

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### FACULTY SKILLS TRAINING EVENTS

#### ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

##### MARCH

- 3 Creating ideas
- 4 Teaching in HE
- 5 Networking
- 8 Starting a business
- 9 Effective presentations
- 10 Social media developing a researcher profile
- 11 Myers-Briggs Type Indicators
- 11 Writing up your thesis
- 19 GTA/Demonstrator
- 24 Social media for research

##### APRIL

- 13 Tools for time management
- 15 Effective research posters
- 16 Careers intensive
- 26 Intro to research
- 29 Writing up your thesis
- TBD Managing your supervisor
- TBD Surviving your viva

##### ONLINE TRAINING

- Endnote
- Academic writing
- Ethics: good research practice
- Managing your research supervisor
- Project management
- Getting published in the sciences

#### HUMANITIES

##### MARCH

- 1 Keeping PhD on track
- 2 Literature reviews, paraphrase and referencing
- 2 Writing conference proposals
- 3 Negotiating
- 4 Introductions and results
- 5 Applying for postdoc funding
- 8 GTA/Demonstrator
- 8 Networking
- 9 Presentations
- 9 Writing grant and funding proposals

- 11 Psychometric questionnaires
- 15 Preparing for your review panel

- 15 Coping with academic pressure
- 16 Presentations

- 17 Mind maps
- 22 Managing your time

- 23 Academic writing
- 23 Editing your thesis

- 31 GTA/Demonstrator

##### APRIL

- 20 Thesis submission briefing
- 20 Viva Survivor
- 26 Intro to presentation skills
- 26 GTA/Demonstrator
- 27 Presentations
- 28 Peer review

##### ONLINE TRAINING

- Endnote
- Word
- Managing long Word documents
- Powerpoint

#### LIFE SCIENCES

##### APRIL

- 15 & 16 1st Year PhD/MPhil communications workshop

##### ONLINE TRAINING

- Statistics and data handling
- Endnote
- Note: most training for Life Sciences is handled via the internal EGTP system which provides a personalised training schedule to each FLS researcher.

#### MEDICAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

##### MARCH

- 2 Effective academic writing
- 4 Research ethics study day
- 9 Teaching
- 15 Presentation skills to the next level
- 16 Intro to data handling
- 17 Plagiarism
- 22 Peer mentoring
- 24 Lone worker

##### APRIL

- 22 Optimising your scientific poster
- 27 Intro to research

##### ONLINE TRAINING

- Academic writing skills
- Making a scientific presentation
- MS Word for research experts
- Using Endnote
- Using Reference Manager
- Using SPSS

## TOP TIPS FOR... NETWORKING

ROBIN DE LA MOTTE

### AT EVENTS

- Be prepared. Research who is attending; have business cards or notepad; plan specific achievable objectives
- Arrive early and leave late; make time to talk.

- Be helpful and sociable - get noticed positively. Meet at least one new person per session. Get contact details before leaving.

- Don't fear rejection - it rarely happens (and if it does you'll be able to rationalise it). You're a PGR - you're the future!

- Follow up. Find a reason to follow up - even if it's just to say thanks for an interesting discussion.

### GENERAL

- Be organised, with a contact journal, notes on collected business cards, and/or LinkedIn.com
- Networking is for life, not just for Christmas. Build networks before you need them. Who would you like to know? Work towards it. Try asking faculty members and colleagues about their career history and background.

- Networks need to be maintained. Find reasons to communicate, at least occasionally.
- Networking isn't selfish - your network helps others in it too.

- Sign up for a Careers Service "networking" event.

## BOOK REVIEW

AMY FREUND

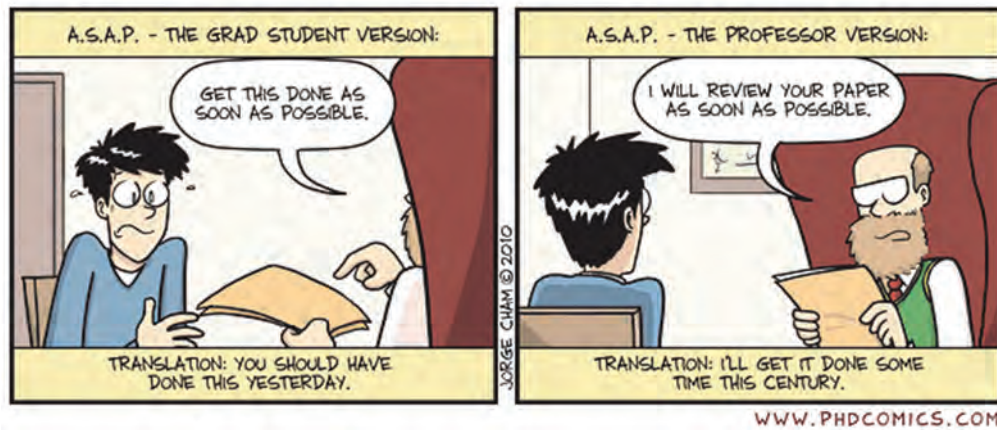
### Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation by Patrick Dunleavy, Palgrave Study Skills

