

## Faculty of Life Sciences Research Symposium 2007



In celebration of the Faculty's research achievements, the third annual Research Symposium was held on Friday, 21 September. This full-day event saw short-listed postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers give presentations of their work to approximately 800 of their peers, academic and support staff and invited guests.

The symposium also provides a forum for postgraduates to demonstrate some of their generic skills in communication, presentation, organization and networking. The day overall gives both postdoctoral researchers staff and postgraduates the opportunity to share best practice.

The standard of presentations given on the day was extremely high. The overall winners were awarded prizes such as a laptop computer, donated by UMIP and AstraZeneca. Runner up prizes (£250 to each speaker) were donated by Science Careers and Professor Barry Furr.

An exhibition comprising 99 posters by the Faculty's postgraduate students was also held on the day. This display

effectively highlighted the great breath of research ongoing in the Faculty, and a prize was given for the best poster.

On attending the Research Symposium to present the prizes, the President of the University, Professor Alan Gilbert commented: "On all the measures of success, this is a really exciting place to be – in research, in the world, not just in Manchester or the UK."

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## Code of Practice for Research Degrees

The Code of Practice sets out the University of Manchester's framework in relation to the management and coordination of postgraduate research degrees and defines minimum requirements to safeguard high standards of postgraduate research degree activity. The Code is divided into the following sections which provide or direct users to policy and guidance on all aspects of postgraduate research activity:

- Research Environment
- Applications and Admissions
- Registration and Induction
- Skills Training
- Supervision
- Progress and Review
- Changes to Degrees
- Submission and Examination
- Quality Assurance
- Collaboration

The Code is intended for use by academics, administrators and postgraduate research students and is revised on a regular basis in consultation with its users and the University's Graduate Education Group (GEG).

To view the Code of Practice for Research Degrees visit

[www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code)

If you require any further information or have any feedback relating to the Code of Practice or policies and procedures in graduate education, please contact Jo Heaps ([Joanna.Heaps@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.Heaps@manchester.ac.uk)) in the Graduate Education Team within the Research Office.



## Editor's Note

The festive season is upon us and this issue brings with it an array of informative articles on skills training activities taking place across the University.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this edition of STEPS, in particular to Elizabeth Wilkinson from the Careers and Employability Division, Dr Robert Phillips from MSEC and Gabriel Sayyed from the Teaching and Learning Support Office.

The next issue of STEPS will be available in February 2008 at

[www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/steps/](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/steps/)

Best wishes  
Claire Atherton  
[Claire.l.atherton@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.l.atherton@manchester.ac.uk)



## Manchester Science Enterprise Centre Skills Training Workshops

Postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers are increasingly finding the need for a more diverse range of skills in the workplace. Whether in academia or the commercial world, skills such as understanding finance, creating ideas and effective networking are invaluable. Manchester Science Enterprise Centre provide a range of workshops designed to provide researchers with the skills they need to succeed whatever their chosen career and maximise their attractiveness to potential employers.

Being enterprising involves using a set of transferable skills applicable to a wide range of jobs. In a large company, the need for new ideas is constant, with many products and services having a short life cycle. In a small company, researchers may have multiple responsibilities, including customer liaison, managing budgets and planning company strategy. In academia, many researchers often find that their discoveries have a commercial application and the money generated needs to be managed effectively in order to further fund their research.

'MSECs half-day workshops, focus on skills which will make researchers more enterprising and able to face the challenges provided by their future careers. The workshops currently being offered to researchers within the faculty of EPS are Starting a Business, Creativity and Networking.

### Starting a Business

This workshop involves working on an idea of the students' choice, possibly from their own subject areas, in groups and putting together an effective "Dragons Den" type presentation focusing on the commercial benefits. Comments from recent workshops included: "One thing I really liked was the way the workshop helped me to understand business related issues", "I will think about taking my idea forward" and "I feel I can be more confident and ready to risk more."

