



Employability experiences
for postgraduate research students



ROYAL
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Introduction

The Doctoral School aims to give you, as a postgraduate researcher (PGR), as many opportunities as possible to enrich your student experience and develop skills to support future career pathways, whether inside or outside academia. You can find these activities in this brochure, and they include:

- PGR placement schemes
- alumni mentoring scheme
- PGR alumni speaker series
- training for an academic career

These activities supplement the training and employability experiences already available to postgraduate researchers within the academic schools.



PGR placement schemes

Our postgraduate researchers who undertake placements during their research degree consistently report how positive the experiences is. Placements provide the opportunity to develop a wealth of employability skills and invaluable networking links.

What can you gain from going on a placement?

Placements:

- create opportunities for you to engage with non-academic audiences
- encourage you to develop key skills in communicating successfully with those outside of their own area of expertise
- help you to gain confidence in your own knowledge
- provide an opportunity for you to gain a broader perspective on the skills you have to offer
- help you to gain different perspectives on deadlines and target setting
- enhance your networks and develop collaborations and connections, some of which could lead to careers outside of academia.

Please note that you will need to get approval from your supervisor to apply for the placement schemes. If you are on a student visa, restrictions will apply to how much you can work, so please contact the [International Student Support Office](#) for advice before applying.



PGR career enhancement placement scheme

Have you developed a connection with an organisation, and would love to do a placement with them to enrich your skills and career prospects, but are not able to as it is unpaid? This is where the PGR career enhancement placement scheme comes in.

Who is eligible to apply?

Any current Royal Holloway postgraduate researcher who has identified a suitable placement opportunity and is not able to secure funding to support the placement elsewhere (e.g. via their Research Council)

Highlights of the scheme

- provides financial support for unpaid placements of up to three months.
- supports placements for the purposes of enhancing your employability skills and career prospects i.e. not integral to your research.
- interrupts your studies for the period of the placement i.e. your submission deadline will be extended by the period of the placement.
- allows College-funded students to continue receiving their stipend payment during the placement, with an extension to their funding end date. Self-funded students will receive a bursary in line with the College studentship stipend for the period of the placement.
- allows you to claim expenses of up to £1,500 claimed for travel and accommodation to support the placement.
- covers any suitable placement opportunity sourced by the College with an existing external partner, which will be advertised as they become available, in addition to the self-sourced placement opportunities.
- provides funding for at least six postgraduate researchers to take a placement each year

Find out more about this pilot scheme for 2022/23, and how to apply



StoryFutures PhD placement in industry scheme

StoryFutures is part of a Government UK-wide investment in the creative industries, administered through the AHRC (Arts & Humanities Research Council) to fuel industry growth through research and development. Sitting within Royal Holloway's Centre for Digital Creativity, *StoryFutures* is focused on experimentation in new technologies and the future of storytelling, funding and collaborating with producing SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) working in virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence and all forms of immersive, technology-driven storytelling.

The aim of this pilot scheme is to provide a bridge to creating jobs, a skills pipeline, and long-lasting relationships between industry and university talent and expertise.

Who is eligible to apply?

All current Royal Holloway postgraduate researchers.

Highlights of the scheme

- offers two placement opportunities with *StoryFutures'* SME partners to work on a pre-defined research and development project, which current Royal Holloway postgraduate researchers can apply for in the autumn 2022
- runs for up to eight weeks but this could be spread over a period of time to suit the SME's needs and your availability
- exists predominantly as a work experience and skills development opportunity rather than feeding into your own research project
- interrupts your studies for the period of the placement i.e. your submission deadline will be extended by the period of the placement (or full-time equivalent)
- provides funding during the placement in line with spine 13 of Royal Holloway's pay scale.

[Find out more about this pilot scheme](#)



GRADnet employer engagement programme for postgraduate researchers

The [Graduate Network](#), run by the [South-East Physics Network](#), delivers professional development for postgraduate researchers and early-career researchers. While its primary focus is on training aimed at Physics researchers, some aspects of the scheme are open to any postgraduate researcher at Royal Holloway whose research is within any of the STEM subjects.

GRADnet placement scheme

Among the development opportunities provided is a [placement scheme](#), which aims to give you an opportunity to gain insights and experiences of careers beyond academia - and to understand how your research might fit into an industry environment

Who is eligible to apply?

Any current Royal Holloway postgraduate researcher in the Department of Physics

Highlights of the scheme

- provides placement opportunities lasting between one week and three months
- offers both unpaid and paid placements. Placements of more than one month are likely to be paid
- may interrupt your studies, depending on your Research Council guidelines, whether the payment is paid, and whether it is integral to your research.

