

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



University of East Anglia

**DOCTORAL  
COLLEGE**

# PGR STATISTICS

1780

POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCH STUDENTS  
(1 DEC 2021)

359

PGR  
STARTERS  
IN 2021/22

370

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS  
INVOLVING PGR  
STUDENTS IN  
2021/22

296

GRADUATES  
IN 2021/22, of which:

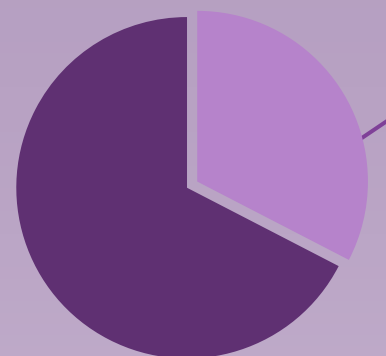
216 PhDs

23 PROFESSIONAL  
DOCTORATES

57 OTHER RESEARCH  
DEGREES

## COMPOSITION OF STUDENT BODY

2021/22:



### GENDER

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62% FEMALE

37% MALE

1% NON-BINARY, GENDER  
FLUID or OTHER

### AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRY

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30 YEARS

# FOREWORD



PROFESSOR  
SAM FOUNTAIN  
ASSOCIATE PRO-VICE-  
CHANCELLOR,  
UEA DOCTORAL COLLEGE

It is a real privilege to take over the role of Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor and ensure postgraduate researchers remain a central part of our research culture and institutional research success. First, I would like to thank my predecessor Professor Alastair Grant for his hard work and commitment to postgraduate research at UEA, and his academic leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic including the difficult situations faced by our PGR community regulating laboratory/archive access and fieldwork during this time.

This year we are celebrating the University's success in the Research Excellence Framework. I was particularly pleased to see the important role that postgraduate researchers play in our institutional research attainment reflected in the statements submitted across all our units of assessment. Our postgraduate researchers continue to contribute to research-led teaching across the university as Associate Tutors, and this year we launched the Introduction to Teaching Skills training programme. The programme is designed for postgraduate researchers, focuses on developing professional skills and competencies, and is accredited by the Higher Education Academy.

This report outlines PGR successes in more detail. My thanks to all staff and students who continue to contribute to our vibrant postgraduate research community at UEA.

UEA'S 2021/22

# ENGAGEMENT AWARD WINNERS

Since their inception in 2009, [UEA Engagement Awards](#) have celebrated and recognised public engagement by students, staff, academics and departments from UEA and the Norwich Research Park. Here are some examples of the contributions of our postgraduate students.



**SAMUEL WARNER (BIO, JIC)** Working on crops resilient to climate change, he engages with the public through art.

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION STUDENT AWARD



**KAMRAN QURESHI (AMA)** Studying creative practice research, he is the director of the commercial film [Only Love Matters](#)



**ANDREA SMITH (LDC)** Her research focuses on BBC radio. She has independently produced a five-part series about her work on radio Shakespeare



**DANIEL MARCU (BIO)** Editor of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion blog, and driver of students' engagement activities



**NIK ARIF (ECO)** Sustainability champion, author of several high profile articles in social media



**BUSHRA ABU-HELIL (BIO, QIB)** Involved in engagement activities for improving poultry welfare and health



**SARA SKARP (ENV)** Coordinator of [Project Change](#) and the Youth Climate Change Programme

# RESEARCH CULTURE PROJECT AT UEA

A series of projects run by and focused on PGR students were carried out at UEA to increase mindfulness and wellbeing amongst the PGR student community



Twelve projects spanning many different areas and grouped into two main categories were undertaken:

1. **Interest groups:** Arts and crafts, Gardening, Yoga, Walk and talk.
2. **Development projects:** Developing MyUEA PGR webpages, Training staff on what its like as a PGR, PGR networking events, Experiences of international students, Guidance on international fieldwork, Guidance for disabled PGRs, Post PhD destinations

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PGR STUDENTS

### Ambiguous role

The role of a PGR can often feel a bit confusing, as there are elements of being a staff member as well as a student. For example, the workload and pressures are more akin to paid members of staff. However, PGRs are closer to taught students in terms of finances.

