University of Bedfordshire

Professional Doctorate

Systemic Practice

Programme Handbook

2020

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Programme Ethos

Introduction

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice is designed for people in practice. It provides an opportunity for you to create a sophisticated and in-depth study to achieve the highest level of attainment in your field of organisational development, therapy, coaching, professional training, leadership, management, supervision, consultancy, policy development, group work or community work. Professional doctorates recognise professional practice knowledge as having academic standing and equivalence. This is an applied alternative to a PhD and the highest degree one can undertake in the UK.

This programme is aimed at systemic professionals who want to produce a work of scholarship on a subject directly related to their professional practice. As a practitioner-researcher, you will benefit from membership of a systemic research school with a specialist understanding of systemic theory, practice, and values, and learn about suitable practitioner research methodologies. The doctorate is designed to enhance your professional practice, that of others, and your standing in your professional community.

This school of systemic inquiry encourages the development of new professional and research practice. Your research will generate accounts of the fluid and shifting connections between systemic theory and practice; systemic research theory and practice; other sources of inspiration such as literature, art, philosophy. Systemic Inquiry is a form of reflexive practitioner research. It draws on contemporary systemic practice, philosophy, communication theory, the arts and the social sciences. All research topics are expected to contribute to improving lives and the worlds we inhabit.

This programme was originally developed by Dr Peter Lang, Martin Little and Professor John Shotter at the former KCC Foundation (KCC) in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire. The University has run the programme in-house since 2010.

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice is studied part-time with an initial period of regular group meetings and a support programme throughout your remaining period of registration. These meetings create a supportive learning community for practitioner researchers to help you produce innovative and leading edge systemic practice.

We anticipate that programme participants will already have an advanced knowledge of systemic theory and practice. This is a doctorate by thesis on practice-based research and will normally be about 65,000 words up to a maximum of 80,000 words in length.

Systemic Inquiry

This Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice takes its methodological inspiration from systemic social constructionism. Consequently, you are encouraged to develop an approach to inquiry of your practice which draws on systemic values and principles. Your inquiry will also reflect the relational ethics of your professional practice. It is important for you as a practitioner and researcher to be visible and audible in your inquiry, to speak reflexively and with transparency about the complexities of your positioning in relation to others. You may need to find ways of showing and discussing the complex interactions of inner and outer dialogue, and of different types of movement in and between people. Drawing on reflexivity, ethical guidance and theories both from Systemic Practice and from the postmodern, post-structuralist field of Qualitative Inquiry you will produce a study into both your area of practice interest and into the nature of inquiry.

Historically, research into people's everyday home and workplace practices has either been the application of theory to practice or as the evaluation of their practices in the light of an academic theory. In both these approaches to research, researchers are outsiders, usually academics, not academic practitioners. In this school of systemic inquiry, research is expected to emerge from within the movements which make up relational activity. The collaborative turn requires a co-constructionist view of language, discourse theory and what counts as knowledge, knowing and know-how in our everyday lives. This approach to research builds on the work of McNamee & Gergen (1991), Anderson & Goolishian (1988), Anderson (1997), Anderson & Gehart 2007), Burnham (1992, 2005), Dewey (1930, 1949), Shotter & Katz (1998), Shotter (2011), White & Epston (1990), and Wittgenstein (1953) in that it understands relational practice as an emergent co-construction, as a form of reflexive action research.

Instead of seeing language as an already established, self-contained system of linguistic communication that sets out a set of rules or social conventions that people make use of in talking about things, we can see it as a much more dynamic, embodied, participatory activity closely related to how we communicate through gestures which are still coming into being. To embrace this view of language involves a very different view of the world in which we live. It is to see it as a living, dynamic, indivisible world of events that is always still coming into being. In this view, we understand another person's utterances in terms of the responses they spontaneously arouse in us *and* as responses to us or others or something else. This view supports other linguistic theory such as on the power of language to reinforce or challenge narratives which restrict or open stories of possibility. When we use this view to inform how we approach an inquiry into professional practice, we are starting in a different place to that of an outsider trying to gather objective material, a thing in itself, outside of a relational context, often referred to as data. The invitation to generate relational co-constructionist research opens exciting opportunities to learn more about our relationships, our work and the communities in which we live and work.

We are living in times of great social, economic and political upheaval. The theories of new materialism and agential realism are some of the new philosophical stances which are attempting to extend and re-frame our understanding of human life and anthropocentric systems. Posthuman perspectives encourages us to widen our focus on how systems and structures world. We are now our technology, all matter is alive, responsive and humans are decentred in systemic thinking. The work of Barad (2003, 2007, 2014), Braidotti (2011, 2013, 2014, 2015), Bennet (2010), Haraway (1988, 2015, 2016), Lather (2019), Pillow (2003, 2015, 2019), Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994) are newer textual friends who help us find ways of situating our work in more complex 21st century living. This theory will bring a wider and contemporary contextual frame to your practice and research.

Living Research, Living Systemic Practice

Systemic practitioner research or systemic inquiry involves a process of reflexive movement between research activities and professional activities, professional theories and research theories - each informing and forming the other in a continuing and emergent process. As the study of moment-by-moment activity is explored and the detail of this exploration is described, the impossibility of defining and isolating things becomes apparent. The non-separable character of the different aspects of practice activities, of participants and the environments defy scientific dissection. To attempt categorical analyses alone invokes a significant loss of context and therefore of meaning. Research which is sensitive to systemic practice incorporates the sometimes hierarchical but often unpredictable levels of context also present in professional practice. Relational movements and know-how creating activities in both professional practice and reflexive research are reflexively linked while also nameable as separate. For example, we are professionally engaged with speculating, discussing, sharing, reviewing, elaborating, critiquing, connecting professional activity to the other arts, crafts and practices, to cultural, socio-political and economic contexts, to administrative expectations, and, especially, to predictable and surprising elements of people's everyday lives – apart and together.

During any professional dialogue in which reflexivity is a guiding ethical principle, practitioners and their conversational partners may generate many accounts of their positions, of their actions and collaborative attempts at understanding. Reflexivity is ethical action guiding responsivity. Diffraction is the re-directional processes of new knowing and new ways of going on. In this sense systemic inquiry methodology merges second order epistemology with ontology to expect engagement in unfinalised processes of knowing and knowledge as fluid and context dependent.

Practitioners and clients become co-researchers - and, as co-researchers, they become co-practitioners in an unfolding process. As a result, professional activity, learning and research are all enfolded with each other as one in-forms and *creates* the other in an evolving,

generative and systemic fashion. The immersion in this kind of understanding and practice of relational reflexivity is a form of qualitative inquiry and shows how systemic inquiry is (intended as) a transformative process for all participants.

This approach incorporates major elements of Reflective Practice (Schön 1987, Bolton & Delderfield 2018) and systemic Praction Research (Simon 2012) in that research is conducted from within the doing of practice relationships, while conducting the practice and involves the influencing movement of self reflexivity and of relational reflexivity. This is not unique to systemic inquiry. There is much academic theory and practical innovation emanating from a strong and growing body of knowledge and field of practice within the reflexive professions (Etherington 2004; Speedy 2007; McNamee & Hosking 2012, Simon 2013) and also from within the branch of post-positivist qualitative research, often referred to here and elsewhere as Qualitative Inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2017; Dillard 2012; Ellis 2004, 2007; Haraway 2004, 2015, 2016; Lather & St Pierre 2013; Madison 2003, 2018; Richardson 1994, 2000; Spry 2001).

One of the elements in this approach is that there is an intentional blurring of the traditional boundary between research and practice. Your research will highlight and foreground the reflexivity you employ on a daily basis so the practice in question contains and shows within itself moments of critical reflection. Through reflexive storytelling, you will be able to show how practice, and therefore your research into practice, is enriched by the mutual influence of participants; and you will find ways of making transparent the role of the researcher, their inner and outer dialogue, their own stories in relation to the research topic and where possible, to include reflexive responses from other participants.

This practice doctorate expects you to produce a study which makes an original contribution to i) the professional activity of the practitioner and their practice community and ii) to the field of systemic practice research. Your research should lead to and encourage the development of theoretical concepts relevant to learning in personal or professional life, community life, institutional life, academic life, as well as consciously articulating the practice as research learning.

Examples of research methodologies developed by previous programme participants have included Dialogical Participatory Action Research (Olsson 2011), Embodied Dialogical Inquiry (Vedeler 2011), Praction Research (Simon 2011), Pragmatic Inquiry (Juhl 2012), Rich Portraiture (Day 2015), Relational Phenomenology (Pedersen 2014), Relational Ethnography (Simon 2011), Metaphorical Inquiry (Mahaffey 2016), Dialogical Action Research (Kebbe 2012), responsive temporally framed narrative inquiry (Salter 2018), and Practice Based Evidence Based Practice (van Hennik 2017).

The University of Bedfordshire as a Systemic Practice and Research Community

Another novel feature of this programme is that participants are members of a learning community of practice and recruited in cohorts. As such, you will be colleagues, participants in, witnesses and contributors to each other's learning. Periodically, you will be expected to read each other's work, give feedback and offer consultation on the development of each other's projects. The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice provides a forum for the elaboration of thinking, practice and research through the common language and heritage of systemic, social constructionist, collaborative, dialogical, appreciative theory and practice.

You are encouraged to find points of connection with the diverse personal, cultural and professional experiences which other programme participants bring to this learning community. It is an exciting and unique opportunity to participate in a group of highly experienced systemic colleagues. In previous cohorts, programme participants have arranged research walk-and-talks, mountain retreats, dinners, skype conversations to further ideas, create opportunities for generating writing, to read and respond to each other's work – especially after the first two years of meetings.

Each year, we extend our research school for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice to host the Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School. This event has contributions from eminent national and international practitioner researchers and academics and offers an excellent opportunity for students to present their research, connect across cohorts and participate in an international systemic learning community.

We encourage our programme participants to present at other conferences such as the Postgraduate Systemic Research Conference jointly hosted by the University of Bedfordshire and the Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust. It is very helpful to find opportunities to develop ways of speaking about your research and participating in a wider community of practice research conversation.

The University of Bedfordshire organises and host the biannual Autism and Systemic Practice conference. In 2014, the University of Bedfordshire awarded an Honorary Doctorate to Peter Lang in recognition of his service to the systemic professions. We have organised festschrifts for Professor John Shotter, Dr Peter Lang and Dr Imelda McCarthy with the Friends of KCC with an impressive array of presenters from across the globe.

The University of Bedfordshire is committed to promoting the development of systemic practice learning and research communities. The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice sits in the Institute of Applied Social Research in the Faculty of Health and Social Science. The Institute of Applied Social Research has a national and international reputation for the

contribution of its research to policy makers and organisations with a team of researchers awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Research. In addition to the rich experience of Institute and Faculty staff, we invite eminent practitioners, researchers and writers from the fields of systemic practice research and qualitative inquiry to contribute to this programme.

The social work courses in the University deliver systemic modules in their trainings in management and leadership and also in child and family work in both qualifying and post-qualification awards. The Tilda Goldberg Centre is leading research projects on systemic social work practice.

Since 2012, the University has been the awarding body for courses run by the Institute of Family Therapy, London. The University of Bedfordshire has been the academic partner or awarding body for systemic programmes over many years. It previously approved KCC's courses in systemic supervision, leadership and therapy.

Reading as Systemic Practice

To support your research, you will read widely from these areas of reading:
  i)   Systemic literature: post Milan; dialogical; collaborative; narrative; social constructionist; post-structuralist; appreciative inquiry; systemic inquiry; systems theory; complexity theory; post-human and new materialist theory.
  ii) Past and contemporary literature and practice connected to your research focus.
  iii) Qualitative Inquiry, Philosophy, the Social Sciences, Organisational Learning, Politics, Critical Race Theory, Communications Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminism, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies, Literary and Art Criticism; Literature, the Arts and so on.

You will need to compile a strong and extensive reading list of texts suited to your area of study. We have a reading list of papers, books and journals on BREO which offers guidance on essential and recommended reading.

The development of systemic practice has its roots in family therapy but we encourage therapists to read organisational theory and we encourage people researching leadership and management, for example, to read therapy theory. Our experience is that systemic practitioner researchers find richness through engaging with a variety of texts which extend into other disciplines. In addition, there are times when one area of professional activity is leading the field with some innovative theory and practice – and then something happens in another part of the systemic field. All areas of systemic practice have a great deal to learn from each other's thinking.

At doctoral level, we expect you will situate your research within a systemic discourse as well as bring in theory from other disciplines or fields of study. In developing and finding sources of reading, we expect there will be an honouring (meaning recognition) of the contributors to the development of systemic theories and practices. You will also offer your own critical, appreciative and practical elaborations on materials and their applicability across context.

You will conduct an in-depth search for, and study of, the relevant literature and other material in **the topic of your practice research**. You can decide how to engage in reading-responding-writing practices. Perhaps you will examine and critique the presence and dominance of some voices over others which may be absent or silenced.

This is not intended as a complete list so much as a brief signposting towards the rich literature of systemic inquiry.

- **Systemic Inquiry** and research: look at writers such as Sheila McNamee, Dian Marie Hosking, Mary Gergen, Kevin Barge, Gail Simon, Sally St George, Dan Wulff and Vikki Reynolds. Read other systemic practice dissertations.

- In **philosophy**, read from Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Mikhail Bakhtin, Deleuze and Guattari, Jerome Bruner, Julia Kristeva, Lorraine Code, Voloshinov, Donna Haraway, Clifford Geertz, Vygotksy, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, John Dewey, Richard Rorty, Paul Ricoeur, Michel Polanyi, Francisco Varela, Lois Holzman and several other writers would be studied.

- **The rhetoric of science:** Nora Bateson, John Shotter, Patti Lather, Charles Bazerman, Richard Bernstein.

- **New Materialism:** Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, Wanda Pillow, Jane Bennett, , Nora Bateson, Elizabeth St Pierre, Lisa Mazei, Alicia Jackson-Youngblood, Elizabeth de Freitas.

- Recent work in **Qualitative Inquiry** (Qualitative Research) has much family resemblance to Systemic Inquiry. So do find some texts by people like Norman Denzin, Carolyn Ellis, Laurel Richardson, Art Bochner, Alecia Youngblood Jackson, Lisa A Mazzei, Patricia Clough, Yvonna Lincoln, Saliha Bava, Patti Lather, Elizabeth St Pierre and Gail Simon amongst others.

- **Post-colonialism:** writers such as John Stanfield II, Cynthia Dillard, D. Soyini Madison, Wanda Pillow, Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Paulo Freire, Ngugi waThiongo, Homi Bhabha will add depth, rich learning and critique.

- The contribution by **feminist writers** is important for all area of research. Check out writers such as Patti Lather, Elizabeth St Pierre, bell hooks, Kamala Visweswaran, Amy Kilgard, Lorraine Code, Carol Gilligan, Dale Spender, Celia Kitzinger, Audre Lorde.

