

Research Degrees Student Handbook 2025-26

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1. Introduction

We want your time at The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) to be fruitful, productive and enjoyable. We aim to equip you with outstanding research skills which will provide an excellent basis for your future career. Many of our graduates go on to make a significant contribution in the fields of cancer research and treatment, thereby improving and enriching the lives of others. As a student here, you will train with some of the world's leading researchers and you will have the opportunity to be involved in cutting edge cancer research.

The handbook is designed to give you an introduction to life as a research degree student at the ICR and to provide you with details of how to access services, resources and support as you need them throughout your period of study.

The Codes of Practice for the Degrees of MPhil/PhD and for the Degree of MD(Res) detail the policies and practices which govern your period of study.

You must familiarise yourself with the information in both this Student Handbook and the relevant Code of Practice, as well as that found in the Academic Regulations, in order to benefit fully from your time here.

The ICR also has a Student Charter (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/studentcharter>), jointly agreed with the student body, which sets out mutual expectations – what you can expect from the ICR, and, in turn, the ICR's expectations are of you.

Additionally, you should be aware of the Complaints Procedure and both the Academic Appeals Procedure and the Review Procedure. Further information on these policies, as well as all policies outlined in this handbook are available at <https://go.icr.ac.uk/policies>.

1.1. The ICR's Mission Statement

Our mission is to make the discoveries that defeat cancer.

Fundamental to this is the ICR's vital role in building the future cancer research community globally. We are a Member Institution of the University of London, with a strategic goal to educate and train the next generation of cancer researchers and clinicians.

We aim to offer our students the highest possible standard of education, informed by the very latest scientific approaches and technological advances. We are also committed to providing exceptional career support for postdoctoral scientists and clinicians. It is important to us that our students and early-career researchers continue to perform excellently once they have graduated from the ICR – going on to leading roles in cancer research, oncology and related professions all over the world.

1.2. Nexus

Nexus (nexus.icr.ac.uk) is the ICR's intranet. Nexus is a valuable resource, enabling you to search for information. You will find all the ICR's policies and procedures here, as well as user guides, forms and a great deal of other material that will be helpful as a student and colleague in the ICR community. You will only be able to access Nexus (and the associated weblinks provided throughout this handbook) from the ICR network through secure channels such as VPN, BC Access or on site.

1.3. Equal opportunities

The ICR promotes equality of opportunity, and does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of your age, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, race, religion or belief, parenting or marital status.

We believe that our strength comes from combining what we have in common – our shared goals and values – with what makes each of us different.

We are committed to creating a non-limiting and fully inclusive environment for staff and students to achieve their organisational and personal goals, and recognise that providing appropriate support to individuals will help us to achieve this.

All students (along with all staff and visitors) are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, the ICR's Equality of Opportunity policy. This is available on Nexus which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network or at <https://go.icr.ac.uk/equality>.

2. Registration and Administration

2.1. Registration

The ICR is a member of the University of London Federation and our research degrees are awarded under the authority of the University. As a student of a Member Institution of the University you are entitled to use a number of its facilities, including the University Careers Service, and its library.

Students should provide the Registry with a copy of their passport and visa, as appropriate, when they first register, and then provide further copies if any changes are made to either of these as soon as the updated copies are received. **Students MUST re-register every year by completing and signing a student registration form.** This is to ensure that the information we hold on your student record remains accurate, and to make statutory returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to confirm each year that you are still here as a student. By registering with the ICR you agree to abide by its rules and regulations.

Registration is therefore an important function and students are requested to return their registration forms and any other requested documentation within a month of starting at the ICR. **We cannot provide any proof of your student status if you have not registered or paid any fees (if these are required).** If you cease to be registered, you cease to be entitled to enter for examinations or be awarded a degree, except in exceptional circumstances.

Students must ensure that all personal data provided is accurate and up-to-date. You can check the key details which the Registry hold about you via the 'My Details' page in iProgress. The Registry should be informed of any changes to contact details that take effect in-year (after completing the registration form at the start of the year), by emailing researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk.

2.2. The academic year

The academic year runs from 1 September to 31 August. Students are normally registered at the start of October each year. Occasionally students are permitted to register on a different date, by prior agreement with their Supervisor and the Registry. Students such as clinical fellows, who are also employees of the ICR or other organisations, are encouraged to register in October but may need to start their studies at other times depending on when their employment contract starts. Re-enrolment takes place in October each year, regardless of start date.

2.3. Student records

Files are maintained by the Registry to record a student's period of study and progress at the ICR. We are required to send details of all our registered students to HESA; these records are processed in strict adherence to Data Protection legislation. You can find the HESA student data collection notice here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/notices#student>. Some of the information in student records is fed to iProgress, the ICR's system for monitoring research student progression.

2.4. Graduation

On successful completion of your degree programme, students are invited to the Award (graduation) Ceremony. The Award Ceremony celebrates the conferment of honorary degrees and other notable awards. All graduates of the ICR automatically become members of the ICR's Alumni community.

3. Academic and administration support

3.1. The role of the student

Students are expected to attend regularly and to undertake such work as directed by their Supervisor. A standard full-time working week, or the pro-rata equivalent, is expected. This may include attendance at formal teaching sessions, seminars and journal clubs. It may also include practice in writing and presenting scientific papers, and in preparing grant applications. Where teaching sessions are arranged for all postgraduate students on an ICR-wide basis, attendance will be expected. Students are expected to prepare such reports on progress as are required by the ICR.