### Work-life balance

Managing a healthy work-life balance is very difficult. It is common to be undertaking part-time work alongside PGR studies, such as AT work. There are therefore lots of competing demands that must be managed.

### Belongingness

## 5 EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT PGR STUDENTS AS SUPERVISORS

### 1 Person-centred supervision

Understand that PGR students are not all the same and tailor your approach in response to this. Whilst you may have your own style of supervising, it is important to be flexible to your supervisee's needs. Whilst some may be motivated by strict deadlines, others may feel overwhelmed.

### In practice...

Have a conversation with your supervisee about how you can best support them, what they would find helpful, and how you can work best together. Make yourself aware of the wellbeing support available to PGRs, so you can signpost effectively.

### 2 Importance of positive encouragement

### In practice...

Aim for the feedback sandwich:

# PGR CAREERS HIGHLIGHTS

The PGR Careers Adviser team, based at Career Central, has seen an increase in researcher engagement since the start of the pandemic.



Not only has attendance at our training sessions increased 3-fold when held online in comparison to in person, in 2021-22 we recorded the highest ever proportion of PhD students having individual guidance appointments. During lock-down we started “Career Option” sessions incorporating a check-in with everyone in attendance to support students working at home alone. These have evolved into a set of informal events consisting of lively discussions with alumni pursuing different career paths; the online nature of the events means that we can invite people working across the UK and sometimes abroad. Topics for 2020-21 included ‘Working in the Museum Sector’, ‘Working in the Pharmaceutical Industry’, ‘Teaching outside of academia with a PhD’ and ‘Working in Consultancy’.

The opportunity to do on campus events again has meant that in person “Cake & Careers” sessions returned in 2021-22, either held on the main UEA campus or at the Norwich Research Park. These relaxed sessions (with home-made cake) help build community by providing a space for PGRs and postdocs to meet new peers from different disciplines and allow the PGR careers team to provide informal guidance and referral to further careers support. Sessions frequently result in researchers sharing ideas and tips based on their experience, and many attendees follow up with individual appointments to pick up some of the themes discussed by the group.

i-Teams where groups of postgraduates work with a mentor on the commercialisation of a novel technology or heritage resource was run successfully online during the pandemic with organisations receiving advice on improving marketing, clear guides to archive digitisation/conservation, and information on the development of new product ideas. Although we discovered some benefits to remote working, we were able to reintroduce some in person sessions in 2022 and worked with the Museum of Food on a planned exhibition about school dinners, the development of a pea based snack with the Norwich Bioscience Institutes and a marketing strategy for the Restoration Trust.

# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

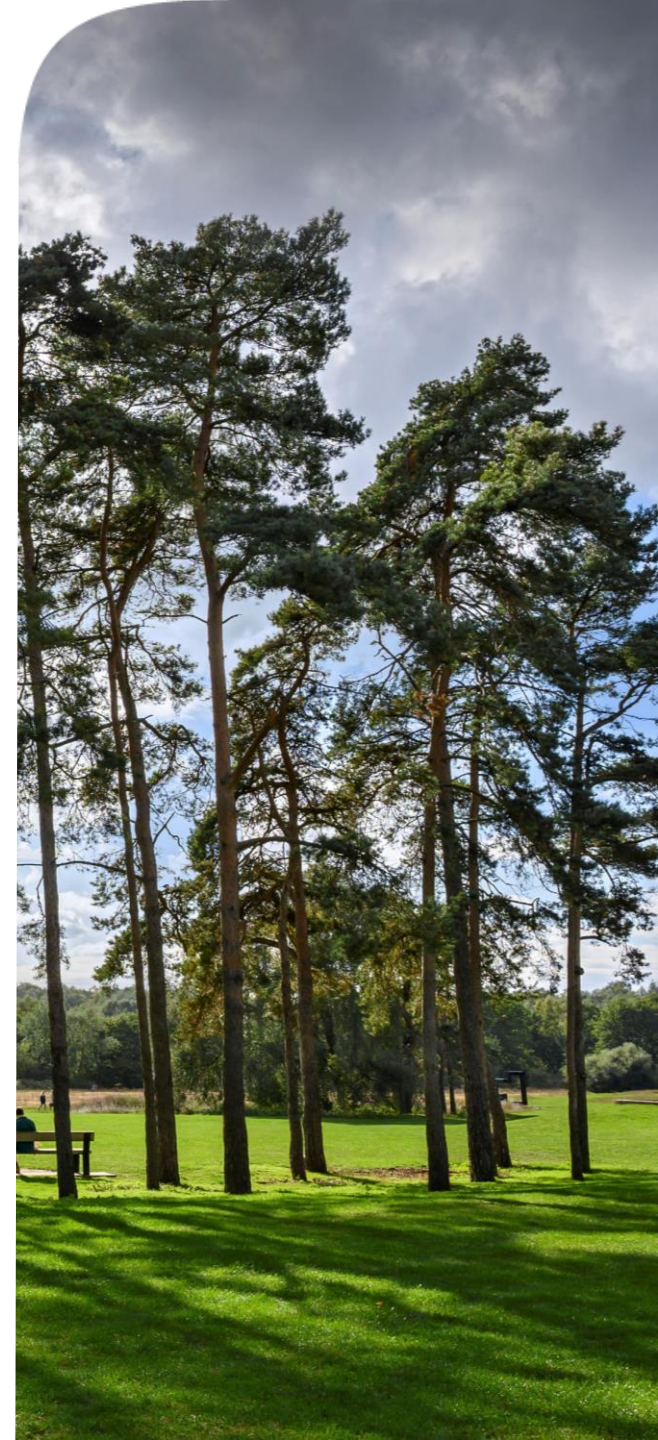
## ARIES DTP (NERC)