### Creating Ideas

Being innovative is recognised as important in any environment, whether in academia or the commercial world. This workshop will show you how to generate and evaluate ideas using several simple creative techniques. Comments included: "I will think differently about obstacles and reconsider any 'stupid' ideas" and "I will start looking at problems with a different view to try and find a solution."

### Networking Skills

Networking can seem like a daunting experience but it can be both rewarding and fun. Networking is an excellent way of finding a job, potential research collaborators or new suppliers and customers. This workshop will give you the chance to learn and improve your networking skills. Comments from attendees included: "It will help me to improve how I plan for meeting people that I have never met before" and "I now understand the importance of contacts, how to get them myself and how to make the best impression."

New workshops and dates will become announced during the year. Future workshop topics include intellectual property, marketing, finance and managing risk. They will be coordinated by Dr Robert Phillips at MSEC, from whom further information about workshop content can be obtained. [Robert.Phillips@Manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Robert.Phillips@Manchester.ac.uk)

For further information please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/msec](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/msec)

Author - Dr Robert Phillips



## Manchester Postgraduate Careers Blog

There's a new way to get careers news, comment, vacancies and deadline alerts for all our postgraduates – <http://manchesterpgcareers.wordpress.com>

I took my first tentative steps into the blogosphere at the end of September, inspired by reading two excellent blogs from Professor Tudor Rickards from Manchester Business School (<http://leaderswednesday.wordpress.com>) and Craig Laughton, one of our current Maths PhDs (<http://gooseania.blogspot.com>), both of which reassured me that blogging wasn't just about mad anoraks ranting in cyberspace.

Blogs are just a quick and easy way of adding information to a website with "posts" appearing in reverse chronological order – an ideal way to deliver informal, constantly changing careers information to our postgrads. It also has the advantage of allowing readers to add comments and give feedback.

Now I'm delving into the realms of RSS feeds, the site allows you to choose how you want to receive the information – browse the website, add a feed to a feedreader so the content comes to you (for those who've discovered services like Google Reader) or, if you're inbox isn't full enough already, you can get updates e-mailed to you.

With news added several times a week, so far I've highlighted current job and scholarship vacancies and employer events which are aimed at postgrads, shared "inside information" from employers gleaned from the recruitment fairs and covered tips for seeking out research jobs and employers.

There are obviously some readers out there (over 3000 hits in the first month) but the next big push is to reach as many of our postgrads as possible. Have a look, whether you like what you see or want something different, just let me know by posting a comment - I'd be delighted to hear from you.



Author - Elizabeth Wilkinson, Head of Postgraduate Career Development, MLP, Careers and Employability Division.

## GradConnect - Virtual Postgraduate Bridge

The Faculties of Humanities and Medical and Human Sciences are working collaboratively on a Roberts funded initiative which aims to create a facebook style social networking space for part-time postgraduate researchers at The University of Manchester.

The 'environment' will provide part-time postgraduate researchers (PGRs) with a discussion forum to support each other and the skills to develop a 'voice' within the UoM research community. Inevitably, beneficial face to face meetings and discussions will evolve out of the contacts made. Postgraduates will be able to connect, collaborate, discover and contribute resources and information through

their connections. Users will begin by creating a digital identity: describing themselves and their professional/ research interests. There will also be the ability to publish a podcast and a way for users to subscribe to content elsewhere on the web. Communication facilities including blogs, wikkies and discussion forums which will provide students with a range of tools and allow them to find and link up with other learners and practitioners with similar interests in the two faculties, thus creating a learning community. The environment will contain signposting for all relevant online and real-time UoM support relevant to PGRs (from induction through to career choice); signposting to all relevant PGR school activities plus links to relevant national and international web-material.

