

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023/24 ✨

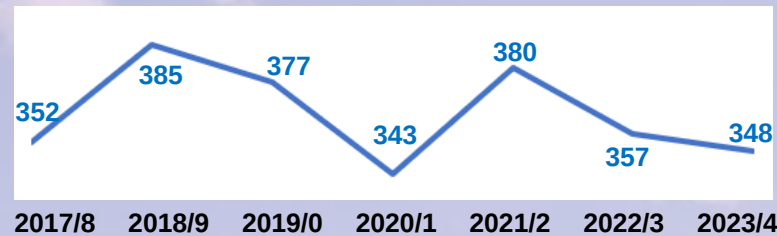


# PGR STATISTICS

1781

CURRENT POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCHERS  
(1 DEC 2023)

## PGR STARTERS



405

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS\*  
INVOLVING PGRs IN 2023/24

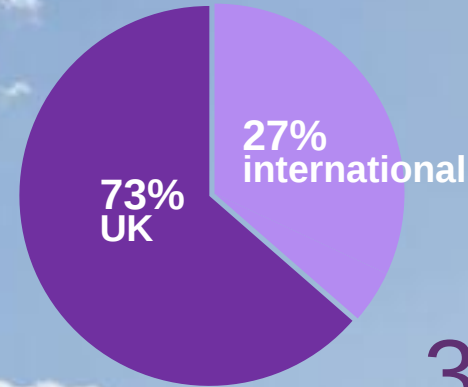
355

GRADUATES  
IN 2023/24, of which:

- 260 PhDs
- 40 PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES
- 50 OTHER RESEARCH DEGREES

\*Publications within AY23/24 by current PGRs or by recently graduated PGRs (up to 1 year before the publication).

## 2023/24 COMPOSITION OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS BODY:



27%

international

OF OUR 2023/24 PGR  
STARTERS ARE FROM  
OUTSIDE OF UK,  
REPRESENTING

37 COUNTRIES

## GENDER

60% FEMALE

39% MALE

1% NON-BINARY, GENDER  
FLUID or OTHER

## AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRY

30 YEARS

## Welcome

First, I was pleased to see the result of the latest Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), up 6% for overall satisfaction. I am also very pleased to report that UEA has been successful in numerous high-profile and highly competitive UKRI Doctoral Landscape Awards. These awards are UKRI's flagship schemes for training the next generation of highly skilled people, and marks a change from previous Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) schemes. Success in this area includes the Arts & Humanities Research Council London and East of England Doctoral Landscape award where UEA is a key strategic partner, UEA as institutional lead on a Natural Environment Research Council Doctoral Landscape award, and UEA partnering with Norwich Bioscience Institutes on a Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council Doctoral Landscape award. All multimillion-pound awards helping to shape our own doctoral landscape at UEA. Huge congratulations and thanks to colleagues who helped prepare these bids and provide the necessary leadership. This success builds upon UEA's partnership in the Economic & Social Research Council-funded South and East Network for Social Sciences (SENSS) awarded last year which is currently recruiting its first cohort of students.

The Doctoral College continues to take a leading role in ensuring our postgraduate research programmes, our research culture and environment are equal, diverse, and inclusive. Around 1 in 3 of our postgraduate researchers have shared a disability. We have been working collaborative with teams in student support, learning enhancement, and key academic leads at UEA and Norwich Bioscience Institutes to ensure we have a robust process for identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments for postgraduate research students based at UEA and across the Norwich Research Park. This work includes a new canvas of reasonable adjustments that better fits with the complexities and diverse activity across the postgraduate researcher's journey.

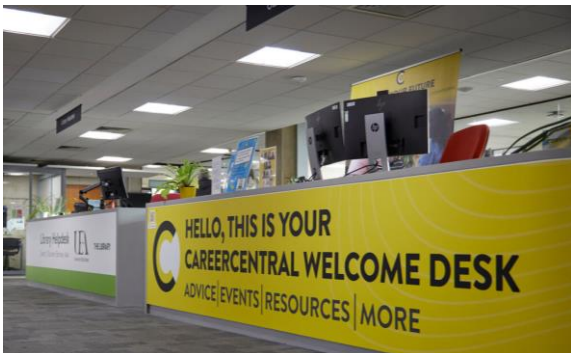


# FOREWORD



**PROFESSOR  
SAMUEL FOUNTAIN**

ASSOCIATE PRO-VICE-  
CHANCELLOR,  
UEA DOCTORAL COLLEGE



# PGR CAREERS HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to providing professional advice, the PGR Careers Adviser team helps build community amongst our PGRs.



