**Training Needs Analysis: Introduction**

Carrying out a training needs analysis (TNA) with your DPhil student will help assess the competencies they will need to carry out their DPhil and ultimately take the first steps towards their career. It will identify, prioritise and record the things they need to do.

Research Councils expect us as a research organisation to have mechanisms in place to assess and monitor individual student training needs, and to provide individually appropriate training and development opportunities. The resources provided here have been designed to support you in meeting this expectation.

Although it’s known as a ‘*training* needs analysis’, it should really be called a ‘*learning* needs analysis’. Skills and experience are developed not only through attending formal training/ events but also in more informal ways such in collaboration with supervisors and colleagues; much of these activities will take place as a matter of course during the student’s day to day work.

**What is a training needs analysis (TNA) and why should a supervisor be responsible for this?**

It is a tool to help students and supervisors review, prioritise and plan for the skills and experience that the student needs to learn and develop in order to:

* make the best possible start to their DPhil research and go on to complete a DPhil that meets their own and the University’s expectations within their funded period
* carry out and communicate about their research
* prepare to take the next steps to a successful and fulfilling career – be this into a postdoctoral position or into one of a range of other career pathways

The student should take ownership of their own learning and development and drive the TNA process. The supervisor should *support the student* in carrying out the learning review and planning.

**How does one carry out a TNA and what resources are available?**

*The following resources are available to download from* [*https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-and-resources-for-supervisors/essentials-of-supervision*](https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-and-resources-for-supervisors/essentials-of-supervision)

* MPLS template training needs analysis
* Summary of relevant divisional training courses and other activities to support core skills development
* Project Initiation Plan

You might also find it useful to see what is available from other training providers in the University: <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/support-from-university-researchers>

*Carrying out a TNA with your student:*

The MPLS TNA is structured around a set of core skills that MPLS academics have identified as essential to becoming a good researcher, and sets advisory standards as guidance. It has also been designed so that students and their supervisors can add and tailor skills and experience in line with the student’s individual and discipline needs and aspirations.

For each skill, consider and discuss together the student’s current level of competency against the standards guidance and identify any gaps. Discuss which of the identified skills gaps should be prioritised for action, and what action should be taken – eg attend a training course, or any other way of developing the particular skill or experience. The student should complete the relevant sections of the TNA form as a record of the discussion.

**How often should this happen and how to follow up on it?**

Students should begin thinking about their learning needs at an early stage, so that they make the best possible start and maintain progress with their DPhil research, and because core skills are reviewed at Transfer of Status. A meeting during the first weeks of the student’s DPhil to get this process going is advisable. The Project Initiation Plan [link] is another tool to help with this.

The TNA should be seen as a living and evolving work and should be reviewed by you and the student regularly throughout the DPhil. How often this should happen depends on what you and they consider to be appropriate for their individual situation, but the division recommends a review at least once a year and preferably more often.

During a review you should discuss what progress has been made on the learning needs identified previously, and discuss which new priorities should be addressed.

**Where is it logged, how is it monitored / reported on?**

The critical aspect is to make sure that the TNA is continually evolving and moving forwards as the student progresses; the student, with their supervisor, should be reviewing and updating it regularly.

The work done on the TNA can feed into the relevant regular GSR reporting.

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