



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Research &
Innovation
Services.

Issue | Winter 2012

Doctoral Times.

The Newsletter for Doctoral & Higher
Research Degree Students

REAL WORLD RESEARCH

Qualitative Sociology
SCITWARTEL/JACOBS

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of the Doctoral Times.

I hope you enjoy this issue which illustrates the vibrant community you are part of, and demonstrates the wide range of opportunities available to you as a post graduate and higher degree research student.

It is intended that there will be three issues per academic year and these will have various themes. This edition's theme is the postgraduate research pathway and contains articles from academics, professional services and postgraduate students.

We would like future publications to have input from both PGR students and the staff who support them. Below is more information about how you can get involved.

HAVE YOUR SAY....

your chance to get involved and shape this publication.

We'd love to have your input, and your feedback.

Our first planning meeting with R&IS and PGR students was held in October 2012, the next one will be January 2013.

If you would like to be involved in the planning and designing of content, drafting articles, interviewing and contributing to this publication please contact me at the email below.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Email Carolin Gale at c.p.gale@sheffield.ac.uk

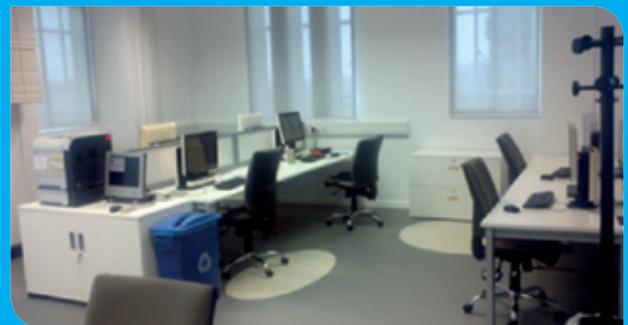
We have been named UK University of the Year in the 2011 Times Higher Education Awards.

The judges found it to be a quality, research-led university, and a community with values, confidence, flair and its sleeves rolled-up.

As postgraduate students you make a huge contribution to the University. Good quality research is a bed rock of 'research-led universities' like this one and therefore you can congratulate yourself for your contribution to this award.

2011
THE AWARDS
AWARD WINNER
UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

New Graduate Research Centre



We are excited to announce that we have moved from North Campus to the Dainton Building.

A newly 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 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

Introduction

Think BIG – Be confident in your ability to carry out original research that has impact, makes a positive difference and is communicated widely

Research students make an immense contribution to the University’s ambition to remain one of the best universities in the world – renowned for excellence in research, teaching and knowledge exchange – and I would strongly encourage you to take advantage of the breadth of opportunities available to you that will support your professional development and the University’s ambition.



As a research student you possess the necessary blend of qualities to push forward the frontiers of knowledge: passion, inquisitiveness, a refusal to accept the ordinary and to challenge ways of thinking. Your supervisory team is here to channel your enthusiasm, to advise and support you throughout your studies at Sheffield, guiding you on a journey towards greater independence. Make the most of your supervisory team, and other support available to you, and be confident to express your opinions. Be assertive – our academics welcome frank discussions of ideas and issues, encourage different perspectives, and want to help research students to have the courage and inner self-confidence to develop into independent researchers and professional research colleagues.

Academic departments recognise that research students inject a vibrancy into the intellectual climate and the diversity of backgrounds within the research student community enriches Sheffield’s international dimension. Research students are members of overlapping communities –the student community, the community of the academic department, Faculty and University. Just as Supervisors and academic departments continue to take steps to integrate research students into their scholarly community (for example, through invitations to departmental events and introductions to world leading researchers), research students should feel equally empowered to lead on activities (for example, organising a seminar series). Study at doctoral level is a partnership between the University and research students.

