

Section 1: Introduction

Welcome to De Montfort University.

As a student studying for the award of MA or MSc by Research at this University you are required to undertake generic and Faculty level research training courses. These courses are not credit-bearing but they are a compulsory element of the Masters and attendance will be monitored. You may well have additional research needs specific to your area of research or project and you will be asked to discuss these with your supervisor so that all reasonable support can be offered to you.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a source of information about the training requirements and also a tool for you to consider the skills you already have and those you need to develop further.

The Masters by Research extends the skills required for the study of a discipline at degree level, but also requires higher level research skills associated with independent study and with managing and completing a substantial research project. The characteristics of Masters Graduates are outlined by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in their *Master's Degree Characteristics* published in March 2010 which can be viewed at:

(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/masters/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf>).

These include the possession of:

- in-depth knowledge and understanding of the discipline informed by current scholarship and research,
- the ability to study independently,
- the ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to advanced scholarship in the subject,
- the ability to continue to learn independently and develop professionally , including the ability to pursue further research where appropriate.

Action Required:

Please refer to **Section 2** which identifies the training courses you are required to complete. If you are not able to demonstrate that you have attended all the required training courses you will not be able to progress to submission of your thesis.

Please complete **Section 3 – Training Needs Statement** to identify your strengths and those areas you need to develop further.

Section 2: Generic and Faculty Training Courses

As part of your Masters by Research award you are required to attend a number of generic and Faculty specific courses throughout your time at the University. These courses are not credit-bearing but they are a compulsory element of the Masters and attendance will be monitored.

The generic courses are organised centrally by the Graduate School Office and the discipline specific courses are organised by your Faculty.

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure you attend and complete each training course.

Course Bookings: Generic Training Courses

The bookings can be made through the Graduate School Office. Places on each course are limited, so booking is essential. You can check availability of places and book to attend a course by email at rtp@dmu.ac.uk or by phone on 0116 250 6242.

You will receive email confirmation of your booking and an email reminder will be sent to you approximately one week prior to the course taking place.

If you cannot attend a course for any reason it is vital you inform the Graduate School Office as early as possible so your place can be offered to a fellow student.

Course Bookings: Faculty Training Courses

These courses are organised and delivered by your relevant Faculty. To book a place on these courses please contact the relevant person listed on page 12.

Attendance and Training Attendance Records

Attendance is compulsory for the entire duration of each course, failure to complete to the satisfaction of the presenter will be deemed as non-completion.

An attendance register will be taken at each course; please ensure you sign the register each time you attend a course.

Individual training attendance records which provide an overview of the courses you have completed and those still outstanding will be posted twice a year to all students in July and December.

Attendance certificates will be issued upon completion of your Masters.

Course Completion

This handbook provides full details of each of the courses offered. You are required to undertake all compulsory courses and these are assigned to a group, which indicates which stage of your research the course is most suitable for.

All compulsory courses must be completed before being eligible to progress to submission of the thesis.

We are aware part-time students have many commitments; if you are studying part-time you are given a longer time period to complete the compulsory training courses, in line with the expected timeframe for completion of your degree.

The following table indicates when you are expected to complete courses within each group.

Course Group	Expected Completion For Full-Time Students	Expected Completion For Part-Time Students
Group A	Within 3 months of enrolment	Within 3 months of enrolment
Group B	Between 3 and 6 months after enrolment	Between 3 and 6 months after enrolment
Group C	Within 9 months of enrolment	Within 18 months of enrolment

The Graduate School Office takes non-attendance very seriously and failure to attend courses booked, without prior notification, may affect your registration on the programme.

Special Requirements

If you have any particular needs you would like the administrators or presenters to be aware of please notify us in advance of the course. Contact the Graduate School Office if you require:

- building or room access information,
- information on resources and equipment available to you,
- materials in an alternative format.

Requirements For Students Where English Is Not The First Language

If you are a student studying in the UK at De Montfort University and English is not your first language you are **required** to attend an English language initial assessment session at the Leicester City campus **within 3 months** of commencing your research.

Students who have passed the necessary IELTS/ TOEFL course are also required to attend the initial assessment. The initial assessment requires you to undertake a written and spoken test to identify your level of English to determine:

- if the level of English is of a satisfactory standard for undertaking study at MPhil or PhD level, in which case you will not be required to attend any further sessions,
- if the level of English requires further assistance, in which case you will be advised how many classes you must attend to attain the required level.

The course duration is highly dependent on the needs of individual students. Courses are held exclusively for research students and are targeted specifically at your needs.

Please refer to the course description on page 6 for further information on the areas covered.

Summary Of Generic Courses

Below is a list of all generic courses that form part of your Masters by Research; refer to individual course descriptions for further information about the content of the course.