"A central task for any author is to manage readers' expectations", writes Patrick Dunleavy, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at LSE. This is an important theme in *Authoring a PhD*, a comprehensive guide to the process of completing a PhD. "But authors are often not fully aware of the number of different ways in which they create expectations", he says, in particular through "overenthusiastic critique" of previous work, which may create false expectations of the impact of their contribution.

Students should ensure that their literature review is focused and relevant, make chapter lengths regular and section titles frequent, concise and informative - all contribute to enabling effortless navigation of the text, so that readers may focus solely on the substance of the work.

He follows his own advice throughout the book, carefully signposting the text to allow the reader to anticipate the content of coming sections or chapters. The result? An accessible, practical guide to the skills involved in producing a large piece of writing, such as a PhD thesis. The book stands alone as a good general guide, while also containing useful detail on the major referencing styles and touching on how to write journal articles or books for publication.

Dunleavy emphasises the link which exists between writing and the substance of research through the formulation of the "central research question" and advises the reader to maintain an integrated view of their overall thesis plan throughout their PhD, making this a useful book for those just embarking on their PhD research as well as those approaching the final hurdles of writing up and examination.



## CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

**Get involved!** You too can shape STEPS - and there's £25 available for contributions (deadline: 1 May)!

**Give feedback!** Comment on our blog - we want to hear from you! [manchestersteps.wordpress.com](http://manchestersteps.wordpress.com)

**Next issue (May 2010) feature:** Why Personal Development Plans matter - all you need to know!



MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

## Skills Training Essentials for PGR Students

# STEPS

Issue 16 / March 2010

## STEP INTO 2010 SKILLS TRAINING!

**Welcome to the first 2010 issue of STEPS! Before telling you about the range of careers and skills training events set to take place this year, let us take a backward glance at some of those held during 2009.**

After more than 10 years as host, The University of Manchester ran a local, nonresidential three day **GRADSchool** in May with the theme 'Developing the Effective Research Communicator'. This intensive course offered attendees the chance to develop their communication, team-working, project planning and decision making skills. Also present were a panel of experienced researchers sharing best practice. The next Manchester GRADSchool will take place 5 - 7 May 2010.

Following on from the success of the previous two years, the **Pathways** careers event was held in June, and included an early career researcher employers' fair comprising 11 employer stands, experts offering career and training advice and a stand for Vitae; a national organisation focusing on the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education and research institutes. The event was short-listed for a Times Higher award: outstanding contribution to support early career researchers. The next Pathways event will take place 11, 14 & 16 June 2010.

The **Manchester Enterprise School**, a three day residential workshop held in the Lake District in July as part of the Northern Enterprise Schools Consortium, was attended by 32 PhD students and post-docs from the Universities of Manchester,



Durham, Lancaster and Liverpool. The consortium, which also includes the universities of Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle and York, hosts workshops for early-career researchers to develop their business awareness, "intrapreneurship", enterprise and teamwork skills. Places on all courses are available to students attending any of the consortium universities. The next Manchester Enterprise School will take place 12 - 16 July 2010.



Continues on page 2

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- BLOG [researchtraining.wordpress.com](http://researchtraining.wordpress.com)
- TWITTER [twitter.com/trainingteam](http://twitter.com/trainingteam)

## STEPS

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The STEPS newsletter is published quarterly. Visit our blog to give feedback and to get more details, contacts, and regular updates: [manchestersteps.wordpress.com](http://manchestersteps.wordpress.com)

## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

STEPS is a publication by and for postgraduate researchers at The University of Manchester. We'll keep you up to date with the diverse range of skills training and development opportunities available and report back on what you found to be useful, interesting and worthwhile.

Why not help your friends and colleagues by pointing them to STEPS?



## ...WELCOME TO THE FIRST 2010 ISSUE OF STEPS!

JENNIFER SANDERS

Elsevier's **How to Publish a World Class Paper** workshop held in October proved to be an extremely popular and over-subscribed event. Science publisher Elsevier presented practical tips for publishing manuscripts in leading international journals to an audience made up of research staff and students from all disciplines across the University. Main topics included planning the article, appropriate use of language, article structure, and issues of ethics, copyright and fraud associated with manuscript publication.

