Wingate Foundation for anthropologists, the Society for Legal Scholars for those working in Law, BELMAS studentship in Education.

The Faculty’s Research Grants Officers can provide more information on funding opportunities. They are Harriet Irivine (Department of Social Sciences and School of Law): hjirvine@brookes.ac.uk and Rachel Wilmshurst, Department of English and Modern Languages, Department of History, Philosophy and Religion and School of Education: rwilmshurst@brookes.ac.uk

The Graduate Office can give further advice on potential sources of funding, bodies to which applications for scholarship may be made, and we recommend you discuss this issue with the Director of Studies in your supervisory team. The processes of application will often involve your supervisors acting as referees and/or the Chair of the Faculty PGR Degree Committee.

**COMPLETING A PGR DEGREE: PRESENTING YOUR THESIS FOR EXAMINATION**

A PhD is examined in two stages: the first involves an evaluation of the written thesis by internal and external examiners; the second stage is an oral examination which may be chaired by an independent member of the Faculty, and the same internal and external examiners who have previously read your thesis.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your thesis is submitted before the registration period expires. It is, however, within your discretion whether to submit and when, though it would be most unwise to submit your thesis for examination against the advice of your Director of Studies.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that the format of the thesis meets the University’s regulations. These are outlined in the Research Degree Regulations [Section 19]. In brief, they require that the thesis should be printed on A4 paper, double or one and a half spacing, although the footnotes/endnotes may be single spaced, and with consecutively numbered pages. The Library has guides to referencing but please check with your Supervisor about the most appropriate system for your thesis.

At least three months before you are due to complete your thesis your Director of Studies will submit the names of two (sometimes three) proposed external examiners and no more than one internal examiner to the HESS Sub-Committee for approval. Earlier, you will have had the opportunity to discuss likely academics with your Director of Studies, who will have informally sounded out their willingness to act. Please remember that it is not the responsibility of the research student to be involved in the arrangements for the examination, nor should s/he make contact with the examiners between their appointment and the viva.

As you approach the viva (oral examination), it is recommended that a **mock viva** is set up, which ideally will involve members of the supervisory team and if possible an additional member of staff expert in the same subject domain. A Ph.D. is required to make an original contribution to knowledge. Of course, that also may happen with an M.Phil. but quite crucially, originality is not the primary requirement for the successful award of a M.Phil. A second important requirement of a doctoral thesis is that a sustained and coherent level of critical scholarship is evidenced throughout the thesis.

Once the thesis has been sent to the examiners, the internal examiner will confirm a date for the viva with all parties. The viva must be held within three months of the examiners receiving the thesis. Each examiner reads the thesis and completes a preliminary report that is submitted directly to the Graduate Office before the viva. After the viva, a formal report is made which can:

* recommend the award,
* recommend the award after minor amendments,
* recommend the award after major amendments,
* recommend a re-submission, or
* recommend no award, or
* (in the case of a Ph.D.) recommend the award of an M.Phil.

The RDSC considers the examiners’ recommendations as detailed in the Research Degrees Regulations and communicates the decision to the candidate.

Where the examiners recommend that the thesis must be re-submitted for re-examination, and the recommendation is approved by RDSC, it is important that you work with your Director of Studies so that the recommendations for improvement are fully met in your re-submission.

Again, it would be unwise to re-submit without the endorsement of your Director of Studies. After successful completion of the examination process, one copy of the thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Office, who will send details to the British Library and lodge the thesis with the University Library. Students are required to submit an electronic copy of the thesis to the University’s Research Archive and Digital Asset Repository (RADAR), but can apply for permission to delay this for a period if they plan to publish the thesis. The award is conferred once the Graduate Office has received the examiners ‘signing off’ of the thesis as ‘being satisfactory’ and one final bound copy of the thesis must be supplied to the Graduate Office. The University Conferment Office will issue the certificate within three months of conferment of the award.

**BEYOND THE PHD – AN EXPERT ACADEMIC, TEACHING, PUBLICATION**

The successful award of a PhD or EdD means you are conferred the title of Doctor of Philosophy! There is life after the Doctorate (albeit may seem a little unreal at first to find you have more time to do the things which may have been on hold during the final year of the doctoral programme of study). There are a number of post-doctoral study activities that may prove to be of interest depending upon what you want to do with a PhD or EdD.

There are, of course, a wide range of motivations and reasons for undertaking a doctoral study: as indeed there will be a number of opportunities and options for making the most of having received the award of a doctoral degree. These might include becoming an academic. A PhD is traditionally recognised by many subject areas as a form of apprenticeship for an academic career. It is also true that teaching, and writing are continuing activities that can make a very positive contribution to the quality of student experience during a doctoral programme of study.

There may be some opportunities for gaining experience of teaching through part-time employment as tutors in the Faculty. If this occurs, it will probably come nearer the end than the beginning of your career as a graduate student. It is a useful opportunity, particularly if you are thinking of an academic career, but it needs to be balanced against the completion demands of your own research. We inform research students when part-time teaching does become available.

