The Graduate School

Supporting the postgraduate student experience

www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool
ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Graduate School

1.1.1 The primary purpose of the Graduate School is to develop and deliver a world-class and engaging provision ensuring all Imperial College London postgraduate students are provided with excellent professional development training which complements their academic studies and provides opportunity to develop skills applicable to a broad range of careers. Informed by the Professional Skills Development External Advisory Board, which comprises industry representatives, the Graduate School’s programme offers students the chance to develop skills which are of most value to a range of employers. Additionally, the Graduate School’s College wide events bring students together from across all disciplines to network and engage in interdisciplinary discussion.

1.2 Roles, staff and structure of the Graduate School

1.2.1 The Graduate School (Figure 1) is led by the Director, Professor Sue Gibson, and Deputy Directors, Dr David McPhail and Dr Bernadette Byrne, who work in partnership with the Manager of the Graduate School to develop postgraduate educational strategy and policy. Although the quality assurance of postgraduate provision is managed and administered centrally by the Registry’s Quality Assurance team, the Director and Deputy Directors represent postgraduate educational matters at senior College Committees.

1.2.2 The Manager of the Graduate School has overall responsibility for ensuring the operational efficiency and quality of provision that the Graduate School offers. The Manager is supported by a Deputy Manager, who leads the administration team and the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development, who leads the team of tutors.

1.3 Welcome to new members of the Graduate School and thanks to outgoing members of the team

1.3.1 In April 2015, the Graduate School was pleased to welcome Dr Janet De Wilde as the newly appointed Head of Postgraduate Professional Development. Janet was previously Head of Researcher Development at Queen Mary, University of London and is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Prior to this, Janet was Assistant Director (Scotland) and Head of STEM at the Higher Education Academy and also worked as Researcher Development Manager at the Universities of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt. Janet has previously worked at Imperial College London as a researcher in the Department of Electrical Engineering and later became a lecturer in the Department of Bioengineering.

1.3.2 In February 2015, Dr Elena Forasacco joined the Graduate School as a part-time Teaching Fellow. Elena has previously worked at Ulster University as a Project and Research Associate. Elena also worked as a teaching assistant and has supervised both undergraduate and Master’s students. Dr Elena Forasacco is an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.
1.3.3 At the end of September, Dr David McPhail will be stepping down in his role as Deputy Director of the Graduate School. At the end of December 2015, Dr Bernadette Byrne will also be stepping down in her role as Deputy Director of the Graduate School (professional skills). The Graduate School extends thanks to both David and Bernadette for their valuable contribution and support.

1.4 President’s Awards for Excellence 2015

1.4.1 The Graduate School is extremely pleased to announce that in 2015, Dr Paul Seldon was awarded a President’s Award for excellence in teaching. The Award recognises Paul’s outstanding contribution towards the enhancement of teaching, in particular for the GTA training programme, the Global Health international doctoral summer school held at the University of Cape Town and for his excellent student feedback.

1.4.2 Additionally, the Graduate School is pleased to announce that in 2015, Laura McConnell was awarded a President’s Medal for excellence in supporting the student experience. The Medal recognises Laura’s responsibility for ensuring that postgraduate students receive innovative and effective professional skills training, her work as part of the Doctoral Proposition, and her role in establishing the African Global Health Fellows Programme.

1.4.3 Both will be presented with their awards at a special ceremony in December 2015.
Figure 1: Graduate School 2014-15

Front row (left – right) – Kelly Hayes, Rebecca McKone, Sarah Faux, Bernadette Byrne, Hayley Cordingley
Back row (left – right) – Paul Seldon, Caroline Hargreaves, Helal Ahmed, James Tilley, Laura McConnell, Sue Gibson, David McPhail, Sergio Santos
1.5  Director of the Graduate School's award for professional skills development 2015

1.5.1 The Director’s Award for Professional Skills Training is an initiative to recognise the outstanding contribution to and support for the Graduate School's professional skills development programmes among Imperial academics and post-doctoral tutors.

1.5.2 The award is open to all members of College academic, support and post-doctoral staff who assist the Graduate School with the delivery of Graduate School courses. Previous winners have included Mr Greg Artus, Professor Paul Langford and Mr Ebrahim Mohamed. This year the award was presented to Dr Mike Tennant from the Centre for Environmental Policy. Mike was presented with his award at the Graduate School’s Research Symposium in July 2015.

