

1. Using the Skills Points System (SPS)

The database is a web-based application which can be accessed from anywhere. The following are step by step instructions on how to get started on the database. Please contact spdsupport@qmul.ac.uk if you need further help.

1.1 How to log in

a) Go to <https://webapps2.is.qmul.ac.uk/sps>

b) Enter your college username

c) Enter your college password

(Every student has one of these, it is what you use to log onto webmail, but if you are unsure of yours please go to IT Services in room W209 in the Queen's Building at Mile End or call extension 8888)

You should be able to view your information, including your supervisors' details, Points Summary, Activity Record, Pending Activities, and Non-applicable Activities. There is also an option to "Print your record". Clicking on this will take you to a page with all your information on, ready to be printed.

1.2 Activities

1.2.1 Activities that are added automatically

PhD Development courses, which you have booked online via the [QMUL CPD Booking System](#), will be added to your record without you having to do anything. **The full list of activities that are added automatically can be found at the end of this document.** Any courses that are NOT listed in the tables at the end of this document must be claimed manually (see sections 1.2.2 and 1.3).

In order for these courses to be added automatically, you must ensure that:

- a) You have provided the following details on the [QMUL CPD Booking System](#) (under "My Account"):
 1. full name
 2. student number (9-digit number at the front of your ID card)
 3. QMUL email
 4. Role: PhD student
- b) You sign the attendance sheet at each session

It can take between 2-3 weeks for this information to appear on your record.

1.2.2 Other activity categories, types and classes

You may manually enter a claim for any other activity you have participated in. Some activities will already be listed on the system (for example if your School has provided the information) and some will not.

Any activity that has helped to develop your skills or knowledge can be added. The only exceptions are things that are integral parts of the PhD process (e.g. your research, meeting your supervisor, writing your 9-month report and thesis etc).

When you click on "Claim new activity" on your home-page you will see several drop-down menus.

Under "category" activities are divided up into broad areas. Looking at this list will give you an idea of the kinds of activities you can claim points for.

Claim an activity

The screenshot shows the 'Search for Activities' form with the following fields and values:

- Activity Provider: Barts Cancer Institute
- Category: Any Category
- Type*: Any Category (dropdown menu is open showing options: Conference attendance, Course/event attendance, Ethical approval, Funding application, Giving presentations, Induction event, Meeting/club/reading group attendance, Organising events/seminars, Outreach/public engagement, Seminar attendance, Teaching, Work Placement, Written publications)
- Activity Code: [empty]
- Title: [empty]
- Provider: [empty]
- Date From: [empty]
- Date To: [empty]

Please Note: Courses for Doctoral College students will be automatically added to your account.

Once you choose a category you will see a drop-down menu of corresponding activity types, e.g.

Claim an activity

The screenshot shows the 'Search for Activities' form with the following fields and values:

- Activity Provider: Barts Cancer Institute
- Category: Course/event attendance
- Type*: -- Please select a Type -- (dropdown menu is open showing options: Basic IT/Software course (Class 1), Core research knowledge or methods course (e.g. LTCC, IALS courses, masters lectures) (Class 1), GRADFEST (Class 3), Health and Safety (Class 1), Other Teaching/demonstrating training (Class 1), Other course/event attendance (Class 3), Reading/Writing retreat (2 days) (Class 2), Reading/Writing retreat (half day) (Class 2), Reading/writing retreat (1 day) (Class 2), Statistics (Class 1))
- Activity Code: [empty]
- Title: [empty]
- Provider: [empty]
- Date From: [empty]
- Date To: [empty]

Please Note: Courses for Doctoral College students will be automatically added to your account.

Claim an activity

The screenshot shows the 'Search for Activities' form with the following fields and values:

- Activity Provider: Barts Cancer Institute
- Category: Giving presentations
- Type*: -- Please select a Type -- (dropdown menu is open showing options: Conference Presentation (Oral) (Class 2), Conference Presentation (Poster) (Class 2), Internal Presentation (<30 mins) (Class 2), Internal Presentation (>30 mins) (Class 2), Journal Club/Reading Group/lab meeting Presentation (Class 2))
- Activity Code: [empty]
- Title: [empty]
- Provider: [empty]
- Date From: [empty]
- Date To: [empty]

Please Note: Courses for Doctoral College students will be automatically added to your account.

