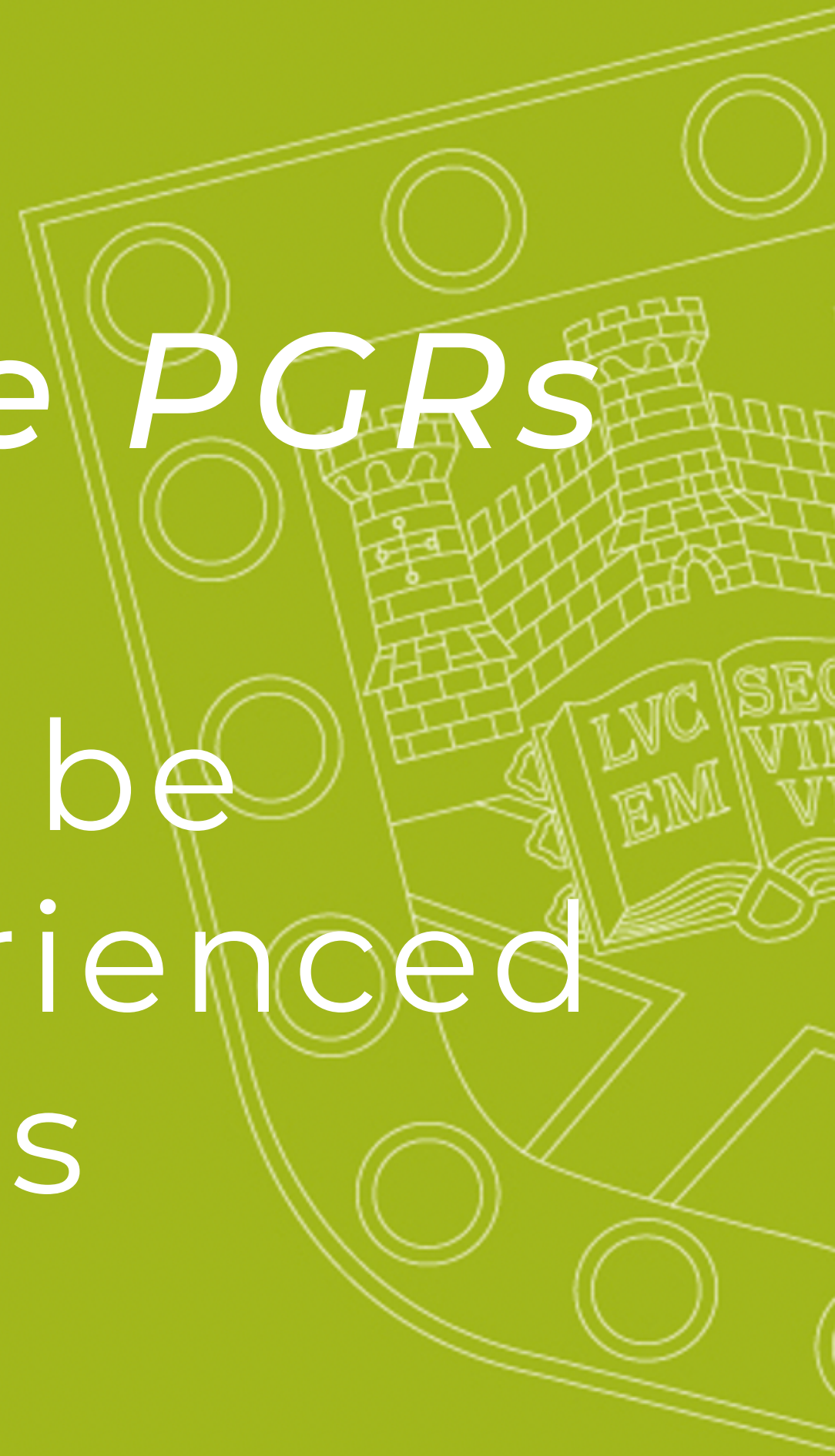


Guidance for Mature PGRs

Your struggle will be
different to that experienced
by younger PGRs



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The term ‘mature student’ is usually used when referring to anyone going to university or college after a period of time out of full-time education.

