Student Handbook

MSc Science Communication
MSc Science Media Production

2018/2019
Welcome to the Imperial College Science Communication Unit. We very much hope you enjoy your time here.

This booklet contains the general information you will need to follow the MSc Science Communication and the MSc Science Media Production. More detailed information about individual modules will also be given out as the year proceeds. You can also find information about the courses on our website at http://www.imperial.ac.uk/science-communication-unit and on the Blackboard learning portal at https://bb.imperial.ac.uk.

Please keep this booklet to hand throughout the year so that you are able to plan your time carefully.

If you have any questions about the course, please don’t hesitate to ask one of the course tutors.
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Introduction

The MSc in Science Communication and MSc in Science Media Production are aimed at preparing science graduates for careers in the media and other communication professions. The MSc in Science Communication offers a broad overview suitable for those interested in all aspects of communication. Science Media Production is focussed specifically on the broadcast media and has a greater emphasis on broadcast production work, especially over the summer period.

Both courses combine academic analysis with creative work in particular media. There can be tensions between these two ways of thinking and working (and some people may find they are much better at one than the other) but both are essential to becoming a good science communicator. With time, you will begin to see how the practical work and academic work can each inform the other.

The academic side of the programme draws heavily on the humanities and social sciences. We do not expect you to have any prior knowledge of these areas, but you will find that you cover a lot of new material at a rapid pace. You may find this disorientating at times – and you will certainly find it hard work – but we can guarantee that you will also find it a highly rewarding experience. We also do not assume any inside knowledge of the media, although we do assume that all students are consumers of the media and have a general knowledge of a range of outlets and genres.

The courses are taught by five members of staff together with a number of freelancers who work in the industry or in academia. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time through the course of the year. You will often find that you can catch lecturers at the end of a class or at other times in their offices, but it is best to e-mail first to make an appointment (see the end of the booklet for contact details). Specific administrative questions should be addressed either to our administrator Liam Watson or to the
relevant course leader (Felicity Mellor, Science Communication; Robert Sternberg, Science Media Production).

**College information**

Details of College facilities and other information may be found on the College website: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students.

A copy of the Regulations for Students can be found at:
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations/.

All postgraduates are members of the College’s Graduate School. The Graduate School provides a number of training courses and workshops for students. These are aimed mainly at science research students, but you may find some of interest. For details see: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/currentstudents.

**Induction programme**

In order to help ease you into the course, there will be an induction programme in the first week of term. The induction programme has two purposes:

- to enable you to get to know each other as quickly as possible;
- to introduce aspects of the learning techniques we shall be using on the course, some of which may be unfamiliar to those of you who to date have studied only science or engineering.

The induction programme will include discussion sessions and social events. We will also deal with various administrative matters during the induction programme.

Please ensure that by the end of the first week:

- you have set up a College e-mail account.
– you have collected your College ID card. These cards double as security passes and library cards. You will need them for access to College buildings after normal working hours and for entry to the library at any time.
Learning approaches

Reflecting on learning

Educational research shows that learning is more effective whenever learners are conscious of how learning is taking place. The induction programme will introduce you to some of the approaches to learning that you will encounter in the rest of the course. We emphasise the need for students to take an active approach to learning – working through ideas for yourself so that you really come to understand the issues at stake. Many of you may be used to more passive approaches to learning based around lectures. In the humanities and social science subjects relevant to science communication, this is not so appropriate. That means there will be far less class time than you may be used to, and far more private study time to give you a chance to do the large amounts of reading that you will need to do. Some students can find this a little unnerving at first, but learning to learn for yourself is one of the most important skills you will acquire during your time here.

Active reading

Whenever we want you to learn new ideas we will encourage you to read about them, rather than tell you about them in lectures or seminars. Research shows that reading is a more effective way of learning than listening. We shall provide you with lots of written material composed specially for the course, together with copies of core texts from published sources. There will also be references to other books and articles which you might usefully read to develop your understanding further.

This means that you will be required to do large amounts of reading every week for all academic modules. At the very least, you should read the course handouts and the other core texts provided as
learning material in any given week. Reading will be one of your most powerful learning activities, but reading is not much use unless it is active reading. You should engage with the text as you read it. Such engagement might take a number of forms and the one(s) you choose should be those most suited to your personality and learning style. They might include:

– Verbalising your responses to the text, especially if it annoys you or you can’t understand it (obviously best done in private!)

– Noting your responses by writing comments in the margins of the text (but clearly not in library books).

– Marking the text by underlining, highlighting and so on, to draw out the passages which are most interesting or important (again, not in library books).

– Re-expressing what you have just read as an account or critique in your own words.

– For those with good memories (lucky people!), simply recording a few key points or words may prove adequate to recall much of the rest of the text.

You should generate your own summary version for most of the works that you read with any thoroughness.

**Learning from friends on the course**

Our teaching sessions involve student activities and group discussions as well as some more conventional lecture-style teaching. The point of these activities is to play around with new ideas, to discuss them and begin to fit them into the framework of what you already know.

In all cases, learning will occur best if you both make contributions to the session and listen and learn from what other people say. It doesn’t matter if you agree or disagree with them – interacting with
these different ideas will lead to the development and maturation of your own. In these situations, you are learning from your peer group and since members of the group have very different backgrounds, interests and experiences, you all have a great deal to teach each other and a great deal to learn from each other.

Don’t confine your discussions to class sessions. Discuss, argue, defend, attack, and pick each other's brains in coffee rooms or bars whenever you can. Share ideas, don’t keep them to yourself. Everyone benefits from exposing as many of their bright ideas as possible. Within the confines of the MSc courses you have nothing to lose. Try not to treat your fellow students as rivals but rather as partners and colleagues. Collectively you will get through this intellectual and practical assault course more easily than if you try to go it alone. Your objective should be to maximise the amount you learn.

Learning from assignments

You should view assignments as a great learning opportunity; that they are also a means of assessment is a secondary function. There will be a large number of assignments for both the academic and practical modules. These will all be open-ended exercises, with no right or wrong answers, and will provide opportunities for reflection and development. However, assessment of set work is also important. For details of the assessment criteria, see the section on assessment.

Study guides

You might find it helpful to read more about learning in a humanities context. Among the relevant study guides available in the Central Library are:


### Outside activities

In addition to College-based learning, we also encourage students to take on voluntary activities if you can. For instance, there are opportunities to work on the College newspaper *Felix*, the science magazine *I Science*, and the College TV and radio stations. Other opportunities may also arise during the course of the year. These activities can be complementary to the work you will be doing on the courses and you may find there is mutual feedback between such activities and the masters programme; however, you must ensure that you do not take on so much that it impinges on your time for your studies.

### Support for students

Lecturers are happy to respond to queries about their modules outside class time. It is usually best to email to make an appointment or to catch them at the end of a class.

