



EXPLORING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PT/DLPGR STUDENTS

Investigating Issues and Interventions

Jane Greaton and Charlotte Morris

YOUR TIME.
YOUR PLACE.

INTRODUCTION: THE

HESA

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Postgraduate					
Doctorate research	24,040	23,980	23,275	24,700	25,405
Other postgraduate research	3,350	3,185	2,680	2,720	2,100
Institutional credit at postgraduate research	160	190	155	60	170
Total postgraduate research	27,550	27,355	26,105	27,475	27,675
Total postgraduate research	111,850	112,945	110,875	114,405	113,315

INTRODUCTION: THE

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Part Time and Distance Learning Postgraduate Research Students: Investigating Issues and Interventions

Funding	Project code	Department	Start dates	Application deadline
Funded	EDSO7960423	School of Education and Sociology	October 2023	6 April 2023

Contact information

-  Admissions
-  [+44 \(0\) 23 9284 5566](tel:+44(0)2392845566)

Applications are invited for a fees-only PhD bursary to commence in October 2023.

This PhD is motivated by concerns that there is a postgraduate research (PGR) mental health crisis, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a pressing issue for the wider doctoral community, part-time and distance learning students tend to struggle more with isolation, discrimination and balancing multiple responsibilities during their studies; all factors which have negative implications for individuals' wellbeing. However, their experiences and strategies for support are under-researched.

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Part Time and Distance Learning Postgraduate Researchers

Investigating Issues and Interventions

Workshop

Mental health & wellbeing

Distance learning

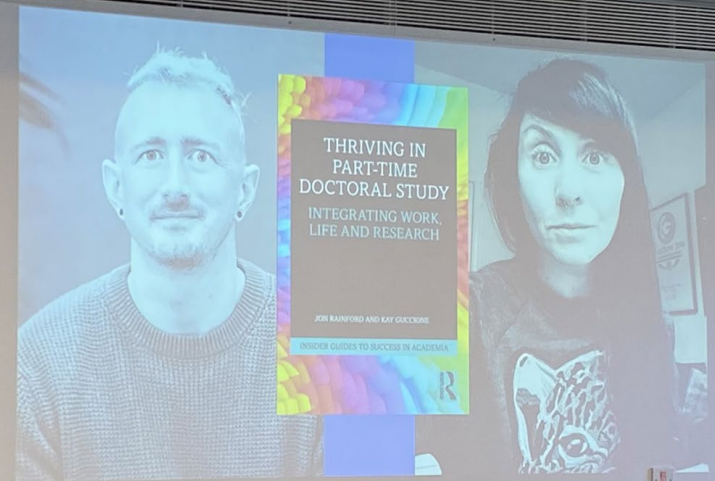
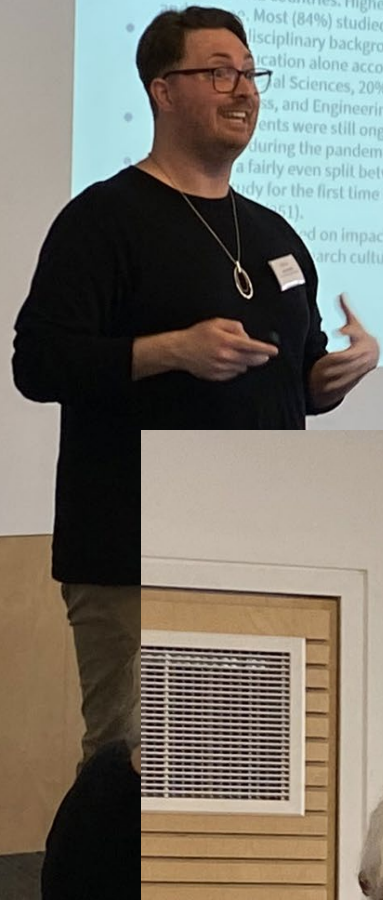
Part-time provision

