

'THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTACTING A SUPERVISOR'

7 OCTOBER 2026



TODAY'S PANEL



CHRISTIAN WARD

Host; Marketing and
Recruitment



PROF JULIE GIBBS

Senior Research Fellow;
Division of Diabetes,
Endocrinology and
Gastroenterology



KIRSTY EATON

Recruitment and
Admissions



ANUSHKA

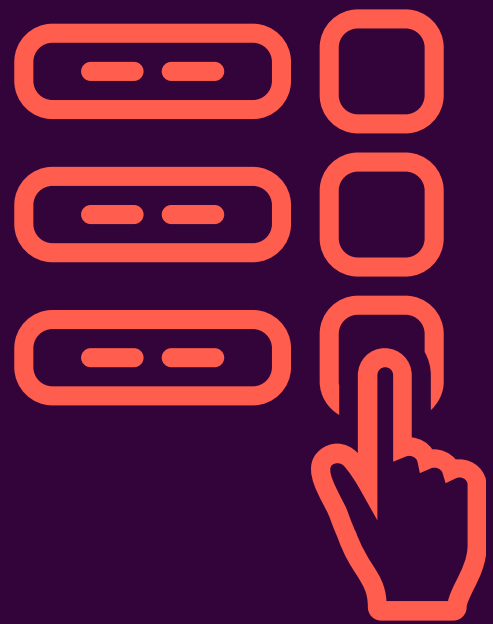
Postgraduate Researcher



BETHANY

Postgraduate Researcher

POLL



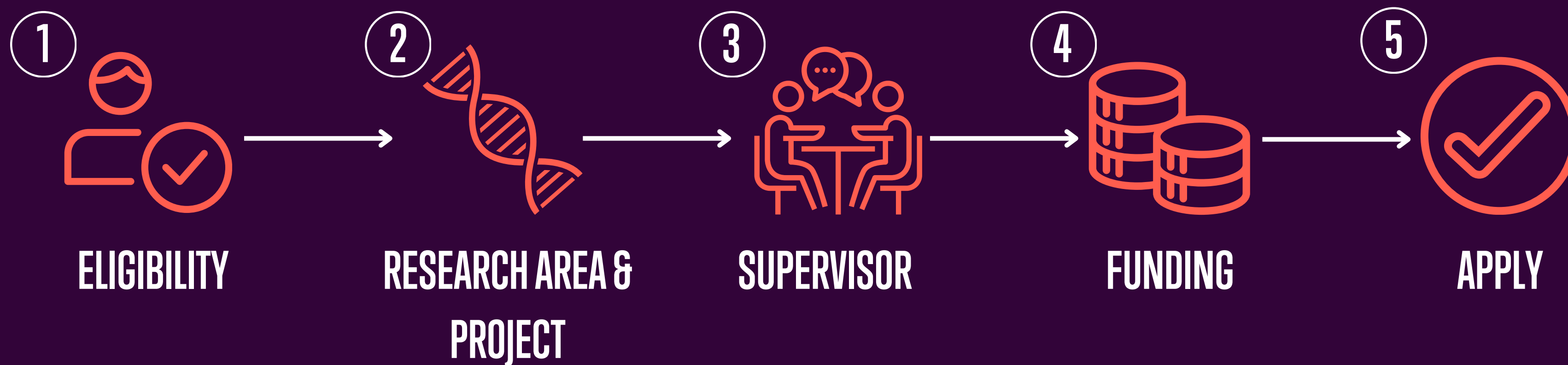
WHAT STAGE OF THE PGR JOURNEY ARE YOU AT?
LET US KNOW VIA THE POLL



YOUR JOURNEY TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester



'THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTACTING A SUPERVISOR'

- What role do supervisors play?
- Finding your supervisor
- Preparing to contact a supervisor
- Writing your email
- Tips for successfully contacting a supervisor
- What happens next?



STARTING OUT



***HOW TO KNOW YOU'RE SUITABLE
BEFORE YOU CONTACT A SUPERVISOR?***

WHAT ROLE DO SUPERVISORS PLAY?

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ACADEMIC GUIDANCE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



PERSONAL MENTORSHIP

RESEARCH EXPERTISE

WHY IS CONTACTING A SUPERVISOR IMPORTANT?

- **ALLOWS SUPERVISOR TO ENSURE YOU'RE A GOOD FIT**

- Helps the supervisor to learn more about you and your suitability.
- Gives them insight into your strengths, passion, experience and potential.

- **STRENGTHENS YOUR APPLICATION**

- They can endorse your application or nominate you for funding.
- Makes them aware of your strengths and experience when reviewing applications.