ARIES has now welcomed three rounds of new researchers with the fourth due to start in October 2022. This year we enjoyed a return to face-to-face training for our intensive research training events, hosted in Norfolk and at UEA. We also held our meeting with the Cambridge NERC DTP at the Natural History Museum (NHM). The NHM are one of our valued partners in the DTP and our postgraduate researchers were treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the museum as well as science communication training and their researcher lead one-day conference.



## EDESIA (WELLCOME)

The third cohort of students has just joined the Wellcome Trust-funded EDESIA: Plants Food and Health PhD programme to begin their research rotations across our partners. The previous two cohorts are working on a diverse range of exciting PhD projects across UEA, the John Innes Centre and the Quadram Institute. This year, we held our first EDESIA Conference, 'Diverse Food, Healthy People', planned by the students. It was great to be able to have an 'in person' meeting with both national and international speakers, as well as poster presentations. This conference will be biennial and complements our EDESIA seminars held throughout the year. Students have also been able to attend international meetings, increasing exposure to their research field and enhancing networking. They have also taken part in engagement activities such as the Norwich Science Festival. The second round of Wellcome Trust Biomedical Vacation Scholarships, awarded in conjunction with the EDESIA programme and focused on widening participation have been completed successfully.



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

## NRP DTP (BBSRC)

The Norwich Research Park Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership (NRPDTP) is led by the John Innes Centre, in partnership with the Earlham Institute, Quadram Institute Bioscience, The Sainsbury Laboratory and UEA. Research projects address a broad spectrum of the biosciences including artificial intelligence and computational studies, through biology, chemistry and microbiology, to plant sciences, health and medicine. In 2021, 38 PhD students joined us to give a total of 160 on the programme of which one-fifth work on joint projects with non-academic partners.

One of our graduates has been awarded the prestigious Linnean Society of London Irene Manton Prize 2022 for the best thesis in botany examined for a PhD in the UK. With additional funds from UKRI-BBSRC, the NRPDTP was able to support, for up to six months, eleven Doctoral Career Development Associates to build on their doctoral research, professional placements, or other personal and professional training that they had received during their studentship.





# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

## AgriFoRwArdS CDT (EPSRC)

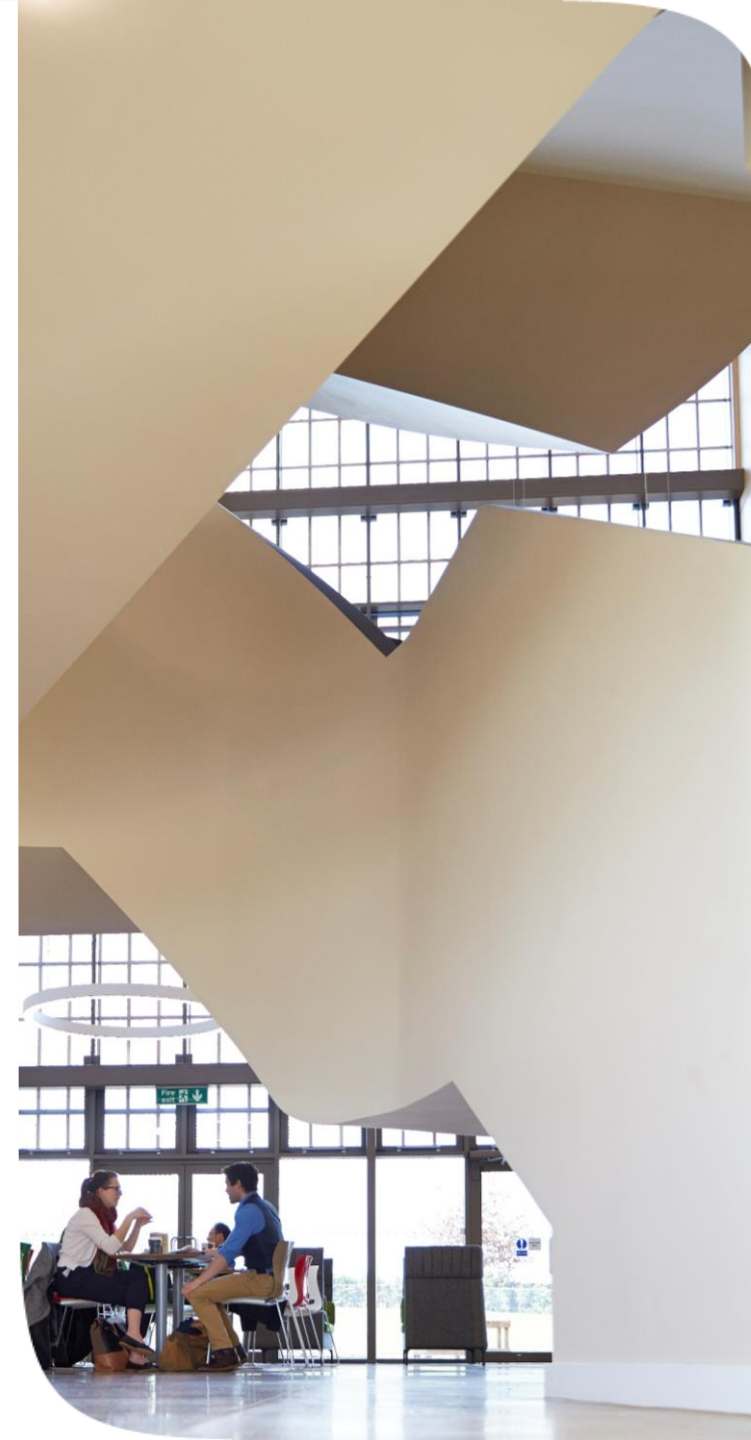
We were delighted to host the annual Agriforwards summer school in July 2022, in partnership with Cefas and Productivity East. Students worked on problems set by Cefas around the possibility of developing a fully automated system for finding, catching, cooking, and selling fish, and enjoyed a visit to the Cefas laboratories in Lowestoft and hearing from diverse speakers on starting out in business. We're looking forward to welcoming the cohort back to Norwich Research Park in the spring for the annual progress meeting, to be held at the JIC Conference Centre.

We're pleased to welcome our third funded postgraduate researcher to the School of Computing Sciences, working on problems in computer vision, with industry sponsor Antobot.

## CHASE DTP (AHRC)

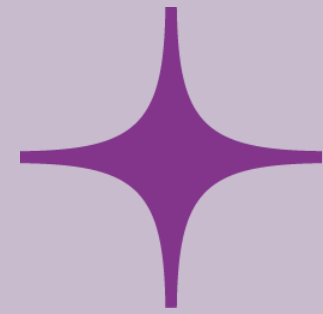
It has been another busy year, with CHASE researchers involved in placements, training, network events, and the regular Encounters conferences (just to name a few activities), in addition to progressing their doctoral projects. Read below one of our researchers reflections on his experiences.