1.6  Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards 2015

1.6.1 In 2015, in recognition of our successful cohort building programme, the Graduate School was shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award in the Outstanding Student Services Team category. The Awards Ceremony was held on 18 June 2015 with many members of the Graduate School in attendance.
SECTION TWO: GRADUATE SCHOOL PROVISION 2014-15

2.1 Professional skills development for research students

2.1.1 Following on from recommendations made by the External Advisory Board in January 2015, the Graduate School has undertaken a major review of its provision which will take effect for the 2015-16 academic session. The following section is a review of the programme delivered in 2014-15.

2.1.2 During 2014-15, the hallmark of Graduate School training provision continues to be ‘compulsion with flexibility’ with students being required to attend a minimum number of courses, but having a wide selection to choose from.

2.1.3 The programme is divided into three sections which are aligned to the three key stages of doctoral studies (it should be noted that these stages will be removed from the provision from 2015-16 allowing students to choose courses from across the entire programme):

- **Underpinning**: the early stage (0-9 months)
- **Consolidation**: the mid stage (9-20 months)
- **Completion**: the late stage (20+ months)

In order to meet the requirement of Early Stage Assessment at 9 months, students are required to attend four courses, each from a different domain in the underpinning stage or the Research Skills & Development Course (RSD) plus one other course from any domain in the underpinning stage.

2.1.4 Within each stage, workshops have been grouped into a number of different domains, addressing the personal and professional qualities, knowledge and skills most relevant to postgraduate researchers as they progress. In addition, there is an Enrichment section which offers further workshops available to students at any stage. The provision is informed by a scholarly approach with research informing its content and student evaluation ensuring its efficacy.

2.1.5 The programme features two Times Higher Education (THE) Award winning courses – FUMO (Finish up, Move on) and the RSD. The RSD course is a residential course recommended for all early stage researchers. It takes place at Easthampstead Park in Berkshire, a Victorian mansion (Figure 2) situated within 60 acres of beautiful parkland. The course is designed to enhance both the personal and research effectiveness of participants and to help develop a social and support network.

Figure 2: Easthampstead Park Conference Centre

2.1.6 FUMO is an interactive two day non-residential course which is recommended to students in the Completing stage of their doctorate. It covers what students need to know about how to successfully complete their research degree and move on to the next phase of their career. The programme
includes discussion, reflection and practical exercises. There is also a small reception and networking event to provide an opportunity for students to talk to peers, alumni and the course tutors.

2.1.7 A full list of doctoral courses delivered in 2014-15 is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Doctoral professional skills courses delivered in 2014-15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Research Skills &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Career Options</td>
<td>Career Planning for 1st Year PhDs: Business, Engineering and Physical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Career Options</td>
<td>Career Planning for 1st Year PhDs: Life Sciences and Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
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<td>Information Retrieval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>The Information Landscape: Introducing the Web of Science Database</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>The Information Landscape: Keeping your Research Up to Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>Introduction to Research Data Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Personal Effectiveness</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Personal Effectiveness</td>
<td>Myers Briggs: Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Personal Effectiveness</td>
<td>Negotiation Skills for Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Personal Effectiveness</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
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<td>Presenting</td>
<td>Presentation Skills Half Day Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>Technical Presentation Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Application for AFHEA Pre-Submission Workshop</td>
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<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Assessment and Feedback for Doctoral Research Students and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Introduction to Teaching and Learning for Doctoral Research Students and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Science, Research and Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Science in Context: How Science Tells the Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>Science in Context: Science Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Project Management for Researchers</td>
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<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Becoming an Effective Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Efficient Reading</td>
</tr>
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<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Research Design for Social Sciences &amp; Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Introduction to Statistics using SPSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Stats for Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Stats from Scratch</td>
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<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Academic Writing Skills</td>
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<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Systematic Reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Tackling a Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing for Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Planning your Career: Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Planning your Career: Physical Scientists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Planning your Career: Medically Qualified Doctoral Students</td>
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<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Planning your Career: Life Sciences &amp; Medicine PhDs</td>
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<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Networking</td>
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<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Advanced Presenting</td>
<td>Advanced Presentation Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Advanced Presenting</td>
<td>Effective Poster Presentations</td>
</tr>
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<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Advanced Presenting</td>
<td>Presenting Effectively at Conferences</td>
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<td>Consolidating</td>
<td>Progressing</td>
<td>Motivating and Independence for Mid-to-Late Stage Researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Advanced Writing</td>
<td>Grant Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Career Action</td>
<td>Career Focus for the Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Career Action</td>
<td>Effective CVs &amp; Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Career Action</td>
<td>Interview Practice with Video Playback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Career Action</td>
<td>Job Search with a Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Career Action</td>
<td>Preparing for Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Planning and Writing a Thesis and Preparing for the Viva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.8 In addition to the courses listed above, the Graduate School has also produced two videos which are available for students on DVD at any time, these are:

