Prospective postgraduate research student user personas

Erin – EU prospective postgraduate research student
Andy – International prospective postgraduate student
Fernando – Non-native English speaker

Erin – Irish prospective PGR student
Age: 30-years old
Location: Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Background information

Erin is a prospective postgraduate research student currently based in Dublin. She has been working as a research assistant in Sustainability at University College Dublin. She is considering undertaking a PhD to further her career and has a well-established professional relationship with a researcher in Sustainable Development at the University of St Andrews whom she would like to be her supervisor.

Her primary concern is funding, so she would like to know about any funding and scholarships that she may be eligible for, including research council funding. Erin is also considering starting a family in the future and would like to know if she would be able to take time out from her studies to do this, what support may be available and any implications this may have on her funding.

Technical competence

Erin is a competent user of technology. The majority of his internet use is via her tablet or desktop computer.

Communication

Erin has already found a potential supervisor at the University with whom she is in regular email contact with. She would also like to receive all official communication from the University via email.
Goals

Erin’s primary concern is money and she would like to find out about the funding and scholarship opportunities she may be eligible for.

Information required

- Funding and scholarships
- PhD maternity leave and support
- Research and networking opportunities
- Professional development

Andy – Australian prospective PGR student

Age: 25-years old

Location: Brisbane, Australia

Background information

Andy is interested in applying for a postgraduate research degree in biomedical science at the University of St Andrews.

He has found two potential research supervisors and wishes to know if he should contact both or whether there is the opportunity to have more than one supervisor. Andy is also not clear about how his Australian degree translates into the Scottish system so would like some more in-depth information about entrance requirements.

Money is another concern for Andy, so he would like to know about any funding opportunities or scholarships that he might be eligible for, including research council scholarships, should he choose to study at St Andrews.

Aside from these concerns, he would like to know about the research activities of the School of Medicine, opportunities to co-author papers and participate in research while studying at the University and networking opportunities.

Technical competence

Andy is a proficient user of technology and his internet use is split between his laptop and smartphone.
Communication

Andy believes he has found two potential supervisors; so would like to know who he can contact to talk about whether this is allowed. He would like to receive all correspondence via email as he is conscience that the time difference would make telephone calls difficult.

Goals

Andy would like to know if there are any suitable supervisors at the University of St Andrews School of Medicine whose research activities align with his own interests. He would also like more specific information about entrance requirements; scholarships and funding; and opportunities to participate in research during the course of his studies.

Information required

- Available supervisors
- Research activities
- Research outputs
- Entrance requirements
- Funding/scholarships
- Research opportunities

Fernando – international prospective PhD student

Age: 25-years old
Location: Spain

Background information

Fernando has recently completed a Masters’ degree in Mediaeval History at Complutense University of Madrid. He is interested in being supervised by a member of the School of History for a PhD. Fernando has an offer of funding from a Spanish research institution and so funding is not a concern for him.

Whilst Fernando has experience in academic writing in English, he has never attended an English speaking University and is worried that he will have to pass an English proficiency test in order to be accepted at St Andrews. He is aware that he may require support in transitioning to the UK. He is also concerned that he may be overwhelmed by the application process, which is entirely in English.
Technical competence

Comfortable using technology, although sometimes struggles with long web pages or emails which are entirely in English. Uses a laptop and smartphone to access the internet.

Communication

Fernando prefers to email the University so that he can proof read his replies before sending them. Fernando is in touch with his potential supervisor, the School of History secretary and with Admissions and would prefer it if he did not have to repeat the same information to each party.

Goals

Fernando would like to be given an offer to start a PhD at St Andrews, ideally with support for his English language skills. He is aware that he is lucky to have funding already organized, which means that if he does not feel happy with the offer from St Andrews, he will stay at his current institution for his PhD.

Information required

• English language proficiency information
• Support for overseas students
• The benefits of attending St Andrews