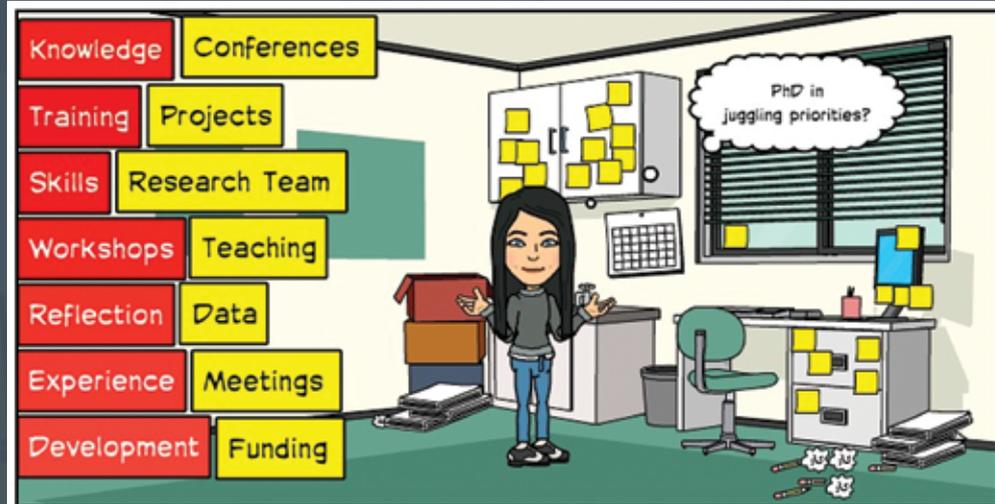




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Issue 5 | Winter 2013

Doctoral Times

For Doctoral & Higher Research Degree Students

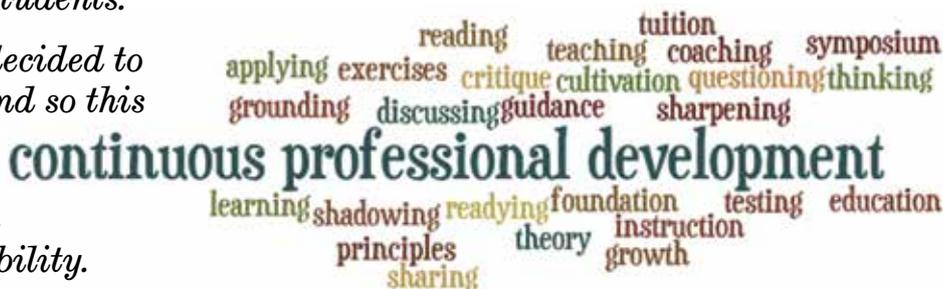
Edition focus: Continuing Professional Development

Welcome

Welcome to the fifth edition of 'Doctoral Times', a publication specifically for doctoral and higher research degree students at the University of Sheffield.

At its inception in 2010, three doctoral students were commissioned to find out what PGRs wanted from Doctoral Times - the themes were: career profiles of successful doctorates, content related to employability and transferable skills and information about events for doctoral students.

For this edition, we have decided to go back to the beginning and so this edition is brought to you through the themes of continuous professional development and employability.



Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a broad term understood in different ways by different people. The above 'wordle' provides a sense of what can be involved and we hope this edition will give further insights into what it can be and why it is important!

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Shaping the publication

In the next edition, the focus will be selected based on the findings of a recent further survey of the PGR community. Our hope is this will ensure Doctoral Times encompasses the breadth of topics readers want to read about!

We love feedback, input, steer, ideas – in summary, we want to hear the PGR voice!

To be part of the next publication of Doctoral Times, which will be available in 2014, please email grc@sheffield.ac.uk – we will welcome writers, organisers and editors!

Thanks go to all who have responded to the call for articles for this edition.

GRADUATE RESEARCH CENTRE

A recently refurbished and centrally located space, the Dainton Graduate Research Centre offers research students dedicated and bookable workspaces at the heart of the campus.

The centre has been designed with research students' needs in mind. It has wireless connectivity, social space with soft seating, flexible work space, a seminar room and kitchen facilities.

If you are interested in looking around with a view to using the space, you can contact us at grc@sheffield.ac.uk

CPD: The workshop approach

Sarah Bell, Researcher Development Manager for the Faculties of Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences, tells us about a new University-wide initiative to support postgraduate researchers as they prepare for their vivas.

Can you record your viva?

Can I ever answer “I don’t know”?

Should I show off?

What happens if I am paralysed by panic?

These are just some of the questions posed by participants in a recent viva preparation workshop.

The half-day session, **Viva Survivor**, was led by Dr Nathan Ryder, host of the **Viva Survivor** podcasts (<http://viva-survivors.com>). The workshop aimed to dispel some of the anxieties that researchers inevitably have about their viva and to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to do justice to themselves and their research on the day.

Format – a combination of group discussion, individual planning and having a go!

- A comprehensive Q&A session, covering topics that many researchers feel uncomfortable about addressing with their supervisor.
- Supporting participants to develop practical, workable strategies to prepare for the viva, looking at the type of questions likely to be asked and considering ways of tackling them
- The opportunity to be thrown in at the deep end and ‘grilled’ in a mini viva.