🕒 09 Jun 2023



Our 'Distance Doctorates' survey respondents

- Were mostly women (339) as opposed to other genders.
- Ranged in age from 21-71. Largest cluster between 25-36.
- Residence - 42 countries. Higher participation from Australasia/Pacific
- Most (84%) studied in the country they were resident in.
- Disciplinary background, the majority were from the Social Sciences, 20% Sciences, 18% Arts and Humanities, 4% Business, and Engineering/Tech.
- 65% of respondents were still ongoing with their studies (65%) and most were still ongoing during the pandemic (388)
- A fairly even split between those who were undertaking their study for the first time (208) and those for whom this was not their first (151).
- Respondents were asked about their experience on impact of COVID, supervision experiences, and research culture of institution - happy to talk about



2 Supervision of part time Research, writing, (builds on D

Instru
meeting
require

Profe

and wellbeing



KEY REFLECT

Preparedness

Power/value

Relationships

Journey

Resources

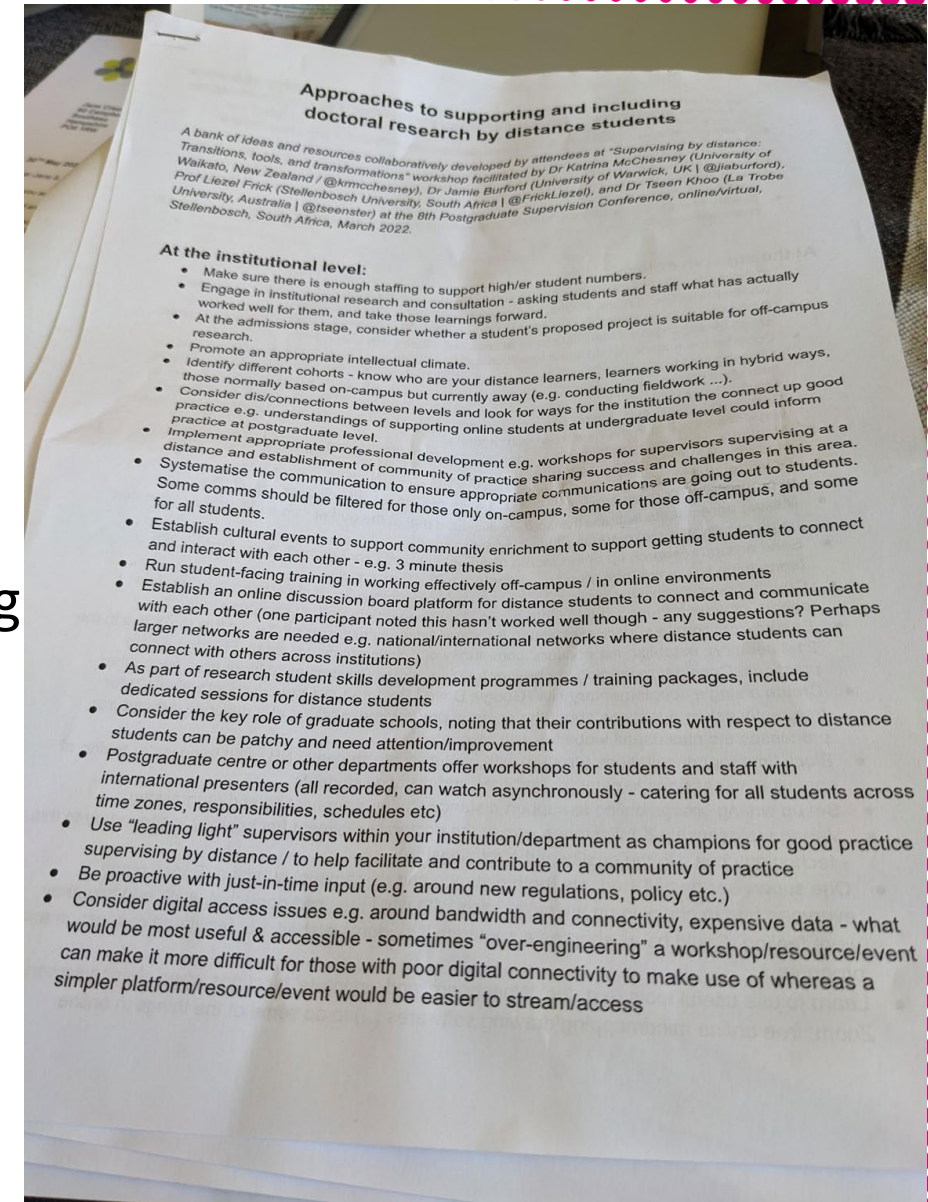
THIS WORKS

- Highlight the growing range of resources and materials to support mental health and wellbeing of part-time DL students
- Identify, navigate and apply ideas and suggestions
- Consider perspectives of supervisors, students, researcher developers

ACTIVITY

Your university has identified that part time students have lower progression and completion rates than full time students and your group has been tasked with answering the following questions:

1. What are the potential mental health and wellbeing challenges for this group of learners?
2. How can institutions and programme leaders build communities and foster belonging in the part time PGR community?
3. What additional support and training do supervisors need?



ACTIVITY

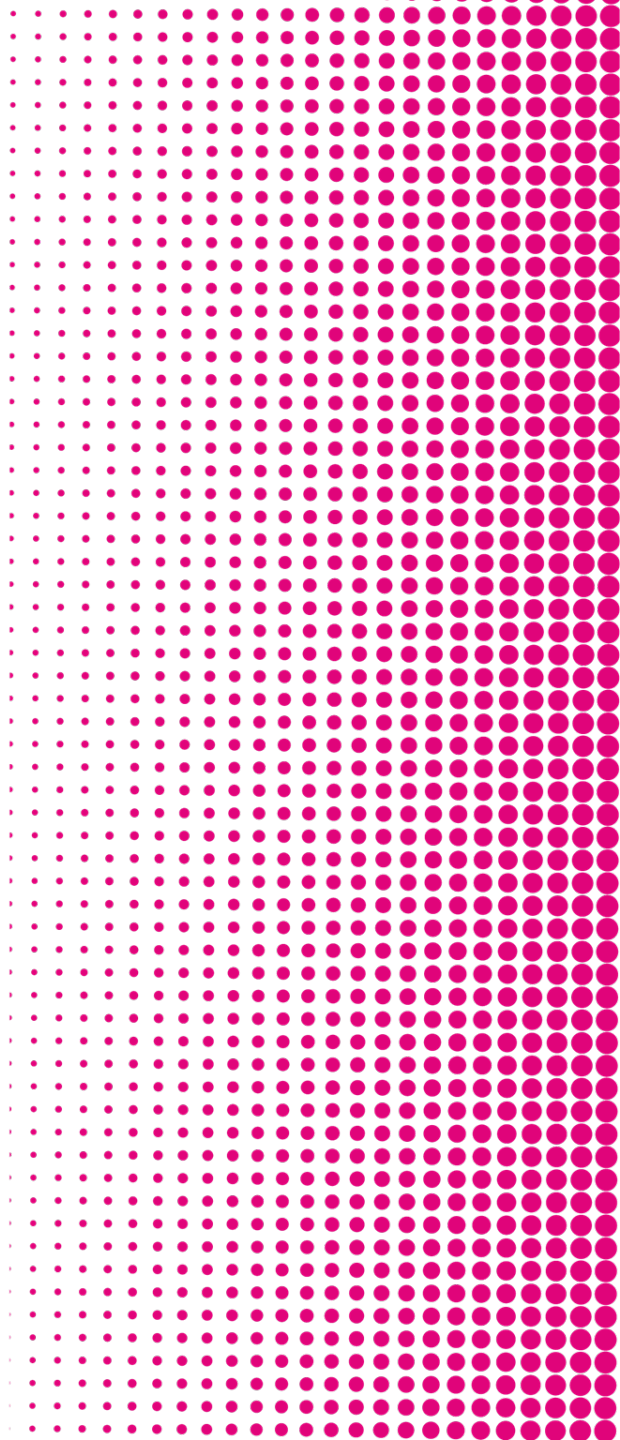
Jackman, Jacobs, & Sanderson (2021) - 5 principles to support (new) PhD researchers' mental health:

- Connections with peers.
- Supervisor relationships.
- Student services advice & support.
- Training and development.
- Information & resources.

