

**Title:** Draft Research Degree Education Strategy  
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### Issue

This paper includes the current draft of the Research Degree Education Strategy as presented to the 13 June 2014 Postgraduate Research Executive. This is the postgraduate research part of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. It provides a high-level summary of the University's aims for research degree education, particularly at doctoral level. Further appendices including a doctoral training strategy (draft also appended) will also be included in a revised version following consultation over the summer and early autumn 2014.

The expected timeline is as follows:

| Date         | Action   |
|--------------|--|
| Jan-May 2014 | PGR Training Network group discusses doctoral training strategy                          |
| 15 May 2014  | Draft doctoral training strategy considered by Postgraduate Research Executive           |
| 13 June 2014 | Draft research degree education strategy considered by Postgraduate Research Executive   |
| 25 June 2014 | Draft research degree education strategy and timeline considered by LTC                  |
| Jun-Sep 2014 | Consultation on strategies with academic staff and students in Schools and Faculties     |
| 7 Oct 2014   | Revised research degree education strategy considered by Postgraduate Research Executive |
| 22 Oct 2014  | Revised research degree education strategy considered by LTC                             |

### Recommendation

The Learning and Teaching Committee is asked to note the strategy and associated timeline and to feed back any comments to Dr Nick Watmough, Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes as part of an ongoing consultation which will take place with academic staff and students in Schools and Faculties over the summer and early autumn 2014.

### Resource Implications

Resource implications will be considered for each of the items by the Postgraduate Research Executive when the strategy is presented on 7 October 2014 before returning to the Learning and Teaching Committee after that.

### Risk Implications

Risk implications will be considered for each of the items by the Postgraduate Research Executive when the strategy is presented on 7 October 2014 before returning to the Learning and Teaching Committee after that.

### Equality and Diversity

Equality implications will be considered for each of the items by the Postgraduate Research Executive when the strategy is presented on 7 October 2014 before returning to the Learning and Teaching Committee after that.

### Timing of decisions

The expected timeline is as given above.

### Further Information

Contact Dr Vivien Easson, [v.easson@uea.ac.uk](mailto:v.easson@uea.ac.uk), extension 1835, with any queries about this report.

## **DRAFT: The Purpose and Corporate Objectives of the UEA Research Degree Education Strategy**

### The Purpose

The purpose of the *Research Degree Education Strategy* is to:-

- Articulate our key institutional priorities with regard to the education of research degree candidates.
- Prioritise changes that will help the Norwich Research Park continue to develop as an international centre of excellence for doctoral education.
- Ensure an appropriate alignment with the goals and ambitions set out in the *UEA Corporate Plan*.
- Ensure that the University's approach to the education of research degree candidates is properly aligned with the *UK Quality Code* and with the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.
- Ensure that the University's approach to the training of research degree candidates is properly aligned with Vitae's *Researcher Development Framework* (RDF) and the *RCUK statement of expectations about doctoral education*.

### Alignment with Corporate Priorities

The *Research Degree Education Strategy* has been developed to reflect the University's commitment to high quality doctoral education as articulated in Section Two of the University's Corporate Plan 2012-2016 "*Research with Impact*":-

- Attract and nurture world-class early-career and established researchers and provide top-class research support and mentoring for all research staff.
- Secure Research Council and charity-funded postgraduate research centres and partnerships, increase postgraduate research student quality and numbers from a diverse range of funding sources and support them with an exemplary training programme.
- Develop a sustainable strategic investment plan for University-funded PGR Scholarships that serves to encourage the best research students world-wide to train with us and underpins the development of key strategic national and international research partnerships (such as doctoral training centres).
- Have in place Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership status with the key UK funding bodies, including AHRC, BBSRC, MRC, EPSRC, NERC and ESRC.
- A year-on-year increase in the number of UEA registered PGR students from the current ratio of PGR/ATR of ~1.5:1, with the aim of achieving a ratio of ~1.75:1 over the duration of the Corporate Plan.

### Implementation Plan

The *Research Degree Education Strategy* is supported by an implementation plan, the *Research Degree Quality Enhancement Plan (RDQEP)*, which incorporates actions from plans developed by the institution as part of its ongoing implementation of the UK Quality Code. The RDQEP is contingent on policy documents that will be developed during summer 2014.

