Research Student Training Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The text of this Code of Practice is based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) (see https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/developing-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework, also illustrated in section 1.4) for providing appropriate training provision for research students. The framework describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers and is a professional development framework for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education. It articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages them to realise their potential. Quality assurance standards also require that the University provide appropriate training and monitoring for research students. Three strands of provision are indicated for the application of the statement at Brookes; Supervisory team provision, Faculty provision and University provision.

The major responsibility for ensuring that training appropriate to the individual is provided lies with the supervisory team, with its effectiveness monitored by Faculties. The Director of Studies will normally be expected to co-ordinate such provision, except where the Director of Studies is external to the University, in which case the Brookes supervisor should ensure training is provided either internally or externally. Faculties will be expected to provide training appropriate for the field and area of study. The University will provide induction and training appropriate to all research students. The University (via the Research Degrees Committee) will monitor training provision via annual reports from Faculties and the University's Director of Researcher Development.

The Code of Practice is not intended to provide a comprehensive guide to research training provision. It is anticipated that Faculties, the University and supervisors will adjust or augment provision in the light of the needs of individual research students and the requirements of funding bodies. Where a student is working externally for a Brookes degree, training may be most appropriately provided at the place of study. However, the University supervisor and Postgraduate Research Tutor should still monitor the training provided.

Supervisors and students should perform a training needs analysis, using the RDF as a framework, within the first month of the student's programme and annually thereafter at the beginning of the academic year. The Personal, Professional & Career Development planner https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/research-degrees-team/current-students/graduate-college/events/training-and-networking/ should be used to record the planned training and also to record training once completed. Engagement with training should be reviewed at Faculty level during annual progress monitoring. About 70 hours of training should be planned annually for full time students, and pro rata for part time students. The student retains the Planner as a record of their training when they leave.

1.2 Throughout this Code, the following terminology is used:

'Faculties' are administrative and academic divisions within the institution. Health and Life Sciences; Technology, Design and Environment; Humanities & Social Sciences; Oxford Brookes Business School.

'Students' refer to those people enrolled to study for a research degree.

'Supervisors' are those members of staff who guide the students' research.

The 'Director of Studies' is the senior member of the supervision team who has overall responsibility for the supervision of the student.

'Postgraduate Research Tutors' are members of staff who have responsibility for research student matters within a Faculty, on behalf of the PVC Dean of Faculty.

The 'Research Degrees Committee' (RDC) is the senior committee in the University with responsibility for research degrees matters.

The 'Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) monitors and implements policy relating to research within the University and is the committee to which the Research Degrees Committee reports.

1.3   These guidelines are published annually by the University, and students and their supervisors should acquaint themselves with them.