How could these principles be applied to thinking about supporting distance postgraduate researchers?



RESOUR





Connections with peers

5 PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT NEW PhD RESEARCHERS



Supervisor relationships



Student services advice & support



Training & development



Information & resources

<https://lili.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/2021/07/14/new-guidance-to-support-doctoral-researchers-mental-health>

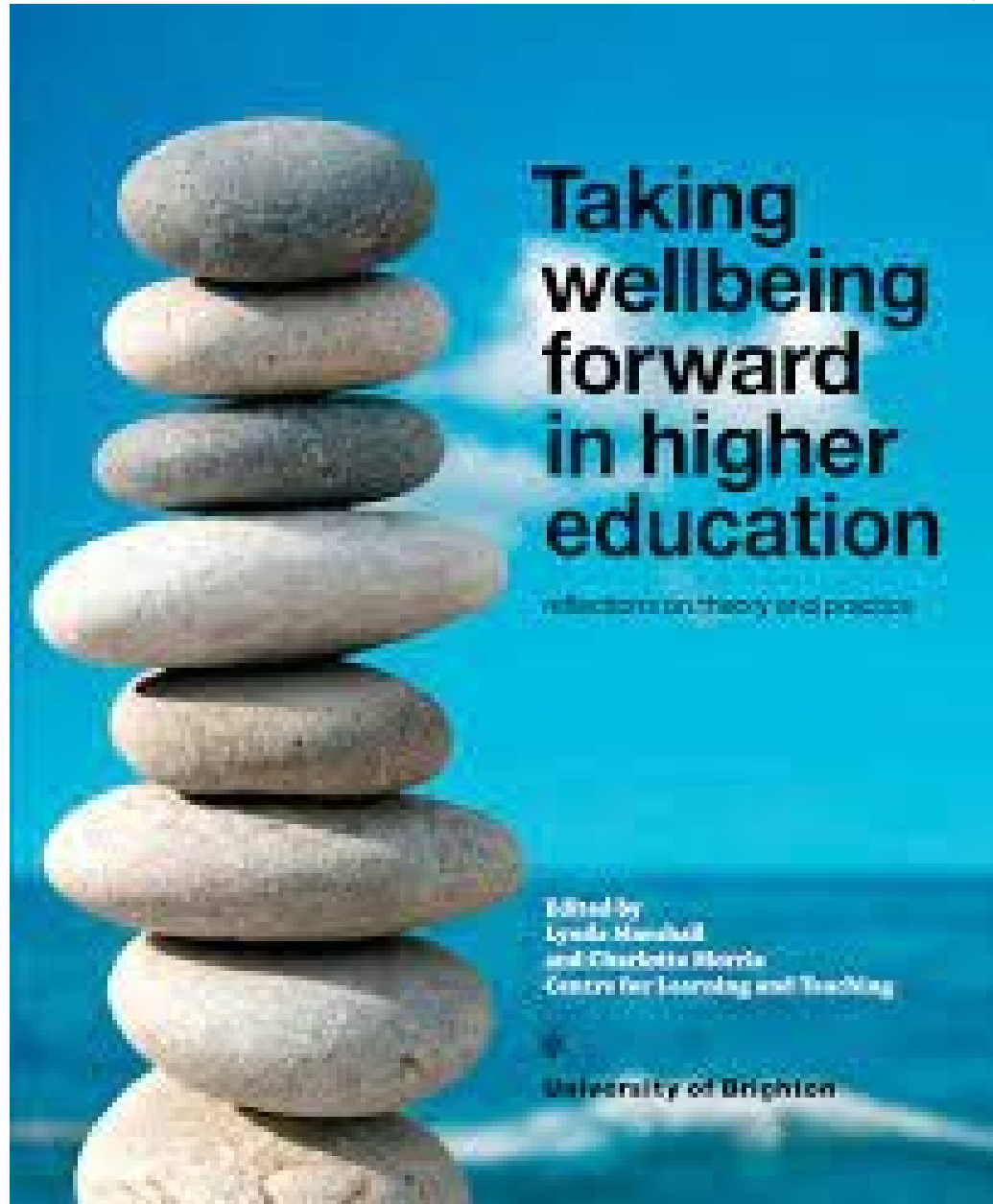
Aim	Does your university offer...	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Not yet implemented
Connection with peers Help doctoral researchers to develop connections, feel part of the doctoral researcher community, and get support from peers	Opportunities for doctoral researchers to connect virtually pre-enrolment?			
	Opportunities for new doctoral researchers to interact with more experienced doctoral researchers during the first weeks following enrolment?			
	Encouragement to engage with and provision of platforms for doctoral researchers to continue to connect with other new and more advanced doctoral researchers after induction?			
	Engaging activities, in person and online, that encourage participation (e.g., writing groups, coffee mornings) and are accessible (e.g., for international students, distance learners, disabled students)?			
	"Spaces" (e.g., virtual, physical) for doctoral researchers to connect throughout their studies?			
Student support Raise awareness of the support available, common concerns for doctoral researchers, and strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing	Clear information for doctoral researchers about the different student support services available to them and how these are accessed?			
	Awareness raising activities targeting doctoral researchers on the importance of proactively protecting mental health and wellbeing?			
	A dedicated area on your student support or wellbeing website for doctoral researchers?			
	Resources on time management and self-care for doctoral researchers?			
	Regular student support activities that foster good mental health and wellbeing amongst doctoral researchers?			
	Frequent reminders of the support available to doctoral researchers?			
	Regular meetings with supervisors, including weekly or fortnightly meetings for new doctoral			