- **Passing your viva**
- **Presentation skills**

Also available online are “help sheets” for writing, presentation and career planning ([http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/help-sheets/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/help-sheets/)). As of this year each of the Graduate School courses has its own Blackboard site enabling students to access and print course material whenever it’s required.

2.1.9 Finally, all doctoral students are required to complete an online **Plagiarism Awareness** course prior to their ESA. The course is designed to provide students with guidance and information about proper citation and attribution in writing. After completing the course students will be able to explain what plagiarism is, be familiar with the concept of academic integrity, be able to explain how to avoid plagiarism and learn what the College’s policy concerning plagiarism is. [Find out more about the online Plagiarism Awareness Course](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/help-sheets/)

2.2 **International Doctoral Summer Schools**

2.2.1 The Graduate School, in partnership with the International Relations Office, offers doctoral students the unique and exciting opportunity to visit leading research universities around the world as part of its international doctoral summer school programme. In an environment where international collaboration is of mounting importance this is an exceptional chance for students to meet fellow students from across the world as well as collaborate with experts in their field through research placements which follow the summer school. The summer schools that took place in 2014-2015 were:

- **Tsinghua**: 12 July – 8 August 2015, Easthampstead Park, UK (1 week course)
- **KAIST**: 12 July – 8 August 2015, KAIST (Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology), South Korea (1 week course plus 3 week research placement).
- **MIT**: 7 June – 13 June 2015, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), US (1 week course, optional 3 week placement)
- **UCT**: 25 – 31 January 2015, University of Cape Town, South Africa (1 week course, optional 3 week placement)

2.2.2 Summer Schools encourage participants (PhD students) to explore and identify key elements of team working, networking, effective communication and project management. They are a balanced and structured programme of exercises and review sessions that provide a variety of learning situations allowing participants to identify and take away relevant lessons and skills to use within their chosen careers or in academia. In addition, the International Summer Schools help to develop researchers’
global skills and have been successful in strengthening the College’s collaborative partnerships with key institutions abroad.

![Imperial-MIT Global Fellows Programme Tutors and Participants](image1.jpg)

2.2.3 The UCT Global Health Fellows Programme ran for the first time in January 2015 in partnership with the Wellcome Trust Centre for Global Health. Students with an interest in global health from all disciplines were encouraged to attend and the professional skills programme was tailored around particular themes such as improving public knowledge of global health issues. Following a successful first year, it is envisioned that the summer school will alternate between Imperial and the Wellcome Trust’s African partner institutions in future years with MRC Gambia another possible host abroad.

![Imperial-UCT Global Health Fellows Programme Tutors and Participants](image2.jpg)

2.2.4 The inaugural Imperial-KAIST Global Fellows Programme was hosted in Daejeon, South Korea in July 2015. The programme was led by Imperial College Graduate School tutors working with KAIST staff. The residential week brought together 33 PhD students from Imperial College and KAIST for experiential learning focused on cross-cultural understanding and research collaboration. The programme was based on a range of team building and collaboration exercises.
2.3 Research to Inform Programme Content and Development

2.3.1 Moving towards online / blended learning
Following the development of the Graduate School’s new e-Learning strategy, during 2015-16, the PDU will be enhancing online/blended learning opportunities for students. Training in webinar software has taken place over the summer term and will be instrumental in developing a more flexible programme offering a variety of learning experiences to suit more learning styles.