- **ALLOW YOU TO CHECK IT'S A GOOD FIT FOR YOU**

- Chance for you to make sure it's right for you too!
- Learn more about them, their research and style.
- Find out more specifics about the project, labs, funding etc.

- **BUILD RAPPORT**

- Demonstrates your initiative and enthusiasm for their field of research.
- Helps make a good first impression and begin to build a relationship with them ahead of potentially working with them.

- **SAVES YOU TIME**

- Prevents you having to complete numerous speculative application forms for projects that interest you without knowing if they'll be successful



FINDING YOUR SUPERVISOR

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PROJECT LISTINGS

[www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/
study/research/projects-
programmes-degrees](https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/study/research/projects-programmes-degrees)

Modelling the ecology and evolution of microbial communities

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

PhD Research Project Self Funded

Dr Katharine Coyle, Dr C Knight

Application Deadline: Applications accepted all year round

[View Details](#)

(International Partnership Studentship) Understanding the molecular interactions between bacteriophages and plasmids

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

PhD Research Project Competition Funded Students Worldwide

Prof Michael Brockhurst, Dr Claudia Igler

Application Deadline: 29 November 2024

[View Details](#)

(International Partnership Studentship) Precision guiding of spermbots to detect and eradicate pre-invasive ovarian cancer lesion

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

PhD Research Project Competition Funded Students Worldwide

Dr C.K Schmidt, Prof R Edmondson, Prof I Larrosa

Application Deadline: 29 November 2024

[View Details](#)

INSTITUTE, NETWORKS AND CENTRES WEBSITES

[www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/
research/institutes-centres/](https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/research/institutes-centres/)



Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

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Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

Research

Impact and innovation

Research by school and division

Institutes, networks and centres

Technology platforms

Support for researchers

Research staff

Institutes, networks and centres

Much of the research within the Faculty takes place in institutes, networks and externally funded centres. These bring together researchers from across a broad range of disciplines and benefit from excellent links with charities, industry and the NHS.

View a list of our research centres, institutes and networks below.

You can also [browse further research by school and division](#) in the University's Research Explorer.

Institutes

- [Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute](#)
- [Christabel Pankhurst Institute for Health Technology Research and Innovation](#)
- [Lydia Becker Institute of Immunology and Inflammation](#)
- [Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research](#)
- [Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing](#)
- [Institute for Health Policy and Organisation](#) (Alliance Manchester Business School)
- [Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence](#) (Faculty of Science and Engineering)

UNIVERSITY WEBSITE/ RESEARCH EXPLORER

[www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/
study/research/supervisors/](https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/study/research/supervisors/)



Home Profiles Research units Research output Projects Impacts Activities Press/Media Search...

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

The University of Manchester

Website
<https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk>

Overview Network Profiles (1801) Research output (44811) Projects (845) Impacts (246) Activities (4909)

Organisation profile

Organisation profile

The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health delivers a truly translational approach to the life sciences, from pure discovery science through to clinical application and patient care.

We develop and deliver the highest quality education and training for health professionals and life scientists in partnership with the NHS and industry, contributing to the University's tradition of innovation and improvements in the health of people around the world.

NETWORKING, REFERRALS, CURRENT ACADEMICS, RESEARCH PAPERS



PREPARING YOUR EMAIL

- **CHECK THE PROJECT LISTING AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- Familiarise yourself with the project listing
- Make sure you understand what it's about and that it's right for you
- Ensure you meet the entry criteria set out in the project listing

- **RESEARCH THE SUPERVISOR**

- Familiarise yourself with their recent publications and ongoing projects.
- Understand their research group's focus and collaborators.

- **EMAIL CONTENT**

- **Subject line**
 - Clear and specific e.g., "Prospective PhD Applicant: Interest in....".
- **Introduction**
 - Including a brief overview about you, your current level of study and academic background, your relevant academic, research or industry experience;
- **Project suitability**
 - Outline why you're suitable for their specific project, why you're passionate about the area of research and any prior knowledge you have about them/the research
- **Tone**
 - Be professional tone, use formal language and proofread for errors.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY CONTACTING A SUPERVISOR



