

Skills Training Essentials
for PGR Students

STEPS

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Research to Enterprise Summit



Left to right - Alasdair Rawsthorne, Dr Rob Phillips, Rod Benson, Lynn Sheppard, Maggie Philbin, Ian Livingstone, Luke Johnson and Professor Rod Coombs.

The first Research to Enterprise Summit took place on Tuesday 17th June at the Whitworth Hall with almost 500 postgraduate students and research staff from all Faculties in attendance. The aim of the Summit, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and organised by Manchester Science Enterprise Centre (MSEC), was to raise awareness of enterprise for researchers at the university, inspiring them to become more enterprising in whatever their career holds for them in the future; be it academia, industry, a technology transfer position or in starting their own business.

The event was hosted by Maggie Philbin, TV and radio presenter and formerly a reporter on the BBC's *Tomorrows World*, who took us through a timeline of inventions such as the CD, the internet and DNA fingerprinting as well as showing some clips of some of the more bizarre inventions which failed to make it, to the amusement of the audience, before introducing each of the speakers.

Rod Benson, founder of Imagen Biotech, based at the Manchester Bioscience Incubator, described his journey from PhD. student and postdoc in cell biology to AstraZeneca. It was their policy of outsourcing some of their research that encouraged him to start his company in high content biology, which allows potential drug candidates to be screened earlier in the drug discovery process, thereby saving researchers valuable time and money.

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Research to Enterprise Summit

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Alasdair Rawsthorne, Professor in computer science at The University of Manchester, explained how he persevered for several years with his idea of creating a method of allowing PC software to be able to run on Apple Macs and vice versa, before creating his company Transitive, which now has software in all Intel microchips, numbering many millions worldwide.

Ian Livingstone took us through his journey from Games Workshop operating out of a small flat in West London selling fantasy adventure games such as Dungeons and Dragons to Eidos, the company behind the world famous Lara Croft and the Tomb Raider computer games.



Luke Johnson spoke about his successes and failures during his entrepreneurial journey and the importance of being prepared to take risks based on his time in charge of Pizza Express, Strada, The Ivy and now as chairman of Channel Four and Risk Capital Partners investment company.

Professor Rod Coombs, Vice-President for Innovation and Economic Development at the university, closed the event with the launch of the Research to Enterprise website for those interested in how to take the next step (www.rte.manchester.ac.uk). The website is a focal point for information, useful links and event listings for enterprise activities at The University of Manchester.

The feedback received from the events attendees was extremely positive and a few of their comments are featured below;

"It was really inspiring and I feel I have learnt a lot from successful people who have openly shared their experiences."

"It was really encouraging for us (who have just set up a company 7 months ago!) and would definitely be looking forward to taking part in similar events."

Dr Robert A. Phillips, MSEC

Editor's Note

It's certainly been a busy summer if not a very sunny one!! This issue gives you an update on recent events and activities taking place across the University and the HEI sector, including the Research Enterprise Summit, Pathways event and launch of the new Vitae Programme.

There are also lots of dates for your diaries with all the forthcoming opportunities for you to take advantage of, so get your pens at the ready.

Thanks to all those who contributed to this issue and for those wishing to submit an article for a future issue please do get in touch with me.

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

www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/steps/

Best wishes
Claire Hughes
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Pathways Event 2008 - Championing the Career Development of Researchers



'Pathways' was the inaugural career development event run across the University to support early career researchers. It was supported by each faculties dedicated researcher training teams and the careers service. It focused on different career pathways available to researchers and provided in depth support and training for career management and development.

"I attended PhD Options last year and very much enjoyed it, but this year was even better; Thanks for a wonderful job!"

Professor Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, launched the event by talking frankly about her career choices giving an insight into how she has followed her passions and become such a successful academic.

The rest of the day was comprised of expert panel sessions. More than 90 speakers shared their research experiences and careers advice explaining how they navigated their way to the careers they now hold. Each expert had filled in a bubble CV that charted their education and career choices and how they had secured their current positions. Researchers were provided with the bubble CV booklet in advance of the sessions which enabled them to pick and choose sessions tailored to their own career aspirations and create a bespoke timetable.



"What can I say, but a great big thank you –you managed to have people there with careers I'm interested in but also areas that I hadn't thought of and I came away with different ideas"

After a weekend to reflect on the vast array of options available to them Day 2 comprised of targeted workshops and talks from external and internal trainers and experts to provide researchers with the essential skills to secure their desired future careers.

