

The Honorary Graduand: Miss Pamela Richards

The Orator: Professor Fiona Cramp

Pamela Richards is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Master of Science.

Pam had a successful career in banking as a manager, including team management. One of her many roles during her career was to deliver part of what was, at the time, the largest IT project in Europe. Later, Pam travelled throughout the UK to deliver training courses, ranging from three days to three months, in banking procedures and management.

Unfortunately, due to developing severe rheumatoid arthritis, Pam had to retire from her much-enjoyed profession. It left her physically unable to return to work with her debilitating condition affecting every area of her life. However, 20 years ago, Pam was asked by the Academic Rheumatology team at the Bristol Royal Infirmary to help them better understand the effects of rheumatoid arthritis on day-to-day life from the perspective of people living with the condition.

Since joining that first research project, she has collaborated with researchers based in the UK at UWE Bristol, University of Bristol and institutions further afield such as OMERACT (Outcome Measures in Rheumatology Clinical Trials), EULAR (The European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology) and The American College of Rheumatology. Many research projects have benefitted from her generously sharing her experience of the everyday impact of rheumatoid arthritis and she has co-authored the resulting research papers. She has been privileged to join the supervision teams of three PhD students.

Pam's main area of research has been in developing Patient Reported Outcome Measures, ensuring domains included in those instruments are representative of the patient perspective.

It is important to Pam that people with long-term health conditions are enabled and empowered to have their experiential knowledge included, not just as research participants but as research partners, in every stage of the research process from identifying topics of importance through to the management of the projects. To this end Pam has helped train and facilitate patient research partners locally and internationally.

Her Honorary Degree of Master of Science is dedicated to all those who have ensured research is more robust because of effective patient involvement.