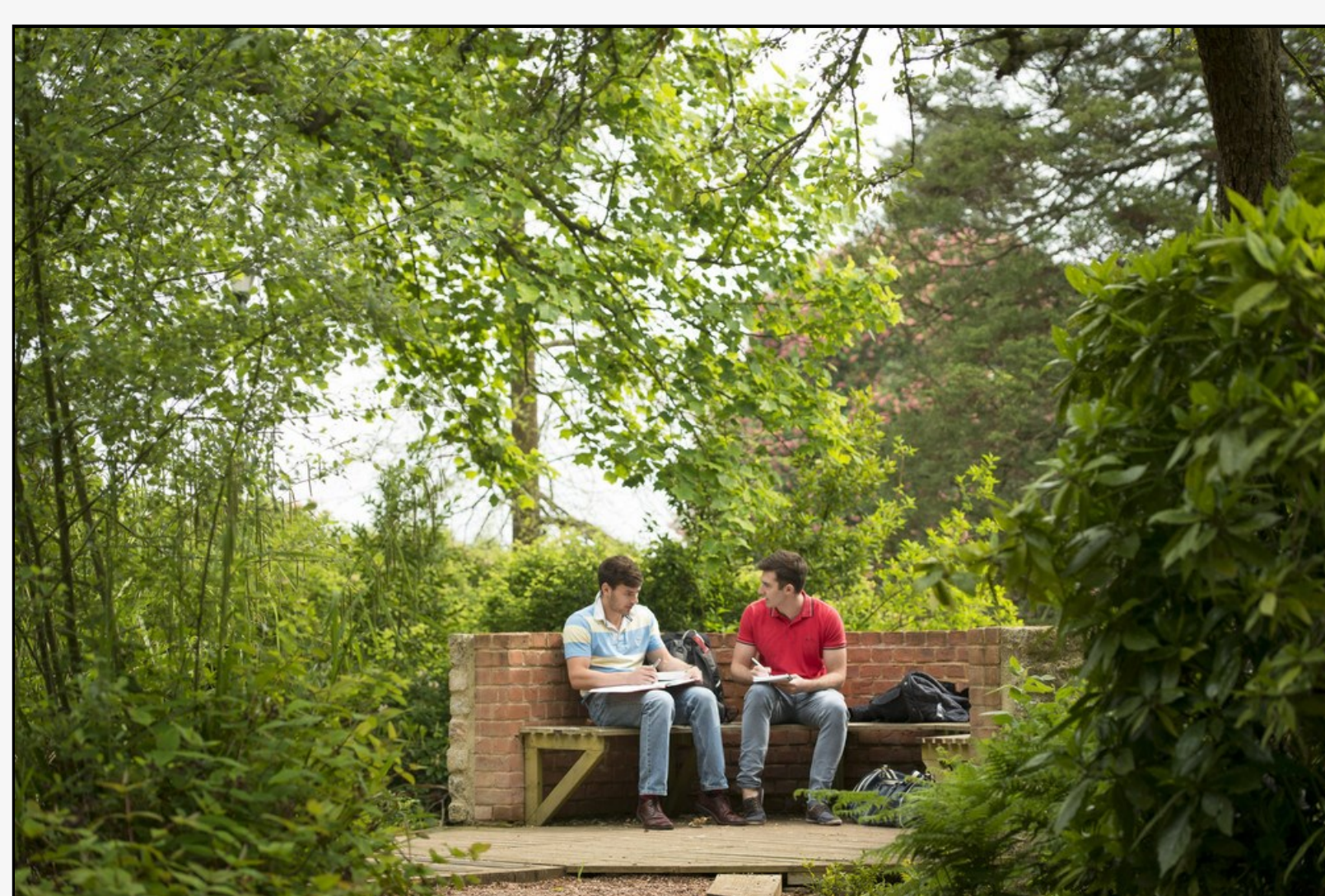


Towards a Framework for Supporting PGR Wellbeing at the University of Exeter

The University of Exeter Doctoral College have been working to develop a holistic framework of support for the wellbeing of our PGRs that looks to achieve three aims:

1. Raising awareness of wellbeing issues and support services for PGRs
2. Building resilience and support amongst our PGR community
3. Providing clear routes of access to therapeutic support



Access to **wellbeing workshops** through our Researcher Development Programme on:

- Managing Stress
- Mindfulness
- Confidence and Resilience
- I've Got to Be Perfect: Managing the Demands of Perfectionism
- How to Just Do It: Overcoming Procrastination
- Go to Bed and Get Some Sleep: Overcoming Sleep Problems

Workshops provide information and techniques as well as space for peer discussion, and the opportunity to talk to a wellbeing practitioner in a non-therapeutic context

Wellbeing Week 2017
Week Beginning: 20th February

For further information and to find out about all the events we have going on throughout the week and how to book on visit:
www.exeter.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/events/wellbeingweek

Hosting a **Doctoral College Wellbeing Week** in February 2017, offering a combination of:

- Research talks
- Yoga and meditation taste sessions
- Wellbeing workshops
- #5minwalk twitter campaign
- Self-care postcards
- Mindful colouring

This was supported by a new page on our website collating all support services PGRs have access to, replicated on our VLE page and on posters across all campuses

The aim Wellbeing Week was to increase awareness of support services, and to de-stigmatise mental health issues

Care first

Working with HR services to provide **access to Care first, a 24/7 telephone counselling service**, in the same way as staff across the University

Care first provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

The service is free for University of Exeter postgraduate researchers

Telephone support is available with (free) referrals for face-to-face counselling

Includes an online service with resources, advice and support for a wide range of issues

Introducing PGR to PGR mentoring

Collaboration between Student Guild, Academic Skills Team and Doctoral College

Being piloted in Digital Humanities in 2017/2018

Offered at discipline level to provide training and research support, as well as the opportunity for community building and pastoral support

Mentors will receive training including information to sign-post relevant support services

Reviewing the role of PGR mentor and introducing PGR Pastoral Tutors

'[t]he 'PGR Pastoral Tutor' is a designated member of academic staff with a responsibility to provide pastoral support to specified PGR students at their request.'

PGR Pastoral Tutors have specialist face-to-face and online training, including information on all support services and relevant processes and procedures to support PGRs

Embeds the notion of wellbeing in programmes of study, and provides a point of contact independent of supervision team to discuss issues

Key questions

- What additional support can we provide to promote an open and honest culture around mental health, as well as championing key issues and stressors that affect the PGR community?
- How can we advocate further for skills development around wellbeing and mental health?
- How do we engage more PGRs with wellbeing workshops, and other support services?
- Given the increasing amount of surveys about PGR stressors and recommendations for support, how can we begin to share good practice and evaluate the impact of interventions?

About the Author

Kelly Preece is the Researcher Development Manager for PGRs in the University of Exeter Doctoral College. She has a background as an academic, having worked as a dance lecturer and scholar for 6 years before moving in to researcher development. Kelly has a track record of pedagogical research and expertise, having been appointed as a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in 2010, and awarded her Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in 2014. She continues to publish her pedagogical research, with a commitment to publishing in online, open access journals.

Acknowledgements

Several professional services have been working to support PGR wellbeing, increase provision and raise awareness at the University of Exeter through the initiatives outlined above. This includes but is not limited to Wellbeing Service, Human Resources, the Student Guild, Academic Development, Skills Team as well as teams in the Doctoral College including our Researcher Development and Research Culture team.