Award-winning workshop presenter Hugh Kearns, lecturer and researcher at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, descended upon Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery in October to assist PhDs and research staff in maximising their writing output at a regional half-day course entitled **'Turbo-charge your writing'**. In attendance were researchers from several other universities, including Edge Hill, Lancaster, Liverpool John Moores, Manchester Metropolitan, Bolton and Central Lancashire.

Finally, October closed with **PRISM 2009**, an annual regional event, organised by Vitae, uniting postgraduate researchers working in the medical field. The conference allows researchers to present their work, enhance their skills and CV, network and interact with members of their discipline and possibly win a presentation prize. Workshops included 'How to survive a viva', 'Enterprise for researchers' and 'Managing your PhD supervisor'.

## USING YOUR BIG BRAIN TO TURBOCHARGING YOUR WRITING

Post-graduate students have big brains. Everyone knows that. But not everyone knows that a large part of that big brain goes into finding excuses not to write a thesis. I've worked with thousands of research students and I've heard some good ones! "I need to read more" even though you've read for two years. "Just one more article and then it'll be clear". And the classic "I'm not ready yet".

In October 2009 I ran a workshop called Turbocharging your Writing for over 200 research students at the University of Manchester. We talked about the Readiness Myth and that you are probably as ready now as you ever will be. We talked about the diseases of writers – readitis and experimentitis and the dangers of being sucked into referenceland and never being seen again. We looked at the fatal attractions of binge writing and the benefits of snack writing. It got a bit gory when we talked about "nailing your feet to the floor" for some concentrated writing time – the two golden hours.

We talked about when to write, what to write and the biggie, why we don't write. Writer's block. Anxiety about writing. How to deal with those "helpful" voices looking over your shoulder as you write saying "This is crap!"

As I said postgraduate students have big brains. The purpose of this workshop was to fire up those big brains so they could turbocharge their writing. And they did!

## HUGH KEARNS'S TURBO-CHARGE YOUR WRITING WORKSHOP

"A skilled presenter, who was confident, authoritative and humorous. Somehow, putting into words/hearing what I had always known made an impact. The 'golden 2 hours' idea is so simple yet works really well for me. I found the course to be very motivating. Although I already felt I had good time management skills, I feel my output has increased as a result of attending the course."

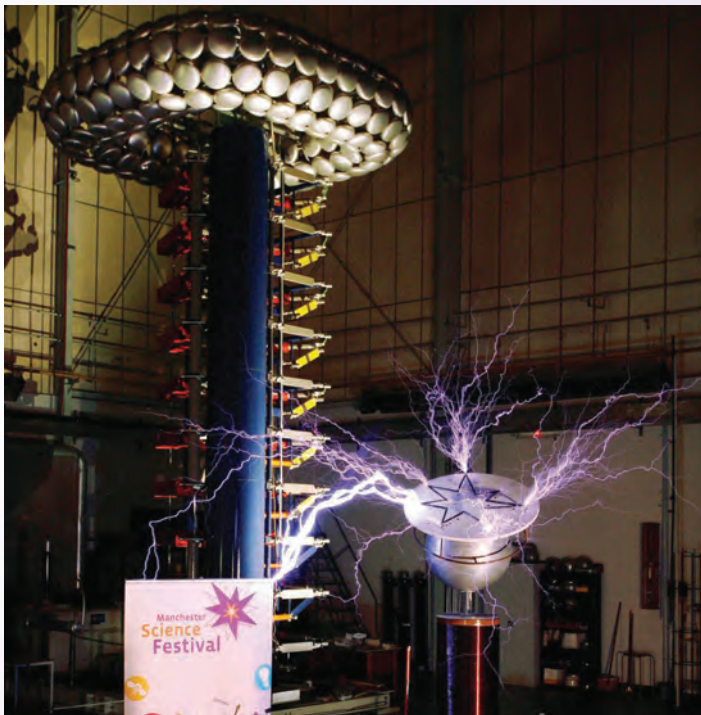
## MANCHESTER SCIENCE FESTIVAL

IMOGEN CLARKE

The Manchester Science Festival takes place every October, with over 150 science events, in more than 50 locations, aimed at a wide variety of audiences. The 2009 festival ran from 24 October to 1 November, and among the massive assortment of different events you could find arts and crafts activities, story-telling for children, science-themed walking tours of Manchester, robot-making, debates, a Darwin rap, and even some collaborative activities between artists, writers and scientists. These took place in museums, libraries, pubs, shops, and even out on the streets of Manchester.

