

Introduction

This issue of the Doctoral Times has a special focus on the Doctoral Academy. ‘What is the Doctoral Academy?’ I hear you ask. The University of Sheffield’s Doctoral Academy consists of almost 4000 doctoral research students at the University, their research and their activities. This community is what makes The University a ‘Research Intensive University’ and helps to deliver the University’s mission to understand the world and make it a better place.

From the 2014/15 academic year The University of Sheffield will refer to our community of research students as our Doctoral Academy. As a structure, the Doctoral Academy will become a point of focus for research students, and those who support them, across the whole institution. It will break down barriers and facilitate shared experiences and collaborative working wherever possible.

The Doctoral Academy does not just look inward but also acts as the outward face for doctoral student activity in the University, ensuring that we tell the outside world about the excellent and exciting work that you all carry out. Consequently as part of what it does, the Academy will provide a consistent, strong, external marketing message and will act as an aid to attracting external support for our research activity.

I hope that your experience of the Doctoral Academy is helpful and supports you in achieving your ambitions, both whilst you are here and after you leave.

*Professor Ian Douglas
Director of the Doctoral Academy*

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Editorial Team

Commissioning Editor:

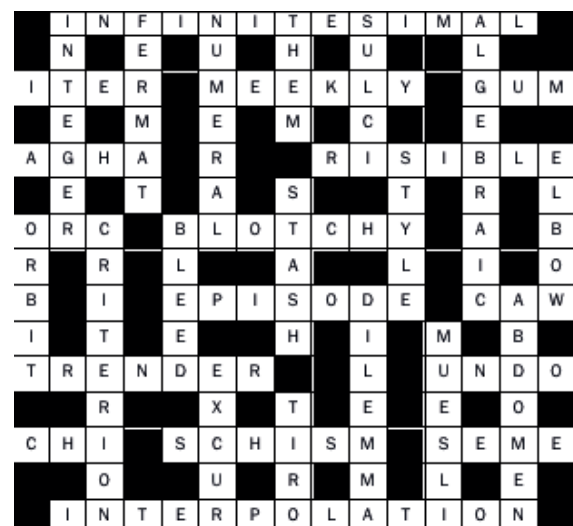
*Dr Gavin Boyce, Doctoral Development Team
Leader*

Editor

Anita Jane Kenny, Doctoral Support Officer

Thank you to all contributors to this edition

Solution to Issue 6 crossword



New Faces – Doctoral Academy Interns

In establishing a positive and effective community for Doctoral Research students here at the University, the Doctoral Academy have brought on board two current Doctoral Researchers to help in the evolution of the Academy. doctoralacademy.group.shef.ac.uk



Sam Fox

My name is Sam Fox and I am currently undertaking a PhD in the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering within the Pennine Water Group, now into my second year of research following on from my undergraduate degree in the same department. The work I am doing is exploring the idea of dynamic leakage in plastic pipes, in other words, how the behaviour of leaks in plastic water pipes change and what the most significant influencing factors are. During my research I've had the opportunity to work with postgraduate students in a range of different roles, affording me a chance to discuss the strengths and deficiencies of being a part of the body of academic researchers here at the University. Within the role of Doctoral Academy Intern, I hope to use some of this understanding regarding the needs of our postgraduate researchers, to further develop the research integrated community feel amongst our PGRs, enabling improved lines of communication to enhance potential interdisciplinary research, collaboration and the sharing of knowledge, experiences and specific skill sets.



Kathleen Hudson

My name is Kathleen Hudson and I am a PhD student in the University of Sheffield English Literature Department. My research centres on early Gothic literature, particularly servant narratives in early Gothic novels, and I am now entering my third year here. Originally from the United States, I came to Sheffield in order to pursue new areas of study and explore a wide range of academic experience, both independently and as part of a student community. Once I started over here I got to know a wide cast of characters from numerous different research departments and developed a real interest in the research my friends were doing and why they wanted to study those particular subjects.

As an Intern Representative of the University's Doctoral Academy I want to encourage open interdisciplinary communications between different research departments at the school, helping students take an energetic interest in their doctoral program as part of a community effort to further research and education.

Postgraduate research can often be a difficult and isolating experience, and by working at the Doctoral Academy we hope to help ensure that students have a full opportunity to share their research, get funding, reach out to other students, and be part of a supportive student community. Over the forthcoming year, we want to provide a platform for all postgraduate students to showcase their own research for both an internal and external audience with the aim to promote the amazing work done here in Sheffield and also to promote the real positives about life as a Doctoral Researcher at this University.

Doctoral Academy Insights



In this edition Professor Ian Douglas, newly appointed Director of the Doctoral Academy provides us with an insight into the Doctoral academy and his role

AJ: Professor Douglas, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, perhaps you could start by telling us about your background.

ID: I have worked at the University for a total of 33 years, 2 years as a postdoctoral Research Associate and 31 as an academic member of staff, and I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute of those years. Prior to taking up this appointment I did my PhD in Birmingham, was a postdoctoral Research Associate in Microbiology (now part of MBB), then moved to a research fellowship at the Royal College of Surgeons at its Dental Research Unit in the village of Downe, just behind Charles Darwin's residence. I was then appointed to a Lectureship in microbiology in the Dental School and have then been internally promoted here.

AJ: What about your research interests?

ID: My research interests have mainly been aimed at the host-pathogen interaction. Recent work has been on the way oral bacteria cause gum disease, they get inside cells that line the pocket around teeth and we have been looking at how they do this.

Some of my work has led onto interdisciplinary research with Chemistry and Tissue Engineering on using responsive polymers for early detection of infection, 'smart bandages' if you like.

