

DCHAF Training and Development Programme, 2025-26

DCAHF's Research Training and Development Programme draws on the incredible interdisciplinary diversity of PhD research in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and seeks to forge a lively community of researchers working across a variety of methods, including the theoretical, critical, practice-based, artistic, qualitative and quantitative. The programme is designed to help you: make connections with other researchers in the faculty; get the best possible start to your research degree by helping you acquire key skills and knowledge; and enable you to reflect meaningfully on your development as a researcher so that you're equipped for what comes after the PhD. A key strand of the programme is focused on new PhD researchers, and we encourage attendance in your first year as much as your schedule will allow.

There is a full programme of sessions in semesters one and two. We're here to support you and are happy to respond to training and development needs as they arise, so please feel free to be in touch. Semester three will provide more opportunities for PhD-led initiatives, writing retreats outside of the university, and ad-hoc sessions. All of our sessions are advertised on the [Doctoral Training Student Calendar](#) where you will also find a wide array of other training sessions, including Methods Masterclasses. Some Doctoral College events (which we are co-hosting this year), are also listed in this programme – but this only represents a fraction of what's on offer!

Sessions will be offered as hybrid, synchronous events wherever possible, but may occasionally be online or in-person only. The sessions usually take place in room GE 2.06 (Grosvenor East) and on Teams, but please check the programme for full details.

Sessions aimed primarily at first-year PhD researchers and new starters are indicated with an orange heading on the calendar and in the session headings. Researchers in their second years (or part time equivalent) are welcome to join these sessions if they would like a refresher.

Semester One

Tuesday 16th September, 1-2.30pm, Practice-based Conversation with Helen McGhie, Poetry Library roundtable and on Teams

Informal staff-led conversation series, organised by Nicola Lewis-Dixon and hosted by the Poetry Library, with a focus on practice-based research. In this session Senior Lecturer in Photography with SODA will lead a discussion on creative reflective practice as a methodology and initiate some discussion around the differences between arts-based research and art-world practice.

Email Nicola if you'd like to come in person, as we usually provide refreshments:
nicola.lewis-dixon@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Wednesday 8th October, 1-2.30pm, Practice-based Conversation with Susannah Thompson: Writing About Creative Practice, GE 2.06 and on Teams

Informal staff-led conversation series, organised by Nicola Lewis-Dixon and hosted by the Poetry Library, with a focus on practice-based research. In this session, 'Writing about Creative Practice', Susannah Thompson (Professor of Art History and Criticism) will lead a discussion aimed at practitioners seeking to articulate their practice and the forms they might choose to work with to do that.

This session will be in GE 2.06, not the Poetry Library.

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nicola.lewis-dixon@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Monday 13th October, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 15th October, 10.30-1pm, Arts & Humanities Induction, GE 2.06 and on Teams

The induction will be run as a hybrid event which you can attend either in-person or online, followed by an **in-person lunch from 1.00pm - 2.00pm**. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to meet academic staff, fellow doctoral research students, and to learn more about the interdisciplinary community in the Arts and Humanities. During the induction, you'll find out about your faculty and what support is available to you both academically and pastorally, including the training programme that will run this academic year. **Please send an email to Dr Derek Bousfield**

(d.bousfield@mmu.ac.uk) to let us know whether you can attend, and if you would like to attend in-person, please include your dietary requirements for the lunch.

Thursday 23rd October, 11-12pm, Ethics as Process (joint with staff) with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06

Ethics training aimed at students from year two of the PhD onwards and staff members. This session dedicated to questions of research will discuss the role of ethics while preparing your approval application; when carrying out your research; and when writing up. We will also address practical questions about the application process, and have room for discussion of any questions or issues that you may want to address or need support with. The workshop will be run by Dr Adi Kuntsman, the Faculty Chair of Ethics, and Dr Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, the PhD Liaison from the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Thursday 30th Oct, 11-12.30, Poetry Library exhibition meeting with Martin Kratz, The Poetry Library and on Teams

This meeting is for PhD researchers who have applied to exhibit with the Poetry Library in the PhD exhibition in 2026 and have been selected to show their work. This will be an opportunity to talk about plans for the exhibition and discuss the curatorial aims and ambitions of the project.

Tuesday 4th November, 11-12pm, Applying for DCAHF Funding with Antony Rowland, Online only on Teams

Three times a year the Doctoral College Arts and Humanities Faculty invites applications to its Research Degree Fund. The Fund gives you the opportunity to apply for up to £200 to support your research, whether by attending a conference, visiting an archive, attending courses, residencies or workshops, or organising an event that will benefit the wider PhD community. In this online session Antony Rowland will cover the basics of how to apply to the Fund, sharing some tips on what makes a good application. Feel free to come with any questions you might have.

