

SWK ADVANCED PGR TRAINING

Postgraduate research students in the School of Social Work benefit from a range of advanced training opportunities. These build on the generic PPD course offered by the Social Sciences Faculty, and focus on four broad themes: subject-specific core training; specialist training, linked especially to the areas of research excellence within the School; inter-disciplinary approaches; and enhancing impact.

The two primary vehicles for the advanced training are the 'Research Student Group', and the *Centre for Research on Children and Families*.

RSG workshops

RSG workshops are for PGR students from the Schools of Social Work and Psychology, which enables cross-disciplinary learning and exchange. They take place fortnightly during semester times, every other Wednesday afternoon. Attendance from all three PGR years is expected, which enables students to learn from each other, across the years. The RSG co-ordinator works with students to arrange a programme of teaching and discussion to include core skills such as preparing research proposals, ethical approval, writing the literature review, data collection and analysis, interviewing, preparing for vivas, and writing for publication. These sessions complement those of the SSF PPD programme, but here the emphasis is more specifically on the core knowledge and skills required for students in social work, social policy and psychology.

All students are required to present on different stages of their research, and get detailed feedback from the other students and the group co-ordinator. First year students present on their proposals; 2nd years on their developing plans and literature review, prior to their transfer to PhD registration (supervisors and other faculty members are invited); 3rd years on the key stages of analysis and dissemination. Presentations are often preparatory to more public presentation of research in School seminars, the annual PGR showcase at the city library, and external conferences.

The Centre for Research on Children and Families

The CRCF is at the forefront of research on vulnerable children, parenting and family change. It is based across the School of Social Work, enabling PGR students to work in an environment where research really matters – where the findings inform the complex decisions that policy-makers and practitioners have to make on a daily basis regarding the well-being of adults, children and families.

The wide range of research projects being undertaken by the Centre means that research-active staff are on hand to share their experiences, knowledge and findings (please see the Centre website for details of the research in progress). The Centre offers an annual

'advanced training workshop' to facilitate this, where staff deliver training based on their current research and the methodological challenges and opportunities (see further below).

The Centre also offers a programme of regular Qualitative Research Seminars. These draw on current research and focus on the methodological issues, giving PGR students an insight into the real world of social work, social policy and psychology research.

Strong research links exist with local authorities, primary health and mental health agencies, primary and secondary schools, community organisations and businesses. These links help PGR students gain access to relevant agencies for their research, and in turn give opportunities to disseminate the findings. They give PGR students the chance to meet policy makers, senior managers and front-line workers, to learn about the challenges of their work and the expectations they have of social work and social policy research.

Further opportunities

SWK PGR students who have not undertaken postgraduate training in quantitative and / or qualitative research methods have the opportunity to take the *Further quantitative research methods* and *Further qualitative research methods* modules provided for the SSF MRes.

Other opportunities for advanced training include occasional open lectures and seminars by visiting academics, including the UEA Annual Child Care lecture.

Advanced training events to be offered externally

Each year the School offers an advanced training workshop that is also open to PGR students and researchers from other institutions, and sometimes policy makers and practitioners. This is organised under the auspices of the CRCF, and may draw on colleagues in other Schools and experts from other universities.

The 2014 workshop will be held at UEA on 7-8 May 2014. The theme will be *Researching Adoption and Foster Care*. The residential nature of the conference ensures maximum opportunities for PGR students and junior researchers to engage with research-active staff and develop their research skills.

The programme will draw on current and recent research and areas of expertise in the Centre, which include:

- Interviewing children and young people who are in care or adopted;
- Engaging with adoptive and birth parents;
- Negotiating access with professional agencies;
- Obtaining histories from case files;
- Ethics of research with children and young people
- Data analysis
- Disseminating research findings for maximum impact