The festival provides fantastic opportunities for any student researching a science-related topic to get involved. Outreach Officer for CHSTM (the Centre for History of Science, Technology and Medicine), Vicky Long, helped out with several events. She believes that participating in an event like this "offers a timely opportunity to reflect on what the key themes of your research are and which audiences beyond academia would be interested in engaging with these. It allows you to think creatively about ways in which you might convey these ideas clearly and succinctly to different audiences such as families and children, via activities, object handling, a walk or public talk." Sometimes feedback from the public can have a positive effect on your research project itself. It also looks great on future job applications, showing that you're committed to thinking about the social impact of your research.

Any student with an idea could contact the organisers and get involved, or volunteer to help out at existing events, including as science buskers at a number of public locations. Many university departments (including CHSTM) were also creating their own events. Nowgen (a Centre for Genetics in Healthcare) organised several activities to generate dialogue about biomedical research and its societal impacts. The Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement - who offer great opportunities for anybody interested in working with communities around Manchester - supported Nowgen in running a workshop helping scientific researchers to devise creative hands-on demonstrations and develop their skills in public engagement. These skills were then used during two days of 'Meet the scientists' events.



## MEET THE EDITORS

INTRODUCING FOUR OF THE SIX CURRENT STEPS EDITORS (MORE NEXT ISSUE)

ATUSA SADEGHOLNEJAT  
MSc CANCER BIOLOGY, FLS

"I am currently pursuing a masters in Cancer Biology, which continues an interest from my undergraduate dissertation, when I studied the effects of hypoxia and drug resistance in bladder cancer cells. After graduating from university, I decided to focus on studying molecular aspects of cancer."

The University of Manchester provided the opportunity to conduct research specific to cancer studies. I am currently researching cell signalling pathways in melanoma. In addition to research I also enjoy the written aspect of projects ranging from freelance writing to co-writing a script for an independent film. Hence becoming an editor of STEPS was of much interest to me; it has allowed me to contribute information which will be useful for postgraduate research students, like myself.

As for the future there are many and varied career paths in research, and STEPS provides useful information on various aspects of careers issues. I have participated in various seminars and workshops which have helped shape my career decisions; finding the right path is a unique journey for each of us. Skills training can provide researchers with beneficial knowledge on issues ranging from improving research techniques to enhancing your CV. STEPS aims to guide you on what's available."

IMOGEN CLARKE  
PHD HISTORY OF SCIENCE, FLS

"I've just started a PhD at Manchester, looking at the transition from classical to modern physics at the beginning of the twentieth century, and how these changes affected public faith in science. Before this, I did a BSc in Mathematics and History and Philosophy of Science, and an MA in History and Philosophy of Science, both at Leeds."

I was unsure about doing a PhD at first, and put it off for a year, because I couldn't really see what the point was, particularly in a non-scientific subject. If you don't have your heart set on becoming an academic, sometimes you do start to wonder just why you're doing a PhD in a subject that might seem irrelevant to the real world.

That's why I think it's important to spend your three years taking up every opportunity you can to widen your skills, beyond just writing a thesis, and hopefully get a better idea of just what you want to do with at least the next few years of your life (or even all of it, but for me that's a little bit ambitious at this stage). Becoming a STEPS editor was part of this, but obviously the newsletter is full of other possibilities. And whilst my motivation in searching for all of these other possibilities is purely selfish, when I find them, I won't keep them to myself! So hopefully we can all benefit from this newsletter, and become a little less confused."

SIMON PATRICK  
PHD PHYSIOLOGY, FLS

"I began my university career studying Biology at the University of Nottingham in 2002. I then moved to Manchester and completed an MRes in 2006 and I am now in my final year of a PhD in Physiology. In my PhD I am trying to elucidate the cellular mechanisms that allow the piscine heart to undergo massive stretches during their operational cycle. This may not sound that exciting but I sometimes have to travel to where the fish can be found and this has taken me to both Hawaii and Brazil!"

I am currently looking at the career opportunities open to me and I am finding that there is a wide range of possibilities for postgraduate students! I am interested in scientific writing or possibly journalism and becoming an editor of STEPS seemed to be a great way to practice my communication skills. I have also tried a range of extracurricular activities during my PhD including the excellent Researchers in Residence scheme. There are a wide variety of training programs and opportunities to be found at this university but it can be difficult to find out about them if you do not know where to look."