1.4   The Vitae Researcher Development Framework
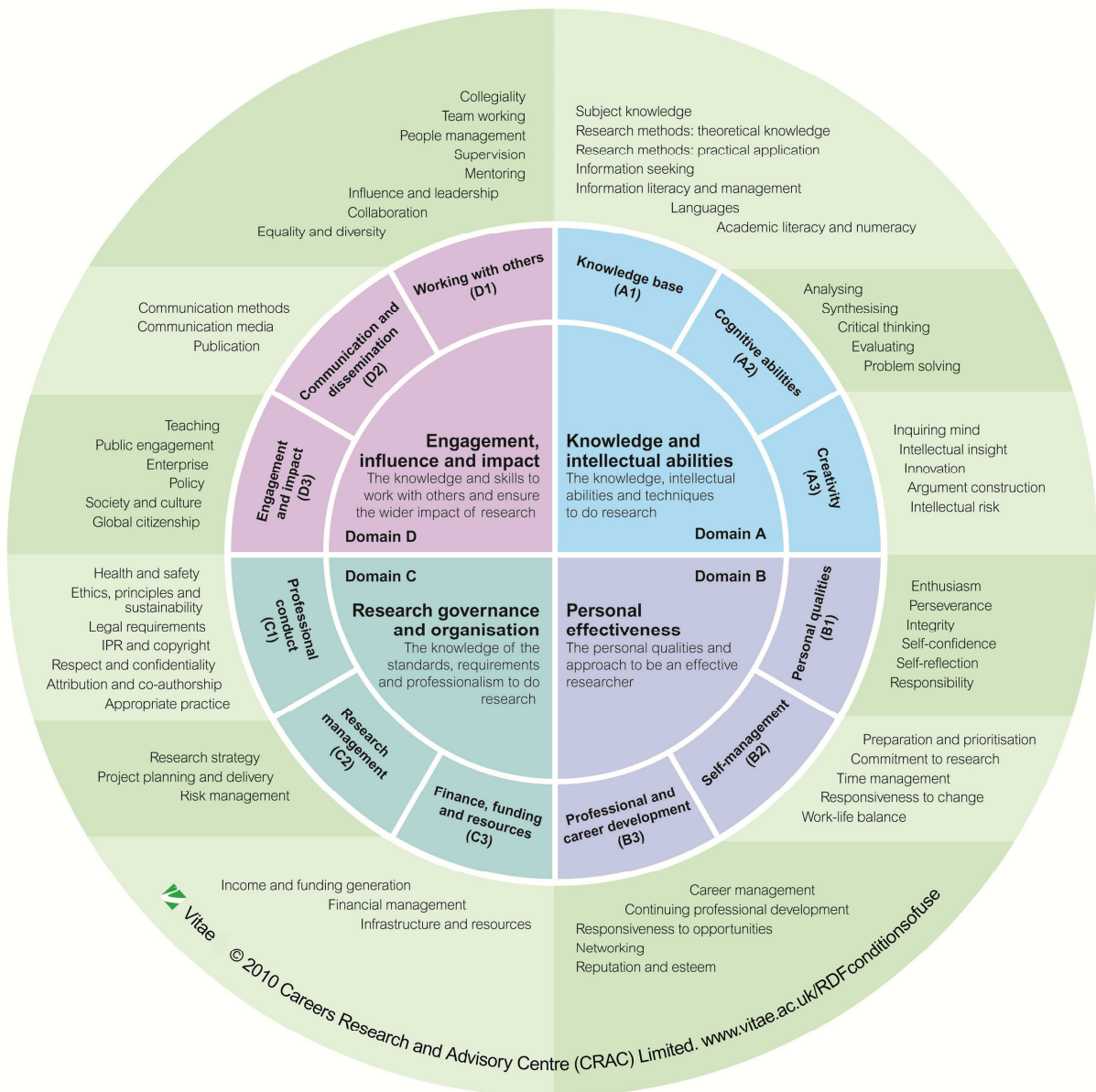
2.1 Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities
The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research.

Students should be able to demonstrate:

that they have a sound knowledge base through

- awareness of recent advances in their own field and related areas
- theoretical knowledge and practical application of research methods
- identification, access and collation of information through appropriate use of resources, bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources and equipment
- information and academic literacy and numeracy

their cognitive abilities through

- analysing and synthesising the results of their research and that of others
- critical thinking
- evaluation and problem solving
- an ability to summarise, document, report and reflect on progress, including through written reports required by supervisors, for registration, transfer, annual monitoring and the writing of the thesis

their creativity through

- an enquiring mind
- innovation, intellectual insight and intellectual risk
- skilful argument construction

Supervisors should:

- consider all of the above in the training they provide for their students
- undertake regular meetings, including discussion of related work and its conceptual framework, decision making and forward planning
- give criticism of research methodology
- encourage their students to read widely around the subject area and from a variety of sources
- discuss the effectiveness of methods used and other alternatives
- give support in the effective use of libraries and other information resources.
- give training that will support in developing the research programme, in key methodologies, and in data collection, or direct the student to other sources of training
- monitor progress in these areas.
- require regular written work and evaluate and criticise it appropriately, providing further training where necessary. First year reports and transfer reports should be seen as being preparation for thesis writing
- support the student appropriately in writing the thesis, always with the aim of creating an independent writer

Faculties should:

- provide, where relevant, research methods courses
- include relevant project management/planning and information gathering/research methodologies in their research methods training.
- ensure that the research student is developing effectively in all the above areas. Remedy will require action by the student, the supervisory team and the Faculty.
- require students to report on their work verbally and in writing. Annual reports, transfer reports

and annual monitoring interviews will be major points of review covering these areas and should involve someone external to the supervisory team

- develop and use their own monitoring schemes, including for first year and transfer reports and annual appraisal interviews
- identify (ideally at interview) if a student is likely to require additional support in written English and identify appropriate support (either before commencing study or during study)

The University will:

- include a basic introduction to research in a general sense
- provide workshops on specific methodologies (e.g. statistics) as required
- make available information on other resources including the wide range of courses available to researchers

2.2 Domain B: Personal effectiveness
The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher

Students should be able to demonstrate:

Personal qualities of

- self-reflection, including the ability to identify their own training needs
- enthusiasm and perseverance
- the highest levels of integrity
- self confidence
- responsibility

Self-management

- time management and prioritisation of tasks
- commitment to research
- responsiveness to change
- maintaining a healthy work life balance

Professional and career development, including

- networking
- responsiveness to opportunities for continuing professional development and career management
- building reputation and esteem

Supervisors should:

- include discussion of these issues in meetings with the student
- encourage independent learning and development of creativity and originality in approach to research
- allow students to identify their own training needs and support them in fulfilling them
- allow increasing freedom for independence over the course of the research programme
- encourage students to engage in dialogue with others in their field and help in establishing initial contacts, networking at conferences etc.