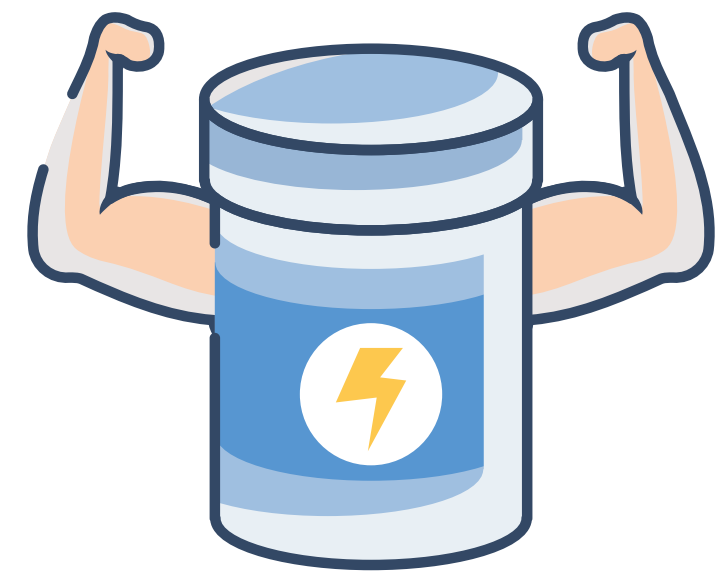
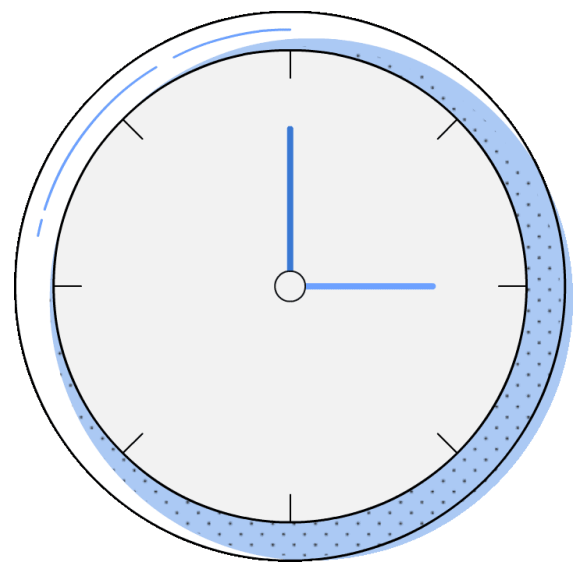
Typically, this will mean students who are over 25 years of age at the beginning of their postgraduate studies.

Around 40% of mature students are over 30.

*Your first challenge is
accepting that you are right
where you need to be,
regardless of age.*



*Common fears
of being a
mature student*



Am I too old?

Age, who cares?



- You come equipped with life experiences and skills to handle challenges.
- You have had time to discover yourself and find your passions.
- You know why you want to pursue a research degree.
- You know how to prioritise work and stay on track.
- You have learned about your strengths and weaknesses, and you can compensate accordingly.
- You know how to communicate with others, including those in a higher position than you. You know how to say no when it is needed.