Compulsory

Course Title	Group
English Language for Academic Research Purposes*	A
Planning and Managing Research	A
Preparing For Your Viva	C

* Refer to page 3 to see if you need to complete this course.

Optional

Course Title
Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics
Research Ethics: Online

Summary Of Faculty Courses

Each Faculty has its own research methods training for MA/MSc Research students and are designed to facilitate the change in level from undergraduate to postgraduate study. The main aim of this training is to equip students with the tools and knowledge essential to effective research in their discipline.

Only when a student has successfully completed all components will they be eligible to progress to submission of the thesis. Faculty Graduate Offices will assume responsibility, in liaison with supervisors, for recording successful completion of Research Methods training and will confirm this, in writing to the Graduate School Office for their records.

In addition to the training courses you are required to complete Section 3 - Training Needs Statement in consultation with their supervisor.

Compulsory: Faculty Of Health and Life Sciences

Course Title	Group
Induction Event	A
Literature Searching and Reference Management including Endnote	A
Health and Safety in Laboratories*	A
Principles of Research in the Health and Life Sciences	A
Presentation of Research Data and Participation in Analytical Discussion	C
Research Ethics	B

* Only compulsory for students working in a laboratory or similar setting during their research

Compulsory: Faculty Of Humanities

Course Title	Group
Induction Event	A
Literature Searching and Reference Management including Endnote	A
Research Methods At Masters Level	B

Optional: Faculty Of Humanities

Course Title
Subject Research Seminars and Events

Generic Course Descriptions

Courses are held regularly throughout the year and managed by the Graduate School Office.

To reserve a place on these course please contact the Graduate School Office on 0116 250 6242 or by email at rtp@dmu.ac.uk.

English Language for Academic Research Purposes

Course Completion: Compulsory - Group A

Course Description:

This course is compulsory for students where English is not their first language and is targeted specifically at individual needs.

The following topics are covered:

- academic writing skills,
- presentation skills,
- general English language skills,
- advice on form filling,
- writing summaries, abstracts and journal articles.

Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics

Course Completion: Optional

Course Description:

This is an introductory course to the concepts of and University regulations concerning intellectual property rights and ethics as they apply to research.

This course will:

- introduce postgraduates to the concept of intellectual property rights (IPR) with discussion on copyright, patents, trademarks, ethics, etc.,
- make postgraduates aware of the University's protocols regarding IPR arising from research and data protection,
- provide a basic overview of the key issues relating to copyright and ethics,
- outline the impact of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation and the management of research records.

Planning and Managing Research

Course Completion: Compulsory - Group A

Course Description:

Starting a research project is a major undertaking for any student. This course aims to help you through the early stages of the research process, preparing you to successfully determine the direction of your research and plan and manage your project.

This course will:

- establish the differences between undergraduate and masters level research,
- look at what makes a good research degree,
- provide assistance in defining your aims and objectives,
- enable you to review your current time management practices and develop new ones,
- assist you in scheduling and timetabling a project effectively,
- examine possible obstacles to achieving your goals and how to reduce or eliminate their impact.

Preparing For Your Viva

Course Completion: Compulsory - Group C

Course Description:

This course will offer guidance on preparing for your viva examination. At the end of this course you will:

- understand the format and purpose of the viva examination,
- know how to devise a strategy for preparing for the final viva,
- have gained confidence to perform well in your final examination,
- have viewed an example of a simulated viva examination.

Research Ethics: Online

Course Completion: Optional

Course Description:

This online Blackboard course is designed to give you some detailed understanding of research ethics and the role it plays in your studies as a research student.

‘Your Course’ should not simply be viewed as a one-off course you have to complete but rather as an ongoing resource which you can draw upon throughout your time as a registered research student here at De Montfort University.

For this reason there are facilities where you can post your ideas and comments, and enter into discussion with others in this research community throughout your time here.

Furthermore, there is an additional area in the Blackboard resource called 'Your Community' where you can develop and share knowledge with other research university students.

You are encouraged to use this area to discuss research ethics related issues with other students, share news items you may have seen and generally use the area to sustain ongoing activity amongst research students on this important subject.

The key learning objectives are:

- to understand the broad range of topics in research ethics,
- to understand the topics in research ethics specific to your discipline,
- to be able to identify and address the ethical issues specific to your research from inception through to completion,
- to be aware of the need to share good research ethics practice.

Faculty Course Descriptions

Courses are held throughout the year and managed by the relevant Faculty. To reserve a place on these courses please contact the relevant Faculty Office.

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Induction Event

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description:

This compulsory course will provide an opportunity for you to meet your Head of Research Studies and to gain an understanding about the procedures of research within the Faculty.