You will also be assigned a personal tutor at the start of the year. Your tutor will meet with you towards the end of the first term to discuss your progress so far and to talk about how you are finding the course. Your personal tutor will also be available at other times to discuss any personal problems you may have – just email them to make an appointment. You are also welcome to make an appointment with your course leader or with the Director of the Science Communication Unit to discuss any personal difficulties you may be facing or any issues about the course in general.
The College also provides a counselling service. Counsellors are available to any student who would like to talk confidentially about any personal issue, such as study difficulties, loneliness, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, bereavement, or sexuality. There are both male and female counsellors. Telephone 020 7594 9637 or email counselling@imperial.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

**Information for students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties or long-term health issues**

At Imperial College we recognise that studying at university can be a challenge, especially if you have a disability. We are keen that you have every opportunity to fulfil your potential and graduate with the degree you deserve. It is therefore important that you let us know about any disability, specific learning difficulty or health problem as soon as possible so that we can give expert advice and support to enable you to do this.

Some people never think of themselves as having a disability, but students who have experienced any of the issues listed below have found that a little extra help and support has made all the difference to their study experience.

- Specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD(H)D)
- Autistic spectrum disorder (such as Asperger’s)
- Deafness or hearing difficulties
- Long term mental health difficulties (such as chronic anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression)
- Medical conditions (such as epilepsy, arthritis, diabetes, Crohn’s disease)
- Physical disabilities or mobility impairments
Learning Approaches

– Visual difficulties

Where to find help

1. Your Disability Liaison Officer

Liam Watson is your first point of contact and is there to help you with arranging any support within the Science Communication Unit that you need.

2. Disability Advisory Service

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice

The Disability Advisory Service works with individual students no matter what their disability to ensure that they have the support they need. They can also help if you think that you may have an unrecognised study problem such as dyslexia. The service is both confidential (information about you is only passed on to other people in the university with your agreement) and individual in that any support is tailored to what you need.

Some of the things the Disability Advisory Service can help with are:

– Being an advocate on your behalf with others in the College such as your departmental liaison officer, senior tutor or exams officer, the accommodation office or the estates department.

– Checking that your evidence of disability is appropriate and up-to-date.

– Arranging a diagnostic assessment for specific learning difficulties.

– Help with applying to the College for the cost of an assessment.

– Help with your application for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) see below.
Learning Approaches

- Helping students not eligible for the Disabled Students Allowance in obtaining support from other sources.
- Help with arranging extra library support.

**Disabled Students’ Allowance**

Students who are classified as ‘home’ for fees and who have a disability can apply for a grant called the disabled students allowance which can pay any extra costs that are a direct result of disability. This fund is not means-tested and is also a grant not a loan so any home student with a disability can apply and will not be expected to pay it back. Remember students with unseen disabilities such as mental health difficulties, dyslexic type difficulties or long term health problems are also eligible for this fund. For more information see: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/.

**Student Surveys**

Your feedback is important to us and to the College and Imperial College Union. There are a variety of means for you to give your feedback on your Imperial experience. We encourage you to speak to your course leader or your lecturers if you have any concerns. At the start of the year we will ask you to appoint some student representatives who will attend staff-student meetings to let us know about any issues that might have arisen.

In addition, the following College-wide surveys give you regular opportunities to let us know what is working well and what might need improving:

- **PG SOLE**
- Postgraduate Taught Student Experience (PTES)

The PG SOLE survey runs at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms. This survey is your chance to tell us about the modules you have attended and the lecturers who taught them. During December
and March you will receive an email in your Imperial College account with a link to the survey.

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is the only national survey of Master’s level (MSc, MRes, MBA and MPH) students that the College conducts and so the only way to compare how Imperial is doing against the national average and to make changes that will improve our Master’s students’ experience in future. PTES covers topics such as motivations for taking the programme, depth of learning, organisation, dissertation and professional development. PTES runs every two years. In the years in which it runs, you will receive an email in your Imperial College account during the spring term with a link to the survey.

These surveys are anonymous and the more students who take part the more representative the results, so please do take a few minutes to give your views. For further information on surveys, please contact the Registry’s Surveys Team on surveys.registrysupport@imperial.ac.uk.
Course Content
MSc Science Communication

The MSc Science Communication consists of a combination of academic and practical modules designed to encourage you to reflect on issues concerning science communication while developing your own communication skills in a range of media. The precise balance between academic and practical work varies through the course of the year, with the taught academic modules occurring in the first half of the year and practical work predominating in the second half of the year. During the second half of the year, you will also complete a dissertation and over the summer full-time students will undertake a work placement.

In addition to classes, there is a seminar series for the first two terms. Visiting speakers give talks on a variety of issues of general interest to students on both courses. The seminars are given by media practitioners or by academics in relevant fields.

Term 1

*Core Module 1: Science and its Social Contexts*
*Core Module 2: The Media Representation of Science*
*Core Practical*

In this term, full-time students take two core academic modules and one core practical module. Part-time students take the Core Practical and Core Module 1 in their first year and take Core Module 2 in their second year. Teaching is on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The aim of the two core academic modules in this term is to start you thinking critically about the nature of science, the nature of the media, and the interaction between the two. To do this, you need to stop thinking like a scientist (although your inside knowledge of
science will continue to be useful to you) and to start seeing science from the outside. To help you in this, we draw on analyses from a range of disciplines including history, sociology, cultural and media studies, and philosophy.

The Core Practical gives you the chance to explore how some of the ideas you encounter in the academic modules influence communication practice. You will get hands-on with our audio and video equipment from the word go, taking on a variety of roles and thinking hard about audiences. Following our ‘reflective learning’ approach, you will try ideas out and reflect on them in groups. Discussion about what we have learned is at the heart of the encounter. So that you can feel unpressed trying out new skills, the work you do in the core practical is not formally assessed.

**Term 2**

*Group project*  
*Introduction to the Dissertation*

Academic options chosen from:  
*Ethics in Science*  
*Documentary Film*  
*Narrative*  
*Science and Display*  
*Science Policy*  
*Sounds, Signs and Meanings in Radio*

In this term, full-time students will complete the Group Project and choose three of the option academic half-modules. Part-time students normally take two option modules in their first year and the Group Project and the remaining option in their second year. Details of the academic modules will be given out towards the end of the first term and you will be asked to make your choice shortly afterwards. Teaching is on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The option modules give you a further opportunity to develop some of the ideas from the core academic modules by pursuing more specialist areas. These modules look at specific issues in greater
depth than the core modules do and typically draw on just one or two academic disciplines. These are half-modules so each module lasts for five weeks.

The aim of the Group Project is to give you an opportunity to revisit some of the ideas you encountered in the core academic modules and to think about how these might inform a piece of creative work. You will work in a small group to produce an artwork or some other form of audio or visual product. This module is all about imagination, abstract ideas and actual products.

This term you will also start the process of developing your dissertation project ideas. There will be a number of workshops during the term to help you with this.

**Term 3**

Over the Easter vacation, full-time students will make a start on their dissertations. You will continue with this work during the summer term, as well as taking two practical modules from those listed below.

- TV
- Radio
- Exhibitions
- Print
- Website Design

Part-time students take one practical module each year and undertake the dissertation in the second year. An introductory session about all the practical options will be held towards the end of the second term when you will be asked to make your choice.

Please note that all practical options have a limited number of places. We will ask you to indicate your top three preferences. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to do both your top two choices, although in most cases this is possible.
Please also note that this term classes are not confined to Mondays and Tuesdays and a module may be taught on any day of the week. You will be given a timetable before you make your option choices.