Students must submit their thesis for examination within the expected timescale relevant to their programme and mode of study:

- for PhD students within four years of the date of registration (full-time students), or the pro rata equivalent of this for part-time students;
- for MD(Res) students within three years or up to four years of the date of registration at the latest, or the pro rata equivalent of this for part-time students;

- MPhil students, within three years of the date of registration (full-time students) or the pro rata equivalent of this for part-time students.

For all PhD and MD(Res) students, the thesis will not be accepted beyond four years (or pro-rata equivalent according to the student's FTE), save in exceptional circumstances. Further details on thesis submissions are published in the Codes of Practice.

Students are subject to the ICR's disciplinary procedures and are expected to abide by the rules of the ICR and the University of London. Students are expected to follow the policies and procedures which apply to the laboratory, group, and Division in which they work. Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism or the falsification of experimental data, will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

3.2. The role of the Supervisor/Supervisory team

Supervisors play a key role in the academic career of a research student. They are responsible for providing the student with the resources, or access to the resources, which permit successful execution of the project. The key responsibilities of supervisors are detailed in the relevant Codes of Practice.

3.3. The role of the Academic Dean

The Academic Dean is responsible for the management of all education and training activities, and ensures that all students receive appropriate supervision and have adequate resources at their disposal during their time at the ICR. The Academic Dean is responsible for keeping a regular check on student welfare and academic progress. This responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Deans, with whom students will interact on matters of welfare and academic progress.

3.4. The role of the Deputy Deans

The Deputy Deans have responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of research students. Their responsibilities include:

- formally appointing Supervisors;
- reviewing students' academic progress through regular chats as detailed on iProgress;
- initiating remedial actions where there are academic, personal or resource barriers to the student's progress;
- arranging, where possible, changes in supervision on the rare occasions when it is in the scientific or personal best interests of the student that this should occur;
- monitoring the general welfare of students; and
- monitoring student discipline and, on the rare occasions when it proves necessary, initiating appropriate disciplinary procedures against students who are in breach of the rules and policies of the ICR.

The Deputy Dean (Biomedical Sciences) has responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of MPhil/PhD students.

The Deputy Dean (Clinical Sciences) has responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of MD(Res) students.

3.5. The role of the Academic Dean's Team

Both Deputy Deans are supported in the tasks above by a number of Senior Tutors appointed by the Academic Dean. Collectively this group is referred to as the Academic Dean's Team. The Academic Dean's Team has responsibility for the general welfare of students.

Information about the Academic Dean and membership of the Academic Dean's Team can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

3.6. The Registry team

The Registry is part of Education and Library Services Directorate and deals with all administrative aspects of postgraduate study at the ICR. This includes co-ordinating the student recruitment, admissions and registration processes, maintaining student records, supporting the Academic Dean's Team in monitoring student progress and key milestone activities, and arranging the ICR Awards ceremony.

Registry staff are available to advise on day-to-day queries or problems that may arise during your research degree programme. You are welcome to contact the Registry team at any time during office hours. The Registry staff are based on the second floor of the Sir Richard Doll Building in Sutton if you wish to meet us in-person. Alternatively, you can also email the team at researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk.

4. Sites and facilities

The ICR has two main sites in Sutton and Chelsea. Maps, directions and floor plans for both sites are available on the ICR webpage (<https://www.icr.ac.uk/contacts>).

4.1. The Library and Study Rooms

Accessing library resources

The Library has an extensive online catalogue, including books and journals, which can be accessed both on and offsite.

Access to journals is available from both inside and outside the ICR (via <https://journals.icr.ac.uk>).

If the ICR doesn't have access to an article through its subscriptions, you can request a copy for free by completing the online request form. The form is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

For any enquiries, please contact the Librarian, Barry Jenkins, in the Sir John Beckwith Library in Sutton, on library@icr.ac.uk or by phone on 020 8722 4230.

The Sir John Beckwith Library in Sutton is located in the Brookes Lawley Building (BLB). Library staff are available to help with any enquiries from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. There is 24-hour access for registered users. Please register with the library staff.

Senate House Library

Students at the ICR may also use the University of London Library (Senate House). When applying for membership, photographic identification (such as a driving licence, passport, or your ICR student ID) and

proof of your current address (such as a utilities bill, credit card, or bank statement) will be requested. A verification letter from Registry may also be required.

Study rooms

Both Sutton and Chelsea have study rooms available for use by research degree students, these are a physical environment that provide a pleasant and quiet area to study. Final year students are given priority in the use of these rooms. The study room at Chelsea is equipped with desks and Macs (which also run Windows). The study room in Sutton is attached to the John Beckwith library and contains one PC. In the Sutton Library, there is a colour photocopier (including a scanning and printing facility) and a comb/ring binder, enabling small documents to be bound.

At both sites, students may bring laptops into the room.

4.2 Chapel and Prayer Rooms

Facilities available at the ICR and Royal Marsden

The Royal Marsden has a chapel and prayer room at each site, which you are free to use for worship or private reflection—whether you follow a particular religion or not. In Chelsea, the chapel is near the main reception, with the prayer room on the ground floor of the Wallace Wing (opposite the Facilities office). In Sutton, the chapel and prayer room are next to each other on the third floor of the West Wing. For further information, please see <https://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/your-care/support-services/spiritual-and-religious-care>.

4.3 Catering

At the Sutton site, there are catering facilities on the ground floor of the Brookes Lawley Building and Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery, which provide a range of snacks, meals and soft drinks. The Chelsea site offers a catering facility in the sixth floor common room of Chester Beatty Laboratories, which provides a range of snacks, meals and drinks. Also 123 Old Brompton Road has a café that provides a range of snacks and drinks. Students are also permitted to use the Royal Marsden canteens at the Chelsea and Sutton site.

