

Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee

International Benchmarking: Research Degrees

Template for case studies

Title

Generic Skills Dundee (GSD)

Please give a brief description of the case study including which theme(s) it relates to (please see list attached). It would be helpful if this could include the developmental stage the practice is at, i.e. whether it is new or established, for example.

Since its inception in September 2006, GSD has delivered a programme, for the University of Dundee post-graduates, that is designed around the UK Research Councils Joint Skills Statement (Communication Skills, Networking and Team Building, Research Environment, Research Management, Personal Effectiveness, Career Management and Research Skills and Techniques). Our training programme is reviewed and launched every September for the forthcoming academic year and our 2010/11 programme can be found at http://www.dundee.ac.uk/genericskills/news_events/2010_11/GSD1011.pdf.

For Post-graduates who teach

Every year we run a number of courses on Introduction to Teaching, Demonstrating and Support Learning.

Public Engagement

In 2008/09 our programme was further expanded with the creation of a public engagement resource for researchers called Revealing Research. This now forms a distinct, fully established unit within the university. Researchers now have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of public engagement and training events. The GSD programme continues to include courses on Communicating Science to Non Specialists as well as Outreach, Impact and Engagement seminars.

Entrepreneurship

GSD runs a range of entrepreneurial themed workshops in addition to the published programme. This year's sessions include 'Intellectual Property and Commercialisation', 'Spin-out Companies', 'Developing and Funding your Research', 'Idea Development in Action' as well as a Ventures Plan Competition.

Leadership and management

One of our high uptake courses that we run twice every academic year is 'Project Management in the Real World'. In addition, we run college tailored Post-graduate Project Management sessions which are always popular and well attended.

Professional Skills

We run a number of one day courses that cover the topic of how to win research funding as well as numerous courses that aim to improve students oral and written presentation skills.

Career Development

We run a full series of workshops in conjunction with the University of Dundee's Careers services to cover topics such as CVs, Covering Letters, Application form, Interview techniques and mock panel interviews.

A brief outline of the reasons behind the development, its purposes and benefits.

The University of Dundee demonstrated its commitment to supporting the development of its researchers and to meeting the UK Research Council's increased emphasis on transferable skills training by the creation of GSD – a transferrable skills training resource devoted to the specific needs of Post-graduate research students. GSD's integration into the research community is largely thanks to the support of and frequent communication with, student focus groups, course coordinators and College Vice-Principals.

A brief outline of what works well, any particular challenges faced and how these were addressed.

The initial challenge was one of engagement with a population not yet fully aware of the skills training agenda, the courses that were suddenly on offer and the benefits of such training. However, after initial fluctuating levels of attendance we are now well established with a good network of support for both promoting and endorsing our transferrable skills provision.