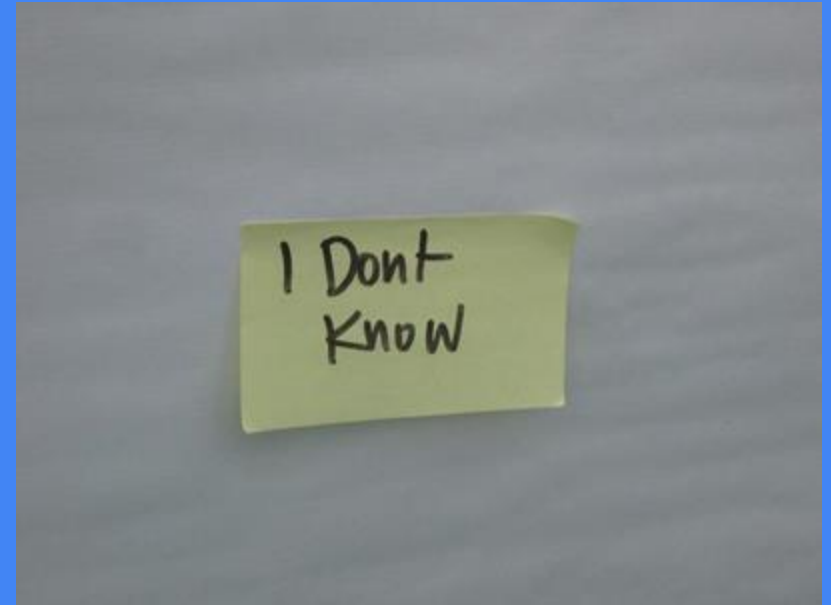


What the neglected 'how to's' of research have to do with ethics and integrity

Petra Boynton



There are a broad range of issues that **should** be covered in research training....but aren't





***I don't know how
to...***

“...select a research topic”

“...be more productive”

“...remain motivated when my manuscript is rejected,
or respond to reviewer feedback”

“...advocate for myself in research meetings”

“...network”

“...collect data”

“...manage my time”

“...agree authorship”

“...obtain ethics approval”

“...communicate with colleagues”

“...avoid plagiarism”

“I’m the first in my family to go to university and in my final year of my PhD. My supervisor has been absent throughout my analysis and writing up. The doctoral programme has some online materials on writing that I’ve used but it does not feel adequate.

I’m due to submit my thesis soon but worry major problems will only be revealed in the viva. I asked my supervisor what standard a thesis needs to be to pass but they say this cannot be determined until the viva. How can I prepare more effectively?”





Nature Portfolio

October 25, 2022

Nature's 2022 global survey of graduate students finds that some scholars in PhD and master's programmes are losing faith in their chosen career path as they face financial hardships, multiple demands on their time and uncertain career prospects.



Corhal Duane

NATURE.COM

Stress and uncertainty drag down graduate students' satisfaction

Nature Careers

How many complex skills are expected to be undertaken by scholars of all levels of experience working in an unsupported and pressurised environment?

Who's disadvantaged when we leave out the how-to's? Students and staff that are


- Low income
- Estranged
- From an ethnic minority
- Disabled or have learning difficulties
- Physically or mentally ill
- Parents or carers
- Self-funding
- Part-time
- LGBTQ+
- On placement or doing fieldwork
- International
- Older/mature
- Working or studying remotely
- Women
- First-gen

Image from
UKRIO

(Based on The
Concordat to
Support Research
Integrity, 2019)



Have you ever been formally taught how to...

Email a colleague or participant (and manage replies)	Create a recruitment strategy (including refusals)	Design an inclusive, accessible, engaging and accurate research invitation or advert
Manage projects from start to end (including obtaining funding)	Apply theory to practice (and vice versa)	Give and receive feedback (including being a peer reviewer)
Effectively address emotional and physical safety for students and staff		Plan, pilot, revise and retry research, teaching and pastoral care
Enter, clean, maintain and store data	Work with on and offline communities and stakeholders	Use debriefing techniques through the lifespan of a project
Effectively use social media and other dissemination options (beyond a peer reviewed paper or report)	Understand what impact and sustainability mean - and how to critically engage with these ideas	Make research inviting, relevant and welcoming to all participants and related parties

And have you been taught any of these things in a way that ...