More information is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/Catering>).

4.4 Transport between sites

The ICR and the Royal Marsden operate a shuttle bus service that runs between the Chelsea and Sutton sites, as well as a bus that connects Sutton station with the site in Sutton.

Sutton station shuttle bus to the ICR

The shuttle bus service runs between Sutton station (The Quadrant) and the ICR in Sutton between the hours of 06.30am-10.00am, and 4.00pm-9.00pm. A lunchtime service is also available.

The pick up and departure point operates from the rear of the Children's unit and can be accessed by walking along the RMH corridor towards the Maggie's Centre/Dept. of Medicine/Medical Photography (WWB/Grd/901) and leaving through the doors at the very end. Alternatively it can be approached for the site road behind the crèche opposite the Centre for Molecular Pathology (CMP) Building.

Intersite shuttle bus

Bus departure and drop off point is at the following locations:

Sutton – The bus operates from the ICR side of the 'blue corridor' in the turning area by the RMH large oxygen tank. From the RMH, follow the signage towards the Cripps Lecture Theatre until you come to the door on the right-hand side of the "blue corridor" which takes you towards the ICR, the bus will park there.

PLEASE NOTE: The 06:00 bus from Sutton departs from the front of the hospital by the main entrance.

Chelsea – The bus operates from the east side of the Royal Marsden main entrance on Fulham Road.

Maps of the pick-up and drop off locations and bus departure times are available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/bus>).

Public transport

There are several buses linking Sutton train station to the ICR, with routes 80, 280, 420, S1 and S4 passing nearby to the ICR.

There are good transport links in Chelsea due to its central London location. The Chelsea site is situated on Fulham Road. The nearest underground station is South Kensington which is approximately five minutes' walk away. The Circle, District and Piccadilly lines serve South Kensington station. Several buses also stop nearby: 14, 211, 414 and 345. The ICR also has offices at 123 Old Brompton Road.

A number of map and route-finding mobile apps are available to download from your mobile app store to assist you in navigating London and further afield. The price for transport varies greatly depending on where and when you are travelling. Transport for London has an excellent website (tfl.gov.uk). You can also telephone them on **0343 222 1234 (textphone: 0800 112 3456)**.

Transport for London shows all London bus, tube and train timetables as well as regular traffic updates. Getting an Oyster card will make it cheaper to travel in and around London. The cost of this varies depending on where and when you are travelling (refer to <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/>). Please be aware that buses no longer accept cash fares so you must ensure you pay using an Oyster card, or a contactless payment bank card.

Students can get a 30% discount on travelcards by registering for a student Oyster card (<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/18-plus-student-oyster-photocard>). To apply you will need to ensure you have your Enrolment ID number which can be found on iProgress. Registry staff have access to the TFL system to approve your application. **Please let us know once you have applied so that we can approve your application.**

A 16-25 Railcard is available for purchase if you're aged between 16 and 25, or if you're over 25 and in full-time education. The railcard saves you 1/3 on rail fares throughout Great Britain. For more information and to apply for a railcard please refer to the website (16-25railcard.co.uk).

Students aged 18 or over can also save 25% on the cost of annual membership with Santander Bikes. To get your discount, sign up with Student Beans (www.studentbeans.com).

Taxis and minicabs

Black cabs are in the traditional cab design (and often appear in advertisers' colours rather than the traditional black). They can be hailed on the street and the orange light on the roof indicates they are available. They are licensed and considered by many to be safer to use than a minicab.

Minicabs are licensed private hire vehicles which must be booked in advance. Minicabs are not allowed to pick up passengers when hailed on the street although many will do. It is strongly advised that minicabs are not hailed on the street as it is also possible that the driver and vehicle is unlicensed and may be a danger to you.

You can find phone numbers for local taxis and minicabs on the Yellow Pages website, or [via tfl.gov.uk](https://www.tfl.gov.uk). The reception desks at Chester Beatty Laboratories in Chelsea and the Brookes Lawley Building in Sutton also have numbers of local firms.

Uber and Bolt are taxi services which operate in London using an online app. You order your cab through the app and it comes directly to you and knows exactly where to go. Payment is made via your account. You will need to set up an account with Uber or Bolt on your smartphone before using their service.

4.5. Car parking

There are parking facilities at the Sutton site, currently run on a free permit system for staff and students who meet the qualifying criteria. Sutton is situated 12 miles from Central London, and the ICR is a mile away from Sutton train station.

5. Student welfare

5.1. Pastoral care and welfare services

Your Primary Supervisor has responsibility for your day-to-day welfare, academic and personal, and beyond this, the Academic Dean's Team (which includes the Deputy Deans and Senior Tutors) has responsibility for the general welfare of students.

If you are concerned about issues related to your project, we advise you to discuss these, if possible, with your Primary Supervisor or a member of your supervisory team in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you can also approach your Senior Tutor and/or Head of Division.

We recognise that individual students may be reluctant to share personal difficulties with their Supervisor, particularly if they feel it may conflict with academic progress. The Academic Dean's Team has an open-door policy for students to discuss issues of concern. Students can also discuss welfare and disability issues with the Registry team by phone (**020 8722 4253**), email (researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk) or in person (Second Floor, Sir Richard Doll Building, Sutton).

A summary of the different routes for student support can be found in the Student Welfare and Wellbeing information on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

Students with disabilities

The term 'disability' can cover a range of impairments and conditions which could have a long-term and adverse effect on studying (including dyslexia and mental health issues).

You are encouraged to declare any disability at the earliest opportunity. Knowledge of a student's disability will allow any special arrangements, for example regarding examinations, to be made. Information disclosed regarding your disability and/or additional needs will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Unless you choose to opt out, the disability information you provide will be passed on to the ICR's disability support provider and a Disability Support Advisor will be in touch with further guidance on the support available.