Faculties should:

- ensure that the research student is developing effectively in all the above areas. Remedy will require action by the student, the supervisory team and the Faculty.
- provide opportunities for networking
- run research seminar series, encourage attendance at national and international conferences and provide an effective research environment
- encourage team working by Faculty research policy and selectivity. By being part of a national and international research community, Faculties will encourage students to see the importance of contacts and to engage in dialogue

The University will:

- provide training to include the concept of a Personal, Professional & Career Development Planner and of continuous professional development
- make available information on resources including the wide range of courses available to research students
- provide, via the University Careers Service, flexible and impartial careers education,information, advice and guidance including bespoke training focussed on the, professional and career development, needs of reseachers .
- provide courses that include consideration of: time management, use of milestones, prioritisation
- introduce library and learning resources information.

2.3 Domain C: Research governance and organisation
The knowledge of the standards, requirements and professionalism to do research

Students should be able to demonstrate:

Professional conduct, including knowledge of

- research ethics, including best practice for attribution and co-authorship
- legal requirements, including IP and copyright
- health and safety
- respect and confidentiality
- appropriate practice

Research management

- effective project planning and delivery
- risk management
- research strategy

Finance funding and resources including knowledge of

- means of research income and funding generation
- infrastructure for financial management and resources

Supervisors should:

- include discussion of these issues in meetings with the student
- ensure that students correctly reference all work produced as part of the programme
- ensure that students receive instruction in health and safety issues as appropriate to the research environment.

Faculties should:

- provide health and safety training as required for the field of study
- provide explicit training covering all aspects of plagiarism

The University will:

- provide training courses that will include
  - ethics and confidentiality
  - copyright and its attribution
  - research malpractice and the Brookes mechanisms for dealing with this
  - data ownership and requirements of the Data Protection Act.
  - the process for funding and evaluation of research
  - plagiarism
  - good practice in data management, storage, sharing and archiving

2.4 Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact
The knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research

Students should be able to demonstrate:

Working with others

- developing and maintaining co-operative networks and working relationships with supervisors, colleagues and peers, within the institution and the wider research community
- people management, supervision and mentoring
- an awareness and respect of equality and diversity
- influence and leadership
- an understanding of how one's behaviours impact on others when working in, and contributing to, the success of formal and informal teams
- listening, giving and receiving feedback and responding perceptively to others

Communication and dissemination

- an engagement with different communication methods and media
- an intention to publish and disseminate research findings through appropriate media and channels

Engagement and impact

- global citizenship and engagement with society and culture
- awareness of policy
- promotion of the public understanding of one's research field
- support of the learning of others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities
- the process of academic or commercial exploitation of research results

Supervisors should:

- create opportunities for students to present and discuss their work formally and informally - for instance in group meetings, supervisory meetings etc.
- provide feedback on presentation skills and prepare the student to speak to wider audiences
- where possible, support students in giving a talk to an outside audience or at least to their Faculty or Department during their programme
- encourage students to undertake the OCSLD Associate Teachers course - – in particular the online introduction to teaching course

- undertake viva preparation, including a mock viva and use supervisory meetings to develop the skills needed for a viva.
- wherever possible, encourage the student to participate in the research group (team), mentoring less experienced students, commenting on other's work etc.
- informally monitor progress in these areas and provide support and advice in developing skills.