The [PGR Careers team](#) supports postgraduate researchers from aspiring to do a PhD, through applications at UEA and beyond, to planning their next steps in academia or industry. Support is offered via refreshed online resources on “MyCareerCentral” and “PGR & Researcher Central,” individual guidance appointments, and group training sessions. Online guidance remains popular, with 2.2 times more attendees at virtual training than in-person. Providing a balance of training offered in different ways seems to meet the needs of a wider range of PGRs, so we will continue to provide this blend considering what is most appropriate for each topic.

Career options in and outside academia are explored in sessions like “How to choose a career.” For those pursuing academia, we offer targeted support through sessions such as “Getting your first lectureship” and academic application prep. Industry-focused sessions feature employer insights on applications and interviews.

We also run “Career Options” events with speakers sharing their post-PhD journeys, including sessions focused on Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences, IP/tech transfer, science communication, and unexpected career paths.

Bespoke sessions were delivered for researchers at Earlham Institute, John Innes Centre, and UEA’s Social Work and Health Sciences schools. A CV training session led to over 70 submissions for review, creating valuable engagement across Norwich Research Park.

“Cake & Careers” drop-ins foster community and peer sharing over homemade cake. Networking skills are supported through regular training and short online videos, forming part of our tailored resources for PGRs.



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## The Critical Decade for Climate Change (CDCC, Leverhulme TRUST)

**Student Recruitment.** As of February 2024, the [CDCC](#) recruitment is complete. The three cohorts include students from CHE, DEV, ECO, ENV, LAW, LDC, and PSY, spanning Science, Social Science, and Humanities faculties

**Training and cohort building activities.** The programme continues to deliver bespoke training and development events, organised centrally and by the Student Training Committee, made up of students from each cohort.

### Training activities delivered this year include:

- *Narrative Workshop* – Jean McNeil & Elizabeth Lewis-Williams (Oct 2023)
- *Storytelling Workshop* – Steve Waters (Oct 2023)
- *Sainsbury Centre Collaboration* – Climate Exhibitions: *Sediment Spirit* and *The Stuff of Life/the Life of Stuff* (Nov–Dec 2023)
- *Human Centred Data Visualisation* – Jordan Harold, Tyndall Centre (May 2024)
- *Building Stories with Data* – Cara Thompson, 4-week course (May 2024)
- *CDCC Writers Retreat* – Dragon Hall, Norwich (July 2024, student-led)

All students receive school-based induction, follow UEA's standard PhD supervision, and access faculty-specific training. Each scholar is also offered a mentor, often from non-academic sectors.

### Creative workshops under the theme 'Rest, Resistance and Restor(y)ing' included:

- *Exploring the Role of Audio and Sound in Creating Meaningful Narratives* – Catherine Carr & Tony Phillips (Jan 2024)
- *Creative Encounters* – Ben Musgrave (Feb 2024)
- *Thrutopian Parked Cars and Nimble Spaces* – Alice Willitts (Dec 2024)



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## ARIES DTP (NERC)

The [ARIES](#) (Advanced Research and Innovation in the Environmental Sciences) Doctoral Training Partnership aims **to train postgraduate research students (PGRs) with excellent potential from across society, equipping them with the necessary skills to become leaders in the science and sustainable business of the natural environment.**

In 2023, the ARIES DTP recruited 26 PGRs, with the cohort extended by a further 10, externally funded PGR Associates.

**During 2023–2024**, ARIES delivered the *EnviroSPRINT* online training event in collaboration with five other DTPs (involving up to 150 individual PGRs). Training was delivered in innovation, communication and infographics, followed by completion of an inter-DTP team-based challenge developed by non-University partners. This innovative training event forms a key part of ARIES, is highly regarded by the funding organisations and is included in the application to NERC for the renewal of the ARIES DTP as a Doctoral Landscape Award from 2025.

# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## EDESIA (WELLCOME TRUST)

The fifth and final cohort of postgraduate students arrived into the Wellcome Trust-funded [EDESIA](#): **Plants, Food and Health** PhD programme in 2024 and are undertaking research rotations across our partner institutes. Previous cohorts are working on a diverse range of applicable PhD projects across UEA, the John Innes Centre and the Quadram Institute.

In April 2024, we ran the second EDESIA Conference 'Plant-based diets for healthy humans and gut microbes'. We had excellent speakers, both national and international, supported by poster presentations from local students. This biennial conference is a great opportunity to network and complements our seminar series held throughout the year.