Students who have a disability, mental health problem or specific learning difficulty can apply for Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) to help with additional study-related requirements. This can be on its own or

in addition to other types of student finance. The type of support and how much you get depends on your individual needs - not your household income. Full details on the DSA, including how much you'll get and what DSA can pay for, is available at <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>. Disabled students who are not awarded a Disabled Students Allowance may also be eligible for a [Student Health Association Bursary](#).

Further information about welfare and support for students with disabilities is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/studentwelfare>).

The ICR additionally has a support network for students and staff with disabilities, and the network is open to anyone with a disability, physical or otherwise, as well as people with other long-term health conditions. For more information, contact diversity@icr.ac.uk

If you experience or witness issues relating to equality or discrimination you can speak about these with your Supervisor or senior tutor, or arrange a meeting with the Equality Champion for the Academic Dean's Team via [the Registry](#).

Confidential information and support services

The ICR does not maintain an internal student counselling service but students are able to make use of the following confidential information and support services:

London Nightline: a counselling and confidential information and support service for students in London. The service can be accessed by calling **020 7631 0101** at any hour of the night or visiting their website (nightline.org.uk).

Employee (and Student) Assistance Programme: a confidential, free life management and personal support service which can help you deal with both everyday situations and more serious problems. The service is available 24 hours a day to all staff, students, and family members in their household and can provide advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, relationships, family care, work, consumer, medical advice and personal support (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/employeeassistance>). The service offers up to six sessions of counselling for mild to moderate presenting issues, which can be face to face, via video or over the phone.

You can access the service directly, confidentially and without a limit on the number of times used.

- **Freephone UK: 0808 196 2016**
- **WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 07418 360 780**
- **Online: <https://instituteofcancerresearch.spectrum.life/login?org=ICREAP>**

The service is available to download as a mobile app (app.spectrum.life). You can also register for access to the online wellbeing platform, which provides access to a digital gym service, as well as resources related to sleep, mental health and nutrition among other topics. To register, you should enter the Organisational code **ICREAP** and select your site location (Sutton-Scientific or Chelsea-Scientific) and member level ('Student').

Further guidance on the service is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://nexus.icr.ac.uk/Staff%20essentials/Pages/Student-Assistance-Programme.aspx>).

The ICR's Wellbeing Adviser network

The ICR also has a group of Student Wellbeing Advisers as part of the ICR's Wellbeing Adviser network. Student Wellbeing Advisers provide a support network for students by students as an alternative to those provided by Registry and the Academic Dean's Team.

Further information and contact details for the Student Wellbeing Advisers can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

5.2 Sports facilities, clubs and activities

There is a small gym in the Brookes Lawley Building at the Sutton site, with changing facilities available, which can be accessed 24 hours a day. However, it is not staffed, therefore during the hours of 7pm-7am, and at weekends, at least two people should be in the gym at any one time. There is also a squash court on site and the Ups Club and pH Bar, which provides sport and social facilities for students and staff. You can learn more about sport and social activities run by the Ups Club and the pH Bar on the website (theupsclub.co.uk) or you can email: UPS_Club@icr.ac.uk for further information.

There are several activities run at the Sutton site such as exercise classes, squash and badminton.

There is an additional budget for students based at Chelsea, managed by the Student Committee to run sports activities. Further information is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/sport>).

University of London Sports Clubs and Activities

There are a number of sport clubs and activities available to students at the ICR via the University of London (<https://clubs-societies.london.ac.uk/about/clubsandsocs/>). Students interested in joining any of the below activities are required to apply for membership of the respective Unions.

5.3 Student Discount Schemes

As a student you will be eligible to apply for various membership schemes, which will allow you to get discounts in numerous shops and restaurants, in-store and online, as well as gyms and travel. To find out more, please see the following websites:

- www.totum.com
- www.myunidays.com
- www.studentbeans.com
- www.healthservicediscounts.com
- www.bluelightcard.co.uk (NHS card holders only)

For further information about student discounts, please contact the Student Committee (studentcommittee@icr.ac.uk).

5.4. Harassment and sexual misconduct

The ICR believes in having a culture that values everyone, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The ICR does not tolerate bullying, harassment and/or victimisation and expects everyone working or studying at the ICR, as well as ICR visitors and guests, to behave respectfully towards others and never act in a way that could be regarded as bullying, harassment or victimisation.

Information about how the ICR deals with harassment and sexual misconduct can be found on the ICR website at this link: <https://www.icr.ac.uk/study-and-careers/student-life-and-support/welfare>

This page includes:

- Dignity at The ICR policy – sets out the preventative steps the ICR will take and how we will investigate and deal with complaints of bullying or harassment, and how we support those affected
- How students can report incidents, either anonymously or with contact details provided
- What happens when someone makes a report
- How the ICR reports on any complaints we receive
- Supports available for those who have experienced harassment or sexual misconduct
- Relationships Policy – sets out the ICR's approach to personal relationships at work, and in the educational environment
- Details of the training provided to staff and students on harassment and sexual misconduct.

You will receive training on these topics during your onboarding at the ICR, through an in-person mandatory "Supportive Workplace" training course.

Report + Support

Detailed guidance on the online reporting tool, Report + Support, can be found under *General Support* on the website (<https://reportandsupport.icr.ac.uk/>). This includes frequently asked questions about the online reporting tool and a range of support resources available from both the ICR and external providers for people affected by bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, as well as advice for anyone whose behaviour has been reported. The launch article on Nexus also includes a helpful workflow diagram, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://nexus.icr.ac.uk/News/Pages/ICR-launches-Report-and-Support-website-to-tackle-inappropriate-behaviour.aspx>).