AJ: Having spoken to a Doctoral Research student involved in this project I understand that this work is aimed at improving treatment of burns victims and people with eye infections so your work is not only innovative and interdisciplinary, it has real relevance.

ID: Although still in its early stages our first results are promising.

AJ: The Doctoral Academy is designed to promote interdisciplinary working, which you are clearly committed to but could you tell us what particularly interested you in the role of Director?

ID: Thirteen years ago I took over the role of PGR Tutor in the Dental School and subsequently was appointed "Sub-Dean for Postgraduate Affairs" in the faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, as it was then called. That was before the faculty reorganisation in the University which led to the name change to Postgraduate Lead for Medicine, Dentistry & Health. The job description for that post was modified a little, advertised and I was pleased to be appointed. I made the case in my interview for developing a Graduate School in the faculty, which would aim to bring together various activities around PGR provision including offering a much improved induction course. It is through these experiences that I became interested in the concept of a central hub in the University for PGRs with the faculty DTCs and Graduate School as the spokes.

A strategic review of PGR was carried out in 2012/13 and from discussions the view emerged of the potential value of a doctoral college-type structure, and a name was sought to give it a sign post but avoiding confusion and so the Doctoral Academy was "borne". The idea of bringing together aspects of PGR support, progression and marketing and promoting our PGR opportunities into a cohesive strategy that would also be co-ordinating with the University's research strategy was enormously exciting for me.

AJ: Why is the Doctoral Academy important?

ID: It is important that we provide a sense of community for our research students who are hugely important for our research effort. The Academy will provide the vehicle for development and promulgation of the University's vision for PGR going forward. This hasn't really been done before - I am not suggesting that PGRs have not been well looked after, they have been, and the University has made considerable advances in its supervisory and monitoring arrangements in recent years - but there has not been a co-ordinated approach for this group of student activity at an institutional level that has been visible internally and externally to the same extent that there has been for taught programmes through LeTS and other structures.

Of course the Academy is also of major importance for the research ambitions of the University since PGR students are big contributors to that effort, quite apart from the training they receive for their own development as the researchers of the future.

For the University to achieve its research ambitions it will need a PGR population of a certain size, which we feel is about 6-7% greater than we have at present. Consequently part of the importance of the Academy is to provide the structure for this growth. But growth will not be at the expense of quality, we must recruit the highest quality students and maintain and enhance the enormous strides forward we have made in the quality of our supervision and support for them. The Academy then will seek to find ways to improve our market position and so will consequently be the University's outward face on matters relating to PGR.

AJ: How will the Doctoral Academy benefit Doctoral Research students and researchers?

ID: By acting as a point of focus in the University:

- It should enable enhanced student interaction between disciplines, departmental and faculty boundaries and removing any feeling of isolation

- Provide a platform for communicating and promoting PGR-led activities
- Including facilitating and sponsoring events, symposia retreats and teams to enter national competitions
- Provide signposting to useful PGR information e.g. that is currently difficult to find across the UoS website

AJ: Do you see the Doctoral Academy as a long term development and why?

ID: Yes, it has to have a central place in our structure if it is to deliver on its aim. In my mind the Academy is much more than a branding exercise. It is the "Academy community" that the PGR students will join when they come here which means it must have a proper focal place in the structure of what the University is trying to do. Of course it is true that we will seek to increase our share of high quality international PGR students and the 'Academy brand' should hopefully be a useful marketing tool.

AJ: What is your vision for the future of the Academy?

ID: I hope I have put that across in what I have said already but I remember Richard Jones asking me how the success of the Academy might be measured. I said that it would be a success if it became a recognised structure, a point of natural contact for both prospective students and external organisations as well as a source of information for current students, staff and our various contacts. It will be something that demonstrates a logical structure to our PGR effort to everyone and, as a result, that we would see an increase in the number and quality of applications to the University.

AJ: Professor Douglas, many thanks for your time.

Sheffield GRADschool — SUGS

To mark the launch of the Doctoral Academy SUGS, the Sheffield University GRADschool will be aligning itself to the Doctoral Academy. SUGS is the UOS flagship 3 day interdisciplinary skills development course and has been helping Sheffield's research students to achieve career success since 2009.



What is SUGS?

The GRADschool is designed to give participants the opportunity to reflect on their career plans and to enhance their communication, team working, leadership and critical thinking skills through a range of indoor and outdoor learning activities and case studies. All of these are designed to improve participants learning, problem solving and help them to consider their career options.

The 2014 course was completely redesigned, including a coaching and goal setting element, and this year a new course director was introduced. Day three involved a morning of mock interviews and training to become a skilled interviewer, an asset to any work situation. All these activities are designed to develop confidence and to assist research students to successfully complete their PhD and reflect on a range of career options both inside and outside academia.



"I would recommend 100%! Everything was relevant, to the point and enjoyable."

"Without doubt, the return on your investment in going on this three day course is positive and significant."

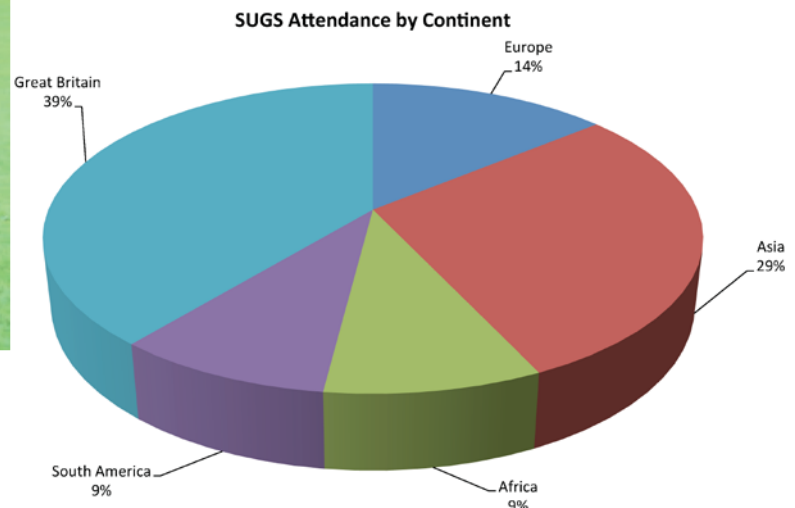
Who is it aimed at?