2.3.2 Doctoral alumni views in context
This project builds on findings from a Master’s in Education (2013) and helps to bridge the gap in knowledge of the outcomes and impact of the doctoral experience. The Graduate School has carried out evaluation and research on provision from the outset. Research to date has focused on doctoral student views of the professional skills programme, creativity, wellbeing and entrepreneurship (http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/studentexperience).

This research considers quantitative and some qualitative data from doctoral alumni as to what they value in terms of supporting and developing their professional trajectories, and how their changing views can inform the professional skills agenda.

2.4 Imperial PhD Scholars

2.4.1 In October 2014, the Graduate School welcomed the second cohort of Imperial PhD Scholars. The Scholars are a group of academic high achievers who have been awarded a scholarship by the College. The Graduate School has developed a series of special events and courses for these individuals to enhance their experience at the College. In November 2014, a “meet and greet session” was organised for the new cohort hosted by the College President & Rector, Professor Sir Keith O’Nions. Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller (Chair of Council) was invited to talk to the Scholars about leadership and the event ended with a networking reception. The Graduate School also organised a lunchtime innovation lecture delivered by Professor David Gann, Vice-President (Development and Innovation) at the new White City Campus, a Strengths-finder Workshop and a Careers Workshop entitled “Professional Development to Enhance your PhD Experience” for the new cohort. In addition to this the Scholars organised their own Symposium open to both first and second years and the programme of events was closed with a summer celebration and networking barbeque in July.

2.4.2 The Imperial Scholars Working Party is responsible for development the special programme of events and courses for the Scholars. The Working Party will continue to review the content of this special programme during 2015-16.

2.5 Professional Skills Training for Master’s Students – The MasterClass Programme

2.5.1 Imperial College London is one of only a few institutions in the UK to provide a professional skills training programme for Master’s students although sector interest is now building in this area. The MasterClass programme is designed to complement academic study and courses have been scheduled to run at appropriate times throughout the academic session to fit in with course timetables. Since its inception in 2011-12, the programme of courses has been expanded and now includes a specific set of courses for MRes students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Short Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Writing</td>
<td>This session covers Master’s thesis planning, structure, style, and the writing process itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Thinking</td>
<td>Students complete activities with different examples of ways to think creatively outside the box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing your Career Through Networking</td>
<td>Students explore how using different networking techniques and strategies can maximise chances of finding all potential career opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Taking and Examination Skills</td>
<td>This course gives students advice on how to prepare for exams by making revision notes and using different learning techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Posters – Design and Layout</td>
<td>The course gives a brief introduction to academic posters, before quickly turning to practical aspects of layout and design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>In this course students identify good and bad interpersonal skills and the strategies and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Programme of Masterclasses delivered in 2014-15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Skills</td>
<td>A highly interactive session aiming to provide greater understanding about job interviews for postgraduate students and how to deal with challenging questions often encountered with employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search with a Difference</td>
<td>This course offers an insight into how the UK graduate recruitment market works, with up-to-date information about potential vacancy sources, as well as strategies for successful job hunting using social media and networking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Skills</td>
<td>In this course students learn about the different leadership styles that leaders implement and their advantages and disadvantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation Skills</td>
<td>This course introduces strategies for negotiating that can be applied in a range of academic, professional and personal situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing and Writing a Literature Review</td>
<td>Students learn what should and what shouldn’t be included in the literature review and how to prepare and structure it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Skills</td>
<td>This course offers ideas and tips on targeting presentation content for the audience, slide design and delivery to meet the needs of peers and academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Public speaking is not simply telling an anecdote or joke at a party, introducing oneself or delivering a paper at a conference. This course examines not only how to inform or express thoughts, but also how to change emotions, actions and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>This workshop explores the wider issues of research ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Skills and Reference Management</td>
<td>Becoming an effective researcher takes practice. This session introduces key research tools, reference management software and the importance of building up an effective search strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping up: Master’s to PhD</td>
<td>In this session students explore the decision to undertake a PhD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>This workshop examines responses to stressful events, considers personality type, self-esteem and their relation to stress, and looks at coping mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>By exploring how to manage time successfully, students can become more effective in completing tasks and reducing stress and anxiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking in Critiquing Research Articles*</td>
<td>This course is mainly composed of exercises in the examination of different passages of text taken from articles. It covers everything from the identification of arguments, the evaluation of evidence to writing at a critical level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Design*</td>
<td>Students learn how to use careful planning and preparation to design an experiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a PhD Proposal*</td>
<td>This course helps students to learn how to write and structure a good PhD research proposal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.2 In addition to the courses above, the Graduate School’s Research Integrity Working Party has also developed a Master’s version of the online Plagiarism Awareness course which is compulsory for all Master’s students.