Students who are engaged in part-time teaching in the Faculty must also attend a Departmental session on ‘Preparing to Teach’ and, depending on how much teaching they are doing, they must attend all or some of the University’s training courses for Associate Teachers in Higher Education. No student is allowed to teach more than 6 hours per week (including preparation, assessment etc.,).

We like to encourage research students to present their work either in a seminar or conference or to publish it in a refereed journal. Within the Faculty there will be plenty of opportunities for you to present your work: in seminars series and/or conferences run by your School or Department, and/or in the Annual Research Student Symposium organised by the Faculty.

While presenting work within the Faculty provides valuable experience, we do encourage you to present (as well as attend) at outside conferences relevant to your work and career. Presenting research papers and, particularly, publication is becoming increasingly important if you are thinking of an academic career. Even if you are not, however, the skills learnt in presentation (and the feedback obtained) are a valuable part of your career and training as a research student.

A very useful way of progressing this aspect of a doctoral study is to join one or more research interest groups, including subject led groups or societies that include specific provision for postgraduate students in terms of membership, and opportunities to disseminate at academic conferences and seminar workshops. Some examples include:

British Educational Leadership Management & Administration Society at [http://www.belmas.org.uk](http://www.belmas.org.uk/)

British Educational Research Association at [http://www.bera.ac.uk](http://www.bera.ac.uk/)

Studies & Research in Higher Education at [http://www.srhe.ac.uk](http://www.srhe.ac.uk/)

The Socio-Legal Studies Association at [http://www.slsa.ac.uk](http://www.slsa.ac.uk/)

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law at <http://www.biicl.org/>

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/>

The Ecclesiastical History Society at <http://www.history.ac.uk/ehsoc>

Vitae at [http://www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/)

The Historical Association at <http://www.history.org.uk/>

The Institute of Historical Research at <http://www.history.ac.uk/>

Preparing work for presentation or publication is, however, time-consuming and you should consult with your Director of Studies for advice on this, as well as on the content of your presentation.

Students are strongly encouraged and advised to apply for external funding to cover travel and other expenses for presenting a paper at a conference. The Faculty has only limited funds to contribute towards the costs of such conference attendance, as mentioned above.

**AT ANY TIME: HELP, ADVICE & FAQ**

Your **Director of Studies** or PGR **Administrator** should be your first point of reference for a question or concern depending upon the nature of the issue, which they will try to resolve. The **PGR Tutor** **for your School or Department** is the first point of reference for any difficulties related to your supervision team and can advise on procedural or related matters, as well as receive confidentially issues of concern that may arise between yourself and your Director of Studies. For advice about the Research Degree Regulations and procedures related to the programme, your RDSC application forms and the HESS Sub-Committee, contact Jill Organ ([jorgan@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jorgan@brookes.ac.uk)), in the University Graduate Office, which is currently located in the Buckley Building but will be moving to the new John Henry Brookes Building in 2015. Also:

For information about annual enrolment and payment of fees please contact Catherine Joyejob ([researchenrolment@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:researchenrolment@brookes.ac.uk)) in the Graduate Office, Buckley Building.

The University has a **Financial Aid Office**, which administers a concessionary fund and a small hardship fund. Contact Mike Shott on 484728 for further information.

The Student’s Union has an **Education and Welfare Advice Department**, which offers independent, confidential and free advice and debt counselling (extn. 483160)

**Please come and talk:** If at any time you need someone to talk to, if you are experiencing personal difficulties or suffering from an illness, please talk to your Director of Studies in the first instance who may recommend, if necessary, some time off from your studies in order to resolve the problem.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to your Director of Studies, then the PGR Tutor or Graduate Office are there to help. The Faculty research student representatives on the RDSC OR RKTC committees may also be able to offer practical or confidential advice. Please remember that most problems can be resolved and it always helps to share the problem with another person or fellow student, as they may well have experienced the same difficulties, especially if it is related to coping with your research and the programme. The University’s Student Services Department have a professional Counselling and Advisory Services section and they will deal with all matters on a one to one basis and in the strictest confidence (Tel: 01865 484650). The Chair of the HSS Research Degrees Committee, Dr Glen O’Hara, can also deal with any queries or problems you might have.

Finally, for most answers to less serious but frequently asked questions we suggest first checking the induction pack you will have received at enrolment: this includes the following content:

1. Research Degree Regulations Regulations for PhD by Published Work (if applicable)

2. Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research

3. Code of Practice for Research Student Training

4. Research Degree Forms reference set

5. Code of Practice for Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants

6. Oxford Brookes University Student Directory and Charter

7. Welcome letter from Chair of Research Degrees Sub-Committee

8. Introduction letter from Head of Graduate Office

9. List of PGR Tutors

10. List of Research Degrees Committee and Sub-Committee meeting dates

11. List of University-wide research student training events

12. Information on University IT training

13. Information on Associate Teachers’ Course

14. Research Students’ Guide to Learning Resources

15. Letter from the Chair of the Research Students’ Forum and email discussion list

16. Notice about email

17. List of useful Brookes web pages

18. Information on contents of Graduate Office web pages

We wish you all the best for the time you spend with us. **Remember: we are here to help.**