

***FACULTY OF BIOLOGY
MEDICINE AND HEALTH
PGR COHORT
ADVISORS TOOLKIT***

ADVISORS TOOLKIT

This information has been produced by the Doctoral Academy (DA) to support PGR Cohort Advisors in their role. A list of all Cohort Advisors, a summary of the role and how Cohort Advisors are allocated can be found on the [intranet](#).

What is expected of you?

From October 2022, all Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) will be assigned a Cohort Advisor for the duration of their Programme. The Cohort Advisors are fully independent to the PGR supervisory team, and are supported by the Doctoral Academy. The Cohort Advisor will be an important person in the PGR journey and can help to promote a healthy research culture, as well as ensuring that timely and appropriate pastoral support and guidance is offered. We expect that Advisors will hold at least 1 group meeting (preferably

in person) with their Advisees, as well as at least 1 individual meeting with each Advisee per year for the duration of the PGRs' programme. It is also expected that the Advisors will be available to their Advisees (via email, zoom, etc) throughout their programme at The University of Manchester.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- [Full list of Doctoral Academy contacts](#)
- [General Support](#)
- [DA Academic Lead for PGR Research Culture](#)
- [University Counselling Service](#)
- [Report and Support](#)
- [UoM Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)](#)
- [UoM Occupational Health](#)
- [PGR Coordinator \(Wellbeing and Support\)](#)

GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOU

Whilst there is no mandatory training for this role, the DA and other University services are available to support you. The Academic Lead for PGR Research Culture and the PGR Wellbeing and Support Coordinator run 3-4 online sessions throughout the year to support Cohort Advisors.

Training available for advisors

- [Supporting Students](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Mental Health Problems](#)
- [Supporting PGR Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Mental Health Difficulties - Case Studies](#)
- [Student Mental Health Matters Training](#)
- [The Six Ways to Wellbeing](#)
- [Disability Equity Training](#)

GOOD PRACTICE

Please do share good practice, new resources or training with the DA to support other Advisors through the [Cohort Advisor Padlet](#).

SUPPORTING DISABLED POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

You will receive a copy of any Disability Support Plans provided to your PGRs. This is for information, not action but please re-read support plans regularly to ensure the correct support is being offered. Any questions/concerns can be directed to the Doctoral Academy Disability Support Coordinators.

- If you have a disabled PGR in your cohort, please ask them if their needs are being met according to the plan. If there are any issues, please speak to the [Disability Support Coordinators](#).
- We encourage all advisors to engage with the [Disability Equity training](#) on Blackboard to gain understanding and awareness of the barriers that disabled people can face.
- Inclusive Alliance Network- This Network is open to all staff who support disabled staff/PGRs.

The aim is to provide a safe space where people can chat peer to peer, share advice, and get guidance. We encourage any advisors with disabled PGRs to sign up to the network. You can [join the Network here](#).

- You can also encourage any disabled PGRs to sign up to the Challenging Research Disabled PGR Group. This is a peer support group for disabled PGRs across all faculties at UoM. For more information, please email FBMH.doctoralacademy@manchester.ac.uk
- [Introduction to PGR for Disabled PGRs](#) – training that takes place at the start of each intake.
- Security- the phone number for security staff is on the back of ID cards. Install the [SafeZone app](#) on your phone or request a SafeZone wristband.



OFFERING SUPPORT

You can use the [Stepped Care Model](#) to match appropriate support to the current level of need.

It might be helpful to frame your conversation around the [Support Wheel](#).

CRISIS SUPPORT

Use the [risk flowchart](#) to determine the appropriate approach. This includes guidance on sharing personal information.

URGENT HELP (NHS)

- A&E departments have dedicated Mental Health Liaison Teams who are trained to support people in Mental Health crisis, whose lives are at immediate risk.
- Call 999

URGENT HELP (ON CAMPUS)

- Security: 0161 306 9966 (this phone number is on the back of ID cards) / use [SafeZone app](#)
- Counselling and Mental Health Service: If the student is in crisis but they are able to keep themselves safe, call 0161 275 2864 or contact the Duty Practitioners on counselling.service@manchester.ac.uk. Open Monday-Friday 09:00-16:30

OUT OF HOURS SUPPORT

- Greater Manchester Mental Health 24/7 Helpline: 0800 953 0285
- The Samaritans: 24/7 support. 116 123 or 0161 236 8000
- Papyrus: 24/7 telephone support. 0800 068 41 41
- Crisis Café at No.93: to attend, contact via email or by telephone on 07778 012838 or 0161 271 0339. Monday to Friday 6:30pm-1am and Saturday to Sunday 2pm-1am.

- Bluesci at Night: to attend, call or text 07933882743. Monday to Sunday 5:30pm-12:30am.
- CALM: call the helpline on 0800 58 58 58. Open Monday to Sunday 5pm- 12am
- A&E departments have dedicated MH Liaison Teams who are trained to support people in MH crisis, whose lives are at immediate risk
- Call 999

REFERRAL PROCESSES FOR UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER'S CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

- Book an initial First Step Appointment [here](#). Appointments are released for the next working day at around 4pm Monday-Friday. If the PGR is unable to book online, they can 0161 275 2864.

