

## Research Postgraduates Showcase Interdisciplinary Research Excellence



Left to right organising committee with VIPs: Dee-Ann Johnson, Catherine Taylor, Prof Andrew Murray, Prof Helen Gleeson, Amr Elbanhawy, Prof Klaus Muller-Dethlefs, Prof John Perkins, Prof John Durell, Hazel Jones, Jenny Williams, Jessica Miles, Dr Andrew Thomas, Dr Carl Percival, Ashiq Khalid

Postgraduate researchers in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, hosted the first interdisciplinary research symposium of its kind recently at the successful Graduate Research Conference 2007.

Spearheaded by the EPS Graduate Development Scheme (GraDS) the one-day conference provided postgraduate researchers and post-doctoral research assistants with an opportunity to foster interdisciplinary research excellence and promote transferable research skills at the University of Manchester.

Held in the Simon Building, the event attracted over 200 participants with 40 talks and 100 posters. The conference theme reflected the diverse research taking place across the faculty and included topics such as materials and optics, nuclear physics, computational science, biophysics, laser applications, earth science systems and astronomy.

Continues on page 2

## In this issue

Research Postgraduates Showcase Interdisciplinary Research Excellence	2
PGR Conference Travel Fund 2007/2008	2
RCUK Announcement	2
Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences Training Activities	3
Faculty of Humanities Training Activities	3
Faculty of Life Sciences Training Activities	4
Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences Training Activities	4
National Skills Training Events	5
GRADschools 2007	5
Careers in Focus – Investment Banking	5
Research Council Training Requirements	6
Thesis Binding	6

## PhD Careers Options Event

Continued...

Opening remarks by the EPS Associate Dean of Research, Professor Helen Gleeson, discussed how postgraduates could add value to their own research project by encouraging them to seek out opportunities for interdisciplinary or collaborative research with other students from across the faculty. Talk sessions were chaired and judged by post-docs, with prizes awarded to the best speaker in each session. A poster reception provided participants with the chance to network, engage with the special exhibits including a virtual jet engine, and vote for the best posters on display. Vice-President and Dean of EPS, Professor John Perkins, delivered the closing remarks and presented awards.

Dr Jim Boran, EPS Graduate Development Manager, said, "The faculty-wide initiative, with support from the skills training and development funds, was designed to provide our graduates with a host of skills, ranging from communication, to team working, negotiation and management through first hand experience in organising a major event."

Sponsored by the School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, School of Physics and Astronomy, the Photon Science Institute, and the Dalton Nuclear Institute, the conference was organised entirely by postgraduate research students. Of the initiative, Professor Richard Patrick, Head of School, SEAES, said, "That the event was organised and run by early career researchers gave it a vibrancy lacking in traditional conferences."

## PGR Conference Travel Fund 2007/2008

The aim of this scheme is to assist postgraduate researchers in attending national or international conferences to present their research. The PGR Conference Travel Funds will assist with the costs of travel, conference registration fees and accommodation expenses, and are intended to supplement the applicant's own contribution or funds from other sources.

This fund will provide postgraduate research students with the opportunity to:

- refine their research by exposing it to national and international peer review by presenting a paper or poster at a conference
- network and interact with some of the best researchers in their field

Four closing dates for applications will apply during 07/08;

Friday 5th October 2007

Friday 14th December 2007

Friday 14th March 2008

Friday 13th June 2008

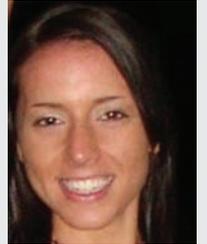
For further detailed information on how to apply for PGR Conference Travel Funds and the application criteria please visit

[www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/travel%20fund/](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/travel%20fund/)



## Editor's Note

**The summer seems to have passed us by and the new academic year has certainly come round quickly, but let me assure you that 07/08 will bring with it a wealth of exciting opportunities for researchers to take advantage of.**



Each of the four faculties have many informative and skills enhancing activities planned to equip researchers with the necessary skills to successfully complete their research degree and succeed in their chosen career path. Faculty activities taking place over the next few months are featured within this issue with details of how to book being made available.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this edition of STEPS, in particular to Catherine Taylor who provided the Graduate Research Conference Report.

