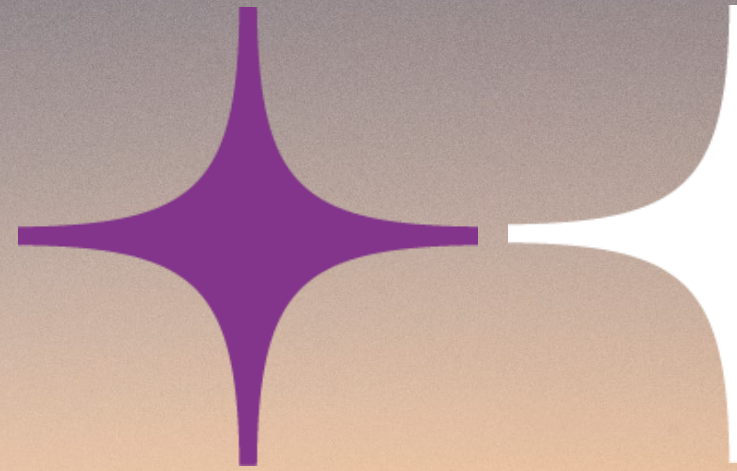


ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



DOCTORAL
COLLEGE

PGR STATISTICS

1585

POSTGRADUATE
RESEARCH STUDENTS
(1 DEC. 2020)

343

PGR
STARTERS
IN 2020/21

408

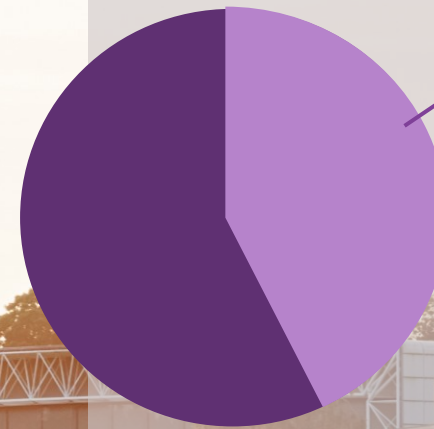
RESEARCH OUTPUTS
INVOLVING PGR
STUDENTS IN
2020/21

243

GRADUATES
IN
2020/21:

- 201 PhD
- 31 PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES
- 11 OTHER RESEARCH DEGREES

COMPOSITION OF STUDENT BODY 2020/21:



41%

OF OUR 2020-21 PGR
STARTERS ARE FROM
OUTSIDE OF ENGLAND,
REPRESENTING

43 COUNTRIES

GENDER

57% FEMALE

42% MALE

1% NON-BINARY, GENDER
FLUID or OTHER

AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRY

30 YEARS

FOREWORD

Our 2020/21 Annual report of the Doctoral College marks the end of another highly unusual academic year.

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt many aspects of our lives. Within this context, the research and training of our doctoral researchers has carried on, and our Graduate Schools have kept on innovating to support our students and staff. These efforts will lead to lasting improvements in doctoral support, with more flexibility in processes related to online vivas and thesis submission. We recognise the need to keep reviewing what we do and to keep supporting all researchers who have experienced challenges.

Our doctoral researchers have demonstrated an astounding level of resilience over the past year. They have also made remarkable contributions within and beyond our community, as featured in our latest UEA Engagement Awards, and as beautifully captured in the poem 'Snowflake' by Vicky Bristow, a doctoral researcher in MED.

This academic year has also marked the end of a longer cycle for research in the UK. UEA completed its submission to the Research Excellence Framework, which highlights the many contributions of our postgraduate research students, including 408 research outputs in the past year.

We begin a new cycle with two newly funded doctoral programmes, presented in this report. Building on our research excellence, and recent efforts related to SARS-CoV-2 sequencing, we are immensely proud to be leading on a new DTP in Microbes, Microbiomes and Bioinformatics funded by the Medical Research Council. We are also building on the success of ClimateUEA, our first interdisciplinary research theme, and are thrilled to be hosting our first Leverhulme Doctoral Scholars working on the Critical Decade for Climate Change this Autumn.



