

COMMUNITY • DEVELOPMENT • CONNECTION • OPPORTUNITY • RESEARCH • INTERNATIONAL

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER | DOCTORAL
COLLEGE



THE GLOBAL
TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION **100**
UNIVERSITY

www.exeter.ac.uk/doctoralcollege





Welcome to the University of Exeter and our Doctoral College.

Here at the University of Exeter postgraduate research students and early career researchers are at the heart of what we do. Our Doctoral College works across discipline boundaries to ensure all research students and early career researchers receive excellent training and support and are part of an inspiring and collaborative research community.

We are the fastest growing research intensive university in the UK and 98 per cent of our research was rated as international or world-leading quality in the national Research Excellence Framework (REF).^{*} Importantly, our postgraduate research students and early career research students contributed to a large proportion of these papers.

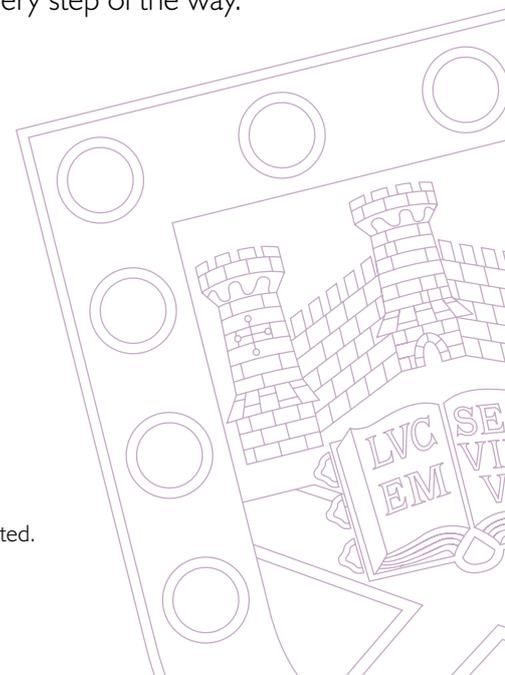
My role is to lead the Doctoral College to ensure you have the best experience and support when undertaking your research with us. We offer a number of research degrees, which are a level above taught postgraduate programmes and involve undertaking an independent research project under academic supervision. This brochure will hopefully give you a flavour of our research expertise, what it's like to work or pursue a research degree with us, along with the practicalities of how to search for funding and apply.

Becoming an academic researcher takes commitment and dedication: our Doctoral College is here to support you, every step of the way.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Ryan". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line underneath.

Professor Michelle Ryan
Dean of Postgraduate Research
Professor of Social and Organisational Psychology

^{*} taking account of our quality and the proportion of staff submitted.



Research Exercise Framework (REF) confirms Exeter as a global research player

- **98 per cent** of our research is of international or world-leading quality (Research Exercise Framework 2014).
- **World-leading research** and impact in **all subjects**.
- **Nine units of assessment in the top 10 nationally for world-leading or internationally excellent research:** Theology, Area Studies, Archaeology, Politics, Sociology, Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences, Public Health, Biological Sciences.
- **HEFCE has awarded us an additional £3.8 million** for research following the REF; the third highest gain amongst English universities.

A global top 100 university with an international outlook

- **7th in the UK** (*The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2016*) and **93rd in the world** (*Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016*).
- Our flourishing **international reputation** means we're home to students from 130 different countries and employ staff from over 70.
- Between 2008/09 and 2014/15, our **research income has grown by 87 per cent** from £33.3m to £62.2m, and our **Research Councils UK income has increased 92 per cent** from £13.1m to £25.1m.
- This has enabled us to **recruit the best academic researchers** and to offer **hundreds of funded PhD studentships**.
- **A supportive and collaborative environment** in which to pursue research, offering excellent workspaces, resources and access to **high quality training** and supervision.







Collaboration locally, nationally and internationally

- We are at the **forefront of global collaboration**, actively supporting our staff and students to build working relationships with counterparts overseas.
- Our **international collaborations** span a range of disciplines and countries, from our partnership with the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore, to a pan-University memorandum of understanding supporting research collaboration, student exchange and joint conferences with Peking University.
- In addition to the array of partnerships we hold with other Russell Group universities and publically-funded bodies, **our industry partners include: Airbus, Glaxos Smith Kline, IBM and Rolls Royce.**

Closer to home we:

- are a **leading player in the GW4 research network** of universities in the South West of the UK and the SETsquared network of enterprise and knowledge transfer centres;
- **use our research to positively benefit our local communities**, from improving health and wellbeing through physical activity, to helping those who experience severe or recurrent mood disorders, to community-based energy saving initiatives in Cornwall.