Wednesday 5th Nov, 4-5.30pm, Navigating your PhD as an International Student with Jea Na, Domenic Suntrapak and Sumi Sivapalan, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

Starting a PhD can be challenging for any new researcher, but this event is an opportunity to reflect on what's unique about the international and overseas experience. Chaired by Jea Na, Senior Lecturer in the School of Art, you will also hear from current PhD researchers who are a little further along in their research journey – Domenic Suntrapak and Sumi Sivapalan. They will share their experience of starting out and navigating the PhD from an international perspective, and you will also be able to ask any questions you might have. There will also be tea, coffee, snacks, and a chance to chat and get to know new and returning doctoral researchers. If you're a returning student we encourage you to come along and meet some of the new starters.

Friday 14th November, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 19th November, 1-2.30pm, Practice-based Conversation with Sara Davies: Mapping Methods and Methodologies, Poetry Library (tbc) and [on Teams](#)

Informal staff-led conversation series, organised by Nicola Lewis-Dixon and hosted by the Poetry Library, with a focus on practice-based research. In this session, Sara Davies, Lecturer in Art Theory and Practice at the Manchester School of Art will lead a discussion focused on methodologies in art and design practice-based research. This will be ideal for first years who are still thinking through their methodology, but you also might find it useful if you are at a later stage in your PhD and are returning to write or edit methodology informed parts of your thesis.

Please come to this session prepared with ideas for interesting readings or reflection on art and design practice-based methodologies. Sara also wanted to encourage you to read this chapter before the session so that we could discuss it:

Vear, C. (2022) *The Routledge International Handbook of Practice-Based Research*. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group. Available at:

<http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6818293> (Accessed: June 17, 2025).

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Email Nicola if you'd like to come in person, as we usually provide refreshments:

nicola.lewis-dixon@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Thursday 20th November, 11-12pm, Intro to Ethics with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and on Teams

What are Research Ethics and what do you need to know to complete your Ethos application? This session is designed for first year PhD researchers who are preparing to submit an Ethos application. It will cover the basics and beyond.

Wednesday 26th November, 10-12.00, Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, GE 2.06 and on Teams

Within this session we will discuss easily memorable approaches to engaging in critical thinking around your own reading of published research, with a view to building skills and abilities in critiquing work ahead of incorporation into your own thesis. To complement this, we will engage in the critical reading and deconstruction of an easy to read paper from linguistics, exploring how even published papers of limited value and argumentation can be published, and the danger in relying on, or trusting everything written in black and white. Derek (who is running the class) will provide the paper for reading and critiquing at least a week before the session, so please ensure you have signed up well in advance in order to receive the paper for critique.

Tuesday 2nd December, 1-2.30pm, Practice-based conversation with Kim Moore: Creative Practice, Creative Form (need to request Poetry Library tbc) and on Teams

Informal staff-led conversation series, organised by Nicola Lewis-Dixon and hosted by the Poetry Library, with a focus on practice-based research. In this session Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, Kim Moore will lead a discussion on 'Creative Practice, Creative Form', looking at other ways of presenting research than a traditionally structured thesis with chapters, literature review, etc.

Email Nicola if you'd like to come in person, as we usually provide refreshments:
nicola.lewis-dixon@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Friday 5th December, 11-12pm, Writing Ethics, with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

This training is designed for third-year PhD researchers and beyond and will focus on how to write about the results of your research and data collection with Ethics in mind.

Tuesday 9th December, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Semester Two

Monday 12th January, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 14th January, 10-12.00, Methods Masterclass with Elizabeth Kealey Morris (organised by the Doctoral College)

Wednesday 21st January, 10-12.00, Methods Masterclass with Elizabeth Kealey Morris (organised by the Doctoral College)

Wednesday 21st January, 2.30-4pm, Academic Careers Panel with Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrio, GE 2.06 and on Teams

Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrio, Senior Lecturer in Modern European History, will chair this panel discussion with early career researchers about the different forms an academic career might take, how to go about finding and applying for jobs, and what you can do to prepare for the job search.

Friday 30th January, 10.30-12.30, Ethics Application Writing with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and on Teams

You are cordially invited to the next event in our “writing ethics” series: a short writing retreat. Although primarily aimed at PhD students, the session would be beneficial for anyone who is reflecting on ethical complexities in their publications. The session will include a short presentation, followed on by hands-on writing exercises and a discussion.