Tony Prince, Postgraduate Researcher in English Literature provides his reflection on undertaking CPD.

Writing Articles for Publication: a Workshop for Postgraduate Students

I attended this workshop in July of this year, hoping to learn more about the business of academic publishing and to get some practical advice on how to maximise my chances of being successful when submitting work for publication.

I approached the day with some trepidation, feeling uninformed on this subject and expecting to find out that the process would be even more difficult and the chances of succeeding even more remote than I imagined them to be in advance.

My doubts were soon allayed once the session began. The presentations were very polished, professional, lively and engaging! We were taken through the whole process of publication in a way that was very

Outcomes – can a three hour workshop really make a difference?

Here’s what your PGR colleagues had to say:

“Attending Viva Survivor helped me to explore vague fears and uncertainty. The workshop gave me a much better sense of what is expected of me, the purpose of the viva and how to prepare. I will definitely be going back over the list of generic questions before the now-less-dreaded day.” (Iona Hine, Biblical Studies)

“Viva Survivor was very helpful for me. It let me know what to expect from my viva and, in particular, how to prepare for it and how to handle the stress beforehand.” (Yulei Weng, Economics)

“I found [Viva Survivor] really useful. It gave me a good overview of the process and made me feel more prepared for my viva. It was useful to be able to practice answering the kind of questions we might encounter and helped me think more carefully about some aspects of my thesis.” (Christine Wallis, English)

How do we know there is a need?

Initially, I arranged viva preparation workshops for PGRs in the faculties of Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, after discussions with researchers about their learning and development priorities.

Following the success of Viva Survivor last year and in response to demand from researchers in other faculties, the workshop has been opened up to PGRs from across the University as part of its **Think Ahead** development programme (see page 10 for further information), with around 150 final year doctoral researchers set to participate over the coming academic year.

detailed and comprehensive and here the facilitator’s experience of working within the trade was invaluable. It enabled her to tell us a ‘warts and all’ insider’s story, with really handy tips and suggestions. Moreover, she was also very enthusiastic about enabling early careers researchers to overcome barriers to publication, responding very fully and thoughtfully to questions and concerns.

The session was also very practical, in that it enabled us to analyse a proposal of our own and of a colleague for strengths and weaknesses by matching them to the type of criteria publishers’ referees commonly apply when assessing the quality of submissions. I especially enjoyed the way in which we explored specific ways of phrasing proposals to achieve maximum effect.

To my surprise, I left the session with a real sense that I now had a thorough understanding of the nature of the publishing industry and how to give myself the best chance of getting work published. The session was a real learning experience, without being even remotely gruelling!

CPD: Research Ethics & Integrity

Part time PGR student Peggy Haughton interviews Lindsay Unwin from Research & Innovation Services to find out more about this compulsory CPD.

Peggy: What is research integrity about?

Lindsay: It encompasses being honest and ethical, professional and rigorous, respectful and responsible, critical of yourself and others as well as being collegial and engaging in open discussions about your research with colleagues. It applies to all research – not just research that involves human participants, personal data or human tissue (like the ethics review procedures).

Peggy: Why has this module been made compulsory?

Lindsay: Although the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP) is generally tailored to the individual, conducting research ethically and with integrity is considered so central to becoming a good researcher that the University has decided that this element of the DDP should in fact be a requirement for all PGRs. The module should be beneficial even for those who have done some form of ethics or integrity training before, perhaps at another institution, as it will clarify what's expected here at Sheffield and ensure that you are aware of all the key topics that your faculty has agreed are essential for you to know about.

Peggy: How is the Research Ethics & Integrity (RE&I) module delivered?

Lindsay: The module is provided through the DDP and is delivered at faculty level to ensure that the topics covered are sufficiently relevant to the disciplines within the faculty. Each faculty has a lead academic who runs the module, with support from a number of facilitators (often post-docs or 3rd year PGR students).

Peggy: What could I expect to gain from taking part?

Lindsay: The aim of the module is to encourage you to critically analyse and reflect on your actions and behaviours when conducting your research, ensuring that your research is conducted rigorously, responsibly and with respect to any others involved as well as to heighten your ethical sensitivity and reasoning - helping you to plan and prepare for ethical challenges you may face and to be able to manage these challenges when they arise.

In addition, being able to think and act ethically and with integrity is an important transferable skill, with many employers now explicitly stating their expectation that their employees have integrity.

More information can be found at:
www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr/ddportal/reit.

Engaging with ethics and integrity issues in research – Dr. François Guesdon and Dr. Pirashanthie Vivekananda-Schmidt (Research Ethics and Integrity Module leads in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health) explain how they implemented this vital learning experience in their faculty.

It is nationally recognised that postgraduate research training must include some form of ethics and integrity training. Therefore, in addition to its direct benefit to students who undertake such training, it is now an expectation of most research institutions when hiring for research positions.

Three years ago, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health asked us to develop a new DDP module in six months. This was an exciting opportunity but also a very significant challenge for us in many respects. First, we had to work from scratch as very little prior teaching in this area had been done in the faculty before. Second, the programme had to meet the needs of all the departments within the faculty. Thirdly and perhaps the most challenging aspect, we had to recruit a team of post-doctoral facilitators to deliver this module to a large number of students.