We are keen to hear about ideas for future issues of STEPS and further details of how you can submit contributions are featured at the end of this issue.

The next issue of STEPS will be available in hard copy and online at [www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/steps/](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/steps/) at the end of November

Best wishes

Claire Atherton

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## RCUK Announcement

The Research Councils have announced an investment of over £15 million in line with their commitment to 'enhancing the quality and output of the UK research base through training the next generation of world-class researchers'.

In order to meet this challenge they are broadening the remit for the existing UK GRAD Programme to create a new researcher development programme. The contract, to run from 2008-2012, will include support for research staff as well as for postgraduate researchers.

The programme proposed by CRAC and their partners will support the personal, professional and career development of researchers through four key aims to:

- Champion the development and implementation of effective policy;
- Enhance higher education provision through sharing practice and resource;
- Provide access to development opportunities and resources;
- Build an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda.

The UK GRAD Programme will continue to operate until the end of the existing contract on 31 December 2007. During 2008 the activities will be progressively extended to include research staff, before a formal launch of the new programme, at a national conference in September 2008.

For further information visit;

[www.crac.org.uk/crac%5Fnew/news/news9.asp](http://www.crac.org.uk/crac%5Fnew/news/news9.asp)

## Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences – Training Activities

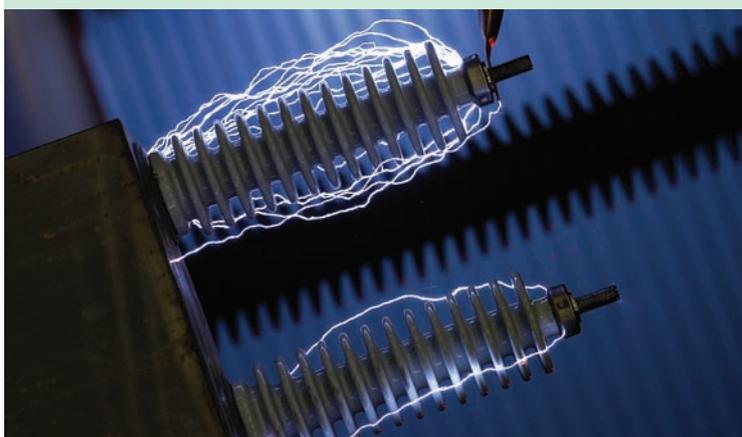
The skills required to accomplish a research degree must go beyond subject-specific training to prepare graduates for the world of competitive research and the commercial sector. With this in mind the Graduate Development Scheme (GraDS) aims to support postgraduate research and taught students, in the Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences, in the development of personal/professional skills required to successfully complete a degree and ensure maximum future employability.



### Faculty Training Contact

Dr. Jim Boran is the Graduate Development Manager for the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences. Jim has worked on graduate development issues since 1999 (formerly at UMIST) and works with Tony Mathews and Dee Ann Johnson at the Graduate Development Scheme in the EPS Graduate School. Contact them at eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk

Introduction to Research 'Speed PhD'	1st October '07 (2 days) 2nd October '07 (2 days) 3rd October '07 (2 days) 8th October '07 (2 days) 9th October '07 (2 days) 10th October '07 (2 days) 15th October '07 (2 days) 16th October '07 (2 days)
Graduate Teaching Assistant Training	9th October '07 18th October '07
Graduate Teaching Assistant Training (Lab)	23rd October '07 1st November '07 6th November '07
Effective Presentations	6th November '07 8th November '07 13th November '07 15th November '07
Academic Writing	19th November '07 21st November '07 26th November '07
Planning the Final Year	26th November '07



## Faculty of Humanities – Training Activities

The Humanities skills training timetable has undergone a thorough review over the past year and has been redeveloped and redesigned to meet the needs of PhD students in the faculty at each stage of their PhD.

The new training programme aims to build transferable skills in researchers during each year of their PhD. For example, project management courses have been specifically designed for each year of the PhD. Courses for first years will focus on planning and objective-setting, for second years monitoring and review, and for third years, planning their final year.

Most courses will be running on Mondays or Tuesdays to help students manage their time and easily plan training into their schedule.

Training is on a needs basis, so students can sign up for the courses open to them which they feel will be most useful. Between September and December there will be a wide variety of 'core courses' on offer such as project management, time management, presentation skills and academic writing. The second semester will see more specialist academic skills courses, including sessions on getting published, writing proposals, and getting funding.