The first cohort of EDESIA students submitted their theses in 2024 and are now taking advantage of the Transition Fund, enabling them to explore potential career opportunities at the end of their PhD. This is awarded as a Career Transition Fellowship, enabling students to use the fund flexibly, often across multiple activities.

The fourth round of the Wellcome Trust Biomedical Vacation Scholarships, awarded in conjunction with the EDESIA programme and focused on widening participation have been completed successfully.





# 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.

In 2023/24, 38 PhD researchers joined us to give a total of more than 150 on the programme of which a quarter work on joint projects with non-academic partners.

One of our researchers won first prize in the poster competition at the Annual meeting of the British Psychological Society and another won the Early Career Poster Prize at the Pharmacology Annual Meeting. One of our alumni has set up a charitable organisation, Get Genome, that provides equitable access to genomics technology for early career researchers all over the world. Another has been involved in establishing a new company, TraitSeq, during the final year of their PhD studies.

# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



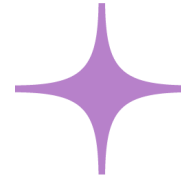
## AgriFoRwArdS CDT (EPSRC, Agrifood robotics)

It's been an extremely busy time for AgriFoRwArdS, marked by multiple international conferences, training events, visits, and celebrations. Two particular highlights recently have been the prestigious awards won by our CDT researchers.

In September 2023, the annual AgriFoRwArdS conference in Cambridge was transformed into three conferences in one: it was also the Towards Autonomous Robotics Systems (TAROS) Conference as well as the Joint Robotics EPSRC CDT Annual Conference. This made for a spectacular opportunity for learning, networking and socialising for people from both the UK and beyond. UK Conferences attended also included the International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) and the International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS), both at the ExCeL Centre in London. Further afield, one CDT researcher also attended the International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems in Kyoto, Japan, in October 2022. We're now looking forward to hosting the annual AgriFoRwArdS conference in July 2024 at UEA.



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## MRC-funded Microbes, Microbiomes and Bioinformatics (MMB) DTP

The [MMB](#) doctoral training programme (DTP) builds on the success of the MRC DART iCASE programme, funded in 2017.

The MMB programme successfully recruited the third cohort of 7 researchers who will join the existing 14 PGRs in October 2024.

Our PGRs are located across the NRP being based at UEA, QIB, EI and JIC. They continue to value our six weeks of intensive bioinformatics training held in the first three months of their studies. Postgraduate researchers also engaged in monthly masterclasses – interactive sessions run by both internal and external colleagues where students are exposed to the use of different informatic approaches applied across a wide range of scenarios, or discipline-specific transferrable skills.

Year 1 PGRs enjoyed a 2-day visit to UKHSA in London where they learned about how bioinformatics is used in the response to and prevention of infectious disease, and the differences between working in a government agency and their usual research environments.



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## CHASE DTP (AHRC)

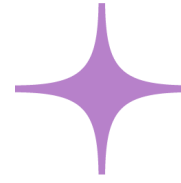
We have had another successful year, securing 11 new studentships across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. These include one CDA supervised by Professor Matthew Taunton and Dr Clare Connors in partnership with the Harry Ransom Center (Austin, Texas). A huge thank you to all colleagues who took part in this year's selection panels, and we look forward to welcoming our final CHASE cohort and ensuring that all our students benefit from the plethora of training, placement and networking opportunities that the consortium affords.

A relevant activity for [CHASE](#) PGRs during this academic year has been their participation in several assistant editor placements for the Journal of the English Association. This is an internationally known journal of literary criticism, published on behalf of The English Association. Each issue contains essays on a wide range of authors and literary texts in English, a substantial reviews section, and original poetry. The journal's editorial team are situated in the school of Literature, Drama and Creative writing. Assistant editors provide support and strategic stewardship of the journal and work with the editors to guide the journal's editorial direction. The placement gives PGRs an insight into academic journal editing from initial submission, through peer-review, revisions, copy-editing, and proof-reading to the final published issue.

We also have introduced the PGR CHASE EDI Ambassador role to develop and strengthen networks to support progression to postgraduate study in the arts and humanities from under-represented groups. As part of this work, the current CHASE EDI Ambassador, in partnership with Media Studies and UEA colleagues have carried out several podcasts and are launching the inaugural Student Podcast Challenge, inviting postgraduate researchers from across the university to create a podcast, and helping with its development and promotion.