Students wishing to seek advice or discuss concerns about harassment may approach a Wellbeing Adviser, their Senior Tutor or Deputy Dean, a member of their Supervisory team, or a member of the Registry team. Any meetings or discussions are treated in confidence.

5.5. Health and safety

All staff and students have duties under the law to:

- take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who might be affected by their acts or omissions at work;
- co-operate with the ICR in the implementation of its Health and Safety policy;
- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare;
- use equipment provided by the ICR in accordance with their training;
- assist the ICR in identifying risks to health and safety at work; and
- bring to the ICR's attention any shortcomings in its arrangements for health and safety.

All students are required to undertake appropriate safety induction training at the first available opportunity upon commencement of their studies at the ICR. Your Supervisor will advise you of what safety training you need to undertake.

Details of safety induction training can be found on the ICR's training website (<https://training.icr.ac.uk/>).

5.6. Healthcare services

Registering with a GP

We strongly recommend that you register with a GP locally (close to your term-time residence) whilst you are at the ICR.

Should you need hospital treatment for any reason, you may need a referral from a GP and this will be more easily obtained if you are already registered. Information on how to locate and register for a local doctor can be found on the main NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>). Many international students will be entitled to use the National Health Service (NHS), which provides free health care paid for UK residents' taxes.

If you are an EEA national, you may be entitled to use the NHS by showing your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

If you have a Student visa, you are also entitled to use the NHS, because you have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of your visa application.

If you do not already have an NHS Number, you will be assigned one on registration to a GP Surgery. This number is unique to you and will be used to help healthcare staff and service providers identify you correctly and match your details to your health records. You can find your NHS Number online by using the Find your NHS number service. You can also find it by logging into the NHS App (you'll need to register if you have not used it before), or through some GP online services.

The NHS advises you to check your vaccinations, get contraception, eat healthy food, and get plenty of rest. For more information, visit the NHS website (www.nhs.uk).

If you need medical advice you can also contact the NHS on **111**, or visit their website.

Registering with a dentist

NHS dentists provide dental care at a low fixed cost. You can register with an NHS dentist or you can choose to use a private dentist at a higher cost. NHS dentists have a fixed list of patients and there may be a waiting list to register. A list of local dentists can be found on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>). Proof of UK address may be required in order to register. Please check with the dentist surgery beforehand.

Eye care

The ICR provides eye care for all students using DSE for more than an hour a day for their studies, every two years. This is an online voucher scheme with Specsavers (<https://www.specsavers.co.uk/corporate/employees>). All staff and students are entitled to a voucher which includes access to a basic eye test and a pair of single vision prescription glasses (if required) from their main own brand range, specifically for DSE use. Users can choose to upgrade their eye test or glasses/lenses at their own cost.

To claim a free ICR eye test, please contact safety@icr.ac.uk to arrange a Specsavers voucher. See the Specsavers website for your nearest store (<https://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores>) and book an eye test appointment.

Further information can be found on the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Nexus pages, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

Where to find NHS services

You can find local NHS services, including GP's, dentists, opticians and pharmacies, using the search tool on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/services-near-you/>).

5.7. Occupational Health and wellbeing

Before you start your course, you will need to obtain health clearance. When necessary, students will need to make an appointment with Occupational Health; this is arranged through our OH provider. Details can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/occupationalhealth>). Confidentiality is assured to all students and employees. The following services are available:

Health screening

The purpose of this is to match the health of the student to the physical and mental demands of the post, and to advise management on reasonable adjustments to enable the employment of people with disabilities. This is usually achieved by means of a completed health questionnaire, occasionally an interview with a nurse, or a medical examination, if required.

Health surveillance

Some students, depending on the nature of their work, are required to participate in health surveillance programmes as required by health and safety legislation (such as lung function tests for those working with respiratory sensitisers).

Sickness absence and return to work

Referral to Occupational Health may be made following frequent episodes, or one long period, of sickness absence. This provides an opportunity to discuss any effects of work on health, methods of improving fitness, and advice on rehabilitation.

Immunisations/infection control

The Occupational Health team works closely with the hospital infection control departments to prevent occupationally acquired infection. This may require consultations and the collection of specimens from time to time. Specific work-related vaccines are available, plus a wide range of vaccines and advice for overseas travel.

Accidents at work

All accidents and incidents, including near misses, should be reported using the Alcumus system, which can be accessed directly at <https://icr.info-exchange.com> or via Nexus (accessible by connecting to the ICR's network).

Mental health and managing stress

Getting the right 'work-life' balance is not always easy, and managing pressure is an important way of preventing stress related health symptoms. Further information on mental health and managing stress can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

Students who joined the ICR after the 1 March 2023 must also complete the mandatory Stress Awareness Training. Training records will be updated once the modules have been completed, which takes around 20 minutes. Users can log on using your normal ICR Windows username and password at [this link](#). If you have any technical issues, please contact hrinformation@icr.ac.uk.

Health promotion

Occupational Health provides information and advice on lifestyle factors such as smoking, diet, alcohol, drugs, stress, and fitness. Health promotion displays and events are organised throughout the year to coincide with National Days.

Support for parents and carers

The ICR has developed a range of schemes and initiatives to support parents and carers. More information is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/families>).

Counselling

A confidential counselling service is available for all staff and students via the Employee and Student Assistance Programme provided by the ICR. Through this programme, referrals can be made for up to six sessions of counselling for mild to moderate presenting issues. These sessions can be face to face, via video or over the phone, with remote options available in over 26 languages. In addition, Occupational Health staff are able to advise on appropriate specialist internal and external counselling agencies.