GRADnet training

Who is eligible to attend?

Any current Royal Holloway postgraduate researcher whose research is within one of the STEM subjects.

GRADnet training covers a wide range of advanced physics as well as professional skills training, relevant to STEM students. Many of the training activities are offered as in-person workshops at locations in the south east, enhancing networking and collaboration opportunities. Examples of core training events include residential courses (e.g. a summer and a winter school) for PGR students and postdocs to develop their professional and technical skills, student-led conferences, and a range of discipline-focused events.

[Find out more about GRADnet's training and the placement scheme](#)

Alumni mentoring scheme: Royal Holloway Connect

Our alumni community platform, Royal Holloway Connect, gives current students access to alumni who can help support them through their studies and beyond.

Who is invited to join?

All current Royal Holloway postgraduate researchers.

Highlights of the scheme

- facilitates transition from university to employment, which can be a daunting experience
- provides practical and tangible support from the experience and expertise of our alumni mentors.
- provides PGR alumni mentors, who can share tips and insights to help you negotiate the writing up process and prepare for your viva.

To join Royal Holloway Connect, and start engaging with alumni mentors who can support you, scan the QR code or visit royalholloway.alumni.community.

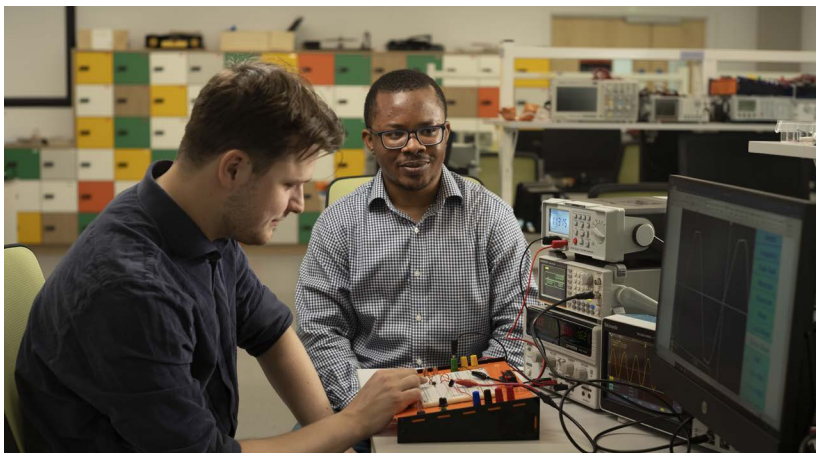


“I found speaking to graduates in the years above me helpful when I was deciding what to do after graduating. Being able to have a quick honest chat about what it’s like to work in a particular industry or get some advice on what to include in my application really helped me with my career.”

Tom Corbin

Geography 2015

Associate Planner, Prior + Partners



PGR alumni speaker series

Hear directly from Royal Holloway PGR alumni about their career experiences since graduating to gain not only invaluable insights into possible career pathways after your research degree, but also an opportunity to build networks beyond your core discipline.

Who is invited to attend?

All current Royal Holloway postgraduate researchers and staff.

Highlights of the series

- invites recent PGR graduates to come to campus to speak with you about their career experiences since leaving the College.
- covers a broad range of topics, areas of interest, and career pathways.
- includes speakers with different backgrounds, PhD experiences and academic disciplines.

There will be one talk per term, followed by a drinks reception to provide networking opportunities:

[Find out more about this speaker series](#)



Training for an academic career

The College offers training that equips postgraduate researchers with the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to pursue a range of graduate destinations. If you wish to become an academic, you can benefit from a structured programme of training and other opportunities that support your development and prospects.

Who is eligible to attend?

All current Royal Holloway postgraduate researchers.

Highlights of the series

- delivered variously through the College's Researcher Development Programme (RDP) and through training organised by individual schools, or by schools working in collaboration
- offers a changing programme depending on postgraduate researchers' needs.
- includes sessions in areas similar to these provided in the recent past: Copyright and creativity; Writing a journal article; Organising and presenting at conferences; Planning for research impact; Research ethics; Communicating with different audiences; Data visualisation; Developing academic networks; How to get published; Preparing grant applications; Leading and managing academic projects; Applying for academic jobs.
- is supported by other activities such as career development workshops on specific topics (such as preparing postdoctoral applications), mentoring schemes, platform discussions with recent graduates and prospective employers, and undergraduate teaching opportunities that enhance your CV and preparedness for careers in academia
- provides regular opportunities to apply for funding to curate/organise research-related events to develop your leadership and networking skills, and to raise the profile of your research.

[Find out more](#)





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