

Graduate School

New Starter Checklist January 2022

Welcome to the University of Westminster! As a new doctoral researcher, you are joining a vibrant community of researchers here at the University. We know the first few weeks can be a little daunting – a new place, new people, new processes – so we've put together the following checklist to help you get started.

If you have any questions, at any stage during your programme, do email us at Graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk and one of the team will be more than happy to assist.

Check List

Complete?	Task/Activity
	Enrol with the university
	<p>Set up your university email account</p> <p><i>The University will contact you by email in the first instance, using your University of Westminster email address. Please be aware, if you do not regularly check your University email account, or do not set up an automatic forward from your student account to another account you do use regularly (through the settings function on email), there is a risk you will miss important communications which may affect your enrolment status.</i></p>
	<p>Change your email address to your name (optional)</p> <p><i>Upon enrolment, you will be assigned a University email address in the format of an alphanumeric code@my.westminster.ac.uk. If you would prefer the alphanumeric to be changed to your actual name, please log a call with the University's IT Helpdesk here:</i></p> <p>https://servicedesk.westminster.ac.uk/MSMSelfService/</p>
	<p>Download Microsoft Office package which is available for free for students: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/studies/study-skills-and-training/digital-skills/microsoft-office-365-access</p>
	Attend the Graduate School Arrivals Event (20th January 2022)
	Attend the Graduate School Welcome Reception (20th January 2022)
	<p>Attend your School Arrivals Event and Workshop (<i>Starting out as a Researcher</i>)</p> <p><i>The workshop starts immediately after your Schools Arrivals Event.</i></p>

	<p><i>Dates and times vary, see pages 8 and 10 of the arrivals booklet for details - https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/before-you-arrive/enrolment/graduate-school-enrolment-and-arrival</i></p>
	<p>Make a note of and attend the following workshops:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your Research at Westminster, 2nd February, 10am – 4:45pm 2. The Ethical Researcher, 3rd February, 2pm – 5pm 3. Networking for 1st Year Doctoral Researchers, 9th February, 10am – 12:30pm <p><i>These are university workshops designed for new doctoral researchers across all Schools. They include critical information and will help to get your research experience off to a great start.</i></p> <p><i>Booking information can be found here:</i> http://blog.westminster.ac.uk/doctoralresearcherdevelopmentprogramme/doctoral-researcher-development-programme/doctoral-process/</p>
	<p>Have your first meeting with your Director of Studies and/or supervisory team.</p> <p><i>This should be held within your first two weeks after enrolment and this meeting should establish the schedule of supervisory meetings in at least the first six months of study.</i></p>
	<p>Complete the ‘skills assessment’ with your supervisory team</p> <p><i>Your first meeting with your supervisory team should also provide the opportunity for you to undertake a ‘skills assessment’ with the team, enabling any skills, training, and development needs for the coming year to be discussed, agreed, and planned for.</i></p> <p><i>This assessment will make reference to the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP) website, detailing the development sessions being offered during the year. The ‘skills assessment’ will then be reviewed alongside your Annual Progress Review each year (or every other year for part-time students).</i></p> <p><i>The form can be found here:</i> http://blog.westminster.ac.uk/doctoralresearcherdevelopmentprogramme/forms/</p>
	<p>Consult the DRDP Programme and sign up to any relevant workshops or those that are of interest, in addition to those highlighted above which are designed specifically for new doctoral researchers.</p>

	<p><i>The DRDP consists of tailor-made workshops, specialist skills sessions and personal development planning activities which will benefit both your research and you as a researcher throughout your degree. Many of the sessions also provide excellent opportunities for you to think about how your research will contribute to life after the PhD.</i></p> <p>http://blog.westminster.ac.uk/doctoralresearcherdevelopmentprogramme/doctoral-researcher-development-programme/</p>
	<p>Enter your thesis title into the VRE</p> <p><i>You should ensure that your thesis title is entered into the VRE (on your project page) when you first enrol (Any agreed changes to your thesis title should be updated in the VRE promptly and this can be done at any point during your programme).</i></p> <p><i>To update the title, navigate to ‘My Record’, then ‘Doctoral Research Project, and finally ‘Edit’. You can then populate the field and hit ‘save’.</i></p> <p><i>Remember to remove the default text before adding your thesis title.</i></p>
	<p>Update your Doctoral Researcher Profile in the VRE</p> <p><i>The doctoral researcher profile you enter in the VRE is publicly available via the University’s website and is a fantastic way in which to publicise yourself and your project.</i></p> <p><i>To update your profile, navigate to ‘My Record’ and then ‘Edit Researcher Profile’. You can then populate the field and hit ‘save’.</i></p> <p><i>Look out for dedicated workshops via the DRDP if you’d benefit from tips on how to approach this.</i></p>
	<p>Log into Blackboard</p> <p><i>Familiarise yourself with the platform and check you are added to the correct course(s) (if relevant).</i></p> <p><i>See: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard</i></p>
	<p>Social Media – another way to receive updates from Graduate School</p> <p><i>The Graduate School is on Twitter if you wanted to give us a Follow - @uw_gs</i></p> <p><i>There is also a Facebook group ‘Research Students at the University of Westminster’. Admission is managed by the Graduate School but thereafter researchers are encouraged to share relevant news items, ask questions,</i></p>

<i>and use it as best suits their needs. Members include current and past researchers and staff.</i>
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Other Useful Information:

Official Letters

You can request the following types of official letter online via our self-service system:

- Confirmation of enrolment
- Bank letter
- Council Tax Exemption Certificate (see <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/accommodation/private-rented-accommodation/who-pays-council-tax> for more information on eligibility)

For information on how to produce a self-service letter visit <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/student-matters/official-letter-requests>

Travel/Rail Discounts

Make sure to look into a Student Oyster Card with Transport for London which offers 33% off travel (<https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/student-travel>) and a Young Persons Railcard which offers 30% off travel (despite the name these are for everyone aged 16-25 and mature students – visit <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>).

The Graduate School Registry can officially stamp Rail Card applications for you. Please send the completed PDF form to our inbox and we'll complete and return the form to you.

Contact and Appointment Times

The Graduate School Registry Team operate on a SMART working model. This means that team members will sometimes be in the office at Wells Street and sometimes will be working elsewhere. Please contact us via the team email: graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk.

In addition, we will be available for weekly appointments during the following times:

Tuesdays 11am – 3pm (in-person)

Thursdays 10am – 2pm (online via MS Teams)

If you wish to book an appointment during one of these times, please complete our [booking form](#).

If you have an urgent question, please email graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk and we will contact you.

In the event of an emergency please call 020 7911 5000 (ext. 5555).