The University has recently articulated a set of expectations – expectations that research students should have of the University and the University’s expectations of research students:

Research students can expect to:	The University expects research students to:
Undertake research that makes a positive difference in the world and changes the way people think about the world	Undertake original high quality research, including communicating research with the wider academic community and the wider public, and demonstrating its benefits
Develop intellectually, professionally and personally	Be motivated and passionate about research, to be inquisitive, to be proactive and to persevere
Have access to a range of intra or inter-disciplinary research expertise and support via a supervisory team, including access to a personal tutor	Display at all times the highest standards of research ethics and integrity
Be treated as professional colleagues and members of an intellectually stimulating community	Contribute to the University’s research outputs in other ways (for example by authoring journal publications)
Access a high quality doctoral development or training programme	Contribute to the University’s wider ambition (for example contributing to teaching, enterprise, civic activities, and University decision-making affecting research student provision)
Access high quality professional support services	

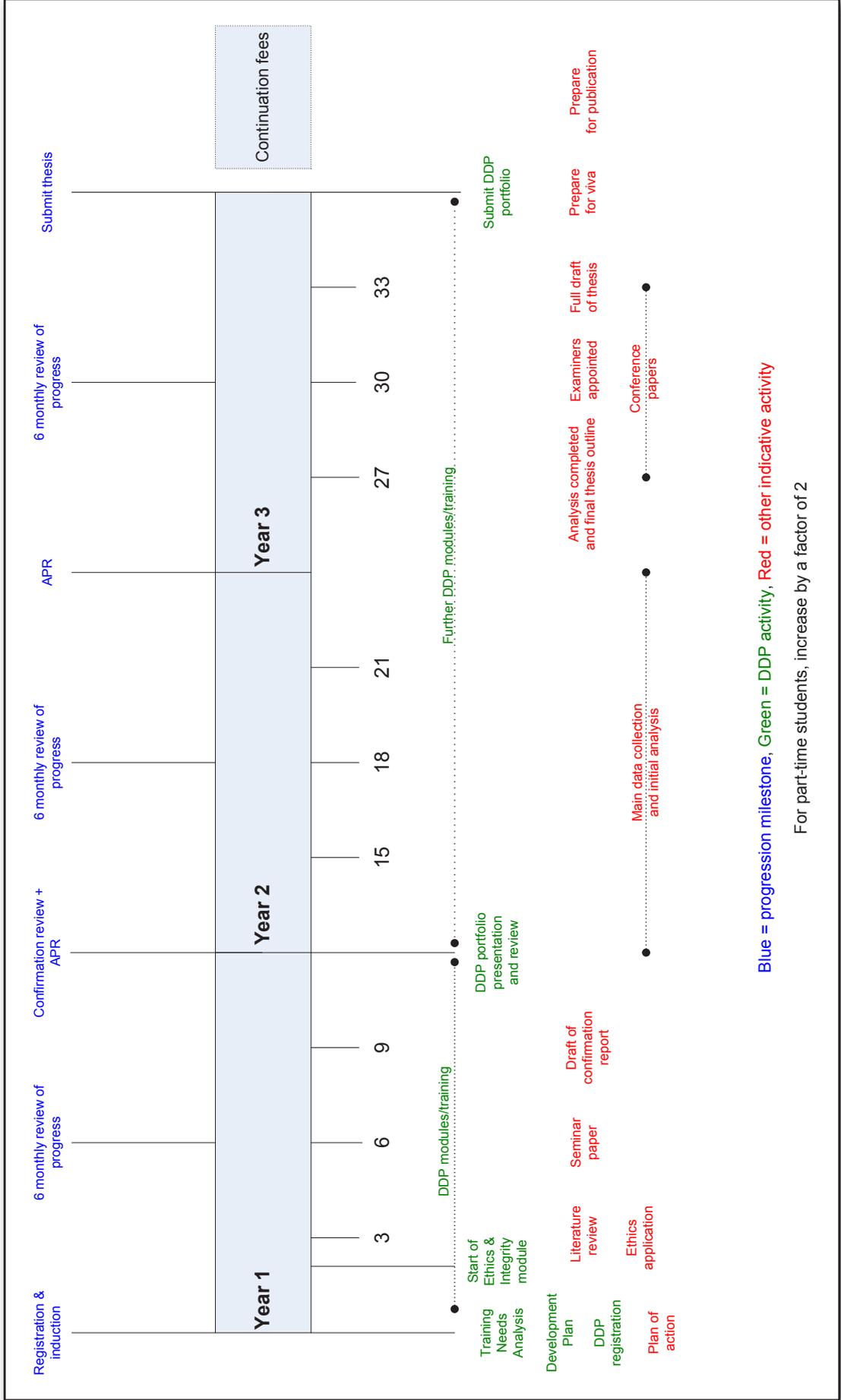
This edition of Doctoral Times provides you with a sense of the richness of opportunities available, and includes articles on professional development (to help you in your research and your career), how to gain experience of teaching, enterprise and entrepreneurship activities, and ways to contribute to the University’s governance and decision-making.