It is designed for researchers across all faculties, departments and disciplines within the University. Well over half of the participants were international researchers, reflecting the strong emphasis of the course on diversity.



"I learned a lot about myself, and I felt positively challenged to think about my strengths and weaknesses, my values and the kind of jobs I should be considering."

This cultural diversity is illustrated in the rich mix of nationalities who took part in this year's event.





“It was very research focused and tailored to exploring options after a PhD.”



The course is carefully designed to build on existing research skills, whilst enhancing a range of skills that can be transferred to environments both inside and outside academia.



Further information?

Watch this space for the new name change!!!

Look out for details of the course in 2015 or visit www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/pgpr/rtp/sugs



Day one looked like this:

- Course Directors introduction
- The Marshmallow Challenge – or getting to know your team
- The use of coaching techniques to support personal development and confidence building
- Team work case studies run outside the venue (The Kenwood Hotel) Reviewing the day’s activities in support of Day 2 and 3.

On top of this, participants enjoyed excellent food and refreshments and went away with a course certificate and many new contacts!

If you would like to have further details and consider how this fits into the journey for research students, please contact Jane Simm, Course Manager for 2014 (j.m.simm@sheffield.ac.uk).

“Being on the course helped remind me why I chose to do a PhD in the first place, and wanting to finish it so I can get back to focusing on how to achieve those goals through career progression.”

USES 2014



Pratik Desai obtained a First Class Chemical Engineering Honours in Masters of Chemical Engineering with Fuel Technology from the University of Sheffield. Currently a research associate, he is also concomitantly reading for a PhD in Chemical Engineering. He has several research interests and has worked and consulted with several companies on a variety of projects. His Master's Thesis has led to patentable work and was conducted in conjunction with the National Physical Laboratory. He is also Chair of the Faculty of Engineering's PGR Forum.



University of Sheffield Engineering Symposium – USES 2014, June 24th Octagon Centre

The first ever University of Sheffield Engineering Symposium held in May 2013, was considered a success with 300 participants throughout the day. It was specifically designed to increase interdisciplinary research and featured 40 posters and elevator talks on the day.

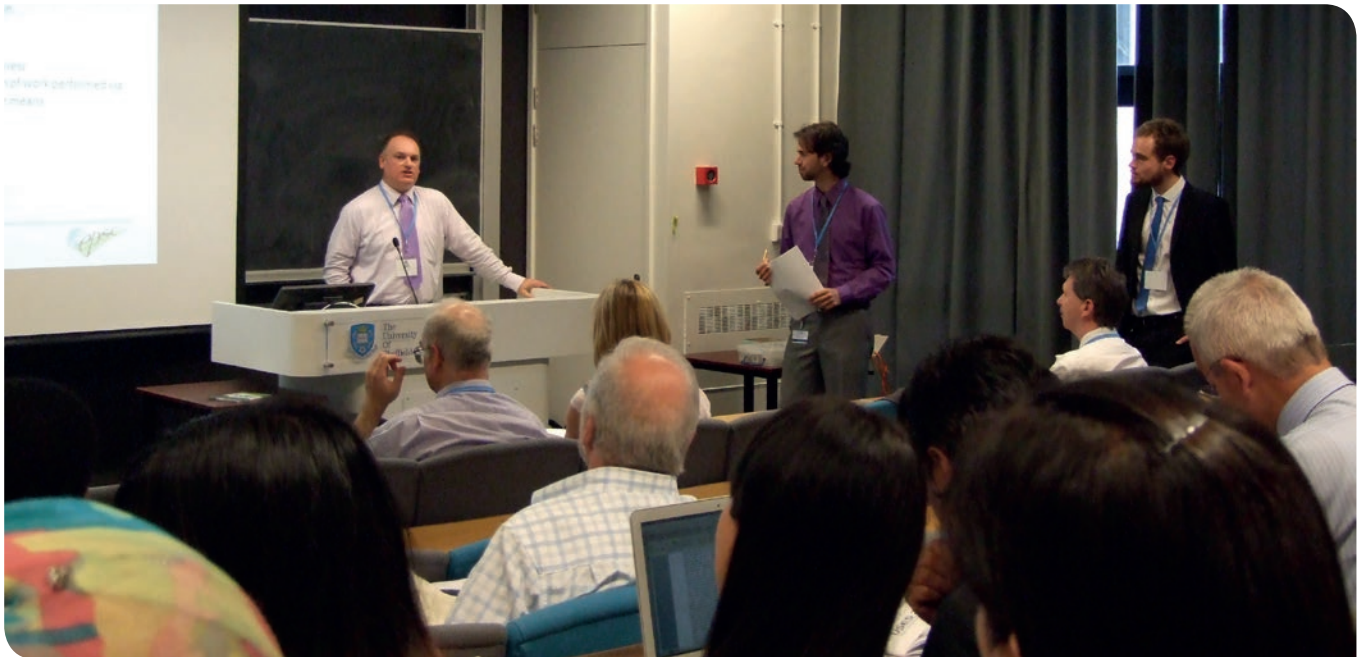
Although the original goal for promoting collaborations was achieved using a networking session towards the end of the day, the final event was much more elaborate. The day long event, hosted on the 24th of June 2014 brought together researchers, engineers and scientists from around the University to explore the latest technological advances and research results in core areas of engineering.

