

### **University of Northampton: coaching for postgraduate researchers**

The aim of this coaching scheme was to support postgraduate researchers overcome some of the challenges they might face during their research.

Some of the most common are:

- motivation dip
- isolation
- lack of self-confidence
- lack of focus or direction
- work-life imbalance
- poor time management.

The coaching provision was aimed to support the professional and personal development of researchers, to improve performance and, in the long term, to improve completion rates. This could include increasing motivation and performance, gaining clarity of research and career goals, enhancing self-confidence, and improving communication and interpersonal relationships.

The coaching was provided internally by the Graduate School's Research Skills Training Coordinator, a qualified coach.

#### Coachee quotes:

"It was very useful to step out of the situation and analyse things. I feel more confident about managing to control my time and work".

"I feel like I am 'the sun' and my wellbeing brings light to all areas of my life".

"At first I was sceptical about coaching but now, I am really impressed. I would definitely recommend it to anyone. It's extremely valuable to step back from your life and observe what you are doing. From that you can improve so many aspects of personal and professional life; it is truly enlightening."

"I am glad that I managed to say 'no' when asked to do things that I didn't have the time to do them. I always felt guilty to say no. I also spoke to my supervisors and told them about the aspects I did not agree with in my research. This was a big challenge for me but I am glad I did it. I am now very excited about my research and I enjoy doing it because it's so unique".

"I was almost crushed when we started coaching and you really helped me to stay focused and motivated. I was almost ready to quit my research degree and just get on with my life, but when I started talking about my needs and goals, I realised that what I am studying is really important to me. Your positive stance and support opened another door in my head and I wish to say a big thank you!"

#### **Key contact for further information:**

Daniela Bultoc was the former Research Skills Training Coordinator at The University of Northampton. She now works at University College London as the Skills Development Programme Manager. She is in the process of setting up a coaching scheme for UCL researchers.

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