### Reference Points

[The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland \(2008\)](#)

[The UK Doctorate: a guide for current and prospective doctorate candidates](#)

[The UK Quality Code](#)

[RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#)

[The Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#)

[UEA Corporate Plan 2012-2016](#)

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## Foreword by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Engagement)

The *Research Degree Education Strategy* for 2014–19 has been written to complement the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy that will underpin the development of our taught programmes over the same period. It will ensure that the outstanding research environment offered by UEA and our partners on the Norwich Research Park is used effectively to train the next generation of researchers. We have consciously developed an educational strategy that recognises the duality of research degree candidates. By this we mean that such candidates are simultaneously novice researchers whose careers we wish to develop and also UEA registered students with a right to access the high-quality student-facing services and facilities that contribute so much to UEA's outstanding performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) and other measures that evidence the satisfaction of our undergraduate population. Our *Research Degree Education Strategy* will ensure our continuing success through the combined efforts of our academic, research, technical and professional staff working together and in partnership with our research degree candidates.

The University and its partners on the Norwich Research Park are committed to further developing the research infrastructure and providing an outstanding physical and digital training environment for our postgraduate researchers. However the key to the rich and rewarding doctoral education offered by UEA is our commitment to managing the vital professional relationship between our candidates and the academic staff and researchers who constitute their supervisory teams. Nurturing and ensuring the strength of these relationships remains at the very heart of our strategy.

To emphasise the distinctive nature of a UEA research degree we have produced a summary of attributes of UEA doctoral candidates that is designed to inform colleagues, sponsors and potential employers of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that we anticipate that will become hallmarks of our doctoral candidates. These attributes will ensure that on graduation UEA postdoctorals can not only realise their potential as researchers, but can also make maximum impact in their diverse future professional lives.

*Professor David Richardson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Engagement),  
UEA*

# Attributes of UEA Doctoral Candidates

The attributes set out below provide doctoral candidates with a framework within which they will be able to articulate the knowledge, attributes and skills that they have acquired when they graduate to employers. At the same time it will provide staff and other stakeholders (e.g. employers, funding bodies) with a clear indication of the value of doctoral level study at UEA. The UEA doctoral attributes are divided into 4 separate themes:

- Academic excellence
- Research capabilities
- Critical self-awareness and personal attributes
- Digital Literacy

The degree to which doctoral candidates are able to demonstrate these attributes after graduation may depend on the extent and duration of the independent research project and the eventual award. For example those graduating with an MPhil are less likely to be able to demonstrate the full range of attributes whilst those completing a professional doctorate may demonstrate additional competencies and would be expected to have developed their own individual professional practice.

| Academic excellence   | Research capabilities  |
|---|--|
| <p>On graduation, a UEA postdoctoral will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and interpret new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication.</li> <li>• Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.</li> <li>• Make informed decisions on complex issues in specialist fields often in the absence of complete data.</li> <li>• Demonstrate a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.</li> </ul> | <p>On graduation, a UEA postdoctoral will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an awareness of the frontiers of research within the discipline and a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.</li> <li>• Conceptualise, design and undertake research projects, and adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.</li> <li>• Explain the principles of good research conduct in their discipline and understand how to conduct their research in a way that complies with relevant ethical, legal and professional frameworks.</li> <li>• Evaluate and extrapolate from the outcomes of their research.</li> <li>• Locate their research within a broader theoretical, and where appropriate, practical and policy context.</li> </ul> |
| Personal attributes   | Digital literacy   |
| <p>On graduation, a UEA postdoctoral will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.</li> <li>• Use appropriate advanced methodologies to solve complex problems in novel situations</li> <li>• Act autonomously and exercise personal responsibility in complex and unpredictable situations and in professional environments.</li> </ul>  | <p>On graduation, a UEA postdoctoral will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidently use a range of technologies for academic and professional purposes.</li> <li>• Use appropriate technology to search for high quality information.</li> <li>• Critically evaluate and engage with the information obtained.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an awareness of global perspectives on disciplinary knowledge and how it is represented and understood within other cultures</li> </ul>   |

# Our Strategy

Our PGR Education Strategy consists of 15 Strategic Aims each of which has measurable outcomes.