I anticipate that your time as a research student at Sheffield will be life changing. Through the journey at Sheffield you will develop intellectually, professionally and personally and leave with a distinct set of qualities, advanced skills and knowledge that will help you to build successful careers, and prepare you for demonstrating leadership with integrity (better able to contribute to finding solutions to address economic, social and environmental challenges facing our world).

You have the talent and ability to lead – that is why you are here. I encourage you to think BIG.

Professor Richard Jones,
Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation

PGR Timeline



The PGR Timeline has been developed for PGR students and their supervisors. It is designed to help students visualise the whole PGR journey, with its various components, as well as being a guide for reflecting on individual progress towards timely submission of thesis.

It also demonstrates the interrelatedness of progression on research degree programmes, with the skills development and training elements provided through the DDP.

The timeline is based on an original design by Dr Penny Curtis in the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Professional Development for Research Students

NEW: University-wide Researcher Professional Development Team supporting the professional development of research students

After being awarded a research degree, Sheffield's research students embark on a wide diversity of career paths; research careers, within and outside higher education, careers in business, industry, charities, the voluntary sector, the public sector and self-employment. The University values the importance of equipping research students with qualities, skills and tools that will help them to survive and thrive in their chosen careers and which, equally and more immediately, will help research students to succeed in undertaking original quality research and engage in other activities whilst at Sheffield. The University has shown its commitment to this through the creation of a new Researcher Professional Development Team whose remit is to provide the University's researchers (students and employees) with access to a holistic package of professional development support. A programme is already available and is being developed in 2012/13 to ensure an increasingly more employer and researcher influenced model.

Support from the team:

- Training and development programmes benefitting research and individual careers, that employers have said they find credible, and which will facilitate networking between research students from different academic departments
- Expert careers advice tailored to individual needs - available now.
- The researcher-mentoring programme: This is becoming well established for research staff across Science, and Medicine, Dentistry and Health, and has just been launched in Engineering. The next exciting phase for the programme is to construct useful ways for research students to access expert opinions on finishing the research degree, that uses our pool of

trained research associates (post-docs) as advisors. Would you benefit from Thesis Mentoring? Could you use the opportunity to talk through what's expected of a thesis, how to break down the task and set milestones for your writing, and how to be more effective and productive? We invite you to give your opinions here <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/thesismsurvey>

Members of the team are listed at:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/contacts/pdt>

More detailed information will be provided in the next edition of Doctoral Times or can be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr>



Student Profile

*Lakshmi Priya
Rajendran – PhD
Student - School
of Architecture*



What led you to do a PhD?

My Masters in Architecture gained at the Indian Institute of Technology in India helped me to reinvent myself and instilled in me a deep desire to pursue meaningful research. I took an Assistant Professorship in SRM University, and after 3 years decided I resign to pursue my goal. My work experience, especially after my Masters had given me a sound grounding in research, field work and analytical skills so I decided to explore research opportunities outside India.

I chose the UK for its non commercialisation of architecture in the education system, and after carefully reviewing the various universities I thought that the University of Sheffield appeared as an attractive proposition with its comprehensive Doctoral Development Programme (DDP).

