

The Research Room

May 2024

Tips of the month

Here are some tips and tricks you can use to make your research experience at VUW much more productive and enjoyable

Connect with a mentor: Alumni as mentors

Embrace the opportunity to connect with a mentor who can offer invaluable insights and guidance as you navigate your career journey. Alumni as Mentors is a free mentoring programme that connects current students with alumni of Te Herenga Waka in four-month long career mentoring partnerships. The programme is open to postgraduate students in their final year of study who want to connect with a mentor to discuss their career questions. There are currently mentors available who have completed doctoral research and then gone on to interesting careers in academia or industry.

The alumni mentors can help with a range of career questions, including how best to showcase your skills and experiences to employers, insights into potential career paths, and to help you reflect on the skills you've developed through your research project(s). Find out more about requirements and [apply to the programme today](#), or contact the team on alumniasmentors@vuw.ac.nz with your questions.

Dr. Anna Greenhow—Wellington Careers and Employment, Victoria University of Wellington

Strategic publishing: Where to start

Te Pātaka Kōrero – The Library has a subject guide on [strategic publishing](#). There you can learn about scholarly publishing, predatory publishers, authors' rights and open access. If you're considering publishing in an academic journal, you should first ask yourself: Does your research fit the journal's scope? Is it read by your target communities? And is the journal reputable and trustworthy? Use journal selection tools for informed choices. Then, meticulously follow submission guidelines, requirements, and referencing styles. Upon acceptance, review the author agreement provided by the publisher, which outlines your online sharing rights.

More publishers are embracing open access or offering it with Article Processing Charges (APCs). At the Library, we have [Read and Publish Agreements](#) with major publishers, including SAGE, Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Oxford University Press, and Springer Nature, which waive APCs for particular journals. Check our [alphabetical title list](#) for all agreements (Some publishers on the list do not have an agreement with us). [Beware of predatory journals and other unethical publishing practices](#), which may offer minimal editing, restrict authors' rights, and charge fees. Ensure you choose a peer-reviewed journal that doesn't restrict your rights.

[Think, Check, Submit](#) offers resources and a checklist to find suitable journals and identify red flags. [Journal selection tools](#) helps match your manuscript with relevant journals by entering keywords, title, and abstract to find similar articles and where they are published. For more advice, contact your [Subject Librarian](#).

Research Services Team—The Library, Victoria University of Wellington

Share your story

When utilized effectively, stories can be powerful tools to motivate and change minds. If you need an extra dose of motivation, this story should help you out

Reflections from my research journey – Mehri

Education was a much sought-after commodity in my home country of Iran. I loved schoolwork. Every day when I returned home from school, I would sit at my usual spot in the corner of the house, take out my workbooks, and do my homework. Languages were my favourite subjects. So, when the time came to choose my university degree, the decision was crystal clear.

I took part in the annual university entrance exam in 2009 and managed to get into the English Language and Literature programme at my hometown university. It felt like a dream come true, seeing all those late-night study sessions finally paying off. Closely reading the English Language Classics and learning the ins and outs of literary criticism further fuelled my passion for languages and cultures.

Fast forward to 2018, I received a doctoral scholarship to pursue my PhD in Early Childhood Education at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington. I knew very little about New Zealand, but the opportunity was too good to pass up. My husband and I landed in Wellington in March 2018, and we've never looked back.

Settling in as an international PhD student was anything but easy. Building entirely new relationships with supervisors, PhD peers, and University staff initially seemed like an insurmountable task. However, friendly staff at The Faculty of Graduate Research left a great first impression. I was also lucky to have the most supportive supervisors who really understood the daily challenges of doing a PhD as an international student. Yet, it took me a while to feel comfortable reaching out for support.

If I were to summarise my PhD experience, I would say 'It is a steep learning curve'. You will learn something new every day, be it performing a certain task on the Microsoft Suite of tools, searching for relevant resources to conduct your literature review, or even finding the right support service. For me, the most

challenging and insightful part of the PhD experience was applying for research ethics approval. My research project focused on exploring the experiences of Middle Eastern families in the context of New Zealand early childhood settings. Participant recruitment coincided with the aftermath of the 2019 Christchurch Mosque attacks. There was increased sensitivity around participant recruitment, especially given the impact of that incident on certain communities. I had to tread a thin line and it took many back-and-forth conversations with the Ethics Committee to tighten my recruiting criteria.