**PROFESSOR
FIONA LETTICE
PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR,
RESEARCH & INNOVATION UEA**

FOREWORD

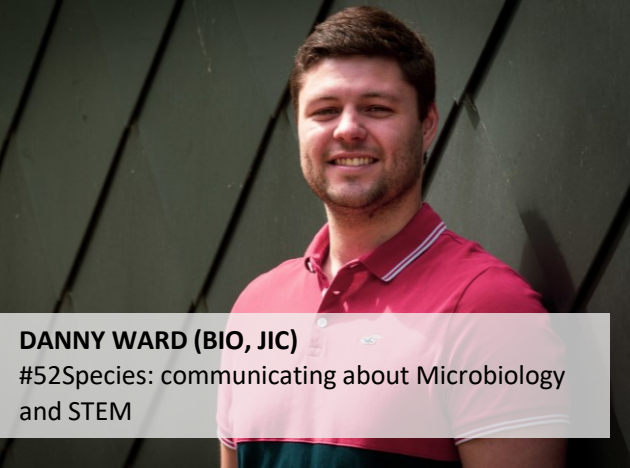


**PROFESSOR
ALASTAIR GRANT
ASSOCIATE PRO-VICE-
CHANCELLOR,
UEA DOCTORAL COLLEGE**

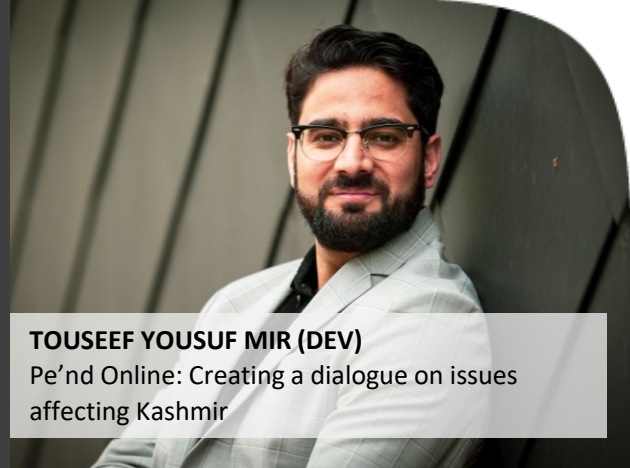
COVID-19 has created another year of challenges for all of us. Many PGRs have had to work from home more than they would have preferred; we have all had to continue with remote meetings and supervision and the demands on PGR service staff, School/Institute PGR Directors and Associate Deans have increased substantially, as they have helped to manage the increased flexibility that has been required.

Amidst these challenges, there have been a number of successes. Quadram Institute and FMH have obtained MRC funding for a new DTP which complements our other Research Council funded programmes. The Leverhulme PhD scholarship programme led by Corinne Le Quéré has recruited its first cohort. There is more information about both of these elsewhere in this report. The first cohort of the Educational Psychology Doctorate has graduated and funded numbers on the Clinical Psychology Doctorate have been substantially increased. Numbers of applications have increased substantially and incoming postgraduate researcher numbers have been maintained. Participation in virtual PPD opportunities run by Faculty training coordinators and Careers Central has been excellent. Simon Watts in SSF has made some online PPD training events available to postgraduate researchers outside of UEA, drawing in attendees from 46 UK Universities and a very wide range of disciplinary backgrounds.

This report reviews these successes, and other highlights of the year, in more detail. I'd like to give my huge thanks to everyone in the PGR community at UEA for the incredible hard work over the past year that has contributed to these successes.