*"As part of a six-month entrepreneurial CHASE placement, I established an organisation, [Arts Against Extremism](#), which promotes literature as a means of investigating, understanding and countering extremism. So far, Arts Against Extremism has showcased an array of creative and critical works, including a non-fiction essay about QAnon, a flash fiction about Islamist extremism, a poem about the war in Ukraine, a short story about the division of the island of Cyprus, and a novel excerpt about tensions in Bosnia. The organisation is always on the lookout for new voices and open for submissions" (Nicolas Padamsee, LDC).*



# LEVERHULME DOCTORAL SCHOLARS

## THE CRITICAL DECADE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE (CDCC)



Scholars are trained within and contribute to the vibrant ClimateUEA community, bringing together leading experts and thinkers in climate research from across UEA. The profiles of our current Leverhulme scholars are published on the [programme website](#).



- The CCDC aims to generate a new cohort of 21st Century climate thought leaders with the agile and interdisciplinary skills needed to lead a **paradigm shift** in how we respond to climate change.

- This programme has recruited the first two cohorts, 13 scholars in total. The researchers are being trained to look at real-world data in near real-time to generate unique insights into **why societies succeed or fail to respond to the threat of climate change**. For the year 2023/24, 14 projects have been approved. Interviews are scheduled for January 2023.

- Training activity highlights for 2021-2022 academic year include:

- Cohort one induction (11/10/2021)
- Cohort one networking event (24/11/2021)
- Modern Data training (26/04/2022)
- Writing Retreat (13-15/05/2022)
- Climate training day delivered in partnership with ARIES DTP (30/06/2022)



# THE MRC DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

## Microbes, Microbiomes and Bioinformatics (MMB) DTP

In 2021/2022, the MRC-funded [MMB DTP](#) and UEA's Faculty of Medicine and Health welcomed the first intake of students.

This doctoral training programme (DTP) builds on the success of the MRC DART iCASE programme, funded in 2017. Of the seven students selected from over 140 applications to the programme, five have been assigned to conventional studentships and two to iCASE projects. This first cohort included two overseas and five home students.



Within a few weeks of starting their PhDs, students have been immersed in a six-week training programme in microbial bioinformatics, which is equipping them with key data handling skills and will ensure they feel relaxed and confident using the command line interface.

Over the coming year, we are looking forward to running training events with partners in key government agencies, including the Animal and Plant Health Agency and the UK Health Security Agency.

Feedback via social media suggests students and supervisors are thrilled with the programme.

# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

## DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY ([ClinPsyD](#))

We were delighted welcoming 49 funded trainees and 2 international students in September 2021, representing a significant increase in the coverage of clinical research topics within the programme. Alongside the expansion in student numbers, we have seen some expansion of our ClinPsyD research staff team and moves to widen involvement of regional Clinical Psychology colleagues in research topic generation and supervision. For the first time, we have also been able to offer a series of 'Developing and Extending Skills in Clinical Psychology Research' Continuing Professional Development workshops for Clinical Psychologists in the region. In addition, we launched our own bespoke Clinical Psychology Research Supervisor training. Through these ventures we have developed new collaborative research relationships with colleagues in clinical services and are excited to be offering joint thesis project supervision, alongside ongoing Service-Related Project supervision. We look forward to continuing and extending these collaborations over the next year.

In terms of outgoing students, this year we were very pleased to be able to hold our annual research conference with an in-person element for our final year trainees, programme staff and wider UEA collaborators. As ever the quality of platform and datablitz presentations was very high, and by making use of the IT facilities within the Medical School, students were able to share research posters via screen to people in the room as well as virtually. The format also allowed international colleagues and alumni to join online to hear the research presentations at this event. For the first time, we introduced two new programme prizes named after esteemed ClinPsyD Programme Directors, which were presented at the Research Conference. These were the **Ken Laidlaw prize for scientific rigour** for research carried out by trainees whilst studying at UEA and the **Malcom Adams award for Professional Practice**. These prizes supported by the Medical School will continue to be awarded annually.