A light-touch introduction to ethical thinking

We designed this programme with the following priorities in mind:

Active learning in small groups and the development of critical reflection - the objective is to encourage participants to articulate their viewpoints and reflect on them in the light of input provided by others.

Multidisciplinary discussions - we make sure that each study group draws participants from several departments within the faculty. This provides the groups with a wide variety of experiences and perspectives, ranging from social sciences (Human Communication), basic biology (Oncology, Neurosciences etc.) to clinical research (Nursing, Dentistry) and public health (SchARR).

Keep it light-touch, minimizing demands on precious student time - the module requires attendance at only five sessions in an academic year.

Provide valuable teaching experience to the post-doc staff facilitating the small group sessions - we designed the teaching so that it is integrated with the teacher training available to post-doctoral staff as part of the "Think Ahead" programme. The module offers the opportunity to gain valuable small group facilitation experience.

What students and facilitators gain from the module

As would be expected of any compulsory unit, there are two groups of participants:

1. those who comply with the requirements of the module because they have to
2. those who welcome the opportunity for learning and endeavour to maximize the outcomes of the experience

We have been pleased to see the students' reflections arising as a result of the opportunity to critically examine the ethical aspects of their research work.

The RE&I module has now been in place since September 2011 and in this year's Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, 84% of respondents agreed that their understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during their programme.

There were students who fed-back that the training provided was too short and does not offer the opportunity for deeper engagement. One of the ideas we are now considering is the creation of a follow-on, more advanced module that would be available on a voluntary basis. We have also had very positive feedback from many of the facilitators who have helped with delivering the module, who felt that this was both a very valuable teaching experience but also an opportunity to learn and develop their research ethics knowledge through the facilitation opportunity. One in particular commented, "I wish I had this sort of training when I was a PhD student."

Want to know more?:
 Visit www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics.

CPD: The PGR conference approach

Dea Nielsen and Helen Cameron, Postgraduate Researchers in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health (MDH), share perspectives on bringing together researchers to discuss the PhD experience.

On September 16th, the MDH Postgraduate Student Forum hosted its inaugural **Postgraduate Researcher Day** in the Octagon Centre. The event was organised for students, by students, with the aim of creating a day of talks, workshops and activities that would be engaging for the range of doctoral candidates within the faculty.

The diversity of the faculty's research areas meant identifying activities that would be valuable for students with wide-ranging research interests was a challenge, so the Student Forum aimed to draw out areas of the PGR experience that students have in common.

The theme of the day

This was on how to make the most of the PhD experience, both during the process and after the viva. There was also a specific focus on practicing disseminating research to a lay audience, a skill that is increasingly critical and sought-after in researchers.

The format

The event itself included plenary speakers Professor Tony Ryan, Professor Rod Hose and Professor Richard Ross and CPD-focused workshops given by Dr Gavin Boyce, Dr Andrew Booth, Professor Allan Pacey, Mr Greg Oldfield and Ms Sarah Geere, covering aspects of publishing, networking, public engagement and promoting one's research in the media.

Students were also challenged to create a poster of their work that would be comprehensible to a non-specialist audience and to explain their thesis in a quick-fire, one-minute presentation entitled, '**Gone in 60 seconds**'.

The day concluded with a student version of the popular BBC programme, '**Question Time**', where audience members had the opportunity to hear from a selection of researchers fresh from their viva or in the very final stages of writing up.

Where was the CPD?



The event was a chance to use the multiplicity of the faculty's research interests to provide a platform for students to practice explaining their research to an audience from outside of their research fields.



It also gave students a chance to share in each other's research.



Students were afforded time to think critically about the benefits of doing a doctoral project, both for oneself and in terms of the potential applications of research for the wider world.



Listening to speakers provided new information and perspectives.



Arranging the day was also a rich learning experience for the organising committee itself. The Student Forum Committee comprised representatives from the faculty's five departments and provided first-hand knowledge of the process of establishing and running a large-scale event. Besides being a significant achievement and a bonus on any CV, it also gave student organisers the opportunity to meet and work with peers from across the faculty who may not otherwise have had reason to collaborate.

The future

Student feedback suggested the day was well-received and recommendations from attendees will be used to shape future versions of the event.



The PGR Day committee: back row from left David Baker, Sarah Kate Smith, Professor Ian Douglas, Helen Cameron, Sue Spriggs, Iain Huggins, front row from left Dea Nielsen, Laura Gibson, Lav Darda.



Plenary speakers: Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Tony Ryan, Professor Rod Hose, Professor Richard Ross and event host Professor Ian Douglas.

CPD: The PGR conference approach

Faculty of Engineering PGR Symposium – review by Eunice Lawton, Researcher Development Manager for the Faculty of Engineering.

The recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) highlighted the need for PGRs to be provided with opportunities to become involved in the wider research community beyond their own department. With this in mind, Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) within the Faculty of Engineering organised the first ever **University of Sheffield Engineering Symposium (USES)** that was held in May 2013.

The symposium had five clear aims:

- To spread awareness of current research across the faculty
- To share methods used by different research groups
- To promote possible links and collaboration
- To pose technical challenges and cries for help
- To showcase the work of the Faculty of Engineering to industry

By default, it provided an opportunity for PGRs to develop their networks, interdisciplinary work and to generate future collaborations.