Dissertations

The dissertation is a substantial piece of academic research which involves investigative work and demonstrates critical engagement with the relevant literature. During the second term you will put together a project proposal and you will be allocated a member of teaching staff to supervise your work. The choice of subject is yours but it must be demonstrably related to science communication.

At the start of the third term you will submit a literature review and research plan. You will continue work on the dissertation during this term and you will have regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss your progress. You will complete the work over the summer. It is important that you make an early start on the dissertation since all dissertations need to be based on extensive reading. The precise structure of the dissertation will vary, but all dissertations should present a well-evidenced argument or investigation.

Part-time students undertake their dissertations in the second year.

Assessment criteria

Dissertations are marked according to the same criteria as assignments (see section on assessment below).

Submission requirements

- Two printed copies of the dissertation should be submitted. The College will retain both copies. In addition, you should submit an electronic version of the dissertation as a pdf file. This should be submitted by email to Liam Watson.
- Hard copies of the dissertation must be double spaced on one side of A4 paper and should have reasonably tough perspex protective sheets at the front and back and should be spiral-bound using plastic binding strip.

- The maximum length for the dissertation is 10,000 words (including footnotes but excluding the bibliography).

- The cover sheet should give the project title, your name, the date of submission and the following wording: “submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an MSc in Science Communication at Imperial College London”.

**Work placements**

During the summer, most students undertake a work placement of two to six weeks. We offer placements in a wide range of science communication roles and sectors including written journalism, broadcast, museums and exhibitions, policy, new media and comms/PR. The placement is not assessed but is intended to compliment the academic and practical elements of the MSc through some ‘real world’ experience. Some students, especially part-timers, may already be in relevant employment and thus not wish to take up a work placement, but we are happy to help any part-time students who would like one. We encourage all host institutions to consider some modest remuneration or at least to cover some subsistence and travel expenses, but the majority of work placements are unpaid.

In most cases we arrange your placement through an ongoing relationship with the host organisations. Increasingly, our placement hosts require students to apply formally via the organisations’ own work experience and volunteering schemes. We endeavour to provide a placement for everyone but students are welcome to arrange their own internships too.

The exact list of placements changes each year but some of our regular host organisations include: *Nature*, *Guardian*, *Observer*, *New Scientist*, BBC Radio, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Wellcome Trust, Wellcome Collection, Science
Museum, Royal Society of Biology, a range of television production companies, Academy of Medical Sciences, Nesta, CRUK, BHF, Alzheimer’s Society. Most placements are UK based (mainly in London) but in some years we also have one or two international internships; in recent years these have included CERN (Geneva), ADE Consulting (Brussels) and the European Food Information Council (Brussels).

The work placements are co-ordinated by Gareth Mitchell. During the spring term Gareth will ask you to indicate what sort of placement you would prefer and to submit a copy of a well-composed CV. Actual allocation of placements can happen at short notice and at any time over the summer. See the section on Careers for some advice on preparing for work placements.
The MSc Science Media Production (SMP) combines academic and practical modules to introduce students to key issues in communication with an emphasis on the broadcast media. You will be encouraged to reflect on the nature of the media and to draw on the theory of communication to inform your own practical work. The balance between academic and practical work varies during the year. In the first half of the year, taught academic modules sit alongside more practical work while in the second, students focus solely on practical projects. This second half begins with a work placement in May and is followed, from June to September, by preparation and completion of a substantial film or radio project.

In addition to classes there is a seminar series once a week for the first two terms. The seminars cover topics of general interest to all students and are presented by media practitioners or academics from relevant fields. Towards the end of term three this seminar slot is used for workshops specific to SMP interests.

**Term 1**

In this term you will take two academic modules and two practical modules.

- **Academic module 1: Science and its Social Context**
- **Academic module 2: Introduction to Film Form**
- **Core Practical**
- **Radio Production**

Science and its Social Context and the Core Practical are shared with the Science Communication students while Introduction to Film Form and Radio Production are for SMP students only.
The academic modules will help you to think critically about the nature of science and its relationship with wider society, and about the nature of film and the development of distinctive film styles. You will encounter ideas from a range of disciplines including the philosophy of science, the sociology of science and film theory.

The Core Practical is a non-assessed ‘orientation’ module where we introduce you to the basics of radio and television studio production and location recording. The aim is to get you hands-on with our audio and video equipment from the word go. The Core Practical is also an opportunity for those with little previous technical experience to gain some basic proficiency. Following our ‘reflective learning’ approach, you will try ideas out and reflect on them in groups. Discussion about what we have learned is at the heart of the encounter. So that you can feel unpressed trying out new skills, the work you do in the core practical is not formally assessed.

Building on the Core Practical, the Radio Production module will delve deeper into the fundamentals of journalistic practice and make you proficient in essential aspects of radio production. During the term you will systematically explore techniques of writing and narrating for radio and interview technique; you will then produce short features and complete programmes. You will be assessed on the individual production of a radio package and you will also work in groups on the live transmission of our ‘Science at One’ weekly magazine programme.

The Radio Production module runs for 8 weeks. In the last two weeks of term there will be two workshops introducing you to the basic techniques of documentary film production in preparation for your second term practical projects.
Term 2

During this term you will take three theory half-modules and one practical module:

*Narrative,*
*Documentary Film*
*Sounds, Signs and Meaning in Radio*
*Documentary Production*

The aim of the theory half-modules is to look at some ideas in greater depth than in term one and to introduce new ideas specific to broadcasting.

In parallel with this theoretical work, and spanning the whole term, you will also take a practical module in Documentary Production. In this module you will work in small groups to conceive, research, shoot and edit a short documentary film (ca. 10 minutes) on a set theme. As the term progresses, you will find it necessary to work outside of the designated contact hours, organising yourselves around each other’s availability and the various requirements of your film production. You will be assessed in groups on the basis of your film.

Term 3

At the start of the third term, students undertake a work placement of four weeks’ duration. The placement is not compulsory or assessed but is intended to compliment the academic and practical elements of the MSc by providing some first-hand experience of the industry. We encourage host institutions to consider some modest remuneration or at least to cover some subsistence and travel expenses, but the majority of work placements are unpaid.

Our television placements are in independent production companies. The BBC only accepts television placements via its formal work experience website. However, we do have direct access to work placements in the BBC Radio Science Unit. The exact list of television work placements varies each year but some of our regular
host organisations include Arrow Media, Blink, Caravan, Clearstory, DSP, ITN, Pioneer, Popkorn, Talesmith, Windfall.

Work placements are co-ordinated by Gareth Mitchell. Gareth will require a well-composed CV from each of you as well as an indication of whether you have a preference for radio or television. Please see the section on Careers for some advice on preparing for work placements.

For the remainder of the third term, you will attend development workshops with Bob Sternberg and gradually work up your proposals for your final projects.

**Term 4 - Final Projects**

These are substantial pieces of practical work in either radio or video accompanied by a written report. You are free to choose any topic for your work. Radio projects are undertaken singly, film projects in pairs. Final projects must be pitched to Robert Sternberg or Gareth Mitchell for green-lighting before any production can begin. The pitch must include a written proposal, treatment and a production schedule. It is up to individuals or groups to organise their own productions and to meet the various deadlines for ‘assemblies’, ‘rough cuts’ and ‘final cuts’ as agreed in the schedule.

