

You can easily think you know stuff, you know 'oh I know how to do that' or 'I know how to edit my thesis' or 'I know how to create a web profile' and the quality of some of those courses was really good, and I can do those things much better as a result of doing those courses. They're available to you free, whilst you are at the University and a lot of people just don't seem to tune into them at the beginning very well. You should tune in every year that you're here and do a few of them because some of them are amazing about what you learn.

Focus on your academic studies but also focus on all the supporting skills that you may need. You may need to present at conferences, practice in advance, not two days in advance of when you are going to do a presentation.

I would advise them to start exploring all the facilities and the workshops at the University of Sussex and also the social activities as this would help them to engage and learn new skills. Also to keep an open mind and learn as much as they can.

I think as a new PhD student, often we think, ok, it's about writing thesis, I think it's much, much more than just about writing a book. I think a PhD is more about, it's a comprehensive journey/experience and it's a great opportunity to train yourself with skills beyond research and those are the skills like organisational skills or leadership skills that I think is very important and very integral to an academic life. So I would strongly encourage new researchers to actively engage in organising seminars or workshops and taking part in conferences, trying to help and organise conferences, which I think is a very, very important skill to have and it's very important for life beyond the PhD.

Unsurprisingly I would suggest that you make really good use of the training programme because there are lots of opportunities that will help you make good progress in your doctorate and also you'll get to meet lots of other researchers who are in the same position as you.