The programme for the day included guest speakers from inside and outside of the university, flash presentations and poster displays. Delegates were asked to vote for their favourite poster to enable three prizes and a large amount of prestige to be awarded to the best entries! Large cash prizes and free pizza helped to entice contributions of over 50 posters and presentations and attracted over 300 participants on the day.

We are now planning a much larger event for 2014 to showcase our research excellence and have already booked the Octagon on 24th June 2014 for an all-day event. This will involve subject specific symposia in the morning and sessions focusing on interdisciplinary work in the afternoon. The afternoon will also feature speakers from professional bodies and industry.

PGRs will again be involved in the planning and organising of this event as well as others throughout the year, with representatives being recruited from within all the departments. If PGRs are interested in being involved in organising events for PGRs during the next year they should contact me, Eunice Lawton (e.lawton@sheffield.ac.uk / x22164) or check the webpage for details www.sheffield.ac.uk/faculty/engineering/research/thinkahead/pgrs.



Think Ahead inspires researchers to pursue a Healthcare Career – Dr. Lucy Lee, Researcher Development Manager for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health (MDH) reports.

Think Ahead organises, “a very inspiring careers event” - the **Healthcare Careers Expo 2013**, a tailored day for post-doctoral and PhD researchers across the University.

The Expo held in The Circle on the 5th June 2013 was a great success, with over 70 Postdoctoral and PhD student researchers attending from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health, Faculty of Science and even Aston University!

The Expo was organised by an enthusiastic team of PhD students from the Medical School (Sarah Hawtree, Jack Pearson, Daniel Cozens and Lisa Trollope), who initially came up with the idea for the event and members of the Researcher Professional Development Team.

The day began with a plenary talk on the landscape of Healthcare careers from the new Director of the Clinical Research Office, Dr Peter Sneddon. Presentations were then given by individuals who had all done a PhD before moving into a range of careers including healthcare scientists, along with those in the disciplines of medicine and dentistry.

Reflecting on the experience, one of the morning speakers, Mark Gidley commented, “I thought the careers day was a great idea and I would have found it extremely useful attending an event like this when I was a PhD student and it would have made finding out about other career options away from academic research much easier.”

During lunch attendees also had the opportunity to book slots with speakers for very useful 1:1 CV and career advice clinics. The afternoon continued with very informative and interesting talks from a range of speakers including Forensic Science, Public Health England, Genetics Councillor, NHS research coordination and NHS management.

Delegates' reflections

“I will now be more passionate about my career.”

“As a result of attending the healthcare career expo I have realised that a good career requires good planning.”

“The expo gave me clear, factual and practical information as to how to enter these careers.”

Expo 2014

Planning is currently underway for a university-wide ‘Careers in Professional Services’ expo event for Summer 2014, so visit the **Think Ahead** website (www.shef.ac.uk/ris/ecr) in the new year for updates.



CPD: Getting competitive

Juliet Harland, Industrial Knowledge Forge Administrator, provides her perspective on Biotechnology YES (Young Entrepreneur's Scheme).

A round-one win for University of Sheffield post-graduate researchers!

What is Biotechnology YES?

The scheme is a well-established competition designed to develop and test skills of the commercialisation of bioscience ideas among early career researchers. It is one of many strands of 'YES' competitions that cover Biotechnology, Digital Economy, Engineering, Energy & the Environment.

Teams work to develop a business plan for an 'imaginary' biotechnology start-up over a three-day workshop. On the final day they pitch for investment to a panel of experts from business, finance and academia, who assume the role of venture capitalists.

Although teams arrive at the workshop with their idea already shaped and researched, they engage in an intensive programme of presentations from experts in IP, patents, finance, marketing and commercialisation. They use this knowledge, as well as any advice they have received from support systems in their HEI (of which The University of Sheffield provide many) to revise and refine their business plan and produce their presentation.

Industrial research leaders have praised the scheme and identified that it is the ideal bridge between academia and industry and an excellent thing to have on your CV, whether you win or not. Competitors also get to join an extensive LinkedIn network of past participants and current and previous mentors, which offers support, practical advice and job opportunities.

Team 'BioPlas Technologies'

The successful team is made up of Tessabelle Sultana (CEO), Sam Harding, Sarah Oates and Hannah Thornton (all from the Department of Infection and Immunity) and beat competition from six other universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, to make it through to the prestigious final in London. BioPlas Technologies, is based around the idea of plastic degrading bacteria, solving the world-wide problem of increasing plastic waste by making more of it recyclable: 'exploiting the world's resources - in a good way' (slogan).

Juliet documents the journey

At midnight on the day before the team were to be pitching to investors the laptop they were working on crashed and they lost their presentation! Miraculously, after a frantic, adrenalin-fuelled hour they managed to reproduce it. The team were then up until the early hours finishing it off and making sure the finances added up – a key part of pitching to potential investors, as anyone who's watched *Dragon's Den* will know! After only a couple of hours sleep, they were up again at 6.30am to practice their pitch.