Your Final Projects will be assessed in relation to the brief you set yourself in your initial proposal and treatment (contained in a ‘production dossier’). In determining how well you have achieved your aims, assessors will consider the following areas: key outcomes, intellectual engagement and technical skill.

**Key Outcomes**

In completing the Final Project, you will demonstrate that you are able to:

- Articulate a self-set brief, develop plans for achieving it and present these plans orally and as a written treatment.
Produce work that demonstrates your practical ability to put those plans into effect. The piece should be an innovative, imaginative and personal response to your brief.

Note: These terms are intended to focus the student and the assessor on the quality of the ideas demonstrated in the work as opposed to its subject matter. You need not necessarily come up with a new subject, just a new and imaginative way of treating it.

**Intellectual Engagement**

Your dossier consists of three elements: initial proposal and treatment, report of production and post-production, and analysis of the finished piece. The whole dossier serves as evidence of your intellectual engagement in the project.

In your proposal and treatment, you should demonstrate that you can:

- Initiate and develop a project that challenges you in terms of learning, research, technical realisation and communication to an audience.

- Contextualise your work by demonstrating an understanding of its place in relation to the history of documentary film or radio and to contemporary debates about non-fiction practice in your chosen medium.

- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the methods of research and production required to realise your project.

- Show an appreciation of the ethical dimension of your piece in terms of working practices and representation of people.

In the report of production and post-production, you should:
– Record the course of the project, noting and explaining any changes of direction. (You are advised to keep notes or a diary for this purpose as you go along.)

In your analysis, you should:

– Present a close reading of your finished piece, analysing and evaluating its effects in terms of the distinctions developed in the theoretical strands of the course.

*Technical Skills*

As evidenced in your work, you should demonstrate:

– A level of technical skill that would mean you could take on the responsibility of developing proposals and treatments in a professional environment.

– A level of technical skill that would mean you could take on the responsibility, in a professional environment, of basic video and sound recording and of advanced radio audio recording. You should be able to record images that are correctly exposed and focused and appropriately framed. You are not expected to have a professional level of skill in hand-held shooting but your work should demonstrate you understand the aims of the technique. In both video and radio pieces your recording of voices and of atmospheres should be at a professional standard.

– A sound knowledge of and basic skill with film and radio editing software.

Having completed the Final Project of the MSc in Science Media Production at Imperial College you should be able to:

– Engage in focused, independent, self-motivated research and development.
- Respond to complex problems and challenges creatively and systematically.

- Communicate your ideas effectively, orally and in writing (both in an academic idiom and in language appropriate to the industrial media context).

- Work effectively in a team and individually.

- Manage your time and resources effectively and responsibly.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the professional world you will work in after graduation, including the demands of a professional life.

- Identify your strengths and weakness and take these into consideration in making a career plan.

Assessment is based on the following criteria applied to the finished piece (80% of final grade) and the written dossier (20% of final grade):

Distinction (70%+)
The student is a highly motivated and reflective practitioner whose work demonstrates an impressive range of the qualities and strengths outlined above and few weaknesses. Where weaknesses do occur the student has recognised and acknowledged them. The student is sophisticated in their close reading of the finished work, engaging fully with the theoretical material from the course. Their overall level of ability suggests a high potential to succeed in professional media practice (or further education).

Merit (60-69%)
The student’s intellectual grasp of documentary issues and their practical abilities are clearly appropriate for a postgraduate going on to professional practice or further study. They have many strengths but there is room for development in some areas. The student is self-aware and motivated to develop their abilities in areas that are currently weaker. These weaknesses, however, are not likely to hinder professional development and the student should be able to make a significant, innovative contribution to their profession.
Pass (50-59%)
The student’s abilities are appropriate for a postgraduate going on to professional practice or further study. They have strengths and weaknesses but also the potential to develop. They are aware of the weaknesses and are motivated to address them. This student should be able to make a significant contribution to their profession.

Fail (less than 50%)
The student’s ability is inadequate for a postgraduate intending to work in the media. There are serious weaknesses and what strengths there are cannot compensate. The student shows no ability to recognise these failings and seems unlikely to succeed in the profession.

Submission requirements

- Each student must submit their final piece as a transferable video or audio file.
- Each student must compile a production dossier and submit it electronically.
- The guide lengths for the three sections of the dossier are 2,000 words each for the report and analysis while treatment, schedule and appendices should be as long as necessary.
- The cover page should give the project title, your name, the date of submission and the following wording: “submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an MSc in Science Media Production at Imperial College London”.

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Assessment

The MSc programmes are assessed through three elements: an academic element, a practical element, and a dissertation (Science Communication) or a final project (Science Media Production). All assessed work is given a percentage mark. A mark of 70% or greater indicates distinction level work; a mark of 60-69% indicates merit level work; a mark of 50-59% indicates a pass grade; and a mark of less than 50% is a fail.

In order to pass the degree, you must have a mark of 50% or greater in each element. To be awarded a merit in the degree overall, you must have achieved an aggregate mark of at least 60%, with a mark of 60% or greater in at least two components and a mark of 50% or greater in the third component. To be awarded a distinction in the degree overall, you must have achieved an aggregate mark of at least 70%, with a mark of 70% or greater in at least two components and a mark of 60% or greater in the third component. Candidates whose aggregate mark falls within 2.5% of a grade boundary may be promoted to the higher grade at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.

As long as you work hard throughout the year, it is unlikely that you will fail. However, if a student does fail one or more elements of the course, they will normally be able to resit that element at the same time the following year. This need not require attendance. There are no earlier resit opportunities.

Full details of the assessment regulations and the College’s appeals procedure can be found at:
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance

The weighting of each element and of assessment components within each element are given below for each MSc. Term 2 academic modules are half modules, whilst all other modules are full modules. All academic essays carry equal weight.
Assessment scheme – MSc Science Communication

**Academic Element: 40% of overall mark**

Science and its Social Contexts: 2/7 of element mark
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)  50% each

Media Representation of Science: 2/7 of element mark
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)  50% each

Academic option 1: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words)  100%

Academic option 2: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words)  100%

Academic option 3: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words)  100%

**Practical Element: 35% of overall mark**

Group project: 1/3 of element mark
Group project and commentaries  100%

Practical option 1: 1/3 of element mark
Practical project  100%

Practical option 2: 1/3 of element mark
Practical project  100%

**Dissertation Element: 25% of overall mark**

Dissertation (10,000 words)  100%
Assessment scheme – MSc Science Media Production

**Academic Element: 40% of overall mark**

Science and its Social Contexts: 2/7 of element mark
2 coursework essays (2000 words each) 50% each

Introduction to Film Form: 2/7 of element mark
2 coursework essays (2000 words each) 50% each

Documentary: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words) 100%

Narrative: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words) 100%

Sounds Signs and Meaning in Radio: 1/7 of element mark
1 coursework essays (2000 words) 100%

**Practical Element: 25% of overall mark**

TV practical: 1/2 of element mark
Practical project 100%

Radio practical: 1/2 of element mark
Group project and commentaries 100%

**Final Production Project Element: 35% of overall mark**

Film or radio documentary 80%
Written dossier 20%
Coursework assignments

One feature of the Masters programme is the large number of assignments you have to do as part of your coursework. The purpose of these assignments is to help you engage with the ideas presented during the course of the modules and to enhance your understanding of the relevant issues. This means that, unlike many science essays, the assignments are not about regurgitating facts but are about active interpretation and critical analysis.