You will see that activities are listed as Class 1, 2 or 3.

Class 1: points are given per hour (usually up to a limit), e.g teaching, public engagement. You will be asked to enter the length of time you spent on that activity.

Class 2: there are a set number of points for that activity, e.g conferences, presentations.

Class 3: you will be asked to estimate how many points you think the activity is worth based on the guidelines below, e.g. courses, organisation of events, participation in postgrad. events, applying for funding over £10,000.

Any taught courses to do with your subject, or research methods (e.g. Masters lectures, LTCC courses, IALS courses, research methods courses etc) should be claimed under "Core research knowledge or methods course".

1.3 Claiming an activity

- Click on the Claim activity link on your homepage
- Select an "Activity provider", or "Any provider" if it's not listed or you don't know.
- Select a "Category" (see above)
- Select a "Type" (see above)
- Enter a date range that covers the event you're claiming
- Click "Search"

Depending on your search criteria, you might get three different types of result:

EITHER:

Select an activity with a date

The system knows when these activities took place.
Pick the activity you attended from the list below to add to your profile

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Enter any additional information about the activity						Then select the activity						
Other course/event attendance	HSS310002	English and Drama Core-Skills Training Day for Year-1 PhDs	School of English and Drama	14-Oct-2015 14:00	14-Oct-2015 17:00	0.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	7.0	+
Other course/event attendance		Drama Research Development Seminar: Approaching Performance (I)	School of English and Drama	20-Oct-2015 16:00	20-Oct-2015 18:00	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	+
Other course/event attendance		English Research Development Seminar: Thesis Writing Workshop (1): A Hands-on practical session to help with your writing.	School of English and Drama	21-Oct-2015 14:00	21-Oct-2015 16:00	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	2.0	+
Other course/event attendance	HSS32002	Drama Research Development Seminar: Approaching Performance (II) [Theorising Spectatorship]	School of English and Drama	27-Oct-2015 16:00	27-Oct-2015 18:00	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	+

If your activity is here, click on the **+** sign and the activity will now appear in your activity record.

OR:

Select an activity and tell us the date

The system knows of these activities.
You will need to tell us the dates that you attended and select the activity from the list below to add to your profile

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Enter the dates of the activity						Then select the activity						
Enter any additional information about the activity												
Other course/event attendance	HSS311001	English Research Development Seminar: Issues in English Studies (I): Archives	School of English and Drama			n/a	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	+
Other course/event attendance	SPD	Skills Points System drop-in session	CAPD			n/a	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	+
Other course/event attendance	HSS30008	English & Drama Research Development Seminar: Library Resources	School of English and Drama			n/a	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	+

If your activity is here, **enter the dates**, click on the **+** sign and the activity will now appear in your activity record.


Enter a new activity

None of the activities above match what you're looking for?
Please enter the details of the activity into the form below before adding it to your profile.

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total
Other course/event attendance (Class 3)											

(Class 3) Please enter the hours you spent on the activity and the number of points you think the activity is worth.

Please give further details of the activity* (what it involved, what skills you developed etc)

If your activity is not in the system (which will be the case most of the time), enter the required information (only things with the red asterisk are mandatory fields), and click on the  sign.

This activity will now appear in your activity record, unless it is a "Class 3" activity (see above), which means that the number of points awarded for that activity need to be confirmed. If this is the case, then the activity will be listed as "Pending" until it has been approved (within a month).

For class 3 activities please write a few details in the "Reason for Claim" box, e.g. what you learned, what skills you developed, etc. You should also provide the total number of hours you spent on this activity in the "Hours" box. If you do not provide this information, we will not be able to approve your claim.

See section 2 for guidance on estimating points values.

