

Graduate School

New Starter Checklist January 2026

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 have put together the following checklist to help you get started.

If you have any questions at any time, please email us at graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk and one of the team will be more than happy to assist.

Checklist - Task/Activity	Complete ?
Enrol with the university	
<p>Set up your university email account:</p> <p>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, there is a risk you will miss important communications which may affect your enrolment status.</p> <p>Email forwarding rules are not permitted on Microsoft 365 Doctoral Researcher accounts.</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>	
<p>Enrol and collect your student ID card</p> <p>Wednesday 14th January 2026, 11.30am – 1.00pm, Marylebone Campus, W1B 2HW</p>	
<p>Attend the Graduate School Induction Event</p> <p>Wednesday 14th January 2026, 2pm – 5pm, UG.02, Regent Street, W1B 2HW</p> <p>You will meet the Graduate School team, hear about how we support you and learn about your programme structure.</p>	
<p>Attend the Graduate School Welcome Reception</p> <p>Wednesday 14th January 2026, 5pm – 7pm, UG.02, Regent Street, W1B 2HW</p> <p>A drinks reception where you can network with doctoral researchers and University of Westminster colleagues</p>	

Checklist - Task/Activity	Complete ?
<p>Attend your School Induction Event and Workshop ‘Starting out as a Researcher’</p> <p>The workshop starts immediately after your School’s Induction Event. Dates and times vary, please refer to the Graduate School Enrolment and Induction Programme Booklet for details: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/before-you-arrive/enrolment/graduate-school-enrolment-and-arrival</p> <p>We will also confirm the timings at the Graduate School induction.</p>	
<p>Make a note of and attend the essential DRDP workshops:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Your Research at Westminster and Introduction to the DRDP, Wednesday 28 January 2026, 10am – 3.30pm The Ethical Researcher, Thursday 29 January 2026, 1pm - 4pm <p>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.</p> <p>Further Information about these workshops can be found on: https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/doctoralresearcherdevelopmentprogramme/doctoral-essentials/</p>	
<p>Have your first meeting with your Director of Studies and/or supervisory team.</p> <p>This should be held within your first two weeks after enrolment. The meeting should establish the schedule of supervisory meetings in at least the first six months of study.</p>	
<p>Complete a log of your first supervision meeting and submit it via the Virtual Research Environment (VRE).</p> <p>Log into the VRE and navigate to your <i>Doctoral Research Project Page</i>. Select the <i>Supervision Meetings</i> tab and then <i>New Supervision Meeting</i> to complete the log.</p> <p>A log should be completed after every supervision meeting.</p>	
<p>Complete the Skills Assessment Form with your supervisory team.</p>	

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<p>One of your first meetings with your supervisory team should also provide the opportunity for you to complete the 'Skills Assessment Form' with the team, enabling any skills, training, and development needs for the coming year to be discussed, agreed, and planned for.</p> <p>This assessment will refer to the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP) website, detailing the development sessions being offered during the year. The Skills Assessment Form will then be reviewed alongside your Annual Progress Review each year (or every other year for part-time students).</p> <p>The Skills Assessment form can be found here.</p>	
<p>Consult the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP) and sign up to relevant workshops, in addition to those highlighted above.</p> <p>The DRDP consists of tailor-made workshops and specialist skills sessions 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.</p> <p>All DRDP workshops and activities can be searched, viewed and booked via the Inkpath platform. You can download Inkpath from your app store or go to the Inkpath Web App. For more guidance, visit our booking information</p>	
<p>Enter your thesis title into the VRE.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>To update the title, navigate to <i>My Record</i>, then <i>Doctoral Research Project</i>, and finally <i>Edit</i>. You can then populate the field and hit save.</p> <p>Remember to remove the default text before adding your thesis title.</p>	
<p>Update your Doctoral Researcher Profile in the VRE.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>To update your profile, navigate to <i>My Record</i> and then <i>Edit Researcher Profile</i>. You can then populate the field and hit save.</p> <p>Log into Blackboard</p>	

Checklist - Task/Activity	Complete ?
<p>Familiarise yourself with the Blackboard platform and check you are added to the correct course(s) (if relevant).</p> <p>https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard</p>	
<p>Social media – another way to receive updates from the Graduate School</p> <p>The Graduate School is on Bluesky if you wanted to give us a Follow - @uowgraduateschool.bsky.social</p> <p>and Instagram - @uowgraduateschool</p> <p>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, and use it as best suits their needs. Members include current and past researchers and staff.</p>	
<p>Consider joining the PhD Society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head to https://uwsu.com/societies/view/PhD 2. click "Sign in" 3. Use your University of Westminster account to sign in 4. Add membership to "basket" (Free) 5. Finish the free purchase following the checkout step 	

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 the following website for more information on eligibility)

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/accommodation/private-rented-accommodation/who-pays-council-tax>

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 investigate 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 Student Centre can officially stamp Rail Card applications for you. Please email the completed PDF form to: studentcentre@westminster.ac.uk or you can take it to one of their service points on campus at: service points at Harrow, Cavendish or Marylebone Campus.

Contact and Appointment Times

The Graduate School Office operates on a SMART working model. This means that team members will sometimes be in their office UG01 at Regent Street and sometimes will be working elsewhere. Please contact graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

The Graduate School offers both in-person and online appointments (via MS Teams). To make an appointment or for general enquiries, please contact the Graduate School via graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

If your enquiry is urgent, please indicate this in your email subject line.

In the event of an emergency please call the main university switchboard on 020 7911 5000.

You can also contact the Doctoral Tutor to discuss any problems that you feel might be better approached by somebody outside of your supervisory team. Doctoral Tutor hours can be found [here](#).

Research Degree Academic Regulations

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>

Research Degree Handbook 2025-26

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>