- **Post-positivist social constructionism:** writers such as Sheila McNamee, Mary Gergen, John Shotter, Kenneth Gergen.

From **Systemic Practice,** you will select writers from the systemic social constructionist, collaborative, narrative and dialogical schools of practice which are relevant to your practice research focus along with earlier contributors to the field who have provided a strong and innovative basis for contemporary systemic interests. For example,

- **UK systemic therapists:** Peter Lang, Elspeth McAdam, John Burnham, Glenda Fredman, Desa Markovic, Fran Hedges, Elsa Jones, Gwyn Daniels, Barry Mason, Britt Krause, David Campbell, Charlotte Burck, Karen Partridge, Gail Simon and many more.

- **Dialogical School of Scandinavia**: Tom Andersen, Lisen Kebbe, Anne Hedvig Vedeler, Mia Andersson, Ottar Ness, Tom Arnkil, Per Jensen, Jaakko Seikkula, Risto Piuuto, Ann-Margreth Olsson.

- **Fifth Province** practitioners from Ireland: Nollaig Byrne, Phil Kearney, Imelda McCarthy, Marie Keenan.

- **American family therapy**: Lynn Hoffman; Virginia Goldner, Monica McGoldrick, Kathe Weingarten, Evan Imber-Black, Peggy Penn, Peggy Papp, Salvador Minuchin, Jay Haley, Carl Whitaker, Virginia Satir; the **Houston Galveston Institute** including the work of Harlene Anderson, Harold Goolishian.

- **The Milan School**: Laura Fruggeri, Umberta Telfner, Gianfranco Cecchin, Luigi Boscolo, Paolo Bertrando, Valeria Uggazio.

- **Systemic Organisational Development, Management and Leadership**: Ann Cunliffe, Patricia Shaw, Kevin Barge, David Boje, David Campbell, Stafford Beer, Robert Flood, Nancy Dixon, Peter Senge, Frank Barrett, Dian Marie Hosking, Birgitte Pedersen, Chris Agyris, Jenny Helin, Donald Schön, Ralph Stacey, Barbara Czarniawska, Edgar H. Schein, Peter Senge, Stafford Beer, Diana Whitney, Carsten Hornstrup, Jacob Storch, Joe Jawarski and Karl Weick.

- **CMM** theorists, Barnett Pearce, Vernon Cronen, Christine Oliver.

- **Narrative Therapy** School including David Denborough, David Epston, Cheryl White, Michael White, Johnella Bird and many more.

- **Bridging therapeutic discourses** of Carmel Flaskas and others.

- **Canadian School** of Karl Tomm, Stephen Madigan, Ken Stewart; Cathy Richardson, Vikki Reynolds, Chris Kinman, Sally St George and Dan Wulff.

- **Solution Focused Therapy**: Insoo Kim Berg, and Steve de Shazer amongst others.

- **Appreciative Inquiry:** Diana Witney and David Cooperrider.

- E**arly systemic influences:** Gregory Bateson, Mary Catherine Bateson, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Explore early issues of the journal, Family Process.

Quality in Systemic Inquiry

There is much discussion about how one can evaluate quality in qualitative research. Now there are criteria for quality in systemic practitioner research which can aid the identification of rigour, creativity, ethics and aesthetics in practice based research. There are several papers on the reading list which address criteria for quality in research. We recommend you take into account at all stages of your writing and identify for readers what criteria you are using. Please see the criteria listed for Progression Point 1 writing and for Progression Point 2 writing in the appendices in this handbook.

What might a Systemic Practice Doctoral Thesis look like?

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice thesis comprises i) illustrations from your practice which set a context for ii) your theoretical discussion drawing on systemic theory, research theory and other sources of inspiration.

Your practice research elements will showcase innovatory practices such as descriptions of practice, detail of interaction with colleagues or clients, conference presentations, reports, audio-visual recordings, performance pieces, experimental works, programme design and training materials, case studies, published papers, methodological and theoretical papers, textbooks, artwork, other media, interviews, poetry and so on. Your practice research materials provide a springboard for responding to the complex interrelations between innovative practice, research and academic accounting practices.

Your practice components must be accompanied by or integrated into an in-depth critical, appreciative and reflexive discussion of systemic theory and practice with an evaluation of the modes of inquiry used in this research. It is the task of your theoretical discussion to provide an umbrella or meta-narrative that i) brings together all of your thesis components and ii) connects your practice research in relation to the research and practice literature.

Your thesis will include substantial theoretical reflection which articulates and discusses the major themes and questions pursued in your practice research. Your theoretical discussion is the connecting tissue which links practice with theory, and existing knowledge with new understanding. It sets a context and responds to the integrated or accompanying collection of practice research materials arising out of your research. Your theoretical discussion will weave critical thinking with reflexive dialogue drawing on systemic theory, research theory and other relevant literature in relation to the specific research focus in your area of inquiry. Your work will include a strong reflexive recounting of your research journey, your responses to literature and other inspirations, the evolution of your methodology, your relationships with research participants and in using and developing systemic theory and practice.

How you structure your thesis will depend on a number of factors. You need to take into account what will work best for you in terms of productivity as well as considering how best to present the material and you will also need to consider the needs of your readers. You should consider coherence between your practice research material and presentation.

This Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice thesis can be structured to reflect your approach to your unique form of inquiry and/or your preferred format. The presentation of your thesis will be shaped by practical, ethical and aesthetical influences arising out of and in response to your research focus, to the type of practice, to the research materials, and to the theories with which you have been engaged. You are encouraged to regularly reflect on the relationships between theory, practice and inquiry and consider how these elements move within and alongside each other reflexively to shape the overall presentation in the thesis.

Your theoretical discussion may take the form of being one discreet piece of writing or a series of papers which respond theoretically, reflexively and dialogically to the range of practice research material in or accompanying the thesis. Your thesis might weave practice research material with theoretical discussion. Or you might write a series of papers about practice and include a reflexive theoretical discussion which connects the papers. You might produce art work, an event or a performance piece and write a theoretical discussion on that work.

You are encouraged, where appropriate to collaborate with research participants in the production and presentation of the research. In the same way, we proposed that reading is a systemic practice, we encourage you to also treat writing and other forms of presentation as systemic practices. You need to think of writing your thesis as an act of communication with a reader. This is loaded with practical and ethical challenges. Use lots of signposting to avoid readers feeling lost and disorientated. Explain all terms. Think of writing as always taking place in the context of a relationship and as a dialogical activity.

However, you structure your thesis and present your research, you need to ensure there is a substantial presence and depth in the thesis of the following components:

- A clear, concise, accurate and engaging abstract
- An engaging, clear and informative introduction with background to your study, a clear description of your research focus, your research methodology, aims and expected outcomes of the research
- Extensive description and critical discussion(s) of your research methodology, your reflections on its emergence and how it has evolved, how and why
- Substantial incorporation of literature from systemic practice theory, philosophy, other professional theory, and other relevant literature and material. Many illustrations from practice which are reflexively connected to critical theoretical

discussion
- Substantial inclusion of research material
- A final chapter which critically reviews all aspects of your research, with examples of its actual and potential contributions

Please also consult the University Style Guide for additional guidance on format and inclusions. Whatever the structure and character you aim to create in your thesis, you will find some useful advice in the Research Degree Regulations.

The final judgment of the thesis by the examiners will be based on the criteria in this handbook in addition to any other criteria you choose to identify early on in your thesis to identify quality in your research. The award of the degree is subject to the successful assessment of the thesis and a viva voce examination. The thesis will be based on practice-based research and will normally be about 65,000 words up to a maximum of 80,000 words in length.

The Programme Team

Dr Gail Simon, **Programme Director.** BA Hons, CQSW, MA Systemic Practice, Dip. Art & Design, DProf Systemic Practice, UKCP, AFT reg.   *Gail.Simon@beds.ac.uk*

I have been teaching and supervising systemic social constructionist practice and practice research since the early 1990s including at KCC, at the Universities of Manchester, Leeds and the Relate Institute. I was research lead at The Relate Institute on the MA and MSc Relationship Therapy. I supervise doctoral research in both organisational and therapeutic backgrounds. I have published systemic research papers and have presented at national and international research conferences. I co-edited two books, "Systemic Inquiry. Innovations in Reflexive Practice Research" and "Systemic Therapy as Transformative Practice". My doctoral research: "Writing (as) Systemic Practice" explored relationality in writing from within practice and research relationships. I trained at KCC in the early nineties and still find I am engaged by the influence of systemic social constructionism on methodological and ethical choices in reflexive dialogical practice and research. My main area of interest is systemic practice and research methodology. Research interests include dialogical installations and performance, and systemic practice and autism. I am a member of the Institute of Applied Social Research Ethics Panel and I am Editor of *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*.

Dr Birgitte Pedersen, **Course Tutor & Research Supervisor.** BA, MA Language & International Studies, MA HRM, MA Psychology, DProf Systemic Practice. Systemic & narrative process consultant, executive manager.   *Birgitte.Pedersen@beds.ac.uk*

I bring twenty years of experience as in-house practitioner in large, global organisations, going through rapid change. Typically, I am the one heading the strategy driven change processes. It is often referred to as a portfolio manager. Sometimes other titles and categories are used as they resonate better with the system (change manager, leadership development manager, talent director etc.). Regardless of which label I wear, I am always designing, implementing, supervising and teaching leadership development, talent programmes, recruitment innovations – combining them to other components in the HR "value chain" and the company turnaround. I am particular engaged in the infrastructure (concrete touch points) promoting clarity and understanding, building new bridges to stress the interconnectivity of functions, colleagues and customers. My research interests lie in the systemic, relational, phenomenological or what I call eco-systemic approaches to organizational development. I look beyond storytelling, models, tools and recipes as the only ways of evolving as organizations affected by crisis move toward future survival - as a counterpoint to the traditional, mechanical (Cartesian) ways of viewing structures, problems and processes expected to lead to change in behaviour and performance. I am Deputy Editor of *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice.*

Dr Liz Day, Course Tutor & Research Supervisor. MSc Systemic Therapy, DProf Systemic Practice, UKCP, AFT reg. *Elizabeth.Day@beds.ac.uk*

I began my working life as a teacher. I have been interested in research since my social work training in 1986 when I looked at the responses of local authority training departments to the HIV epidemic and the experiences of lesbians and gay men in generic counselling services. I have many years' experience as a presenter and trainer working in social services where I specialised in HIV, sexuality and gender, bereavement and disability equality. My certificate in management research looked at the experiences of disabled people when they wanted to access therapy. I completed my MSc in Systemic Therapy in 1999. My dissertation explored the stories told by African children affected by HIV. In 2003 I was invited to be part of a meeting in Cape Town which was the beginning of a project called the Ten Million Children Memory Project. I was inspired by these experiences to continue to explore my clinical practice through research. As a tutor at the KCC foundation I taught on the MSc course and regularly examined dissertations. My passion for clinical practice and my interest in research came together when I embarked on the Professional doctorate in Systemic Practice. I have been working in the NHS for the last ten years and have developed an innovative groupwork programme with Elisabeth Heismann which is the subject of my doctoral thesis. I supervise and teach on the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice. I am Deputy Editor of *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice.*

Dr Julia Jude, Course Tutor & Research Supervisor. BA Hons, CQSW, Dip. Group Psychodynamic Therapy, MSc Systemic Practice, DProf Systemic Practice, UKCP, AFT reg. *Julia.Jude@beds.ac.uk*

I have over 25 years' experience of working with young people and their families in a broad range of settings – CAMHS, Education, Youth Work and Social Care. My first psychotherapeutic training was in Group Psychotherapy, where I practised at Thomas's hospital and taught at Goldsmith College. I later I trained as a Systemic Therapist and, having completed my masters, lectured at KCC, IFT and Prudence Skinner. My doctoral research explored my relationship with African indigenous ways of knowing alongside systemic ideas in the context of homebased family work. I am keen to explore new ways of learning, teaching and practising. I have a creative streak that I like to incorporate into my work. I have been fortunate to have several papers published and, in 2015, I collaborated in a short film funded by the Welcome Trust, addressing the invisible wound of late adolescent bereavement in an effort to improve its recognition.

Dr Leah Salter, Deputy Programme Leader, Course Tutor and Research Supervisor. BSc, Dip Psych, MSc Systemic Therapy, DProf Systemic Practice, UKCP, AFT reg. *Leah.Salter@beds.ac.uk*

I have been involved with the programme since 2014, first as doctoral researcher/ student and (since graduating) as a doctoral supervisor and visiting lecturer. I work as a family and systemic psychotherapist and have over twenty years' experience working with families in

communities impacted by deprivation and oppression. For the last ten years I have been working in the field of adult mental health in the public, private and voluntary sectors. My own doctoral research took the form of a narrative inquiry into women's experience of abuse and oppression, particularly sexual abuse, with a focus on group work and systemic practice as a means to enacting solidarity and resisting oppression. My other research interests include women's wellbeing, parental mental health, the impact of community interventions and research as activism. I am a visiting lecturer at The Family Institute, Wales and practice in South Wales.

Dr Robert van Hennik, Course Tutor and Doctoral Supervisor. MSc Systemic Therapy, DProf Systemic Practice, *Robert.VanHennik@beds.ac.uk*

I work as a Systemic Family Therapist, Trainer and Supervisor in Euthopia, Breda & Utrecht in the Netherlands. I am engaged in a practice which relies on curiously inquiring improvisational wisdom as living actors responding to unpredictable circumstances in multi-complex contexts. I did my Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice at the University of Bedfordshire on 'Practice Based Evidence Based Practice. Navigating complexity in Feedback-informed Systemic Therapy'. In Practice Based Evidence Based Practice the therapist is both practitioner and researcher and involves clients as co-researchers. Therapist and clients together examine the effect of their collaboration. The output of research is input for therapy in the 'collaborative learning community' we constitute together. I am very inspired by a new-materialist theory that integrates cybernetics and social constructionism in contemporary systemic thinking and enjoyed participating in Professor Rosi Braidotti's Summer School at the University of Utrecht. I love teaching and writing about practices within frames of reference that generate a greater variety of response-abilities within a larger response-spaces – and to meet and have conversations about all of this.

Additional Doctoral Supervisors

- Dr Debra Allnock, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Lisa Bostock, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Mr John Burnham, Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist, Birmingham NHS Trust, UK.
- Dr Joanne Collins, PhD, Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist, London, UK.
- Dr Carlene Firmin, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Alfredo Gaitàn, PhD, Institute of Health Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Gill Goodwillie, DProf, Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist, UK.
- Dr Joanne Collins, PhD, Systemic Child and Family Therapist and Trainer, London.
- Dr Joanne Hill, PhD, Institute of Sports Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Patricia Hynes, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Andreas Juhl, DProf, Granhof Juhl ApS & Deutero Konsulenterne ApS, Denmark.
- Dr Lisen Kebbe, DProf, Kebbe & Sandström AB Organisational Consultancy, Sweden.