1.4 Approval of activities

Any Class 1 or 2 activities do not need to be approved and will go straight onto your record. When your supervisor looks at your record (at supervision or progression meetings) they will make sure that your activities are appropriate, and they may query anything you have done which they believe hasn't aided your development as a research student.

When you claim for a Class 3 activity it must be approved by the Researcher Development Adviser for PGRs (Dr Fryni Panayidou). She will look at the points estimate and the reasons for the claim, and do one of the following:

- Approve the claim, in which case it will go onto your record.
- Mark the activity as "Non-applicable" if isn't included in the points scheme.
- Alter the number of points/points distribution and then approve the claim.
- Contact you to ask for further information.
- Refer the claim to the Doctoral College Management Group who oversee the points scheme, so that they can make a judgement.

Pending claims on the database will be looked at on a regular basis, and the Doctoral College Management Group meets once a month, so you can expect any pending claims to be processed within a month.

1.5 Common examples

1.5.1 Seminar attendance

Research seminars (seminars lasting 1 – 1.5 hours in which someone talks about their academic research) are given 0.5 points in domain A.

Anything else that might be referred to as a seminar (e.g. short sessions on research methods, transferable skills training, lectures on basic topics) should be claimed under "Other course/event attendance".

To claim points for an individual research seminar:

- a) Click on the Claim activity link on your homepage
- b) Select "Any provider" from the activity provider list
- c) Select "Seminar Attendance" from the categories list
- d) From the type list select "Seminar attendance (single)"
- e) Click "Search"

You should see the following:

EITHER:

Select an activity and tell us the date

The system knows of these activities.
You will need to tell us the dates that you attended and select the activity from the list below to add to your profile

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Enter the dates of the activity				<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>							
Enter any additional information about the activity				<input type="text"/>		Then select the activity						
Seminar attendance (single)	SEF-SEM-SING	Economics and Finance Seminar	School of Economics and Finance			n/a	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	
Seminar attendance (single)	RES-SEM-SING	Research seminar (singular)	Any provider			n/a	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	
Seminar attendance (single)	SPIR-SEM-GRAD-IND	SPIR Graduate Research Seminar	School of Politics and International Relations			n/a	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.5	2.0	
Seminar attendance (single)	SPIR-SEM-IND	SPIR Graduate Research Seminar	School of Politics and International Relations			n/a	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	

If your School's seminar series is listed, just enter the date of the seminar and any additional information (e.g. title and speaker) and click on the sign.
If your seminar series is not listed, you can claim it under "Research seminar (single)", as shown in the red box. Again, enter the date of the seminar and any additional information (e.g. title, speaker, duration) and click on the sign.

To claim points for a series of research seminars:

As before, but select "Seminar attendance (series)" from the type menu. Scroll to the bottom of the screen, and you should see the following:

OR:

Enter a new activity

None of the activities above match what you're looking for?
Please enter the details of the activity into the form below before adding it to your profile.

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Seminar attendance (series)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	-	
Reason for Claim:				<input type="text"/>								

Enter the details of the seminar series. **Please also state how many seminars you attended in the "Reason for claim" box.** Click on the sign

1.5.2 Insessional English courses

If you have attended an Insessional English course run by the Language Centre, it is easy to claim the points:

- Click on the Claim activity link on your homepage
- Select "Language Centre" from the activity provider list
- Select "Course/event attendance" from the categories list
- From the type list select "Other course/event attendance"
- Click "Search"

You should see a list of all the Insessional courses:

Select an activity and tell us the date

The system knows of these activities.

You will need to tell us the dates that you attended and select the activity from the list below to add to your profile

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Enter the dates of the activity				<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>							
Enter any additional information about the activity				<input type="text"/>				Then select the activity				
Other course/event attendance	ELS102	Effective Presentation Skills	Language Centre			n/a	2.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	10.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS034	Grammar in context 1	Language Centre			n/a	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	20.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS110	Academic Listening	Language Centre			n/a	8.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	12.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS4006	Critical Thinking for Reading & Writing	Language Centre			n/a	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS111	Effective Participation in Seminars	Language Centre			n/a	2.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	10.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS4007	Structuring arguments and avoiding plagiarism	Language Centre			n/a	12.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	20.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS036	Proofreading and Editing Skills	Language Centre			n/a	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	20.0	+
Other course/event attendance	ELS026	Excellence in Writing 2	Language Centre			n/a	14.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	20.0	+

Enter the dates of the course, and click on the  sign.

