



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH
DOCTORAL COLLEGE

Skills Forge: a step-by-step guide for University of Portsmouth Postgraduate Research Students

A screenshot of the Skillsforge web application interface. The header includes the University of Portsmouth logo, the text 'Skillsforge', and a 'Sign Out' button. A navigation menu contains 'Home', 'My Diary', 'Development Needs Analysis', 'Development Activities', and 'Annual Leave'. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to SkillsForge at Portsmouth' and features a 'Meeting records that still need to be signed off:' section with a green checkmark and the text 'All of your records are signed!'. To the right, there are sections for 'Announcements' and 'Useful Shortcuts', which lists links for 'My Diary', 'Development Needs Analysis', and 'Development Activities'.

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Introduction

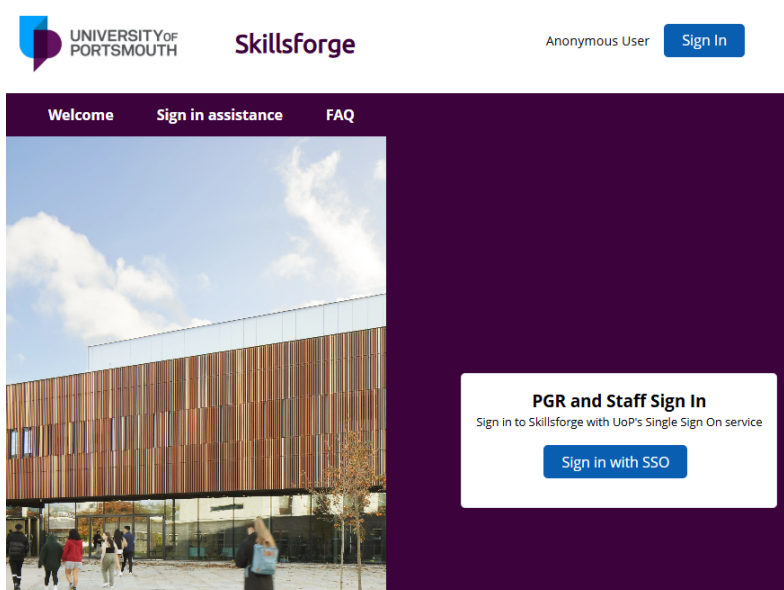
Skills Forge is an interactive web-based system that you will use to:

- ✓ Book your place on Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) Workshops;
- ✓ Manage your development needs (Development Needs Analysis);
- ✓ Maintain a record of your supervision meetings;
- ✓ Record annual leave.

Please contact the Graduate School Development Programme Team (gsdp@port.ac.uk) with any questions about Skills Forge.

Accessing Skills Forge

Skills Forge can be accessed via skillsforge.port.ac.uk



Signing in to Skills Forge

Skills Forge uses Single Sign-On (SSO) and Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). To sign in to Skills Forge:

1. Single Sign-On (SSO):
 - Click on the "Sign in with SSO" button.
 - You will be redirected to the University of Portsmouth's 'Uni Login' page.
 - Enter your University username and password.
2. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):
 - After signing into the 'Uni Login' page, you will be prompted to complete Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).
 - See guidance for using MFA for PGR students or guidance for using MFA for staff.
3. Access Skills Forge: Once authenticated, you will be redirected back to Skills Forge, where you can manage your Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) bookings, record your own development activities and record supervision meeting notes.

If you have *both* student and staff credentials at the University of Portsmouth, you may need to switch accounts to access Skills Forge. Follow these steps:

- Log Out of Current SSO Session: Ensure you are logged out of your current SSO session. You can do this by closing your browser or explicitly logging out from the University SSO portal.
 - Open a New Browser Window: Open a new browser window or use an incognito/private browser.
 - Setting Up Different Browser Profiles: Set-up different browser profiles for your staff and student account. This will allow you to quickly switch between profiles without needing to log out and log back in. Find out how to [manage Chrome with multiple profiles](#), or [create multiple profiles in Microsoft Edge](#).
- ✓ In compliance with our Communications Policy, Skills Forge will always use your @myport email address for correspondence. If you will be using another email address you should set-up [email forwarding](#) to your preferred address to avoid missing important communications.