The competition began in earnest and after listening to five of their competitors pitch before them, it was their turn to go before three real-life investors, including a venture capitalist. They had 15 minutes to sell their idea, followed by a grilling where they had to show that they knew their stuff. After a nervous time waiting for the winner to be announced, Tessabelle described how they could

not believe they had won, "when he called BioPlas Technologies we did not move, it took a few seconds to click!"

The team were praised by the investors for their idea, the clear and concise manner in which they communicated their business plan, their use of social media (@BioPlasTech) and their detailed breakdown of exactly what they planned to do with the two million pound investment they asked for. The team said that the competition had given them lots of confidence and belief that they could work in a business environment in the future or set up their own biotechnology business and become successful entrepreneurs.

They commented that it was great to have a different challenge to focus on away from their PhDs and that they have come back to their research reinvigorated. They were also keen to emphasise that although it was incredibly hard work, it was a fantastic experience and as a bonus they got to stay in luxury accommodation!

Good luck to BioPlas Technologies for the next stage of the competition in December, when they will be up against nine other heat-winning teams, competing for a £2000 cash prize, a helicopter flight over London and an all-expenses paid trip to Texas!

Has this whetted your appetite?

Industrial Knowledge Forge (www.shef.ac.uk/faculty/medicine-dentistry-health/thinkahead/inkforge), aims to embed development of industrial research knowledge for early career researchers and has this year supported five teams to enter the competition. Preparation begins in early spring with a workshop 'Innovation, Enterprise and Industry' from external commercialisation consultant Dr Kevin Parker of KKi Associates.

Following the workshop, participants form teams and are offered further chances to engage with mentoring sessions with Kevin and the Sheffield Healthcare Gateway (<http://shg.sheffield.ac.uk/home.aspx>) to explore the feasibility of initial ideas.

A business finance workshop in early autumn with Finance Directors from AstraZeneca helps teams gain highly sought after business skills including how to develop a business plan.

Our team development programme in 2014 will also feature talks and advice from an IP expert, a patent attorney and from academics with experience of forming spin-out companies.



BioPlas Technologies: Sam Harding, Hannah Thornton, Tessabelle Sultana and Sarah Oates.

CPD: Internships

Sam Amsbury, Postgraduate Researcher in the Department of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology shares his experience of completing a three month industry internship.

During the course of a PhD it is easy to get buried in your own research and forget about the rest of the world. We are constantly told about the importance of continued development outside of your research but who really has the time?

I have always been interested in science communication but finding time to develop this has been hard. When the opportunity came along to do a three month internship in science communication at the Food and Environment research agency (Fera) I jumped at the chance!

Fera specialises in science underpinning agriculture, environmental management, conservation and food safety. Research at Fera advises government policy - notable cases include the recent horsemeat scandal and the spread of ash dieback disease across the country. It is an organisation with a reputation for secrecy but a desire to communicate its science to a wider audience and to gain public trust.

My role was to work with the plant clinic at Fera to develop their communication strategy, making their science and services more accessible to the public while ensuring there was no government policy conflict. This communication strategy included social media and one key product of the internship was the development of a twitter account and conducting staff training in the art of communicating via twitter.

This short break from my research has proven to be the best decision I could have made. Fera could not have been more different to a university environment and the opportunity to get a different perspective was not only exciting but invaluable. By spending those short three months outside my comfort zone, the progress I made in skills such as presenting, working under pressure and teaching others astounded me.

If the opportunity arises during your time at Sheffield to do an internship somewhere I would highly recommend it. The skills you develop and the contacts you make could be the difference between getting a job or not.

“Professional internships for PhD students (PIPS) are challenging our conception of PhD training. It is still early days to understand the impact the PIPS will have on the professional development and training of young researchers. I believe it could provide PhD students with a window of time within their PhD studies to increase their confidence and realise how much their skills apply to a broad professional environment. I am sure it will boost their motivation in mastering research skills that are invaluable in many jobs. It will certainly broaden their perspectives of the types of careers research training can lead to.”

Dr Sandrine Soubes,

Researcher Development Manager for the Faculty of Science.

Carla Turner, 4th Year Postgraduate Researcher in the Department of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology shares her experience of completing a three month industry internship.

Taking opportunities and a feeling of renewed enthusiasm.

As a fourth year PhD student, I am well aware of the highs and lows of PhD life. Nearing the middle of my third year I was on a low and had lost all enthusiasm for my work. Three years of plodding along with mixed results meant I had become well and truly engulfed into a PhD rut. Being in this rut had made me narrow minded and at times I even forgot why I had pursued this career path, one which I had once been so enthusiastic about.

At that point I doubted my ability to be a researcher in the future . . . but then the BBSRC threw me an amazing opportunity in the shape of an internship. An internship in which I could choose to do anything, anywhere!

I seized this opportunity with both hands and thought carefully about which companies I might like to work for in the future, as well as what jobs I would like to gain experience in. I landed upon corporate and government affairs at Syngenta, an agri-chemical company.

On arrival, I was quite nervous as many of the things I was asked to do I had little experience in. However, the team were always very supportive and appreciated my skill set as a PhD student. I was able to do loads of cool things including organising events, writing articles, visiting parliament and going to other interesting meetings in London.