# EXTERNALLY-FUNDED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES



## SENSS (South and East Network for Social Sciences)

SENSS is a consortium of eight institutions : UEA, along with the University of Essex, Goldsmiths, City St George's, University of London; Cranfield University; University of Lincoln; Middlesex University and the University of Roehampton.

SENSS is an interdisciplinary programme and offers a student-led studentship competition, a supervisor-led collaborative PhD competition, and a post-doctoral fellowship competition.

In addition to the studentship competitions, SENSS has launched new training opportunities, many of which are available to all postgraduate researchers at participating HEIs.

Recent activities have included a training series on Generative AI use in research; and a forthcoming conference in summer 2025 at University of Cranfield.

SENSS opportunities are highly competitive. The DTP is attracting highly talented doctoral researchers to join our research community and building new opportunities for collaboration across our institutions.





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# DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

[EdD](#) is a 5-year part-time programme which recruits every two years.

The programme is structured with four study block weekends (two in each of the first two years) and with a sequence of summative and formative assignments designed especially for busy professionals who want to conduct educational research in a topic of their interest. Support from a supervisory team is a constant feature throughout the programme.

The next cohort will start in October 2026 with recruitment from October 2025. The most recent cohort welcomed 12 researchers.

We are delighted that the recent PRES survey results indicated that 91% of the EDU PGR respondents rated supervision experience as positive. Currently, the EdD has 30 researchers overall, and we look forward to the forthcoming 2026 EdD cohort.



# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES



## DOCTORATE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ([ProfD HaSC](#))

The 2023/24 academic year was another successful one for the programme, with two more completions bringing our total graduates to three. Many alumni now contribute to teaching, supervision, and curriculum development, and some are being supported in applying for honorary fellowships. Cohorts from 2019, 2021, and 2023 continue to progress well. Recognising the demands on students in senior roles, we have introduced greater flexibility around deadlines and registration to support wellbeing.

A highlight was the Professional Doctorate Symposium held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, showcasing student research across health and social care. The event featured awards for best poster and presentation and was attended by supervisors, stakeholders, and prospective applicants.



Our efforts to cultivate a strong research culture are yielding tangible results. We've seen a notable increase in student presentations at national and international conferences, as well as successful publications. A particularly exciting development has been the launch of the Professional Doctorate in Health International Research Network, building collaborative links with institutions in the UK, New Zealand, and Australia. These international connections provide valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and the co-production of research addressing global health and social care challenges. New Supervisor Support Meetings have strengthened supervision quality and community, receiving positive feedback.

We also completed our five-year programme review, affirming the programme's strong alignment with professional practice and identifying areas for growth. Looking ahead, we're excited by the programme's momentum, expanding research impact, and growing community of practice.



# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES



## DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY ([ClinPsyD](#))

The 2023/24 academic year was another successful one for the ClinPsyD programme. UEA secured the new national training contract (starting Oct 2023) and received Level 2 accreditation from the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapists. We welcomed 49 funded and 2 international trainees in October 2023, with the same intake planned for 2024/25. The programme continues to expand clinical research coverage and offers joint research opportunities with NHS services, including bespoke UEA Clinical Psychology Research Supervisor training. Our placements team has worked hard to build relationships and develop potential placement opportunities and thus far we have met necessary placement demand. We remain grateful to our NHS partners for supporting placement provision, especially in areas like older adult and learning disability services.

We celebrated the end of the academic year and a milestone for the Programme with our [10<sup>th</sup> annual research conference](#) in September 2024. This was our largest conference to date, celebrating the completion of our 2021 cohort – our first expanded cohort of 50 trainees. The cohort submitted a total of 65 abstracts showcasing methodologically diverse work across our key research areas of Adult and Child Mental Health, Health Psychology, Behavioural Sleep Medicine, Clinical Neuropsychology and Social and Professional Issues. Attendees included senior colleagues from regional services, international collaborators, clinical and research supervisors and service users and carers, representing the breadth of collaboration and impact of trainee research. We are also pleased to see continued improvements to publication of trainee research during the period since the thesis portfolio was introduced, with 35 publications in the year 2023-24.

We are delighted that the International Training Opportunity (ITO) has continued in 2024. This year seven trainees, the largest number to date, have undertaken international placements in Malaysia and Australia and placement sites were also extended to include Sri Lanka and Singapore, for the first time this year. A [short film](#) produced by the trainees on the 2024 ITO was shown at the annual Research Conference and now appears on our externally facing webpages. Looking ahead to 2024-25, six trainees will undertake an international placement supported by Turing funding. These include a variety of community psychology placements in Malaysia and Sri Lanka and a research placement at a centre of excellence for Neuropsychology at Monash, Melbourne, Australia.

