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Researcher development and  
interdisciplinary research training  
at  
Newcastle University

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# Characteristic Approach

- In Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS), respond to UK Research Councils
  - Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
  - Economic and Social Research Councils (ESRC)
- ESRC: Detailed generic and discipline-specific research training guidelines since early 1990s
  - Apply for ESRC Doctoral Studentships (if training guidelines met)



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## Postgraduate Research Training and Researcher Development Programme in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

- An interdisciplinary learning environment
  - 55 members of Faculty academic staff deliver sessions on their research specialisms (+ 8 specialist outside consultants)
  - PhD students from all the major disciplines in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (c. 100 per year, some Postdocs/Staff)
- Core foundational programme
  - All expected to attend (Exemptions for prior learning granted)
- Transferable Skills embedded in Programme
- Purposely built Postgraduate Training Suite



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# Outline of 1st Year Programme

- Modules covering all the major aspects of the research enterprise (option of registering for Postgraduate Certificate in Research Training, 60 credits):
  - Managing a PhD
  - Information Skills (10 credits)
  - Nature of Explanation and Enquiry (10 credits)
  - Qualitative methods and Critical Analysis in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (20 credits)
- - Introduction to Quantitative Methods (20 credits)



# Example: The Nature of Explanation and Enquiry

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- The Philosophical Foundations of Knowledge
  - Science and Pseudo-science (Human Geography)
  - Laws, Prediction and Explanation (Human Geography)
  - Scientific Knowledge as a Social Construct (Politics)
  - Interpretation, Meaning and Relativism (Human Geography)
  - Objectivity, Hermeneutics and Reflexivity (Sociology)
  - Post-structuralism and Post-modernism (Politics)
- Contemporary Debates
  - Historiography (History)
  - Actor Network Theory (Business School)
  - Critical Realism (Sociology)
  - Feminist Theory (Sociology)
  - Post-Colonial Theory (English Literature)



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# Learning Style: 50 Minute Lecture





Followed by  
Small Group Work (led by  
experienced PhD Student)

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# Multi-Cultural Learning Environment







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# What Skills are Developed?

- Philosophical sophistication
- Interdisciplinary awareness
- Team working
- Presentation skills
- Small group facilitation
- Writing and analytic skills



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# Examples of Advanced Training Sessions (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Years)

- Within newly-formed North East Doctoral Training Centre (with Durham University)
  - Writing across Boundaries (Writing up qualitative data)
  - International Fieldwork in Developing Countries
  - Visual Methods
- Other Transferable Skills modules/sessions available (egs Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Communication Skills, Careers, Working with Industry, Publishing, Academic Writing and Self Editing, etc)
- Conference on collaborative studentships with Business planned

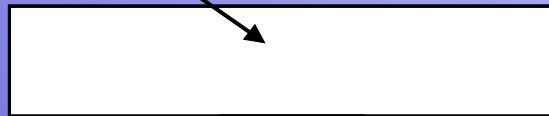


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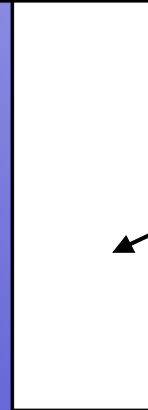


# Developing T-shaped Researchers

Interdisciplinary Awareness and Transferable Skills



Deep Disciplinary Skills and Expertise



Adapted from Leonard-Barton, 1995.



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# Impact: Newcastle Submission Rate Study

- Analysed records kept by Graduate School since ‘professionalisation’ of Doctorate (c. 2004)
- Probability of submitting within 4 years:
  - If Submitted Project Approval Form, Engaged with research training and had a supervisory team: 70%
  - If No PAF, Not engaged and sole supervisor: 15%
- Humphrey R, Marshall J, Leonardo L. (2012) ‘The Impact of Research Training and Codes of Practice Procedures on Submission of Doctoral Degrees: An Exploratory Cohort Study’. *Higher Education Quarterly*, **66**(1), 47-64.
- <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00499.x/abstract>