

Requirements of the lead buddy

The lead buddy will be assigned a group of 3-4 PGRs and is expected to organise and facilitate 1 buddy group meeting between Monday 06 and Friday 26 October. Each lead buddy will only be assigned 1 PGR buddy group.

Buddy group meetings are expected to be 30-60 minutes, can be face-to-face or online, and should be accessible and inclusive of all members of the group.

As facilitator, the lead buddy will enable discussion between the PGRs in their group, ensuring that all members of the group have a chance to participate and be heard, and providing conversation prompts if required.

Timeline

08 September 2025	Scheme launches and Expression of Interest for taking part opens for PGRs and Research Staff
26 September 2025	Deadline for Expression of Interest
By 03 October 2025	All successful participants notified and informed of their buddy group
06 – 24 October 2025	Buddy group meeting to take place
27 October 2025	Short evaluation form to be completed by PGR and Research Staff participants

Guidance on organising a buddy meeting

As the lead buddy it's your responsibility to coordinate and organise the buddy meeting. This means finding a time that works for everyone and a place to meet (your group will either be meeting online or in-person, depending on what was requested by you and the PGRs on registration).

Communication – How you communicate with your buddy group is up to you and them. We'll be sending out information by email and you can stick with email (you don't need to copy us in) or switch to a Teams chat or another messaging service if that's easier for the group

Finding a time – The window for meeting is only **3 weeks**. This was made clear in the initial information on the PGR-Postdoc Buddy Scheme webpage and on registration. It's therefore important to start trying to find a time for the meeting quickly as even in groups of 3-4 finding a suitable time can be tricky. We suggest using a platform such as [Doodle Poll](#) or [Calendly](#) (other platforms exist, please let us know if there's one you think is better than the two we've suggested). You might instead try using Outlook Calendar, Teams or simply asking about availability over email

Finding a location online – we recommend using Teams for online group meetings

Finding a location in-person – we recommend a location where everyone can feel relaxed and comfortable. This could be a nearby cafe, the student union or library. In general, we suggest avoiding using a room in the building you work in as this might be too formal and some people don't like having to find rooms in unfamiliar academic buildings. If you'd prefer to meet in a café then be aware that money might be tight for some and not everyone likes coffee – try to ensure that everyone is happy with the location when deciding. On the day itself

you may wish to arrange to meet people on campus to walk together to the location (if not all are familiar with where it is) and make sure you let your group know how you can be identified when they arrive, making sure to get there early to welcome them.

Guidance on leading a buddy meeting

The lead buddy is a facilitator of the buddy meeting. Your role is to help the conversation between the PGR participants flow. This may mean listening and asking questions to help the conversation move forwards. Some example prompt questions have been provided below.

Involve all members of the group in the discussion as much as they want to participate. If there is a group member who hasn't spoken for a while, you can ask them how their experience is similar to or differs from what's being discussed. They might not feel comfortable inserting themselves into the conversation and this can help given them an opening. However, don't push anyone to participate, help them to understand that they're able to join in the discussion but can remain quiet if they'd prefer.

As the person who is likely to have the most experience of academic research or even careers beyond academia, the buddy group may turn to you with questions or for advice. The buddy group meeting is not intended to be a Q&A, so try to facilitate the conversation so that others in the group can respond. You are not expected to have the answer to every question that their group might have, but you are welcome to give advice where you know something, making it clear that it's from your own experience. You can also signpost to relevant PGR resources (see list below).

Be open to how the discussion and the relationship between group members develops. Some participants might have specific topics they'd like to discuss, or specific questions they'd like to ask their buddy group. Some participants might appreciate a structured block of time to simply step away from their research and are happy to discuss anything. Some participants might be more interested in making connections with others in similar roles at the University rather than discussing anything in particular.

Example conversation prompts:

- Tell us one thing about yourself that isn't to do with your research
- What has your experience been like so far working with your supervisor?
- What kind of social activities are you doing around your PhD?
- What's been your biggest accomplishment since starting your PhD?
- What's been your biggest challenge since starting your PhD?
- What have you been doing to take care of yourselves, both physically and mentally?
- Is there anything you'd like to get out of your PhD that you aren't currently? How could you go working towards those goals?

Next steps

The PGR-Postdoc Buddy Scheme has been structured to include one buddy group meeting during the allotted window of time, however your group may decide they wish to meet up again or to continue their discussion beyond the allocated meeting time. If this is the case then it is up to you whether you'd like to continue to participate, there is no expectation for you to continue beyond the one meeting. You may find the experience useful or you may feel that your role is over and feel that the group should take ownership to organise and facilitate meetings themselves.

Useful links:

PGR Development Hub: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development/>

PGR Development Group: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development-group/>

PGR Development Programme 2025-26: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development/programme/>

PGR Development Resources Hub: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development/resourcehubforpgrs/>

LEAP: The PGR Leadership Programme: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development/leap/>

The Researcher Development Framework (RDF):
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/pgr-development/rdf/>