This is only if you attended all (or nearly all) of a module. If you only attended one or two sessions you will need to claim for them individually by filling in the "Enter a new activity" boxes at the bottom of the screen:

Enter a new activity

None of the activities above match what you're looking for?
Please enter the details of the activity into the form below before adding it to your profile.

Type	Code	Title	Provider	From	To	Hours	A	B	C	D	Total	
Other course/event attendance (Class 3)				<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(Class 3) Please enter the hours you spent on the activity and the number of points you think the activity is worth.												
Please give further details of the activity* (what it involved, what skills you developed etc)				<input type="text"/>								

2. Class 3 Activities – estimating points

When you claim for a class 3 activity you will be asked to estimate the number of points you should receive in each domain of the RDF (see next page), and to give a reason for the claim and your estimate. These are a few guidelines on how to go about this:

Course attendance: Short courses (1 day or less) are typically given 1 point per hour, so a course from 9-5 with a 1-hour lunch-break would be 7 points. Generally no more than 7 points will be given for a 1 day activity.

Longer courses will be given more points, depending on the length and the level.

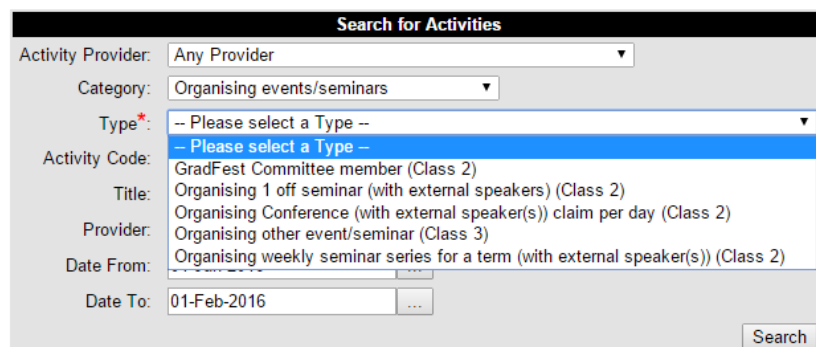
In the "Reason for claim" box please include the length of the course, what it was about, what skills it helped you develop and any other useful information.

Applying for funding >£10,000: Applying for funding of between £10,000 and £100,000 can be given a maximum of 10 points, and for funding of over £100,000 it is a maximum of 20 points. The exact value will depend on how much work went into the application and your role in the application procedure.

In the "Reason for claim" box please include the amount of funding you applied for, what the funding was for, what the application involved, whether the grant or application was in your name, whether you wrote it yourself, or co-wrote it with someone else, and any other useful information.

Organising an event/seminar/conference: Points for this will vary according to the type and length of activity and your involvement. Some things are class 2 activities:

Claim an activity



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search for Activities". It contains the following fields and options:

- Activity Provider: Any Provider (dropdown)
- Category: Organising events/seminars (dropdown)
- Type*: -- Please select a Type -- (dropdown menu is open, showing options: GradFest Committee member (Class 2), Organising 1 off seminar (with external speakers) (Class 2), Organising Conference (with external speaker(s)) claim per day (Class 2), Organising other event/seminar (Class 3), Organising weekly seminar series for a term (with external speaker(s)) (Class 2))
- Activity Code: (text input)
- Title: (text input)
- Provider: (text input)
- Date From: (text input)
- Date To: 01-Feb-2016 (text input)
- Search button

But if your activity doesn't fit into any of these types, then you can select "Organising other event/seminar". In the "Reason for claim" box please include as much information as possible about the event you organised and your involvement in it.