2.5.3 Unlike the doctoral professional skills programme there are no college wide minimum attendance requirements and students are free to take as many MasterClasses as they wish. Individual departments have made some elements of the MasterClass programme compulsory for their students as they appreciate the value of developing these skills.

2.6 Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Project

2.6.1 The Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Project was a two year joint initiative between the Postdoc Development Centre and the Graduate School to enhance training in this domain and to promote development opportunities within and outside of Imperial for postgraduate students and postdocs. The project closed in July 2015, leaving a legacy of professional development courses which will continue to be delivered by the Graduate School in 2015-16.
2.7 Cohort Building

2.7.1 Cohort building activities help to develop a thriving research culture and environment. Research students working in cohorts can improve their understanding and access to professional and personal development as well as pastoral care. Cohort building can also assist departments to comply with the QAA’s UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B11, indicators 4 and 14), and the College’s Research Degree Precepts (Precept 9). The Graduate School offers two types of support, firstly tailored professional development courses to cohorts of students and secondly funding for cohort building activities. If you would like to discuss a possible cohort activity, please e-mail Dr Caroline Hargreaves (caroline.hargreaves@imperial.ac.uk) cohort coordinator for the Graduate School.

2.7.2 During 2014-15, the Graduate School approved funding for 15 cohort building activities a 50% increase from 2013-14. Examples of these are available on the cohort building website. Activities included networking and information sharing events for students, a media training session, a cultural heritage workshop and a young scientist day.

2.8 GTA Training – STAR Framework

2.8.1 The GTA training programme ran for the first time in 2014-15 and proved to be extremely popular with over 200 students participating both in the ‘Introduction to Teaching & Learning for Doctoral Students & GTAs’ and ‘Assessment & Feedback for Doctoral Research Students & GTAs’ workshops. The Graduate School, in partnership with the Educational Development Unit, has developed the GTA training programme to recognise the teaching carried out by PhD students which may lead to accreditation from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) as part of Imperial’s STAR Framework (supporting teaching accreditation and recognition). More information can be found at the link: http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/star-framework

2.8.2 To complement these workshops and to assist students in gaining recognition for their teaching activities a new workshop was also piloted in 2014-15 entitled ‘Application for AFHEA pre-submission’ which focussed on assisting students in writing their applications to the HEA.
SECTION THREE: GRADUATE SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

Committees

3.1 Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)

3.1.1 The PPDC is chaired by the Deputy Director of the Graduate School (Professional Skills). The Committee ensures the development and provision of a balanced training programme in professional skills for all postgraduate students and monitors the quality of programme delivery, both at the individual workshop level and for the programme as a whole.

3.1.2 The PPDC seeks to continually develop new aspects of the programmes to meet changing needs and receives recommendations to enhance the programme from the External Advisory Board. The PPDC also takes an interest in the development of e-learning provision to facilitate off-campus learning and develops links with other agencies (national and international) to maintain an awareness of the needs of employers, research councils and other stakeholders to enhance training.

3.2 Graduate School’s Centre for Doctoral Training / Doctoral Training Programme (CDT/DTP) Governance Committee

3.2.1 The Graduate School’s CDT/DTP Governance Committee is chaired by the Director of the Graduate School. The Committee acts as a forum in which to share good practice across Research Centres and to provide oversight of and help to coordinate the additional training provided to students by these Centres. The value of establishing peer groups and cohorts has been identified by this committee and is now one of the College’s research degree precepts which Departments are assessed against.

3.2.2 The Graduate School is also able to gather information from this committee to inform its own training programme and to ensure that students who do not belong to a CDT or DTP are given a comparable learning experience and support. Likewise, the Graduate School shares good practice and provides training support and advice for tutors on the design and delivery of CDT/DTP run professional skills courses.