- Professor Ravi Kohli, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Professor Emily Munro, PhD, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Professor Ottar Ness, PhD, University of South-Eastern Norway.
- Dr Chris Papadopoulos, PhD, Institute of Health Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, PhD, IASR, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Christina Schwabenland, PhD, Business & Management Research Institute, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Ged Smith, PhD, Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist, Liverpool.
- Dr Mark Wareing, PhD, Institute of Health Research, University of Bedfordshire.
- Dr Camille Warrington, PhD, IASR, University of Bedfordshire.
- Professor Alexis Weedon, PhD, Research Institute for Media, Art & Performance, University of Bedfordshire.

Visiting Faculty

- Dr Taiwo Afuape, PhD, Systemic Psychotherapist, Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust.
- Professor Kevin Barge, PhD, Professor of Communication Texas AM University.
- Nora Bateson, Writer and Documentary Maker.
- Professor Vernon Cronen, PhD, Professor of Communication, University of North Carolina.
- Professor Ann Cunliffe, PhD, Professor of Organisation Studies, University of Leeds.
- Professor Kimberly Dark, Performance Artist and Pop-Sociologist. California State University (San Marcos).
- Dr Glenda Fredman, PhD, Consultant Clinical Psychologist in Systemic Psychotherapy, University College Hospital and Middlesex Hospitals, London.
- Dr Laura Fruggeri, Director, Centro Bolognese di Terapia della Famiglia, Italy.
- Professor Kenneth Gergen, PhD, Senior Research Professor of Psychology, Swarthmore College; President, The Taos Institute.
- Dr Carina Håkansson, PhD, The Extended Therapy Room, Sweden.
- Professor D. Soyini Madison, PhD, Professor of Performance Studies, Northwestern University.
- Dr Imelda McCarthy, PhD, University College, Dublin, (retired) Director of the PhD in Family Therapy programme.
- Professor Sheila McNamee, PhD, Professor of Communication, Management Studies and Practice, University of New Hampshire. Vice President, The Taos Institute.
- Amanda Middleton, MSc, The Pink Practice and Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust, London.
- Naz Nizami, MSc, Bradford District Care Trust.
- Professor Wanda Pillow, PhD, in Gender Studies and the Department of Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah
- Dr Shoshana Simons, PhD, Associate Professor and Program Chair, Expressive Arts Therapy at California Institute of Integral Studies.
- Dr Anne Hedvig Vedeler, DProf, Research Supervisor and Lecturer in Systemic Therapy, Diakonhjemmet University College, Oslo, Norway.

Tutorial Support and Supervision

Tutorial support is available for participants in addition to the coaching provided within the peer group. Your supervisory team will comprise a Director of Studies and a Second Supervisor. We use a team supervision model so both supervisors have an equal part to play in your supervision but the Director of Studies holds the administrative responsibilities. We finalise arrangements for supervisory teams four months into the programme once we have had a chance to see how your research focus and methodological leanings are developing. We consult with you prior to making arrangements to see how you imagine our suggestions would work for you.

You will have contact with at least one of your supervisors bi-monthly. We recommend more joint supervisory conversations where possible. You might find more supervision help is needed in the early stages and towards the end of a research degree. Research students and supervisors have joint responsibility for maintaining regular contact and striving to maintain a productive working relationship.

You are expected to prepare for meetings with supervisors; this may at times involve you submitting work sufficiently in advance of meetings to allow the supervisor(s) time to read and reflect on your work. You need to upload a supervision record after each supervision meeting with either or both supervisors. This helps keep all involved in what has been discussed. As you start to produce writing, a big part of the supervisory relationship involves reading your work and getting into dialogue through written or verbal feedback. Some programme participants will be returning to study after a considerable period of time, and may need some study support in advanced study skills where available in the University.

For further information on supervision, see the Supervision channel on Slack.

The Structure of the Professional Doctorate

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice (PDSP) is usually undertaken as a part-time programme with two years of regular group meetings and a support programme throughout the remaining period of registration. The maximum time for registration is 60 months.

The first two years each offer a programme of five semi-structured meetings of three consecutive days. The diagram of Fig. 1 shows the structure of the programme in relation to the different phases of research activities and progression points.

The group meetings offer you a supportive learning community alongside other practitioner researchers. One of these meetings each year takes the form of the annual Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School and is for all programme participants, at whatever stage of your studies, as well as being for participants from the wider systemic practice communities. You will have regular tutorials and consultations about your research with your supervisory team, fellow group members and visiting lecturers. You are expected to engage in a minimum of 220 hours of private study per year and undertake a minimum of 220 hours of systemic practice per year connected to your research.

There are Progression Points which must be successfully completed in order to progress to the final phase of preparing and submitting your thesis.

As doctoral students you are expected to present and discuss your research throughout the programme in a variety of settings. You will present at the yearly Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School on your research. In addition, you are expected to submit an abstract and present at the biannual Systemic Postgraduate Research Conference co-hosted by the University of Bedfordshire and the Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust. As postgraduate students, you are also encouraged to present your research-in-progress at the University's Postgraduate Research Conference and other suitable professional or research conferences.

Fig. 1 Progress Timeline
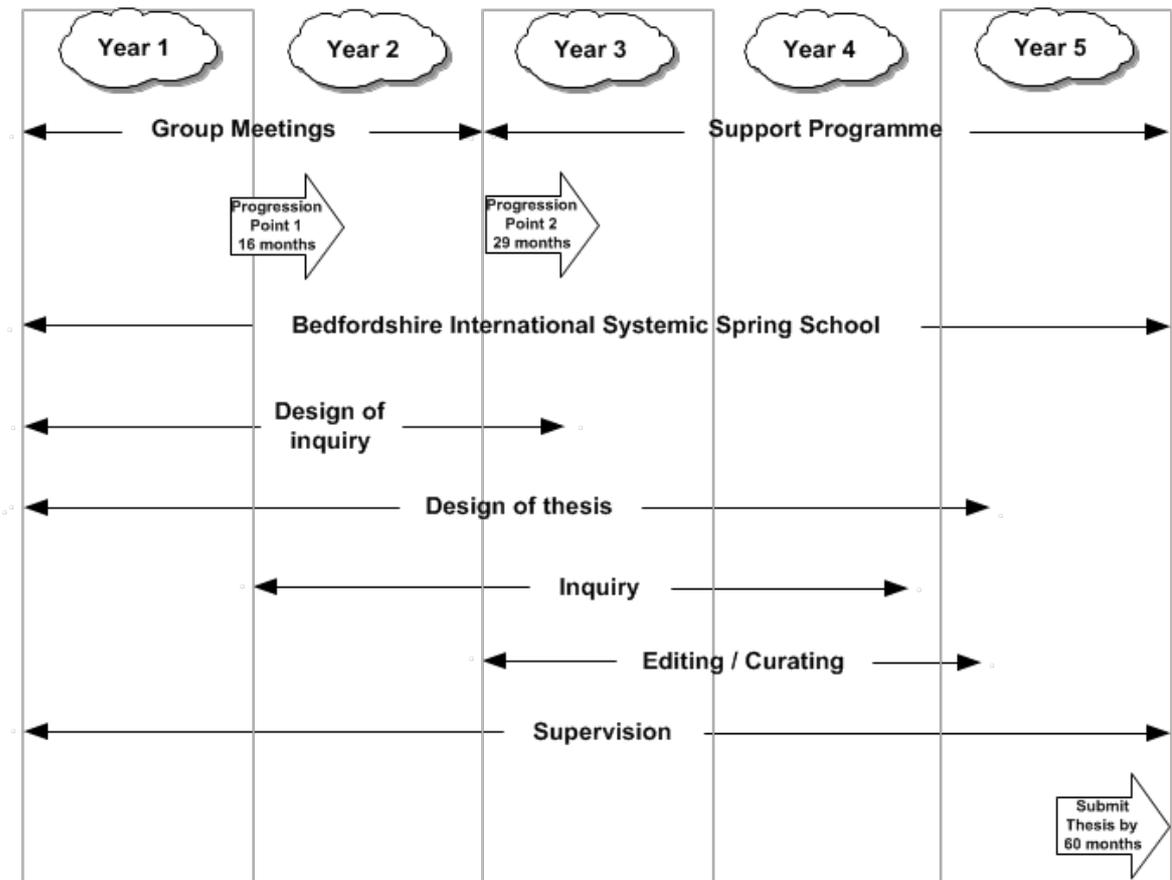
Fig. 1 Progress Timeline

Part 1 - Systemic Inquiry, Reflexive Practice Research Methods, and the Philosophy of Scientific Discourse

Group Meetings

The programme of group meetings is designed to set a philosophical, theoretical, ethical and practical context for systemic practitioner research.

The group meetings provide

- Learning opportunities to situate systemic practice and post-positivist research methods in a social constructionist understanding of science, knowledge and research theory.

- Reflexive space which supports the emergence and shaping a focus and approach suited to your area of inquiry.

- Opportunities to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills about research and practice literature. Literature searches and referencing.

- Information and support for preparing your application for ethical approval.

- Research consultations on the development of your research.

- Opportunities for developing ways of presenting your research.

- Support for you to develop your writing style and written pieces of work.

- Feedback and advice on your research writing.

The group meetings are intended as an experimental learning ground. Within the structure of the three-day group meetings there is an invitation to play with ideas and practices, to read widely and experiment with ways of describing and presenting one's research-in-progress. It is an invitation to immerse yourself in your area of inquiry and a listen out for ways forward, to find a working relationship between form and content, and for you start to negotiate an appropriate relationship between the living languages of the practices under inquiry and the academy.

It is a time to play with connections between theory and practice, between writing, reading, talking and other relational activities; to experiment with ways of knowing and being in relation with others. You are invited to develop ways of sharing and re-presenting these experiences and reflections which take into account the systemic-collaborative-dialogical activity and ethics of systemic practice and research relationships.

We encourage you to hold relational ethics at the forefront of all your research relationships with co-participants, with writers, actors and directors, with fellow programme participants and lecturers and consider the challenges in ethical re-presentation.

During this time, we explore a range of research methods, qualitative and quantitative, their philosophical and culturally situated underpinnings and invite critical and reflexive thinking about the usefulness and ethical implications of using approaches across context.

There is space to consider what your research focus is going to be and which approaches will emerge as attractive and suitable for your inquiry.

All pieces of your work will be written in the first person throughout the programme and thesis.

You will be shown how to make the most of University resources, the online library and how to use literature in your writing.

Part 1 aims

- To prepare you to develop your systemic research inquiry during and beyond this year.

- To familiarise you with systemic practice-based research.

- To provide an overview of research methods used in practice research.

- To explore differences and uses of traditional and post-positivist practice research methodologies.

- To connect modernist and post-positivist discourses about research, science and 'truths' with systemic theory.

- To encourage critical, appreciative, ethical and practical reading, writing and reflecting about research.

- To support the development and preparation of your Research Proposal and Research Ethics Application.

- To support the development and preparation of your 10,000 word Progression Point 1 submission.

In the first part of the programme, participants engage in defining, exploring and redefining what counts as a 'research' process and consider what a process of reflexive inquiry can look like. We explore connections between a process of reflexive inquiry and systemic practice. Programme participants will extend their knowledge and critiques of methods of inquiry. In particular, there will be opportunities to reflect on the concepts of quality and validity in post-positivist qualitative research. You will engage with a wide range of theory within the systemic, social constructionist, dialogical, collaborative, new materialist, posthuman, radical constructivist, narrative, pragmatist and post-modernist spheres through rigorous reading, academic learning, exploration, critique and testing of the reflexive relationship between theory and the practice.

Innovative and context-responsive means of inquiry will emerge and be developed as members of the programme read, write, and work together, using each other and the programme team as learning guides and fellow explorers, sharing knowledge and skills. This approach will support the development of knowledge, knowing and know-how, weaving insights between a wide range of theories and practices together with the projects that members are exploring to fashion innovative and needed practices.

In Part 1 you will have time to plan or imagine a possible framework for how to progress your doctoral studies. We recognise it takes time to develop a clear focus and the programme offers a lot of methodological space for your area of inquiry to be reflexively influenced by the subject and practices in which you are engaged. It is important to build in a balance of transparent clarity about your intentions while leaving room for new practices and new learning to emerge.

You will pay particular attention to the development and preparation of one or two orientation papers and a brief research report which together form a 10,000 word submission for Progression Point 1. To pass through to the next stage of this programme, programme participants must pass Progression Point 1. To achieve this, you need to produce some writing of up to 10,000 words which explores aspects of your inquiry through one or two pieces of writing which are likely to become part of your final thesis. You also need to submit a report on your research. (See details below in section on Assessment and Progression and also Appendices 2 and 3).

During Part 1, you will also prepare your Research Proposal and Research Ethics Application. You should aim to have your Research Proposal approved by your supervisors before or soon after your PP1 submission. Once the Research Proposal has been approved, you should aim to have submitted your Research Ethics application to the Institute of Applied Social Research Ethics Panel as soon as possible following the completion of your PP1 and before submitting PP2.

Programme participants will continue to develop their practice project in consultation with the programme faculty, fellow programme participants and with other members of the systemic and research communities.

Programme participants will present to the group aspects of their work, movements in their ideas and exciting things they have read or experienced. There will be a good deal of time for group and individual consultations.

Towards the end of Part 1, you will be formulating some ideas about what needs to happen in the subsequent years in order for you to work your research into a final submission.

Once you have passed PP1, you may apply to register for a MPhil if you do not wish to continue with the Professional Doctorate.

Part 2 - Reflexivity in Practice Research, Reading, Writing and Presenting

Part 2 aims

- To support you critically and reflexively reading literature connected to your research focus and your means of researching it.

- To encourage playful, experimental, critical, appreciative and reflexive thinking about your practice and about research.

- To explore the concept of relational ethics and how it connects to systemic practice and to your practice research.

- To study the reflexive relational movements between doing and description and between the parties involved in that which is being studied.

- To work towards achieving doctoral quality in theoretical and practice content.

- To develop in-depth critical and reflexive thinking about the relationship between your professional practice, theory and research methodology.

- To develop a structure and writing style for your thesis sensitive to your research and to your reader.

- To demonstrate theoretical and structural irreverence, independent thought, critical thinking, a balance of imagination and rigour about theory, professional practice and approaches to reflexive practice inquiry.

- To support the development and preparation of your Progression Point 2 submission and development of your overall thesis.

Your Research Proposal is normally approved by your supervisory team before Progression Point 2 and you should aim to have obtained successful research ethics approval from the IASR and from other required ethics committees before your PP2 submission where possible.

To progress to the final stage of the programme, you need to successfully complete Progression Point 2. This requires that you submit between 20,000 – 25,000 words of written work. (See details below in section on Assessment and Progression and also Appendix 3.)