Our international recruitment has continued, and we received the largest number (c272) of international applications to date. A promotional film, [UEA International Trainee Video.mp4](#) hosted on our webpages has been made by two of our current international students.

As we look ahead to next year, we are excited about the continued growth, wider research impact and future potential of research on the ClinPsyD programme.

# PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES



## DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY ([EdPsy](#))

We welcomed 15 trainees in September 2023 as part of our 6th cohort. As trainee numbers have expanded year-on-year since our first year of welcoming trainees in 2018, the course team has also grown. There is representation on the academic and professional tutor team from across Eastern Region Educational Psychology Services and beyond. We continue to further our relationships with our eleven partner Local Authorities (Bedford Borough, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend, Suffolk and Thurrock) who support the course by providing and supervising placements for our trainees, commissioning small scale research projects for our year one trainees and contributing to processes such as recruitment of future trainees.

In January 2024, several of our previous UEA trainees presented their research at the British Psychological Society, Division of Educational and Child Psychology annual trainee conference, whilst members of the course team presented workshops during the Eastern Region Educational Psychology Services Biannual Conference in March 2024.

In the summer of 2024, all trainees from our 2021 cohort submitted their doctoral theses with 14 of the cohort having achieved their registrations as practitioner psychologists with the Health and Care Professions Council and working across the Eastern and South-East Regions as newly qualified educational psychologists.

Alongside our consortium partner universities, (Birmingham, Bristol, Exeter, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield), we were notified in the summer of 2024 that funding had been secured from the Department of Education for a further three cohorts of trainees (2024, 2025, 2026) with our numbers per cohort expanding from 15 to 20 per cohort. We are excited by this continued growth and look forward to welcoming our new trainees.

# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS



## HUMANITIES

Associate Dean: Dr Karina Aveyard (LDC)

- We continue to maintain strong recruitment in postgraduate researcher with our PGR community enriched by students from a wide range of backgrounds and many different countries.
- Our Faculty Grant Scheme continues to fund conferences and to support research training and engagement work and is a vital part of our strategy for supporting positive postgraduate research culture in the Faculty.
- In April 2024 we hosted the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Postgraduate Research: A Practice Sharing Day', a one-day workshop at UEA informed by pedagogical research undertaken by staff from the HUM Graduate School.
- The Graduate School Student Forum (GSSF) plays a central role in the life of our community and helps to guide the decisions and priorities of the HUM Graduate School. This year's postgraduate researchers representatives are to be warmly congratulated for their diligence and dedication and their outstanding work.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Prof Kirsten McConnachie (LAW)

- Registration for SSF PPD activities continued to be in high demand, and the 'UEA Online Training Series for PGRs', which makes elements of our PGR skills training provision available to other universities, was delivered to attendees from close to 50 UK HEIs.
- We launched the first year of studentship competitions under the new South and East Network for Social Sciences (SENSS) and received 12 studentship awards for postgraduate researchers starting in October 2025 and 1 post-doctoral fellowship.
- We have continued to work to build community and research culture across SSF PGRs, with activities including a team-building event followed by a social lunch at Namaste Village, the launch of a new PGR Research Culture fund for student-led research initiatives, and an interdisciplinary PGR Writing Group.



## MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Associate Dean: Dr Penny Powell (MED)

- Our PGR programme continues to increase with 120 external, Faculty or self-funded researchers, including 30 international.
- Postgraduate researchers' successes include 22 PhDs, 1 PhD by Publication and 16 MSc by Research degrees awarded this year. There has been recognition of their work both nationally & internationally with travel awards to attend conferences, as well as awards for outreach activities. Throughout their studies, many PPD courses for transferable skills and more specific PGR training are available from FMH academics. Interactive FMH supervisor training continues face-to-face, with a mix of ECRs new to PhD supervision exchange ideas with experienced supervisors.
- New annual PGR-led research conferences were held – one for Metabolic Health, and a combined one for Lifespan Health and Population Health – giving students the opportunity to highlight their excellent contributions to improving healthcare knowledge and practice.
- The Metabolic Health research department held a canoeing, kayaking and BBQ social event for all students and staff in June 2024.

