**Welcome to Manchester!**

Firstly congratulations on starting your PhD journey here at Manchester! UoM is a great university which works hard to ensure that all our PGRs feel welcome and supported. We are aware that as a disabled PGR you may face some additional barriers on your PhD journey. You may feel nervous about some of the challenges that lie ahead so to help you along we’ve put together this leaflet to let you know the support available. Just know your not alone and there are departments and groups ready and waiting to support you.

**Disability Advisory Support Service (DASS)**

DASS is UoM’s dedicated disability advisory service. Located on the 2nd floor of University place, they support over 10,000 disabled students, staff, and PGRs at UoM and will be your first port of call on your journey. Registering with DASS will entitle you to a range of specialised support, with the service having a PGR specialist who can help you dismantle any barriers you encounter. This includes:

* A dedicated case worker.
* Support applying for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). This will pay for assistive technology such as Read & Write, specialised office equipment such as ergonomic chairs, and study coaching.
* DASS plan detailing the support you need to your supervisors and academic advisors.
* Entitlement to an office in your schools grad school.
* RADAR keys for disabled toilets on campus.
* Funding for additional costs incurred by disability, for example to pay for a carer to attend conferences with you.
* Support communicating your disability to staff and supervisors.
* Adjustments during your Viva, such as meeting your external examiner beforehand.

This is just to give you an idea of the support DASS provides, however they understand that disability is often unique with each person facing their own barriers. They are flexible with the support they offer and can tailor it to suit your specific needs. You can contact DASS on:

Tel 0161 275 7512 ; Mobile Number (Text only for d/Deaf students) 07899 658 790 ; Email [dass@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:dass@manchester.ac.uk)

**Challenging Research Disabled PGR Group**

Challenging Research is a peer support group for disabled PGRs across all faculties at UoM. Our focus is providing a safe and supportive space for you to socialise mask off and get advice on any issues you may be facing. We do most our communication using our WhatsApp group which is where we all generally chat and share news. We also have a lot of events on Zoom aimed at filling in those extracurricular activities a lot of disabled PGRs miss out on e.g. research seminars, nights out with mates, networking etc.

We also do a lot of advocacy work, including regular Zoom focus groups with Uni higher ups to address any issues, run workshops for staff on the lived experience of disabled PGRs, and work to make institutional change across UoM.

It's entirely up to you how much you get involved. Some people drop a message every few months, some just want to do the social aspect and join the Zoom pub quizzes, and some want to get really involved in advocacy. Others just need a place to vent with people who understand their experience.

If you’d like to join email [laura.howard-3@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:laura.howard-3@manchester.ac.uk) or join our WhatsApp on: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IHNTebfyfPKHhxWWGK2QYR>



A group of people sitting at a table

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Challenging Research Coffee Morning

**UoM Disabled Staff Network**

In addition to the disabled PGR group your also entitled to join UoM’s disabled staff network (DSN). Representing over 200 UoM staff members, the DSN advocates for disabled staff on both an individual and collective basis. We meet four times a year to discuss upcoming initiative and gather feedback from members. We also host other events including socials such as our Christmas card making party and Neurodiversity pizza and gaming sessions, and celebrations and talks for disability pride and disability history month. We also run events aimed at well-being such as workshops and a weekly Zoom exercise class called Mobilates designed specifically for disabled people. To join our teams’ space just search UoM DSN or email [dsnetwork@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:dsnetwork@manchester.ac.uk).

A group of people sitting around a table

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DSN Christmas Party

A group of people in wheelchairs outside a building

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DSN Light Up Event for Disability History Month.

**Introduction to Postgraduate Research for Disabled PGRs**

Join Researcher Development and a panel of exceptional academics and PGRs to learn about life as a disabled PGR at UoM and what support is available to you as a postgraduate researcher. In this induction:

* Learn what support is available to you and how to access it
* Hear about best practice and advice for doing research with a range of different conditions
* Meet your peers and find out about networks you can join
* Ask questions about anything that's on your mind to do with starting your PhD

Sign up at <https://www.researcherdevelopment.manchester.ac.uk/researcher-development-for-pgrs/>

**The Library Service**

At The University of Manchester Library, we're dedicated to providing inclusive support for disabled postgraduate research students, ensuring you have equal access to resources and opportunities for success during your studies.

**Training and Support:**

* Access in-person workshops, online workshops, and online resources via My Learning Essentials (MLE) and My Research Essentials (MRE), covering essential skills like research, writing, referencing, data analysis, and presenting.
* Receive dedicated assistance via our Specialist Library Support (SLS), with in-person and online workshops covering business data, copyright, referencing, and advanced searching to excel in your research.
* Access extensive support for distance, online, and blended learning for academic flexibility.

**Shut Up and Write (SUAW):**

* Boost productivity and writing skills in supportive SUAW Pomodoro sessions, with breaks that allow you to socialise with fellow postgraduate research students.

**Request Book Services:**

* Easily request books online via Library Search to be collected at a Library Site of your choice.

**Personalized Support:**

* Engage with our Engagement Librarians, dedicated to meeting the unique needs of students from specific schools.
* In-person customer support services and library drop-ins are available for immediate assistance on-campus.
* Online customer support services are available 24/7, 365 days per year, and FAQs are available via the Library Help page.

Visit our website to see how we can unlock your full academic potential.

**UMPA**

UMPA is UoM’s postgraduate society and as a PGR you’ll automatically be registered as a member. UMPA has two disability officers and two neurodiversity officers who work to advocate for disabled PGRs. If you have any issues during your PhD UMPA can act to support you. In addition they run several disability friendly events, including regular social activities on Zoom for PGRs who struggle to attend campus.

A logo of hands shaking

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**Logo of UMPA (UoM’s PGR Association)**

**Health and Safety**

As a disabled PGR we’re aware that you might face some additional barriers when it comes to health and well-being on campus. Whether it’s making it safely out of a building during a fire, feeling more vulnerable on campus, or having your wheelchair breakdown there are systems in place to support you.

**Security**

Our disability trained security team are here to help you if you have any issues on campus, so don’t be afraid to get in touch if you need any assistance. There are a number of ways to do this, firstly their phone number is printed on the back of your student ID. You can also install the SafeZone app on your phone. When the app button is held down for five seconds security is alerted to your location and will make their way to you. The app lets you upload a photo of yourself so security can easily identify you. It also includes an additional information box where you can provide any information on your disability that you feel is relevant. The team recognised that using the App is not always possible for us so DASS registered PGRs can request a SafeZone wristband instead. This has a button on it which when pressed alerts security to your location so they can make their way to you.

**PEEP Plans**

PEEP plans are personalised emergency evacuation plans that are designed to help disabled people safely evacuate the campus in an emergency. These plans are individually tailored to your needs with your DASS case worker so that you can feel safe and secure on campus.

**Counselling Service**

As a PGR there may be times when you need additional support in managing the stresses of a PhD. UoM has a dedicated counselling service who can offer next day appointments and up to six weeks of counselling to help support you. They are also available in emergencies so please don’t hesitate to contact them if you need help. There phone number is printed on the back of your student ID.