

# Programme Specification: Post Graduate Research

## For students starting in Academic Year 2023/24

### 1. Course Summary

<b>Names of programme and award title(s)</b>	Postgraduate Certificate in Research Techniques
<b>Award type</b>	Postgraduate Certificate
<b>Mode of study</b>	Part-time
<b>Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award</b>	Level 8
<b>Normal length of the programme</b>	Two years (for full-time PhD students); Four years (for part-time PhD students)
<b>Maximum period of registration</b>	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
<b>Location of study</b>	Keele Campus
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Regulator</b>	Office for Students (OfS)
<b>Tuition Fees</b>	This programme is offered to PhD students in the School of Pharmacy and Bioengineering based on supervisor recommendations at no extra cost.

**How this information might change:** Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

\* We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

### 2. Overview of the Programme

This programme has been designed to equip students with all the necessary skills required to carry out their postgraduate research studies and beyond. The programme will enable the students to gain an appreciation of techniques required within the research arena and tools to equip them in terms of personal wellbeing and skills necessary for their future career steps. The programme will help to develop independent career ready postgraduates and will add value to their existing postgraduate research studies.

### 3. What you will learn

Students who successfully complete the programme will be able to:

1. Develop core skills appropriate for the implementation of research including research planning and research integrity
2. Develop an awareness of appropriate research methodologies and methods in relation to your research area
3. Develop awareness of risk associated with performing research

4. Critically interpret and evaluate literature sources
5. Demonstrate clear and critical understanding of the complexities involved in developing, managing, evaluating and disseminating research
6. Develop skills enabling critical evaluation and appraisal for peer review of a subject relevant discipline

### **Keele Graduate attributes**

Engagement with this programme will enable you to develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to become a well-rounded graduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in after your studies are completed.

Further information about the Keele Graduate Attributes can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/journey/>

## **4. How is the programme taught?**

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. All teaching is undertaken on the University campus in the appropriate classroom or presentation environment, group sizes vary according to the cohort. A variety of approaches to teaching are used on the programme:

- Traditional and interactive lectures in which the lecturer provides students with a framework and context for further reading and independent study. Some lectures may feature invited external speakers who are active researchers and practitioners from the research field.
- Workshops facilitated by academic staff allow students to work together and develop practical skills by applying subject-specific knowledge to critically evaluate a piece of literature or to solving in-context problems, for example.
- Individual and group presentations where students research and present a topic to the whole group with time allowed for interactive questions and discussion, peer review and feedback.
- Online learning using the Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE): this is used in both modules and provides a platform for students to access a wide range of learning resources, to share online discussions, to submit work for assessment and to receive individual feedback that is specific to a particular assignment or task.

Independent study will be required throughout the programme, perhaps guided by academic staff or self-directed in relation to the various demands of each module component and its assessment. This type of learning may be facilitated by use of various resources including those provided on the KLE. Independent study also forms an important part of the development of postgraduate researchers.

### **Achieving the learning outcomes**

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways. For example:

- **Lectures and associated independent study** enable students to broaden and deepen their existing knowledge and understanding of core and applied concepts of science and business, and to transfer that knowledge from theory into practice.
- **Small-group workshops**, including individual and group presentations, provide opportunities for students to clarify and exchange ideas, and to question and challenge research methodologies and concepts.
- **Independent study and online learning** encourage students to reflect upon their learning and to take responsibility for its development, and to collaborate with others to share, explore, and evaluate ideas in greater depth.

## **5. Teaching Staff**

The teaching team is currently comprised of postgraduate directors, academics with specific subject relevance and members of the academic development team. This interdisciplinary group of educators with a comprehensive skillset will ensure that students gain perspective on all aspects of carrying out postgraduate research. The staff group has extensive experience of teaching at postgraduate level and includes individuals with expertise in learning and teaching, and research. The work of all research-active academic staff has been published widely and shared via conference presentations, for example.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the

programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

## 6. What is the structure of the programme?

The programme is structured over two consecutive modules. Entry into module two is dependent on passing module one. You will need to pass both modules to be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate qualification. Each module consists of a short series of teaching sessions and workshops, with assessments either integrated into the main sessions via group participations or submitted separately via the Keele Learning Environment (KLE) subsequent to the sessions. The content and timetabling has been carefully considered in order to minimise the burden of assessments across each year of study, allowing you to focus on your research alongside registration on this programme.

### Module 1 - PHA 40192 - Getting Started in Research

The first year-long module of the programme adopts an integrated approach to developing your knowledge of the research environment and local requirements for postgraduate study milestones and coping mechanisms.