Advice to staff and students

Confidential advice is available to staff and students who have health problems arising from, or affecting, their ability to work or study.

5.8. Student Committee

The Student Committee is run by students, for students, and operates at both the Chelsea and Sutton sites. It is open to all ICR students and runs a range of social activities, as well as representing students in committees across the Institute. The Student Committee is affiliated with the National Union of Students. Information on the Student Committee contacts is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/studentcommittee>).

5.9. Student Wellbeing Advisers

The Student Wellbeing Advisers provide an additional level of support for students. They form part of a wider network of Wellbeing Advisers at the ICR whose purpose is to: listen; signpost you to relevant people and resources both within ICR and beyond, and promote communication on wellbeing related topics within the student body. To hold this position, as part of the wider Wellbeing Adviser network, students must attend a relevant training course. Training is general, covering communication skills, attitude and behaviour, procedures, and confidentiality. A list of current Student Wellbeing Advisers can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/swa>).

6. Study Resources

6.1. iProgress

iProgress (iprogress.icr.ac.uk) is an online system for recording, monitoring and reporting on student progression and skills training activity. It supports the administrative processes around the milestones that students have to achieve during their studentship. The system also provides an efficient way of managing information related to each student at the ICR.

Your ICR username and password can be used to log on to iProgress. Please contact the Registry team if you need any assistance with this system.

6.2. e-Learning

Research students at the ICR are provided with two key e-learning resources to develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to excel in cancer research. Perspectives in Oncology is a modular e-

learning website that provides a basic grounding in several aspects of cancer science. The Skills website is a blog style resource giving tips and advice on transferable skills useful for research at the ICR, and beyond.

Perspectives in Oncology (perspectives.icr.ac.uk)

Cancer science draws together experts from the biological, chemical, and physical sciences. By combining different approaches, we are better able to understand the nature of cancer, the mechanisms underlying its development and spread, and how the disease can be managed, treated, and prevented.

Perspectives in Oncology is designed to give ICR students a common grounding in many areas of cancer science. Each module has been built with the guidance of an expert scientist or clinician from the ICR or the Royal Marsden. Areas covered include cancer epidemiology, cancer genetics, cell biology and signalling, bioinformatics, medical physics, structural biology, cancer treatment, and drug development.

You can register on the site with your ICR email address.

Skills (skills.icr.ac.uk)

Completion of a research degree demands very different skills to most other types of study. Many of these skills can be picked up 'on the job' or learnt with the support of your Supervisory team. Some might require a training course, such as those organised by the ICR's Learning and Development team, and other skills develop over time. In order to get the most from your research training experience it can be helpful to have guidance throughout the course of your research degree.

Skills brings together tips and advice relating to skills development written by ICR staff, students, postdocs and other experts. The website evolves alongside your research degree, delivering new material to you highlighted through email updates. Themes covered include time management, scientific writing and presentation, advice on career choices, as well as the broader implications of work at the ICR. We hope that as well as benefitting from the site you will also join the discussion below individual articles, offering reflections on your experience as a student at the ICR.

You can access the site using your ICR username and password.

Further information on how the above resources are used to assist and monitor your progress can be found in the Codes of Practice.

6.3. Learning and development

All students are expected to participate in an average of 10 days personal and professional development per year. In year one, this will mostly be drawn from your reading of the Perspectives in Oncology and Skills websites described above, but in later years will involve courses organised by the Learning and Development team. The Learning and Development website (training.icr.ac.uk) is a useful starting point and the team are happy to provide additional advice and support if required.

They provide support in a wide range of interpersonal skills training, IT skills, management and leadership training, and work with the Post Doc Association to provide specific programmes for research staff.

You can find out more about training for research degree students in the Codes of Practice.

Personal Development Plan

The learning contract you agree with your Primary Supervisor in the first three months of your degree programme, laying out the research objectives and skills development needed for your project, will form a framework for the Personal Development Plan. Guidance on the Personal Development Plan is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

Reflection is an important part of the Personal Development Plan. You should regularly update and comment on your progress in the relevant sections of the template. This should be reviewed at least annually with your Primary Supervisor, which will enable you and your Supervisors to assess the impact of training undertaken and adapt accordingly—for the benefit of the research project as well as your future career.

Training Needs Screener

You are encouraged to visit the Training Needs Screener within your first month at the ICR. This tool helps you to identify and prioritise immediate training needs, and selects courses and materials that may be of particular interest to help improve your weaker areas. It will populate a Personal Development Plan with these, which you and your Supervisor should develop further.

You can access the training needs screener at students.icr.ac.uk/trainingneeds.

Training Tracker

You should use the training tracker to keep a record of your personal development activities—formal training, outreach, and conferences, for example. The Learning and Development team will automatically update the Tracker on completion of certain courses and activities.

Tip: fill in the Tracker as you go... it is a lot easier to do this than periodically needing to search your memory for activities you may have done months ago.

You can access the training tracker at tt.icr.ac.uk.

Orcid

Orcid is a unique global standard research identifier, which will help you manage your publications across a number of platforms and distinguish you from other researchers with similar names to help you get the recognition you deserve. Many funders now require you to have an ORCID iD. Your ORCID iD will stay with you throughout your research career.

You are required to sign up for an ORCID iD via Symplectic (or connect an existing iD).

If you need help, contact the library at library@icr.ac.uk.

Open Access

Open Access is a mode of publishing designed to improve access to research by enabling your work to be accessed for free. This has many advantages and some funding bodies (e.g. the Wellcome Trust) require that the work they fund is available via Open Access. The ICR requires that the work produced by its staff and students is made available via Open Access—the library will pay associated fees for students.