I think the DDP reflects an innovative approach towards student specific training and is designed to complement individual research projects.

What is your PhD about and how long have you been studying?

This is my first year here. My research is in the domain of people and place and stems from a deep need to ask questions and find answers about implicit things which are often taken for granted and are rarely attempted to research in the field of architecture. I strongly believe that quality research is a panacea for all human problems. Architecture as a holistic discipline encompassing all facets of human existence, with its ability to coalesce with other diverse scholarly fields, can play a significant role in improving the quality of living and overall progress of mankind, which I ambitiously attempt to demonstrate through my PhD thesis. Drawing insights from current research on self-identity-place from diverse scholarly fields including Human Geography, Phenomenological Philosophy and Social Anthropology, the thesis strives to reveal the relevance of these insights for current design practice and theory, vital for design and designers in the 21st Century for improving the long term well being of people in our contemporary cities

Could you summarise your PhD learning journey thus far?

With brain storming academic discussions, engaging seminars and conferences, a new culture (which never ceases to amaze), serene beauty of the place, frugal living, part-time job hunting the past 5 months in Sheffield has been a challenging and eventful journey. However, the sheer feeling of following my dream of doing quality research amidst so many constraints and challenges has been a great motivating factor.

What are the challenges you have found in studying for your PhD?

Funding has always been an obstacle for many meritorious students from India to pursue research abroad especially for a three year PhD programme in United Kingdom. With my supportive parents and my personal savings I have entered my first year of research in the University of Sheffield. Failure to acquire the university scholarship demanded dependence on my retired parents and part time work. Hailing from an economically weaker family background, at an age of 31, being single, surviving societal pressures and prejudices for being an ambitious young woman had been a test for my perseverance and pursuit of dreams. As a first person to acquire a PhD degree in my lineage, with supporting parents as my blessing and lack of financial support as a challenge I have reached a crucial stage of my life that bestows on me a tremendous social and personal responsibility.

What are your future plans?

Taking my research further, five years from now, completing my post doctorate in people and place studies and gaining teaching experience abroad, I will render valuable and innovative contributions towards teaching and research in architectural schools in India and abroad. With a long and challenging path to tread, I strongly believe that, *challenge is always a great opportunity in disguise.*

“I strongly believe that challenge is always a great opportunity in disguise.”

Enterprise

What is the Enterprising Researcher?

The recent Researchers@TheEdge conference brought around 70 postgraduate and early career researchers together to exchange best practice on being an enterprising researcher. In a series of presentations and workshops researchers got to see how their peers across the institution are approaching their research in an enterprising way and what this means for them and the institution.

In his opening address to the conference, Professor Richard Jones (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at Sheffield University) described Enterprise as 'casting your net wider'. This simple phrase captures the aspects of public engagement and collaboration which had been incorporated by many of the projects presenting on the day, whilst distinguishing 'Enterprise' from 'Entrepreneurship'. To be a successful entrepreneur one should surely be enterprising but one can be enterprising without being an entrepreneur, which has connotations of business and profit.

Throughout the day presentations from researchers showed how taking an enterprising approach had advanced their research and their research careers. In the Engineering faculty the Sheffield Engineering Enterprise Development (SEED) programme had helped one researcher to get a job in industry whilst another had gone on to a lectureship. Researchers taking part in the Sheffield Crucible project reported that being given the space to 'do it for real' (take their idea and actually develop it into a mobile phone app) was both exciting and empowering. Participants in the QCinema and Collaborative Ethnography projects reported on the value of seeing one's research from another point of view and on the learning that transpired from being outside one's comfort zone and the overview of the SIIDShare Initiative showed us how one connection can lead to another and then another providing greater opportunity for all involved.

