

# Health Sciences Doctoral Training Centre

## HSDTC Buddy Scheme 2019/20



The **HSDTC Buddy Scheme** helps new PhD students ('Starting Students') in the Health Faculties at King's to find their feet, network with other doctoral researchers outside of their immediate surroundings, and gain valuable information on topics that they feel would be of use to them.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and Starting Students will be paired with more experienced students ('Buddies') based on mutually shared areas of support and guidance in the following areas:

- Accessing Resources and Training
- Balancing Caring Responsibilities and your PhD
- Careers
- 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

**Starting Students** will be looking for support from more experienced doctoral researchers, and must have begun their doctoral studies at King's on or after Monday 2 September 2019.

**Buddies** are more experienced doctoral researchers who can provide support to newer students, and must have completed their Upgrade by Monday 6 January 2020.

When you apply, we'll also ask you to choose which [HSDTC Research Theme](#) your work most closely aligns with, and we'll then attempt to match you in line with this choice:

- Molecular Basis of Disease
- Health Across the Life Course and Evolutionary Time
- Imaging, Computational and Technological Approaches to Health
- Advanced Therapies and Translational Medicine
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Health Services, Patient Engagement and Clinical Care
- Health Research Application and Evaluation

Finally, if you're a **clinician** and would prefer to be matched with another clinician, please let us know when you apply and we'll do our best to accommodate this request.

Once you're paired, we suggest an initial meet-up over coffee (see the 'Getting to know you...' box on the next page for suggested topics to chat about) and you can then decide between you how often to meet up and topics for discussion; **as a guide, however, we suggest that you meet three or more times over a six month period.**

For Buddies, this is a great opportunity for you 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.

If you're interested in taking part, please complete this short application form by **9am on Monday 2 December 2019**:

- <https://kings.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/hsdtc-buddy-scheme-2019-20>

We'll let you know who you've been matched with by **Monday 9 December 2019**. You'll then be invited to take part in a short webinar which will provide more details, some useful tools, and troubleshooting suggestions. If you've requested to be a Starting Student, we'll email you the details of your matched Buddy, and encourage you to make first contact!

After about six months we'll send out a short, anonymous questionnaire to all participants, and we'd really encourage you to complete this so that we can evaluate what went well and what we can do better next year. Here's a short timeline with key dates for the scheme so you can plan ahead:

- **Monday 2 December 2019**: Deadline to apply
- **Monday 9 December 2019**: Applicants informed about matching
- **Wednesday 11 December 2019**: HSDTC Buddy Scheme webinar at 11:00
- **December 2019-June 2020**: Suggested minimum of three meetups
- **Monday 8 June 2020**: 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](mailto:hs-dtc@kcl.ac.uk).

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

**The Buddy should not:**

- 1) Be confused with the 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 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 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... <i>some ideas for icebreakers and to get the conversation going</i>		
Both	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?		
Favourite food?	The best bit of my PhD so far has been ____.	I most look forward to ____ in my PhD.
Favourite actor/actress?		
Favourite book?		
Favourite song?	When I started my PhD I wish someone had told me ____.	I think ____ will be the most important aspect of the first year.
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 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 (Starting Student or Buddy) 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](mailto:hs-dtc@kcl.ac.uk)