My main ambition as a STEPS editor is to promote this newsletter and to fill it with useful information so that you know exactly what opportunities the University of Manchester has to offer, when they are and how to apply for them!"

JENNIFER SANDERS  
PHD PHYSICS, EPS

"Since coming to The University of Manchester many moons ago in 2003 to study Physics, I seem to have been unable to leave and after completing my MSc in Photon Science in 2006, a PhD became the game and Photon Physics was its name."

My research uses an optical trapping technique using lasers ('laser tweezers') to trap micron-sized particles to study fluid dynamics at the micron level. More specifically, I examine the behaviour of particles, such as polystyrene beads, dispersed in a liquid crystal solution; the fluids found in LCD TVs.

Despite my background over the last seven years highly favouring science, my affinity for the English language has always been lurking and scientific writing or editing is a wonderful crossover of these two polar opposites. After being reminded in a scientific essay that I was "not writing for New Scientist!", I began to seriously consider a career in science writing.

I've tried my hand at science communication and noticed how many opportunities there are for researchers to promote their discipline to the public. Hence, becoming a STEPS editor was a chance to gain valuable editorial experience for a possible future career path, as well as helping to promote the skills training and development opportunities available."

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER CONFERENCE TRAVEL FUND

SIMON PATRICK

Around this time last year, I had just heard that my abstract to present a poster at the 36th Congress of the International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS) had been accepted. This represented a great opportunity for me to present my research to the international leaders in my field and receive their feedback. There was one final hurdle, however; the conference was in Kyoto!

The initial excitement at being offered a place and an opportunity to visit Japan was tempered with the very real possibility that I might not be able to afford the registration fees, travel costs and accommodation. Many students may face this same problem but, unless you want to accrue even more debt, there are a number of ways of raising the cash. Firstly, when you are submitting your abstract to a conference make sure you check any boxes relating to student travel grants! They can be quite easy to miss but they may provide a substantial contribution to the costs of attending the conference as they luckily did for me. Secondly, join the societies that are relevant to your field. Most of these offer student travel grants for postgraduate researchers who are presenting at a conference. Unfortunately, this second route turned up blank for me this time despite having been successful in the past. Finally, it is apparently a little known fact that our very own research office also offers up to £400 towards the costs of attending a conference at which you are presenting your work. This is known as the Postgraduate Researcher Travel Fund and I decided to apply.

The application process for the Fund is easy and only involves downloading the application form from [www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/travel\\_fund](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/travel_fund), filling in the relevant sections, asking your supervisor to fill in the final part (admittedly, this could prove more difficult



and may include bribes of tea/coffee) and handing in at the Research Office in the Christie Building. Make sure it is on time and be aware that the next deadline is Friday 12 March for conferences taking place between Saturday 13 March and Saturday 16 October, 2010. Sorry if you have already been to a conference as there are no retrospective applications. I was lucky and received a contribution towards the cost of my conference which enabled me to visit Kyoto and present my work to world experts in my field. Oh, and the scenery was pretty good too!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## UNIVERSITY EVENTS

## MARCH

- 2 Library Scopus for Researchers
- 2 Careers Are you crazy enough to run your own business?
- 8 Careers Voluntary, Not for Profit and Public Sector Fair
- 10 Library Endnote
- 10 CEEBL "Help! I've got a tutorial"
- 17 Library Web of Science
- 24 Library Tips for Avoiding Information Overload

## APRIL

- 13 RCS Introduction to Advanced Research Computing
- 19 Venture Further Competition 2010
- 20 RCS Introduction to MATLAB
- 28 CEEBL Designing Tutorial Exercises: Triggers
- 29 RCS LaTeX for Researchers

## ONLINE TRAINING

Postgraduate Online Writing Clinics  
(20 January - 17 March, every Wednesday 12:30pm - 1:30pm)  
<http://breeze1.manchester.ac.uk/alp>

## Careers Service

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk)

## CEEBL

[www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb1/events](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb1/events)

## Library

[www.library.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk)

## RSC

[www.manchester.ac.uk/researchcomputing](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/researchcomputing)

## REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

## MARCH

- 5 Sense About Science: Research: publishing it, reviewing it & talking about it publicly, Sussex (Applications by: 19 February)
- 15 Vitae Digital Researcher, London
- 19 Sense About Science Standing Up For Science Media, Manchester (Applications by: 8 March)
- 30 Vitae Careers in Focus: Academia, Manchester.

## APRIL

- 26 Vitae Yorkshire & North East Hub Public Engagement Competition

## Vitae

[www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

## Sense About Science

[www.senseaboutscience.org.uk](http://www.senseaboutscience.org.uk)