Whether you pass your PP2 or not, you may apply to register for a MPhil if you do not wish to continue to the final submission. Your PP2 examiners also have the option of recommending you apply register for a MPhil as one of the outcomes of the PP2. This must be done by month xxx from initial registration.

Part 3 - Research and Thesis Development

The Research and Thesis Development phase aims to support the development of your ideas, critical thinking, and writing practice.

Aims for this final stage of the course
- To achieve doctoral quality in theoretical and practice content.

- To identify and critically discuss significant and novel contributions to systemic practice and systemic theory in your research.

- To demonstrate and be able to critically discuss your research methodology.

- To support and guide you in preparing your final thesis and for your viva voce.

During this part, you will be gathering up examples from your inquiry to see how they sit together, what stories emerge about the research journey and from the acts of curating your research material. It is a time to focus on the learning arising out of your practice and create a collection of pieces of work which will evidence the extent of novelty and quality in your research. You will be working on an incisive, reflexive and thorough set of theoretical responses to your research focus. You will start to work out a structure for presenting the thesis.

You will identify the themes you are using in the reflexive practice which you are planning for your thesis. You will begin to create, within an academic and scholarly context, a narrative commentary on the practice which you have been undertaking and place it in the larger context of the community of practice that you are working, such as in the therapeutic professions, a community, the business or institutional world.

In particular, at this stage, you will be engaged in a process of moving between zooming in to examine one's research and theory in detail and panning out to see what can be seen and storied at a grander level. There needs to be a balance between being in the domains of explanation and aesthetics which can be usefully generative of new stories and creative in presentation, with being in the domain of production (Lang, Little and Cronen 1990) in working towards a final submission.

It is a time for programme participants to gather together their reflections, their materials and make links with theory in ways which invite a weaving of material into a coherent whole. Particular attention is given to writing, to finding a style and shape which showcases the work to its best advantage. It concentrates on an in-depth refining of research material, a sophisticated review of reading, and shaping of the thesis. There will be preparation for the final examination, the viva and consultation about presentation options for the thesis.

There are optional writing retreats and writing seminars during years 3 – 5 in Luton.

The programme of study concludes with the submission and examination of the thesis. For more information, please see the section below on The Final Examination (p.33) and refer to the section on the Examination Process in the Research Degree Handbook. Theses should normally be submitted with the approval of your Director of Studies. You can submit your thesis after 36 months from your date of registration with the full agreement of your supervisory team but it is common for programme participants to use further time for an extended period of writing, reading and reflection with a maximum time to submit your thesis of 54 months from registration.

Research Proposal

Your research proposal is approved by all members of your research team. You send a first draft of your research proposal to your supervisors and a peer in your cohort in time to incorporate their feedback. The research proposal should be 1500 – 2000 words plus references.

Once all your supervisors agree that your research proposal is ready for you to proceed to prepare your research ethics documentation. Your Director of Studies emails the Research Graduate School and me as Programme Leader

Format
* Title
* Abstract
* Introduction (highlight need for this research)
* Research Context (your practice, professional, personal, social-historical-politico contexts, theoretical – both systemic and subject, philosophical, subject areas, practice research)
* Research focus and Research Questions
* Research Methodology
* Research Design (what are you doing and how and over time time)
   - Participants
   - Recruitment
   - Time Frame
* Ethical Issues
* Significance of Research
   - Anticipated outcomes
   - Contribution to the field and benefits to others

Check that the wording in your Research Proposal matches the wording exactly in each of your Research Ethics documents e.g. title of research, your research questions, the aims, the participants.

Research Ethics Approval

Preparing your documentation for ethical approval is not an administrative hoop through which to jump. The whole research design is a creative process in which a preoccupation with ethics will shape and influence all aspects of the inquiry: the description, the plans, the execution and sharing of your inquiry. Reflexive practice inquiry is ethics-in-action.

Your application for ethical approval is normally submitted and approved before Progression Point 2 unless there are strong reasons why it is important to submit earlier or delay

submission but this would be decided in conjunction with your supervisory team.

It is important to hold in mind the following pointers.

1. Read all the guidance on BREO and Slack prior to commencing your Research Ethics application.

2. All programme participants on the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice submit applications for ethical approval to the IASR Research Ethics Institute Panel. You should only submit your Research Ethics application to the IASR once you have achieved approval of your Research Proposal by all members of your supervisory team. There should be unswerving coherence between every element in your Research Proposal and Research Ethics Application.

3. This is a business document read by busy professionals from other discourses and professions. You should write all research ethics research applications in concise everyday language. Answer all questions directly and with sufficient detail. Be very specific in the information you give. Explain any professional terminology including research methodology – but briefly.

4. It is essential that you achieve formal approval for your Research Ethics Application prior to commencing your research even as part of a preliminary study. If you need additional ethical approval from another organisation, then this must also be achieved before collecting material for your inquiry. Always achieve internal IASR ethics approval before submitting an application for ethics approval to another organisation. Once you have obtained ethical approval from the IASR Ethics Committee you are free to begin your research unless you still need to apply for ethical approval from another organisation.

5. If you wish to include work in your inquiry which you are already undertaking, as is often the case in professional doctorate research, please discuss this with your supervisory team as soon as possible.

6. If your research focus or methodology changes significantly, you will need to resubmit a re-worked Research Ethics Application. Always discuss this with your supervisors and perhaps take advice from the IASR Ethics Panel.

7. You will provide drafts of your ethics documentation to your supervisory team and to another member of the cohort. They will give you feedback to help you develop clarity, coherence and precision. When you and your supervisory team agree your documentation is ready to be forwarded for approval, it must be signed by your Director of Studies and a copy of all your documentation emailed to Hemlata Naranbhai. Always copy in your supervisory team.

8. You must comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). See guidance on the IASR pages and consult guidance applicable to your own country.

9. Please consult the guidance on the IASR Research Ethics Panel web page: https://www.beds.ac.uk/research-ref/institutes/iasr/ethics/

Digital Environment

Participants on the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice live all over the world. Sometimes the gaps between in person meetings feel too far apart and we need other spaces to carry on the conversations and provide learning opportunities. Please try to ensure you have a good internet connection and up to date software.

BREO
This is the University of Bedfordshire online portal. It is a multiverse of resources on referencing, access to your email and the sites below. Have an explore.
www.breo.beds.ac.uk

Digital Library where you can access journals and e-books and see where you can find print books. We always have a session with library staff to introduce you to the resources for the online library. https://brum.beds.ac.uk/

Research Graduate School where you can find the Research Degree Regulations, Programme Handbooks, important forms, guidance, the Deadline Calculator and much more. There is an introductory session to the site. You can find them on BREO Communities.

Slack
This is the main online home for the programme. Here you will find channels with information on different aspects of the programme such as the Progression Points, research ethics, research proposals, supervision, programmes for the meetings in Luton, calls for papers, notifications of events and much more. Each cohort has its own channel. You can set up a channel, direct message others on the programme, ask questions, get and share information. Check it regularly. You can download the Slack app free for your gadgets.
https://pdspbeds.slack.com

PDSP home page
From the PDSP home page, you can access links to past and future conferences and events hosted by the PDSP. www.beds.ac.uk/pdsp

Webinars
We supplement the meetings in years one and two with online presentations or discussions on topics related to research. Slides from presentations get uploaded to Slack.

Reading Seminars
Occasionally we run online reading seminars for participants on the Professional Doctorate and for members of the wider systemic community. There is a list of papers to read. It tends to be the more stretching new materialist reading and often easier tackled with others. The webinars are not presentations. Everyone does the set reading and we discuss the paper and a video we may have watched. A member of the course team acts as a facilitator. These are often on Skype just using audio or on Zoom.

Software
You need to submit your work as both WORD format (doc/.docx) and as PDF. Please use the latest software to ensure compatibility. Always use UK spellcheck and grammar check. Check how you can download Microsoft Office 365 for free as a student
https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/education/products/office

Back up your work

Back up all notes and drafts in at least three or more places. Microsoft 365 comes with cloud storage called OneDrive. Get a USB stick. Email documents you are working on to yourself at least every hour. Make a new copy of a document as you go along. Keep your anti-virus software up to date.

Supervision

Most supervision takes place online. If you can get to the university to meet your supervisors that's great but not essential. The most important thing is to make sure your internet connection is reliable whatever the software you and your supervisors agree to use.

Assessment and Progression

Your academic progress is assessed through work you submit at two progression points. The first is at 16 months. The second is at 29 months. Details are outlined in the section below.

The guiding principle of Progression Points is to help programme participants to complete their research degrees successfully and on time. The timings of PP1 and PP2 are designed to support the creation of developmental building blocks towards the final thesis.

Progression Point 1

To advance to the next stage of this programme, programme participants must pass Progression Point 1. To achieve this, you need to produce one or more pieces of writing which are likely to shape and contribute to your final thesis. This must cover *both* a theme central to your research topic *and* emergent methodological approaches to your inquiry. You also need to submit a brief report on your research study plan and thesis development. Together, these writings will create a submission of up to 10,000 words.

So, for example, you might prepare one or more papers in which

- You write about an area of practice or practice theory which is of particular interest to your research. You critically and reflexively consider ethical issues, your professional and/or research practice, literature from systemic social constructionism, from professional theory, philosophy, research methodology, and other material from the arts or sciences.

- You critically and reflexively present and discuss material which connects with your research focus. This material might be found in professional, research and other academic texts, in literature, science and the arts. You might conduct a systematic review on research relevant to your subject.

- You might write a methodological paper in which you describe and critically and reflexively discuss

  o what counts as knowledge, knowing and know-how across different academic and philosophical contexts, and the choices you are making in systemic practice and systemic practice research;

  o the relationship between reflexive practice and models of inquiry;

  o your leanings towards your chosen or emerging approaches to your inquiry;

      o   practical and ethical challenges you face in researching your own professional practice or that of others.

Feel free to develop your own ideas and discuss them with your supervisory team. Think about what moves you to write but also hold in mind the Assessment Criteria (Appendix 2) with which your work will be assessed. Whether you write a single paper, two or more papers, these pieces of writing taken together need to adequately address all of the criteria. It is not expected that each of the papers will meet all of the criteria unless you write a single paper.

Writing from within or about reflexive practice means you need time to get lost in the process of reading-writing-reflecting. You are unlikely to generate creativity if you allow the criteria to dominate your every thought. You will need to learn how to allow yourself periods of immersion and reading/writing from within the moment of reflection and periodically panning out and considering what else is needed for that particular piece of writing and to help the thesis on its way.

Remember to present an overview of your research and to set a context for the reader so they understand why you have chosen the focus of this inquiry, how these writings might contribute to your imagining of your thesis and how reading and writing are influencing the process of inquiry at this stage.

The final submission date for Progression Point 1 is 16 months from registration.

For full information please read Appendix 2 carefully on

    i)   submission guidance

    ii)   assessment criteria

    iii)   documentation

    iv)   timeline for this submission

    v)   examination process

Progression Point 2

To advance to the Research and Thesis Development phase, programme participants must pass Progression Point 2. To achieve this, you will produce a collection of writings which you intend to form part of your final thesis and a report on the progress of your research.

We recommend you submit a few pieces of writing to give you the opportunity to create some flexibility in what you choose to submit and to write in 'chapter-sized' sections. The submission may include previously submitted writings which you will have developed further.

In preparing these pieces of writing, you will need to be entertaining ideas about structure. Perhaps you want to use the familiar structure of a thesis: methodology chapter, literature review, reports of findings, discussion and so on. Perhaps you are developing other ideas about the juxtaposition of materials for your thesis. Whatever your thesis design, writing an introduction and even imagining a concluding chapter is likely to be very helpful in developing your abilities to set a clear context and describe clearly what you are interested in to imagined readers.

Remember to present an overview of your research and set a context for the reader so they understand why you have chosen the focus of this inquiry, how these writings might contribute to your imagining of your final thesis.

These pieces of writing, taken together, need to adequately address all of the assessment criteria.

You will produce a brief report demonstrating how this collection of works meets the criteria and indicating how you plan to develop and complete the thesis within a stated timeframe.

The submission will be made up of a collection of writings of between 20,000 - 25,000 words in total including the report.

This must be submitted by 29 months from registration. It may be submitted earlier with the written agreement of both members of your supervisory team.

For full information please read Appendix 3 carefully on

   i)   submission guidance

   ii)   assessment criteria

   iii) documentation

   iv) timeline for this submission

   v)   examination process

The PP2 submission is assessed by two examiners independent of the supervisory team. Usually the examiners will be the same as those at PP1. Assessment is on the basis of the written submission, a short seminar presentation, and a viva voce (oral examination).

The Final Examination

The formal examination of the programme will take the form of a) the submission of a thesis to the University Research Committee and (b) a successful viva voce examination based on that thesis, examined in the standard way for a research doctorate. Work contributing to the award of a research degree is not formally graded. Programme participants will, however,

receive detailed feedback on their submitted work. Please refer to the section on The Examination Process in the Research Degree Regulations.

Submission of the Thesis

The thesis is submitted after consultation with the University supervisor. You are also advised to consult the University Style Guide for guidance on formatting and binding.

The Examination

The examination is through a viva voce. This is a meeting which is chaired by a senior member of the University who will not have read your thesis and does not participate in the examination except to oversee and facilitate the proceedings. There will be two examiners, one internal and one external, (occasionally three), who will have read your thesis and who will discuss your thesis with you. Between them the examiners should bring experience of contemporary systemic practice, specialist knowledge relevant to the research subject and substantial familiarity with the methodology. You may invite one of your supervisors to attend the viva – they may take notes but do not join in the conversation. More information about this process and outcomes can be found in the Research Degree Regulations.

Awards

On successful completion of the programme, you will be awarded a Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice by the University Research Degrees Committee on behalf of the Academic Board. This award is equivalent to a PhD. You may then put *DProf* or *DProf (Systemic Practice)* after your name.

Following the oral examination, the Postgraduate Research Examination Board will agree on one of the following outcomes:

- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice
- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice subject to minor amendments and corrections being made to the thesis within three months of the viva
- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice subject to substantive amendments and corrections being made to the thesis within six months of the viva
- that the candidate is permitted to re-submit for re-examination for the degree on one further occasion within 12 months
- that the oral examination is reconvened at a later date
- that the candidate is awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners within 12 months.
- that the candidate is not awarded the degree and is not permitted to be re-examined

Please refer to the Research Degree Regulations for further information.

Additional Information

Entry Requirements

As an applicant to the PDSP, you will be an experienced professional, working as a practitioner in a relevant professional context such as organisational development, therapy, coaching, professional training, leadership, management, supervision, consultancy, policy development, group work or community work.

You need to be working in an environment which will support your study to develop systemic practice and research.

You are expected to hold a post-graduate qualification in systemic practice or a related post graduate qualification and normally over three years of experience of systemic practice.