"I would like to thank the organisers for inviting me as a guest speaker; I enjoyed the whole day and was very impressed by the whole event"

Workshops included marketing your CV, critical thinking, confidence building and interview skills, strategic academic career planning and the do's and don'ts of funding applications.

There was also an employability zone, with information and advice from schemes and organizations offering opportunities for researchers to expand their CVs by adding evidence of skills. Researchers also had the chance to talk to academics, careers consultants and others about prioritising their career plans.

For further information about the event and to access the CV booklet resources visit the dedicated event website

www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/trainingteam/pathways

Dr Judith Williams & Dr Rachel Cowen
Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences Research Training Team

Developing the Postgraduate Manager

Honing leadership, management, team working, planning, presentation, negotiation, decision making and self-reflective skills is something that we all strive to achieve, but for 82 postgraduate research students these skills were put to the test in an intense three-day workshop that would challenge even the most proficient manager!

Running for an eighth successful year, the UK GRAD accredited school – “Developing the Postgraduate Manager”, ran in April and again in June. Though the specific course task for next year is a closely guarded secret (you have to attend for yourself to find out), we can reveal that this year postgraduates addressed the themes “Can Research Save the Planet” and “From Managers to Leaders”. Exploring these themes in a fun and memorable case study provided postgraduate researchers with an opportunity to practise different management and team working styles and explore what it means to be a good leader as well as a good manager.

Additionally participants were encouraged to reflect on their own and each other's practices, analysing strengths and weaknesses and giving, accepting and using positive feedback.

Hosted by the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the course attracted postgraduates from across the disciplines from medicine to engineering to the arts enhancing team interactions and opportunities for improving communication skills.



One participant said of the course, “It gave me the chance to interact with others, respect, listen, co-ordinate and improvise.” Another said, “It gives you the opportunity to realise things about yourself that you did not see before, especially as you are working in a different environment with different people.”

Dr Jim Boran, Course Director, echoes these thoughts, “When researchers step back from their day-to-day work projects and are given opportunities to move from their “comfort” zone of practised skills into new “stretch” zones of creativity and spontaneity they can find it to be an incredibly rewarding experience. It also demonstrates a willingness to learn, acquire skills and adapt – characteristics that any future employer will be keen to see.”

If you are interested in finding out about sessions taking place in 2009, send an email to eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk.

Dee-Ann Johnson
Graduate Development Scheme, EPS



Introducing the FLS Postgraduate Society

Adjusting to a new city and new lab as well as the switch from undergraduate life to postgraduate life is a daunting proposition for any new student in the faculty. Although individual lab groups make a great effort to welcome new students and help with these early adjustments, the transition is not always as straightforward as it seems. That is where the FLS Postgraduate Society steps in. The Society is currently up and running and coincides with the new intake of PhD students in September. The Society is currently headed by 6 PhD student reps - Robert Quinn and Hayley Campbell (Molecules to Cells), Tanja Torbica and Amanda Gallagher (Cells to Tissues), and Stephen Beesley and Elizabeth Pawson (Tissues to Organisms). These students, with the support of FLS, plan to organise a series of events, both social and academic in nature, to help welcome and support new students and encourage interaction of new and current students across the faculty.

One exciting event that will be taking place towards the latter part of 2008 will be the first of what is hoped will be an annual lecture, given by an eminent scientist. The initiative for this has come from the Postgraduate Society, in both selecting a guest and organising the event. We hope to invite prominent speakers of academic excellence as well as those with industrial/biotechnological experience with a solid background in science communication, in order to learn from their life's work and be inspired! A new social event is also in the pipeline - the FLS Postgraduate Ball. The Ball is designed to unite all members of the faculty; students, post-docs and staff, for one bucks-fizz fuelled night of dancing and entertainment.

The FLS Postgraduate Society is currently promoting a new mentoring scheme which supports the integration of new PhD students into FLS and the PhD programme. During induction week, each new PhD student will be assigned a student mentor who works in a similar field to the student. Mentors will be the first port of call for students, in the case of problems or queries about academic life in FLS. Regular meetings will be held between mentor and student to allow progress monitoring and to allow any issues to be addressed. It is hoped that the scheme will be successful in allowing the induction of new students into the faculty to be more enjoyable.