Health and Safety in Laboratories

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description:

This course is only compulsory for students who will be working in the laboratory or similar setting during their research.

This course will introduce postgraduates to the concepts and up-to-date regulations concerning safe working in laboratories.

Literature Searching and Reference Management, including Endnote

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description:

Completing a comprehensive literature review is often one of the first tasks for many research students. There are a great many resources available to you to help you keep up to date and informed on research in your chosen area.

It is recommended you attend this course at the earliest opportunity as it forms an important foundation for your future research. This course will:

- review how to develop a strategy for undertaking the initial literature search,
- provide you with information on where to access information and secondary sources,
- enable you to find semi-published material, including conference papers and theses,
- offer advice on how to remain up to date with the literature throughout the course of your research,
- demonstrate how 'EndNote' can be used to create bibliographies and manage references.

Presentation of Research Data and Participation in Analytical Discussion

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group C

Course Description:

This is a compulsory element where guest speakers and students will give presentations in “laymans terms” and focus on the methods of research they have used and their experiences of research activities.

Principles of Research in Health and Life Sciences

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description:

This compulsory course will discuss the principle elements of hypothesis-driven research methods, appropriate methods of data gathering and data analysis and the ethical constraints on research in Health and Life Sciences.

Research Ethics Workshop

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group B

Course Description:

This compulsory course is delivered approximately two to three times a year and led by experienced members of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Here students have the chance to consider, in the format of case studies, how they might approach a piece of research ethically.

Induction Event

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description:

The course provides an introduction to the practice of research in Humanities, advice on recording and monitoring progress and research and information management.

Literature Searching and Reference Management, including Endnote

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group A

Course Description

Completing a comprehensive literature review is often one of the first tasks for many research students. There are a great many resources available to you to help you keep up to date and informed on research in your chosen area. It is recommended you attend this course at the earliest opportunity as it forms an important foundation for your future research. This course will:

- review how to develop a strategy for undertaking the initial literature search,
 - provide you with information on where to access information and secondary sources,
 - enable you to find semi-published material, including conference papers and theses,
 - offer advice on how to remain up to date with the literature throughout the course of your research,
 - demonstrate how 'EndNote' can be used to create bibliographies and manage references.
-

Research Methods At Masters Level

Course Completion: Compulsory – Group B

Course Description

The course will include the following:

- planning a large research project,
 - handling research data,
 - planning and writing a thesis.
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Subject Research Seminars and Events

Course Completion: Optional

Course Description

Each Department in the Faculty holds regular subject-specific research seminars. You will be expected to attend as many of these as possible, and will be informed of dates and themes at the start of the academic year by your subject research student coordinator.

Contacts

Queries relating to the Generic training courses, information about course schedules or reserving a place should be referred to:

Kerry Mason
Research Training Manager
The Graduate School Office
John Whitehead Building

Phone: 0116 257 7015

Email: rtp@dmu.ac.uk

OR

Jimi O'Callaghan
Administrator
The Graduate School Office
John Whitehead Building

Phone: 0116 250 6242

Email: rtp@dmu.ac.uk

Queries relating to the **Faculty** training courses should be referred to the relevant Faculty contact identified below:

Health and Life Sciences

Faculty Research Office
Room: 1.07, Estates Development Building
Phone: 0116 257 7118 or 0116 207 8798
Email: HLSFRSA@dmu.ac.uk

Humanities

Graduate Centre Team
Room: 3.06, Clephan Building
Phone: 0116 250 6179
Email: pghums.gradcentre@dmu.ac.uk

Section 3: Training Needs Statement

As a research student you are expected to take responsibility for managing your research project and assessing the skills you need to acquire, develop or refine in order to achieve successful completion. Completion of the Training Needs Statement is compulsory.

Your supervisor will be able to supply support and advice in assessing your additional training needs and the Training Needs Statement provides the opportunity for you to reflect on the skills you have and those you need to develop.


Submission

The Training Needs Statement must be completed and submitted within three months of enrolment for full-time students and within six months for part-time students to the Graduate School Office. You are strongly encouraged to complete this document as early as possible after enrolment.

The completed document will be processed by the Graduate School Office. A copy of your Training Needs Statement along with the signatures and approvals page will be held in your student file and the original document will be returned to you.

Completion

Completion of the following pages is COMPULSORY. Please discuss your completed statement with your supervisor and ensure the Signatures and Approval section on the inside back cover has been completed before submission of the document to the Graduate School Office.

-  Work through each section and tick [✓] the relevant boxes to identify areas you feel confident about and those you still need to develop further. Summarise your skills and development needs on pages 16 and 17; you may want to refer to page 18 and 19 for a sample summary.