Researchers@TheEdge showed that the research community at Sheffield is a vibrant and active one and researchers here are often very busy; but the enterprising researcher will find a way of ensuring that their research benefits from useful input no matter where it comes from. Whether it is through collaboration with business and the wider community or with other departments or faculties, this interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to research brings new perspectives and new ideas; this is where innovation starts.



The projects presented at Researchers@TheEdge have given researchers the chance to develop themselves and their research by pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone, doing something scary and learning through that experience. But if we have learned one thing it is that the enterprising researcher doesn't wait for such an opportunity to come around. They can make that opportunity happen for themselves.

Do something that scares you today. Cast your net. You never know what you might catch.

Dr Gavin Boyce
Research & Innovation Services

More information about Researchers@TheEdge and the projects that have been supported through the Research Enterprise Innovation Fund can be found here:
<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/enterprisingresearchers>

If you are interested in enterprise why not try the Ideas2Enterprise course which is exclusively available to postgraduate and Early career researchers.
ddpenquiries@sheffield.ac.uk here to express interest.

“ this interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to research brings new perspectives and new ideas; this is where innovation starts. ”

Shaping the University

There are various opportunities for postgraduate research students to actively participate in the shaping of the University, via forums, committees and feedback through PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey). Here Scott Eldridge II, a PhD student and co-chair of the Social Science Student forum and Iain Huggins PhD student and student rep. give an overview of the role of student committees & forums.

Student Forums: What we do.

Scott Eldridge II, PhD Student, Journalism Studies Department, co-chair of the Social Science Student Forum.

On 9 October, the Social Science Student Forum launched its activities for 2012/2013, with a kick off lunch outlining the interdisciplinary overlaps of our faculty, and soliciting themes for a series of seminars, workshops, reading groups and drop-ins. As with all the forums efforts, these will be geared towards meeting the needs and expectations of Social Science PhD students.

That is what the forum is for.

While much of the PhD experience is spent in training modules, or highly individualised research, the Student Forum is mission-bound to be a student-driven project to address the needs of PhD students from the bottom up. Composed of representatives from each of the faculty's departments, the forum arranges activities and outlets for transferable skills development.

Bolstered by a Roberts-funded grant, this year will see more of these efforts, while embracing the interdisciplinary character of the faculty. It aims to equip PhD students across the faculty with an array of opportunities to carry them from student into early career researchers.

As a student-run effort, though, the student forum is both agile and fragile. As these forums are wholly student-led, they can address and adapt to the needs of the PhD cohort quickly. But they depend on students getting involved, and it is the hope that this year the forum will attract even greater interest and involvement to continue its efforts in the years ahead.

Postgraduate Student Representation in the Medical School

Postgraduate Student Representation in the Medical School is the responsibility of the Medical School Postgraduate Society (MPGS) Committee. This is comprised of student volunteers from all 5 departments within the medical school who meet once every month to discuss an agenda which any postgraduate student within the medical school can contribute to. These items may then be passed up to higher levels for discussion on committees in which the MPGS has representatives.

In the last year the committee has been particularly active and successfully lobbied for improved feedback from a number of key events on the path of the PhD, one-time access to plagiarism checking software for key written submissions, an overhaul to speed up the MPhil to PhD transfer process, and a comprehensive policy on student holiday entitlement throughout the school. Further to this the committee has also taken on the responsibility of organising parts of the 1st year presentation day and the Medical School's annual research meeting to ensure the inclusion of relevant material.

MPGS are also committed to improving the postgraduate experience by running social events encouraging the inter-mingling of students from throughout the school's separate departments, most recently bringing a screening of 'PHD Movie' to the University, and a subsidised day trip to the Scarborough seaside which proved to be extremely popular.

The immediate future plans of the MPGS committee are to develop a method for anonymously providing feedback on the medical school's postgraduate experience and to develop a framework for faculty-wide student representation.

There are also opportunities for all PGRs to feedback whether they are committee or forum members. This, along with the reflection we ask from academic departments, serves to give us insight into ways of improving our provision and ensuring its quality.