| Aims   | Measure  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 To offer challenging and properly resourced research projects:-</b><br/>We will ensure that each project whether devised by supervisor(s) or applicant will be reviewed and refined before and/or during the admissions process to meet four criteria: (i) that it is appropriate to the background of the student; (ii) that it is aligned with the research priorities of the faculty (iii) there is a well-qualified and experienced supervisory team; (iv) there is realistic prospect of progressing the research within the period of study.</p> | Monitored via project sift, admissions and probationary processes                        |
| <p><b>2 To provide an effective induction to doctoral level education:-</b><br/>We will offer effective programmes of induction that acknowledge the rich diversity of educational, cultural and professional backgrounds of our research degree candidates and will help them integrate with their peer group, School and the wider research community at UEA.</p>  | Monitored via feedback from induction sessions and PRES                                  |
| <p><b>3 To ensure best practice and good conduct in research:-</b><br/>We will ensure that at the earliest opportunity all research degree candidates receive training in the principles of good research conduct in their discipline or subject area and understand how to comply with relevant ethical, legal and professional frameworks.</p>   | Monitored via training records and progress monitoring                                   |
| <p><b>4 To encourage strong relationships between staff and research degree candidates:-</b><br/>We will ensure research degree candidates gain maximum benefit from their research degrees by meeting regularly with their supervisory team, taking advantage of training opportunities offered by faculty graduate schools and engaging with the wider research community at UEA. The role of the School Director of Postgraduate Research is pivotal in managing these relationships.</p>   | Monitored via training records, progress monitoring supervisor training records and PRES |
| <p><b>5 To actively manage progression</b><br/>We will provide a regulatory framework for all our research degrees with explicit requirements for timely progression based on published criteria and benchmarks.</p>   | Monitored via progress monitoring  |
| <p><b>6 To identify training needs in order to enhance employability:-</b><br/>We will continue to develop mechanisms that assess, provide for and monitor individual student needs. These needs for continuing professional development will be met by the Faculty and NBI Graduate Schools, working collaboratively with CSED and Career Central to offer programmes of professional and transferable skills training.</p>   | Monitored via training needs analysis, training records and learning outcomes            |
| <p><b>7 To provide a dynamic and stimulating research environment:</b><br/>Along with our NRP partners we will continue to invest in the physical and digital infrastructure that supports advanced scholarship and a high quality research environment.</p>   | Monitored via Faculty Research strategies, REF outcomes, spend and feedback              |
| <p><b>8 To offer training opportunities in subject-area and discipline specific research methodologies and advanced research skills:-</b><br/>The Faculty and NBI Graduate Schools will develop structured pathways</p>  | Monitored via training needs analysis, training records and                              |

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
|    | that allow research degree candidates to receive advanced research training and develop a broad understanding of their subject area beyond their specific research project. These pathways will be accessible both to individuals or broad peer groups.   | feedback  |
| 9  | <p><b>To provide opportunities for research degree candidates who wish to teach:-</b></p> <p>We will expand access to an established programme of training that allows research degree candidates who wish to participate fully in the delivery of taught programmes to meet the requirements of the descriptor for Level One of the UK Professional Standards Framework and which is appropriate to the discipline and style of teaching and learning undertaken.</p>  | Monitored via training needs analysis, training records, teaching records and module evaluation |
| 10 | <p><b>To promote global citizenship:-</b></p> <p>We will embrace the international profile of our staff and research degree candidates. Where appropriate we will deliver training to multi-disciplinary groups of peers that provide an inclusive and international perspective. By organising training events around such groups we can maximise opportunities for peer to peer learning and develop sustainable networks that equip our research degree candidates to address contemporary global issues and challenges.</p> | Monitored via training records and feedback   |
| 11 | <p><b>To provide timely feedback:-</b></p> <p>We will ensure that supervisors provide timely and helpful feedback which is appropriate to the work submitted or research idea suggested.</p>  | Monitored via progress monitoring and feedback  |
| 12 | <p><b>To develop a governance structure that can oversee the specialist provision of research degrees:-</b></p> <p>We will continue to develop our governance structure for research degrees to enable us to deliver research degree education effectively in accordance with this strategy.</p>  | Monitored via GSE, PGR Executive LTC and Senate minutes   |
| 13 | <p><b>To work with a range of stakeholders to enhance the experience of research degree candidates:-</b></p> <p>We will implement the conclusions of student representation reviews and work with UJEAS and the GSA to ensure that research degree candidates are able to contribute effectively to the development of research degree provision.</p>   | Monitored via regular Student Experience Committee minutes and PRES                             |
| 14 | <p><b>To evaluate and enhance our research degree provision:-</b></p> <p>We will review the <i>Research Degree Quality Enhancement Plan</i> on a regular basis in order to evaluate our research degree provision in a structured manner and with reference to clear benchmarks and targets.</p>  | Monitored via regular review and feedback   |
| 15 | <p><b>To improve professional support for research degree education:-</b></p> <p>We will continue to improve and enhance processes relating to research degree administration as a supporting aim for delivering other aims within this strategy.</p>   | Monitored via regular review and feedback   |