The programme will include sessions on **Introduction to Research** where you will be introduced to the local Regulations and PhD milestones at Keele University. This session consists of content such as *Defining the Research Question, PhD milestones, Personal Development and Learning Plan (PDL) preparation, English Language Support, Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity*.

There will also be focus on the boundaries within which research should be conducted and ethical implications of research in **Research Integrity**. This includes sessions on *Avoiding Plagiarism, Avoiding Academic Misconduct and Research and Ethics governance*.

You will then progress on to **Research Planning**. These sessions will cover aspects of time management and project progression including sessions on *Plan your PhD, Keeping Up to Date, Literature Searching and Public and Patient engagement within Research*.

Following this, you will be equipped with the techniques required in order to keep novel research ownership and methods to critically analyse data in **Data Collection and Storage**. The content of which covers *IP, Data Storage and Collection as well as a general introduction to research methodology in Qualitative and Quantitative Research*.

The final session will communicate tips for being successful within a PhD programme in **Surviving Research**. This will include sessions on *Reading a Research Paper, Mental Health in Postgraduate Studies and Surviving Progression, followed by a session outlining the Module Assessment Guide*.

### Module 2 - PHA-40194 - Advanced Research Techniques

You will be exposed to more advanced aspects of research techniques required for independent research. This will be achieved through dissemination in **Academic Writing, Creating Impact and Presentation Skills**. The **Academic Writing** content will incorporate sessions on the planning involved for thesis preparation in *Plan Your Final Year and Thesis Construction*. Additional sessions on *Writing in Academic Style and Writing for Publications* will further develop your skills in this aspect and for their future publications.

The **Creating Impact** sessions will develop your ability to distinguish your research on a national and international scale by adjusting their communication styles in *Abstract Writing, Creating Impact and Three Minute Thesis*.

You will develop their skills for the next step in your career in **Grant Writing** and will be exposed to advanced and subject specific methodologies for critical analysis of data through **Advanced Research Methods**. The communication of research complexities in a concise and explicit manner will also form the basis of the **Grant Writing** sessions. Here, you will develop the skills necessary to identify the section requirements of typical grant applications such as pathways to impact, summary and background in the **Grant Writing** session as well as communicating academic concepts in a non-academic manner through the **Lay Summary** session. There will also be the opportunity to learn the skill of being able to carry out **Effective Peer Reviewing** of others work. These sessions will give added value for you which will help you to plan for fellowship applications and ensure readiness for your own independent research making you competitive in your respective fields.

Further communication training is provided through the **Presentation Skills** sessions. Here, you will develop skills in *Confidence for Presentation* to equip you for future presentations at conference, interview

and other academic related invitations. Additionally, the ability for you to display your work in a poster format and talk it through in a concise and explicit manner will be explored through **Posters for academia**. Additionally, a **Public Engagement** session will inform you about mechanisms for and importance of dissemination of research to the general public.

For the **Advanced Research Methods** content, you will separate into discipline specific groups and attend sessions on **Statistics relevant to your discipline**. You will also learn about **Leadership** and finally attend a session on the **Module Assessment Guide**.

Material is delivered in large-group lecture presentations and interactive workshops, supported by subject specialists in each sessions which contextualise the module content. It is essential to note here that you will also study aspects of ethics that are relevant to all arenas, and will reflect upon their own attitudes and values.

## Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

### Level 8

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
To develop core skills appropriate for the development of research including research planning and research integrity	PHA 40192 - Getting Started in Research
To develop an awareness of appropriate research methodologies and methods in relation to your research area	PHA 40192 - Getting Started in Research
To develop awareness of risk associated with performing research	PHA 40192 - Getting Started in Research
To critically interpret and evaluate literature sources	PHA 40192 - Getting Started in Research
To demonstrate clear and critical understanding of the complexities involves in developing, managing, evaluating and disseminating research	PHA-40194 - Advanced Research Techniques
To develop skills enabling critical evaluation and appraisal for peer review of a subject relevant discipline	PHA-40194 - Advanced Research Techniques

## 7. Final and intermediate awards

Students who successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 will be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Techniques.

It is not envisaged that students will gain any certification without completing and passing both modules.

**Note:** students may attend the sessions for academic development without the requirement to submit or participate in assessed components, but will not be eligible for an award in this case.

## 8. How is the Programme Assessed?

The progressive range of assessments across each year of the Postgraduate Certificate programme promotes learning. Due consideration of workload has led to the staggered distribution of assessments, thus allowing you space to organise and manage your time more effectively commensurate with skills that you will need as your progress in your career after completion of your postgraduate research studies. You will be advised explicitly as to the content, style and deadline for each assessment, and the purpose, process and assessment criteria for each assessment is advertised clearly in student handbooks and elsewhere.