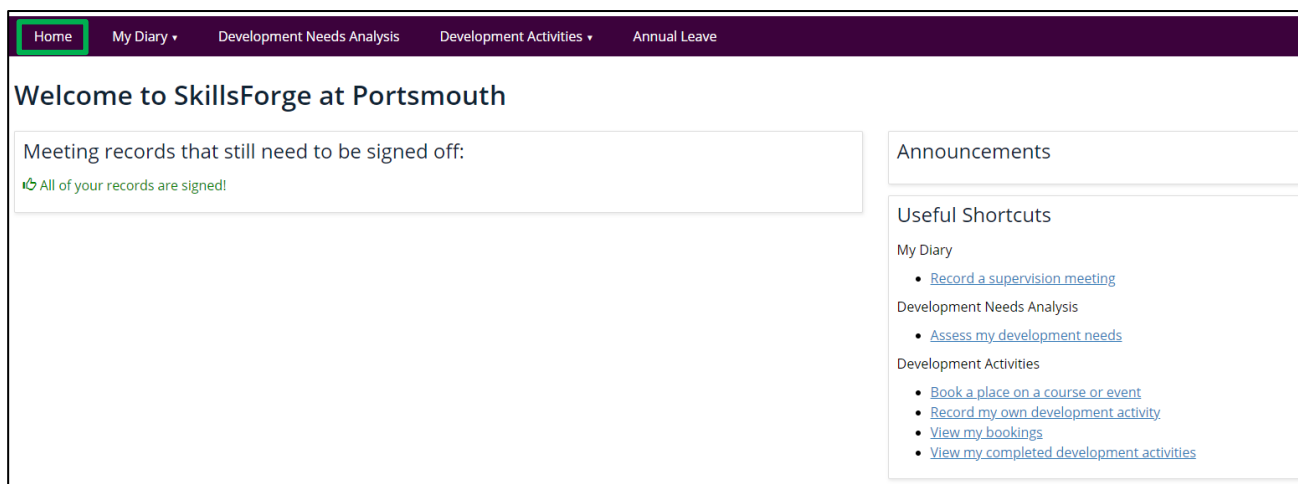
Navigating your way around Skills Forge

The main menu for Skills Forge is represented by a row of tabs. These tabs will always be visible no matter what screen you are in.



The 'Home' Tab

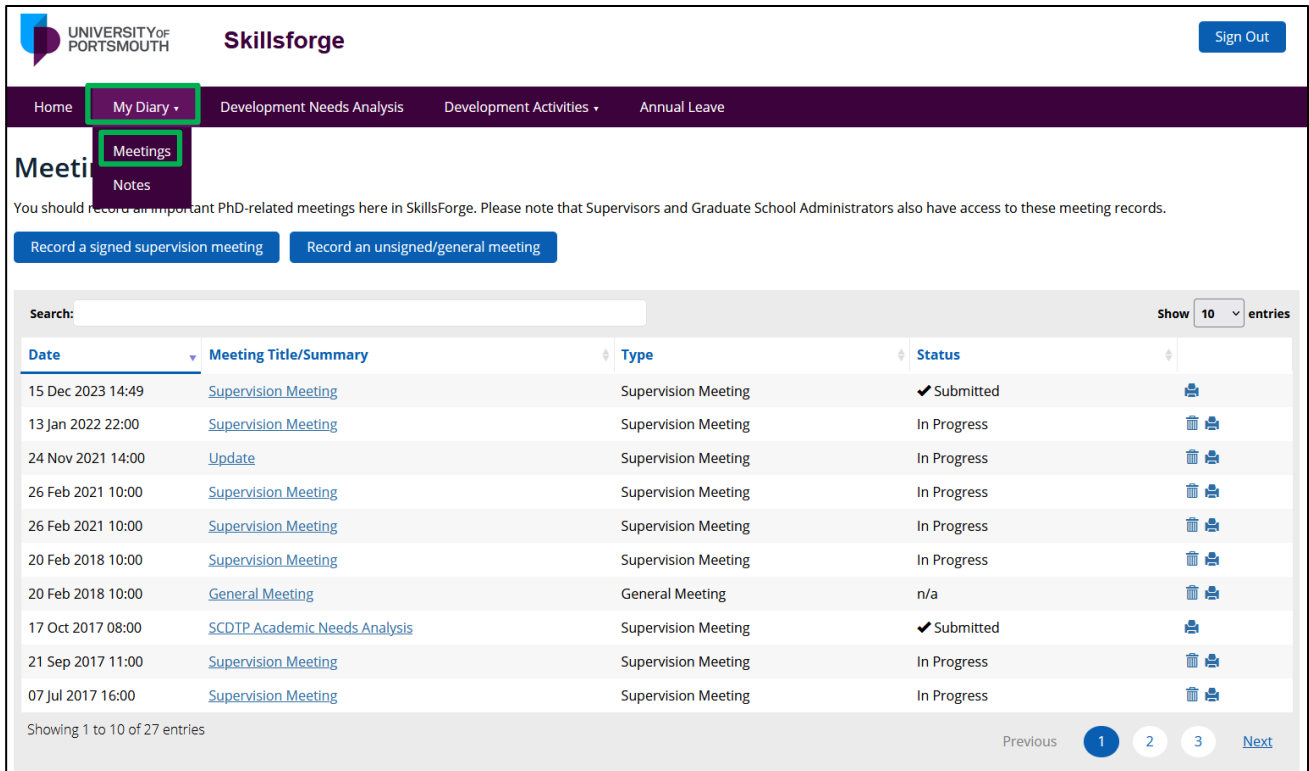
- Find a personalised dashboard which allows you to see any outstanding meeting records that are awaiting a signature from you and/or your supervisor(s).
- Use the Useful Shortcuts links to get one click access to the most used parts of Skills Forge.
- View any Announcements that have been added by the Graduate School Development Programme Team.