- ensures all aspects of your work are **inclusive** and **accessible** to participants, staff, students and other colleagues/communities
- proactively avoids inequalities, precarity and other inbuilt harms (e.g. bullying)
- prioritises diversity of needs and requirements, respect and dignity; while challenging unfair, outdated, unequal and unethical systems
- informs how to give pastoral support and signpost to appropriate sources of care (a single helpline number doesn't count)
- doesn't expect 'something for nothing' or working 'for exposure or experience' (as in, have you fully costed and budgeted your work)

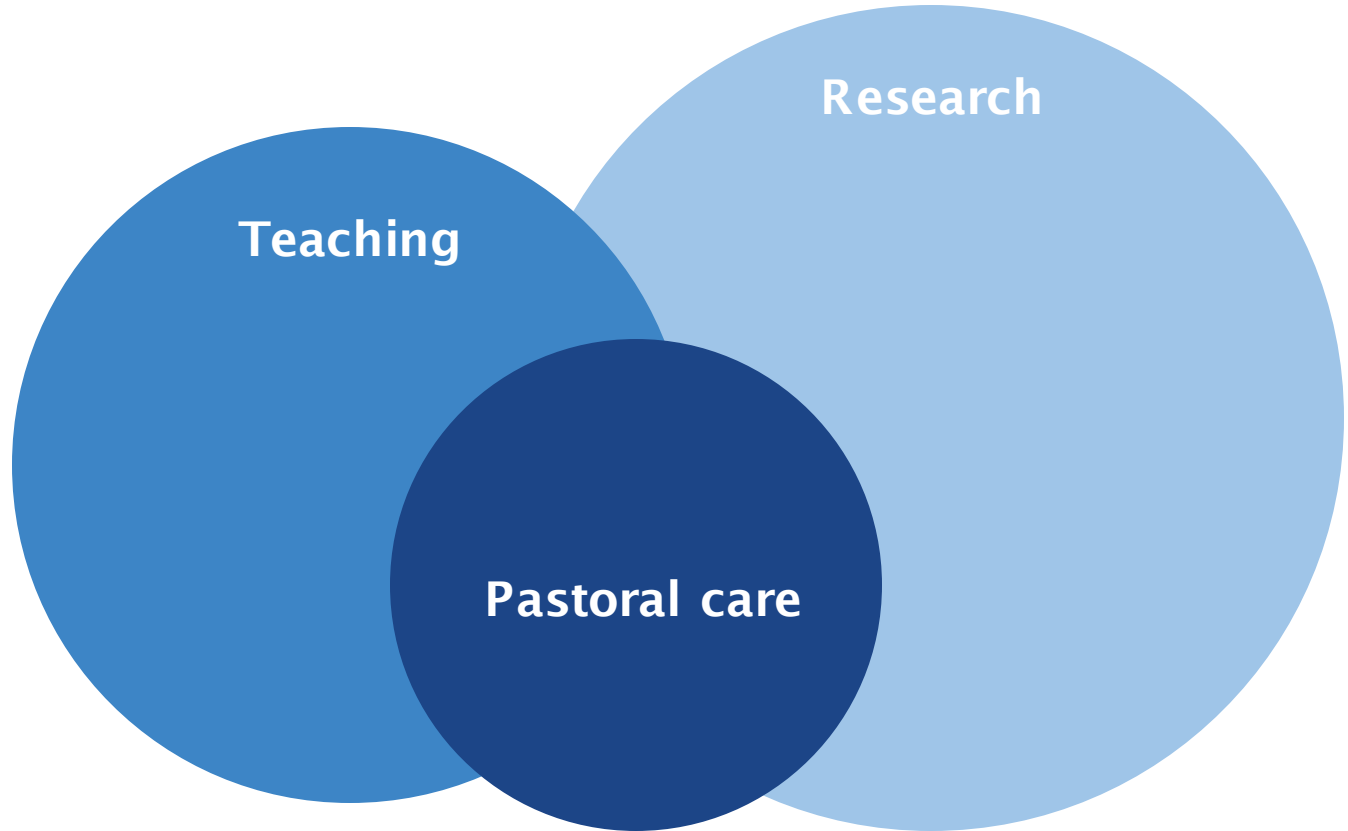
Ways to fix this





- Time
- Money
- Accessible instructions and guidelines (aka 'what to expect')
- Places and spaces to work and study
- Training and supervision
- Support and encouragement
- Reflection and feedback
- Opportunities for practice and making mistakes
- Spaces to ask for help - with help given
- Strategies when things (inevitably) go wrong
- Managing expectations
- A focus beyond the university/STEM

What else might we do?




- Address poor or inconsistent delivery of research tuition and supervision
- Rethink how research methods are taught across all sectors
- Focus on 'real world' research skills (e.g. sourcing, synthesising and sharing)
- Use responsive, exciting, creative approaches, featuring dilemmas/case studies
- Ensure welfare, rights, dignity, respect and wellbeing are central
- Check that EDI is more than just a tick box activity
- Hold research institutions more accountable for policies, practices and promises
- Focus on proactive not reactive approaches (particularly on harassment, bullying, safety, whole-campus practices and research culture)
- Target specific problems (e.g. misuse of online surveys)

In order to prioritise ethics and integrity....

...we urgently need a greater awareness of joined-up and whole-organisation approaches; accessible and inclusive practices; that prioritise safety and wellbeing within research methods teaching and practice....

to's

w 

the how

**Thanks for
listening!**

@drpetra

info@drpetra.co.uk

www.theresearchcompanion.com