This experience allowed me to gain some immensely valuable skills for my CV which I would not have if I had not gone outside of my PhD and the academic environment.

These included:

- argument construction
- meeting tight deadlines
- popular science writing skills
- interviewing
- communication with different stakeholders (including industry, government and the general public)

Interviewing scientists, writing articles and going to exciting events at the forefront of agricultural research allowed me to get out of the rut I was in and realise there is a plethora of fascinating research out there. I thrived on having jobs to turn around quickly, with a concrete outcome from each of them, unlike the slow and uncertain research I had been doing over the past three years. The internship also allowed me to meet a lot of new people which was great for building networks.

I am really grateful for the skills I gained over those three months but the biggest impact of the internship was to re-motivate me and increase my confidence. However, the most valuable lesson from my internship was to see the number of different careers there are in the world, just waiting for an ambitious PhD student to go in to!

If you'd like to read more about my experiences, please visit carlaturner.wordpress.com/.

CPD: The thesis

The five point musings of Dr Kay Guccione, Researcher Mentoring and Coaching Manager and PhD graduate from the University of Sheffield.

Research thesis as well as indicator of employability and transferable skills?

As you limber up for the task of writing your PhD thesis, striving to morph several years worth of collected data into a coherent narrative that illustrates clearly 'what you did' and 'what you found out' for an external audience, you may come to the conclusion that this is a big challenge to be met.

As a sense of apprehension creeps in, remind yourself that there are some really excellent reasons to write the thesis that extend beyond just evidencing the time you've spent working your socks off!

I have prepared a list of five points that demonstrate how completion of your thesis itself will make you more employable. These are easy-wins for your next job application evidence and good to keep in mind if you're wondering how you'll survive the write-up phase a.k.a. the academic Krypton Factor!

- 1. You have written a book.** Congratulations, you are an expert communicator of the written word! You have crafted a complete and coherent story with a beginning, middle and end. You have conveyed the what, how and very importantly the why. You also made all the figures, you commissioned some editors, you drafted and redrafted copy and you formatted, typeset and printed this yourself. You are the hero of this story.
- 2. You have managed a project.** You can work aligned to a project brief (the last student's thesis format), to create a deliverable work package (the book), to be delivered to stakeholders (your supervisor, your funder, the university), within an agreed time frame (your deadline). You will have assessed the risk and the costs/benefits associated with collecting more data versus writing up now. You've planned your project milestones (chapter deadlines), managed your resources (your time, your supervisor's time, the biscuits) and the logistics (work at home, department, or the Information Commons) and quality assured the output.
- 3. You are skilled at influence and persuasion.** A necessary part of writing up is making demands on the time and energy of others, whether to show you how to do a particular analysis, to read drafts and give you corrections or to listen when you want to have a moan. To negotiate their help you are likely to have spared a thought for diplomacy in timing your requests and demonstrated reciprocity by helping others when they needed it. You understand the need to be consistent and reliable in delivering on promises and understand how that helps to cultivate trust. Whilst hanging on to that a shared vision for the finished thesis can take teeth-grinding effort, you've negotiated and compromised to make it happen.

4. You are self-motivated. Who got up and got the thing written? You! By this you have demonstrated a commitment to finishing what you started, to stretching out of your 'comfort zone' and to learning from your mistakes. You can now demonstrate persistence in getting it right and resilience in becoming stronger through perseverance. This will be very useful for that interview question on demonstrating your commitment to success!

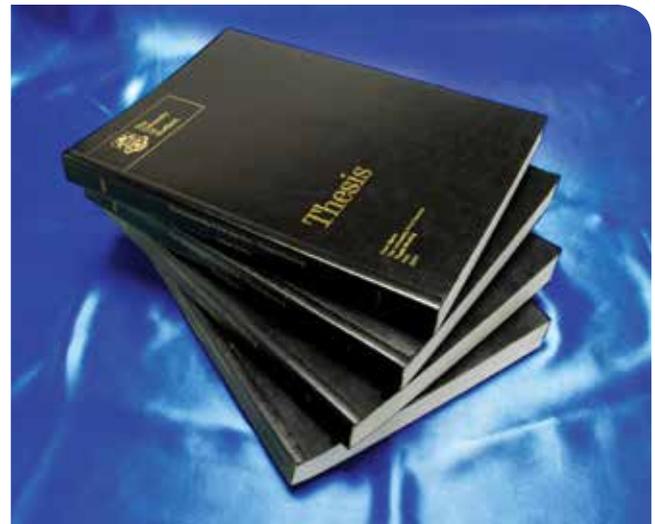
5. You are a critical thinker. After all, that's what the PhD was all about. Maintaining an awareness of your role and responsibilities in the thesis writing process can help you think critically about yourself

- your skills, competencies and attributes
- what parts of work you enjoy and would like to be a part of your future career
- what you found easy
- what you found challenging
- what, if you had to do it all again (it's ok you don't), you'd be better at

How do I know?

I've done a PhD. Also, I have spent some hours talking to thesis writers through my thesis coaching projects and at the University of Sheffield, the above top five skills have become well evidenced.

The Thesis Mentoring programme will be launching again in January 2014. If you'd like to work with a post-doc mentor to explore how your thesis project planning can be fine-tuned, keep an eye on your email.