3.3 Quality Assurance Committees

3.3.1 Although administered and managed centrally by the Registry’s Quality Assurance team, the Director and Deputy Directors chair a number of senior College quality assurance committees which report to Senate. These are:

- Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)
- Master’s Quality Committee (MQC) (BEPS – Business, Engineering and Physical Sciences)
- Master’s Quality Committee (MQC) (MLSPD – Medicine, Life Sciences and the School of Professional Development)

3.3.2 The PRQC advises the Senate on all matters relating to postgraduate education and research, changes to higher degree regulations and policy developments in the UK and internationally affecting postgraduate education. The Committee also determines the standards and frameworks by which Departments operate for postgraduate education and research, among other things.

3.3.3 The MQCs advise the Senate on all matters relating to the quality assurance of postgraduate taught education, changes to UK and international policy affecting postgraduate taught education. The Committees also receive the external examiner reports for all Master’s programmes of study and make recommendations on changes to the Regulations affecting postgraduate taught courses.
Working Parties

3.4 **Working Party for World Class Research Supervision**

3.4.1 One of the strategic aims set out in the College’s Education and Student Strategy document, published in autumn 2013 and now incorporated within the Strategy 2015-20, is for the College to achieve international recognition for a distinctive education. This led to the Doctoral Proposition, a document developed and refined through extensive consultation, which outlines what postgraduate research students can expect of their education and wider student experience at Imperial College London. The Doctoral Proposition vows amongst other things that Imperial will provide a world-class research programme throughout which internationally-acclaimed academics support, inspire and challenge students as they develop into independent researchers. The Working Party for World-Class Research Supervision, which reports to the Vice Provost’s Advisory Group for Education (VPAGE) and the Vice Provost’s Advisory Group for Research (VPAGR) was established by the Graduate School to develop this part of the proposition.

3.4.2 The Graduate School has conducted surveys to capture the opinion of both PhD students and academic staff on what constitutes world class research supervision and the findings of these have informed the development of recommendations to strengthen the research student experience.

3.5 **Research Integrity Working Party**

3.5.1 The Graduate School’s Research Integrity Working Party was established to review the current support and guidance available to staff and students in matters relating to research integrity, specifically copyright and plagiarism awareness. As previously mentioned, the Research Integrity Working Party developed two new compulsory online courses in Plagiarism Awareness, one doctoral and one Master’s. In 2014-15, the Research Integrity Working Party has developed a new online course in copyrighting which is due to be piloted in autumn 2015.

3.6 **Imperial Scholars Working Party**

3.6.1 The Graduate School established the Imperial Scholars’ Working Party to develop the courses and special activities for the Scholars in 2014-15 and beyond. The Working Party comprises representatives from all Faculties and CDTs and is chaired by the Deputy Director of the Graduate School (Professional Skills).

3.7 **Working Party for International Doctoral Summer Schools**

3.7.1 The International Doctoral Summer Schools Working Party is chaired by the Director of the Graduate School. It is administered by the International Relations Office. The Working Party is responsible for identifying new links and reviewing the quality of doctoral summer school provision both in terms of content and student experience.

3.8 **Working Party to Strengthen Postgraduate Staff Student Committees**

3.8.1 Following the extraordinary meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and chairs of Staff-Student Committees, held on 25 February 2015, it was agreed that the Graduate School and Imperial College Union should work together to improve the representation of postgraduate issues at Staff-Student Committees. This Working Party has been established to take forward this action point and will report to the October meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. More information on this will be provided in the next annual report.

3.9 **Postgraduate Staff Forum**

3.9.1 The Graduate School organises these meetings for postgraduate Departmental administrators and academic staff concerned with postgraduate education to share best practice and to discuss views on areas of concern. The meetings are also an opportunity for the Graduate School to share forthcoming developments and canvass opinion on such matters as well as being a networking opportunity for all concerned.
3.10 Graduate School Operations Group

3.10.1 The Graduate School’s Operations Group has a focus on postgraduate educational strategy. The Group, comprising members of the Graduate School management team, also takes an interest in the quality assurance of Graduate School courses, particularly in light of the requirements and expectations set out in the RCUK Concordat. It is responsible for the overall purpose, role and function of the Graduate School.