DANNY WARD (BIO, JIC)
#52Species: communicating about Microbiology and STEM



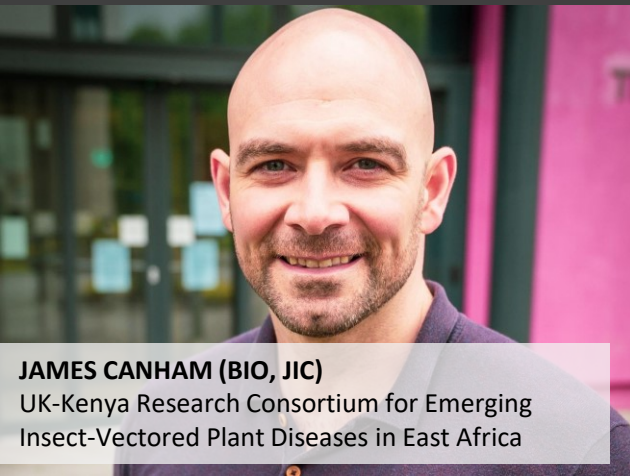
TOUSEEF YOUSUF MIR (DEV)
Pe'nd Online: Creating a dialogue on issues affecting Kashmir



JAMES CHRISTIE and BRIDIE DAVIES (ENV)
Sharing stories of Volcanology, Risk and Communities



XING HUANG AND MOE SUZUKI (PPL, front centre and right)
Anti-racism and decolonisation in academia



JAMES CANHAM (BIO, JIC)
UK-Kenya Research Consortium for Emerging Insect-Vectored Plant Diseases in East Africa



NEFTALY DE JESÚS CRUZ MIRELES (BIO, TSL)
Ciencia Cakotanú: Promoting Science and Technology in Mexico

UEA ENGAGEMENT AWARDS

Every year, UEA recognises and encourages excellent practice by academics, staff and students from across UEA and Norwich Research Park in engaging the public with research. This year's Awards feature many of our doctoral researchers, and innovative mechanisms to maintain external engagement with our research.

The UEA Engagement Awards celebrate the crucial work taking place across our partner institutions in reaching new audiences and encouraging meaningful dialogue, expanding the impact of their research to local, national and international communities.

Here are some examples of the contributions of our postgraduate students; the full list and further descriptions are available on the [UEA Engagement Awards Website](#).

LEVERHULME DOCTORAL SCHOLARS

THE CRITICAL DECADE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE


In November 2020, the Leverhulme Trust awarded a £1.35m grant for a new doctoral programme at UEA.

The **Critical Decade for Climate Change** Leverhulme Doctoral Scholars will 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. This new generation of researchers will help build the foundations for a healthy planet and a fair society for the future.

The doctoral programme will be led by Professor Corinne Le Quéré, Royal Society Research Professor of Climate Change Science and international advisor on climate policy. In collaboration with Deputy Director Dr Mark Tebboth, and ClimateUEA Chair, Professor Konstantinos Chalvatzis, an interdisciplinary group of experts across the University will support our researchers to become leaders of this Century's climate research.

The profiles of our first *Critical Decade* Leverhulme Doctoral Scholars have been published on the [programme website](#)

With an additional contribution from UEA, twenty studentships will be offered over three recruitment years, with our first cohort starting in October 2021. Leverhulme Scholars will train within and contribute to the vibrant ClimateUEA community, bringing together leading experts and thinkers in climate research from across UEA.

A portrait of Prof Corinne Le Quéré, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue dress and a colorful necklace. She is standing outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

“We know that the 2020s will be a decade of profound change for our environment and we know that research, as it stands is too slow to help address the growing urgency of the climate crisis.

This is a completely new and very exciting approach into researching climate change and I'm absolutely thrilled that we'll be delivering it at UEA.”

Prof Corinne Le Quéré, CBE FRS,
Programme Director

MICROBES, MICROBIOMES AND BIOINFORMATICS

In July 2021, the Medical Research Council (MRC) announced its next round of investment in Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP), including a new programme to be led by UEA.



Professor Mark Pallen (MED, QIB)
Programme Director of the MMB DTP

"Through this programme, we will ensure that tomorrow's research leaders in microbiology will be fully capable of exploiting the huge opportunities provided by fast and cost-effective microbial genome sequencing. By working with front-line government agencies, we will equip our students for real-world impact."