The assignments will be produced to set deadlines. This is a key skill for all media-related work and we expect all students to meet these deadlines punctually. You will be given details of the assignments at least two weeks before the deadline.

The assignments will normally be marked within three weeks. A copy will be returned to you with a grade and comments from the marker for feedback. You should read these comments carefully to help you reflect on your learning. Double marking of coursework assignments normally takes place later in the year. All grades given out during the year are provisional until after the meeting of the Board of Examiners at the end of the year.

Submission of assignments

All coursework assignments should be submitted to Liam Watson by 1pm on the day of the set deadline unless the tutor concerned gives you other instructions. Assignments may also be submitted at any time before the deadline.

If you are unable to meet a deadline you should contact the tutor who set the assignment before the deadline. In cases of illness or extreme personal problems, the tutor will be able to give you an extension. Please note that extensions cannot be granted for reasons of computer failure, transport difficulties, poor time management, and so on. College policy is that any work submitted late without prior approval of an extension will be capped at 50% if up to one calendar day late and will receive a mark of zero if more than one calendar day late.
Unless otherwise stipulated by the tutor, all assignments should:

- be formatted with double-spaced lines and wide margins to allow room for tutors to write comments.

- be submitted by email to liam.watson@imperial.ac.uk, usually as a pdf, with the file naming convention: Surname_Initial_ModuleName

- include a cover sheet which clearly shows your name, the title of the assignment, the name of the module, the name of the tutor who set the assignment, and the date.

- be properly referenced with a full bibliography of all the works used in the assignment (see below).

Assignments must be all your own work (or that of other group members in the case of group work). Any material taken from other sources must be acknowledged (see below for details of how to reference correctly). Failure to acknowledge sources correctly may lead to plagiarism. The College requires that all students complete an online plagiarism-awareness course. This is compulsory and it would be best to do it at the start of the year. It takes about 1.5 hours to complete and can be found on Blackboard.

**Assessing essay assignments**

The assignments will usually take the form of open-ended essays and so the most appropriate structure for them will vary considerably. However, the following general features are relevant to all the assignments you will be set.

- The questions will seldom have agreed right answers and cannot be resolved merely by recourse to more information or more facts. The facts themselves need extensive interpretation.

- In many cases the titles or themes of the assignments will not be in the form of a tight question or a solvable problem. Re-
expressing the title in such a context, framing an interesting question, may be important.

- Most scientists have been trained, when faced with a question to which there is no agreed answer, to generate a review, an even-handed summary of all sides of the question with perhaps an appeal for more thought or experiment to resolve the issue. But for most of the questions we ask, such a review and call for more work is not appropriate. Instead, you will have to develop an argument about some aspect of the question or in favour of one side of the question or solution to a problem.

A good academic argument has the following characteristics:

- Its steps are logically founded and developed. Recourse to emotional argument is usually avoided.

- Its conclusions depend logically on the premises used.

- Factual and other information is selected and marshalled in service of the argument; facts and concepts are not gratuitously presented because you happen to know them or have just learned them.

- Interpretations and arguments against your own position are competently rebutted (as far as this is possible, since if they could be completely rebutted then the question would have a right answer).

- The discussion is elegant, stylish and concise.

These are some of the key criteria we shall be looking for in assessing many of the academic assignments you undertake. The whole thing may look and feel strange to someone who has not done much essay writing and to those who have only written essays whose main objective is to demonstrate accurate recall and understanding of textbook science. Don’t worry, practice will soon make perfect. It does not take long to learn how to do these things.
Assessment

Grades

The base line performance for a pass mark (50-59%) is for there to be clear evidence of learning and the formulation of the basis of an argument, the absence of major errors of fact or distortions of interpretation, adequate referencing (see below), and adequate use of grammar and style.

In addition, a merit level performance (60-69%) will show evidence of further reading and will offer a well-reasoned and well-evidenced argument. It will be written in a clear and engaging style.

A distinction level performance (70% and over) will show evidence of extensive reading, an insightful understanding of different positions on the issues, and the development of a compelling critical argument in favour of one position and against others. It will also be stylishly written.

It is important that all assignments are written in correct English. Make sure you spell check your work and proofread it carefully before submission. If there are any grammatical points you are not sure of, try looking up an online style guide, such as that of the Guardian newspaper available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide/. For punctuation, an abbreviated version of a widely-used guide by Larry Trask can be found at: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/informatics/punctuation/.

How to reference properly

As ethical scholars, all students should be in the habit of crediting all the sources used in writing an essay. It is important that any honest researcher gives credit to all those whose work they have incorporated into their own.

Accurate referencing to the sources you have used is a time-consuming, but necessary, chore. Standard conventions operate governing how you should present references to previous work. Your reference should allow someone else (or you if you have mislaid your notes) to find the information you used quickly and easily.
Others can then check whether you have reported the views or facts given in your sources accurately. This allows them to assess how the conclusions you draw, or the insights you claim, relate to the state of knowledge before you added your contribution.

You should only ever reference the source you actually consulted. Where you find out about an author by reading what someone else has said about them, you must refer to that latter source if you are not able to consult the original author’s work directly yourself.

We require that you use the Harvard system of referencing, which is explained below. The Harvard system uses in-text citations. This is the most common form of referencing, so it may already be familiar to you. Please do not use any alternative system.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s thoughts, words, images or diagrams as though they were your own. Another form of plagiarism is self-plagiarism, which involves using your own prior work without acknowledging its reuse. Plagiarism is considered a cheating offence and must be avoided in all your coursework essays and project work. As long as you take care to reference correctly you need not worry about plagiarism.

Where plagiarism is detected in group work, members of that group may be deemed to have collective responsibility for the integrity of work submitted by that group and may be liable for any penalty imposed, proportionate to their contribution.

For further information, please see: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/plagiarism-awareness/.
The Harvard system of referencing

In the Harvard system, the citation is separated off in brackets in the main text and contains the names of the authors of the work referred to and the date of publication. All the citations are then fully listed in alphabetical order as a bibliography at the end of the essay. This makes it relatively easy to match up a point in the text with the full reference to the citation in the bibliography.

References in the body of the text should conform to the following format:

a) Direct references require author, date, and page number; e.g.,

White (1981: 23) argues that: “The notion that sequences of real events possess the formal attributes of the stories we tell about imaginary events could only have its origin in wishes, daydreams, reveries.”

b) If you paraphrase someone, give the author and date; e.g.,

Wildlife films owe more to Hollywood film narratives than to scientific accounts of animal behaviour (Bousé, 2000).

c) If you quote or paraphrase jointly authored material, you must give both authors’ names; e.g., (Welsh and Wynne, 2013). If there are more than two authors, then (Davies et al., 2008) will suffice.

d) Material extracted from several sources should be shown in the following way:

The standard account of the public engagement with science entailing a shift from a deficit model approach to dialogue is flawed in several respects (Bucchi, 2008, 2013; Davies et al., 2008; Welsh and Wynne, 2013)

Further information about the Harvard system can be found on the library website, including details about how to reference different types of work:
Bibliography

Bibliographies are designed to make it very clear who wrote a given book or article, what it is called and where and by whom it was published. Your essays must always include a bibliography at the end. Your bibliography should list all the works you have used. Works should be listed in alphabetical order of author’s surname.