The 'My diary' tab

Meetings

It is very important that you keep a record of what you discussed in meetings with members of your supervisory team and, in particular, that you record any actions that were agreed. You can see a list of all your meeting records, including their type and status, from the **Meetings** page.



UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH Skillsforge Sign Out

Home My Diary Development Needs Analysis Development Activities Annual Leave

Meetings Notes

You should record an important PhD-related meetings here in SkillsForge. Please note that Supervisors and Graduate School Administrators also have access to these meeting records.

Record a signed supervision meeting Record an unsigned/general meeting

Search: Show 10 entries

Date	Meeting Title/Summary	Type	Status
15 Dec 2023 14:49	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	✓ Submitted
13 Jan 2022 22:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
24 Nov 2021 14:00	Update	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
26 Feb 2021 10:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
26 Feb 2021 10:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
20 Feb 2018 10:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
20 Feb 2018 10:00	General Meeting	General Meeting	n/a
17 Oct 2017 08:00	SCDTP Academic Needs Analysis	Supervision Meeting	✓ Submitted
21 Sep 2017 11:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress
07 Jul 2017 16:00	Supervision Meeting	Supervision Meeting	In Progress

Showing 1 to 10 of 27 entries Previous 1 2 3 Next

There are two types of meetings that you can record:

Signed supervision meeting

If you add a **Signed Supervision Meeting** there is the option for you and your supervisor(s) to 'sign' the meeting record. Once all selected Signature Participants have 'signed' the Supervision Meeting record it cannot be changed, so make sure you read all the content carefully before you sign it. To add a **Signed Supervision Meeting**:

1. Click on **Record a signed supervision meeting**.
2. Add a Title/Summary and add all the relevant information, including the actions completed and future actions.
3. To attach a document click **Choose a file to upload** and select the file you wish to attach. Then click **'Open'** to attach the file.
4. Select who attended the meeting by checking the appropriate boxes.
5. Click **Sign**, then click to **Save** your meeting record.
6. The selected Signature Participants will now have access to the meeting record and can either suggest amendments or also sign it.
7. The last person to sign the form will then be given the option to **Submit** the record, and it will no longer be editable.



Supervision Meeting

[Help](#)

History:

Supervision Title / Summary

Date of meeting

Actions completed or still ongoing since the last supervision meeting

Student comments

Supervisor(s) comments

Future actions and agreed training

File Attachments

Quota used: 0.00MB 50.00MB

[Choose a file to upload...](#)

Signature Participants

This form should be reviewed and signed by **the student and any supervisors who attended the meeting**. Please ensure they are *selected to sign* in the list below.

Note: Any amendments to this form will require all those selected to sign, to re-sign.

- Student, Mr Test** [Masters by Research Training]
- Supervisor, Mr Test** [Supervisor]

Signatures

Not enough people have been selected to sign yet. Please revise the **Signature Participants** list above.

[Close](#)

Unsigned/general meeting

Click on **Record an unsigned/general meeting** to create a general meeting record. General Meeting records cannot be signed off but can be used to record other important information. These records only require a meeting title/summary, date, time and any comments/actions that you would like to record. They do not require signatures but are visible to your supervisors.