Research Council Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres

- Our **research reputation** has resulted in the University being awarded **over a dozen externally-funded doctoral training centres** with a range of prestigious partners.
- These centres offer **PhD funding in the form of studentships** alongside a range of other benefits. These include research supervision and training from more than one institution, and opportunities to engage in **research collaborations with leading researchers** from across the partnership.

More information:

www.exeter.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/dtp



At Exeter, we offer an exceptional doctoral training experience across the spectrum of our research areas. We are members of over a dozen doctoral training centres – in specialisms ranging from ancient history to water informatics. This places us at the forefront of world-class research in science, technology, the humanities and the social sciences, as a leading centre for postgraduate research.



Professor Nick Talbot FRS,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Exceptional interdisciplinary research

The following examples of our research are not exhaustive. Please visit the A-Z of our research areas to explore our research expertise in depth.

www.exeter.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/subjectlinks

Climate change, the environment and sustainability

The climate and environment are so core to our work that research expertise can be found in all six of our academic colleges. From understanding climate change through archaeology to climate change prediction – our climate and environment research expertise is broad. Our interdisciplinary research in these areas extends to other prestigious university partners and wider industry, including the Met Office and Rothampsted North Wyke.

The main focus of our climate and environmental research falls into the following themes:

Climate change and sustainable futures

- earth systems science
- climate dynamics
- environmental attitudes and behaviour
- ecosystem impacts
- environment and health

Environment and sustainability

- the challenges of environmental sustainability
- the causes of degradation and exploitation of the environment
- the processes of living with change

Food security

The challenge of ensuring global food security is at the heart of the Food Security and Land Research Alliance. We are one of the Alliance's five prestigious partners researching how to increase crop yields in a manner that requires a much lower dependency on chemical intervention and fertilizers.

The Alliance unites our individual research strengths, making us one of the leading international players in agro-food and land-based research. We bring a wide range of disciplines to the issue of food security, from economists analysing the determinants of food prices to biochemists protecting maize crops against a common pest.



Environment and Sustainability Institute

Unlike many research institutes around the world, our £30 million Environment and Sustainability Institute is not a virtual entity. Physically located on the University's Penryn Campus, near Falmouth, the research centre brings together state-of-the-art resources with leading academics and researchers in a brand new BREEAM Outstanding rated building.

Mental health and mood disorders

Our research is funded by a wide range of partners in order to understand the underlying causes of neurological and psychiatric disorders, including neurodegenerative diseases, schizophrenia and chronic stress. At Exeter, we take a precision medicine approach, which takes into account the great diversity between patients and replaces the 'one size fits all' approach with more individualised treatment.

Our Mood Disorders Centre specialises in the whole 'spectrum' of mood disorders, including major depression and bipolar depression, while research within Sport and Health Sciences investigates the effect of physical activity on psychological and mental health outcomes.

Medical humanities

This theme explores the relationship between individuals, communities and health. Medical humanities not only 'humanises' the medical profession, but offers critical insights into health and disease, complementing research in the medical sciences. As a result, staff and students researching this theme are drawn from research groups sitting in colleges that are not traditionally aligned.

Public health

We are one of eight leading academic centres who form the National Institute for Health Research School for Public Health Research. The School's research looks at practical solutions to improve population health and reduce health inequalities, which can be applied nationally to better meet the needs of policymakers, practitioners and the public.

We have a particular expertise in patient and public involvement in research design and evaluation. We apply this to answer questions to help prevent and treat diabetes; care for those with chronic illnesses – such as heart failure; and provide health care solutions for the elderly amongst others.



European Centre for Environment and Human Health

Part of the University of Exeter Medical School, the centre researches both the risks and benefits the environment poses to health: from climate change and chemical pollutants, to antibiotic resistance. Incorporating a diverse set of specialisms, researchers are also exploring the benefits to health and wellbeing that time spent in the natural environment can offer.

Systems biology

Research in this theme ranges from the sub-cellular to understanding the organisation of ecosystems. Central to this research is the application of computational, mathematical and novel imaging approaches to predict and inform experimentation.

Studies include:

- characterisation of small molecules and proteins
- reconstructing gene and protein signalling networks
- application of next generation genomic technologies to cure crop diseases
- investigations into genetic disorders
- developing novel biotechnologies

Functional materials

What do invisibility screens for radar, artificial bone, solar panels, computer memories and novel sensors all have in common? They all rely on functional materials, whose properties derive from, and are controlled by, their underlying design.