SECTION FOUR: GRADUATE SCHOOL EVENTS

4.1 Welcome Events

4.1.1 The Graduate School delivers Welcome Talks to all Master’s and Research students as part of the College’s induction for new students. As well as the College welcome, members of the Postgraduate Development Unit also visit each Department to provide a more bespoke talk to students and to provide tailored information on professional skills training. In 2014-15, the Graduate School also held 2nd year orientation meetings for PhD students progressing to their 2nd year. These talks raised awareness of support and development opportunities relevant to mid-stage doctoral students and topics included changing expectations, career choices and thesis embargoes. The talks were filmed and are available online.

4.2 IG Nobel Awards Tour Show

4.2.1 The Graduate School was delighted to host the IG Nobel Awards Tour Show for the tenth consecutive year on 20 March 2015. The show was presented by Marc Abrahams, organiser of the IG Nobel Prizes, editor of the Annals of Improbable Research and Guardian columnist, and featured a host of IG Nobel Prize winners and other 'improbable' researchers.

Figure 5: IG Nobel Awards Tour Show
4.3  **Annual Chemistry Show**

4.3.1  On 12 June 2015, the Graduate School hosted its annual Chemistry Show, featuring a demonstration of live experiments. The show was performed by Professor Hal Sosabowski, Professor of Public Understanding of Science and Principal Lecturer in Chemistry at the University of Brighton. Professor Sosabowski has performed for several years at this event and does live experiment shows across the country. He has appeared on television in the *Ministry of Mayhem* programmes and on the BBC2 show, *Rocket Science*.

**Figure 6: Professor Sosabowski - Chemistry Show**

4.4  **Annual Research Symposium**

4.4.1  The Graduate School’s annual research symposium took place on 10 July 2015. Students were nominated by their Department to take part in the poster competition. The event provided a platform for networking with students from different disciplines, staff members and visitors. This year the symposium featured a guest lecture entitled “Junking Jargon and the Power of Simplicity” from senior lecturer and STFC public engagement fellow, Dr Roberto Trotta followed by a signing of his book “The Edge of the Sky”.

4.4.2  The winners of this year’s prizes were:

- 1st Prize – Tom Hockenhull (Mathematics)
- 2nd Prize – Natalia Molodecky (School of Public Health)
- 3rd Prize & Student’s Choice – Giorgia Rossi (Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Figure 7: Research Symposium**

4.5  **Three Minute Thesis**

4.5.1  Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland. The exercise challenges PhD students to present a compelling oration on their thesis topic and its significance in just three minutes. 3MT develops academic, presentation, and research communication skills and supports the development of research students’ capacity to effectively explain their research in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience. It is a professional and highly engaging international competition.
After careful consideration, the judges awarded the following prizes:

- **1st Prize** – Ryan Robinson (NHLI)
- **2nd Prize** – Nisha Ranganathan (Medicine)
- **3rd Prize** – Laura-Ann McGill (NHLI)
- **People’s Choice Award** – Marianna Micallef (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

**Figure 8: Students who took part in the College’s Three Minute Thesis competition 2015**

**SECTION FIVE: SUPPORTING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

**5.1 Student Evaluation and Focus Groups**

5.1.1 All students are asked to evaluate the Graduate School’s professional skills training courses via online internal student evaluation forms. The feedback received is reviewed by the Graduate School to ensure continual enhancement of the programme. Issues raised by students are also brought to the attention of the PPDC. Students are also invited to participate in external student surveys such as the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and the Student Barometer, the results of which are carefully considered by the Graduate School and where appropriate, the PPDC. In August 2015, the Graduate School hosted a student discussion forum in which to gather feedback and suggestions for new course titles and course descriptions. Focus groups will continue to be hosted throughout the 2015-16 academic session especially to gather feedback on the new revised and refreshed programme.

5.1.3 The Graduate School also works and supports the Graduate Students’ Union to improve mechanisms of feedback and representation at College and has established a Working Party to review and strengthen PG staff-student Committees.