Notes

Records that you enter on this page are for your own personal use - no one else can see them. You can add the following details to Notes:

1. Note Title/Summary.
2. Date.
3. Further Information (i.e. the content of the note).

The 'Development Needs Analysis' Tab

The Development Needs Analysis enables you to review your current research skills and plan your development. Within each of the 10 development areas there are individual skills to review, where you can select the timeframe for development, and your level of confidence.

This process is designed to promote reflection and planning. Your ratings are visible to your supervisor(s) and so they can be a useful place to start when you discuss your professional development as a researcher.

- Select one of the development areas.
- Click on the ▶ icon to read more about each skill within the development area.
- Select the timeframe for when you feel you need work on the skill.
- Rate your current confidence in the skill.
- Click **Save**.

The 'Development Activities' tab

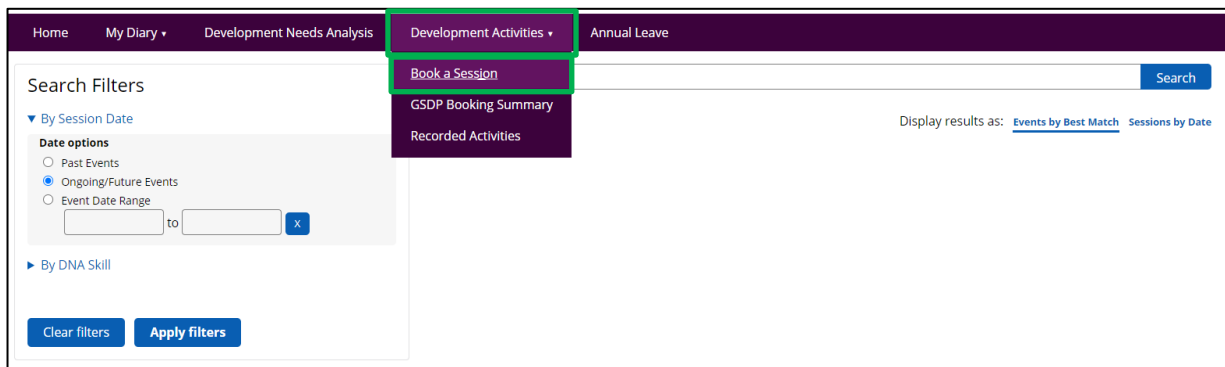
Book a Session

Use the **Book a Session** option to book a place on the [Graduate School Development Programme](#) workshops.

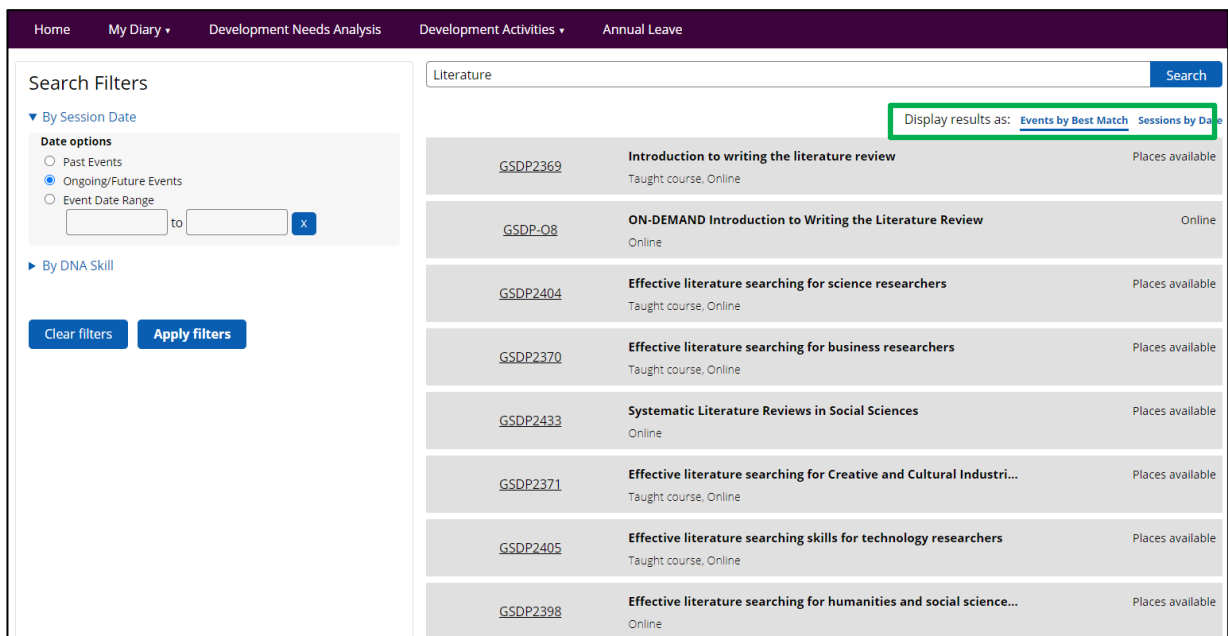
Once you and your supervisor have some clarity about your priority development areas you can use Skills Forge to book your place on relevant Graduate School Development Programme (GSDP) workshops.