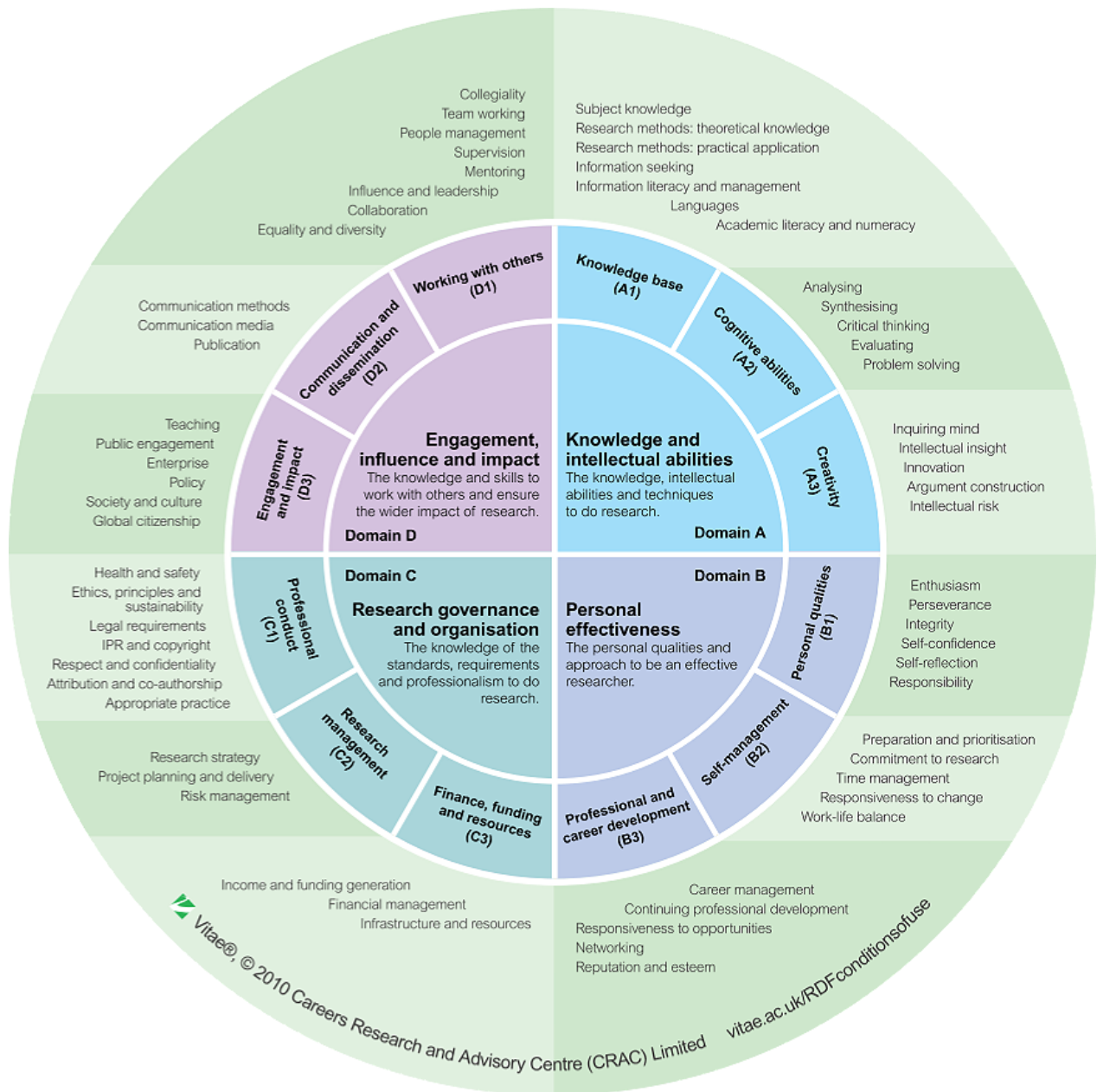
School Induction: As "Course attendance" above.