DISABILITY ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

- **If you are referring a PGR, you will need their consent. When discussing a referral, you can reassure a student that their information will be kept confidential and will never be released to other students, a future employer or included on a degree certificate.**
- **[Link to the referral form.](#)**
- **Disabled students are under no obligation to attend DASS, however, you should make clear to them that if they do not attend, this may affect the level of support that they can receive.**

- **To receive disability support, PGRs will need to [register with DASS and provide evidence.](#)**

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

- If you are unsure whether a referral is appropriate, please contact [Occupational Health Services](#).
- [Referral form can be found on this webpage.](#)
- After an Occupational Health assessment, a report will be sent to the referrer with the PGR's consent.
- The individual has the right to refuse referral and to refuse consent to the sending of reports, however the individual must be aware that further managerial decisions and actions may have to be made without the benefit of a medical assessment.



INITIAL GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

This meeting provides opportunity for the PGRs to meet one another and their Advisor (first year), or catch-up and share experiences (subsequent years). It is also a good opportunity for you to set expectations for the Advisor-Advisee relationship. With notice, we can make the DA meeting room in Simon Building available for group meetings.

Suggested questions/topics for group discussion:

- Allow time for introductions and agree 'ground rules' (ie confidentiality, openness, non-judgemental) and expectations from both sides.
- Discuss what your role is and how you are there to support wellbeing during their programme.
- Remind everyone of the role of their Senior Tutor/Tutor – (i.e. academic progression, eProg, signing forms, advice on eProg milestones). None of these are the job of the Advisor. Topics to discuss could include – supervisor relationships, how to ask for help, when to recognise you need help, where to go for support (see final section)
- Agree timeframe for next meetings (1-2-1).

Individual meetings:

- The individual meetings should be an additional chance to get to know the PGRs and discuss how they feel they are progressing, whether they are keeping well and feel supported.
- Encourage the PGR to share any concerns. This should be a constructive conversation to alleviate concern over general and common issues related to doing a PGR programme, and/or to identify further routes of support where needed.
- If the PGR discloses any concerns or issues, listen carefully. Where you feel comfortable, provide guidance, signpost them to further support or recommend actions for the PGR to undertake.
- You will be notified if your advisees have been issued with a DASS Support Plan. Please use the individual meeting as an opportunity to review the current support plan. Guidance is provided on the eProg form for this meeting.
- Consider any circumstances of the PGR that may impact support needs. i.e. international, parent, clinical, splitsite, part-time, primarily based remotely from University. If peer-support would be welcomed, contact the [PGR Reps](#) for information and advice on [societies and groups](#).
- If necessary, agree next steps and/or an action plan (follow up by email).
- It is critical that you consider whether there is a requirement to escalate or arrange a referral for specialist help. Contact the DA if you are unsure or if you have any serious concerns.
- Where additional support for the PGR is required, please encourage the student to take these steps on their own. If they seem hesitant or unsure, ask if they are happy for you to act on their behalf. Again, if in doubt contact the DA.

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AND GENERAL ADVICE

The DA team will notify you of a PGRs change in circumstances which are approved by the supervisory team/Senior Tutor (ie interruption, extension). Whilst you are not required to be involved in the decision or approval for a change of circumstance request, we recommend you arrange a follow-up pastoral meeting with the PGR to discuss whether they require further support, depending on the nature of the change and/or any previously agreed actions.

Recording meeting actions and follow up

- Following each meeting (group or individual) complete the relevant eProg advisor meeting form.
- For additional meetings, create an extra meeting form on eProg if needed but DO NOT state any confidential details.
- Following group meetings, send an email to all the PGRs to remind them to contact you if they need further support or advice.
- Provide follow-up notes and actions (by email) where appropriate to individual advisees after 1-2-1 meetings. The meeting notes should not be shared with supervisors and must remain confidential.
- If necessary, liaise with the Doctoral Academy to arrange referrals to University support services, or to escalate serious concerns (wellbeing, welfare, disengagement, financial).

Recommendations

- Take accessibility into account when planning future group cohort meetings
- Be sure to ask PGRs questions about how they are feeling / getting on. You may want to use the suggested discussion points on the eProg form in order to start a dialogue around their wellbeing.
- Discuss the PGR's work needs and consult their DASS plan, if necessary, e.g., what prevents burnout.
- Listen to your PGR, be open and curious about their needs without pre-conceptions. Transparency is incredibly important and can help you understand the needs of the PGR and the relationship between PGR and Advisor/Supervisor.
- Whilst the initial group meetings are great, please do not force socialising on PGRs. For example, autistic PGRs can get exhausted from forced socialising, and this can affect their energy, work performance and wellbeing.
- Please be mindful of terminology used and use 'disabled PGR' instead of 'PGR with a disability' as this is in line with social model terminology.
- You are not expected to know all the answers and be able to support your PGRs through any issues they have, but you are expected to know where to signpost them for further support.

GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PGRS

Please use the links provided to the wide range of support and guidance available to you and your Advisees.

RESOURCES

- [Mental health and wellbeing support](#)
- [Financial support](#)
- [Student immigration](#)
Tel: 0161 275 5608
- [Report and Support](#)
- [Chaplaincy Service](#)
- [Flowchart for supervision issues](#)
- [PGR Societies and Groups](#)
- [Key staff contacts](#)
- [FBMH Doctoral Academy](#)
Tel: 0161 275 5608
- [Students' Union Advice Service](#)
- [Counselling and Mental Health Service Workshops](#)