

## **Introduction** 0:00-0:54

[Stephanie Barker] Hi, Elena.

[Elena Artamonova] Hi.

[Stephanie Barker] Thanks for taking the time to have a chat with us today. How are you doing?

[Elena Artamonova] I'm okay, thank you. How are you?

[Stephanie Barker] I'm not too bad. Thanks. I've got a few questions for you. Are you happy for me to launch in and start asking?

[Elena Artamonova] Absolutely.

[Stephanie Barker] Fantastic. So, we both know each other but introduce yourself and just tell us where you're up to in your research journey so far.

[Elena Artamonova] Of course, so my name is Elena. Hi! I'm a PhD student. My department is Psychology and currently I'm in my final year with five months left before my submission date.

Exciting!

## **Advice for a new PGR** 0:54-1:48

[Stephanie Barker] So, looking back to when you first started, considering you're right near the end. What would your advice be for a new research student just getting started?

[Elena Artamonova] Looking back to when I first started, I would highly recommend to contact your supervisory team in advance because you want to build a relationship with them. You want to get to know them, you want to understand what they want from you, and you want to understand what you want from them as well. I would also recommend

asking them regarding any opportunities they might give you, for example, outside of your project specifically. So, let's say like teaching or marking papers, or maybe being a research assistant for them, maybe even creating a website and Twitter and participating in lab activities, things like that I would highly, highly recommend you to do it.

## **Getting started** 1:48-4:33

[Stephanie Barker] That's an awful lot to be getting involved in. What was the sort of first thing that you wanted to do when you were first getting started?

[Elena Artamonova] I always wanted to teach, so I always wanted to be a lecturer. So, I kind of hoped I would be able to teach while doing my PhD. So, I would suggest personally that first and second year is the best years for you to get involved in that because you have a lot more spare time. Yes, you're doing your research, you're collecting your data if you need to, or you're doing your literature review, etc. But get involved in as much teaching as possible. It's an absolute life experience and it gives you so much confidence for your future conferences, if you want to participate in one. It gives you loads of freedom; you learn how to speak in public, you learn how to communicate with the younger generation and most importantly, you present your project as well. So, you can implement your ideas into the lectures which I found really interesting.

[Stephanie Barker] So, that's one of the first things to get involved in from a development point of view, but I know one of the first things that a lot of students have on their minds is that first supervisory meeting, because that's where you'll establish your working relationship with the supervisors.

[Stephanie Barker] How did you prepare for your first supervisory meeting?

[Elena Artamonova] I was terrified, I'll be honest with you, because I just finished my Masters and it was really scary getting into a PhD, but for my first supervisory meeting, I

prepared firstly, by Googling my supervisors. I know it sounds silly, but you got to know who they are and reading all of their papers that are related to my subject, because obviously the supervisors won't accept you on their team unless in some sort your subject is related to theirs. So, I was reading their papers, I was looking at how they structure them. I was looking at what literature they use, so what is for them was the main theory behind their research, things like that and then for the first meeting we've ever had, I went in discussing their papers and they really, really like that because they knew I was prepared, and I was serious about what I wanted to do. So, that's very, very important. You basically need to be like a literature review expert on your supervisor, if that makes sense.

[Stephanie Barker] It does and that's really good advice because it does establish that relationship that you care about their research as much as you're expecting them to now care about yours and work together on that. So, I think that's a really good idea to make sure that you know lots about them and how they work and what they're interested in.

### **Potential opportunities and activities to get involved in** 4:33-8:28

[Stephanie Barker] The other thing is, we talked a little bit about this already, but what are some of the development activities that you've been involved in since you started, and how have they helped you with your research?

[Elena Artamonova] In the past two and a half years that I've been at MMU, I've been involved in variety of activities and all thanks to the postgraduate office. I would highly recommend to firstly get involved in organising a conference for Manchester Met because it is really scary. It is time consuming, and it takes a lot of work, but it gives you an edge over other competitors if you ever want to apply for a job either in academia or outside of academia, it makes you stand out, it makes your CV stand out. I would also suggest to get involved in the [Three Minute Thesis Competition](#). I've been involved twice, so, I did it in my first year, I didn't do as well as I did in my second year, but it was only because I was new, and I didn't know what I was doing, but it is really scary, because you have to summarise

your research in three minutes or less and it's 80,000 words. How are you going to do that? It's very scary and it has to be for a non-specialised audience as well. So, people from a variety of fields have to understand what you're saying, but funnily enough, the experience from the [Three Minute Thesis Competition](#), I managed to get a place at the young researchers' conference, which will be held on 24th of September, because it's the first of its kind and it's held by a University in Israel, but because I did the [Three Minute Thesis Competition](#) and I managed to explain to them my research as a non-specialised audience, they were really impressed with that. So, it is a very, very valuable experience for your future career or for any conferences really. The last thing I wish I've ever done in the University was to get involved in [Images of Research](#), I think it's called because I never got a chance to do it, but I really, really wish I did, because it is a very powerful competition. Being able to take a photo of your research without words is something very, very special and I think if you have time to do it, definitely do that.

[Stephanie Barker] And then lastly, what are your favourite things about studying at Manchester Met?

[Elena Artamonova] Oh wow. It's a tough question, but my favourite thing about the actual University is the fact that they give you all the necessary tools to succeed during your studies and after. The employment rating from Manchester Metropolitan University is very, very high and not every university in the UK can say that. I've been in the academic world for a while. I've completed two undergraduate degrees, two Masters, and it's all done in different universities. So, I know a little bit about what it's like being in university, and I must say MMU has been the best in terms of supporting me and giving me opportunities to progress in my academic career. It started from the teaching experiences I managed to get in my department and to all the conferences that I did. I'm really thankful for that. So, that's to do with the actual University and then what my favourite thing is probably the amount of digital support that you get, for example, [the Library](#) is fantastic online and in person. So, it is absolutely brilliant, all the facilities that you get all the support. So, if you need, for example, to borrow a laptop, you can just go and do that if your laptop broke down, which

happens, it happens to all of us. So, it's absolutely fantastic in terms of just the support that they give you.

**Closing thoughts** 8:28-9:05

[Stephanie Barker] And then lastly, anything you want to say to the new students before they get started?

[Elena Artamonova] I want to say good luck. It's very tough doing your PhD or doing your MPhil or Masters by Research or any Masters degree, but if you get through it, you can get through absolutely anything. So massive, well done on getting in, and good luck.

[Stephanie Barker] Thanks so much, Elena and we'll see you soon and good luck with your writing up of your thesis.

[Elena Artamonova] That's amazing. Thank you so much.