Through a combination of distinguished plenary speakers, parallel technical thematic sessions led by leading experts from academia and industry and interactive poster sessions, participants showcased their research efforts and technologies. Delegates spanning from both academia and industry found the day exciting and innovative.

New opportunities for collaborative effort were created and several links with industrial partners were established. The symposium also aimed to enhance communication and elucidate research amongst researchers and collaborators within and without University whilst creating a dynamic environment for presenting, transferring, and exchanging the know-how and latest advanced research highlights and scientific achievements in engineering being pursued in the faculties of Engineering and Sciences in the University of Sheffield.

There were 8 morning parallel sessions that were planned to showcase the overall research being performed by the various departments and faculties for research at Sheffield.

- Energy, Environment & Process Safety
- Computational Modelling and Simulation



- Design and Manufacture
- Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality
- Life Sciences, Biological Sciences and Healthcare
- Complex Systems, Communications and Signal Processing
- Structures and Dynamics
- Autonomous Systems and Robotics

Top speakers from Academia and Industry presented at each of the sessions and there were over 40 speakers in total. Plenary speakers included Dr. Lesley Thompson, Director, Science & Engineering – EPSRC; Professor Anthony J. Ryan – Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Science – University of Sheffield; Mr. Jon McLoone – Director-Business Development for Wolfram Research Europe; Professor Peter Styring – Professor of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry – University of Sheffield. The event was graced by several prominent guests and delegates with the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Engineering, Science and Research and Innovation also visiting us for the day.

An editorial board was set up in order to provide researchers the opportunity to publish their work in the form of an extended abstract with indexing. This coupled with the poster presentation and oral presentation served as the research showcase. With over 500 delegates and over 150 submissions, researchers also spent some time networking with industry and finding out more

about getting chartered by various professional bodies. There were delegates from across the university and from other external universities. The networking session in the evening coupled with the string quartet turned out to be quite useful for delegates, providing them a chance to network in a less formal setting. Prizes were awarded to the best posters.

The success of the conference was due to the interdisciplinary nature of the work being pursued at the University and with many researchers finding collaborators and being able to publish their work in the form of an extended abstract.

The Editorial board and the college of reviewers convened for the symposium will now form the basis of a new Journal for showcasing the University's interdisciplinary work.



Three minutes, 100 entrants and one exciting final!



Three Minute Thesis comes to the University of Sheffield

How long would it take you to explain your research to someone who isn't an expert in your field?

Well, doctoral researchers who entered the university's new public engagement competition had just three minutes (and one slide) to convey the importance of their PhD to a "non-specialist" audience. Quite a challenge, and one to which our researchers rose magnificently, with around 100 researchers from all disciplines entering the Three Minute Thesis competition.

The standard of entries was extremely high, but after two tough faculty rounds, 10 entrants (two per faculty) made it through to the University final, in June. In addition to a panel of judges, our finalists presented in front of an audience, who also voted for their favourite. Judging was no mean feat, as all the finalists gave very impressive, highly polished performances, on subjects as diverse as the resources required for effective foreign language teaching and the role of stem cells in the treatment of cancer.

After much deliberation, and with the audience votes counted, Carly Lynsdale, from the Faculty of Science, was crowned University Champion, winning £750 to attend a conference or professional development event, and going on to represent the University in the national semi-finals, later this month with her snappily-titled presentation, "Pachyderms, Parasites and Poo", which focused on her research into the evolutionary ecology of parasite infection in Asian elephants.

Ciara Kelly, from the Faculty of Social Sciences, was also given special recognition, being awarded runner-up for her presentation about the effect of leisure activities on work performance.

Speaking about her experience of the competition, Carly said "When I entered the Three Minute Thesis competition I didn't realise how difficult it actually is to try and explain approximately three years of work in such a short



Three Minute Thesis UK finalist Carly Lynsdale
(credit: Virpi Lummaa)

space of time! Although definitely a challenge, it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and one I would recommend to any PhD student.

As a first year I found it particularly useful as not only did I receive some excellent presentation training, but the experience also helped me focus on the outline of my research, the main questions I wanted to answer and how to explain it all to a general audience."

"Winning was absolutely fantastic and a real surprise. I'm now looking forward to presenting my work and meeting other postgraduate researchers at the national semi- finals."



“the competition and the training provided have given them a lot more confidence in talking about their PhD and, more importantly, have made them think more critically about their research.”

Ciara agreed, adding “Since the Three Minute Thesis, I can confidently give people an understandable and enthusiastic summary of what I do. This has helped me in recruiting people to my study, making connections with people who work in similar areas of research, and just generally encouraging me to talk about my research. I can’t overstate how important all of these things are for driving my PhD forward.”

This is the first time the University of Sheffield has taken part in the Three Minute Thesis competition, which was devised by the University of Queensland in 2008, and now attracts participants from almost 200 universities, all over the world. The Faculty and University heats were organised by the Think Ahead team, who support early career researchers at the university.

Sarah Bell, Researcher Development Manager for Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, who led on the Three Minute Thesis competition for the University, said:

“Every single one of the finalists has given really positive feedback about their experience in the competition; entrants at every stage have commented that the competition and the training provided have given them a lot more confidence in talking about their PhD and, more importantly, have made them think more critically about their research. It’s been fantastic to be involved with Three Minute Thesis, and I hope that we can encourage even more researchers to take part next year!”