Further information can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network. If you need help, contact the library at library@icr.ac.uk.

6.4. University of London Careers Service

In addition to advice and guidance from your Supervisory team and other key academic staff, the ICR provides all research staff and students with access to external professional careers advisors from The Careers Group (University of London). The Learning and Development team coordinate the careers-related workshops, webinars, and one-to-one sessions delivered by the Careers Group at the ICR.

Workshop topics vary throughout the year and typically cover interview skills and exploring career options. They are advertised through the Learning and Development website (training.icr.ac.uk), which can be accessed externally.

Webinars cover a range of topics and are recorded and uploaded onto Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/Webinars>).

One-to-one sessions are offered free of charge through the Learning and Development team and involve meeting with an external advisor. They last around 40 minutes. These sessions can be personalised by sending pre-meeting objectives and CVs so that the session can be tailored to individual needs. The sessions are typically used to discuss career options and obtain advice on CVs and cover letters/application forms. They can also be used for mock interviews where prior notice has been given through the Learning and Development team – for more information please contact hrtraining@icr.ac.uk.

One-to-one sessions are advertised on the training website under the name of Careers 1-2-1 with External Advisor (<https://training.icr.ac.uk/coursed.php?course=268>). To be the first to find out about future dates, please register on the waiting list.

6.5. Policies relating to funding and finance support available

Travel expenses

Work related travel expenses should be claimed from the student consumables budget. Each studentship has a consumable budget associated with it and the supervisor is the budget holder. You can arrange with your Supervisor for access to view your consumables budget transactions on Agresso. Since consumables needs vary between projects, it is up to the group leader to decide how the money is spent, as long as there is no overspend over the four years. Some group leaders delegate this to the students, but this is their decision. It's important that you talk to your Supervisor early on about how your budget will be managed (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/StudentConsumables>), however daily expenses and visits home cannot be claimed for.

Travel grants

A portion of the consumables budget may be used to cover the cost of attending conferences and meetings, with the Supervisor's approval. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss external funding opportunities with their Supervisors and to apply for funding from other sources. A summary of all available travel grants (for laboratory visits, training and attending conferences), including upcoming deadline dates and website links, can be found on the [Research Policy and Grant Support pages](#) on Nexus (accessible by connecting to the ICR's network). There is also information about this in the Codes of Practice.

Living expenses

Students living in London should be aware that the cost of living in London can be very expensive and you will need to budget for additional expenses. The costs of living in Sutton are slightly cheaper than London.

Useful websites include:

- Student Finance Calculator;(<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator>).

- StudyUK (<https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/>).

Council tax exemption

Full-time students are entitled to obtain a letter which may provide exemption from Council Tax. One copy of the exemption certificate per year will be issued by the Registry unless there is a change of address. Contact the Registry team for further information (researchdegrees@icr.ac.uk).

Proof of student status and stipend

Occasionally you may need to prove your student status and/or stipend, and the Registry can provide you with a custom letter for this purpose. Some letting agents and landlords may not understand the tax-free status of your stipend, and so we will include text explaining its salary equivalent.

Student emergency fund

Students can apply for emergency funding at any time throughout an academic year. Applications will only be considered under extenuating circumstances and it is extremely unlikely that applications will be approved unless a student has a recorded period of interruption of study or an issue has already been flagged to the Deputy Dean/Senior Tutor. You and/or your Supervisor will need to submit a written case to the Registry for review by the Academic Dean.

If, as a student, you should require discretionary financial assistance under other circumstances, particularly if you need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support, please contact the Registry.

Postgraduate Doctoral Loans

Some governments provide loans or financial support to students at PhD level, so it is worth checking with your home government whether there is any support available.

Students with UK, EU settled status or indefinite leave to remain may be entitled to a Postgraduate doctoral loan from Student Finance. For further information on applying for the loan, including eligibility, interest and repayment details, please see the website (<https://www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan>). Please consider taking on any form of debt extremely carefully. If you are struggling financially, please discuss this with your senior tutor and/or Registry in the first instance.

6.6. Policies relating to attendance

Holiday and sick leave

You can find out more about the ICR's policies regarding holiday and sick leave for students in the Codes of Practice.

The total holiday entitlement for full-time research students is 30 days per annum plus public and ICR holidays. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange mutually convenient dates with their Supervisor.

Sick leave

It is your responsibility to report any sickness absence to your Supervisor on the first day you are unfit to work. Sickness absence is monitored by Supervisors, as is any unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence is reported to the Registry via the Supervisor.

Maternity/paternity

The ICR has a Parental Leave Policy for Non-Clinical PhD Students which can be accessed on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/parentalleavephd>).

6.7. International students

The ICR recruits students from many different backgrounds, which results in a diverse student population. The ICR takes care to ensure that the organisational values are applied towards creating a non-limiting and fully inclusive environment for students to achieve their goals.

Visas and Immigration Health Surcharge Costs

Students can claim for the cost of their visa and the Immigration Health Surcharge. You can also claim for the cost of your dependants' visas and IHS, provided you also need a visa to study here.

Full eligibility criteria and details on how to apply can be found on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network.

Practical Information for living in the UK

National Insurance Number

You do not need to have a National Insurance (NINo) number before commencing a PhD, but it may help you to access certain services. A NINo is a unique personal number which is used to record your National Insurance contributions. If you begin paid work, you will need to obtain one.

If you have a biometric residence permit (BRP), you may have an NINo number printed on the back of it. Not all BRPs have this – it depends on factors like the date it was issued and your visa status.