The Microbes, Microbiomes and Bioinformatics (MMB) DTP will equip tomorrow's leaders in microbial sciences with the knowledge, skills and perspectives to tackle fundamental questions in curiosity-driven research and address pressing health and societal challenges. This DTP brings a unique focus on microbes, microbiomes and bioinformatics, drawing on Norwich's strengths and recent investments in microbial sequencing and bioinformatics and building on our crucial contribution to national and international responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

The MMB DTP builds on the success of the MRC DART iCASE programme, funded in 2017. It will bring together world-class strengths in microbial research and informatics provided by the University of East Anglia (UEA), the Quadram Institute and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The new doctoral training programme will also benefit from strong links with associate partners Public Health England and the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

LEARNING ENHANCEMENT TEAM

The UEA Learning Enhancement Team (LET) in Student Services has continued to innovate in supporting our doctoral researchers through the Covid-19 pandemic

Peer Assisted Learning PGR mentoring scheme

In 2021, the PAL (Peer Assisted Learning) team in LET launched a PGR peer mentoring scheme. This follows a Courage Project report by Laura Haag (MED PGR) and consultation with PGR academic leads and PGR students. The first group of 37 PGR mentors was recruited and trained in March to June 2021. They offer a confidential (within limits) environment to support the mentee in further developing their researcher identity, share experiences, explore solutions to challenges and reflect on skill development. Mentor-mentee matches are created by the PAL Team based on responses to a short matching form given to both mentees and mentors. The scheme operates on a voluntary basis and is available to all postgraduate research students, in any year of study, and across all Graduate Schools. Recruitment for mentees is ongoing, so postgraduate students can sign up to receive mentoring at any point in the academic year. The PAL team will evaluate and make improvements, based on student feedback, to the scheme once the first cohort of mentees have completed their mentoring.

To find out more about the scheme, or get involved, contact pal@uea.ac.uk.

PGR Writers' retreats

LET ran writers' retreats online twice a month throughout 2020-21 (in collaboration with the Student Union). Due to their popularity, LET decided to run sessions throughout the summer and feedback has been very positive. The writers' retreats are full-day events where PGR students discuss their writing, set goals for the day and have four focused writing sessions. It offers a chance to meet and discuss writing with other students as well as reflect on the process and get support from a writing tutor.

The sessions will continue in 2021-22, with some sessions run in person in Earlham Hall and some online. For more information please contact ask.let@uea.ac.uk.

EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

ARIES DTP (NERC)

ARIES welcomed its new cohort of 24 doctoral researchers in October, including 16 UEA students, making the total number of students in progress 55. For the first time the inductions events were run wholly online; although there is no substitute for face-to-face interactions, some of the adaptations have been very successful and will be taken forward. A particular success was participation in enviroSPRINT, which was initiated by ARIES but included students from across several NERC DTPs. During enviroSPRINT, interdisciplinary Teams of PGRs from universities across the UK developed innovative solutions to some of the pressing needs of policy makers, industry and third sector organisations in the environmental sciences. [Experts](#) from a number of nationally important organisations contributed their time and knowledge to provide background information, insights and advice to the Team. More details can be found here: <https://www.envirosprint.uk/>

EDESIA (WELLCOME)

We have completed the first year of the Wellcome Trust-funded EDESIA: Plants, Food and Health PhD programme. Five students, including two international students, have completed three research rotations across the NRP and decided on substantive PhD projects to take forwards. Despite the restrictions placed on us by COVID-19, students have had access to research laboratories across NRP and been able to gain a wide research experience, alongside a range of training opportunities. The students are also currently planning the first EDESIA Conference for 2022. We have recruited the second cohort of five students into the programme. Finally, the first round of the Wellcome Trust Biomedical Vacation Scholarships, awarded in conjunction with the EDESIA programme, were recruited to and completed. These are focused on widening participation and have been very successful.



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. We have 11 Associate Partners including the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the Food Standards Agency, both of which fund joint studentships. In 2021, the Summer Conference, on the topic of 'Bioscience for an Integrated Understanding of Health', was successfully held virtually on an interactive platform.

