

PGR Tips on enhancing your doctoral experience

A doctorate has traditionally been seen as an academic apprenticeship, where a doctoral researcher learns the ropes from an established academic. Does that model still hold true? By making your doctorate a collaborative effort many different people and become part of a research community you will get more out of the experience enhance your effectiveness in working with others (see sub-domain D1 of the [Researcher Development Framework](#)).

Supervisors are not the only resource in completing your doctorate

Much as your supervisors will be an important part of your doctorate, they are not the only people who contribute to a successful outcome. There are some aspects that others are more likely to be experts on. Asking for input from multiple people on different aspects of your doctorate will likely improve both your experience and the resulting research. Networking with these key contacts may also help you in your career.

Learn practical aspects from the experts

Depending on the practicalities of your research, consider who would be most appropriate to approach for training and guidance for any specific aspect. Consider undergoing some training in a different department or institution if you feel this might benefit you.

Searching for information?

Librarians are the experts on finding the right information for your needs, so make them a first point of call.

Peers can offer support and networking opportunities

Interacting with fellow postgraduate researchers allows you to share common experiences and gain advice from peers. This can be face to face or online, for example the [What's up doc? blog](#).

Consider getting involved in representation

You will develop skills and widen your network of contacts by sitting on a postgraduate committee within your university, inputting into skills development in your department or getting involved in your [student union](#).

Find out about careers within and outside academia

Postgraduate researchers tend to discuss their career aspirations foremost with their supervisors. However, a lot of academics may not be best placed to give advice on alternatives to an academic career. Make sure you book an appointment with a careers advisor relatively early on in your doctorate. The [Researcher Development Framework](#) can provide the language and a useful starting point for such a discussion. If you are considering a career in academia, book a place on a [Careers in Academia](#) course.

Take and create opportunities to network

Networking within and outside your field of expertise is important for future employment opportunities. This can be at events or through your online networks.

Attend the Postgraduate researcher symposium 1 November, London

You can explore these issues in more depth with different groups of staff involved in the doctoral experience by attending the [Postgraduate researcher symposium: conversations about the doctoral experience](#) at the British Library on 1 November. This event is your opportunity to have a say and develop recommendations for key stakeholders to improve the doctoral experience.