Things will get overwhelming. There will be times in your research journey where you will need advice from a counsellor. That's totally fine. The important thing to keep in mind is that the PhD experience will make you a stronger person with an exceptional can-do attitude. You will reap the benefits in the workplace.

Remember, your research journey is not only a profound academic pursuit but also a transformative experience that equips you with an extensive skill set crucial for success in your future career. My openness to learning and comfort with ambiguity helped me settle into my first full-time role as Doctoral Scholarships and Admissions Advisor at the university. I was also more understanding of the daily challenges of postgraduate students, which enabled me to provide a more empathetic and holistic service to these students. It has been great to be able to offer the very services that I appreciated so much as a PhD student.

Lastly, please keep in mind that you are in control of your research journey. There will be competing interests or outside pressures, but you make the final calls about the boundaries of your research and the shape of your thesis. Everyone else will only support you in reaching your research ambitions. Hang in there and happy learning!

Dr Mehri Irajzad, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington

Useful resources

Explore our list of research-related links that will help you throughout your research studies

[ImaginePhD](#)

A free online career exploration and planning tool designed to help graduate students envision, prepare for, and pursue a range of career paths both within and outside academia. It provides self-assessment exercises, resources for exploring various career options, and customizable planning tools to help users set and achieve their career goals.

Though primarily targeted towards humanities and social sciences students, it could be useful to researchers in any discipline.

You might also like to explore [MyIDP](#) and [ChemIDP](#), exceptional online career planning tools for graduate students in the sciences

Events happening soon

Looking for other events happening inside and outside VUW? We go over some interesting events happening worldwide

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
Rainbow Research Network, Victoria University of Wellington	Newly embodied: Disability, disorientation, and an intersectional aesthetics of listening (<i>Dual delivery</i>)	23 May, 12:00 NZST	Here
Student Learning, Victoria University of Wellington	Designing surveys (<i>In person</i>)	07 May, 2:10 – 15:00 NZST	Here
	Oral presentations (<i>In person</i>)	14 May, 12:45 – 13:45 NZST	Here
	Intro to NVivo (<i>In person</i>)	21 May, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	Here
	Polishing your writing (<i>In person</i>)	28 May, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	Here
Complete Dissertation by Statistics Solution	Graduate work & writing strategies for Social Science Dissertations (<i>Online</i>)	15 May, 03:00 NZST	Here
Lumivero	NVivo User Group - Visualizations Using NVivo (<i>Online</i>)	23 May, 13:00 EDT	Here
Sage Research Methods Community	How to do research in a digital world (<i>Online</i>)	08 May, 03:00 NZST	Here
Taylor & Francis	Storytelling strategies for research communication (<i>Online</i>)	16 May, 02:00 NZST	Here
	Excellence in peer review: How to be an effective peer reviewer (<i>Online</i>)	21 May, 21:030 NZST	Here
UK Data Service	Ethical and legal guidelines in data sharing (<i>Online</i>)	09 May, 21:00 NZST	Here
	Introduction to copyright: Copyright and publishing (<i>Online</i>)	14 May, 21:00 NZST	Here
	Introduction to copyright: Copyright and secondary data use (<i>Online</i>)	21 May, 21:00 NZST	Here
4eu+ European University Alliance	Searching for open access works (<i>Online</i>)	15 May, 14:30 – 16:00 NZST	Here
	Managing FAIR data in the Humanities: Approaches and examples (<i>Online</i>)	29 May, 14:00 – 15:00 NZST	Here

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
SREE	Using quantitative methods with Participatory Action Research: Its possibilities, challenges, and limitations (Online)	17 May, 14:00 – 15:30 ET	Here
Digital Marketing Institute	Create a social media strategy for success (Online)	22 May, 15:00 London time	Here
Staffordshire University	Using generative AI in research practice (Online)	09, 16, 23 May, 12:00 NZST	Here

**Please note that by listing these events we are not endorsing any organisations but rather compiling and sharing a list of resources that may be helpful.*

FGR

The Wellington Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) works to ensure that your experience as a thesis student is a positive one. For more information, visit our [website](#)

Contact

Postgraduate Research Student Advisers: FGR-postgrads@vuw.ac.nz

- Enrolling in your doctoral or master's programme.
- Candidature management changes.

Online forms for thesis candidature changes can be found [here](#).

Thesis Examinations: FGR-Masters-Exams@vuw.ac.nz or PhD-Exams@vuw.ac.nz

- Submission or examination of theses.

Scholarships and Doctoral Admissions: pg-research@vuw.ac.nz:

- Doctoral applications or the doctoral application process
- Scholarships