## Draft Appendix: A Framework for Training Doctoral Students Registered at UEA

### 1. Overview

In June 2013 RCUK published their *Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training* and *Joint Vision for Collaborative Training*. These documents and the University's recent experiences of feedback from the successful bids for block grants to AHRC and NERC make it timely to review UEA's provision of training for doctoral students. This requires clarification of the language that is increasing being used to describe different elements of doctoral training and understand how each of them articulate with Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF). This document attempts to identify seven different elements (**2.1 – 2.7**) within our current provision and map them against the RCUK Statement (*italics*). These will provide the basis for an institutional framework for training that can be used by Faculty Graduate Schools and DTP Directors from October 2014 to ensure that all UEA PGRs receive appropriate, relevant and minimally prescriptive training according to their individual needs (**Section 7**). The success of training will be assessed by comparing learning outcomes with the individual training programmes along with a number of KPIs (**Section 6**).

### 2. Addressing the RCUK Statement of Expectations

#### 2.1 The Research Environment

*Students must receive training in the principles of good research conduct in their discipline, and understand how to comply with relevant ethical, legal and professional frameworks.*

To protect the interests of the University, supervisory teams and students we need to ensure that all students receive essential training at the outset of the doctoral programmes in those elements described in C1 of the RDF that pertain to their discipline which include:-

- Health and safety
- Ethics, principles and sustainability
- Legal requirements
- IPR and copyright
- Respect and confidentiality
- Attribution and co-authorship
- Appropriate practice

These topics could be covered in an extended induction in the form of an Introductory Conference organised by each Graduate School and ideally should be take place in advance of any formal training needs assessment.

#### 2.2 Training Needs Analysis

*Research Organisations must have mechanisms to assess, provide for and monitor individual student needs and offer the student appropriate development opportunities.*

At present the training needs assessment is carried out by the student in collaboration with their supervisory team and reviewed at the annual progress meeting. Engagement with this process by both students and supervisory teams is patchy and leads to situation in which students focus on compliance ("Is the student on track to complete their PPD training?").

As a matter of priority the University needs to review how the TNA is conducted, reviewed and monitored. This review needs to consider the following:-

- Each student has the opportunity to assess their own training needs shortly after registration and that these TNAs are used by the PGR student and their supervisory team to devise an individual training programme (ITP).
- That the ITP for each student is reviewed on an annual basis and from year two onwards is informed by ongoing access to careers information.

- The way in which ITP is completed needs to be recorded in systematic fashion that goes beyond the simple recording of PPD credits

### **2.3 Professional and Transferable Skills for Researchers**

*Research Councils **expect** the provision of professional and transferable skills to form a fundamental part of doctoral training.*

This suggests that the RCUK anticipate that the six weeks skills training previously funded by Roberts' funds is embedded in HEIs and will be sustained. The most straight-forward way for UEA to continue with this commitment this would be by rebranding, to make its purpose explicit, and simplifying our current PPD programmes which currently comprises >600 individual events. Specifically this would involve removing discipline specific applied research training from the programme and giving a much stronger focus to professional and transferable skills and making sure that they are more closely aligned with the RDF. Retaining the current credit system to evidence student participation and progress is necessary, but enforcement should be related to progression, rather than submission, and benchmarked against the student's most recent ITP. Operation of this programme can be greatly simplified by:-