DART iCASE (MRC)

In 2020-21 the MRC-funded DART (Doctoral Antimicrobial Resistance Training) iCASE programme welcomed a new intake of students to join the existing cohort investigating topics relating to antimicrobial resistance. This topic is a major priority area for UK research and investment, and the fully funded 3.5 year iCASE studentships are undertaken alongside an industrial partner, where the student is placed for at least 3 months of their studies. As such students gain valuable experience of both academic and business-led research environments and decision-making processes, and make a substantial contribution to combatting the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance.



EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

AgriFoRwArdS CDT (EPSRC)

In 2020-21 UEA was delighted to (virtually) host the second annual Agriforwards EPSRC CDT conference, welcoming delegates from across the international Agri-food robotics research community to discuss latest developments around the theme of machine vision. We heard from academia, industry, and government research laboratories on subjects as diverse as robot rose pruners; the automated identification of marine species; and measuring the 'cookedness' of scrambled eggs.

CMP will be pleased to welcome the first cohort of UEA Agriforwards PGRs in October 2021, undertaking research in partnership with Antobot, Cefas and Syngenta, and the Universities of Cambridge and Lincoln.

CHASE DTP (AHRC)

UEA played host to the CHASE Encounters conference in June 2021, a bi-annual event where students from across the consortium showcase their work. There were lively keynote addresses from Dan Hicks and public historian Hallie Rubenhold, as well as brilliant student papers from across the full range of humanities disciplines, and meetings of the vibrant student-led research networks focussed on feminism, decolonising, and climate justice.

SeNSS DTP (ESRC)

In 2020-21, the South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) continued to train Social Scientists across the South East and to prepare them to face the key challenges of our time. The keynote of the 2021 virtual conference was delivered by Prof Lorraine Whitmarsh on 'The role of society (and social sciences) in the transition to climate neutrality', sparking an animated debate among attendees. The DTP continues to deliver innovative training, over the course of six weeks during the summer we offered the first SeNSS series of (online) workshops on 'Decolonising Research Methodologies: Theory and Praxis', for example.



DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD) received a glowing outcome from its most recent visit from the British Psychological Society, in its five-yearly accreditation cycle.

The programme received two formal commendations, recognising national and international excellence, in relation to both the quality of programme delivery and of the preparedness of trainees for entering the NHS workforce. The external visitors noted in particular a 'culture of compassion and academic rigour' and that trainees are held in 'exceptionally high esteem' across the region.



The ClinPsyD Programme personnel alongside their Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychological Therapies (CPPT) colleagues

MORE FUNDED SPACES AT UEA

In February 2021, we were notified that our commissions would be increasing to 49 funded places for 2021 entry. We have increased the number of interviews held, and are delighted to be welcoming 49 funded trainees and 2 international students this September. In light of this expansion, we will also be welcoming various new members of staff to the programme in the coming months.

OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS



HUMANITIES

Associate Dean: Dr Matthew Taunton (LDC)

- The Graduate School Interdisciplinary Seminar ran online in Spring 2021, with a special guest roster of speakers who are recent graduates of the PhD programme, and now Visiting Fellows in the faculty. The seminar was well attended and a great testament to the extraordinary range and quality of PGR research in the Arts and Humanities at UEA. Topics included the Anglo-Chinese Lyric poem, translation in medical settings in Japan, proletarian modernism, and British images of Yugoslavia before Tito.
- The Graduate School Prize ceremony celebrated the excellent work of our PGRs. As well as rewarding very strong work in the usual prize categories (for PGR publications, teaching, engagement and community) a Special Impact Prize was awarded to the PGR-led DecoloniseUEA group, in recognition of the extraordinary work they have been doing across the university and beyond.

NORWICH BIOSCIENCE INSTITUTES

Chair: Prof David Evans (JIC)

- Regular online meetings with student representatives of the Graduate School Executive continued to be held throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure PGR students' needs were considered and met.
- Online induction, and mandatory and elective training, learning and development events were successfully delivered throughout the year, and feedback was good.
- Our portfolio of postgraduate research programmes continues to grow. It is expected that more than 40 postgraduate research students will join the Graduate School in October 2021.

MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Dr Penny Powell, MED

- In the face of continued restrictions on gathering in person, FMH held its annual PGR conference online for a second time, in 2021. After peer review of their abstracts, PGRs at all stages of their course presented their work as poster, pre-recorded or live-online talks to the audience comprising other PGRs and Faculty members. The conference also featured a 'life in science' interview with Prof Michael Houghton, 2020 Nobel prize winner and UEA graduate, recorded by FMH PGR student Ben Bone.
- FMH doctoral researchers continued to run the 'BiteSize PhD' seminar series online throughout the year, incorporating time for optional general chats.

SCIENCE

Associate Dean: Prof Samuel Fountain, BIO

- The Faculty of Science PhD competition awarded 17 studentships starting in October 2021. The studentships reflect the fantastic breadth of research within SCI, from tropical forest diversity loss to photoswitch molecules, dementia assistive smart kitchens, flood risk management, and liquid magnets, to name a few. Most studentships are to be supervised by early career researchers and reflects our strategic priority in supporting new recruits to grow and develop their research programmes at UEA.
- We were excited to be involved in launching a new peer assisted learning (PAL) mentoring scheme with colleagues from Student Services. The scheme is designed to further support PGR student journeys as researchers using fellow PGR students as mentors to offer a supportive space to discuss life as a researcher, the doctoral process, share tips and provide general pastoral support.

OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS



OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS



SOCIAL SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Prof Corrado Di Maria (ECO)

- Due to the on-going pandemic, most of our training took place online. We proactively took this opportunity to expand the range of training we offer to our PGRs in SSF, UEA and beyond. We took 1,900 bookings from across UEA, a third of which were from PGRs from other faculties. We also provided training to 10,197 PGR students and academic staff, drawn from 46 different UK HEIs.
- We redoubled our efforts to attract funding in support of our students and to focus on our widening participation agenda. In 2020-21, we managed to secure a record number of studentship across the SeNSS competitions and beyond. In 2020-2021, we recruited students of 22 nationalities across the seven Schools within SSF.
- Our first cohort of students in the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EdPsyD) have reached the end of their degree, with vivas taking place in July 2021.

UNIVERSITY OF SUFFOLK

Chair: Prof Emma Bond (UoS)

- The University of Suffolk (UoS) has appointed three Professors providing a mentoring role for PGR supervisors across our institution (School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Suffolk Business School, School of Engineering, Arts Science and Technology).
- UoS has appointed a Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and has completed its first REF submission. In addition, UoS has applied for the HR Excellence in Research Award (4-year review) in Summer 2021.
- The revalidation event for Postgraduate Research Provision with UEA was held in May 2021.

A photograph of a golf course with tall pine trees and a person sitting on a bench. The image is on the left side of the slide, showing a row of tall, thin pine trees in the foreground, with a person sitting on a bench in the middle ground. The background shows a green golf course and a blue sky with some clouds.

REGULATORY UPDATES

- New eligibility criteria for UKRI (UK Research Councils) doctoral funding have been announced for 2021/22 onwards, allowing up to 30% of international candidates per cohort. UEA adopted partial fee exemptions to ensure that non-UK students funded by UKRI, Leverhulme or EU funding did not have to pay top-up fees. This policy was approved for PGR starters up to 31 July 2025.
- The thesis submission process is now fully carried out online – no printed thesis is required at any stage.
- A new UEA policy from August 2021 allows choice between in person, hybrid and online vivas. No concession paperwork is required.
- New full-time postgraduate researchers must seek appropriate approvals for learning at a distance if they cannot relocate to Norwich immediately, via a Distance Learning Concession; there are strict visa constraints on what is possible.
- PRES 2021 ran during 2020-21 with 47% response rate, and findings will be circulated and discussed during autumn 2021.

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

pgr.enquiries.admiss@uea.ac.uk



DOCTORAL
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