Assuring Quality PGR Programmes

Each winter academic departments in the University are required to critically reflect on their provision for PGR students. In particular they are asked to identify both good practices and enhancement priorities. Peer-appointed representatives of departments' PGRs (PGR reps or equivalent) also contribute to these reflections. If you would like to provide feedback on your experience, make sure you communicate with your departmental PGR rep(s) in time to influence their input. More information on the University's PGR quality assurance process can be found at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr-support/qa

PRES 2013

In spring 2013 PGR students will be invited to participate in the biennial Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), a national survey run by the Higher Education Academy. This is an opportunity for students to provide feedback on a range of different aspects of their degree programmes.

The University very much encourages all PGRs to participate in PRES, so please look out for communications regarding it in February/early March. Information about the 2011 survey, and the actions that were taken as a result of it, can be found here (intranet access only):

www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr/pres

NEWS

As part of our commitment to PGR students, we are pleased to announce that there is now a new PGR (Postgraduate Research) Portal where you can find all things relating to both current and prospective PGR students.

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/pgr>



Career Profile

*Dr Sumita Roy – Wellcome VIP Research Fellow,
School of Clinical Dentistry, University of Sheffield*



What was your career aspiration before you did a PhD?

I have been always interested in science; therefore, I took up a BSc degree course in Biotechnology (Molecular Biology, Genetics and Biochemistry) for my undergraduate study. During my course, I recognised how exciting research is, so I thought a PhD in infectious diseases would be a good start for my career.

What was your PhD about and when did you get it?

I did my PhD at the University of Sheffield, investigating the virulence factors of an oral bacterium, *Tannerella forsythia*, which is associated with gum infections. During my PhD, I spent some time in Queen Mary College, the University of London where I learnt some techniques required for the completion of my PhD. I completed my PhD degree in November 2010.

Tell us the best thing about your job and why you love it?

This is the first job in my life. I started as a Wellcome VIP Research Fellow immediately after finishing my PhD, and the best thing is, it is in the same department with the same group that I did my PhD. I know the working environment already and I got to stay with the good friends I made during my PhD; therefore, there is no time to be bored. I also enjoyed teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students from across the world about the laboratory techniques. This gave me the opportunity to learn about different cultures, which I love. During my fellowship job, I also collaborated with a well-known research group in the United States which gave me the opportunity to visit their laboratories and attend conferences along with a trip to America.

How does the PhD help you in your job?

My job is an extension of my PhD project; therefore, without PhD I would not have the job. The laboratory skills I achieved during my PhD was extremely rewarding for my current job (Wellcome VIP Research Fellow).

Which were the most transferable skills you acquired doing your PhD and how have you used them?

My PhD taught me to become an independent thinker and very organised in my career. It also taught me how to communicate with professional people. During my PhD, I wrote scientific manuscripts which helped me gain experience in professional writing area. I also gained experience in teaching students which was very rewarding as I might consider a job as a lecturer in the near future.