Toolkits for PGRs and supervisors / departments

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/14755/>

‘In order for transformation to occur you almost have to go through that process [of self questioning].’

‘Emerging through the other side means that I’m happier being in the zone where everything’s Sa little more uncertain than it was previously.’



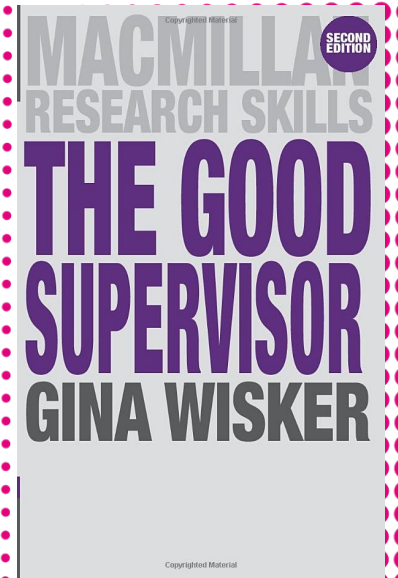
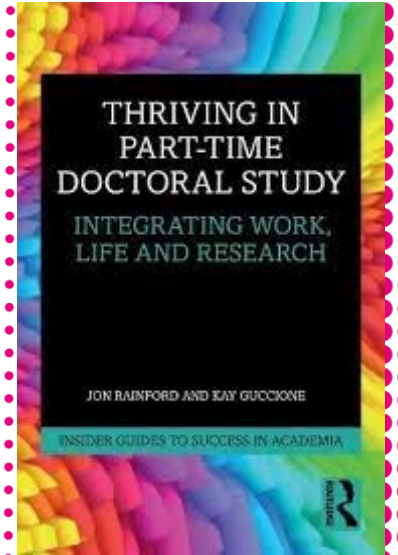


Doctoral Research by Distance



Doctoral research by distance

<https://doctoralresearchbydistance.wordpress.com/>



THANK YOU

for listening



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

YOUR TIME.
YOUR PLACE.