The Finalists are:

- Rebecca Slack - Faculty of Science
- Marzieh Abdul Tehrani - Faculty of Engineering
- Carly Lynsdale - Faculty of Science
- Ciara Kelly - Faculty of Social Sciences
- Darren Geoghegan - Faculty of Engineering
- Joanna Kremer - Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Barbora Novakova - Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health
- Fei Qu - Faculty of Social Sciences
- Maria Jesus Inostroza - Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Dea Nielsen - Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health

STOP PRESS: FANTASTIC NEWS
Carly is one of 6 finalists selected to go forward to the National Finals taking place in September.
Well Done Carly!!!

To see any of these fantastic presentations, please visit

www.sheffield.ac.uk/icoss/training/thinkahead/3mt

QR Code Here



Doctoral Academy Website



Doctor Ben Orza

Ben studied for a PhD in Solar Physics, Department of Applied Maths at the University of Sheffield between 2009-2013. During his PhD he started working for CiCS (Corporate Information and Computing Services) as a Learning Services Assistant based in the Information Commons, he then moved to being a Learning and Teaching Support Advisor for CICS prior to becoming a Learning Technologist with Research and Innovation Services.

A few months ago Ben Orza started working for R&IS as a Learning Technologist working on several projects such as:

- supporting the development of new online content for PGRs to be delivered by professional services (material for Virtual Graduate School)- providing specialist expertise in implementing/ using learning technologies to ensure the continued development of appropriate provision
- supporting the development and redevelopment of webpages managed by the Doctoral Development Team, amongst them are the Doctoral Academy webpages.

The Doctoral Academy webpages were set up with the intention to be a landing site for all doctoral research matters, incorporating signposting to PGR related resources including: the doctoral development programme, the virtual graduate school, scholarships and other funding opportunities. The Doctoral Academy virtual community will allow doctoral research students to find peers for mutual support and benefit and should facilitate communication with one another.

The Doctoral Academy is a University-wide structure supporting doctoral research across all faculties. All Doctoral Research students are members of the Doctoral Academy and can access the information and services that it offers.

The content itself will be easy to modify and sustain, the main core will be published and developed by doctoral research interns, where they will gather information related to doctoral research students from every department or activity. They will help to improve the digital enhancement of the current provision, interacting with other doctoral research students and keeping the infrastructure and content up-to-date.

Throughout the development of new content we will be trying to ensure that doctoral research students are themselves able to share ownership of the virtual community, building on the work done to date to strengthen the current provision and seek engagement and feedback from other doctoral students.

Sheffield has around 4000 doctoral students who play a vital role in developing our vibrant intellectual culture. The Doctoral Academy seeks to enable doctoral students to feel fully integrated as members of this wider research community. By visiting our web pages, you'll find a range of information relating to your time here.

Its web pages provide information on diverse issues including a variety of opportunities You will be able to exchange ideas, form support networks and make new friendships.

Alongside his work on the Doctoral Academy Ben has also been working on the re-development of the Virtual Graduate School. The Virtual Graduate School provides additional support for off campus students alongside the Doctoral Academy web pages.

First conceived in 2007 The Virtual Graduate School or VGS – was an innovative project developed by Professor Jerry Wellington and Ms Sheena Banks. It was developed as online platform for improving the research environment for “off-campus” doctoral research students. By September 2014 we expect to release the new version of the VGS. This will then provide a relevant up-to-date and accessible resource for all students both on and off campus.

You can access the VGS here
<http://vgs.group.shef.ac.uk/cms/>

SEERC Celebrations



The University Of Sheffield.



CITY College
An International Faculty Of The University.

You may have noticed in our Off Campus edition that we focused on the work of 2 students at the South-East European Research Centre (SEERC). Now they and everyone at SEERC have good reason to celebrate.

SEERC has reached a significant milestone, celebrating 10 years as a centre for multidisciplinary research. Celebrations will be taking place across campus between 17th and 21st November 2014.

The South-East European Research Centre (SEERC) is an overseas research centre of the University of Sheffield, established as a non-profit legal entity in Thessaloniki, Greece. The centre was founded by City College, the University's International Faculty, in 2003.

It is conducting multidisciplinary research in the fields of:

- Enterprise,
- Innovation & Development,
- Information & Communication Technologies, and Society & Human Development.

Mission Statement

SEERC's mission is to support the stable and peaceful development of South-East Europe by conducting pure and applied research in and for the region. To accomplish this, SEERC employs the existing research capacities of the University of Sheffield and CITY College by facilitating collaborations between their research staff and by developing multi-disciplinary networks of researchers from across South-East Europe.



The Role of SEERC as a Multidisciplinary Research Centre in the SEE Region

SEERC research faculty represents a very wide array of disciplines including - economics, political science, international relations, social policy, computer science, history, sociology, anthropology, information technology, geography, geographic information systems, engineering, management, urban planning, cultural studies, public health, health care informatics, and education - and undertakes research at both micro and macro levels, employing quantitative and qualitative methods. SEERC also has the practical advantage of being located in Greece, which allows it to function within the EU, while being physically located within the SEE.

In addition, SEERC serves as an information clearing house, distilling the essence of research on the region for use by researchers, policy makers, civil society and business in the region. The centre's output includes timely policy briefs, electronic mapping, working papers and surveys of ongoing and recently completed research in the area, as well as journal articles and monographs. Through its multi-disciplinary research activities and its archival, synoptic and dissemination efforts, SEERC has positioned itself as a cross-border institution empowering those countries that are currently on the edge of Europe to collaborate in playing their full part in an expanded Europe.