- Moving applied discipline specific research training events from the programme to the Advanced Skills Programme
- Consolidating courses so that the minimum unit of delivery is 1 credit
- Organising the delivery of courses into groups of related sessions
- Reviewing and reducing the number of training events for which credit is earned through "confirmation of activity"
- Streamlining the learning through practice so that up to 10 credits can be awarded on the basis of a portfolio (electronic or paper) and a reflective narrative of 3000 words that is submitted between 12 and 30 months after registration

### **2.4 Discipline Specific Research Methodology and Advanced Skills Training**

*Students **must** receive in-depth, advanced research training, as well as developing a broad understanding of their subject area. They should also develop an understanding of the potential impact of their research on society.*

RCUK and the individual research councils continue to rather opaque in what they expect in these areas. The matter is compounded at UEA by differences in admissions requirements between Schools which means that at the outset of a PhD programme students may have quite different experiences of research methodology. For example in HUM all students admitted to PhD programmes must have a Master's degree with a significant research element whilst in SCI a 2.1 Bachelor's degree may suffice.

- Where indicated by the ITP generic training in research methodologies is delivered to first year students within the Professional and Transferable Skills for Researchers programme.
- That each Faculty Graduate School develops a portfolio of advanced research skills courses
- That where possible these advanced research skills courses are supported by external funding for example through the ESRC Advanced training Initiative.
- Since RCUK does not specify a minimum amount of advanced skills training that the University makes provision to record both the outcome of the ITP and how aspects of it were fulfilled by completing elements of the advanced skills programme

### **2.5 Cohort Training and peer to peer learning**

*Students **should**, wherever possible, benefit from the training and support possibilities offered as a result of being part of a broad peer group.*

The emphasis on cohort training by the research councils provides new challenges as it is clearly not realistic to devise bespoke training programmes for each identifiable cohort. On the other hand it may be beneficial for some elements of both Professional and Transferable Skills training and Advanced Skills training to be organised so that they articulate with defined pathways of study or can be delivered to a specific cohort. This is a rapidly developing area and it is suggested that it is dealt with in three ways.

- Where possible cohort specific events for example the EnvEast Summer School are accredited as part of the Professional and Transferable Skills programme.
- Some training events within the Professional and Transferable Skills and Advanced Skills programmes that are delivered more than once are timetabled to allow whole cohorts to be enrolled through agreement of the Programme Director and Training Coordinator.
- Training events in both programmes are grouped to facilitate both integration into defined pathways of study and/or delivery to cohorts that include PGR students at distributed sites
- The University establishing a peer mentoring system within its PGR community that provides each new PhD student with an established, and appropriately trained, PGR student as a mentor.

## **2.6 Public Engagement**

*Students **should** be encouraged to consider the broad context of their research area, particularly in reference to societal and ethical issues, and the importance of engaging the public with research. Learning and training opportunities should be provided to help develop their public engagement skills.*

Through the PGR Showcase the University has a good track record in this area and it is suggested that Showcase becomes a biannual event from 2015 onwards retaining its current format but with a much stronger focus on careers and employer engagement.

## **2.7 Placements and Exchange Visits**

*Research organisations **are expected to** provide an environment where students have the opportunity to widen their horizons as part of their training. Experiences outside the "home" Research Organisation, for example with other academic collaborators, in non-academic environments or overseas are encouraged where it fits with the individual's development needs and the scope of the project. These opportunities should be well planned to ensure the student gains maximum benefit.*

This provision is already established. The Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS) programme is the work placement element of the BBSRC Doctoral Training Programme, offering students the experience to work in an area outside of their PhD project and is an accredited part of the PPD programme. In principle this can be extended to other cohorts of students for whom placements are optional or become part of some defined study pathways.