Work placement: Evaluated on a case by case basis. Please write details of the placement (length, full-time/part-time, what you did etc) in the "Reason for claim" box.

When allocating points to the 4 domains of the RDF, please refer to the diagram in the next page. Think about what skills you have developed through undertaking the particular activity, and which domain those skills fit in. Activities may be given points in all, some, or just one of the four domains.

You can find a detailed breakdown of "Activities and Points" under [Help](#), on SPS

Vitae Researcher Development Framework



The following courses are automatically added to your record on the Skills Points System (SPS). The list includes courses and events provided by: Researcher Development, Careers, Library, Doctoral College, Centre for Public Engagement, Marketing and Communications, Educational Development and E-learning Unit. Any courses NOT listed here, must be added manually – please see sections 1.2.2 and 1.3 above.

Courses for all PhD students

		Total Points	A	B	C	D
RD001	LaTeX Tutorial for Beginners	2	2			
RD002	Café Scientifique	1		1		
RD004	Endnote for Medicine and Dentistry	2	2			
RD005	How to use Endnote for Science and Engineering	2	2			
RD006	Endnote for Humanities and Social Sciences	2	2			
RD008	Let's search it! : Discover High-quality Resources for Science and Engineering Research	2	2			
RD009	Inner Coach 2: Building Willpower and Resilience	3		3		
RD011	Inner Coach 1: Beating Self-Criticism and Self-Sabotage	3		3		
RD012	Stress Reduction 2: Using the Mind-Body Connection	3		3		
RD014	Project Management for Researchers	6		3	3	
RD015	Let's Search it! Advanced search skills for Medicine and Dentistry	2	2			
RD016	Research it! Information Research Skills for Medicine & Dentistry	2	2			
RD019	Writing a Scientific Abstract	1				1
RD022	Stress Reduction 1: Using Mindfulness Meditation	3		3		
RD023	Mendeley It! Using Mendeley to manage your references	2	2			
RD028	Introduction to meta-analysis	6	6			
RD029	Basics of systematic reviewing (2-day course)	12	12			
RD100	Working with your supervisor	3		2		1
RD101	Getting Started with your PhD	3		1	1	1
RD104	Critical Thinking	3	3			
RD105	Making the Most of Your First Academic Conference	3		2		1
RD107	Planning and Managing your Ethical Research Project	2			2	
RD109	Speed-reading for Researchers	3		3		
RD110	Creativity and Mindmapping for Researchers	3	1	2		

RD112	Research it! : Information research skills for Science and Engineering	2	2			
RD113	Research it! : Information research skills for Humanities & Social Sciences	2	2			
RD114	Public Speaking for Researchers	6		3		3
RD116	Visualise it! Your research in focus	2	2			
RD118	Pronunciation & spoken delivery skills for overseas researchers	9		3		6
RD119	Introduction to a concept of systematic reviewing and critical appraisal	3	3			
RD201	Presenting Your Research to an Audience (two session course)	3		1.5		1.5
RD201b	Presenting Your Research day 2	3		1.5		1.5
RD202	Postgraduate Funding: Considering the Alternatives	3			3	
RD203	Reading Strategically and Analytically	3	3			
RD204	Managing your time and workload effectively in a research environment	3		2	1	
RD205	Assertive Communication Skills for Researchers	3		3		
RD208	Making a Poster Presentation	3				3
RD210	Influencing & Negotiation skills	3		1.5		1.5
RD211	Feelings about feedback: how to manage emotions and use feedback to improve your writing	3		2		1
RD212	Becoming Writers: the art, craft and practice of effective academic writing	3		1		2
RD301	Writing Your Thesis	3			1	2
RD302	Preparing for Your Viva	3			1	2
RD305	SciFinder	2	2			
RD306	Define your professional self; enhance your professional relationships	3		2		1
RD307	Finding your Voice as an Academic Writer	3		1		2
RS004	Peer Review	3	1		1	1
RS005	Finding Research Funding, including small grants and travel funds	3			3	
RS125	Introduction to Statistics and R	18	18			
RS415	Introduction to Engaging with Schools and Families	2				2
RS416	Introduction to Public and Patient Involvement	2				2
RS417	Introduction to Community Engagement	2				2
RS418	Introduction to engaging with policymakers	2				2
RS420	Hands on engagement: taking research to events and festivals	2				2
RS450	Public Engagement Masterclass	3.5				3.5
RS452	Public Engagement Masterclass for Science and Engineering	3.5				3.5

