



Student Handbook

MSc Science Communication
MSc Science Media Production

2022/2023

Welcome to the Science Communication Unit at Imperial College. We very much hope you enjoy your time with us.

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 www.imperial.ac.uk/science-communication-unit and on the Blackboard learning portal at 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, 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: www.imperial.ac.uk/students.

A copy of the Regulations for Students can be found at: 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: www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/currentstudents.

The Centre for Languages Culture and Communication, of which the Science Communication Unit is a part, offers a range of evening classes in languages, the arts and humanities. These are available to our students at a discounted rate.

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 activities. We will also deal with various administrative matters during the induction programme.

Please ensure that:

- you have registered with the College before the start of induction week. You will receive a College e-mail account when you register.
- during induction week you collect your College ID card from Liam Watson. 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.

Multimode teaching

If restrictions are re-imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic, there may be some elements of remote teaching during the course of the year. If this is the case, we will prioritise the delivery of practical work on campus.

When on campus, please ensure you follow all College regulations; this may at times include taking regular Covid tests and wearing a face covering indoors. You can find details of the College requirements here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/>.

We will carry our active learning approach over into any remote classes. You will need to prepare thoroughly for these classes,

attend at the scheduled time, and be ready to take an active part in discussions.

We will use Zoom as the platform for any remote teaching. You will need a laptop or desktop computer with a good processor. A phone or tablet will not suffice, though you may find you want to use this to access documents whilst using your computer for Zoom.

Zoom is our preferred platform because it is easy to use, is able to show large numbers of participants and has a break-out room function. We will make extensive use of the break-out rooms, so classes will be highly interactive. When in a break-out room, the chat function and screen share work within the break-out room only. If you need to contact the tutor, you can send a message to call them to your room, or you can return to the main room to catch them there.

The College also uses Teams, so if you prefer you can use this for your own group work meetings. Teams is less intuitive to use and is less good with large groups, but it has the advantage of being integrated with the College email system.

Active reading

Taught classes are just a small part of the learning process. 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 ideas. 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 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:

Chambers, E. & Northedge, A. (2008) *The Arts Good Study Guide*. 2nd ed. Milton Keynes, Open University.

Marion, F., Hounsell, D. & Entwistle, N. (1997) *The Experience of Learning*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Hughes, W. (2014) *Critical Thinking: an Introduction to the Basic Skills*. 7th ed. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Warburton, N. (2007) *Thinking from A to Z*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Extracurricular 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.

When you take on extracurricular commitments, bear in mind that in the first term in particular you should be spending a lot of time reading. Most students also find that the course occupies more and more of their time as the year progresses.

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. 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
- 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

www.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.
- 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: www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/.

Student Surveys

Your feedback is important to your department, the College and Imperial College Union. Whilst there are a variety of ways to give your feedback on your College experience, the following survey gives you regular opportunities to make your voice heard:

Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ)

The MEQ is your chance to tell us about the modules you have attended. The questionnaire is open to students across all years of study and runs at the end of the autumn, spring and summer terms. The survey is confidential. The more you take part the more representative the results so please take a few minutes to give your views.

Last academic year, the College asked students to take part in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). This is a national survey that helps us to compare how we are doing against other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that are valued by our students. The results of the 2022 survey are published online ([link below](#)). PTES is run bi-annually at the College.

The Union's "You Said, We Did" campaign shows you some of the changes made as a result of survey feedback: www.imperialcollegeunion.org/you-said-we-did

The Union's response to surveys can be found here:
www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/your-representatives/responses

If you would like to know more about any of these surveys or see the results from previous surveys, please visit:
<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/student-surveys/pg-student-surveys/>

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. Attendance at seminars is compulsory. Part-time students may choose to attend in either your first or second year, or come along in both years if you want!

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.

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. In the on-campus sessions, 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 in small groups and reflect on them. In some weeks, the whole class will get together online to share your work. Discussion about what you have learned is at the heart of the encounter. So that you can feel unpressured 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
Documentary Film
Narrative
Science and Communication for Development
Museums, Heritage and Science
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.

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 explore how these might inform a piece of creative work in a more practical context. 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 options from those listed below.

Digital Media Campaigning

Radio

Exhibitions

TV

Writing for Journalism

Part-time students take one practical option 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.

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.

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 and comms/PR. The placement is intended to complement 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.

You will be required to prepare a short report about your work placement, to be submitted by the end of the academic year. Submission of this report is compulsory as part of your MSc, but it does not count towards your final mark.

In many 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 instead.