You will have an advanced level of understanding of systemic practice and intend to undertake research into relational practice using systemic, social constructionist, dialogical, collaborative, narrative, appreciative, post Milan practice or related theories.

You are required to submit
1. Research Degree Application Form.
2. Working Proposal. A three page treatment of a possible systemic research proposal, situated in your professional practice. Please write clearly and integrate a range of systemic theory into your statement. Indicate why you are drawn to this subject, why it is important for you and potentially for others. We appreciate that such interests are evolving and are likely to shift or change.
3. Reflective Statement. Six pages of autobiographical writing discussing your values, your intellectual and professional journeys, aspirations, and life experiences that have led to your decision to apply to this programme. Include examples of artistic or literary work, hobbies, politics, things or people that matter to you.
4. Academic Writing Sample: A writing sample of eight-to-ten pages in English (typed) that demonstrates your capacity to think critically and reflectively and demonstrates graduate level writing abilities. This must use a standard referencing system. You may submit copies of previous work, such as a recent academic paper, article, or a report that reflects scholarly abilities.
5. Curriculum Vitae.
6. Two Letters of Recommendation. One referee should be able to comment on your ability to do advanced academic work. Both should use standard business format and include full contact information-name, email, phone number and postal address.

Assessment of this writing and your training and work experience form part of the assessment process. You are not bound by these ideas for a possible research focus.

You must also fulfil the entry requirements of the University of Bedfordshire Admissions Office and the UKVI. You need to provide evidence of work experience, qualifications, English language skills, systemic knowledge and academic ability. All offers are made by the Research Graduate School (RGS) although offers will only made if the documentation has signed approval from the directors of both the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice and the Institute of Applied Social Research.

Fees and Payment

2019/20 fees for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice can be found at:
http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/money/fees

For payment methods, including instalments, visit
https://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/money/fees/payment/

Programme Meeting Dates:

Year 1: September 2021 - June 2022

Year 2: September 2022 – June 2023

Cohort 10 - latest final thesis submission date: 14th September 2026

Year 1
Wednesday 09.00 – 18.00; Thursday 09.00 – 18.00; Friday 09.00 – 1700.

15th – 17th September 2021
17th – 19th November 2021
9th – 11th February 2022
6th – 8th April 2022
27th June - 1st July 2022 **(TBC)** Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School at Brathay Hall, Lake District

Year 2
Wednesday 13.30 – 18.00; Thursday 09.00 – 18.00; Friday 09.00 – 14.30.
14TH – 16TH September 2022
16th – 18th November 2022
8th – 10th February 2023
29th – 31st March 2023
12th – 16th June 2023 **(TBC)** Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School at Brathay Hall, Lake District

Further Information about Assessment and Learning Support

References, Plagiarism and Self-plagiarism

Referencing is a key skill to demonstrate good academic practice. References are required for all written work submitted during the programme. A reference provides the reader with all the information needed to accurately identify the original source of the authors quoted or paraphrased.

For more resources on referencing visit https://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/a-guide-to-referencing and Study Hub Online on BREO https://lrweb.beds.ac.uk

The University 'Academic Discipline Policy and Procedures' define plagiarism as an offence, which:

> '…consists of copying work or attempting to copy from any other source, published or unpublished, including the work of a fellow student or another person, in a manner not authorised by the regulations of the assessment, and presenting the copied work as if it were the student's own work. It includes written and non-written forms of production, for example, in performance, design, the making of artefacts or other 22 objects, and oral presentations, and may constitute part or all of a submitted assessment'.

More information on the University policy can be found here: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/academic-discipline-policy

Appeals against Assessment Decisions

Appeals against the outcome of assessment, will be made through the University's Standard Appeals Procedure (Student Assessment). See 4.1.19 of the 2014 Research Degree Regulations and consult the Research Graduate School for advice.

Programme Participant Representation

Because the programme will consist of small groups of mature programme participants, there will be ample opportunities for ongoing feedback. Staff are receptive to the views of programme participants as part of their commitment to programme development and time will be scheduled for programme participant evaluation of programme delivery at the end of each group meeting and at the end of each year. The University organises unit and programme evaluations across the institution and programme teams are obliged to respond to any problem areas highlighted. As part of annual monitoring, each programme is also now required to keep a programme journal to log any issues raised by programme participants and the action taken.

Learning Support

Because this is an intensive programme attended by programme participants with many other claims upon their time, the Programme Coordinator and programme staff will be available to give advice and guidance during and between the dedicated group meetings in-

person or via email, phone, skype. Assignment turnaround will be as rapid as possible, normally be between three and four weeks, and staff will be available to advise on first drafts.

Learning Resources

Programme participants will benefit from 'blended learning', having remote access to the University's learning resources, programme materials, reading lists, and lecture notes will be available via BREO and a programme BLOG and/or WIKI. This is especially useful in sharing reading materials and in maintaining a sense of learning community between meetings.

The University has a new and well equipped Learning Resource Centre which includes facilities for electronic and paper based study. You will have access to over 300 networked computers, opportunities for electronic learning (Virtual Learning Environment) as well as traditional teaching and learning methods. University electronic resources can also be accessed from home computers via the internet giving mature programme participants, in particular, greater flexibility in studying.

To help you study for assignments and develop knowledge of the subject area, you will need to use the online library and the wide range of resources available. We will ensure you have help and training to access these resources.

You can use the library catalogue https://brum.beds.ac.uk to locate recommended reading or to find material on a topic you are interested in. The catalogue will indicate if we have the material, where it can be found and how long it can be borrowed for. Certain set texts and key papers can be found in the Short Loan Collection.

Programme participants who wish to study in the library will find a range of study environments to support both group work and individual study. The PCs in the library and in the Postgraduate Centre will enable programme participants to:

- Access the Internet
- Use Email
- Find University documents
- Use BREO virtual learning environment
- Use software applications from the Microsoft Office suite

Programme participants will be shown how to locate material and use electronic databases at a library workshop by your Academic Librarian. S/he will also be able to answer programme participants' subject information queries.

For more information on the range of resources and services in the LRC programme participants should read the service handbooks and the subject guides in the library in either print or online at https://lrweb.beds.ac.uk

Referencing and citation guidelines can be found on the University's Learning Resource Web pages. https://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/a-guide-to-referencing

Student Support

Mitigating Circumstances or Suspension of Studies

If you think you need to take time out from your studies or if you are going to be late with a submission, you must contact the Student Engagement and Mitigation Team immediately as decisions on such matters cannot be backdated. Contact SEAM via email: student.engagement@beds.ac.uk Make sure you use the form for Postgraduate Research Students.
https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/studying-at-bedfordshire/student-support/cant-hand-in-a-piece-of-work-or-sit-an-exam/pgr-requests/

You will always be asked to provide evidence of reasons for your request and this is approved by the Research Degrees Committee not by your supervisors or the Research Graduate School. Please refer to Section 4.1.19 of the 2018 Research Degrees Regulations.
https://www.beds.ac.uk/media/237550/section-4-regulations-for-research-degrees-uobar117research.pdf

The Disability and Dyslexia Support Team is available to discuss any issues which programme participants with disabilities, including dyslexia, has and can provide specialist services such as sign language interpreters, note takers, dyslexia screening/tuition and support with mobility on campus. Specialist guidance for programme participants with mental health issues is also available. The DAT can offer confidential advice and information about academic and personal issues, adjustments in examinations, applying for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) and buying suitable equipment.
https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/studying-at-bedfordshire/student-support/disabilities2/

Free and confidential counselling services are available for programme participants requiring assistance with personal or financial difficulties. https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/studying-at-bedfordshire/student-support/counselling2 The Student's Union Advice Centre also provides information, advice and representation. https://www.bedssu.co.uk/

The Professional and Academic Development (PAD) team offers advice and guidance to programme participants who are either struggling with certain aspects of their studies or simply wish to develop and explore certain skills further.

At Faculty and Departmental levels, the staff in the Health and Social Sciences Faculty Office in C403 are available to advise on a variety of matters such as programme changes, late registration, results, change of address and so on.

Equal Opportunities Policy

The Equality Act 2010 builds on previous equality and diversity legislation by introducing a number of "protected characteristics" affording programme participants and staff protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of their personal statuses, perceptions about them or because of their association with these. As a result, University's Equality and Diversity Policy has been updated to reflect the changing requirements of the Act. The Act gives protection in respect of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation

It also places a requirement – a Public Sector Equality Duty - on the University to have "due regard" to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality
- Foster good relations between people from different groups

This Policy reflects our continued reaffirmation of these commitments and contains specific details on the various diversity areas as well as other issues that we believe have an impact on the whole student and staff experience while they are studying and working at the University. As well as setting out details of the various protected characteristics and other related issues, the Policy makes clear the University's aims, the scope of the Policy and the responsibilities for implementation.

We welcome students living with disabilities and we welcome conversation with you about what kind of support or sensitivity would suit your learning needs. Feel free to speak with your supervisor or the Programme Coordinators to discuss what staff and students can do in conjunction with the university's Disability Advice Team to assist you in your studies and with your time in the university. While we can't identify any particular barriers to disabled students accessing the curriculum for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice, that doesn't mean there won't be any so please talk with us. We monitor programme design and delivery continually to ensure compliance with the 2001 Special Needs and Disability Act. But in any case, the needs of all students applying to or studying on the programme will be kept under review to ensure that any problems that do arise can be dealt with speedily, effectively and sensitively.

Your sense of self, your identity, beliefs, life choices are important to you and to us. If you feel anything is absent, misguided or offensive in the programme materials, classroom, conversations or in the university buildings, please let your Supervisor or the Programme Coordinator know sooner rather than later. We will be concerned to hear your experience and consider what needs to happen. Likewise, it you notice inclusive or supportive practices or materials which you feel are important to maintain, please share this with your Supervisor or Programme Coordinator.

Appendix 1

University of Bedfordshire

Programme Information Form (research degrees) (PIF)

The PIF provides core information to students, staff teams and others on a particular programme of study.

Section 1 - General Programme Information			
Programme Title	Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice		
Qualification	Professional Doctorate		
Intermediate Qualification(s)	None		
Awarding Institution	University of Bedfordshire		
Location of Delivery	Postgraduate Centre, University of Bedfordshire, Luton and/or Online		
Mode(s) of Study	Part-time		
Duration (see Academic Regulations 4.1.1)	Minimum period of registration	Normal period of registration	Maximum period of registration
	36 months	48 months	60 months
Start points	September		
FHEQ Level	Level 8		
Route Code (SITS)	Course Code: ASR03RPT Route Code: EAPSYAAP		
Relevant external Benchmarking	QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England and Wales and Northern Ireland 2014: Level 8 Doctoral Degree Characteristics, (QAA). September 2015.		

Section 2 - Published Information

Material in this section will be used on the programme web site to promote the programme to **potential students**. The text should be written with this potential audience in mind.

Programme Structure

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice (PDSP) is undertaken as a part-time programme with two years a series of regular group meetings and a support programme throughout the remaining period of registration.

During the first two years, there is a programme of four semi-structured group meetings of three consecutive days per year in Luton. In Years 3, 4 and 5, there are optional writing retreats in Luton four times a year. In addition, all PDSP students are expected to attend and present at the annual three day Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School which is open to participants from the wider systemic practice communities.

You will have regular tutorials and consultations about your research with your supervisory team, fellow group members and visiting lecturers. You are expected to engage in a minimum of 220 hours of private study per year and undertake a minimum of 220 hours of systemic practice per year connected to your research.

The group meetings offer you a supportive learning community alongside other practitioner researchers while you produce innovative and leading edge systemic practice. They are designed to set a philosophical, theoretical, ethical and practical context for systemic practitioner research.

In Part 1, we address Systemic Inquiry, Reflexive Practice Research Methods, and the Philosophy of Scientific Discourse. These meetings provide
- Learning opportunities to situate systemic practice and post-positivist qualitative and quantitative research methods in a social constructionist understanding of science, knowledge and research theory.
- Reflexive space which supports the emergence and shaping a focus and approach suited to your area of inquiry.
- Opportunities to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills about research and practice literature.
- Information and support for preparing your research proposal and research ethics application(s).

In Part 2, the focus is on Reflexivity in Practice Research, Reading, Writing and Presenting and includes
- Research consultations on the development of your research.
- Opportunities for developing ways of presenting your research.
- Support for you to develop your writing style and written pieces of work.
- Feedback and advice on your research writing.

In Part 3, you participate in the Research and Thesis Development stage which involves attendance at the Systemic Practice and Research School, optional writing retreat, webinars and conferences and regular supervision. During this period, you will identify the themes arising out of your inquiry which you will develop further for your thesis. You will begin to create, within an academic and scholarly context, a narrative commentary on the practice which you have been undertaking and place it in the larger context of the community of practice that you are working, such as in the therapeutic professions, a community, the business or institutional world.

There are Progression Points which you need to complete successfully to progress to the final part of preparing and then submitting your thesis. The first Progression Point deadline is at 16 months and involves a submission of 10,000 words. The second Progression Point deadline is at 29 months and involves the submission of 20,000 – 25,000 words. These submissions are designed to support the creation of developmental building blocks towards the final thesis.

You will prepare you final thesis on practice-based research which is normally about 65,000 words but may be up to a maximum of 80,000 words in length. This must be submitted by 60 months.

Why study this programme

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice is designed for people in practice. It provides an opportunity for you to create a sophisticated and in-depth study to achieve the highest level of attainment in your field of organisational development, therapy, coaching, professional training, leadership, management, supervision, consultancy, policy development, group work or community work. Professional doctorates recognise professional practice knowledge as having academic standing and equivalence. This is an applied alternative to a PhD and the highest degree one can undertake in the UK.

This programme is aimed at systemic professionals who want to produce a work of scholarship on a subject or theme directly related to their practice experience and development. As an experienced practitioner, you will benefit from membership of a systemic research school with a specialist understanding of systemic theory, practices and values and suitable research methodologies. The doctorate is designed to enhance your professional practice and position in your professional community.

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice is studied part-time with an initial period of regular group meetings and a support programme throughout your remaining period of registration. These meetings create a supportive learning community for practitioner researchers to help you produce innovative and leading edge systemic practice.

The annual Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School hosted by the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice offers an excellent opportunity for students to present their research and participate in an international systemic learning community.

Programme Summary – Educational Aims

Part 1 - Systemic Inquiry, Reflexive Practice Research Methods, and the Philosophy of Scientific Discourse

- To prepare you to develop your systemic research inquiry during and beyond this year.
- To familiarise you with systemic practice-based research.
- To provide an overview of research methods used in practice research.
- To explore differences and uses of positivist and post-positivist qualitative and quantitative practice research methodologies.
- To connect positivist and post-positivist discourses about research, science and 'truths' with systemic theory.
- To support the development and preparation of your Research Proposal and Research Ethics Application.
- To encourage critical, appreciative, ethical and practical reading, writing and reflecting about research.