Search for Workshop Sessions

- Click on the '**Development Activities**' Tab.
- Select **Book a Session**.



- If you know the GSDP code or title of a particular workshop, enter this information into the search box and select to display the results as:
 - **Events by Best Match** – this will sort the results by the most relevant to your search.
 - **Sessions by Date** – this will sort the results by the date of the sessions.
 - You can leave the search box blank and just search for all sessions in date order by clicking **Sessions by Date**.
- When your search results appear, click on the event you interested in.



Workshop Session booking page

Once you have searched for and clicked on an event, you will be taken to the Workshop Session booking page. From here you will see the following information:

- Summary – please read the information in the Summary carefully. Please make a note of any Event Preparation you may need to complete before attending the workshop.
- Available Dates – this contains the date and time of the workshop, and if the workshop will be in-person or online, and the venue.
 - Please Note: for in-person events, you will see either “Taught course” or “In-person”, and a physical location.

GSDP2369

Introduction to writing the literature review

Summary

This event has been organised by Graduate School Development Programme. For any enquiries please contact gmdp@port.ac.uk.

Mode of Delivery: BLENDED - IN-PERSON (Taught course) OR ONLINE (Please ensure you select the workshop for your preferred mode of attendance)
Event Preparation: Yes

- Before attending the Introduction to Writing the Literature Review workshop please complete the [pre-workshop activities](#) found in Moodle. These activities will take approximately 1.5 hours, and completion of these activities will be recorded by the Graduate School in Skills Forge, as part of your attendance at this workshop.

Event Description: Whether you are writing for your major review, a journal article, or your dissertation or thesis, this workshop will help you to identify the key components and purposes of a literature review. Using real-life examples, you will explore different structures for the literature review and discuss how to develop a coherent line of argument. Resources for this workshop can be found on [Moodle](#).

Available Dates

This course is delivered in single session. To make a booking, please ensure one of the available dates is selected below.

Session 1

30 Jan 2024 15:00 - 17:00
Taught course PLACES
Venue: St Andrews Court 4.09, St Andrews Court Main Block
[Details](#)

15 May 2024 15:00 - 16:00
Online PLACES
Venue: ONLINE SESSION
[Details](#)

Book

To book a workshop session:

- Select the date for the workshop you want to attend.
- Click **Book**.
- A ‘Booking confirmation’ box will appear. Click **Book** to confirm.
- A confirmation message will appear on the screen - click **OK**.

Waiting List

Places on some of the GSDP workshops are in high demand. Where an event is oversubscribed, Skills Forge maintains a waiting list of workshop places. If a cancellation is made then the first person of the waiting list will be offered a place via an email to their @myport address.

If there are no places available for a workshop, it will say “WAITING LIST” in the Session box.

To add yourself to a waiting list:

- Select which date(s) you want to be added to the waiting list for.
- Click **Register on waiting list**.
- A confirmation message will appear.

Available Dates

You have previously cancelled a booking.

This course has a waiting list. To join it, please ensure all the dates you can make are selected in the list below. We will offer you a place when one becomes available.

Session 1

22 Jan 2024 10:00 - 12:00
In-person WAITING LIST
Venue: St Andrews Court 4.09, St Andrews Court Main Block
[Details](#)

26 Jan 2024 11:00 - 13:00
Online WAITING LIST
Venue: ONLINE SESSION
[Details](#)

[Select all sessions](#) [Unselect all sessions](#)

[Register on waiting list](#)

GSDP Booking Summary

The **GSDP Booking Summary** page shows you the GSDP events you have booked onto or are on the waiting list for. You can use the links from the GSDP codes on this page to manage your workshop bookings, for example, cancelling your place on a workshop.