This year has also seen a further rise in the number of trainees submitting work for publication and achieving publication in some cases prior to leaving the programme. We were also pleased that ClinPsyD PGR students were for the first year able to access Turing funding to support international placements, which continue to be one of the distinctive features of the ClinPsyD programme at UEA

Whilst the expansion in training numbers does raise challenges in terms of capacity, we are excited about the continued growth, wider research impact and future potential of research on the ClinPsyD programme.

# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

## DOCTOR IN EDUCATION ([EdD](#))

The Doctor of Education (EdD) programme is a five-year part-time professional doctorate that recruits every two years. In 2021 I became Director of the programme joining the 13th Cohort's second year of study, and successfully holding the two teaching events (Study Block Weekends), which are offered to second-year student researchers face to face. In October 2022, we welcomed the 14th Cohort of EdD student researchers, which for the first time includes a small number of international students. Another change that has been introduced to accommodate the needs of a diverse cohort is a hybrid-delivery mode for teaching sessions during Study Block Weekends in years one and two, which, after the first study block, has proven successful. Attached is a picture of the First Study Block Weekend on 1st and 2nd October 2022 in which the new 14th Cohort of student researchers has been welcome! Dr Ana Inés Salvi, Director of the Doctor of Education (EdD) programme



# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

## DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY ([EdPsy](#))

Applications to the programme have steadily increased year on year since the first year of the course in 2018/19 when we received 63 applications, to 114 applications for 2021-22 entry. The fees for the training places are funded by the Department for Education and trainees receive a bursary from the DfE in Year 1 and from placement providers in Years 2 & 3.

At the end of the 2021-21 academic year we said farewell to our second cohort of successful graduates who all took up employment as educational psychologists within the Eastern region. Of the 2020-21 cohort all satisfactorily met placement expectations and all submitted their doctoral theses. A number of PGRs from the 19-20 and 20-21 cohorts have presented their thesis research at national and regional conferences and are being supported by supervisors to submit to appropriate journals for publication. We plan to identify further opportunities to expand links with research groups within EDU and across the institution in the coming academic year.

## DOCTORATE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ([HaSC](#))

In October 21, we welcomed the second cohort of 12 Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care students. The module one teaching block took place in October and module two teaching blocks in February and June. The blocks consist of two days each: one at the UEA and one online.

Despite some students needing an extension for their module assignments due to their work pressures, most are progressing into the year long, module three commencing October 22. The October 2019 cohort also experienced significant disruption to their studies due to their work pressures during the pandemic (most of them work in health or social care). Of the 16 students who started the course, four have withdrawn for academic or personal reasons and one is intercalating. The remaining 11 are now progressing with ethics applications and their research.

# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS



## HUMANITIES

Associate Dean: Dr Matthew Taunton (LDC)

- We have been working to provide opportunities for PGRs to gain experience in public engagement. A CHASE-funded placement, held by Eleonora Rossi (Birkbeck), enabled targeted public engagement training as well as facilitating a scheme which saw three HUM PGRs take up paid internships (funded by HEIF) working on UEA research projects to build their public engagement profile. The scheme was well-received both by the interns and by the project leads who benefitted from PGR support, and the faculty is exploring ways to continue this scheme in future years.
- Humanities PGRs have been settling into their new workspaces in the Arts and Humanities Building, which are well appointed and provide a valued sense of community. The GSSF has done excellent work over the last year to advocate for the importance of PGR workspaces.
- The GSSF has appointed a new social secretary, Matthew Mullett (LDC), who has been active in coordinating and organising social events, including a welcome for new students and a trip to the coast to see the seals.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Prof Kirsten McConnachie (LAW)

- In 2021-22, we continued to support PGR students in adapting to the challenges posed by COVID and in mitigating its impacts with continued training and funding opportunities.
- Registration for SSF PPD activities reduced from the 2020-2021 peak (reflecting the move away from fully online learning) but continued to be in high demand, with a total of 1249 bookings.
- The 'UEA Online Training Series for PGRs', which makes elements of our PGR skills training provision available to other universities, was delivered to 8488 attendees from 47 participating UK HEIs.
- SSF received 8 SeNSS studentships in 2021-2022, making a total of 31 SeNSS funded studentships in SSF to date (including 2 SeNSS-ARIES funded project studentships).

## MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Dr Penny Powell, MED

- In June 2022, we held our first in-person annual FMH PGR conference since lockdown. Students gave 10-minute talks, 3 minute thesis and poster presentations. The talks reflected a fantastic breadth of research and prizes were awarded to the best in each category. Many students have submitted their work for publication.
- FMH supervisor training continues online on Blackboard collaborate, with a mix of ECRs new to PhD supervision interacting with experienced supervisors in small breakout groups to update their training together through peer support.
- The six FMH PGR programmes continue to grow. A Research Day was held in December 21 for the FMH competition for standard 3-year PhD studentships, where supervisors presented their research proposals to attract the highest calibre students for our programme.
- The peer assisted learning with colleagues in SU continues to support research and pastoral areas of student life. The “Bitesize” PhD lunchtime seminar series now meets in-person and provides pizza and chat for social networking in the faculty.

## NORWICH BIOSCIENCE INSTITUTES

Chair: Prof David Evans (JIC)

- In consecutive years, 2021 and 2022, NBI students have been awarded the prestigious Linnean Society of London Irene Manton Prize for the best thesis in botany examined for a PhD from any UK institution.
- An NBI student has been recognised with an Honourable Mention by the International Birnstiel Award for Doctoral Studies in Molecular Life Sciences 2022 and another received a Rosalind Franklin Society Award in Science, recognising outstanding contributions from women and minorities, for the best paper in The CRISPR Journal 2021.
- Two teams involving NBI students proceeded to the Biotechnology Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (Biotechnology YES) finals having succeeded in their respective heats. Biotechnology YES is an innovative competition developed to raise awareness of the commercialisation of bioscience ideas among early career researchers. Ultimately, “EastAlga” won the award for the Best Business Plan in the Plant, Microbial and Environment section and “In-Ball Diagnostics” received the People’s Choice Award.

# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS





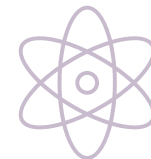
# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS



## SCIENCE

Associate Dean: Prof Andy Cammidge, CHE

- The Faculty of Science PhD competition awarded 15 studentships for starts in October 2022 and it was great to meet more than 60 new postgraduate researchers during this induction.
- Once again, the diversity of research carried out across the faculty was apparent; new projects will (separately!) research stem cell and solar cells, decolonisation and digital manufacturing. We also welcome more than 10 new members of research faculty and look forward to the expansion of our research into more new areas.
- Earlier this year the results of REF21, the most recent assessment of university research were announced, which saw UEA performing even more strongly. The contribution of postgraduate research was apparent throughout all submissions and support for our postgraduates remains at the heart of our strategy for innovation and impact
- We are delighted to see our postgraduate training and social events return to in-person activities. They provide a perfect platform to find out what's going on in research across the Science faculty (and beyond) and build networks. The first socials have seen record attendance, and our plans for extending the breadth of social events are taking shape.



# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS



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- We are also very pleased to see one of our recent graduates Carla Arnau Del Valle being selected by the Lindau Scientific Review Panel to attend the 71st Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting.



# REGULATORY UPDATES

- The following changes were introduced in [our PGR studentship terms and conditions](#):
  - Shared Parental Leave replaced by Unpaid parental leave.
  - Clarification that there is no limit to the number of periods of Maternity, Ordinary Paternity Leave or Adoption Leave that can be taken during a studentship.
  - Ordinary Paternity Leave extended to cover adoption.
  - Clarification that if certificated illness lasts for more than 13 weeks the studentship will be suspended for the period beyond the 13 weeks.

Noting that [UKRI terms and conditions](#) were revised on 4 November 2022, the UEA studentship terms and conditions will be reviewed in light of these changes to see if any amendments are needed.

- The Executive considered a review of research student concessions and resolved:
  - to remove the requirement for a School/Institute PGR Director to comment on every concession;
  - further delegation of specific concessionary approvals to PGR Service staff (parental leave; thesis word count) and professional doctorate Extenuating Circumstances Panels (thesis extension within Period of Study) to speed up turnaround;
  - further work during summer 2022 on forms and guidance to streamline processes

## FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/research/research-with-us/postgraduate-research>

<https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/research-and-innovation/postgraduate-research>

## CONTACT US

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