The team is always open to your comments and suggestions and is looking forward to seeing you all at their first organized event- watch this space! For further information please contact any of the following people:

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Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences – Training Activities

Introduction to Research	Throughout October
Academic Writing	10 November 12 November 17 November
Effective Presentations	13 & 19 November 19 & 21 November 21 & 24 November 24 & 26 November 26 & 28 November
Creating Ideas	20 November
Starting a Business	25 November
Networking	27 November
Teach in Higher Education	2 December
Paper Publication	4 December
Final Year Plan	6 December

For more information about the Graduate Development Scheme, please visit:
www.graduatededucation.eps.manchester.ac.uk/graddev/research

Faculty of Humanities – Training Activities

2nd Year Induction	1 October
Word and Endnote	6 – 10 October
Personal Development Planning	13 October
Planning Your PhD Project – PM1	14 October
Keeping Your PhD on Track – PM2	20 October
Planning Your Final – PM3	20 October
Reactivating Your Writing Skills	21 October
Effective Presentations	27 October
Improve Your Presentation Skills	28 October
Introduction to Powerpoint	3 November
Academic Writing 1	4 November

For further information on the Humanities training, please visit:
www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/humnet/acaserv/pgresearch/training

Faculty of Life Sciences – Training Activities

Academic Literacy Programme & Intro to Graduate Training On-line Courses	23 – 25 September
Radiation Protection and GMO training	25 September
Faculty Research Symposium	26 September
Academic Literacy Programme & Intro to Graduate Training On-line Courses (*Provisional – depends on demand)	2 * & 28 October
Graduate Training Programme & New Student Induction (*Provisional – depends on demand)	2 * & 28 October
BSF Training	Starting 6 October
Demonstrating Training for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants - Day 1 (Provisional)	30 October 6 November 22 November
Demonstrating Training for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants – Day 2	8 December
Day 2 - Practical Experience	

For more information on the Faculty of Life Sciences Graduate Training Programme visit: **www.ls.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/skillsdevelopment**

Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences – Training Activities

Publish or Perish	11 September
Nursing Speed PhD	23 & 24 September
Welcome Event	24 September
Nursing Speed PhD	26 September
Speed PhD	30 September & 1 October 7 & 8 October 14 & 15 October 21 & 22 October
Research Ethics Study Day	31 October
Mini 1st Year Workshop	11 November
Academic Writing	27 November
Academic Writing	11 December

For more information on the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences Graduate Training Programme visit: **www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/research/GTP**

John Rylands University Library – Training Activities

Web of Science	6 October 13 November
Endnote	7 October 23 October
Scopus	22 October 26 November
British Parliamentary Papers Online	4 November
Finding electronic journal articles	28 October 19 November

For further information on the JRUL training programme and to book onto a course please visit: www.library.manchester.ac.uk/usingthelibrary/researchers

Plagiarism on-line - an on-line module to tackle the on-line culture

The Faculty of Life Sciences has developed an on-line training programme that addresses what is Plagiarism? Explores the 'grey' areas of copying and fraud in detail and addresses some of the cultural barriers that postgraduates may face.

The on-line course provides information and experiences in a variety of different media, such as audio as well as written information. Real life examples and consequences of students who have plagiarised, self test questions, interactive exercises and student declarations are featured.

The course has been rolled out to both Undergraduate and Postgraduate communities and has proved particularly useful to non native English speaking students who understand better through audio as well written information. The examples and 'areas of grey' help to address some of the cultural influences students face such as the 'information ready' world we live in and uses of the intranet for copying and sourcing information.

There are plans to expand the module to include sections on Academic expectations and how these vary from country to country.

For further information contact: davina.whital@manchester.ac.uk

VITAE Launched

Vitae, a new organisation to champion the professional and career development of researchers, was launched on 25 June by Ian Pearson MP alongside the new Concordat to support the career development of researchers. Funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation, Vitae builds on previous work by the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD to build capacity in the HE sector to support researchers. Delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities, Vitae will work with higher education institutions, researchers and employers to make real and positive change.



6 October	Careers in Focus: Academia	Manchester
28 October to 1 November 2008	National GRADSchool Bournemouth	4 day residential, The Carrington House Hotel, Bournemouth
18 November to 22 November 2008	National GRADSchool Windermere	3 day residential, Brathay Hall

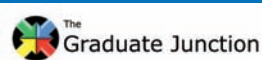
Visit www.vitae.ac.uk/1151/Courses--events.html for further information on all the above events

The programme has four key aims:

- Championing the development and implementation of effective policy
- Enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resource
- Providing access to development opportunities and resources
- Building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda

For more information about the new Vitae programme, please visit the website at www.vitae.ac.uk. A fuller set of activities will be launched at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference on 8-9 September 2008 www.researcherconferences.org.uk

The Graduate Junction



"The virtual meeting place for all postgraduate research students"

The Graduate Junction is a brand new website for Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral researchers working in any field all over the world, helping researchers make contact with others who share similar research interests and facilitate networking opportunities. Graduate Junction aims to promote collaboration and improve productivity, as well as providing useful advice about the research process.