A 'Guide to PGR Training' is also being produced. This will be available as a printed brochure and via the faculty webpage at [www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training/](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training/). These brochures will be sent to Schools for distribution.

### Faculty Training Contacts

Julie Reeves is the Research Training Manager for the Faculty of Humanities and is responsible for managing the development of the PGR and research staff training programmes.

Esme Caulfield is the Research Training Officer for the Faculty Humanities. Esme is responsible for the design, delivery and co-ordination of skills training courses for PGR students in the Faculty.

Coping with Academic Pressure	5th October '07 AM
Planning your Final Year	8th October '07 AM
Planning your Final Year	9th October '07 AM
Introduction to Time Management	15th October '07 PM
Managing a PhD Project	15th October '07 AM
Presentations, Practice and Feedback – Yr 1 students (Yrs 1-2 PT)	16th October '07 AM (TBC)
Staying on Track with your PhD	16th October '07 AM
Introduction to Presentation Skills	17th October '07 AM
What makes a great PhD?	17th October '07 AM

For further information on the Humanities training programme or to book onto a training course, please visit [www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training/](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training/)

## Faculty of Life Sciences – Training Activities

### Introducing the on-line Graduate Training Programme

From mid-September 2007 the Graduate Training Programme will be entirely on-line for all postgraduates in FLS. This will replace the blue GTP file and all of its contents. The electronic Graduate Training Programme (eGTP) was introduced last September and following the success of eGTP, all Postgraduates will now benefit from being on-line.

The benefits include:

- \* Easy access via the Intranet to a wide range of courses and on-line resources
- \* Completion of progression meeting forms on-line – reducing the amount of time spend on administration
- \* On-line progression management and access for students and staff
- \* Access to personal development and time management planning tools

Drop-in session for using the new on-line GTP will be held in September on: 3rd & 10th 11am – 2pm in Microlab 2 Stopford Building.

For more information on the Faculty of Life Sciences Graduate Training Programme visit; [www.ls.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/skillsdevelopment/](http://www.ls.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/skillsdevelopment/)

Academic Literacy Programme & Introduction to Graduate Training Online Courses	20th September '07 9 – 1pm, 1 – 4pm ML 3 Stopford Building
Faculty Research Symposium	21st September '07 9 – 5pm, Renold Building
Academic Literacy Programme & Introduction to Graduate Training Online Courses	26th September '07 9 – 1pm ML 3 Stopford Building
Graduate Training Programme & New Student Induction	31st October '07 10 – 12pm ML 2 Stopford Building
Demonstrating Teaching for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – DAY 1	31st October '07 9 – 5pm CEEBL teaching rooms
Demonstrating Teaching for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – DAY 1	14th November '07 9 – 5pm CEEBL teaching rooms
Demonstrating Teaching for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – DAY 1	28th November '07 9 – 5pm CEEBL teaching rooms
Demonstrating Teaching for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – DAY 2 Practical Experience	10th December '07 9 – 1pm MUL Stopford Building

### Faculty Training Contact

The eGTP Project Officer in Faculty of Life Sciences is Davina Whitnall who has been with University for the last two years in a project development role. Davina is responsible for the development and management of the eGTP. For further information about eGTP or to attend the drop in session please email:

[Davina.whitnall@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Davina.whitnall@manchester.ac.uk)



## Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences – Training Activities

The Graduate Training Programme (GTP) is available to all research students. The Faculty offers both generic and specialised training providing students with the skills, competencies and subject-based training necessary to complete their research. The emphasis is on an organic programme of training that is tailored to the individual needs of students.

Introduction to Research 'Speed PhD'	3rd & 4th October '07
Introduction to Research 'Speed PhD'	10th & 11th October '07
Academic Writing in English – Unit 1 (International students)	10th October '07
Introduction to Research 'Speed PhD'	17th & 18th October '07
Academic Writing in English – Unit 2 (International students)	17th October '07
Introduction to Statistics – Lecture 1	18th October '07
Research Ethics Day	19th October '07
Academic Writing in English – Unit 3 (International students)	24th October '07
Introduction to Statistics – Lecture 2	25th October '07
Academic Writing in English – Unit 4 (International students)	31st October '07

For more information on the Faculty of Life Sciences Graduate Training Programme visit; [www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/research/GTP](http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/research/GTP)

### Faculty Training Contacts

Judith Williams takes the lead in FMHS in the organisation and delivery of a high-quality graduate training programme. She helps provide a high level of support for postgraduate research students, developing both generic and tailor-made training that meets the diverse needs of research students across the Faculty.