Faculties should:

- run research seminar series, encourage attendance at national and international conferences and provide an effective research environment
- provide some funds to towards the costs associated with attending a conference
- give subject-specific training in communication skills and give opportunities for students to attend a wide range of seminars and meetings
- invite the student to present their work by a variety of means (poster, formal talk, informal talk) during their programme, ensuring that they present their work at least once each academic year
- identify, where possible, opportunities for public understanding activities and support the student in them
- encourage students to use opportunities, as they arise, for teaching and/or demonstrating and support and mentor them in it
- where possible, ensure that students join research groups (teams) and are provided with appropriate space and facilities that encourage interaction between research students and other staff

The University will:

- provide training courses and social events that give opportunity for networking and collaboration across the University
- provide induction events to include advice on networking and developing collaborative strategies.
- provide training sessions on:
  - writing the thesis
  - oral presentation skills
  - the viva voce examination
  - poster presentation skills or alternative training as appropriate for the discipline
  - intellectual property rights (IPR), patents and the commercialisation of research
- ensure students have access to the OCSLD associate teachers course - – in particular the online introduction to teaching course
- facilitate interdisciplinary team working and activities at both Faculty and Departmental level

Appendix 1: A summary of Faculty and University provision

Faculties will seek to meet the training needs of research students by:

1)   Running an induction event.

2)   Having a research seminar series.

3)   Providing research methods courses where relevant.

4)   Supporting attendance at national and international conferences.

5)   Providing an effective research environment including: encouraging students to join research groups and providing space and facilities fostering interaction between research students and other staff.

6)   Running subject-specific training in communication skills which should include both written and presentation skills.

7)   Providing appropriate health and safety training.

8)   Requiring students to provide written reports and talk about their work and its wider context.

9)   Giving opportunities for students to attend a wide range of seminars and meetings and to present their work by a variety of means both internally and externally ensuring each student is able to present their work in some form, at least once each academic year.

10)   Providing information on public understanding activities and supporting the student in them.

11)   Providing introduction to teaching sessions each semester

12)   Encouraging students to use opportunities to teach and demonstrate as and when these are available and to provide support and mentor them in it.

13)   Being part of a national and international research community and encouraging students to see the importance of contacts and to engage in widespread dialogue.

In addition, the Faculty will identify (ideally at interview) if a student is likely to require additional support in English and identify appropriate support (either before commencing study or during study).

Monitoring function

Faculties should require formal registration of the project within the University's deadlines and be satisfied with the standard of the registration, including its statements of training.

Faculties will require students to report regularly on their work verbally and in writing. Assessment should involve someone external to the supervisory team.

Faculties should keep a record of the training undertaken by its research students and periodically review the take-up and effectiveness of that provision.

Faculties will provide regular   reports on training activities to RDC via the Research Degrees Team for the Director of Researcher Development.   Details of the report are provided in Appendix 2.

Summary of provision by the University

The University will seek to provide:

1)   University wide induction events including:
- training and managing the training process
- time management and milestones
- student supervisor relationships
- monitoring and progression
- networking and developing collaborative strategies
- introduction to University facilities including library and learning resources**.**

2)   Training courses and social events giving opportunity for networking and collaboration across the University.

3)   University training courses:
- ethics
- copyright and its attribution
- research malpractice and the Brookes mechanisms for dealing with this
- data ownership and management, including the requirements of the Data Protection Act
- the process for funding and evaluation of research
- IPR, patents and the commercialisation of research
- additional workshops on specific topics (e.g. statistics)
- writing your thesis
- oral presentation skills
- the viva voce examination.

4)   Other University training will be provided including:
- careers specific development, training and resources
- information technology
- the OCSLD associate teachers course – in particular the online introduction to teaching course.

5)   Web resources will give information on:
- training available in the University and outside where appropriate
- careers links and further information on career development; information on research student training in the University
- a Personal, Professional & Career Development Planner that research students can use with their Supervisory Team to plan and record training
- details of University regulations and procudures
- contact details for key people in Faculties and the University
- links to resources of use to research students.

Appendix 2: Report on Faculty training provisions

Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutors will provide brief reports to the Research Degrees Committee via the Director of Researcher Development giving details of training programme and activities offered to students in their Faculty. The report should include the following details:

1)   Number of part-time and full-time students in each year.

2)   Number of students attending formal or informal induction.

3)   Details of the introduction to teaching events that are held twice a year

4)   Training activities organised (a copy of the programme given to research students will suffice).

5)   Details of any other noteworthy Faculty or external training taken up by students or examples of first destination employment where former students have benefitted from training received.

6)   Indication of any special training provision made for part-time research students.

7)   Particular difficulties encountered in providing training in the Faculty, its take-up by students or with the University's central training provision.

7)   Review the effectiveness of the training provided.

8)   Reflect on the Faculty's Annual Monitoring Report.

For further information about this document, please contact the Research Degrees Team.

Research Degrees Committee, 4 December 2017
Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, 20 February 2018
Academic Board, 26 April 2018