## NORWICH BIOSCIENCE INSTITUTES

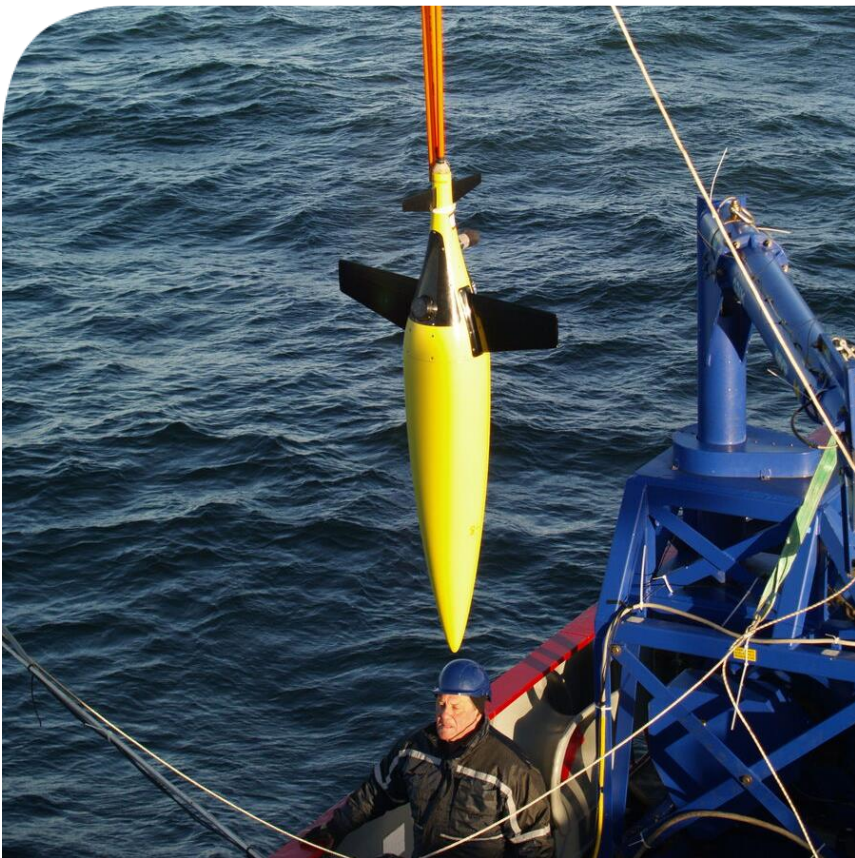
Chair: Prof Anne Graham (JIC)

- The NBI Grad school continued to recruit and welcome graduates to funded PhD programmes (the UKRI-BBSRC Norwich Research Park Doctoral Training Partnership, the UKRI-MRC Microbes, Microbiomes and Bioinformatics Doctoral Training Programme, the John Innes Foundation Rotation PhD programme and the Wellcome Trust EDESIA – Plants, Food and Health PhD programme) as well as charity and other funded studentships.

# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS



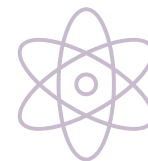
# OUR GRADUATE SCHOOLS: 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS



## SCIENCE

Associate Dean: Prof Andy Cammidge, CHE

- The Faculty of Science welcomed around a hundred new postgraduate researchers during the year, mostly funded by the grant successes of our research faculty, reinvestment by the Science Faculty of the university, and scholarships. Once again, we welcomed new researchers from all over the world (58 UK, 40 overseas). A similar number successfully completed their research degrees, including completion of 78 PhDs.
- The comprehensive professional and complementary skills training returned to mostly in-person format once again, allowing much more opportunity of networking and informal interaction between participants. Researchers selected from more than a hundred offered sessions, covering specific technical and theoretical skills (including, for example, the comprehensive advanced spectroscopy sessions and those focused on programming) through to the skills associated more generally with carrying out successful postgraduate research such as Thesis planning and Tips for overcoming writers' block.
- Following feedback from the previous year, many new sessions and options were added to help rebuild the postgraduate research community and strengthen research culture following Covid. Current postgraduates organised a highly successful induction programme tailored towards new international postgraduate researchers, and throughout the year there were other regular optional events to bring researchers from the different disciplines together. Newly introduced examples included a 6-week Yoga for the mind programme, and a series of wellbeing-focused workshops.



## FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/research/research-with-us/postgraduate-research>



## CONTACT US

[pgr.admissions@uea.ac.uk](mailto:pgr.admissions@uea.ac.uk)



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COLLEGE