There are opportunities for you to gain timely and meaningful feedback on your performance via online

return of annotated coursework via the KLE. The function of each of the assessments listed below is to test your achievement of the learning outcomes and objectives of the Postgraduate Certificate programme. The various assessment strategies are designed to ensure that you are suitably challenged throughout the programme and facilitate your critical engagement with the programme content. There are multiple modes of assessment:

### **Written work and practical skills assignments**

These assessments test the quality and application of subject knowledge. In addition they allow you to demonstrate your ability to carry out basic literature searches, communicate your ideas effectively in writing and support your arguments with appropriate referencing. Written pieces vary in their length depending upon the discipline area and subject matter.

Additionally, you will be assessed on poster presentations. These assess your ability to turn complex methodologies and results into a coherent flowing communication. This will help develop your skills and confidence for presenting your work within the relevant community through conference presentations.

### **Oral presentations**

These assess your subject knowledge and understanding. Crucially, they also test your oral and visual communication skills. Peer assessment and feedback is used to facilitate reflection and personal skills development.

## **9. Accreditation**

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

## **10. University Regulations**

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

## **11. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?**

This programme as proposed is currently intended for all PhD students registered for postgraduate research studies at Keele University.

Language and communication skills form a key part of postgraduate studies. The programme is designed to be inclusive and accessible to international students, which may include both native and non-native English speakers. All overseas students are assessed for fluency in English on entry to their postgraduate research studies and are required to attend additional English classes provided by the Language Centre as deemed appropriate.

## **12. How are students supported on the programme?**

You are supported on entry and for the duration of the programme in many ways, including:

### **Managing Tutors**

You will be directed to the Managing Tutors (Postgraduate Research Director within your discipline and the Researcher Developer within Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence), whose roles are to offer academic support, advice and guidance on any issues which you may face.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students admitted to the Postgraduate Certificate programme with disabilities or medical problems will meet with a member of the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support department and the Schools / Research Institute's Disability Officer within their own Faculty at the very start of the programme in order to discuss any special requirements not already catered for. Procedures will then be implemented according to the nature of the disability or medical problem. These procedures can range, for example, from allowing extra examination time for students diagnosed as dyslexic, to allocating additional space around presentation workshops to account for mobility problems.

### **English Language**

English Language training is available through the Language Centre both as a requirement of overseas

student registration as well as additional classes where required.

### **13. Learning Resources**

Students have access to a wide range of facilities on campus, including the main library which houses an extensive collection of books, journals and other teaching materials recommended for students on the Postgraduate Certificate programme - both physical and electronic resources. The library contains a number of large open-access and smaller, bookable IT suites, rooms for group and private study and areas for social interaction. In addition, the Chancellor's building houses a range of large lecture theatres, flat floor tutorial space and the main University food court. In addition to extensive networked IT facilities, all buildings on the main teaching campus are covered by a wireless network so students are able to access online facilities using their own devices. Students also have access to the Health Library located within the Medical School at the Royal Stoke University Hospital.

The Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE) provides access to a wide range of learning resources for students on the PG(Cert) programme: lecture presentations, notes, additional supporting information, and other useful documents can be viewed and downloaded from the KLE. Students will also submit some of their assessed work for summative assessment online via the KLE, and marked work and feedback will be returned online, also via the KLE.

The KLE is available off-campus and students can engage with the programme materials whenever they need to, no matter where they are.

### **14. Other Learning Opportunities**

Attendance on this programme will develop students' peer interactions and network which will be beneficial at later career stages. Students may attend the taught sessions without registration onto the Postgraduate Certificate programme as a continued professional development option without the need for assessment submission.

### **15. Additional Costs**

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

### **16. Quality management and enhancement**

The Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (FMHS Laboratory) is currently responsible for learning, teaching, assessment and feedback on the Postgraduate Certificate programme, informed by the teaching team who participate in delivery of the programme. The quality and standards of learning on this programme will be subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement via the School of Pharmacy Education Committee, in consultation with the University Postgraduate Research Committee who have relevant expertise in this specific area.

The Programme Management Committee (consisting of Postgraduate Directors, Researcher Developers and Director for Postgraduate Strategy) for the Postgraduate Certificate programme will manage the organisation and development of the programme. They will also ensure the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards of the programme, contribute to the on-going programme review process and the iterative review process. Any enhancements made to the programme will be documented as part of the University's Curriculum review process

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:  
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

## 17. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

- a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
- b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>
- c. Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner <https://rdfplanner.vitae.ac.uk>
- d. University Postgraduate Strategic Development Group

## Version History

### This document

**Date Approved:** 18 April 2023

### Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2022/23	TONY CURTIS	26 August 2022	