

# Personal and Career Development of Overseas Researchers

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# Durham Context

## Postgraduate Numbers – 2006/07 figures

1190 Research Postgraduate Students  
(+ continuation)

2370 Taught Postgraduate Students

Total	Total	PGT	PGR
1975 Full time students	55%	50%	66%
1585 Part time students	45%	50%	34%
2314 Home students	65%	66%	62%
1246 Overseas students	35%	34%	38%

# Pre-Entry Support

**Organised by International Office**

**Regular e-zines on preparing for life in the UK and Durham**

**Pre-departure student handbook covering essential information**

**Pre-departure briefings in locations with high concentrations of students (Hong Kong, China, etc)**

# Pre-Sessional Language School

- Compulsory for all students with low language scores
- 1, 2 or 3-months versions depending on need
- Concentrates on English for academic purposes and the western academic tradition
- Covers all disciplines except separate stream for mathematics
- Plagiarism is high on the agenda

# Induction

- Meet-and-greet service at local airports
- Extensive induction activities (social, etc) at colleges
- Formal University induction day with extra sessions for international students – covering e.g. what is a PhD, plagiarism, etc
- Formal University Matriculation in Durham Cathedral
- Departmental induction programme

# College Support

- All full-time PGRs belong to a college
- One PG-only college plus other mixed colleges with significant numbers of PGs
- Room allocation designed to mix nationalities
- Guaranteed college accommodation for those making early applications
- Many college activities promoting personal development e.g. Ustinov College student-run seminar series

# Support for Teaching

- Compulsory teaching induction programme for all PGRs who teach
- Optional sessions on the education system in the UK for international students
- Additional optional workshops etc on e.g. large group teaching, e-learning, etc
- Support for researchers wanting to accredit their teaching

# Postgraduate Training Programme

- Extensive programme covering all JSS areas
- Little specialist provision for international students – most sessions open to all students
- In-session language support
- Academic writing training particularly relevant to overseas students
- Some sessions for overseas students to review their progress

# Career Development

- Dedicated Career Advisor for researchers
- Most career sessions focussed on UK/Europe but building up expertise for other areas
- Many overseas researchers on academic trajectory
- Local GRAD School, Enterprise support, etc
- Job Shop for part-time work – vital for some overseas researchers
- Workshop for international students who want to find part-time work

# Post-Departure Support

- Pre-departure workshop run by International Office
  - Readjusting to home country
  - Employment issues
- Alumni support in home country
- Involvement in recruitment and pre-departure briefings
- Continuing contact with supervisors

# Issues

- Few overseas students will have done a research-preparation masters
- EFL tests do not relate to English for academic purposes
- PhDs now take more than 3 years but most overseas funding is for 3 years