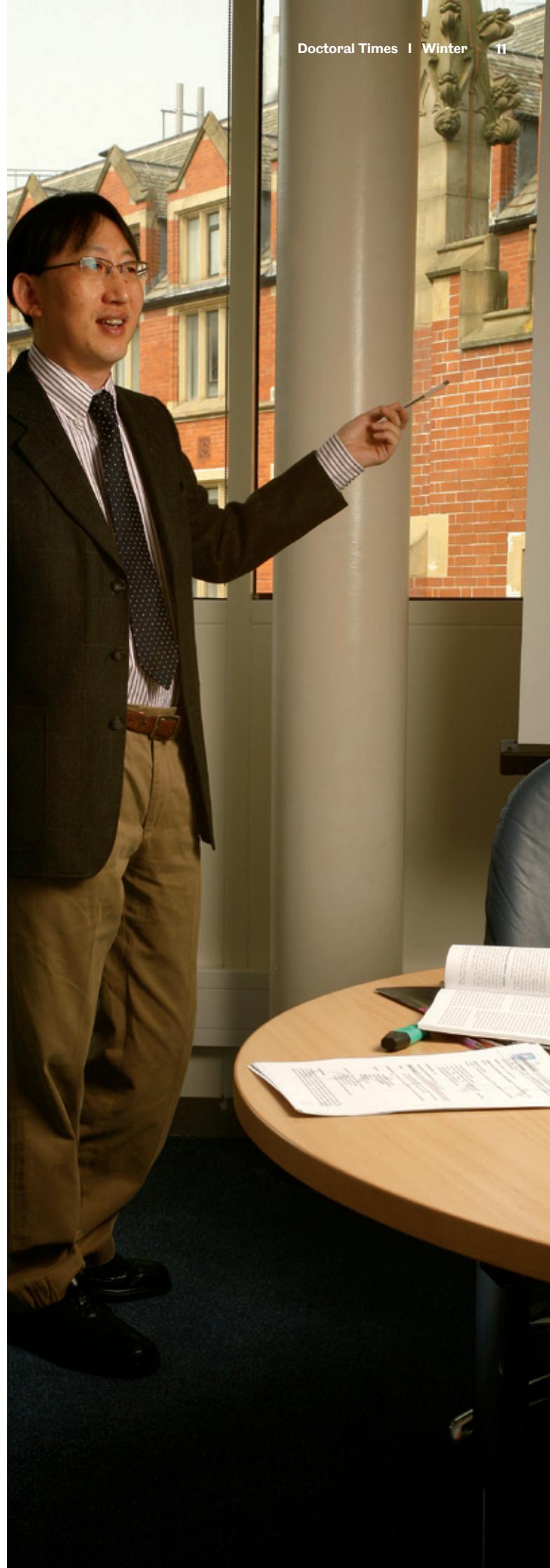
Is there anything you would do differently?

I would not change anything about my PhD or my career, as I have enjoyed my career plan so far.

“*My PhD taught me to become an independent thinker and very organised in my career.*”

Sheffield Teaching Assistant

Postgraduate research students, postdoctoral researchers and research assistants make a significant contribution to teaching on undergraduate and taught master's programmes. Their enthusiasm for their discipline and proximity to contemporary research provides The University of Sheffield's students with a unique learning experience. To help them develop and improve their teaching skills the Learning and Teaching Services (LeTS) are providing a programme of professional development workshops called The Sheffield Teaching Assistant, designed to meet their specific needs. Starting in September 2011 workshops addressing the topics of Large Group Teaching, Small Group Teaching (including Laboratory Demonstrating and Seminar/Tutorial Facilitation), Research Project Supervision and Assessment and Feedback are being offered. They aim to provide practical advice on preparation for teaching and the development of effective teaching skills. The initial sessions, advertised in July, were fully booked within hours. Further sessions have been scheduled and are continuing to prove popular. LeTS intend to run a rolling programme of workshops throughout the year allowing participants to attend the sessions as the need arises. For more information on The Sheffield Teaching Assistant please go to www.shef.ac.uk/lets/sta



Careers Support for Postgraduate Researchers

<p>General Support</p> <p>Careers Service, 388 Glossop Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Sessions Careers Service Events Finding Vacancies 	<p>Specialist Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career and Employability Skills Sessions for Research Students Careers Support Sessions
---	---

Other Sources of Information and Contacts

- Careers Service Briefing Sheets available from the Careers Service or Dainton GRC
- Skills of Researchers
 - CVs & Covering Letters
 - Interview Tips for Researchers
 - Your PhD...What Next?

Other Careers Service Publications

- Where do I Start?
- Job Hunting Strategies
- Interviews and Assessment Centres

www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers

Your Careers Advisers:

Kevin Mahoney (k.mahoney@sheffield.ac.uk) and Jane M Simm (j.simm@sheffield.ac.uk)

To book places on careers management skills workshops go to http://ris.dept.shef.ac.uk/skills_seminars/