Rachel Cowen is the Research Staff Training Coordinator for the faculty and takes the lead in developing a training programme tailored towards the specific needs of research staff. As Judith Williams will be on maternity leave from late October '07, Rachel will also be delivering a number of workshops for postgraduate research students.

Contact the FMHS graduate training team at; [mhspg-training@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mhspg-training@manchester.ac.uk)



## National Skills Training Events

### UKCGE Inaugural Colloquium on Graduate Education: Strategies for Generic Skills Training, Development of Research Supervisors and Innovation in Doctoral Programmes

24th & 25th October 2007, Burlington Hotel, Dublin

The Colloquium represents the first time that UKCGE has held an event in Ireland and is the first of a series intended to establish a new platform for discussion of Graduate Education issues in Ireland, the UK and across Europe. This event is jointly planned by the Council with Irish colleagues and will explore:

- \* The postgraduate implications of Bologna for Ireland and the UK
- \* Postgraduate mobility issues
- \* Best practice for training Research Supervisors
- \* The Graduate School dimension
- \* Novel approaches to the PG training agenda
- \* A European perspective on "Creating Innovative Researchers for the Global Knowledge Economy", presented by a senior Industrialist from Denmark.

Further information, including a downloadable copy of the Colloquium Programme can be found by visiting; [www.ukcge.ac.uk/events/eventsarea/ireland.htm](http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/events/eventsarea/ireland.htm)

### Getting a PhD in the UK

20th November 2007, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1

Studying for a PhD (or other doctorate) is a major investment for you and your sponsor. But many students coming to the UK find our traditions very different from their previous experience. This course is intended to provide you with the opportunity to work with others and find out how you can make a success of your time in the UK. During the day's course you will have the opportunity to submit your own questions in confidence for the course tutor to suggest how you find answers.

Further information can be found by visiting; [www.missendenceentre.co.uk/seminars.htm](http://www.missendenceentre.co.uk/seminars.htm)

## GRADschools 2007—[www.grad.ac.uk](http://www.grad.ac.uk)

### What are GRADschools?

GRADschools are three to five day courses designed specifically for postgraduate researchers. The number of participants on a GRADschool is normally between 40 and 90, and participants work through a variety of activities in groups of between 5 and 10 people. The workshops include a mix of;

- Skills awareness and development exercises (e.g. creativity, communication, project management and presentation)
- Career sessions (e.g. improving your CV, defining your career goals and interview practice)
- Case studies (to practice skills while increasing your awareness of career options)

### Why should you attend a GRADschool?

A GRADschool is an ideal opportunity to:

- gain new perspectives on your research
- consider your future development and career
- compare experiences with other PhD researchers from a range of institutions and disciplines
- learn how to get ahead in academia by developing your networking skills
- gain insights into how to enhance working relationships

### When are the next GRADschools?

22nd – 26th October 2007 – Royal Albion Hotel Brighton

5th – 6th November 2007 – Windermere Hydro Hotel

## Careers in Focus: Investment Banking

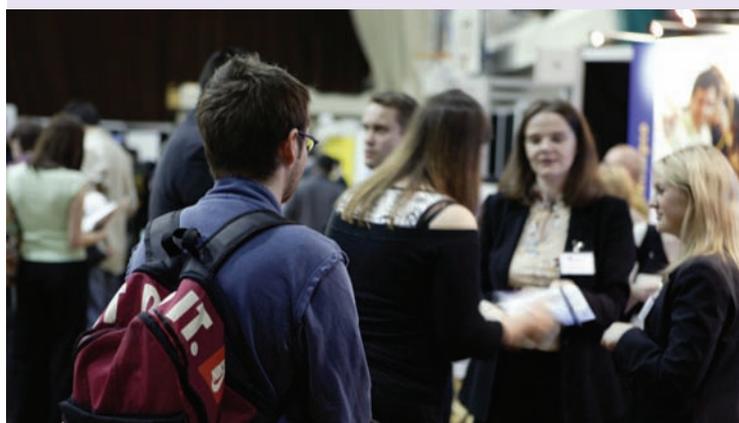
### UK GRAD Careers in Focus event, Hilton London Docklands, Thursday 4th October 2007