Part 2 - Reflexivity in Practice Research, Reading, Writing and Presenting

- To support you critically and reflexively reading literature connected to your research focus and your means of researching it.
- To encourage playful, experimental, critical, appreciative and reflexive thinking about your practice and about research.
- To explore the concept of relational ethics and how it connects to systemic practice and to your practice research.
- To study the reflexive relational movements between doing and description and between the parties involved in that which is being studied.
- To support you in generating a detailed and reflexive account your inquiry
- To support the development and preparation of your Progression Point 1 submission.
- To help you prepare for Progression Point 2 and your overall thesis development.

Research and Thesis Development Stage

- To identify the main outcomes of your research.
- To identify and discuss significant and original contributions to systemic practice, systemic theory and other fields of your research.
- To achieve doctoral quality in theoretical and practice content.
- To develop in-depth critical and reflexive thinking about the relationship between your professional practice, theory and research methodology.
- To develop a structure and writing style for your thesis which are sensitive to your research and to your reader.
- To demonstrate theoretical and structural irreverence, independent thought, critical thinking, a balance of imagination and rigour about theory, professional practice and approaches to reflexive practice inquiry.
- To support the development and preparation of your Progression Point 2 submission.
- To support and guide you in preparing your final thesis and for your viva voce.

Entry requirements

As an applicant to the PDSP, you will be an experienced professional, working as a practitioner in a relevant professional context such as organisational development, therapy, coaching, professional training, leadership, management, supervision, consultancy, policy development, group work or community work.

You need to be working in an environment which will support your study to develop systemic practice and research.

You are expected to hold a post-graduate qualification in systemic practice OR a related post graduate qualification AND over three years of experience of systemic practice.

You will have an advanced level of understanding of systemic practice and intend to undertake research into relational practice using systemic, social constructionist, dialogical, collaborative, narrative, appreciative, post Milan practice or related theories.

Application documentation comprises:

1. Research Degree Application Form.
2. Working Proposal. A three page treatment of a possible systemic research proposal, situated in your professional practice. Please write clearly and integrate a range of systemic theory into your statement. Indicate why you are drawn to this subject, why it is important for you and potentially

for others. We appreciate that such interests are evolving and are likely to shift or change.
3. Reflective Statement. Six pages of autobiographical writing discussing your values, your intellectual and professional journeys, aspirations, and life experiences that have led to your decision to apply to this programme. Include examples of artistic or literary work, hobbies, politics, things or people that matter to you.
4. Academic Writing Sample: A writing sample in English of eight-to-ten pages (typed) that demonstrates your capacity to think critically and reflectively and demonstrates graduate level writing abilities. This must use a proper referencing system. You may submit copies of previous work, such as a recent academic paper, article, or a report that reflects scholarly abilities.
5. Curriculum Vitae
6. Two Letters of Recommendation. One referee should be able to comment on your ability to do advanced academic work. Both should use standard business format and include full contact information-name, email, phone number and postal address.

You must also fulfil the entry requirements of the University of Bedfordshire Admissions Office. You need to provide evidence of work experience, qualifications, English language skills, systemic knowledge and academic ability. All offers are made by the Research Graduate School (RGS) although offers will only made if the documentation has signed approval from the Programme Leader of the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice and the Director of the Institute of Applied Social Research.

Assessment

Progression Point 1

To advance to the next part of this programme, programme participants must pass Progression Point 1. To achieve this, you need to produce one or more pieces of writing which are likely to shape and contribute to your final thesis. This must cover *both* a theme central to your research topic *and* emergent methodological approaches to your inquiry. You also need to submit a brief report on your research study plan and thesis development. Together, these writings will create a submission of up to 10,000 words.

So, for example, you might prepare one or more papers in which
- You write about an area of practice or practice theory which is of particular interest to your research. You critically and reflexively consider ethical issues, your professional and/or research practice, literature from systemic social constructionism, from professional theory, philosophy, research methodology, and other material from the arts or sciences.
- You critically and reflexively present and discuss material which connects with your research focus. This material might be found in professional, research and other academic texts, in literature, science and the arts. You might conduct a systematic review on research relevant to your subject.
- You might write a methodological paper in which you describe and critically and reflexively discuss
    o what counts as knowledge, knowing and know-how across different academic and philosophical contexts, and the choices you are making in systemic practice and systemic practice research;
    o the relationship between reflexive practice and models of inquiry;
    o your leanings towards your chosen or emerging approaches to your inquiry;
    o practical and ethical challenges you face in researching your own professional practice or that of others.

Feel free to develop your own ideas and discuss them with your supervisory team. Think about what moves you to write but also hold in mind the Assessment Criteria in the Programme Handbook (Appendix 2) by which your work will be assessed. Whether you write a single paper, two or more papers, these pieces of writing taken together need to adequately address all of the criteria. It is not expected that each of the papers will meet all of the criteria unless you write a single paper.

Writing from within or about reflexive practice means you need time to get lost in the process of reading-writing-reflecting. You are unlikely to generate creativity if you allow the criteria to dominate your every thought. You will need to learn how to allow yourself periods of immersion and reading/writing from within the moment of reflection and periodically panning out and considering what else is needed for that particular piece of writing and to help the thesis on its way.

Remember to present an overview of your research and set a context for the reader so they understand why you have chosen the focus of this inquiry, how these writings might contribute to your imagining of your thesis and how reading and writing are influencing the process of inquiry at this stage.

Examination is through written submission.

The final submission date for Progression Point 1 is 16 months from registration.

For full information please read Appendix 2 of the Programme Handbook carefully on
- submission guidance
- assessment criteria
- documentation
- timeline for this submission
- examination process

Once you have passed PP1, you may apply to register for a MPhil if you do not wish to continue with the Professional Doctorate.

Progression Point 2
To advance to the Research and Thesis Development part, programme participants must pass Progression Point 2. To achieve this, you will produce a collection of writings which you intend to form part of your final thesis and a report on the progress of your research.

We recommend you submit a few pieces of writing to give you the opportunity to create some flexibility in what you choose to submit and to write in 'chapter-sized' sections. The submission may include previously submitted writings which you will have developed further.

In preparing these pieces of writing, you will need to be entertaining ideas about structure. Perhaps you want to use the familiar structure of a thesis: methodology chapter, literature review, reports of findings, discussion and so on. Perhaps you are developing other ideas about the juxtaposition of materials for your thesis. Whatever your thesis design, writing an introduction and even imagining a concluding chapter is likely to be very helpful in developing your abilities to set a clear context and describe clearly what you are interested in to imagined readers.

Remember to present an overview of your research and set a context for the reader so they understand why you have chosen the focus of this inquiry.

These pieces of writing, taken together, need to adequately address all of the assessment criteria.
You will produce a brief report demonstrating how this collection of works meets the criteria in Appendix 3 and indicating how you plan to develop and complete the thesis within a stated timeframe.
The submission will be made up of a collection of writings of between 20,000 - 25,000 words in total including the report.

Examination is through written submission and viva voce.

The final submission date for Progression Point 2 is 29 months from registration.

For full information please read Appendix 3 of the Programme Handbook carefully on
- submission guidance
- assessment criteria
- documentation
- timeline for this submission
- examination process

Whether you pass your PP2 or not, you may apply to register for a MPhil if you do not wish to continue to the final submission. Your PP2 examiners also have the option of recommending you apply register for a MPhil as one of the outcomes of the PP2 . This must be done by month xxx from initial registration.

The Progression Points create opportunities for assessors to ascertain that students are meeting targets and level 7 and 8 standards.

Final Examination

You will prepare you final thesis on practice-based research which is normally about 65,000 words but may be up to a maximum of 80,000 words in length. This must be submitted by 60 months.

The final examination is by examination of the thesis and viva voce.

Following the oral examination, the Postgraduate Research Examination Board will agree on one of the following outcomes:

- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice
- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice subject to minor amendments and corrections being made to the thesis within three months of the viva
- that the candidate is awarded the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice subject to substantive amendments and corrections being made to the thesis within six months of the viva
- that the candidate is permitted to re-submit for re-examination for the degree on one further occasion within 12 months
- that the oral examination is reconvened at a later date
- that the candidate is awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners within 12 months.
- that the candidate is not awarded the degree and is not permitted to be re-examined

The Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice has a typical doctoral degree equivalence of 540 credits.

Developing your career

Describe how the programme reflects the Researcher Development Framework (www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf) and any discipline specific professional development within the programme

On completion

On completion of this programme, previous programme participants have progressed to senior leadership

and advisory roles, consultant grade and senior academic posts, developed further research opportunities and generated publications often arising out of their doctoral work.

Student support during the programme

There are several sources of support available to you.

You will have regular tutorials (in-person, video link or email) with your Director of Studies and with your Second Supervisor. Your supervisory team will provide you with written and verbal feedback on your written work. As programme participants, you will be encouraged to act as conversational partners with each other and provide feedback and consultation on each other's writing and research.

You will have remote access to the University's learning resources, the library, specialist materials and lecture notes will be available via Slack and BREO. You can also attend seminar programmes provided by the Research Graduate School and by the Institute of Applied Social Research which address contemporary practice topics and ethical and methodological subjects.

Students with disabilities

We welcome students living with disabilities and welcome a conversation with you about what kind of support or sensitivity, from us, would suit your learning needs. Feel free to contact the Programme Leader to discuss what staff and students can do in conjunction with the university's Disability Advice Team to assist you in your studies and with your time in the university. While we cannot identify any particular barriers to disabled students accessing the curriculum for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice, that does not mean there will not be any so please talk with us. We monitor programme design and delivery to ensure compliance with the 2001 Special Needs and Disability Act and the 2010 Equality Act. But in any case, the needs of all students applying to or studying on the programme will be kept under review to ensure that any problems that do arise can be dealt with speedily, effectively and sensitively.

For each element of the programme as listed above, copy and complete the table below.

Programme element	Directed Studies
Element code (SITS)	N/A
Mode of delivery	Group meetings, Research Supervision and Personal Study You will be learning through • Group discussions and presentations. • Doing reflexive practice-based research. • One to one tutorials with your supervisory team. • Reading, reflecting, discussing ideas. • Reflexive writing, note-taking, keeping a journal.

	• Developing your written work for submissions and final thesis. • Reviewing in detail the materials arising from your inquiry in relation to theory, ethics and your research focus/questions. • Watching films, visiting exhibitions, going to the theatre, reading novels and poetry, going for walks, talking with others about your research, for example. • Preparing to present your research at conferences and the Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School. • Making time to reflect on the research study, work and life balance.
Prerequisites	None
Aims	**Part 1 - Systemic Inquiry, Reflexive Practice Research Methods, and the Philosophy of Scientific Discourse** • To prepare you to develop your systemic research inquiry during and beyond this year. • To familiarise you with systemic practice-based research. • To provide an overview of research methods used in practice research. • To explore differences and uses of positivist and post-positivist practice research methodologies. • To connect positivist and post-positivist discourses about research, science and 'truths' with systemic theory. • To support the development and preparation of your Research Proposal and Research Ethics Application. • To encourage critical, appreciative, ethical and practical reading, writing and reflecting about research. **Part 2 - Reflexivity in Practice Research, Reading, Writing and Presenting** • To support you critically and reflexively reading literature connected to your research focus and your means of researching it. • To encourage playful, experimental, critical, appreciative and reflexive thinking about your practice and about research. • To explore the concept of relational ethics and how it connects to systemic practice and to your practice research.

	- To study the reflexive relational movements between doing and description and between the parties involved in that which is being studied. - To support you in generating a detailed and reflexive account your inquiry. - To support the development and preparation of your Progression Point 1 submission. - To help you prepare for Progression Point 2 and your overall thesis development.
Content	- Learning opportunities to situate systemic practice and post-positivist research methods in a social constructionist understanding of science, knowledge and research theory. - Reflexive space which supports the emergence and shaping a focus and approach suited to your area of inquiry. - Opportunities to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills about research and practice literature. - Information and support for preparing your Research Ethics Application(s). - Research consultations on the development of your research. - Opportunities for developing ways of presenting your research. - Support for you to develop your writing style and written pieces of work. - Feedback and advice on your research writing.
Assessment	This is not an assessed element. Students must complete Progression Points 1 & 2 to proceed to the Research and Thesis Development Stage.

Programme element	**Independent Studies**
Element code (SITS)	N/A
Mode of delivery	Group meetings, Research Supervision and Personal Study You will be learning through

	• Doing reflexive practice-based research.
	• Tutorials with your supervisory team.
	• Reading, reflecting, discussing ideas.
	• Reflexive writing, note-taking, keeping a journal.
	• Developing your written work for submissions and final thesis.
	• Reviewing in detail the materials arising from your inquiry in relation to theory, ethics and your research focus/questions.
	• Watching films, visiting exhibitions, going to the theatre, reading novels and poetry, going for walks, talking with others about your research, for example.
	• Preparing and presenting your research at conferences and the Bedfordshire International Systemic Practice and Research School.
	• Making time to reflect on the research study, work and life balance.
Prerequisites	Programme participants must have completed Progression Points 1 & 2 to proceed to the third stage.
Aims	• To identify the main outcomes of your research. • To identify and discuss significant and original contributions to systemic practice and systemic theory in your research. • To achieve doctoral quality in theoretical and practice content. • To develop in-depth critical and reflexive thinking about the relationship between your professional practice, theory and research methodology. • To produce a structure and writing style for your thesis which are sensitive to your research and to your reader. • To demonstrate theoretical and structural irreverence, independent thought, critical thinking, a balance of imagination and rigour about theory, professional practice and approaches to reflexive practice inquiry. • To support the development and preparation of your Progression Point 2 submission. • To support and guide you in preparing your final thesis and for your viva voce. • To produce a thesis for doctoral examination.

Content	Undertaking an independent research project with supervisory support.
Assessment	Final examination by thesis submission and viva voce.

Section 4 - Administrative Information

This section will be used as part of the approval and review process and peer academics are the target audience.

Faculty	Health and Social Sciences
Department/School/Institute	Institute of Applied Social Research
Subject area	Systemic Practice
Programme Coordinator	Dr Gail Simon
Form completed by	Dr Gail Simon
Version Number	2
Authorisation on behalf of Faculty Academic Board	Professor Emily Munro
Approved by (cf Quality Handbook ch.2)	Quality Handbook, Ch 4
Date of approval (dd/mm/yyyy)	
Implementation start-date of this version (plus any identified end-date)	

Appendix 2

Progression Point 1 (full details)

To advance to the next stage of this programme, programme participants must pass Progression Point 1. To achieve this, you need to produce one or more pieces of writing which are likely to shape and contribute to your final thesis. This must cover *both* a theme central to your research topic *and* emergent approaches to your inquiry. You also need to submit a brief report on your research study plan and thesis development. Together, these writings will create a submission of up to 10,000 words.