You should provide:

a) the name of the author(s) giving surname first and then initials or first names.

b) date of publication. Usually this is simply the year of publication, but for newspapers or magazines it will include the full date.

c) the full title of the work. For a book this should be in italics.

d) the place of publication. For a book this should be the name of the publisher and the city in which they are based; for an essay in a collection this should also include the title and editor(s) or the collection; for a journal article give the name of the journal (in italics) and the issue and volume number.

e) for a journal article or essay from a collection, you should give the page numbers of your item.

f) other kinds of material, such as TV programmes, should be referenced using the above as a basis.

Take particular care ensuring that the correct part of the reference is in italics.
The following is an example of a bibliography listing an episode from a TV series, a book, a web site, a journal article and an essay from an edited collection:


Libraries

The Central Library

The College’s Central Library has a small but growing collection of humanities and social science books and journals. The librarian responsible for our master’s programme is Rosemary Russell (020 7594 8611; libbpd@imperial.ac.uk). Rosemary and other members of the team will be able to answer your library queries, show you how to use the library databases and direct you towards other learning resources.

To find resources, use the Library Search at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/. As well as the print book catalogue, this provides online access to ebooks, journals and many other resources. Use your College username and password to access resources remotely. The Library provides information about remote access to online resources here: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/find-books-articles-and-more/passwords-and-working-off-site/.

The library web pages for our courses provide links to a variety of databases which may be useful throughout your course: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/subject-support/science-communication/. These include Web of Science (humanities and social science journal searching, abstracts and links to full text articles where available) and the Humanities Index. Another good way of locating academic papers and books is through Google Scholar: http://scholar.google.co.uk.

Students can request print books, electronic journal articles or book chapters if the Library does not hold the item or a subscription. Do so via the Document delivery service at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/find-books-articles-and-more/document-delivery-service/. Electronic resources are normally delivered directly to your email address.
The Library also welcomes suggestions for new books, journals and other resources for purchase. If titles are available as e-books, they can often be purchased and made available to students the same day. See: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/find-books-articles-and-more/suggest-a-book/.

The Central Library has access to the main journals relevant to science communication. These are:

- Environmental Communication
- JCOM: Journal of Science Communication
- Public Understanding of Science
- Science as Culture
- Science Communication
- Science Technology & Human Values
- Social Studies of Science

The Central Library also has online access to the following journals which you might find useful:

- British Journal for the History of Science
- British Journal for the Philosophy of Science
- Configurations
- Critical Studies in Media Communication
- International Journal of Science Education, Part B
- Isis
- Media, Culture and Society
- Minerva: Review of Science, Learning & Policy
- New Genetics and Society
- Philosophy of Science
- Research Policy
- Science in Context
- Science Fiction Studies
- Screen
- Studies in History and Philosophy of Science

The Central Library also takes Nature, New Scientist, Science, Discovery and Focus.
Other libraries

The Science Museum Library in the Dana Centre, just a few yards from College at 165 Queens Gate, has an extensive collection of works relevant to our courses. Many of these are shelved in the reading room (which also provides a pleasant study space), whilst others need to be ordered in advance. Imperial College postgraduates are able to borrow books from this library.

Another library with useful resources is the Wellcome Library at 183 Euston Road. In addition to a range of reference books and historical texts, they keep clippings files of newspaper reports on a whole range of issues related to medicine and the life sciences. They also have an extensive video and audio collection on medical subjects. This is an open-access library and the librarians are happy to arrange tours to introduce you to the library. They can be contacted through their website at http://library.wellcome.ac.uk.

Students at Imperial College are also welcome to use the library at the Royal College of Art, although you will need to apply for a library card. Applications can be obtained at the RCA library or from Robert Sternberg. The RCA library is small but has a media section and a video library from which films can be borrowed or viewed on site.

Science Communication and Science Media Production students also have access to Senate House Library on Malet Street in Bloomsbury, including borrowing rights and onsite access to all their online resources. You will need to get Imperial Library Services to sign an application form before you can register at Senate House. Find the form at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/use-the-library/using-other-libraries/.

Imperial students can also get reference-only access to some other University of London libraries. You might find of particular use the libraries at Birkbeck College, the Institute of Education (IoE), LSE, and University College London (UCL).
As well as these libraries, you may be able to access other University Libraries. Security regulations vary from library to library but in some cases it may be possible to sign in as a visitor.

Students requiring access to research materials not available elsewhere can also register with the British Library.

The merged catalogue of UK research libraries available at http://copac.ac.uk can be useful for tracking down any hard-to-find works that you need for your studies.
Facilities

We can provide a limited amount of photocopying and telephone calls for coursework-related matters. Please see Liam Watson if you need access to a phone.

Email

Email is the best way of contacting staff and many announcements will be made by email only. You will be given an Imperial College email account on registering. You should check this account regularly; it is this address that staff will use if they need to contact you. You can access your email account from any computer by going to the web page https://exchange.imperial.ac.uk.

Science Communication area (S312 Sherfield)

The Science Communication area in S312 houses our dedicated video and radio edit suites, as well as several standard computers with internet connections. The latter are available to all Science Communication and Science Media Production masters students. These computers are provided for quick jobs that need to be done whilst you are at College rather than for writing assignments and other lengthy jobs. Anyone interested in a career in communications really needs to have their own computer and so we expect all students to have a home computer and/or a laptop.

There is a printer connected to the S312 computers. You can also send documents from College computers to print on the department’s two photocopiers. These can print in colour if required (but this is expensive so print black and white wherever possible). The photocopiers can also be used to scan documents to be sent to your email account. Printing, copying and scanning within the
department is free of charge. However, usage is monitored so please only print when necessary.

You may also use the computers in room 309 whenever the room is not in use for teaching. During term time there are typically classes in this room from 4-8pm each week day and at some other times. Check with Liam if you want to know the availability of the room in advance.

Please observe the following rules when you use the computers:

- No eating or drinking next to the computers.
- Do not fiddle with any settings, disconnect or reconnect any cables or connectors whatsoever. In the event of a malfunction, please contact Liam Watson or Paul Chauncy. If the problem cannot be solved, we will call in someone from IT Services. Please do not contact IT Services yourselves; service arrangements can only be activated using the ‘proper’ channels.
- You should save any material you are working on to your own memory stick at the end of your session. Nothing left in the hard-drive will necessarily stay there.
- The computers themselves should remain on at all times (because debugging and virus checks go on overnight). Only the monitors and the printer should be turned off at night.
- Access to the Science Communication Area S312 and room 309 is by ID swipe card.
- The last person to leave in the evening is responsible for turning off the screens and printer and ensuring that the door is shut.

To operate an open-plan work space effectively and avoid distracting each other or staff working in their offices, noise has to be kept to a minimum. Therefore:

- Please conduct all mobile phone conversations out by the lifts.
– Please use headphones on all edit suites.

– Please do not use the Science Communication area as a general social space and keep your interactions to business in hand. If you feel an urge to conduct a loud conversation coming on, please make sure you conduct it elsewhere.

– Please do not leave your belongings, film props or general mess lying about.