"This sounds like a very helpful move. I only make it to campus about once a month. I would therefore value a place to be in contact with other postgraduates" (Part-time PGR comment about the proposed GradConnect)

Gradconnect will 'go live' mid 2008 and groups will be researching its effectiveness as a tool for increasing interdisciplinary dialogue within our part-time postgraduate research community. Training will be available for those who feel they need it, though anyone who is familiar with social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace will take to it easily.

"What's exciting about GradConnect is the flexibility the system will offer to our students to use it in the way they want to. Layering social stimulation into a mechanism enabling them to discuss PGR issues is only the beginning. What follows is entirely up to them. (Gabriel Sayyed)

For further information on GradConnect please contact Dee Gilmore-Stewart at [Dee.Gilmore-Stewart@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Dee.Gilmore-Stewart@manchester.ac.uk)

## Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences – Training Activities

Effective Presentations	12 February 2008 (2 days) 14 February 2008 (2 days) 19 February 2008 (2 days)
Academic Writing	11 February 2008 13 February 2008 18 February 2008 20 February 2008
Planning the Final Year	25 February 2008
Publishing Academic Papers	18 February 2008
Teaching in Higher Education	20 February 2008
Introduction to Research	28 January 2008 (2 days)
Starting a Business	7 February 2008
Demonstrating Teaching for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – DAY 2 Practical Experience	10 December 2008 9am – 1pm MUL Stopford Building
<b>Online Courses</b>	
Endnote Referencing and Bibliographic Software	
Online Academic Writing	
For more details about the above visit <a href="http://www.manchester.ac.uk/eps/grads">www.manchester.ac.uk/eps/grads</a>	
To register, email <a href="mailto:eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk">eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk</a>	

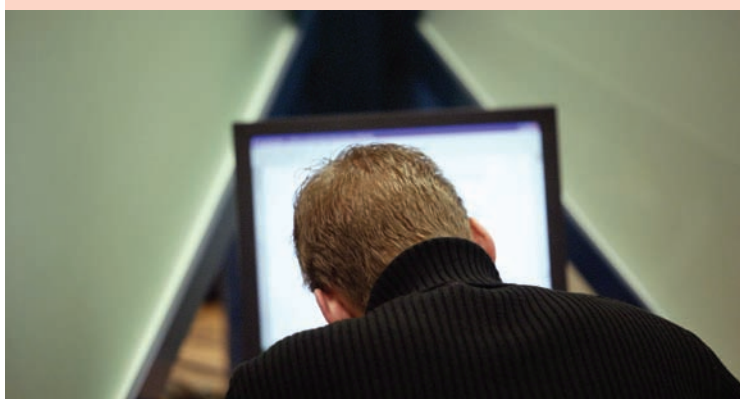
## Faculty of Life Sciences – Training Activities

### Introducing the on-line Graduate Training Programme

The electronic Graduate Training Programme (eGTP) was introduced last September and following the success of eGTP, all Postgraduates can now benefit from this 'e' resource via the FLS intranet.

There are a variety of short on-line courses and generic skills training including: Bioinformatics, Statistics and Data-handling, Academic Literacy and Health and Safety – with specialist sections on: GMO, Personal Safety, VDUs & Managing Stress. Other resources are also available on Public Engagement and Intellectual Property, and students can re-visit and watch the highlights from previous PhD workshops, Away Days or the Research Symposium.

Should you have any queries about these resources or would like to find out more please contact Davina Whitnall on: [davina.whitnall@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:davina.whitnall@manchester.ac.uk)



## Faculty of Humanities – Training Activities

Academic Reading in French	28 January 2008
Academic Reading in German	28 January 2008
Effective Presentations	29 January 2008
Presentations, Practice and Feedback – Yr 1 students (Yrs 1-2 PT)	8 January 2008 30 January 2008
Psychometric Questionnaires	24 January 2008
Introduction to Time Management	4 February 2008
Planning your PhD Project	4 February 2008
Academic Writing 1 – Insights into the Writing Process	5 February 2008
Improve your Time Management	5 February 2008
Keeping your PhD on Track	5 February 2008
Academic Writing 2 – Academic Style, Clarity and Flow	12 February 2008
Working with your Supervisor	12 February 2008
For further information on the Humanities training programme or to book onto a training course, please visit <a href="http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training">www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training</a>	

## Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences – Training Activities

Third Year Workshop	10 January 2008
Introduction to Statistics – Lecture 1	24 January 2008
Introduction to Research 'Speed PhD'	28 & 29th January 2008
Academic Writing in English – Unit 11 (International students)	30 January 2008
Introduction to Statistics – Lecture 2	31 January 2008
Optimising your Scientific Poster	5 February 2008
Academic Writing in English – Unit 12 (International students)	6 February 2008
Academic Writing in English – Unit 13 (International students)	13 February 2008
Academic Writing in English – Unit 14 (International students)	20 February 2008
Effective Presentation Skills Course – Day 1	21 February 2008
Academic Writing in English – Unit 15 (International students)	27 February 2008
Effective Presentation Skills Course – Day 2	29 February 2008
For more information on the Faculty of Life Sciences Graduate Training Programme visit; <a href="http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/research/GTP">www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/research/GTP</a>	

## UK GRAD Programme

### 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. GRADschools include a mix of;

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



## GRADschools 2008 - Please visit [www.grad.ac.uk](http://www.grad.ac.uk) for further information

21 – 24 January 2008	3 days residential (Local)	Barony Castle	Scottish Borders
10 – 13 March 2008	3 days residential (Local)	Scalford Hall	Melton Mowbray
17 – 20 March 2008	4 days, non residential (Local)	Med Sciences Teaching	University of Oxford Centre
17 – 20 March 2008	3 day residential (Local)	Scalford Hall	Melton Mowbray
1 – 3 April 2008	3 days, non residential (Local)	Samuel Armstrong	The University of Manchester
1 – 4 April 2008	4 day residential (Local)	Edinburgh	Edinburgh Business School Heriot Wyatt University
18 – 21 April 2008	4 day residential (Local)	Cambridge	Cambridge Wyboston Lakes
22 – 24 April 2008	3 days, non residential (Local)	Birmingham	Birmingham Business School
12 – 16 May 2008	4 days, residential (Local)	UWE	Buckland Hall Retreat Centre
13 – 16 May 2008	3 days residential (National)	Windermere	Brathay Hall
27 – 29 May 2008	3 days, non residential (Local)	Loughborough	Loughborough University
17 – 21 June 2008	3 days residential (National)	Windermere	Brathay Hall
17 – 19 June 2008	3 days, non residential (Local)	Samuel Armstrong	The University of Manchester
24 – 27 June 2008	4 days, residential (Local)	Edinburgh	Edinburgh Business School Heriot Wyatt University
2 – 4 July 2008	3 days, non residential (Local)	Essex	Essex University, Colchester
22 – 25 July 2008	3 days residential (National)	Bournemouth	Carrington House Hotel Bournemouth
28 – 31 July 2008	4 days residential (Local)	North East	St Aidans College, University of Durham
28 Oct – 1 Nov 2008	4 days residential (National)	Bournemouth	Carrington House Hotel Bournemouth
18 – 22 November 2008	4 days residential (National)	Windermere	Brathay Hall

## UK GRAD – PGR Tips

### Defeating self-sabotage, getting your PhD finished

'Want to get your life and PhD in control? Sometimes things just don't work out – your computer crashes and you forgot to back up, your supervisor doesn't understand you, and you have so many demands on your time it's almost a conspiracy to keep you from getting your PhD finished. Maybe it's just bad luck. But if it keeps happening to you, and you are regularly over-committed or always leaving things to the last minute, there's a chance that you are deliberately self-sabotaging. Common self-sabotaging behaviours include:

- **Over-committing:** You take on so many things that your high priority goals (eg your PhD) suffer
- **Procrastination:** You put off important or necessary tasks, often until the last minute.
- **Perfectionism:** You want your work to be of the highest and most groundbreaking standard.
- **Busyness:** You look and feel very busy, but in reality only less important things (such as emails and referencing) are actually getting done.
- **Disorganisation:** You don't have a routine or system that makes managing your time and life easier.