Research focuses on three major sub-themes:

- nanoscale materials
- structured metamaterials
- photonic materials



I came to Exeter for the scientific environment and the local environment. You can have both here; excellent science and quality of life. ”

Professor Murray Grant

A £340 million investment in science since 2008

The Living Systems building, open in 2016, will pioneer novel approaches to understanding diseases and how they can be better diagnosed. The institute will build on our established research strengths in human, animal and plant diseases; and will incorporate innovative diagnostic imaging technologies and powerful mathematical modelling capabilities.

Extrasolar planets

Research into exoplanets is teaching us more about our own planet, its history, and its future.

Our research in this area unites staff from Mathematics and Astrophysics and covers:

- star formation
- exoplanets
- stellar physics
- galaxies and the interstellar medium



Science, technology and culture

The science, technology and culture theme is investigating a number of key questions including:

- How is life understood, enacted and negated in a post-genomic world?
- How do the humanities and social sciences meet the challenges of digitalisation?
- What is the best approach to overcoming the creative challenges faced within environmental politics and practice?

Work also includes the redistribution of expertise through engagement with business, leading to outputs such as an app capable of exploring medieval culture used in classrooms to teach history.

Identities and beliefs

The impact of research in this area has the potential to reduce tension and bring about peace. Questions seek to:

- negotiate tensions that arise between national and regional identities
- facilitate inter-religious dialogue and understanding
- consider the role of voluntary and third sector organisations
- shape policy and practice in medical and religious institutions

Societal and lifestyle shifts

Research in this theme seeks to understand the behaviour of people, social groups, and organisations. Questions include:

- What interventions should be implemented to mitigate against gender inequalities in the workplace?
- Why do asylum seeker appeals have different success rates in the UK depending on the court in which they are lodged?
- What role does and should the state play in family life given societal changes in this area?

Global uncertainties

The global uncertainties theme involves cross-disciplinary research to address key issues associated with insecurity, uncertainty and rapid change in an increasingly inter-connected world. Sub themes include:

- conflict and security
- resource insecurity
- globalisation and distribution
- the challenge of rising powers
- coping with an uncertain world

Research with reach

Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou is a regular on TV and presented her own series for the BBC: Bible's Buried Secrets. The series used recent archaeological and historical research to challenge many important beliefs about biblical characters and stories which are central to both Judaism and Christianity.





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Hierarchies don't exist at Exeter.
If your work is valid, it's appreciated,
wherever you are in your career.

Professor Mike Cant

”



Our culture

The Doctoral College works with and across our academic colleges to bring together opportunities to share research, meet colleagues, exchange ideas, develop skills and find support. We foster an inclusive, collaborative, thriving and innovative environment in which to pursue research.

Research students and early career researchers work alongside a community of researchers, academics and administrative staff across discipline boundaries. There are opportunities to enrich your experience, through teaching and assessment, events, networks and connections beyond your discipline. You will be encouraged to get involved in activities that will help you gain essential experience for your future career.

Athena SWAN

We are a proud member of the Athena SWAN Charter, which supports and encourages work for gender equality within STEM/M disciplines, and have held a Bronze institutional award since November 2011, in addition to a number of individual bronze and silver departmental awards. Our Athena SWAN Charter is part of our broader 'Women in HE' initiative which supports gender equality across the University.

It's more than just research

Understanding impact and being able to communicate your research are both important features of academic life: you will be encouraged to engage in activities that reach out to the public and inspire the next generation of researchers. Our diverse international outlook encourages the exchange of ideas across international boundaries with a range of seminar speakers, attendance at conferences and international collaborations.

We provide resources to support student-focused and student-led activities such as peer support, seminar series, research conferences, competitions and exhibitions. We encourage you to bring forward ideas that will enhance your time with us and provide help, if you need it, to make them a reality.



In the short time that I have been here I have attended Research Information and Learning Development seminars, Genetics Club and Social Scientist meetings. All of which provide a forum to listen to and ask questions about people, research or research areas outside that of my own.



From the seed of an idea to your career

We are committed to encouraging new ideas and nurturing talent. Thirty per cent of our academic staff are early career researchers; a much greater proportion than most other universities. This creates a dynamic and engaging atmosphere in which to conduct PhD research and beyond.

We give you the freedom and support to develop into an independent researcher: from helping hone your knowledge and interests to form a specific research question, to translating and bringing your research to the wider world for the benefit of society.

Facilities

Our Streatham, St Luke's, Penryn and Truro campuses all provide dedicated postgraduate facilities. In addition to the specialist equipment and resources offered by our colleges, many offer a postgraduate-only common room, computing facilities or desk space.

Our libraries are open 24/7 and what you see on the physical shelves now makes up less than half of what is actually available through our digital library resources.

The Streatham Campus is home to the Research Commons: our world-class research library facility houses some of our special collections and is a hub for researchers, providing a large, light new reading room, multi-media seminar space and an attractive outdoor terrace.