**5.2 Wellbeing**

5.2.1 Following on from the Success of the ‘UG Imperial Success Guide’, the Graduate School is leading the development of the ‘PG Success Guide’ highlighting support services available to students and providing them with useful information for their PhD study with particular regard to wellbeing. More details can be found at the following link: [www.imperial.ac.uk/success-guide](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/success-guide)

**5.3 Peer Review of Tutors**

5.3.1 The Graduate School’s system of peer observation has been designed to enhance the quality of the training offered to students, to positively support all tutors in their own professional development, to complement existing internal quality assurance mechanisms and to be compatible with College policy on peer observation. It is intended to provide an opportunity for enhancement of each tutor’s teaching in terms of both content and method of delivery. It is the responsibility of each tutor to initiate and follow through the arrangements for being observed at intervals no greater than every three years. The PPDC reviews the outcome of peer review.
5.4 CRICK

5.4.1 The Francis Crick Institute is a partnership between Imperial College London (Imperial), King’s College London (KCL), University College London (UCL), Cancer Research UK and the Medical Research Council. The partners have been working together to develop a CRICK PhD programme, the first cohort of which arrived in September 2014. CRICK students can make use of the facilities, in particular those of the Graduate School, at any of the HEIs involved in the partnership. The Graduate School has taken the lead administrative role in the management of the CRICK student experience and will continue to develop the operational processes involved in ensuring this new and exciting venture evolves smoothly.

SECTION SIX: STATISTICS

6.1 Number of professional skills courses delivered in 2014-15

6.1.1 In 2014-15, the Graduate School delivered 75 different doctoral courses. Some courses were delivered more than once so in total, the Graduate School delivered 301 doctoral courses.

6.1.2 21 different MasterClasses were delivered in 2014-15. Some of these were delivered more than once so in total, the Graduate School delivered 95 MasterClasses.

6.1.3 Figure 11 compares the number of courses delivered by the Graduate School in 2014-15 with the previous two academic sessions. It is expected that the number of courses delivered will increase back to the 2012-13 high next year with the addition of two new members of staff to the tutor team.

6.1.4 The total number of courses delivered by the Graduate School in 2014-15 was 396. In 2013-14 the total number was 426.

6.1.5 In 2014-15, the Graduate School delivered 8 fewer doctoral courses when compared with the number delivered in 2013-14. This was as a result of the Doctoral Proposition streamlining the Graduate School’s programme to make sure that we offered a wide variety of courses for the students while minimising repetition.
6.2 Attendance Statistics

6.2.1 Including attendances at MasterClasses, there were 9217 student attendances at Graduate School courses during 2014-15. 6133 of these were student attendances at doctoral professional skills courses. On average, for those students registered for a doctoral degree in 2014-15, 77% took more than the required minimum number of Graduate School courses. This compares with 59% in 2013-14.

6.2.2 Figure 12 compares student attendances at Graduate School courses in the last five academic sessions. 2012-13 was the first year in which the Graduate School distinguished between MasterClasses and doctoral student attendances.

6.2.3 Of those students who attended MasterClasses during 2014-15, 955 students took more than one. Given the College does not require Master’s students to attend MasterClasses, this demonstrates the value of this provision to students.

Figure 12: The number of doctoral and MasterClass student attendances for the previous six academic sessions

![Graph showing attendances from 2009-10 to 2014-15]
SECTION SEVEN: FORTHCOMING PRIORITIES AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Course Development

7.1.2 The well-established suite of face-to-face workshops has been recently reviewed by students and the External Advisory Board. The courses have been given new names for 2015-16 onwards and are now grouped into the following innovation areas: Writing for Success, Perfecting Presentations, Communicating Science to Wider Audience, Ensuring Integrity, Management Skills, Managing yourself and Others, Successful Interactions, Teaching, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Computing, Information Management and Careers. As well as the usual courses the Graduate School will also be working with smaller groups or offering coaching for individual students who may need extra support.

7.1.2 The Graduate School’s portfolio will, in due course, also include a range of virtual interactive classes and e+ practice courses. E-practice courses provide opportunity for students to practice their presentation skills and receive feedback. A series of webinars are already scheduled for the autumn term.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 Thanks are extended to members of academic staff, the Careers Service and the International Relations Office who have supported the delivery of Graduate School courses. Thanks are also extended to the EDU and the Library.

Rebecca Mckone
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