#### If you think you might be self-sabotaging

##### Be aware (but not alarmed!)

Sometimes just being aware that you're being perfectionist or over-committing can be enough to stop you doing it. So review your behaviours and try to identify patterns that get in your way.

##### Take action

If you procrastinate, set yourself deadlines. If you over-commit, try to get rid of some demands on your time.

##### Challenge your thinking

Our thinking determines our behaviour. If you're finding it hard to change your behaviour, then you need to challenge some of the assumptions and thoughts you may have.

#### Use the ultimate defeating SELF-SABotage tool

##### Set a specific goal

What is the next specific, practical thing that you could be doing to get closer to finishing your PhD?

What would your supervisor suggest? E.g. finish analysing my most recent data, or get started on the first section of chapter 3.

##### Earmark times to do this

Specify the actual times and dates you can do this in the next week e.g. Mon 9-12, Fri 9-1.

##### Look back to see what has stopped you in the past

Use the self-sabotage checklist to determine what your typical behaviour patterns are – these are likely to stop you achieving your goal.

##### Fire away!

Have a go, do your best to achieve the goal you set - If it didn't work...

##### So, what happened?

What happened instead of working on your PhD? e.g. I went and helped someone who knocked on my door, or I just thought I'd check one email, but I kept going

##### Accurate thinking?

What were you thinking at the time? Were these thoughts accurate?

##### Back to the start again

Now go back and start again with a goal. Getting a PhD requires a lot of persistence!

\*Extracts from "Defeating self-sabotage, getting your PhD finished" by

Hugh Kearns & Maria Gardiner, Staff Development and Training Unit, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia [www.flinders.edu.au/staffdev/phd.htm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/staffdev/phd.htm)

## Speed PhD: Introduction to Research Course Sets New Attendance Record in EPS



October is always a busy time for the Graduate Development Scheme (GraDS) trainers, but this year saw a record breaking 322 new postgraduate research students in the Faculty of EPS attend the Speed PhD Introduction to Research workshop.

The workshop combines talks on research methodology and ethics, PhD regulations, presentations by essential University services and sets the challenge of completing a mock PhD. Students carry out some research, publish a paper, attend a conference, have a viva and even produce a thesis – all in two days.

Postgraduate researchers are also introduced to a reflective learning philosophy and to the full range of skills expected of PhDs by the University and the working world.

So what did postgraduates have to say about the workshop, "Digestible and practical advice", "It helps me to organise exactly what I need to do in the future." "This will help ensure I am on the right track".

To find out more details about this workshop and others available through GraDS, visit: [www.manchester.ac.uk/eps/grads](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/eps/grads)

## Feedback

Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

**Dr Jim Boran** – Graduate Development Manager  
[jim.Boran@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jim.Boran@manchester.ac.uk)

Faculty of Humanities

**Esme Caulfield** – Research Training Officer  
[Esme.Dodson@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Esme.Dodson@manchester.ac.uk)

Faculty of Life Sciences

**Davina Whitnall** – eGTP Officer  
[Davina.Whitnall@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Davina.Whitnall@manchester.ac.uk)

Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences

**Dr Rachel Cowen** – Researcher Training Facilitator  
[Rachel.I.Cowen@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.I.Cowen@manchester.ac.uk)

## Feedback

We would welcome all feedback on the content as well as ideas for forthcoming issues of STEPS.

The next issue of STEPS will be distributed in February 2008

Please email any thoughts and comments you may have to Claire Atherton at [Claire.I.atherton@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.I.atherton@manchester.ac.uk)