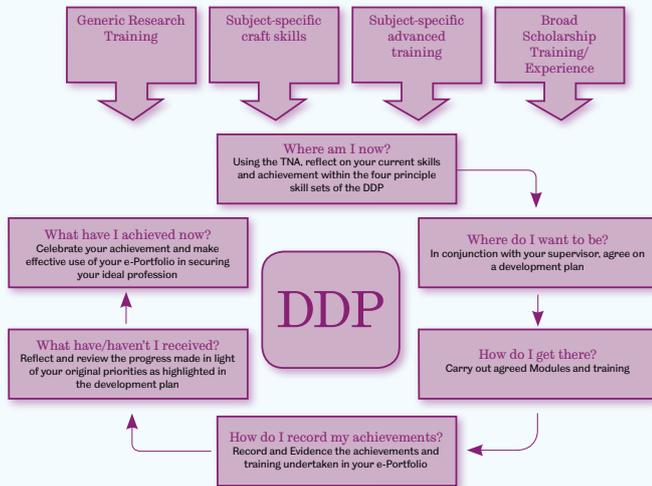


CPD: Accessing opportunities at The University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield has two complementary strands of development that are shaped with PGRs in mind.

The Doctoral Development Programme (DDP)

The annual DDP cycle is encapsulated in the diagram below.



The box on the right poses the question, “how do I get there?” Once you have identified and agreed areas of development and solutions in your TNA discussion, the next step is to take part in CPD activities.

As you will have gleaned from this edition of Doctoral Times, there are many ways to do this. Be flexible and creative in the opportunities you select. Apart from those departmental activities on offer, there are various other **Research Student Seminars** available via the DDP portal that you can participate in.

These include:

- Research study skills e.g. introduction to referencing styles
- Career Management skills e.g. job seeking strategies for researchers
- Sheffield Teaching Assistant e.g. seminar facilitation
- Essential skills e.g. managing yourself
- Computing skills e.g. simple graphs and statistics with SPSS
- Sheffield GRAD School (SUGS) - www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr/rtp/sugs

For full details, visit: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr/ddportal

“I loved working with and meeting researchers from different disciplines”

Think Ahead

Each of the five Faculties within the University, along with Research and Innovation Services and the University's Careers Service, have collaborated to provide researchers with the Think Ahead framework; a range of opportunities, information and guidance to support their personal and professional development.

The Think Ahead programme provides a collaborative, research led, University wide framework of professional development for both PGRs and post doctoral researchers, underpinned by the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

There are a range of themed programmes on offer within and across faculties, including:

- Writing skills
- Mentoring
- Self awareness
- Fellowship preparation
- Career development
- Grant writing
- Three minute thesis
- Communication and self-presentation
- Industry engagement
- Enterprise and creativity

For full details, visit:

www.shef.ac.uk/ris/ecr/training/calendar

To find out more about specific schemes or to get to know more about what is happening at faculty level, contact the relevant Researcher Professional Development Team member.

Faculty Researcher Development Managers

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“this must rate as one of the highlights of my PhD”

The Sheffield GRAD School (SUGS) – an immersing career and personal awareness development event for PGRs

SUGS is an intensive, three day, non-residential course that is modelled closely on the successful national events organised by Vitae (www.vitae.ac.uk). The University of Sheffield course is designed to give participants the opportunity to reflect on their career plans and develop their communication, team working, leadership and critical thinking skills through a range of indoor and outdoor experiential learning activities. All of these are designed to improve participants' learning, performance and problem solving.

In May 2013, 59 postgraduate researchers (PGRs) from departments across the University took part in the fourth University of Sheffield GRADschool. Well over half of the participants were international researchers, reflecting the strong emphasis of the course on diversity.

The event was organised by the University's Careers Service working in partnership with Research and Innovation Services and the course content was delivered by tutors from across the university, including members of the Researcher Professional Development Team. Also contributing was an external tutor, who works as a humanitarian consultant and a director from the Vitae network.

Further information

Look out for details of SUGS 2014 (12th -14thMay) or visit www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr/rtp/sugs.

If you would like to know more about SUGS and how this fits into the student journey for research students, please contact Jane Simm, Careers Adviser for Researchers and Course Manager (j.m.simm@sheffield.ac.uk).



CPD: The Doctoral Voice

The University is always keen to find ways of seeking feedback from PGR students on their experience here at Sheffield and to enable PGRs to get actively involved in **enhancing the PGR experience** for themselves and their fellow students. Being part of the collective doctoral voice also comes with the opportunity to gain new skills along the way.

Ways to get involved

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

Every two years, the University participates in a national survey of PGR students, which aims to help universities enhance their provision for PGRs. The survey asks questions about a range of issues including supervision, research culture, progress and assessment processes and opportunities to teach. Nearly 44% of PGRs took part in the 2013 survey compared with just over 24% in the 2011 survey, so many thanks to all who took the time to complete the survey this time.

The results highlight some valuable themes - areas where the University has improved since the 2011 survey (including better provision of good seminar programmes and better research ambience) as well as areas where improvements still need to be made (including more opportunities to become involved in the wider research community beyond the PGR's department and the perception of how the University values and responds to feedback). A web page is being set up and will be circulated to all PGRs, summarising the key results and what the University will be doing to try and address the issues and concerns raised.