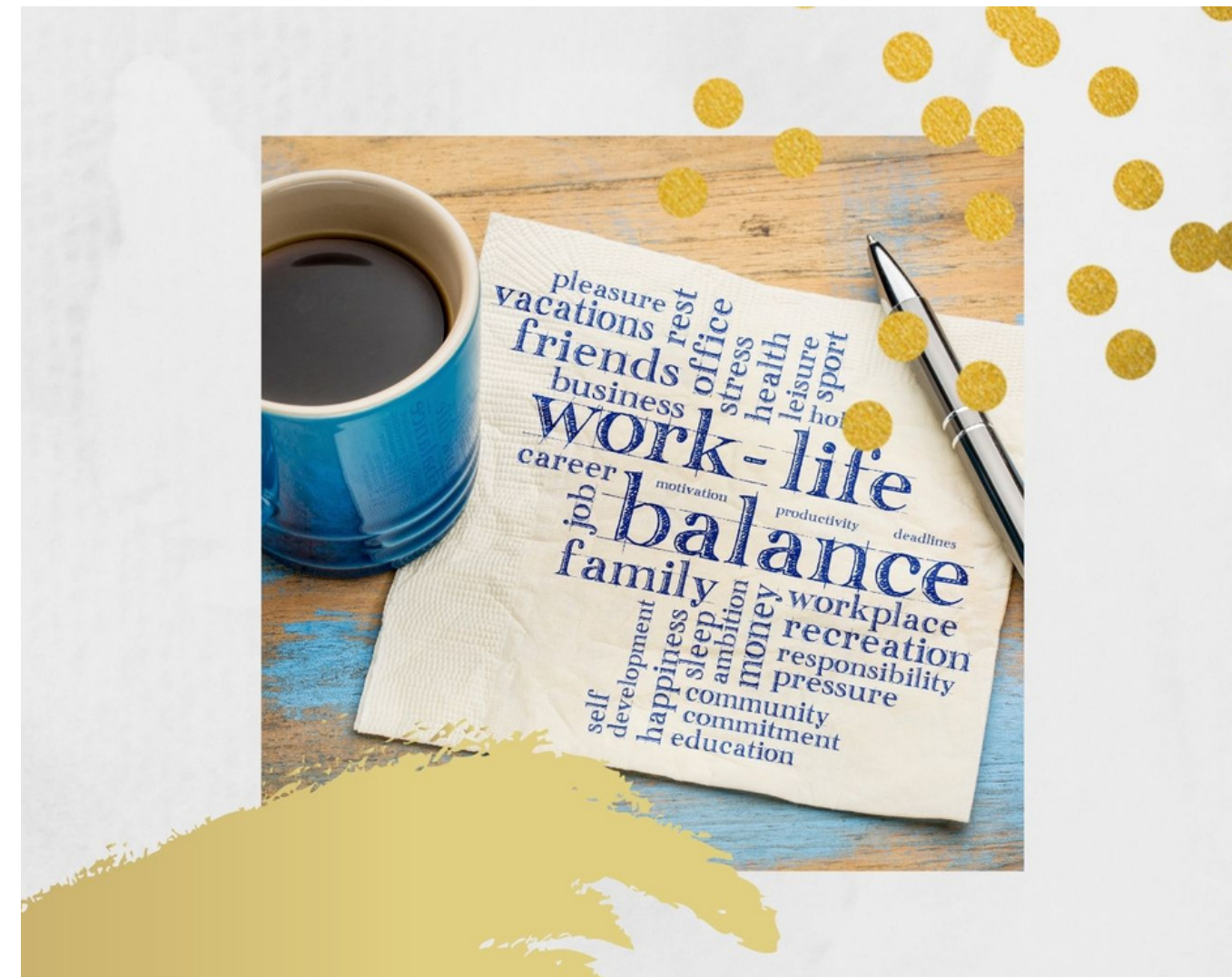
How am I going to manage late nights and weekends studying?

Finding a work-life balance is never easy.

But remember, you are a mature student and will already have been balancing a career and a life.

A PhD is like having another job, with deadlines etc.

You've got this!



How am I going to have the energy of younger students?

You need to accept that you probably won't have the same amount of energy as the younger students around you. This isn't just because you are older, but more likely because you are probably balancing more than just your research degree. You will have additional responsibilities (family, job, caring responsibilities etc) all of which require time and energy. You may not have the luxury of keeping all your weekends purely for rest and relaxation.

But remember: you consciously made the decision to undertake a research degree. Therefore, you have the motivation to complete it successfully.

How can I maximise my energy?

- As a mature student you already know how to prioritise work and life. This allows you to work more efficiently.
- Boost your energy
 - Take time to do exercise - it increases your alertness and endorphin level
 - Maintain a regular sleep schedule
 - Take power naps - a 30-minute nap can provide an energy boost. Even 10-15 minutes can make all the difference.
 - Maintain a balanced diet. Include smart carbohydrates such as beans, bran cereals and wheat bread (if you are able to)
 - Eat often - eat fruit or granola bars (if you can) as snacks through the day
 - Smell peppermint - helps to invigorate you
- Coffee will only really help you for short bursts.

How will I find the time to study?

- This is the same for all PGRs regardless of age.
- Set aside time in your schedule for researching.
- Remember to plan in breaks.
- Join the Exeter PGRs Shut Up and Write Group. This is run by PGRs for PGRs and runs 365 days a year. The group uses the Pomodoro technique of working for 25 minutes then having a 5 minute break. Lots of sessions are facilitated and some are not, just providing a virtual work space offered through the Teams platform. There are face-to-face and hybrid events too.

To join, simply request via the link below:-

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a1dfc4e76b52a4520b1b96dde4aa6845f%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=057d7b5e-e9a1-41be-b70c-e3e5d016f88c&tenantId=912a5d77-fb98-4eee-af32-1334d8f04a53>

Remember...

You've
GOT
THIS

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

