Doctoral Development Programme (DDP)

Introduction

All postgraduate research students will participate in the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP). The DDP will provide research students with a range of skills and competency-based training opportunities orientated both towards their specific programme of study and towards future employment. In particular, as an outcome of engaging with the DDP, during research studies, doctoral graduates will possess advanced skills in inquiry, communication and organisation. They should also be able to reflect critically and take a creative approach to issues in and beyond their field of research expertise.

The DDP is student-specific, designed to complement the individual research project and is agreed between the student and their supervisory team. The agreed training programme will reflect on four skill areas, enabling the student to:

- Acquire the necessary generic skills to become a high-level professional;
- Undertake subject-specific advanced training;
- Acquire subject-specific craft skills;
- Experience broad scholarship and wider engagement within the university and wider community of scholars.

The DDP is designed for all research programmes offered by the University; it will be accessed by those on conventional 3 year programmes, 4 year programmes (including PhD with integrated studies), as well as students on part-time programmes. Remote location and joint location students will be able to undertake skills training units that are available online at any time during their study, and will be able to access provision that is delivered at times when they attend the University.

Students will take ownership of their development through the Training Needs Analysis (TNA), from which a development plan will be devised, and the e-Portfolio, which is a reflective record of evidence of achievement that can be given to prospective employers.

Doctoral Development Programme: Key Actions

Below is a checklist of the actions that are needed in order to fulfill the DDP requirements. The student will need to work through these actions with their supervisory team.

1. The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) will be sent as a web link to the student prior to registration. The student will complete a first draft of the TNA, print it and take it to their first supervisory meeting. This will enable the student to conduct a self-reflective assessment of the training needs that have been identified by the Faculty and supervisor as critical to their area of study.

2. At their first supervisory team meeting, the student’s draft TNA will be discussed. Modifications will be made to it as necessary and an initial development plan agreed. In conjunction with their supervisory team, the student will agree on the DDP review stages. These are a reflective review at three months after registration (with additional review by the departmental PG Tutor), at the point of Confirmation Review (usually around 12 months after registration) and subsequently annually. However, it is recommended that discussion over progress through the development plan take place regularly at formal supervisory meetings. At the stage of thesis submission, the supervisor will be required to confirm the student’s successful completion of the DDP.

3. The student will attend the Information Session for new Research Students in the Octagon Centre on Tuesday 1st October 2013 at 9.30 am. They must attend this session even if they have not yet been able to meet with their supervisory team.

Further information is detailed on the DDP Portal: [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/pgr/ddpportal/home](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/pgr/ddpportal/home)
The Annual DDP Cycle

Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is a way of tracking and planning the student’s development. It centres on the acquisition of skills in four areas (generic professional skills, subject-specific advanced training and craft skills, scholarship), which are delivered through ‘shell modules’, and are provided at different levels over the course of MPhil/PhD registration. Students will complete the TNA annually in collaboration with their supervisory team. When completing the TNA, students will assess their competence in relation to the skill areas in order to identify and address their training and development needs through ‘shell modules’ which are aligned to the TNA.

The student’s prior experience will place them on a scale from “No experience” through to “Proficient”, indicating how much development is required within each of the four subsets of skills training identified above. Thus, the DDP is not a credit bearing system, but is a sliding, incremental scale of competence. Descriptor statements for stages along the “development journey” will help the student and supervisory team draw up the development plan.

Updating the TNA and modifying the development plan can be done by agreement as the student progresses levels over the course of the degree, including when requirements or directions change. For example, it might be envisaged that attendance at career development skills seminars would be a greater part of the later rather than the earlier stages of the research programme but this, and most other training, can be acquired at any stage.

The TNA form can be downloaded from the DDP Portal.

Development Plan

The development plan is a process of self reflection for the student in critically evaluating previously acquired skills, identifying future goals and finding effective means of achieving them. It follows the TNA discussion and highlights training and modules needed for the student to progress. The development plan will enable the student to reflect on aspects of their learning and experience and take advantage of opportunities provided in order to enrich their personal and academic development.

Attendance at the Information Session for New Postgraduate Research Students

New students are required to attend the Information Session for new Postgraduate Research Students, where they will be given additional information on the DDP and have a chance to speak to Research & Innovation Services staff should they have any queries. This event is only held once a year early in semester one.

Undertaking Training Modules

Each student will automatically be registered on ‘shell modules’ for each of the four skill sets in each year of their study. The shell modules will comprise of formal and informal training elements appropriate to the student’s own development needs that can be taken through the shell modules. To achieve training, students can select modules or skills training units available within the University, as well as accrue relevant experiences that are not formally taught or that are gained outside the University. Collectively then, the elements that are selected through the shell modules will reflect the student’s training plan.
Participation on taught subject-specific modules will usually be in the student’s first year of full-time research degree study or the first and second year of part-time research degree study. Students will be required to undertake assessment for modules as necessary. Students will need to ensure that they register for taught modules through Research and Innovation Services.

The choice of modules for the training need not be restricted to those provided by the University. The student and supervisory team may also recommend other means of achieving the relevant training elsewhere by, for example, externally provided courses, or self-study.

The DDP modules/training information is detailed on the DDP Portal.