So, for example, you might prepare one or more papers in which

- You write about an area of practice or practice theory which is of particular interest to your research. You critically and reflexively consider ethical issues, your professional and/or research practice, literature from systemic social constructionism, from professional theory, philosophy, research methodology, and other material from the arts or sciences.

- You critically and reflexively present and discuss material which connects with your research focus. This material might be found in professional, research and other academic texts, in literature, science and the arts. You might conduct a systematic review on research relevant to your subject.

- You might write a methodological paper in which you describe and critically and reflexively discuss

  o what counts as knowledge, knowing and know-how across different academic and philosophical contexts, and the choices you are making in systemic practice and systemic practice research;

  o the relationship between reflexive practice and models of inquiry;

  o your leanings towards your chosen or emerging approaches to your inquiry;

  o practical and ethical challenges you face in researching your own professional practice or that of others.

Feel free to develop your own ideas and discuss them with your supervisory team. Think about what moves you to write but also hold in mind the Assessment Criteria (below) with which your work will be assessed. Whether you write a single paper, two or more papers, these pieces of writing taken together need to adequately address all the criteria. It is not expected that each of the papers will meet all the criteria unless you write a single paper.

Writing from within or about reflexive practice means you need time to get lost in the process of reading-writing-reflecting. You are unlikely to generate creativity if you allow the

criteria to dominate your every thought. You will need to learn how to allow yourself periods of immersion and reading/writing from within the moment of reflection and periodically panning out and considering what else is needed for that particular piece of writing and to help the thesis on its way.

Remember to set a context for the reader so they understand why you have chosen the focus of the, how it sits within your imagining of your thesis and how it is influencing the process of inquiry at this stage.

Please refer to the timeline below for preparation and assessment procedures and timeframes.

PP1 Assessment Criteria

The submission should address both of the following two areas:

  I.   A theme central to your research topic

  II.   The emergent approaches to your inquiry

The submission should demonstrate:

1. Sufficient coherence between the research proposal and the content in this submission and is illustrated with examples from professional practice.

2. A substantial, critical knowledge and reflexive discussion which includes the following

    i)   onto-epistemological positioning of what counts as knowledge, evidence or relevant to the subject.

    ii)   literature relevant to the focus of their inquiry

    iii) systemic social constructionist theory relevant to the focus of their inquiry

    iv)   a possible methodological framework, and the limitations and advantages of approaches under consideration.

    v)   implications of the research design for different socio-economic, cultural contexts or areas of life experience, identity or professional practice.

3. Reflexive discussion and appreciation of ethical issues raised by the research study

i) spanning the entire lifespan of the research study from initial planning including connection to other work in the field, throughout creating or collecting material and reflection and sense-making, during preparation and presentation of the thesis, reports to stakeholders and wider publication or dissemination.

ii) clear descriptions of measures designed to mitigate ethical concerns and comply with professional and research governance requirements. This includes rich consideration of power relations, dual relationships, differences in lived experience, belonging and identity and how these matters play out in both the area of professional practice inquiry and research relationships.

4. The researcher writes in the first person and from within lived experience and practice relationships.

5. How literature and other material is being sourced with an account of the candidate's process of choosing what literature to include or exclude.

6. The research addresses real concerns for people and the communities in which they live, and show how the practices in the inquiry improve lives.

7. The research demonstrates some theoretical and structural irreverence, independent thought, originality, critical thinking, a balance of imagination and rigour.

8. That the candidate is developing a style of writing that works for them, for the reader and for the subject.

9. The research focus, questions and study plan should show promise in respect of fulfilling the assessment criteria for the anticipated award.

10. The submission should meet, or be close to meeting, the expectations of Level 7 (master's) awards. Furthermore, the written submission should show promise for achievement of Level 8 by the end of the normal registration period for the degree. (See Appendix 4 for Level Descriptors)

PP1 Documentation

The student will submit one or more pieces of writing for examination, not exceeding 10,000 words in total. Whilst developing the PP1 document, students and supervisors should refer to the assessment criteria provided in this handbook.

The PP1 document will include the following elements:

- Front cover showing the student's name and student number, the date of initial registration, the current degree registration (DProf), the intended final award (e.g.

DProf), mode of study (PT), the current working title of the thesis, the supervision team, the student's Research Institute and Faculty, and the word count for the main body of the document (excluding front page, table of contents, list of references and the appendix but including all other material including tables, figures, citations and quotations).

- Table of contents with page numbers.

- Statement of the current research question(s) and brief overview of the research.

- One or more well-developed sections from the thesis responding to the assessment criteria.

- Short statement listing other planned sections and developments within these pieces of writing.

- Timeline, table of activities or Gantt chart that demonstrates planned completion of the degree within the normal period of registration.[1]

- Appendix containing a list of training or researcher development activities undertaken to date and a list of those planned for the remainder of the research degree registration.

- List of references in a standard bibliographic format, appropriate to the discipline.

If a student chooses to submit additional material in additional appendices s/he cannot assume the examiners will read this material unless explicitly directed to it as part of the main body. The assessment criteria must be met within the main body of the PP1 document.

Annual Monitoring

In the academic year in which PP1 is undertaken, the student and supervisors will not be required to submit an annual monitoring form, although they may do so if they wish.

Draft Progression Point Submission and Feedback from Supervisors

Supervisors ideally need to see a complete draft to be able to give the student appropriate feedback. You will send your supervisors a draft submission by email by the deadline in this handbook.

Supervisors will address you directly when offering feedback with clear, honest and supportive suggestions with brief illustrations for how you can build on your existing strengths and how you can improve weaker areas.

It is important that you understand how you are/are not achieving Level 7 standards and how you can work towards level 7/8 standards (Appendix 4). The feedback will be helpful in planning for your learning needs and in preparing future work.

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[1] See Regulations for Research Degrees for normal period of registration

PP1 Examiners

- There will be two PP1 examiners, at least one of whom will have supervised a research degree of the type under assessment to a successful completion.

- There should be at least one examiner from a systemic practice background. Where a student is also a member of staff, one of the examiners needs to be from a different research institute.

- There should be related subject and methodological expertise or interest across the examination team.

- It is important examiners are sympathetic to post-positivist, first person practitioner qualitative research to avoid methodological dissonance.

- Examiners will familiarise themselves with the Assessment Criteria for PP2, the relevant Programme Handbook for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice to inform their understanding of systemic social constructionist practitioner research, emergent methodology, structural design choices in qualitative inquiry, reflexive research methodologies and practitioner research writing styles.

- People who have had significant input to the development of the research degree study cannot examine the PP1 (e.g. current or former supervisors, specialist advisors, study commissioners).

- A PP1 examiner will normally be invited to examine the subsequent PP2 summative assessment but must not examine the final thesis.

The Process for Appointing PDSP Progression Point 1 Examiners

Supervisory teams propose examiners for a student to the Programme Leader before approaching potential examiners so there is an overview of which colleagues are being asked to examine. Supervisors may approach the Programme Leader for suggestions of suitable and available systemic and non-systemic examiners. The Director of Studies writes to potential examiners to ask if they agree to examine. Once agreed, the Director of Studies forwards their names to the Research Graduate School who will then send the relevant PDSP Programme Handbook and outline the process to them.

The Examination Process: Submission, Assessment and Feedback

Submission

You will email your submission to both examiners in advance of the final submission deadline. Please remember to copy in your supervisors, the Programme Leader and Research Graduate School.

One of the examiners will upload your submission to TurnItIn and includes the result in their report. Do not submit your own writings to TurnItIn.

The Progression Point 1 submission is examined through reading, viewing etc. the material provided in the submission. There is no viva voce.

Each examiner completes their own report using the template provided by the Research Graduate School and sends their report directly to the Research Graduate School by the deadline. The examiners do not confer unless invited to by the RGS.

If the examiners are in agreement about the outcome of the examination, the Research Graduate School will send out both sets of feedback to the student and their supervisors. If the examiners are not in agreement, the Research Graduate School will send each of the examiners the other examiner's report inviting them to liaise with each other to see if they can come to an agreement about the outcome. If the examiners cannot agree, examiners will advise the RGS who will arrange for Director of the Institute of Applied Social Research to make the final decision.

The same process is repeated for re-submissions.

Once the examination process commences, there is no contact between the examiners and supervisors or student about the submission until the process has been completed.

Completion of the Examination Report

Examiners will refer to the PP1 criteria for assessment for guidance and possible outcomes.

It is important that the students understand from examiners' feedback on the final submission how they are or are not achieving Level 7 standards and how they can work towards level 7/8 standards (Appendix 5). This feedback will be helpful in planning for the student's learning needs and in preparing their Progression Point 2 submission which is 29 months from registration. It is particularly important to adhere to this time limit when the candidate has failed the first or second assessment, since urgent action must follow.

Students make better progress when they are offered feedback which offers clear, honest and supportive suggestions perhaps with brief illustrations for how they can build on their existing strengths and how they can improve weaker areas. Please address the student directly when writing your feedback. This will reflect the ethos of the programme which encourages students to write dialogically and hold the reader in mind.

PP1 Timeline

For specific dates, please use the deadlines calculator on RGS Community pages on BREO.

Months 11-12

- RGS alerts student and supervisors to need to initiate PP1 process.

- During supervision, the student and supervisor(s) discuss PP1 requirements and any related supervision plans and deadlines.

- The supervision team identifies, approaches and secures two PP1 internal examiners (see subsequent section on criteria for examiners).

- The supervision team notifies the student, the Programme Coordinator, Head of Research Institute and the Research Graduate School of the names of the PP1 examiners.

Months 15-16

- Student submits identical pdf and Word copies of the PP1 document by email to the two examiners for assessment and, for information and safekeeping, to the supervision team and the Research Graduate School. Examiners are advised to examine the pdf copy, which preserves the formatting the student intends to be present. The Word document with identical content to the pdf copy may prove useful for ease of annotation, if an examiner wishes to provide feedback in this way; or the Word version may be used to investigate any concerns about academic integrity.

- Recipients acknowledge receipt.

- Student alerts supervisor to any potential non-receipt.

- Student must not engage in any further correspondence with the examiners.

- Supervisors and examiners should not discuss the PP1 assessment before assessment is complete.

- Student, supported by supervision team, should continue to work on research study so that momentum is not lost during the PP1 assessment process.

Months 17-18

- Assessment by examiners (see subsequent sections on assessment outcomes, feedback and reporting requirements).

- If the student passes PP1, the process ends and the student meets the academic criteria for progression to the next stage of the research degree programme.

- Otherwise, at the end of the PP1 assessment feedback, the examiners agree dates for resubmission and reassessment that fall within the continuing timeline.

- Examiners' report circulated within two working days.

If necessary, the following additional stages will apply:

Months 19-20

- Student revises and resubmits PP1 document, responding to feedback following 1st assessment and following the procedure for initial submission described during Months 15-16 in the instructions above.

- Student also submits a statement outlining the revisions to the PP1 document in relation to meeting the requirements set by examiners at the 1st examination.

- Student, supported by supervision team, should continue to work on research study so that momentum is not lost during the PP1 assessment process.

Months 21-22

- If the student passes PP1, the process ends and the student meets the academic criteria for progression to the next stage of the research degree programme.

- If the resubmission is unsuccessful, a recommendation will be made to RDC to terminate the student's research degree registration; due to lack of academic progress (RGS will do this). The student will have recourse to the appeals process.

- Examiners' report circulated within two working days.

If a student does not submit a PP1 document for examination by the end of Month 16 the first opportunity for PP1 assessment is forfeited. The student may submit a PP1 document for examination before the end of Month 20 which will be treated as a resubmission.

The timeline for the PP1 process will be paused if the process has to be stopped to allow an investigation into possible research misconduct.

PP1 Assessment Outcomes

PP1 first examination outcomes:

- o Pass

- o Pass with suggestions for improvements for the attention of the student and supervision team, but no further assessment at PP1

- o Resubmit by (date) ……………..

PP1 second examination outcomes:

- o Pass

- o Pass with suggestions for improvements for the attention of the student and supervision team, but no further assessment at PP1

- o Fail, recommend to RDC termination of the student's registration

Appendix 3

Progression Point 2 (full details)

To advance to the Research and Thesis Development part, programme participants must pass Progression Point 2. To achieve this, you will produce a collection of writings which you intend to form part of your final thesis and a report on the progress of your research.

We recommend you submit a few pieces of writing to give you the opportunity to create some flexibility in what you choose to submit and to write in 'chapter-sized' sections. The submission may include previously submitted writings which you will have developed further.

In preparing these pieces of writing, you will need to be entertaining ideas about structure. Perhaps you want to use the familiar structure of a thesis: methodology chapter, literature review, reports of findings, discussion and so on. Perhaps you are developing other ideas about the juxtaposition of materials for your thesis. Whatever your thesis design, writing an introduction and even imagining a concluding chapter is likely to be very helpful in developing your abilities to set a clear context and describe clearly what you are interested in to imagined readers.

These pieces of writing, taken together, need to adequately address all of the assessment criteria.

You will produce a brief report demonstrating how this collection of works meets the criteria and indicating how you plan to develop and complete the thesis within a stated timeframe.

The submission will be made up of a collection of writings of between 20,000 - 25,000 words in total including the report.

This must be submitted by 29 months from registration. It may be submitted earlier with the written agreement of both members of your supervisory team.

The PP2 submission is assessed by two examined independent of the supervisory team. Usually the examiners will be the same as those at PP1. Assessment is on the basis of the written submission, a short seminar presentation, and a viva voce (oral examination).

Please refer to the timeline below for preparation and assessment procedures and timeframes.

PP2 Assessment Criteria

The submission should introduce substantial new material and the development of writings submitted as part of Progression Point 1 paying particular attention to methodology and the research topic.

The submission should demonstrate:
1. Sufficient coherence between the research proposal and the content in this submission and is illustrated with examples from professional practice.

2. A substantial, critical knowledge and reflexive discussion of

   i) onto-epistemological positioning of what counts as knowledge, evidence or relevant to the subject.

   ii) literature relevant to the focus of their inquiry

   iii) systemic social constructionist theory relevant to the focus of their inquiry

   iv) the methodological framework, the strengths and limitations of the means of capturing or creating research material *and* of the means of analysing or reflecting on the material *and* its potential consequences for the researcher and others.

   v) implications of the research design for different socio-economic, cultural contexts or areas of life experience, identity or professional practice.

3. Reflexive discussion and appreciation of ethical issues raised by the research study

   i) spanning the entire lifespan of the research study from initial planning including connection to other work in the field, throughout creating or collecting material and reflection and sense-making, during preparation and presentation of the thesis, reports to stakeholders and wider publication or dissemination.

   ii) clear descriptions of measures designed to mitigate ethical concerns and comply with professional and research governance requirements. This includes rich consideration of power relations, dual relationships, differences in lived experience, belonging and identity and how these matters play out in both the area of professional practice inquiry and research relationships.