Find out more at:

<http://citycollege.sheffield.eu/frontend/index.php>

And the SEERC website:

http://www.seerc.org/new/#.U9pTvE_ji70

Research Students Explore



Zelda Hannay



Bridie Moore

Terra Incognita Festival was an all day and evening event (10.30am to 9pm) mounted for a university and public audience at The Sheffield University Drama Studio on Shearwood Road.

The festival was organised by Bridie Moore and Zelda Hannay, founder members of the Terra Incognita Performance Network, which was originally started because there was no established network or regular meeting opportunity for Arts and Humanities postgraduate students working through, or interested in, artistic practice. The network meets every second Wednesday in term time at The Hawley Building on Mappin Street where members make presentations, work through practical ideas and share experiences.

The day's programme began with a keynote speech by Dr. Adam Stansbie of the University of Sheffield's Department of Music. His speech introduced some of the key terms of the debate that were to occupy us during the rest of the day.

Dr. Stansbie's Keynote speech explored prescribed forms of practice and the place of practice-as-research within the academy as a whole.

There then followed a diverse collection of performances, presentations and discussion. These included one to one and intimate performances, a series of 5 'selfies', which is a new performance form that incorporates images of the performer, and is designed to be open to interpretation within the remit of investigating the self.

After lunch there was a paper given by Dani Abulhawa, Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, who elaborated on her research into performance of the gendered body through play in the public built environment, revealing to the delegates that she had been performing unannounced in the environs of Shearwood Rd as they had been arriving during the morning registration period.

In the afternoon and evening presentations included work by musician Dominic Moore, playwright Felah Shaker, in a new translation by



Terra Incognita

Sheffield PhD student Alyaa Abdulhusein Nasser Al Shammari, new experimental writing by Tim Norwood and two new works, *Love is a Catskin Rug* by Headless Doctor and *The Mars Project* by Brief Theatre.

Contributors included past and present theatre and music postgraduate students and academics from Sheffield Hallam, Birmingham University and the University of Sheffield, as well as independent researchers and artist practitioners. A variety of forms were represented, including devised and scripted work, improvisational performance, one-to-one performance and site-specific performance. The group discussion was documented, and contact details taken so that attendees could stay connected to the Terra Incognita Network.

The festival was the first event staged by the network, and was created with two main aims. These were: to explore and model the notion of Practice-as-Research within the academy, and therefore to raise its profile and also to extend the network to include a wider variety of disciplines by publicising and then mounting the event.

All feedback from audience members and contributors has been very positive thus far, and the Terra Incognita team are now engaged in evaluation and debrief in order to capitalise on all that they achieved and take the network forward.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the School of English staff and the Arts and Humanities PG Forum fund. Further information can be found at www.terraincognitasheffield.com

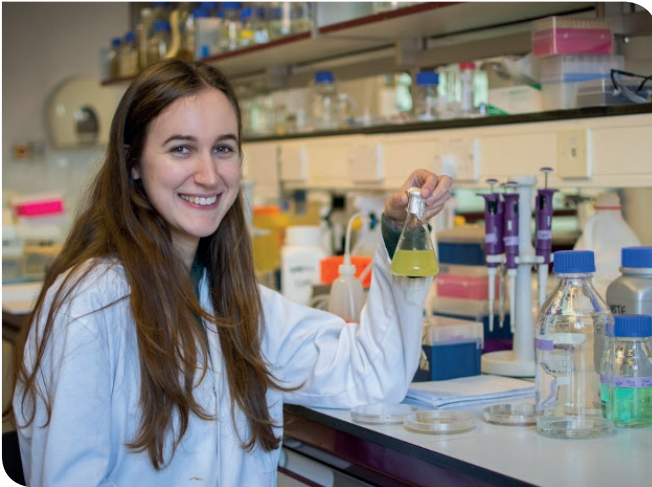
Bridie Moore and Zelda Hannay

Photograph taken from – *Inscribing an Unknowable feminine archetype* by Dani Abulhawa



Katie Grayson

Interdisciplinary



Katie Grayson is a 3rd year Biochemistry PhD student working on photosynthesis and synthetic biology.

Working as part of an interdisciplinary team

I am a biochemist who works as part of an interdisciplinary research team alongside physicists and chemists. Interdisciplinary projects are becoming more and more common in science and, while it can be challenging to work with people from other backgrounds, it has been a stimulating and rewarding experience.

My work as a biochemist often involves producing biological samples for chemists to use in an experiment, and good communication is key. The chemist needs to know how to properly treat and store the samples and I need to understand the experiment so that I know how the sample should be prepared. Occasionally someone may ask me to prepare something, imagining it to take a couple of days, and be surprised when I reply that it could take a couple of weeks. A colleague of mine came up with an excellent idea to help this problem: he ran a biochemistry course for the scientists from other departments. By spending a week in a biochemistry laboratory, they were able to understand more about the biological samples that they were using and what the preparation process involves. As a result, we have since been able to collaborate a lot more effectively.

If I am to fully understand the data produced by the cross-disciplinary research that I am involved in, I need to have a good understanding of the experimental techniques used. I encounter many techniques which require knowledge that my undergraduate degree in biochemistry didn't teach.

It can be time consuming to build up a basic knowledge of a new field, but expanding my skill set can be useful for the future when building new collaborations. Having a good knowledge of other fields can also help me when thinking of applications and designing new experiments for my own biochemical work.

Other than the fact that working with people from other fields opens up a whole new world of experimental techniques, one of the biggest challenges I have faced is the differences in the language used between disciplines. Often different words are used to describe the same thing. This can be confusing initially, but over time I have built up a whole new lexicon that enables me to discuss ideas when I meet other scientists.