**Compulsory Research Integrity & Ethics Training**

Although the majority of the DDP is individually tailored, ALL research students are expected to undertake the research integrity and ethics training module provided by their Faculty. Good research practices are fundamental to good research, and it is essential for every researcher to understand how to conduct their research ethically, and with integrity. Each Faculty run a module that has been tailored to the needs of its own research students, and each student will be automatically registered to attend. For more details about the training, please refer to the DDP Portal.

**Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)**

Non-EU/EEA students wishing to take certain modules that fall within the science, engineering and technology disciplines should be aware that they may need to apply to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for an ATAS certificate, depending on their subject discipline. If ATAS applies to you and you do not already have this clearance it is VERY IMPORTANT that you apply for this clearance before you register on such modules. However, if you have already gained ATAS clearance at admissions stage you will already be covered and need not re-apply.

For further details on ATAS, please contact Student Support and Guidance: international.students@sheffield.ac.uk, or refer to the Student Services Information Desk pages for International Students. [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/international/ves/atas](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/international/ves/atas)

**Demonstrating Development and Confirmation Review**

Attendance and completion of training units will be recorded by module providers and submitted to Research & Innovation Services for inclusion in the student’s record, but importantly, evidence of development will be gained from the reflective log of activity maintained by the student in their e-Portfolio and by the supervisor confirming engagement with non-formal training (e.g. attending conferences etc.) When the student presents for Confirmation Review at 12 months, the second supervisor or Postgraduate/Personal Tutor will be responsible for commenting on the student’s training progress and will formally sign off the e-Portfolio as part of the Confirmation Review process. The student will not be allowed to have their doctoral status confirmed until agreed development needs have been achieved and there is a clear and credible development plan for the succeeding 2/3 years.

The second supervisor or Postgraduate/Personal Tutor will also comment periodically on the student’s development plan during formal supervisory meetings and they will sign a transcript of the e-Portfolio. In addition, they will formally report on progress through the DDP annually by inclusion of a section in the Annual Progress Report. This report will also be signed by the student.

**Monitoring and Assessment**

Ongoing monitoring of development needs will be part of the supervisory process and, as indicated, assessment will take place at key points:

- The TNA will be completed prior to registration, reviewed after the first three months, and subsequently at least annually;
- Assessment of DDP participation will be included in supervisor reports as part of the Confirmation Review process, at annual review, and prior to submission of the thesis.

**Evidencing the DDP: e-Portfolio**

The e-Portfolio will be used by students as a comprehensive illustration of the learning and development they have undertaken, as well as their other academic achievements during their programme of study. Students will use PebblePad to build their e-Portfolio as it provides a plethora of features such as, creation of collaborative documents, upload of documents, audio-files and images of differing formats, discussion and reflection spaces all of which provide the student with a rich learning and development experience.

**Developing as a researcher**

A student’s e-Portfolio provides an excellent tool through which the student’s skills and experiences will be showcased.

**Cross-Sessional Students**

Those students registering after October must pay particular attention to the start date of training courses/modules that they will undertake. This may mean that they have to delay the start of some of the DDP training until the beginning of a future semester.
Summary of DDP Process

- Acceptance of offer of a place to study
- Complete Training Needs Analysis prior to the first supervisory meeting
- Discuss TNA and formulate development plan with supervisory team
- Sign up for appropriate skills training (including any compulsory modules)
- Obtain approval of development plan from PGR Tutor (at 3 months)

Confirmation review, including presentation of Portfolio

Annual progress report to be completed by supervisor team and discussed with student

Continue with further relevant modules and/or experiential training in years 2 and 3

Submit thesis
Supervisors to approve Student DDP Portfolio - signed off by Research & Innovation Services

Supervisory Responsibilities for the DDP
Satisfactory achievement of the DDP requirements is necessary for successful completion of the student’s research degree. As indicated above, student engagement with the DDP will be assessed at particular stages, with supervisor reports presented as part of formal monitoring processes. In addition, it is expected that discussion of the student’s needs will form part of regular supervisory discussion.

The constitution of the ‘supervisory team’ will vary across different faculties and departments. The model for each student however is likely to include:

The primary supervisor – Will be the academic lead for the student. In terms of the DDP, the primary supervisor will advise the student with regard to subject-specific knowledge and skills training required.

The second supervisor – Will take the overall lead on training and possibly pastoral matters. In some departments and faculties, this role may be undertaken by the Personal Tutor or PGR Tutor.

Under this model the second supervisor or Personal/PGR tutor will have the following responsibilities in relation to the DDP:

- Review of TNA and development plan
- Completion of DDP reports at monitoring points (Confirmation Review, annual progress reports, thesis submission)
- Agree the level of competency and skill to be acquired by the student;

- Review of student participation in the DDP as well as ongoing training needs.

Also refer to the DDP Portal for further information on the Role of Supervisor (and Supervisory Team) in the DDP.

Glossary

Doctoral Development Programme (DDP) – Student specific programme of training and skills development.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) – Faculty-specific training needs analysis divided into four ‘shell modules’ to be completed at least annually.

Development Plan – the plan for achieving skills/competency training and progress. An output from the TNA.

Student e-Portfolio – Record of evidence and reflection demonstrating student learning, development and achievements.

DDP enquires:

Enquiries can be made by email to ddpenquiries@sheffield.ac.uk

Further information and guidance also available on the DDP Portal.