If you don't have a NINo, you will need to apply online. Further details can be obtained from the HM Revenue & Customs website (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>).

Finance

It is recommended that you check with the bank beforehand to clarify what information is needed, as banks may vary with their request for information. To open a bank account in the UK, you may be asked to provide:

- two forms of photographic ID, usually a passport and driver's license;
- confirmation of your current UK address, such as a tenancy agreement or an utility bill
- confirmation of your overseas address;
- the previous month's bank statement(s), from bank accounts in the UK and/or your home country; and
- a letter of admission or enrolment from the Higher Education Institution, confirming you are in full or part time Higher Education (you can get this from the Registry).

As well as general post services, the Post Office also offer a banking service. You can find out more on their website (postoffice.co.uk).

Getting a UK phone number

It is recommended that international students arrange to get a UK phone number as this will make things easier (and probably cheaper than using an international number). A variety of providers are available such as Vodafone, Giffgaff, EE, Three, O2, and 3 Mobile. You should explore different options available to find the most suitable phone plan.

Registering to Vote

Why should you register to vote?

Students historically have a low turnout at elections, both local and national, and as a result often do not have their say on the people and policies that ultimately affect them.

Registering to vote, and voting, enables you to help decide who represents you and your local area. Local offices and issues have a direct impact on where you live, where you work and your community – and participating in the act of voting helps shape the response to those issues.

Registering online takes a few minutes, and only requires your National Insurance Number.

In more tangible, day-to-day ways, being registered to vote matters. If you want to rent a property, get a mobile contract, or sign up for a credit card (as only a few examples), being present on the electoral roll helps to confirm your identity and makes the process easier.

To find out more detailed information please visit the Register to Vote website (<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>)

Useful resources:

- UKVI – provides guidance on visas and immigration.
- UKCISA (ukcisa.org.uk) – supports international students in the UK from pre-arrival to post-graduation. They provide advice, guidance, and information about all aspects of the international student experience with services including:
 - Online information and guidance to help you navigate life in the UK - from visas & immigration and fees to working during and after your studies.
 - A student advice line for any questions or concerns you may have about studying in the UK.
- British Council – provides guidance for international researchers moving to the UK.

Additional Support at the ICR:

Weekly English Language sessions for those with English as a second language are offered free of charge – contact training@icr.ac.uk to enquire.

7. Academic Infrastructure

7.1. Student representation

The ICR considers student involvement to be an essential element in the decision-making process and student representation is preserved in the ICR's Articles of Association. Accordingly, students are entitled to representation on two of the key committees within the structure of the organisation, the Board of Trustees (one student member) and Academic Board (three student members). The Student Committee is comprised entirely of students and undertakes the role of a student union. There is also an

opportunity to become a student representative on committees and working groups across the ICR, including on the following:

- Athena Swan Steering Group;
- Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Forum;
- Clinical Academic Forum;
- Sustainability Advisory Group;
- Equality Steering Group;
- ICR Conference Committee;
- PRIDE Network;
- Library Committee;
- Public Engagement Forum;
- Research Degrees Committee;
- Research Degrees Student Liaison Committee;
- Staff & Student Engagement Committee;
- Taught Courses Committee; and
- The Ups Club Committee.

As well as a range of other liaison and co-ordinating roles.

The role of the representative is a responsible one and the student representative has the opportunity to influence decision making in the ICR at the highest level. Representatives are expected to attend all meetings and put forward a student perspective on items on the Agenda. Training is provided on managing meetings effectively for students. For further information, please contact the Learning and Development team (training@icr.ac.uk).

If you would like to represent the student body on any of the above committees or if you would like to be on the student committee in general, please contact studentcommittee@icr.ac.uk.

More information on the Student Committee is available on Nexus, which is accessible by connecting to the ICR's network (<https://go.icr.ac.uk/studentcommittee>).

7.2. Academic committees, student feedback and representation

Academic Board

The Academic Board is charged to consider and report to the Board of Trustees upon all academic and teaching matters and questions of education policy. It should ensure that the ICR, as a Member Institution of the University of London, has a rigorous and responsive Quality Assurance (QA) framework in place with which to develop and deliver the ICR's Education Strategy. It is responsible for matters relating to quality assurance and enhancement procedures, and for the academic standards of the ICR's research degree and taught course programmes; for ensuring alignment with external QA requirements and guidance; for the academic oversight, strategic planning and development of the ICR's taught courses; and for the professional development of Faculty. The Academic Board meets at least two times a year.

Research Degrees Committee and Taught Courses Committee

The Research Degrees Committee (RDC) and Taught Courses Committee (TCC) are each responsible to the Academic Board within the Education and the QA framework for the development, operation, and management of the research degrees programmes (MPhil, PhD, and MD(Res)) and the ICR's taught course programme, and for ensuring all aspects of research degrees and taught course degrees and related training are of the appropriate academic quality.

Research Degrees Student Liaison Committee

The Research Degrees Student Liaison Committee (RDSLC) is the primary point of contact for staff and research degree students to raise issues and provide information across the spectrum of matters affecting students in their work and wider student life. Any matter raised that affects the quality of teaching and/or learning may be discussed by the RDSLC, but must be referred to the appropriate academic committee for decision. All members of the Student Committee are automatically members of the RDSLC, which is chaired by the Student President. The Deputy Dean (Biomedical Sciences) and the Academic Registrar are among the members from Faculty/management.

There are separate liaison arrangements in place for the students on the ICR's taught course. Members of Registry attend meetings and the Head of Registry is responsible for ensuring joint concerns are identified.

Further information on the ICR's committees can be obtained from the Registry.