When tackling a problem, people from different backgrounds often approach the issues in different ways. This can prolong the discussion as an in depth explanation of the background knowledge behind different people's reasoning is often required, but bringing new perspectives to a problem at hand can open up new avenues of research and help come up with a solution.

During my research, I have enjoyed meeting people from other backgrounds, and the chance to learn about new fields. For an interdisciplinary project to be successful, a good deal of background knowledge of all the topics involved is essential, and good communication is vital.

“one of the biggest challenges I have faced is the differences in the language used between disciplines”

Researchers

Simon Whittingham



Simon Whittingham is currently researching cell based devices at the Kroto Research Institute at the University of Sheffield.

My name is Simon Whittingham and I am a postgraduate student operating within the White Rose Doctoral Training Centre for Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine and I'm based in the Kroto Research Institute. I work under the primary supervision of Dr Frederik Claeyssens and secondary supervision of Professor John Haycock and prior to engaging in this doctoral program I obtained a Master's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Leeds.

My work focuses on the development of devices with the intent to facilitate a co-culture environment between neurons and glial cells to elicit a myelination response in the hopes of developing a model. (Myelination is the process of forming a sheath around a nerve to allow nerve impulses to move quicker.) Complex tissues are difficult to study inside the body, and building the complexity of an in-vitro (or outside of a living body) model allows scientists to more closely study the nature of the tissue in a more controlled environment. The primary equipment I'm using to develop these devices is by direct laser writing, which allows for the production of micro-scale features of high spatial resolution which are highly relevant on the cellular level.

The technique outlined above has become highly desirable in recent years and interest in its application within fundamental biology (to applied fields such as tissue engineering) has grown immeasurably thanks to the versatility of this method. As such, the potential for collaborative research opportunities is high. This has allowed for individuals with specific expertise to collaborate their research as part of a collective to optimise results, which may not have been realised otherwise.

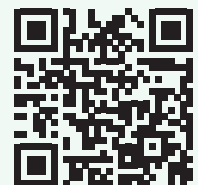
Such an opportunity has presented itself between three departments and their respective researchers; Dr Kurt De Vos of the Sheffield Institute for Translational Neuroscience (SITraN), Dr Cecile Perrault of Mechanical Engineering and Dr Frederik Claeyssens of the Kroto Research Institute. When researching basic cellular functions of neurones as well as potential therapies for neurodegenerative diseases such as motor neurone disease (MND), at early stage in vitro investigations it is of substantial benefit to the scientists involved to have accurate control over cellular outgrowth. In the project we are developing and manufacturing standalone devices that allow this control and at the same time transform what is currently a low throughput process into a higher throughput one, thereby increasing the efficacy of investigations conducted in SITraN. *

If the joint venture is a success the collaborating researchers will have made an impact in our interdisciplinary environment, producing work which may have not been possible individually, with the additional benefit of a reduced time investment from each collaborator.

** SITraN is one of the world leading centres for research into neurodegenerative disorders.*

You can explore their work via this link:

<http://sitran.dept.shef.ac.uk/>



This issue we are pleased to have contributions from two of our alumni reflecting on how interdisciplinary working contributed to enhancing their working environment and reflecting on the transition from student into career. These accounts illustrate the importance of fostering strong reflective supportive communities, which is a key purpose of the Doctoral Academy. *AJ*

Keith Frankish



Making Connexions in a Doctoral Community

I was a PhD candidate in the Department of Philosophy in the mid-late 1990s, working in philosophy of mind. It was a stimulating environment, and there was a lively and mutually supportive doctoral community, whose members were thoroughly involved in the life of the department through teaching, seminars, reading groups, and other activities.

The department was supportive of new projects, particularly ones involving the use of online media, and a group of us joined researchers from Human Communication Sciences to start an online journal of cognitive science, called Connexions. The journal published articles, book reviews, and conference reports, and running it gave us valuable experience of academic editing and publishing, as well as extending our network of research contacts. The experience of being part of an interdisciplinary editorial team also proved to be invaluable preparation for work on the many collaborative research projects in which I have since been involved.

“What made our doctoral community so successful, I believe, was the role played by the department, which was active but not controlling.”

What made our doctoral community so successful, I believe, was the role played by the department, which was active but not controlling. Senior staff encouraged young researchers to collaborate and innovate, offered constructive advice, and granted access to administrative support.

Together with the formal research training available, this created an exciting and fertile environment, which was the launching pad for many successful academic careers. I am sure the modest investments of time and resources required to create and foster the community have been repaid many times over.

“Senior staff encouraged young researchers to collaborate and innovate, offered constructive advice, and granted access to administrative support.”

After leaving Sheffield, Keith Frankish was a Lecturer, and later Senior Lecturer, in the Department of Philosophy at The Open University. He is currently based in Crete, Greece, where he moved for family reasons. Keith's research spans philosophy of mind and psychology, focusing in particular in questions about belief, mental architecture, and consciousness. More information about Keith and his research can be found on his website www.keithfrankish.com

Scott Eldridge



Scott Eldridge II was a PhD student in the Department of Journalism studies at the University of Sheffield. His area of research is Traditional Journalism identities in relation to New Media, and exploring issues surrounding WikiLeaks and Journalism.

Moving from a full-time PhD to the early stages of my career has been a balance of appreciating what I have done in what I hope to do, and realising the PhD never quite ends. Asked to write for the Doctoral Times about my shift from being a doctoral student to early career academia, I realised the biggest task was to decide just how that had occurred. Amid all the changes to work routines and to expectations and to my research, the biggest change with ending my PhD studies has been making sense of how my PhD factored into developing my academic identity.

