In 1998 Meaghan Morris called for universities to admit that “practical skills are required to negotiate the world of competitive research, and that most of these skills can be taught and learned” (p.499). Specifically, Morris referred to emerging academics and doctoral students: high-level researchers who need to acquire certain skills in order to successfully compete in the global environment. The issue of graduate skills acquisition has lately been at the forefront of discussion around doctorates: in Australia (Manathunga and Wissler, 2003; Gilbert et al., 2004), in the United States (Austin, 2002), the United Kingdom (Park, 2007) and in New Zealand (Coster 2006). In March 2007 the University of Auckland launched a ‘Doctoral Skills Programme’ (DSP): a collaborative venture by the School of Graduate Studies, the Centre for Academic Development, Postgraduate Careers and the Library. The programme is open to all doctoral students and has a compulsory element: a one day induction into the doctoral programme for incoming doctoral students. The DSP followed 18 months’ internal discussion around the theme of ‘generic capabilities’ and was established within the context of the institution’s stated desire to increase the number of doctoral completions to 500 per year by 2012; part of this growth is achieved through targeted recruitment of PhD students from beyond New Zealand. This paper aims to give some background to the Doctoral Skills Programme’s establishment and governance, and outlines the content of the compulsory induction day, finishing with an overview of the students’ comments on their experience of the day.