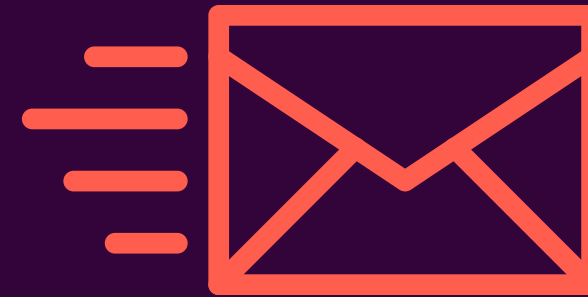
KEEP IT CONCISE



TAILOR EACH EMAIL



BE PATIENT



FOLLOW-UP



**PERSEVERE BUT
KNOW WHEN TO
MOVE ON**



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



POSITIVE RESPONSE

- **Discuss the opportunity in more detail**
 - Supervisor will follow-up with you if interested.
 - May request more information and ask you questions or just ask you to apply.
 - Be prepared to elaborate and ask any questions you have too.
- **Prepare for a potential meeting**
 - Supervisor may arrange an informal meeting or call before any formal interviews.
 - Expect to discuss your research interests in more detail.
 - Have thoughtful questions about their work and expectations, and any further questions you have.
- **Refine detail or discuss funding**
 - Supervisor will provide insights into project.
 - Discuss funding and funding opportunities, if applying for a self-funded project, or flag if you have your own funding.



NEGATIVE RESPONSE/NO RESPONSE

- **No response**
 - Follow-up politely after 1-2 weeks
 - Review your application and where your qualifications or experience may not match that particular project
 - Focus your efforts elsewhere on projects that match your experience and interest more closely
- **Declined**
 - Thank them, politely ask for any feedback to help your future search.
 - Use feedback to re-start your search

A group of six diverse postgraduate researchers are standing in a row on a paved area in front of a large, historic stone building with arched windows and doorways. The building is the University of Manchester, with its name visible at the top. A street sign for 'OXFORD RD' is visible on the left. The researchers include a woman in a hijab, a woman in a cardigan, a man in a t-shirt, a woman in a long white dress and headscarf, a woman in a dark jacket, and a woman in a denim jacket. The entire image has a purple color overlay.

MEET OUR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

ANUSHKA: MY JOURNEY TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

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- Second-year PhD researcher in Occupational and Environmental Health, funded through the President's Doctoral Scholar Award (PDS Award).
- Researching the behavioural determinants of sustained LPG use and household air quality in rural Bihar, India, with the aim of supporting cleaner cooking transitions in low-resource settings.
- Background in Clinical Research and Healthcare Management, followed by a Master's in Public Health and three years working in public health programme management in India.
- Chose Manchester for its interdisciplinary research environment, supportive supervisory team and opportunities to collaborate across disciplines while developing as an independent researcher.
- Became involved in the University community from the first-month of my PhD both as a PGR Representative and PGR Ambassador, taking part in researcher development, outreach and postgraduate community activities.



BETHANY: MY JOURNEY TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

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- 2nd-year PhD researcher in Medical Microbiology, investigating antimicrobial resistance and drug discovery through an interdisciplinary approach, funded by an EPSRC DTP studentship.
- My interest in infectious disease led me to a PhD combining microbiology and new technologies, developing a microfluidic platform to identify antibiotic sensitisers.
- My background is in Biochemistry, where my Master's project explored Herpes simplex virus–brain interactions and their potential role in Alzheimer's disease, sparking my interest in pathogen–host interactions.
- I chose Manchester for its supportive but challenging research environment, excellent facilities and collaborative culture — plus plenty of places to eat and drink when the experiments don't cooperate!
- Moving forward, we're taking the project in two directions: exploring its commercial potential through IBIC, while continuing to push the academic research towards greater clinical relevance and impact.



PANEL Q&A

GOT A QUESTION?
ADD IT TO THE Q&A CHAT



NEXT STEPS

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO DISCOVER MORE
INCLUDING HOW TO APPLY, AVAILABLE
PROJECTS, FUNDING AND MORE.
UOM.LINK/BMH-PGR-WEBINAR-MORE**



**SIGN-UP TO OUR MAILING LIST
TO RECEIVE OUR FUNDING ALERTS, EVENT
UPDATES AND OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.
UOM.LINK/BMH-PGR-WEBINAR-SIGNUP**

UPCOMING EVENTS

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POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH
OPEN DAY

21 OCT 26

2PM - 5PM
ON CAMPUS

BOOK YOUR PLACE [UOM.LINK/BMH-PGR-OPEN-DAY-BOOK](https://uom.link/bmh-pgr-open-day-book)

'PHD LIFE IN THE FACULTY OF BIOLOGY,
MEDICINE AND HEALTH'

11 NOV 26

1PM - 2PM
(GMT)

'PREPARING FOR A
PGR INTERVIEW'

9 DEC 26

1PM - 2PM
(GMT)

BOOK YOUR PLACE [UOM.LINK/BMH-PGR-WEBINAR-BOOK](https://uom.link/bmh-pgr-webinar-book)

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

**LET US KNOW YOUR FEEDBACK VIA
OUR POST-EVENT SURVEY**

[UOM.LINK/BMH-PGR-SURVEY](https://uom.link/bmh-pgr-survey)