For many of us, our early academic identities are wedded to the work in our PhDs studies, so that transitioning from 'student' to 'career' means letting go one project, while appreciating how it introduced us to our fields and, perhaps, opened up an array of opportunities. From my PhD work, I have been able to present and publish and establish a corner of expertise within my academic discipline. With some variation, this is the same for many of us who, as early-career academics, come into the academy as doctoral students and on the back of that work we earn an opportunity to move on as 'actual' academics, the latter relying on the former.

But for the same reason, closing the chapter on our PhD studies can feel like stepping into a space where we are no longer supported by years of research and analysis a PhD requires, yet we eagerly want to develop the next novel idea. This is compounded when it is the first thing we are asked to articulate in a new role, and it can feel like we need to abandon what we have done to do so. I have tried various ways to approach this, setting aside 'research days' to start new projects, and joining networks to focus on new research strands. In the end, I find myself balancing the new and the old.

During one week in April this became clear when on a Monday I presented my future research ideas to a network, and that Friday I was in my viva. Monday's was the first presentation in years that didn't mention my PhD, but by Friday I was reminded how even those future plans drew on my PhD work. It had given me a sense of place within my discipline.

Since that week, I have approached the transition out of the PhD as a mixture of opportunity and experience, and rather than closing the chapter on the PhD, I have returned to it to re-read authors I last read years back and re-visit arguments I made to develop new research ideas.

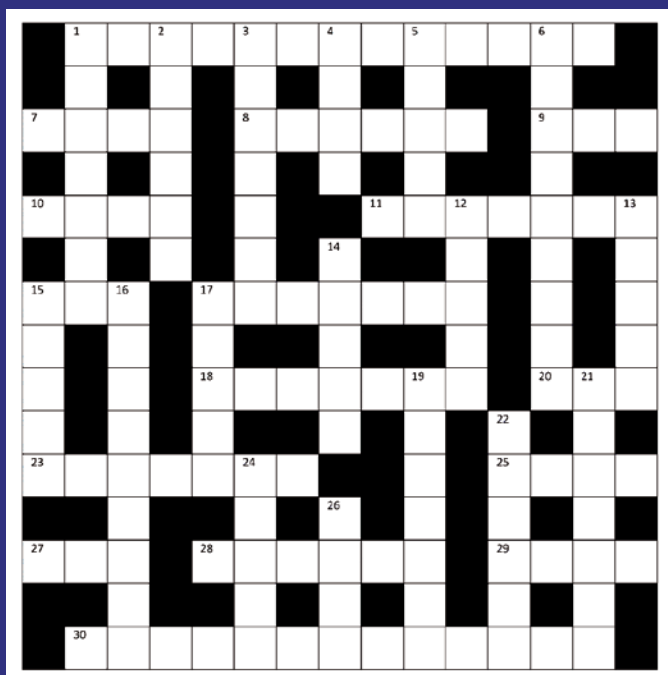
All of this can make the end of the PhD feel like a straddling act, but it can be a welcome one. The day-to-day demands are different, and for each of us the transition is unique. It can be hard to plan for, and hard to anticipate, but in the end it is a balance, and one that can shape our academic identities.

"Moving from a full-time PhD to the early stages of my career has been a balance of appreciating what I have done in what I hope to do, and realising the PhD never quite ends."

Cryptic Crossword



The
University
Of
Sheffield.



Compiled by Vanilla

Clues

Across

1. Watching the cricket is the enemy of thesis submission..... (3,6,4)
7.resulting in being disengaged. (4)
8. The 'dash, dot, dot' of prosody, my foot! (6)
9. Bounder who won't commit his plans to paper? (3)
10. Go to market briefly and come back, but not on foot. (4)
11. ottingham's leader doesn't mix well, but makes connections. (7)
15. Bore, we hear, of the Lebanon. (3)
17. She looks confident In gold dress outfit. (7)
18. Making slow and steady progress but not on tip-toes. (7)
20. Looking around nanotechnology initially for connections (3)
23. His email to the Students Union was copied to Engineering and Social Science, to great effect! (7)
25. Dance for horse and cow? (4)
27. The, not so Magnum, Opus boiled down to some idea that the ordinary life is a path to sanctity. (3)
28. Lack of Rhythm and Blues leaves acerbic southern leader feeling cheesy.(6)
29. Postcard from Lima?(4)
30. The worst start possible for the thesis is actually a fairy tale beginning. (4,4,1,4)

Down

1. Neat solution Roy first left around the German. (7)
2. She has aspirations to develop the same doctorate shortly. (6)
3. A dour American academic can make for hard work. (7)
4. Around the circle and back between the posts but eventually high for one in 1 down. (4)
5. Her letters about my return were far from prosaic. (5)
6. Claim I rob about pathogenic breakthrough. (9)
12. Providing access to 20 across for protagonist from 11 across. (5)
13. n hard back? Doubly so! (5)
14. Study around the defining characteristics of old tomes in the library. (5)
15. A doughnut ripped our team apart, we hear. (5)
16. Neurotic Doctor's first solution is small scale copy. (9)
17. The head of Edinburgh adopts airs about being knighted. (8)
19. An ape in California, surprisingly, has found the solution to all our problems. (7)
21. Some time ago in return to South East struggle. (7)
22. These guys are not squares; outrageously, they used Her Majesty's biro. (6)
24. Not 1 down, as result of South African fun!(5)
26. Note struck by Carroll's outgribing raths, in a roundabout way.(4)

**Please complete if you are submitting your entry*

Name:

Department:

**Got the print
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Link here

