



University of
St Andrews

Research Skills Training

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	PGR only
Applicability date	31/07/2019
Review date	31/07/2023
Approved date	19/07/2019
Approver	Academic Council
Document owner	Academic Policy Officer
School / unit	Office of the Principal
Document status	Published
Information classification	Internal
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/PGR Research skills training
Purpose	Policy on the provision of research skills training for postgraduate research students.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.1	Amended to include requirements for research integrity training.		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	15 July 2019

Research skills training

The University places great importance on improving each research student's depth of knowledge and on developing their research skills. The latter include skills specific to the subject of research and other more generic transferable skills. They also include employment-related skills and time management in order to help students to complete theses or dissertations successfully within the allocated time.

1. Required training

All students are required to successfully complete two online training modules when they first matriculate at the University of St Andrews. The modules are housed in [Moodle](#), the University's virtual learning environment. These modules are:

- **Training in Good Academic Practice (TGAP)** covers the values underpinning all forms of academic work within the University, and acquaints students with the University's policies and procedures supporting good academic practice.
- **Research Integrity at University of St Andrews** covers the principles underpinning all research activity taking place under the University's auspices, and acquaints all those undertaking such activity (whether staff, students or other persons) with the University's policies and procedures supporting good research conduct and handling allegations of research misconduct.

Students are also required to successfully complete six additional online training modules before they matriculate into their second year of postgraduate research studies at the University of St Andrews. Students on a one-year research degree programme must complete all required modules at their first matriculation. These modules are:

- **Introduction to research integrity and the responsible and ethical conduct of research** is an overarching exploration of research integrity, responsible conduct in research and research misconduct.
- **Ethical approval and practice** covers general principles for research involving human participants, research involving animals, conflicts of interest and the dual use of research.
- **Collaborative research and data management and integrity** covers guidance for working on collaborative research projects, data protection and data management plans, and image manipulation.
- **Authorship** explores authorship, including the criteria required, the expectations of a corresponding author and how to minimise authorship disputes.
- **Peer review and publication ethics** explores good research conduct in the activities of manuscript submission and peer review.
- **Plagiarism and recycling of text and research outputs** explores the topic of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism or 'recycling'. It also considers copyright issues and how to protect oneself from unwitting plagiarism.

2. Individual research skills programmes

In order to develop the relevant skills, each postgraduate research student and their principal supervisor (or programme co-ordinator in the case of postgraduate masters degrees designed to lead to advanced research) will identify and agree a training programme, including generic skills and any other skills deemed necessary for the satisfactory completion of the degree, as part of the student's induction process.

The school and the University will provide the student with an appropriate skills training programme as agreed by the student, the principal supervisor (or programme co-ordinator) and the school. In the case of postgraduate masters degrees that are designed to lead to doctoral research (such as the MRes), the skills training programme will be largely integrated into the modules and options offered by the degree programme itself. In some Schools doctoral students may be able to obtain parts of their skills training programmes as a set of non-credit bearing modules. If these are formally approved modules, the University will be able to provide a transcript of these units in response to requests.

An initial induction programme will be offered by the University at the beginning of every academic session in which provision for research skills training and career development training will be introduced.

Students may be required to attend and participate in internal courses, seminars, presentations, demonstrations, teaching and discussion groups as agreed with the principal supervisor (or programme co-ordinator) and the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies. Students may also be expected, as appropriate, to attend and participate in external training modules, seminars, conferences, and discussion forums.

Each research student's training needs will be reviewed annually. The annual school report on each research student will indicate the areas where training has been given and identify future areas for skills training or career development. The student and the school must confirm in detail in their annual review reports that the training provided has been undertaken and is meeting the student's needs.

Students are required to maintain a record of the skills training and career development that they have received. This record should be shown to and agreed by the principal supervisor (or programme co-ordinator). Failure by a student to meet training requirements agreed with the School must be reported to the Pro Dean, who may refer the matter to the relevant Dean for action.

3. Participation in taught courses

Students may be required to be enrolled on modules for training purposes to meet the requirements of funding bodies or schools.

Students may undertake unassessed participation in modules for training purposes on the recommendation of the supervisory team with permissions of the Schools involved in the delivery of the modules. Students will not gain credits for these modules. Students will be registered to these modules directly by Schools via MMS, not through the Academic Advising system. The level of participation should be agreed by the student, the student's supervisor, and the module co-ordinator. The agreement may be suspended or withdrawn if the student fails to abide by the agreement. If the student, the student's supervisor, and the module co-ordinator agree that the level of work undertaken is commensurate with that of other students, this may be reported and a grade of 0A (Audit) will be applied and visible on the student's transcript. Students should not normally audit modules where there is no training benefit relevant to the student's research.

Students can be asked to take modules as a formal requirement for their programme when there is no funding body requirement only if this has been approved through the normal curriculum approval process. In this case, students will be registered to these modules through the Academic Advising system.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Converting policy previously held on a webpage to a stand-alone document. Amended to include requirements for research integrity training.		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	11 June 2019
1.1	Amended to include requirements for research integrity training.		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	15 July 2019