## **3. Careers and Employability**

One of the key drivers in providing opportunities for personal and professional development to PGRs is to ensure that doctoral graduates have the best opportunities to pursue high-level careers in diverse sectors. This not only ensures that funders can demonstrate a return on their investment, but also increases the impact, influence and reach of the University at home and abroad. It may be disingenuous to ask new PGRs who have undertaken doctoral training with a view to pursuing an academic career to consider the full range of career options at the start of their period of study. However they should certainly be exposed at the earliest opportunity to the Careers Service and benefit from expert training as part of their programme of personal and professional development. This can be achieved in three ways:-

- An introduction to the Careers Service should be a mandatory element of the introductory conference for all PGR students.
- Careers related training e.g. CV development, use of social networking, developing job applications is devised and delivered through credit bearing modules by Careers Service staff and integrated into the wider programme of Professional and Transferable Skills training.
- The Careers Service and Faculty Graduate Schools co-sponsoring annual careers events that brings together current PGRs, Alumni and Employers.

It is envisaged that through the Graduate Schools and Careers Service working together to prepare PGRs for postdoctoral employment that those PGRs not wishing to continue in academia will identify appropriate career trajectories that incentivise timely completion/submission.

#### **4. Engaging PGRs and Supervisors**

Since the University first introduced skills training in response to the Roberts Report in 2003 it has consistently received a mixed reception from both supervisors and PGRs. This is exacerbated by the conflicting evidence obtained through feedback provided by PGRs to PPD trainers after individual sessions and adverse comments made in surveys such as PRES.

- An improved explanation of the rationale for training in the introductory conference; including a better articulation of the purpose and benefits of the four principle pillars of training and clear examples of pathways through the three years of training.
- Briefing for supervisors on the rationale for training as part of their tri-annual training with a focus on the need to provide relevant high-quality training that improve those KPIs that inform future block grant funding decisions e.g. submission rates and next destination employment.
- Developing School PGR Directors as champions of PGR training through their increased involvement in the development of Faculty Graduate School training programmes and better awareness of the consequences of poor KPIs for PGR education.

#### **5. Modes of Delivery**

It is envisaged that the majority of training events will be held on the NRP and be delivered by University/NBI staff or external trainers. However in order to take account of the emergence of Doctoral Training Partnerships, the needs of part-time students and students whose fieldwork/archive work takes them away from Norwich some diversification is desirable. Two specific areas need urgent attention:-

- The development of a range of e-learning modules covering those elements of mandatory training relating to the research environment. Completion of these mandatory training elements should be evidenced by achieving a threshold score in an on-line test.
- Development of a system for accrediting any external training event that contributes to an individual PGR's PPD programme, especially those that are available through DTP partners.

#### **6. Evaluating the Impact of Doctoral Training Provision**

##### **6.1 Individual Impact**

This can only be achieved by comparison of the learning outcomes of the programme for an individual PGR towards the end of his/her period of study with the ITP developed at its outset and recorded in the at the initial meeting of the supervisory team. It is recommended that once current operation of training needs analysis is reviewed and refreshed that the APR in the third year (full-time registration) is changed to include a review of how the training programme. Serious consideration should be given as to whether failure to complete the review of training as part of the APR process should represent a more significant barrier to submission/graduation rather than failure to acquire 30 PPD credits.

##### **6.2 Institutional Impact**

The original impetus for skills training came from the need to improve 4 year submission rates. Along with postdoctoral employability this remains an important indicator of the success of any doctoral programme. In refreshing the provision of doctoral training the University needs to continue to closely monitor submission rates

and develop robust systems for monitoring postdoctoral employability. These data along with an improved performance in PRES which can be used to evidence the success of its doctoral programmes both to support future block grant applications and the marketing of UEA's doctoral programmes to uplift PGR numbers.

#### **7. Timescale for Implementation and Risks of Inaction**

Subject to the agreement of PGR Executive the principles outlined in the document will be used form part of the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy for PGR students (due for completion in June 2014 as part of the preparations for HER) and to develop an operational plan for implementation in October 2015. This is possible because a significant amount of preparatory work has been completed with the Training Coordinators and Careers Service.

There is evidence from PRES, feedback from block grant applications and submission rates that our training programmes need to be reviewed and refreshed. The clear statement of expectations from RCUK makes development of an updated training strategy timely. An improved offer of training to prospective PGRs has significant benefits for the research environment, reputation and financial health of the University. Risks associated with of inadequate training provision include; an inability to secure future block training grants, further deterioration of submission rates, low participation in EU funded training networks and difficulties in PGR recruitment.

**Nick Watmough**  
**ADRDP**  
**12.05.2014**

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