PGR Faculty Forums

Last year, in order to give a stronger voice to PGR students in the University, students were encouraged to set up forums at faculty level to:

- i) provide an arena for PGRs to share ideas on how to further improve provision for PGRs across their faculty
- ii) to take forward ideas and lead on their implementation (e.g. running a conference enabling PGRs to gain experience of presenting their research; organising a public engagement event)
- iii) establish a way in which the University can meaningfully consult with PGR students on any University-wide strategic developments that will affect PGR provision.

Faculty forums are now well on their way to being established in all five Faculties. The exact form and function varies across the faculties based on the makeup of PGRs, needs in the faculty and how long they have been established. Support for the forums is provided by the Quality & Governance Team in Research & Innovation Services and the University has identified funding for forum activities.

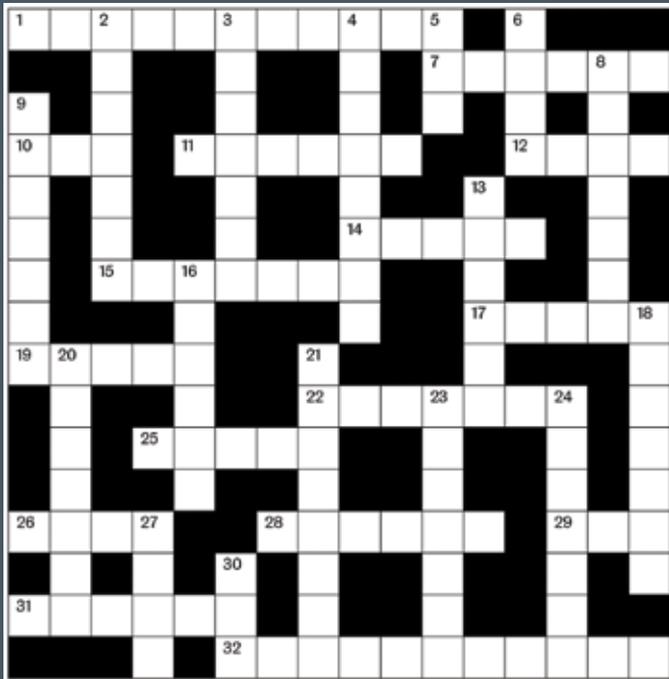
Why be involved

Being involved in a PGR forum provides opportunities for you to develop a variety of generic career and management skills, including organising events, setting agendas, chairing meetings and budget management. It also enables you to establish a network of PGRs within your faculty, for the sharing of ideas and experiences that can help to enhance your PGR experience and that of your fellow students.

For further information see: www.shef.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.307336!/file/PGRForumGuidelines.docx

CPD: Cryptic Crossword

Continuous Professional Development, as discussed in the editor's welcome, can take many forms! Stretch your 'little grey cells' with this edition's fiendishly difficult crossword.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Clues

Across

1. Spy finds Inderite redeposited by chance. (11)
7. Untidy RAF guy will pointlessly squabble in Alabama maybe. (6)
10. This could be what's left when the tin runs out in the Antipodes. (3)
11. Bird caught by shy anvil. (6)
12. 8th? Initially, yet always last eventually. (4)
14. A short study of soil management to uncover an Illyrian leader. (5)
15. Pliny the Elder was impressed by this culture of 'barbarous nations'. (7)
17. A sarcastic tweet in preparation (5)
19. It's a mistake for friend to go back to London. (5)
22. "They shoe horses, don't they?" In Milan maybe. (7)
25. Fast forward to the slide not used for a hit? (5)
26. The removal of Planck's constant in frustrated hyena at lambing. (4)
28. Lug clumsily helps with carbon capture. (6)
29. Semirigid in a strange liquid. (3)
31. Colourless poison can leave one feeling blue? (6)
32. The perfect dance partner? (11)

Down

2. Taken aback by the law? (7)
3. Is it art if it's not unhinged? (7)
4. An imperial beginning, a seed and an exciting start is fundamental. (8)
5. Way back when we hear (3)
6. It's gone wrong in a glycerol preparation at Edinburgh perhaps? (4)
8. Giving directions for La Dolce Vita? (7)
9. Research lacks focus and results in near disaster covered in 29 across. (7)
13. One cannot err in the modern era if one wants to build the foundations for a car like Ferrari (6)
16. Vegetables for a sustainable society? (6)
18. The branched inflorescence of the clumsy pelican. (7)
20. It was research but chemically enhanced and without Imperial College London! (7)
21. What a nerve to act on such an impulse! (8)
23. Othello reviser revised. (7)
24. Wild jam or arm wild! (7)
27. Wild goose, so good they named it twice! (4)
30. Short cure for the blues? (3)

**Please complete if you are submitting your entry*

Name:

Department:

Thanks to Vanilla for this first submission. Puzzlers out there who wish to set a crossword for the next edition, we would welcome your submissions! Contact us at grc@sheffield.ac.uk.

Completed crosswords should be returned to the Dainton Graduate Research Centre or via email to grc@sheffield.ac.uk. Correct submissions will be mentioned in the next edition – if there aren't too many!