Please do not enter staff offices unless there is someone there. If you need access to an office for equipment or other materials, please ask Liam Watson or another staff member for help.

Unfortunately, the large number of students taking courses in the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication means that the small kitchen is not available to students. However, drinking water is available just beside the kitchen.
Careers

Graduates of both the MSc in Science Communication and the MSc in Science Media Production go on to a range of careers including print journalism, scientific publishing, documentary production, museums, public relations, science policy and science outreach. Most such jobs do not ask for a Masters qualification as an essential requirement, but your Masters degree will show your commitment to, and aptitude for, communication-related work. What you do during your time on the course should help you to build up a more impressive CV and enable you to talk confidently and intelligently at interview.

What kind of job should you apply for?

Use your time on the MSc to think about what aspect of science communication suits you best. The courses aim to help you do this in several ways: the academic and practical modules will give you insights into each discipline; the seminars enable you to talk informally with people who have careers in science communication; and work placements will give you the opportunity to experience the workplace and to make useful contacts. Using your free time to gain experience in different sectors and to talk to people already working in the field will also be helpful (see the section on tips on applying for jobs).

Try to be open minded about the kinds of careers that are available, and also be honest with yourself about what kind of environment you want to work in. A job in a cut-throat media company may not suit the shy, retiring type and, conversely, a job requiring a careful eye for detail may not suit someone who gets bored unless rushing around.

You also need to be realistic about what to expect when you graduate. It is unlikely that you will get your dream job straight away, so think about what jobs will help you build your skills and experience so that you can fulfil your ambitions. You may find
yourself working on short-term contracts – see this as a way to build contacts and gain experience.

Some students aspire to working as freelance science communicators. This is a difficult route and most freelance workers will have taken the plunge after several years in their field. Having said that, if you are offered some freelance work that sounds interesting, there is no reason not to take it. However, you must register as self-employed with the Inland Revenue: this is true even if you only do one piece of freelance work! You can find out how to register here: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed/index.shtml.

**Finding a job**

Although you won’t be looking for work until the end of the year, it is a good idea quickly to get into the habit of looking at job adverts. By looking at emerging opportunities, and by making contacts, you should be able to build an understanding of the market. Where jobs are advertised will depend on the precise sector you are interested in.

The psci-com email list often carries job adverts, especially for outreach, public relations and engagement type jobs within scientific organisations. Find it in the Groups list at https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk.

Many previous science communication job adverts have been aggregated on the blog http://scicommjobs.wordpress.com (twitter feed: @ScicommJobs), so this is a useful place to get a feel for some of the types of job available.

*The Guardian* also carries some relevant job adverts at https://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/, especially in the media and PR. In addition, trade journals and their accompanying websites also carry adverts; e.g. *Broadcast* for broadcast jobs in TV and radio; *Museums Journal* for jobs in the museums sector; *Campaign* for jobs in advertising and PR.
Some tips on applying for work

1. The first stage in applying for jobs is to build up a relevant body of experience to list on your CV and, where appropriate, to produce a portfolio of work to demonstrate your abilities. You should use your free time to augment your experience: for example, writing for *Felix* or *I-Science*, volunteering at a museum or working for IC radio. Full-time students, in particular, should make the most of their time as a science communication student based in London. Go to seminars, openings, festivals and events at the local museums and across the city. Blog, twitter and discuss news, projects and events. Talk to people already working in science communication, start to forge a name for yourself, volunteer, network, and make friends with your professional community. The relationships you make this year – with the people you are studying with and with others you meet along the way – will support you throughout your career.

2. Remember that you will almost certainly need to tweak your CV for every job you apply for, including work placements. Most often it is your CV that stands between you and an interview so it is worth spending time on. CV writing is an art, but there are plenty of sources of help, including the Careers Advisory Service (see below).

3. Make sure you thoroughly research the field that you want to go into and the company to which you are applying. This will help you write your CV and will help at interview. It’s no good being interviewed for a job at, say, a television production company, if you haven’t seen any of the programmes it has produced, or if you are not able to talk about television output and the industry in general. You should be able to talk about what you think is good about what the company does; gaps in what they do that could be filled; who their competitors are and how they compare. At an interview, you don’t want to sound arrogant or tell the interviewers how to do their jobs, but you do want to sound informed about the work they do.

4. Make sure that you understand the role that you are applying for; so if you are applying to be a policy officer at a medical charity,
ensure that you have an idea of what that role will involve. Again, this will help you when preparing your CV. Don’t be afraid to ask questions about the details of the job at interview.

5. Most jobs require references, and your tutors will be happy to supply these, but please ask us first. Employers often want references in a hurry, so it is helpful if you let staff know in good time that a reference might be needed. If you would like, do talk to staff about a job application since an extra perspective might be helpful.

Further careers advice

The Imperial College Careers Service offers advice on possible career paths, job applications and interview technique. The Service is available whilst you are a student and also for three years after you graduate.

The Careers Service is based on level 5 of the Sherfield Building and can be contacted at careers@imperial.ac.uk. Also see: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/.

In addition to the support offered by the Careers Service, during the course of the year we will hold some careers-oriented seminars and you will have a chance to meet graduates from our courses to hear about their careers.

Doctoral study

Some of you may be interested in continuing with academic study after you have completed your Masters degree. The Science Communication Unit runs a small PhD programme and we are very happy to talk to any students contemplating further study, either with us or at another institution.
One of the main challenges for doctoral study is finding funding. Currently we have no studentships available within the Science Communication Unit, so applicants need to find their own sources of funding. Some universities have early deadlines for applications to funded PhDs, so if you are interested in this option, start thinking about it early.
Safety Issues

Computer screens

Wherever possible, try to mix work using a computer with other work, to minimise the risk of eye strain, headaches, or aches and pains in your hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back. If long periods of computer-based work are unavoidable:

− Take regular, short breaks.
− Change your posture as often as possible.
− Look away from the screen frequently to allow your eyes to relax.

Ensure that when you are at a workstation you do the following things:

− Adjust the chair so that your arms are approximately horizontal and your eyes at the same height as the top of the screen casing.
− Ensure that your legs can move freely under the work surface, remove any boxes or equipment that may be in the way.
− Don’t bend your hands at the wrists while typing.
− Try to keep a soft touch on the keys and don’t overstretch your fingers.
− Make sure you have enough space for the documents you need.

If you experience any health problems which you believe may result from working with computers, the College Occupational Health Service will be able to offer advice in the first instance.
Manual handling

Some practical options may involve you in lifting or carrying equipment or heavy objects. There is unlikely to be any lifting or transporting machinery available to help you. You will have to do everything by hand. You should observe sensible precautions when handling heavy objects. The key things to remember are the following:

- Think carefully before carrying or setting up equipment in awkward or confined spaces. Plan how you will do the handling and look where you are going. Be extremely careful not to trip or overbalance.

- Take special care not to twist the trunk or stretch excessively while carrying or supporting heavy equipment.

- If lifting a heavy object from the ground to trunk or above trunk height, you should use good handling technique. Essentially this means squatting down to get hold of the object and then lifting by straightening your legs while keeping your back straight. You should not bend at the waist and extend your arms to pick up the object because you will then be lifting with a bent back, which is bad handling practice.

