

Health Sciences Doctoral Training Centre

HSDTC PGR Buddy Scheme 2020-21



The **HSDTC PGR Buddy Scheme** aims to help newly starting doctoral research students in the Health Faculties at King's College London to find their feet, network with other researchers outside of their immediate surroundings, and gain valuable information on a range of useful topics.

Newly starting students will be paired with a **buddy**, who will be in the second, third or fourth year of their doctorate, based on mutually shared areas of support and guidance in the following areas:

- Accessing Resources and Training
- Balancing Caring Responsibilities and your PhD
- Careers Options
- Coping During Lockdown
- Funding Options
- How King's Works
- Supervisor Relationship
- Public Engagement & Outreach
- Publishing
- Teaching
- Upgrade Report
- Volunteering
- Working Part-Time or Flexible Hours
- Workload Management in your PhD

Newly starting students will be looking for support and guidance, and must have begun their doctoral studies at King's on or after **Monday 31 August 2020**.

Buddies are more experienced doctoral researchers who can provide support and guidance to newer students, and must have completed their Upgrade and expect to be transferred to PhD status by **Monday 2 November 2020**.

Once you're paired, we suggest an initial chat by phone or video call, or in person if you feel that it's safe and appropriate to do so, and you can then decide between you how often to speak and topics for discussion; **as a guide we recommend at least three conversations over a six month period**.

If you've already completed your first year, this could be a great opportunity to share your experiences of doing doctoral research at King's, give something back to researchers joining after you, and develop your mentoring and coaching skills; it'll also look great on your own CV.

We recognise that [doctoral researchers on a clinical academic pathway](#) may face specific challenges in navigating clinical and academic careers, and the HSDTC PGR Buddy Scheme is one way in which we aim to support your career development and progression. Please let us know in your application that you're a clinician, and we'll do our best to match you with another clinician, if that's what you're after.

To apply, please complete this application form by 09:00 GMT on Monday 2 November 2020:

→ <https://kings.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/hsdtc-buddy-scheme-2020-2021>

We'll let you know who you've been matched with by Monday 9 November. We'll then invite you to take part in a short **webinar** which will provide more details, some useful tools, and troubleshooting suggestions. Here's a timeline with key dates so that you can plan ahead:

- **Monday 2 November:** Deadline to apply
- **Monday 9 November:** Matches confirmed
- **Thurs 19 Nov 11:00-11:45:** Buddy Scheme Webinar
- **November 2020-Summer 2021:** Buddy meetups
- **Summer 2021:** Feedback requested

If you have any concerns or queries at any time, about any part of this scheme, please email: hs-dtc@kcl.ac.uk.

Newly starting student Recipient of the Buddy's advice, the newly starting student is respectful and appreciative of the buddy's time.	Buddy "A person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period of time, especially at work or school" [Cambridge Online Dictionary 2017].
<i>The following examples give some ideas of typical situations in which buddies might guide starting students</i>	
1. Has been asked to do a list of administrative tasks and is unsure how to proceed.	1. Looks at the list with the starting student and points them in the right direction or helps them identify who the correct person is to ask for more advice.
2. Feels their supervisor has unrealistic expectations of how much work they should be doing.	2. Can help the starting student evaluate whether or not that is a typical workload and see it in context of other PhD projects.
3. Is wondering what the PhD upgrade is like.	3. Can talk about the experiences that you and your peer group have had.

The buddy should not:

- 1) **Be confused with the newly starting student's supervisor;** discussion of project ideas is fantastic, but the buddy is not your personal tutor and all experimental procedures undertaken in the lab should be discussed with the newly starting student's project supervisor.
- 2) **Be a counsellor;** the buddy is there to give you an understanding of how things work as a doctoral research student, not listen to your personal problems.
- 3) **Give career 'advice';** the buddy is only a short way ahead of the newly starting student and is not in a position to advise in this capacity. Please see the [King's Careers & Employability](#) webpages to find out how to get qualified careers advice from a member of the King's Careers & Employability service.

Getting to know you... some ideas for icebreakers and to get the conversation going		
Both	Newly starting student	Buddy
Where did you grow up?	When I started my PhD I was most worried about ____, and now __.	At the start of my PhD I am most worried about __.
Where did you do your first degree?	The best bit of my PhD so far has been ____.	I most look forward to __ in my PhD.
Favourite food?	When I started my PhD I wish someone had told me ____.	I think __ will be the most important aspect of the first year.
Favourite actor/actress?		
Favourite book?		
Favourite song?		
Favourite spot in the world?		

Confidentiality

Please be aware that anything discussed during your buddy meetings should be treated as strictly confidential.

When to seek help

If your HSDTC PGR Buddy Scheme pairing is not working out or if you need any further guidance, please contact us to discuss your options.

If you have any concerns of a serious nature that your buddy partner is really struggling to adjust to life at King's, in London, with their supervisor, or with anything else, please get in touch and we will help you if we can or will point you in the right direction if another team or service at King's is better placed to be of assistance.

Email: hs-dtc@kcl.ac.uk