Tuesday 3rd February, 2-4pm, Methods Masterclass with Kate Pahl (organised by the Doctoral College)

Thursday 5th February, 11-12pm, Ethics as Process with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and on Teams

Ethics training aimed at students from year two of the PhD onwards and staff members. This session dedicated to questions of research will discuss the role of ethics while preparing your approval application; when carrying out your research; and when writing up. We will also address practical questions about the application process, and have room for discussion of any questions or issues that you may want to address or need support with. The workshop will be run by Dr Adi Kuntsman, the Faculty Chair of Ethics, and Dr Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, the PhD Liaison from the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Wednesday 11th February, 9-5pm, Writers’ Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers’ Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty’s Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive ‘ready to write’ but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day

session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 18th February, 2-3.30pm, Kathryn Hurlock, Writing for Trade Audiences, GE 2.06 and on Teams

This workshop offers the opportunity to think about how to write about your research for public audiences and how to go about getting published with a trade press.

Kathryn Hurlock is Professor of Religious and Military History. In 2025 Kathryn's book *Holy Places: How Pilgrimage Changed the World* was published with Profile Books. In this book, she follows the trail of pilgrimage through nineteen sacred sites - from the temples of Jerusalem to the banks of the Ganges, by way of Iona, Lourdes, Amritsar and Buenos Aires - revealing the many ways in which this ancient practice has shaped our religions and our world. Kathryn will share wisdom from her experience of writing and publishing this book, and you'll have an opportunity to think about how you might pitch your research for a public audience.

Monday 9th March, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 18th March, 10-12.00, Demystifying the PhD Viva, with Derek Bousfield and Alumni (tbc), GE 2.06 and on Teams

What is a Viva? How long will it last? What kinds of questions will you be asked? How should you prepare? Although the PhD viva can often be a source of anxiety as you come towards the end of your research project, it's also a brilliant opportunity to have researchers from outside your project engage closely and constructively with your work. In the first half of the session Derek Bousfield, Head of DCAHF and Professor in Linguistics will talk about the viva from the perspective of a supervisor

and examiner. In the second half of the session we'll hear from MMU graduates who have recently successfully defended their theses.

Thursday 19th March, 5-7pm, PhD Exhibition Launch, Poetry Library

Launch party for the exhibition with the Poetry Library. Further details tbc.

Tuesday 24th March, 2-4pm, Journal Article Workshop with Berthold Schoene, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

In this workshop, Professor Berthold Schoene will offer advice and guidance on how to work towards and write-up journal articles based on your research for publication. The session will cover some of the basics, for example, how to choose the right journal, how to prepare cover letters and find submission guidelines, and how to respond to peer review reports, etc. It will also offer an opportunity to think in more detail about what you'd like to publish and when. Over the past few years, Berthold has written journal articles on arborealism and dendrography, eco-narratology and ruderal aesthetics, as well as trans-corporeality, hope, and degrowth aesthetics in the Anthropocene – he'll bring some of this experience to the workshop.

Thursday 16th April, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Thursday 23rd April, 11-12pm, Writing Ethics with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

This training is designed for third-year PhD researchers and beyond and will focus on how to write about the results of your research and data collection with Ethics in mind.

Wednesday 29th April, 10-12.00, Preparing for the Annual Progress Review with Derek Bousfield, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) give you the opportunity to demonstrate your research progress and receive formal feedback from academic reviewers. These

take place annually and doctoral students must complete each review satisfactorily in order to progress to the next year of their research programme. In this informal session we'll talk about what to expect from the Annual Progress Review, how to prepare for it, and the different ways of using it to help your development as a researcher. Come with your questions and queries.

Friday 8th May, 10.30-12.30pm, Ethics Application Writing with Adi Kuntsman and Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#)

You are cordially invited to the next event in our “writing ethics” series: a short writing retreat. Although primarily aimed at PhD students, the session would be beneficial for anyone who is reflecting on ethical complexities in their publications. The session will include a short presentation, followed on by hands-on writing exercises and a discussion.

Summer

Wednesday 27th May, 2-4pm, Getting the Most out of Conference Attendance with Emma Liggins, GE 2.06 and [on Teams](#) (co-hosted hybrid with the Doctoral College)

Thursday 28th May, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Friday 26th June, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day

session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 15th July, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Monday 10th August, 9-5pm, Writers' Retreat with Chad McDonald, in-person only in GE 2.06

Writers' Retreats give PhD students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the opportunity to devote a whole day to writing in a quiet, structured, and supportive atmosphere. The retreats are facilitated by Dr Chad McDonald, the faculty's Senior Academic and Study Skills Tutor. You will need to arrive 'ready to write' but may, of course, bring any materials (laptops, books, data, etc.) with you for the whole-day session. There will be some short discussion around good writing practice and how to approach your writing as a professional task, but much of the day will be devoted to writing without distraction. Whatever your writing project (e.g., annual report, paper, thesis), the retreat will provide a space away from your office or home in which to concentrate and reflect on the process of writing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