We offer postgraduate only accommodation which includes all bills and wifi and guarantee all new unaccompanied postgraduates from outside the EU a place.

Support

Sector leading skills training

All research students and early career researchers are encouraged to engage with our sector-leading Researcher Development Programme. Last year more than 1,500 researchers benefitted from our programme across more than 330 workshops, on all four of our campuses. We support the skills needed for the successful completion of a research project and prepare researchers for the wider context of global research and employment.

Researchers who are not campus-based or are unable to attend face-to-face events can access a series of e-learning modules. These provide skills development for early career researchers and cover the essentials, from starting your doctorate through to preparing for the viva.

All research students have the opportunity to create an online profile. This is a 'window' on your academic life as an early-stage professional researcher. It provides you with an opportunity to showcase your research progress, ideas and wider academic interests.



Being an independent researcher means being self-directed and showing initiative, but it also means knowing when it is necessary to ask for help, and knowing how to go about finding it. Being independent does not mean working in isolation, but participating in the University's research culture, by attending and contributing to seminars and workshops, and looking beyond disciplinary boundaries. ”

Professor Richard Toye,
College of Humanities, Director of Postgraduate Research

Supervision to succeed

We encourage a dual supervision approach for all research students. This helps to ensure that your research specialism is effectively supported by the skills and experience of more than one person, and helps your research to reach a wider audience. Many of our early career researchers co-supervise PhD students, providing valuable experience, enhancing their research career and enriching their own research.



I think it is really important to have at least two supervisors who can offer advice and guidance on different skills areas. I am fortunate enough to have one supervisor who is a professor and is brilliant at advice on the direction of the project, writing abstracts and giving presentations. One of my other supervisors is a post doctoral researcher and they are fantastic at advice on technical questions on how to do things in the lab. ”

Support to thrive

As well as academic support, we know that undertaking a postgraduate research degree can be stressful at times.

We care about your experience as well as your academic journey. Postgraduate research students are able to access many of the wellbeing services available to staff including the Care First service which provides confidential, impartial advice and support, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You are also able to access eye care vouchers and appropriate health and safety training. This is in addition to having access to student wellbeing services.



Funding

PhD studentships

Studentships usually last three-to-four years, and cover your full tuition fees as well as providing a generous living allowance. The majority of the studentships we offer are available through our doctoral training partnerships (see p7).

They are advertised throughout the year with many becoming available for application in term one. They are competitive and merit-based, so if you are seriously considering PhD study you will need to start actively applying relatively early in the academic year.

“

I pursued a PhD for myself. It was a goal I set myself many years ago and Exeter gave me the opportunity to pursue my dream. ”



Alternative funding sources

Teaching and research assistantships

Whether you are planning to go into academia or not, the possibility of undertaking teaching duties or working as a research assistant offers a valuable and challenging opportunity to develop further skills as well as helping you finance your studies.

Some of our departments can offer employment as a teaching assistant or an assistant to a staff research project. The availability of such posts varies so you should contact the department to which you wish to apply. Research students working as teaching assistants receive training through the HEA-accredited Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme run by the University's Education Enhancement Unit.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding services, such as www.studentfunder.com, www.indiegogo.com, or www.hubhub.net, allow you to raise monetary contributions from a large number of people and can help you fundraise directly towards the cost of your degree.

Philanthropy, charities and trusts

Some students have successfully secured funding from a range of local, national and international philanthropic sources; usually charitable bodies. It's worth investigating parish churches, city councils, and other local bodies, many of which offer scholarships, grants, or bursaries of some kind.

Details of charitable trusts and other funding organisations can be found in a number of publications including the Grants Register and the Directory of Grant-Making Trusts. These can be found in libraries and university careers services. Most of these organisations make relatively small contributions towards the costs of your studies, but they can supplement other sources.

www.exeter.ac.uk/postgraduate/money/phdfunding

How to apply

- 1) Pinpoint your research area
- 2) Investigate whether this research area is available at Exeter
- 3) Consider/seek funding
- 4) Construct and refine your research proposal
- 5) Apply online

Programmes based in Exeter

Postgraduate Admissions
8th Floor Laver Building
North Park Road
Exeter EX4 4QE

Email: pg-ad@exeter.ac.uk
Phone: 0300 555 60 60 (UK callers)*
+44 (0)1392 723044 (EU/International callers)

Programmes based in Cornwall

Student Recruitment and Admissions
Treliever Road
Penryn TR10 9FE

Email: pgadmissions-cornwall@exeter.ac.uk
(admission/application enquiries)
Phone: +44 (0)1326 371801

Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained within is accurate.
All unattributed quotes are from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2015.
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