**Introduction**
Research Compass is the online system used to support research students at Stirling and is a one-stop web-based system providing a framework of support, formal and informal progress monitoring and an interactive skills development and skills training system for our research postgraduate community.

**Accessing Research Compass**
To access Research Compass, log in to the portal. Click on the “Administrative Links” tab, then click “Research Compass” and you will be taken in to the system:

![Administrative Links](image)

**Push Poll Question**
From time to time you will be required to answer a push poll question before proceeding. Questions will be short with a single click response required - along the lines of that displayed below:

![Feedback](image)

Please click ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to answer the question. Once you have answered you will proceed to your Research Compass.

**‘Help’ and exiting Research Compass**
At the top of the page on the left hand side underneath the Research Compass logo, there is a ‘home’ and a ‘contextual help’ button:

![Research Compass](image)

These buttons will remain at the top of the page regardless of which tab you are in. If you wish to exit Research Compass and go back to the portal, click the ‘home’ button then click ‘yes’:

If you click the ‘contextual help’ button, this will give you guidance relevant to the tab you are in, for example:
Home tab

News Items
The first thing you will see on the home tab is news items. These will typically be University and/or research student specific items. Use the arrows to scroll up and down through the news items. If you would like further information, click on “read details”:

You will then be taken to the relevant article:

The other features in the home tab are ‘how to’, ‘contact’ and ‘feedback’. Each of these is covered in more detail below.

How to
The ‘How to’ section allows you to search and find help/advice on a topic you need further information on. Click the dropdown arrow on the ‘how to’ box and scroll down until you find the relevant topic. Alternatively, you can start typing the information you are looking for in the “select a category” box as shown below:

The system will automatically suggest a category based on what you have entered. Click on the category you’re looking for and information on the topic will be provided, as shown below:
Contact
Similar to the ‘how to’ feature, the ‘contact’ section will find the contact details for any area in the University you wish to make contact with. Click the dropdown arrow on the ‘contact’ box and scroll down until you find the relevant area. Alternatively, you can start typing the information you are looking for in the “select a contact” box as shown below:

The system will automatically suggest a category based on what you have entered. Click on the area you’re looking for and its contact details will be provided, as shown below:

Feedback
The feedback feature allows you to leave your comments on Research Compass. Simply enter your comments in the text box and click ‘Submit Feedback’ as shown below:

Meeting tab
The meetings tab allows you to record meetings with your supervisor and search for information relating to previous meetings.

1.  Record
2.  Search

Traffic lights show confirmed, unconfirmed and disputed meetings:

Green- confirmed by supervisor
Amber- Unconfirmed by supervisor
Red- Disputed by supervisor
Record a formal meeting

To record a meeting, click ‘record meeting’ and enter details of the meeting as shown below:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student: 22222222222222</th>
<th>Project progress:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting With: 22222222222222</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Date: 24 July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Type: face to face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Notes: At this meeting we reviewed my work to date. I will write the next chapter before my next meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

You also have the option to add any tasks you or your supervisor agreed to complete. An example is shown below:

```
Add Task:

Who: 22222222222222
When: 1 September 2014
What: Write chapter 4
```

Once you have finished entering your meeting details, click ‘record meeting’. This will appear in your list of meetings:

```
24th Jul 2014 (?)
```

This will remain amber with a question mark until confirmed by your supervisor.

Keyword search of recorded meetings

The search function allows you to quickly pick out information relating to a particular meeting by searching using a keyword.

When the search finds a result, the relevant meeting(s) is highlighted. You can then click in to the meeting and view the information you searched for.

Skills analysis tab

The skills analysis questionnaire is based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and lists the attributes of a well-rounded researcher. When you click in to each skill, you will be asked questions about your level of experience, evidence of that experience level and how you might try to improve your skills in that area.
Use the slider to indicate your level of experience, answer the questions and save your answer:

![Teaching slider example](image)

You can come back and answer the skills analysis questions at any time. Once your skills analysis is complete, click submit skills analysis\(^*\). This will unlock the Skills Matrix and Skills Development tabs as shown below:

![Skills Matrix and Skills Development tabs](image)

**Skills development tab**
The skills development tab allows you to record information on developing each of your skills. This interlinks with the skills matrix tab.

For each skill you will be able to add a development task (record the skill you wish to develop and a timescale for this) and register for any relevant training courses which are running.

To add a development task, click in to one of the skills and fill in the information. Once finished, click “add development task”. An example is shown below:

![Development task example](image)

Once you have recorded the development task, you will be able to mark this as completed, or delete it as shown below:
If a training course is available, you will be able to click “add training course” *(if none are available, this option will be greyed out)*. After you have clicked this, details of the course will appear. If you would like to sign up for this course, click “register”. An example is shown below:

Once you have registered, this will be recorded (shown below). If you no longer wish to take part in the course, click “withdraw from course”.

To see at a glance a summary of your skills development, click “view report” at the top of the list of skills.

**Skills matrix tab**

The skills matrix is a graphical representation of your current and developed skills which is driven by the content of the skills development tab. If you hover your cursor over a particular skill, your current and developed skillset scores for that skill will display:

If you would like to find out what each skill involves, double click on any skill to see an explanation as shown below:
If you click “improve skills”, you will be taken directly to the skills development tab where you can complete information on developing your skills:

When you update information in your skills development tab, your skills matrix will reflect changes to your skills levels.

**Calendar**

Tasks recorded in supervisory meetings, any training you have taken or are due to take and institutional milestones are displayed in the calendar. You will be able to see this in day, week or month view. An example is shown below:

If you click on a task or training course, you will be taken to the section where you originally recorded the information, for example the relevant meeting:
**Ongoing tab**
The ongoing tab helps you to manage your workload by creating a list of the tasks you need to undertake. You can add a task by clicking the “create ongoing task” button. Give the task a name and click “create”:

![Create a new, ongoing task](image)

When you create a task, it will automatically appear in the current on-going tasks category:

![Current ongoing tasks](image)

You can move the task to one of the other categories by selecting the task and dragging and dropping it to the appropriate heading:

![Create Ongoing Task](image)

You will then find the task under the heading you have moved it to.

**Formal stuff**
The formal stuff tab allows you to manage the administrative aspects of your research degree. Within this tab you can:

- View information relating to your progress, progress reports and formal meetings
- Apply for leave of absence, annual leave and fieldwork
- View your academic details
- View/edit your personal and next of kin details
- Submit notification of your thesis title

Click on one of the categories, for example “leave of absence”. Within this tab you will see a record of any leave of absence records you have made and a function to request a leave of absence. Click on the “request leave of absence” button to make a new application and fill in the details. An example is shown below:
Once you have filled in the details and attached any supporting evidence required, click "confirm application". This will then appear in your record of current applications:

If, for example, you are ready to submit your thesis title, click on "notification of thesis title". Answer the questions and fill in the details. When you have completed this, click “submit”:

Once you have clicked “submit”, you will see a record of submission:

For guidance on other categories in the Formal Stuff tab, please see the contextual help feature.
**Portfolio**

The portfolio tab enables you to record details of publications, events and teaching you have been involved in during your research degree. To add information, click on one of the categories, for example “publications”. You will see a record of any previous publications and the option to add a publication. Click “add publication” and fill in the information. An example is shown below:

![Create new publication form](image)

When you have completed the information, click “save publication” and a record of this will be saved in your list of publications:

![Publications list](image)

Information on teaching and events should be recorded and saved similarly. Please see the contextual help feature for guidance.