Date	Title	Status	Attendance
2024/01/23	GSDP2361 - PhD Writing Retreat	Booked	-
2023/12/11	GSDP2456 - Managing your Research Data and Documents	Finished	1 session(s): Attended 1
-	GRAD10 - Annual and Major Review Presentation Workshop	On waiting list	-

labelling a Workshop Booking

Places on some of the GSDP workshops are in high demand. Once you have booked a place on a workshop it is important that you keep the date free so that you can attend.

If you can no longer attend a workshop, you can cancel your booking through Skills Forge. To cancel a booking (up to 48 hours before the event is due to take place):

- Click on the '**Development Activities**' tab.
- Select **GSDP Booking Summary**.
- Click the relevant **GSDP code link** on this screen.
- Click the **Cancel this booking** button at bottom of the page.
- A confirmation box will appear. Click **Cancel** to confirm.
- A confirmation message will appear on the screen - click **OK**.

Recorded Activities

You can see a list of all your development activities from the **Recorded Activities** page, and this is where you can record your own activities.

Recorded Activities

There are many activities that constitute training and development once the course has finished and you can record additional activities you are undertaking as part of your day-to-day studies. Your [booked courses](#) will appear here automatically

[See some example activities](#)

[Record a new activity](#)

Search: Show 10 entries

Date	Title / Summary	Skills	
15 Dec 2023	Test event	● Academic Skills	
15 Dec 2023	Test event	● Academic Skills	
15 Dec 2023	Test event	● Academic Skills	
04 Dec 2023	Belonging, agency and purpose in the digital university		

Recording attendance at GSDP workshops

After you have attended a GSDP workshop, your attendance will be recorded in Skills Forge. Please note that it may take a few weeks for session attendance to be processed. Once your attendance has been processed, the event record will appear within the '**Recorded Activities**' page, and the system will generate a record for your reflections.

You can create a record for any training and development events you undertake in your schools/department and Faculty. Moreover, records can be created for any experience that helps you with your research or career planning. Common examples include:

- [GProf](#) Introduction to teaching for PGRS;
- [In-Sessional English](#) for speakers of English as a second language;
- Online training available on the [Graduate School Moodle Hub](#);
- Presenting papers;
- Organising an event;
- Attending committees;
- Wellbeing, community and networking activities.

Record a new activity

To record a development activity that you have undertaken:

- Click **Record a new activity**.
- Complete the Training Course Title box and add all other relevant information.
- If you have a file to upload (e.g. a certificate of completion), click **Choose a file to upload** and follow the onscreen instruction.
- Click **Save**.

Creating a file of your Recorded Activities

At least once each year you will be required to provide a list of development activities that you have undertaken. You can print this list from the **Recorded Activities** page:

- Click on the '**Development Activities**' tab.
- Select **Recorded Activities**.
- Click **Print**.
- A box will open where you can select your printing options.
 - Select to save the document as a PDF file.
 - Follow the onscreen instructions to Save/Print the document.

The 'Annual Leave' Tab

All postgraduate research (PGR) students should plan their time carefully to ensure their balance of research, leave and work supports wellbeing and enables the research to be completed by the submission date. In accordance with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) guidance, a full-time PGR student can take off 6 weeks (30 days), or part-time PGR students 3 weeks (15 days), annual leave each year (on top of bank holidays and the University Christmas Closure). Your leave year is the same as your registration year i.e. 1st Oct-30th Sep/ 1st Feb – 31st Jan/1st April-31st March.

Further information can be found in the [Research Degrees Operational Handbook](#).

Tier 4/Student Route Visa Working Restrictions - Student Responsibility

Full-time PGR students on visas must record authorised Annual Leave as it impacts the number of hours per week they can work (part-time students on visas are not permitted to work). Visas and bursary agreements should also be checked carefully as they may contain additional restrictions on the hours of work permitted.

See the [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) website and the [Working during your studies webpage](#) for further information.

The University is periodically audited to ensure international students are compliant with working restrictions and attendance, and it is your responsibility to maintain accurate records for this purpose.

To record your annual leave:

- Click on the '**Annual Leave**' tab.
- Click **Annual Leave Request**.
- Complete the Summary box to give the annual leave period a name (e.g. Annual Leave Summer 2024).
- Set the date for the Start and End of the leave period.
- Add any comments.
- Click **Save**.

To edit an Annual Leave record:

- Click on the '**Annual Leave**' tab.
- Click on the Summary title of the Annual Leave record.
- Edit the record as required.
- Click **Save**.

To delete an Annual Leave record:

- Click on the '**Annual Leave**' tab.
- Locate the Annual Leave record you want to delete.
- Click the bin icon (delete form).
- Click **Delete**.