To access the Graduate Junction please visit www.graduatejunction.com

SOURCE Event 2008 – 26 September

Now in its 2nd successful year, The Source Event is a dedicated science career fair that combines a dynamic exhibition with conference and workshop sessions. Taking place on 26, September 2008 at the Business Design Centre, London the programme is divided into 3 streams: Graduate, Post Doc and Non-traditional careers.

Those attending will be able to meet with potential employers who are offering hundreds of genuine vacancies and go to plenary and workshop sessions, which will provide a unique opportunity to meet high profile scientists and gain careers advice. To find out more please visit www.source-event.com

Case Study - Careers Intensive for PhDs Researchers

You may know the saying that many people spend longer planning their holidays than planning and managing their career. Some PhD students in EPS showed they're not in that category by taking part in an intensive workshop to hone their career development skills. Presented by Elizabeth Wilkinson, from the University Careers Service, the two-part workshop covered "convincing employers to interview you" and then "convincing employers that you've got the right stuff".

The workshop first highlighted the importance of successfully marketing your PhD. Participants were asked to think about their academic work, work history and other activities and interests to show an employer evidence of a host of skills including planning, problem solving, team working, communication, resourcefulness, creativity and diplomacy. With this evidence to hand, postgraduates were equipped with practical guidelines for writing effective CVs, applications and cover letters. One of the top tips of the day was to be clear about the audience for whom you are writing – this means different CVs for different jobs! The Make Me Look Good session gave participants the chance to give and hear back honest and objective advice from their peers for improving their CV.



The second part of the day focused on both preparing for employer assessments (psychometric, ability and aptitude tests) and on interview skills, taking participants through key questions from the classic starter "tell me about yourself", to motivation and behavioural questions. Participants experienced the importance of presentation and personal approach. Smiling at the start of an interview, confident body language, good eye-contact and the tone of speech would all help to make the right impression.

So what did participants have to say about the workshop? "Good information for job hunting preparation supported by practical advice", "It will help me to understand the interview environment and how to deal with that to succeed" and "Of all the careers advice and workshops I've been to this one was by far the most useful and helpful".

Dee-Ann Johnson, Graduate Development Scheme, EPS

UK GRAD – PGR Tips

Effective planning and time management

As a PGR you will probably be offered a variety of project management and time management courses via your institution. It is very easy to feel that you are much too busy to attend a time-management course but this approach can be self-defeating. Success does not come to those who put in the most hours but to those who make the most of the hours that they do put in. By spending some time thinking about how you manage your time and attending a time management course can be a really good way to achieve this. In the meantime why not try out some of the following tips to help you make the most of your time:

- Identify and minimise distractions – avoid spending hours chatting face to face and on social networking sites, and checking your emails as they come in. If you struggle with this find somewhere else to work, buy some ear plugs or turn off your email altogether. Try and give yourself uninterrupted periods of time to focus on your research
- Control your paperwork - use the 'Velcro fingers strategy' once you have picked up a piece of paper do not put it down until you have used the 4 D's :
 - Do it: immediately
 - Delay it: find time in your diary and file it
 - Delegate it: can someone else do it?
 - Ditch it: throw it away
- Devote time to planning - spend time thinking about how you are going to divide up your time and what your priorities and goals are, it is well worth the investment in time. Remember to reward yourself when you achieve your goals. When you fail to achieve goals try to analyse why rather than punishing yourself, is there something you can change? Try the following planning activities to see if they work for you.
 - Spend 10 minutes at the start of each day jotting down what you want to achieve from that day. This will focus your activity and help you to make the transition from one task to another much easier.
 - Spend an hour every Friday summarising what you have achieved this week and considering where you need to start next week.
 - Spend half a day every month preparing a one page report for your supervisor outlining what you have achieved this month and how it fits into your overall plan for completion.
- Record the hours you actually work – for one week note the time you spend on each activity in your day: lunch, writing, experiments, recreational internet use, making coffee or chatting with colleagues and friends. Many people are surprised how little time they are actually spending on their research. By prioritising research related activities during the day you will limit the need to spend evenings and weekends on it.
- Work regular hours – working nine to five and taking a lunch hour will mean that you have a reasonable work/life balance and will make steady progress. 35-40 hours a week should be enough for you to complete your research if you are structured and disciplined about how you use that time. Binge working will generally be followed by periods of inaction or health problems and high levels of stress. Research is a marathon, not a sprint and you need to avoid burnout.

For more information visit www.vitae.ac.uk

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