- If you have any history of back trouble then you should not attempt to handle heavy or bulky equipment in the field.

Electrical safety

Almost a quarter of all reported electrical accidents involve portable equipment, just the sort of kit you will be using for radio and television work. In all cases there is a potential danger of electric shock, electrocution or fire.

All these risks can be minimised by following this advice:
All equipment issued to you should be in full, correct working order and will have been checked for electrical safety. Nevertheless, you should also look over the equipment yourself before you take it away. Ninety-five percent of all faults in such equipment can be located by visual inspection. The most obvious things to be aware of are:

- loose wires or exposed terminals;
- damage to cables and/or plugs or non-standard joints;
- cable sheaths should be properly gripped where cables enter plugs;
- damage to the casings or fastenings of the equipment itself;
- burn marks or stains on the equipment or on plugs and cables.

If faults, breakages or malfunctions occur while you are using equipment, report and return the equipment immediately so that it can be serviced or repaired before any more harm is done. Do not undertake repairs or maintenance yourself.

Always use the equipment properly. You will be trained in how to operate all the equipment you are using.

Try to avoid using equipment under harsh field conditions. Keep equipment dry and away from excessive dust, humidity or corrosive solvents.

Mains operated equipment must have the correct fuse in the plug and mains sockets must not be overloaded. Take great care with adapters, plugboards and trailing cables.

**Personal safety on location**

All the practical options may involve you travelling beyond the campus. You will not be supervised on these trips and many of the places you visit will be unfamiliar to you and you may be carrying valuable equipment.
This exposes you to health and safety risks beyond those you are used to in your personal and college life. Equipment could be stolen and you could be injured if that happened. It is therefore essential that you try to foresee any increased risks to which you are exposed and then try to minimise those risks as far as possible. You may need to carry out a risk assessment.

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful consideration of what might, on location, cause harm to yourself or other people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no-one gets hurt or becomes ill.

There are five stages in conducting a risk assessment:

1. List the potential hazards you can foresee in the areas you intend to visit and situations in which you will put yourself.

2. Identify who might be harmed and how.

3. Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done. Rank each hazard as high, medium or low risk. For medium and high risks, decide how your actions should be modified to reduce risk. In an extreme case, you may decide the risk is too high to make the visit or to undertake the task you had planned.

4. Record what special precautions or actions you decide to take in the light of your evaluation of risk.

5. Review your risk assessment in the light of how the location visit turned out in practice. Review it again if you undertake similar location work at a later date.

Any written records of such assessments, with any review statements appended to them, should be lodged in the appropriate folder in the office (S312C) or with the relevant module tutor.
The following general points should be born in mind by everyone undertaking location visits on the practical options.

- If an accident, theft or emergency occurs when you on location, this should be reported to us immediately, preferably by phone: 020 7594 8753

- When using expensive equipment, try always to operate in pairs or numbers greater than two. Never leave a single person to 'guard' a lot of equipment. If staying overnight or visiting a café or restaurant, take all equipment with you (or if it is in the boot of a car, keep that car in sight if at all possible).

- Be as vigilant of your personal safety as you would be at any other time.

- If you anticipate entering an area where theft or violence might be expected or you are going to hike across country away from habitation, inform a local person (hotel manager, police) of your intention and expected return time.

- Dress sensibly at all times and appropriately for your location and task.

- Behave courteously and considerately to people on location at all times.

- Always obtain permission (preferably in writing beforehand) if you want to enter private property.

- If you are going to use a car for location transport, you need to check your insurance policy and see make sure you are covered before you use it for that purpose.

- Use common sense at all times and do not put yourself in the position where you could fall into water or down a steep slope. Watch out especially for traffic.
Further information

Further details about safety issues can be found on the College's website at http://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety.

The College has a 24-hour emergency phone line: 020 7589 1000.

The extension number for College security on the South Kensington Campus is 4444.
Appendix

The Graduate School

Welcome from Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School

The Graduate School has several roles but our main functions are to provide a broad, effective and innovative range of professional skills development courses and to facilitate interdisciplinary interactions by providing opportunity for students to meet at academic and social events. Whether you wish to pursue a career in academia, industry or something else, professional skills development training will improve your personal impact and will help you to become a productive and successful researcher.

Professional development courses for Master’s students are called “Masterclasses” and they cover a range of themes, for example, presentation skills, academic writing and leadership skills (http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/masters/). All Masterclasses are free of charge to Imperial Master’s students and I would encourage you to take as many as you can to supplement your academic training. The Graduate School works closely with the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) and is keen to respond to student needs so if there is an area of development training, or an activity that you would like us to offer, but which is not currently provided, please do get in touch (graduate.school@imperial.ac.uk).

The Graduate School also runs a number of exciting social events throughout the year which are an opportunity to broaden your knowledge as well as to meet other students and have fun. You should regularly check the Graduate School’s website and e-Newsletters to keep up to date with all the events and development opportunities available to you.
Finally, I hope that you enjoy your studies here at Imperial, and I wish you well.

Sue Gibson

Welcome from Dr Janet De Wilde, Head of Postgraduate Professional Development

I would like to welcome you to the Graduate School programme for postgraduate professional development. Our team of tutors come from a wide variety of experiences and we understand just how important it is to develop professional skills whilst undertaking postgraduate studies and research. Not only will this development improve success during your time at Imperial College, but it will also prepare you for your future careers. We are continually working to develop the courses we offer and over this year you will see a range of new courses including face-to-face workshops, interactive webinars and online self-paced courses. I encourage you to explore and engage with the diverse range of opportunities on offer from graduate school and I wish you well in your studies.

Janet De Wilde
Welcome from the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU)

I am delighted to welcome you to Imperial College! Let me introduce you to the Graduate Students' Union (GSU). We are the representative body defending your interests as a postgraduate student in major decisions taken by the College. Beyond that, we work towards building a thriving postgraduate community that spans faculties and where students effectively communicate in an interdisciplinary way. Our committee is comprised of motivated postgraduate students like yourself, who have been appointed in university-wide elections and volunteer to make your experience at Imperial as fulfilling and enjoyable as possible.

So, what are we up to for this coming year 2018/19? We are going to focus on three major areas of action:

• Continue improving post-graduate well-being by increasing the quality of supervision and by creating strategies to tackle common mental health challenges in higher education.
• Develop the GSU to become central to the postgraduate community by improving the two-way flow of information, between the GSU and you.
• Organise exciting events around the topics of well-being, interdisciplinary research, and entrepreneurship.

As the GSU president, I would like to emphasise that Imperial College London is relying on its postgraduate students to maintain its position as a front-runner in world-class research and teaching. For us, the GSU, to be successful we need to receive as much of your input as possible. We want to work with you, for you!

Finally, I hope that you have a fantastic time here at Imperial and take advantage of the richness of opportunities that awaits you. If ever you have questions or ideas to share with us, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us and we are looking forward to seeing you at our events!

Ute Thiermann, GSU President 2018/19
gsu.president@imperial.ac.uk
Term Dates

Autumn term: 1st October 2018 – 14th December 2018
Spring term: 7th January 2019 – 22nd March 2019
Summer term: 29th April 2019 – 28th June 2019

Science Communication dissertation deadline and SMP summer project deadline:

Monday 16th September 2019
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