**Training Needs Analysis for graduate students in MPLS**

The MPLS division has developed some resources, at the request of current DPhil students, to help you identify your training needs, make the best possible start to your DPhil research, and go on and complete a successful DPhil. It will help you identify, prioritise and record the things you need to learn and develop in order to carry out your research successfully.

Although it’s known as a ‘*training* needs analysis’, it should really be called a ‘*learning* needs analysis’. Skills and experience are developed mostly through day to day work and interactions as well as through attending formal training/ events.

**What is a training needs analysis (TNA) and how do I carry it out?**

A training needs analysis is a tool to help you, with the support of your supervisor, review you current skills and experience, and then prioritise and plan for those that you need / want to develop.

The TNA form included here is structured around the core generic skills that are essential to becoming a good and effective researcher, and should be tailored to your context by adding the research and discipline related skills that you will need. It also provides guidance on the standards required for each skill.

In discussion with your supervisor, add the research and discipline related skills you will need, together with some guidance on standards, to the relevant part of the TNA form. Consider your level of each skill against the standards guidance and identify any gaps. Then prioritise which of the gaps should be worked on and how – for example you might attend a training course or develop the particular skill / experience in another way. There is a list of relevant MPLS divisional courses with the TNA, and you can find more information about training courses here: <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training> and here: <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/mpls-training/other-training-available-at-oxford>

*You should make notes and keep records on the TNA document.*

**When should I carry out a training needs analysis?**

To help you make the best possible start to your research, and because core skills are reviewed at Transfer of Status, it is essential that you start thinking about this right at the beginning of your DPhil. You should have a project initiation meeting with your supervisor during the first weeks to get the process going, and then review and update it regularly. The Project Initiation Plan Template (available: <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students/progression>) provides a useful framework for this. It will help you start thinking about your research question and methodology, the skills and equipment that you will need, and about other aspects of your DPhil activities.

It is critical that you review and update the TNA regularly throughout your DPhil. You should review what progress has been made on the learning needs identified previously, and decide which new priorities to address. This will mean that your skills and experience develop in the right way for you; and that you have a record that you can refer to when you come to create your CV.

As you progress you should also think about which additional skills you need or want to work on – for example Public Engagement and Enterprise skills. The MPLS Training Programme <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/courses> and the Researcher Development Framework <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework> will provide information and ideas.