Careers in Focus: Investment Banking for PhDs is an interactive one day event, hosted by employers keen to recruit PhDs with quantitative skills. The event provides participants with real insight into this challenging career through a series of dynamic activities, including:

- interactive sessions on core investment banking areas
- CV session and selection process
- networking with representatives from the world's most prestigious investment banks

"I discovered the real opportunities available to a numerate PhD seeking a quantitative role in Investment Banking in a very 'hands-on' way" (workshop participant, 2006)

To apply visit [www.grad.ac.uk](http://www.grad.ac.uk)



## Research Council Training Requirements

### Arts and Humanities Research Council

The AHRC highlights within their Guide for Postgraduate Award Holders 2007-2008 that the development of key generic skills should be a compulsory training requirement for all research students. The Council identifies the Joint Statement of Skills Training Requirements for Research students as being a useful tool in helping students and institutions frame their own research training provision.

[www.ahrc.ac.uk/holders/postgrad/postgraduate\\_doctoral\\_scheme.asp](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/holders/postgrad/postgraduate_doctoral_scheme.asp)



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

### Biotechnical and Biological Sciences Research Council

BBSRC has endorsed the Joint Statement of Skills Training Requirements prepared by the Research Councils. The BBSRC publishes a handbook on Postgraduate Studentships in which their policy on training schemes is outlined. [www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/training/Welcome.html](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/training/Welcome.html)



### Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

The EPSRC believes that it is important for research students to broaden their personal skills, and it is now a requirement that all EPSRC funded PhD students should attend a UK GRAD Programme Graduate School (or an equivalent) during their second or third years of study.

[www.epsrc.ac.uk/PostgraduateTraining/InformationForStudents/UKGRADProgramme/default.htm](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/PostgraduateTraining/InformationForStudents/UKGRADProgramme/default.htm)

**EPSRC**

Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Research Council

### Economic and Social Research Council

The ESRC believe that whatever career paths PhD graduates may follow, there are clear advantages to students if they have acquired general research skills and transferable employment-related skills. The ESRC ensures that all the research students they fund receive substantial, formal and broadly based training in research.

[www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/pgtrainingpolicy/index.aspx](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/pgtrainingpolicy/index.aspx)



### Medical Research Council

The MRC expects each student to have a thorough training in generic research skills (e.g. experimental design, data handling, statistics, intellectual property rights, exploitation), and training in transferable skills, (e.g. oral and written communication, IT skills and time management) during their MRC-funded training period, in addition to subject specific training. The Council publishes a Studentships Handbook in which the broad policy is defined.

[www.mrc.ac.uk/Careers/Studentships/index.htm](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Careers/Studentships/index.htm)



### Science & Technology Facilities Council

There are simple links from the Postgraduate Studentships web page that highlight the Council's adherence to the Joint Statement and advertising other courses available to graduate students.

[www.scitech.ac.uk/Grants/Studs/PostTrain/Contents.aspx](http://www.scitech.ac.uk/Grants/Studs/PostTrain/Contents.aspx)



Science & Technology  
Facilities Council

### Natural Environment Research Council

The Council publishes the Joint Skills Statement as its expectations of training in research and transferable skills for graduate students. The Handbook appears not to specify more than this at present.

[www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/)



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## Call for Contributions to future issues of STEPS

We are looking for more news and article contributions for forthcoming issues of the STEPS newsletter and would be happy to hear about any topics you wish to see discussed.

Contributions could include;

- Conference reports
- Student, supervisor perspectives on the PGR training agenda
- Top tips for researchers
- Careers and employability articles
- Reviews of skills training books or resources
- Recommended books and resources
- Articles on forthcoming skills training events

Deadlines for contributions to future issues of STEPS are;

- Friday 26th October '07
- Friday 18th January '08
- Friday 14th March '08
- Friday 13th June '08

For further guidance on submitting contributions please contact Claire Atherton at [Claire.l.atherton@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.l.atherton@manchester.ac.uk)