RS453	Public Engagement Masterclass for Humanities and Social Sciences	3.5				3.5
RS454	Introduction to evaluating public engagement	2.5				2.5
RS455	Public Engagement Masterclass for the School of Medicine and Dentistry	3.5				3.5
RC003	Getting a STEM research career in industry	3		3		
RC007	How do I decide what I want to do?	2		2		
RC009	Alumni networking event + keynote	2		2		
RC010	LinkedIn secrets – generating job options	1.5		1.5		
RC013	Working with recruitment agencies	1		1		
RC014	Strategic job hunting	2		2		
RC015	LinkedIn – build a great profile	1.5		1.5		
RC016	So you want to do a postdoc?	3		3		
RC017	Managing an academic career (For PhDs and Postdocs)	2		2		
RC018	Interview skills for the labour market	2.5		2.5		
RC019	How to make your CV and job applications stand out (roles beyond academia)	2.5		2.5		
RC020	CVs and applications for academic jobs	2.5		2.5		
RC202	Academic Career Planning for PhD Students	3		3		
RC215	Career Options Beyond Academia	2.5		2.5		
RC216	CVs and Applications for Jobs Outside Academia	2.5		2.5		
RC326	Interview Skills for PhD Students	3		3		
DC100	PhD Induction	7		2	3	2
DC101	1st year PhD day: Maximising the Impact of Conferences and Networking	4		2		2
DC200	2nd Year PhD Cohort day: Understanding the impact of your research	4	0.5	1	0.5	1
DC300	3rd Year PhD Cohort Day - Employability	5		3		2
DC900	Biotechnology YES introduction	2				2

Courses for Research staff (only suitable for some PhD students)

		Total Points	A	B	C	D
RS003	Are YOU fellowship-ready?	3		2		1
RS403	Research Impact: The REF, RCUK Pathways and H2020	3			1	2
RS411	Research Funding 1 - Writing your case for support for Biomedical, Science, and Engineering	3			3	

	Researchers					
RS413	Research Funding for Humanities and Social Science Researchers	3			3	
RS421	Research Funding 2 - Research Finance, and writing about Impact and your Career Development Plan	3			3	
RS009	Introduction to Marketing and Comms (QMUL Media Training)	2.5		1		1.5
RS011	How to write an opinion piece and get published (QMUL Media Training)	2.5		1		1.5
RS012	How to promote your research to the media (QMUL Media Training)	2.5	0.5	1		1

Courses suitable for PhD students with teaching responsibilities

		Total Points	A	B	C	D
GT100	Teach your first session - Humanities and Social Sciences	6		3		3
GT101	Teach your first session - Science and Engineering	6		3		3
A254	Train your voice for Teaching	3		1.5		1.5
A275	Digital identity and social media	2		1		1
A293	Research-Led Teaching	2		1		1
A301	Working with international students	2		1		1
A302	Creating an academic persona	2		1		1
A307	Stagecraft for performance in academia (practical)	2		1		1
ELU001	Getting Started With QMplus	2				2
ELU003	Getting Started with Q-Review: recording your lecture and getting it online	1.5				1.5
ELU004	Designing Quizzes in QMplus	2				2
ELU008	Getting started with video in teaching with QMplus Media	2				2
ELU009	E-portfolios, group work and networking with QMplus Hub	2				2
ELU010	QMplus Administration	1				1
ELUBES	Bespoke e-learning development session (check cpdbookings.qmul.ac.uk for details)	2				2
C107	Introduction to PBL (only for SMD PhD students)	3		1		2
C108	Being a PBL Facilitator (only for SMD PhD students)	3		1		2