Competency Level Criteria

Confident	You have a sound grasp of the relevant research skills or processes and are capable of carrying out the tasks without need for specific guidance.
Quite confident	You have some experience of the relevant research skills or processes and require guidance to consolidate or be fully conversant with the requirements and/or relevance of these tasks.
Not confident	You have almost none or no experience in this aspect of research practice or theory, and are in need of guidance with respect to understanding terminology, processes or the relevance of a particular skill or set of skills.

a) Research Skills and Techniques

Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. identify your key research question			
2. deploy theoretical material related to your topic			
3. show knowledge of recent developments within your field			
4. be aware of the research methodologies you will need to use			
5. analyse and evaluate your findings			
6. summarise, document and reflect on progress			

b) Research Environment

Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. understand the context in which research takes place			
2. be aware of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, research subjects and others who may be affected by the research			
3. understand relevant health and safety issues			
4. justify your own research			
5. understand how to exploit results in academic/commercial terms			

c) Research Management

Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. set research goals, establish milestones and prioritise activities			
2. design systems for the acquisition and collation of material through effective use of appropriate equipment			
3. identify and deploy appropriate bibliographical resources and editorial styles appropriate to the discipline			
4. use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting information			

d) Personal Effectiveness

Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. demonstrate the motivation and self-discipline to embark on a substantial research project			
2. be creative, innovative and responsive to your material			
3. demonstrate flexibility and open-mindedness			
4. draw upon sources of support where appropriate			
5. show initiative and work independently			

e) Communication Skills


Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. write clearly and in a style appropriate to your discipline and the project			
2. construct and sustain a coherent argument, formally and informally, verbally and in writing			
3. defend research outcomes at seminars and conferences and in a viva examination			

f) Career Management

Are you able to?	Confident	Quite confident	Not confident
	✓	✓	✓
1. show commitment to continued professional development			
2. take ownership of and manage your career progression, set realistic and achievable career goals and develop ways to improve employability			
3. demonstrate insight into the transferable nature of research skills to other work environments and the range of career opportunities within and outside academia			
4. present your skills, personal attributes and experiences through effective CVs, applications and interviews			

Summary

Completion of this section is **COMPULSORY** for all research students.

-  Complete this section by summarising your strengths, weaknesses and areas for development for each of the categories. Discuss your development plan with your supervisor.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Development and Action Plan
Research Skills and Techniques			
Research Environment			
Research Management			

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Development and Action Plan
Personal Effectiveness			
Communication Skills			
Career Management			

SAMPLE Completed Summary

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Development and Action Plan
Research Skills and Techniques	I have a clear idea of the general area in which research is located with a wide range of current sources identified and located.	I need to refine my topic to a project which is manageable in the time frame.	Attend as many research training sessions as possible. Work with supervisor to define clearly the scope and limits of the project.
Research Environment	I have a general awareness of environmental issues relevant to my research eg. ethical approval requirements, non-disclosure agreements and intellectual property issues.	I am unsure as to the specific procedure for these issues.	Attend Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics modules.
Research Management	I possess good searching skills, including knowledge of appropriate databases.	I am unsure of how to set specific goals and milestones within the research trajectory. I have insufficient knowledge of approaches to managing references.	Work with supervisor to establish overall timeline for project, with appropriate detail for each stage. Attend Literature Searching and Reference Management module.
Personal Effectiveness	I am very keen on my subject area and strongly motivated to do research, and have confidence about my ideas.	I am less confident about expressing my ideas and knowing how they fit a wider intellectual or creative context.	Attend as many subject specific research seminars, presentations by visiting speakers, etc as possible.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Development and Action Plan
Communication Skills	I have good writing skills and know how to structure an argument well.	I am less confident about verbal presentations and discussion around my research ideas and findings.	Make active contributions to research seminars and where possible put myself forward to report my research at appropriate forums in consultation with my supervisor. Attend Preparing for Your Viva training session.
Career Management	I have a sound knowledge of how my subject specific skills relate to job opportunities in my field, and how to present my CV.	I am less certain about how to present my subject specific skills in ways that demonstrate those skills are transferable to make me more widely employable. I am unsure whether I should consider moving into research at doctoral level.	Seek advice from Student Services. Discuss options with my supervisor and subject research coordinator.

Signatures and Approval

Research Skills Evaluation (Supervisor to complete)

I have discussed this statement with the student and agree with the summary of their skills and also the areas identified for development.

Additional Comments:

Supervisor Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Research Skills Evaluation (Student to complete)

I have discussed my Training Needs Statement with my supervisor and have identified areas for development.

Additional Comments:

Student Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

For Completion By The Graduate School Office Only

Training Needs Statement Approved and Recorded: **YES/NO**

Signature: _____ Date: _____