4. Researchers speak in the first person and from within lived experience and practice relationships.

5. Originality in the inquiry and situating it in relevant and comparative national and international professional practice, literature, and research material.

6. Examples of useful and innovative elaborations of theory for systemic practice and systemic practice research. Indications of how the research makes a substantive contribution to the field of systemic practice and systemic inquiry, to members of the public, other professionals, communities or organisations.

7. Sophisticated examples of self and relational reflexivity. Honest, transparent and reflexive accounting about the selection of material and the candidate's own interpretation or use of the material. Transformation in the researcher's thinking and practice. The reader is offered detail about the presence of the researcher including inner and outer dialogue, thoughts in progress, noticings, feelings, the concrete and the transient.

8. Critical and reflexive appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of being a practitioner-researcher.

9. Real concerns for people and the communities in which they live, and show how the practices in the inquiry improve lives.

10. Theoretical and structural irreverence, independent thought, critical thinking, a balance of imagination and rigour.

11. Aesthetic merit. The candidate is integrating the literature well in their chosen format. That the candidate is using a style of writing that works for them, for the reader and for the subject.

12. Confirmation[2] that research ethics screening was completed before any data collection occurred and if Research Ethics Committee (REC) approval was required, confirmation that this was obtained from the appropriate REC(s) before any data collection occurred**.**

13. Plans and the timeline for completing the research study and a satisfactory thesis should be viable within resource constraints.

14. The PP2 submission should meet the expectations of Level 7 (master's) awards and show promise for achievement of Level 8 (doctorate) by the end of the planned registration period. NB: At this stage it is common for students' work to be uneven; some aspects may require substantial development, while other aspects already achieve Level 8. Examiners will have to form their academic judgement on the balance of probabilities in the context of achievement to date and the time remaining for completion of the degree. (See Appendix 4 for Level Descriptors)

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[2] Students are advised to include evidence of ethics committee screening and/or approval in an appendix where applicable.

PP2 Documentation

The student will submit a collection of written pieces for examination, not exceeding 25,000 words. The submission will contain material that will contribute to the final thesis. This may be accompanied by other media which is directly discussed in the written submission. Whilst developing the PP2 document, students and supervisors should refer to the assessment criteria.

The PP2 document will include the following elements:

- Front cover showing the student's name and student number, the date of initial registration, the current degree registration (e.g. DProf), the intended final award (e.g. DProf), mode of study (PT), the current working title of the thesis, the supervision team, the student's Research Institute and Faculty, and the word count for the main body of the document (excluding front page, table of contents, list of references and the appendix but including all other material including tables, figures, citations and quotations).

- Table of contents with page numbers.

- Statement of the current research question(s) and brief overview of the research.

- Brief rationale for undertaking this research study (1 – 2 pages).

- Succinct statement of the anticipated contribution(s) to knowledge to be made by the thesis (1 – 2 pages).

- An overview of the PP2 submission papers (1 – 2 pages).

- Several well-developed sections from the thesis responding to the assessment criteria.

- Summary of material generated to date, plans for ending or limiting the generation of materials, description of preliminary reflection or analyses undertaken, description of emergent practices and theories and/or preliminary findings.

- Plans for subsequent understanding and presentation of research materials with rationale.

- Succinct description of the research study plan and thesis development including list of planned sections and developments within these pieces of writing. (Up to 2000 words).

- Timeline, table of activities or Gantt chart that distinguishes between completed activities and planned activities. If the study timeline to submission of the thesis extends beyond a total of 60 months, justification is required.

- List of references in a standard bibliographic format, appropriate to the discipline.

- Appendix containing a list of training or researcher development activities undertaken to date and a list of those planned for the remainder of the research degree registration.

- Appendix of evidence of ethics committee screening and/or approval from all relevant bodies.

If a student chooses to submit additional material in additional appendices s/he cannot assume the examiners will read this material unless explicitly directed to it as part of the main body. The assessment criteria must be met within the main body of the PP2 document.

Annual Monitoring

In the academic year in which PP2 is undertaken, the student and supervisors will not be required to submit an annual monitoring form, although they may do so if they wish.

Draft Progression Point Submission and Feedback from Supervisors

Supervisors ideally need to see a complete draft to be able to give the student appropriate feedback. You will send your supervisors a draft submission by email by the deadline in this handbook.

Supervisors will address you directly when offering feedback with clear, honest and supportive suggestions with brief illustrations for how you can build on your existing strengths and how you can improve weaker areas.

It is important that you understand how you are/are not achieving Level 7 standards and how you can work towards level 7/8 standards (Appendix 4). The feedback will be helpful in planning for your learning needs and in preparing future work.

PP2 Examiners

- There will be two PP2 examiners, at least one of whom will have supervised a research degree of the type under assessment to a successful completion.

- There should be at least one examiner from a systemic practice background. Where a student is also a member of staff, one of the examiners needs to be from a different research institute.

- There should be related subject and methodological expertise or interest across the examination team.

- It is important examiners are sympathetic to post-positivist, first person practitioner qualitative research to avoid methodological dissonance.

- Examiners will familiarise themselves with the Assessment Criteria for PP2, the relevant Programme Handbook for the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice to inform their understanding of systemic social constructionist practitioner research, emergent

methodology, structural design choices in qualitative inquiry, reflexive research methodologies and practitioner research writing styles.

- People who have had significant input to the development of the research degree study cannot examine the PP2 (e.g. current or former supervisors, specialist advisors, study commissioners).

- A PP1 examiner will normally be invited to examine the subsequent PP2 summative assessment but must not examine the final thesis.

The Process for Appointing PDSP Progression Point 2 Examiners

Normally, the Director of Studies writes to PP1 examiners to ask if they will continue as PP2 examiners. Once the examiners have agreed, the Director of Studies confirms their availability to the Research Graduate School who will then send the relevant PDSP Programme Handbook and outline the process to them.

The Examination Process: Submission, Assessment and Feedback

Submission

You will email your submission to both examiners in advance of the final submission deadline. Please remember to copy in your supervisors, the Programme Leader and Research Graduate School.

One of the examiners will upload your submission to TurnItIn and includes the result in their report. Do not submit your own writings to TurnItIn.

The Progression Point 2 submission is examined through material in the PP2 submission, a short seminar presentation, and a viva voce (oral examination).

Each examiner completes their own report using the template provided by the Research Graduate School and sends their report directly to the Research Graduate School by the deadline. The examiners do not confer unless invited to by the RGS.

If the examiners are in agreement about the outcome of the examination, the Research Graduate School will send out both sets of feedback to the student and their supervisors. If the examiners are not in agreement, the Research Graduate School will send each of the examiners the other examiner's report inviting them to liaise with each other to see if they can come to an agreement about the outcome. If the examiners cannot agree, examiners will advise the RGS who will arrange for Director of the Institute of Applied Social Research to make the final decision. The same process is repeated for re-submissions.

Once the examination process commences, there is no contact between the examiners and supervisors or student about the submission until the process has been completed.

Completion of the Examination Report

Examiners will refer to the PP2 criteria for assessment for guidance and possible outcomes.

It is important that the students understand from examiners' feedback on the final submission how they are or are not achieving Level 7/8 standards and how they can work towards level 8 standards (Appendix 5). This feedback will be helpful in planning for the student's learning needs and in preparing their final submission.

Students make better progress when they are offered feedback which offers clear, honest and supportive suggestions perhaps with brief illustrations for how they can build on their existing strengths and how they can improve weaker areas. Please address the student directly when writing your feedback. This will reflect the ethos of the programme which encourages students to write dialogically and hold the reader in mind.

PP2 Timeline

For specific dates, please use the deadlines calculator on RGS Community pages on BREO.

The timeline for students registered on the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice starts at 24 months from registration. (It may be submitted earlier with the explicit agreement of both members of your supervisory team). RGS will adjust the timeline for students whose progression to the next stage was delayed or accelerated for reasons approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

Months 24-25

- RGS alerts student and supervisors to need to initiate PP2 process.

- During supervision, the student and supervisor(s) discuss PP2 requirements and any related supervision plans and deadlines.

- Normally the PP1 examiners will also examine PP2. The supervision team checks the continued availability and eligibility of the PP1 examiners (see subsequent section on criteria for examiners). If one or more of the PP1 examination team has to withdraw from the PP2 examination, the supervision team approaches and secures the required number of replacement examiners.

- The supervision team notifies the student, the Programme Coordinator, Head of Research Institute and the Research Graduate School (rgsoffice@beds.ac.uk) of the names of the PP2 examiners.

Month 29

- Student submits identical pdf and Word copies of the PP2 document by email to the two examiners for assessment and, for information and safekeeping, to the supervision team and rgsoffice@beds.ac.uk   Examiners are advised to examine the pdf copy, which preserves the formatting the student intends to be present. The Word document with

identical content to the pdf copy may prove useful for ease of annotation, if an examiner wishes to provide feedback in this way; or the Word version may be used to investigate any concerns about academic integrity.

- Recipients acknowledge receipt.

- Student alerts supervisor to any potential non-receipt.

- Student must not engage in any further correspondence with the examiners.

- Supervisors and examiners should not discuss the PP2 assessment before assessment is complete.

- Student, supported by supervision team, should continue to work on research study so that momentum is not lost during the PP2 assessment process.

Month 30

- Assessment by examiners (see subsequent sections on examination format, assessment outcomes, feedback and reporting requirements).

- If the student passes PP2, the process ends and the student meets the academic criteria for progression to final stage of the research degree programme.

- Otherwise, at the end of the PP2 assessment feedback, the examiners agree dates for resubmission and reassessment that fall within the continuing timeline.

- Examiners' report circulated within two working days.

If necessary, the following additional stages will apply:

Months 31-34

- Student revises and resubmits PP2 document, responding to feedback following 1st assessment and following the procedure for initial submission described at Month 29 in the instructions above.

- Student also submits a statement outlining the revisions to the PP2 document in relation to meeting the requirements set by examiners at the 1st examination.

- Student, supported by supervision team, should continue to work on research study so that momentum is not lost during the PP2 assessment process.

Months 35

- If the student passes PP2, the process ends and the student meets the academic criteria for progression to the final stage of the research degree programme.

- If the resubmission is unsuccessful the examiners must recommend whether:

  o the student be permitted to transfer to the MPhil programme, or

  o the student's research degree registration should be terminated due to lack of academic progress

- Examiners' report circulated within two working days.

If the resubmission is unsuccessful, an Academic Progress Panel (APP) will be convened to consider the PP2 examiners' recommendation, alongside the supervision records from this stage and any mitigating circumstances. The APP will make a recommendation to Research Degrees Committee and report the examiners' recommendation.

If RDC approves the examiners' recommendation not to permit the student to progress to the final stage of the doctoral programme, the student will have recourse to the appeals process. NB the appeals process does not permit appeals against academic judgements.

If a student does not submit a PP2 document for examination by the end of Month 29 the first opportunity for PP2 assessment is forfeited. The student may submit a PP2 document for examination before the end of Month 34, which will be treated as a resubmission.

The timeline for the PP2 process will be paused if the process has to be stopped to allow an investigation into possible research misconduct.

PP2 Assessment Outcomes

PP2 1st examination outcomes (three possibilities):
- o   Pass

- o   Pass with suggestions for improvements for the attention of the student and supervision team, but no further assessment at PP2

- o   Resubmit by (date) ……………..

PP2 2nd examination outcomes (four possibilities):
- o   Pass

- o   Pass with suggestions for improvements for the attention of the student and supervision team, but no further assessment at PP2

- o   Fail, recommend to RDC that the student is not permitted to enter the final stage of the PhD programme, but is permitted to transfer to the MPhil programme.

- o   Fail, recommend to RDC termination of the student's registration

Appendix 4

Doctoral and Research Master's qualification descriptors

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: master's degree (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Source: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QAA, August 2014)

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
    - o to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
    - o to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral degree

Source: *Doctoral Degree Characteristics* (QAA, September 2014)

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 8 qualifications.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches

and will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.

Holders of doctoral degrees will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees will have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

Appendix 5

Course Reading

Core Texts

- Denzin, Norman K., and Lincoln, Yvonna S., (1994, 2000, 2005, 2011, 2017) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Sage.

- Etherington, Kim (2004). *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Our Selves in Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

- Evaristo, Bernadine (2019). Girl, Woman, Other. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

- Gyasi, Yaa (2017). Home Going. London: Penguin.

- Haraway, Donna J. (2016). Staying with the trouble. Making kin in the Chthulucene. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Madison, D. Soyini (2012) Critical Ethnography. Methods, Ethics, and Performance. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

- McKitterick, Katherine (Ed.) (2015). Sylvia Wynter. On being human as praxis. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- McNamee, Sheila & Hosking, Dian Marie (2012) *Research and social change. A relational constructionist approach.* London: Routledge.

- Nash, Jennifer (2019). Black feminism reimagined after intersectionality. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Shotter, John (2011). *Getting It: With-ness Thinking and the Dialogical…. In Practice.* The Hampton Press Communication Series.

- Simon, Gail & Chard, Alex (Eds.) (2014). *Systemic Inquiry: Innovations in Reflexive Practice Research.* Farnhill: Everything is Connected Press.

- Wynter, Sylvia (1994). "No humans involved". An open letter to my colleagues" . Knowledge on Trial, 1, 1, 42-73.

Recommended programme reading

See www.breo.beds.ac.uk for lists of recommended reading and seminar reading lists which change slightly each year.

Appendix 5

Online Seminar and Webinar Programme 2021/22

Research Consultation Days

Research Consultations for each cohort take place on four days in each of the first two years.

Reading Seminars

There are two types of reading seminar each year:

1. Systemic Theory (all cohorts)
2. New Materialism, Black, Indigenous and Queer Studies (two parallel groups)

Webinars

There are six webinar series each year. Normally they take place in the first year but you are welcome to join in at any stage.

1. PDSP Basics (course structure, progression points, research proposals, research ethics x 2, library)
2. Strengthening Academic Skills (analysing research reports, critical thinking and reading, writing at doctoral level, referencing).
3. Practitioner Research Methods (systemic inquiry, ethnography, arts based research, writing as a method of inquiry, action research, reflexive inquiry, discourse analysis, SPSS)
4. The Philosophy of Knowledge, Knowing and Know-how (ontology & epistemology, social construction, coordinated management of meaning, culturally situated knowledge, colonialism, transmaterial worlding)
5. Living Values (power relations, prejudice, culturally situated knowledge practice)
6. Relational Aesthetics. Tutors on their own life research interests.

Check the PDSPCAL and Slack regularly for workshops, conferences and writing retreats:
PDSPCAL: bit.ly/3a0lVRv Slack: pdspbeds.slack.com

You need to book your place for all PDSP conferences and workshops at
https://pdsp.eventbrite.co.uk