The exact list of placements changes each year but some of our regular host organisations include: *Guardian*, *Observer*, BBC Science Unit (television), BBC Radio, Francis Crick Institute, Wellcome Collection, Open Data Institute, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, April Six Proof comms, Science Museum, a range of television production companies, Academy of Medical Sciences, 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.

Course Content

MSc Science Media Production

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, you will 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. Attendance at the seminars is compulsory.

Term 1

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

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

Science and its Social Context is 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.

Radio Production will introduce you to 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.

In the last three weeks of term there will be three workshops introducing you to the basic techniques of documentary film production in preparation for your second term practical project.

Term 2

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

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, is Documentary Production, where 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 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

Before the Easter break there is a workshop on professional crewing, scheduling and budgeting to prepare you for a month-long work placement beginning at the start of May. The placement is intended to complement the academic and practical elements of the MSc by providing some first-hand experience of the television and radio industries. 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.

The exact list of work placements varies each year but some of our regular host organisations include Arrow Media, BBC Radio Science Unit, BBC Science (TV), Blink, Caravan, Clearstory, DSP, ITN, Pioneer, Popkorn, Talesmith, Windfall.

You will be required to prepare a short report about your work placement. Submission of this report is compulsory as part of your MSc, but it does not count towards your final mark.

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.

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, a production schedule and a risk assessment. 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.

Assessment

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 achieve an overall weighted average of 50% or greater and over 50% in the Dissertation and Practical Projects module. To be awarded a distinction in the degree overall you must have achieved a weighted average of 70% or over. You will normally also need a distinction in the Dissertation or the SMP Final Project. To be awarded a merit in the degree overall, you must have achieved a weighted average of 60-69% with a minimum of 60% in the Dissertation or SMP Final Project. To be awarded a pass in the degree overall, you will have achieved a weighted average of 50-59%. Averages of X9.50 or over are rounded up.

As long as you work hard throughout the year, it is unlikely that you will fail. However, if you fail a module with a mark of 40-49%, you can still graduate provided no more than 15 credits have this mark. If you fail more than 15 credits, or have module marks below 40%, you will be normally be given the chance to retake the module in the following year. This need not require attendance. There are no earlier resit opportunities.

Final degree classifications are determined at the Examinations Board, usually held in late November or December. Because we have close knowledge of our students, students are named during the Board's deliberations.

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

The credit weightings of each module are given below for each MSc. All academic essays carry equal weight.

Assessment scheme – MSc Science Communication

Science and its Social Contexts	10 credits
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)	50% each
Media Representation of Science	10 credits
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)	50% each
Academic option 1	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
Academic option 2	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
Academic option 3	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
Science Communication Practical Projects	30 credits
Group project and commentaries	33%
Practical project option 1	33%
Practical project option 2	33%
Dissertation	25 credits
Dissertation (10,000 words)	100%

Assessment scheme – MSc Science Media Production

Science and its Social Contexts	10 credits
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)	50% each
Introduction to Film Form	10 credits
2 coursework essays (2000 words each)	50% each
Documentary Film	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
Narrative	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
Sounds Signs and Meaning in Radio	5 credits
1 coursework essay (2000 words)	100%
SMP Practical Projects	25 credits
Radio Production project	50%
Documentary Production project	50%
SMP Final Project Module	30 credits
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.

You will be given a word limit for all your written assignments – usually 2000 words for essays. These limits are maxima, so should not be exceeded. The word count includes the cover sheet and any footnotes or figure captions, but does not include the bibliography. You should print the final word count of your essay on the cover sheet.

Unless otherwise stipulated by the tutor, all assignments should:

- be formatted with double-spaced lines and wide margins to leave space 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
- be properly referenced with a full bibliography of all the works used in the assignment (see below).
- 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, the date and your word count. Liam will provide you with a template for the cover sheet at the start of the year. You must use this template for all assignments.

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.

If you have used photographs, music or other non-written material not created by yourself, you must always include a credit to the source. It is permissible to use copyrighted material for educational purposes, so such material can be used for an assignment submission but not for something posted online. In all cases, please include details of the copyright restrictions or license in the source credit.

Your submitted assignment may be shown to future cohorts of students or may be posted on the Science Communication Unit's website. It is your responsibility to ensure that any interviewees included in your finished piece agree to this potential use. If you do

not wish your assignment to be used in this way, you must say so clearly on the cover sheet.

Extensions and mitigating circumstances

If you are unable to meet a deadline you should email the tutor who set the assignment before the deadline. In cases of illness or severe personal problems, the tutor will be able to give you an extension. Please note that extensions cannot be granted for reasons of lost files, transport difficulties, poor time management, and so on. College policy is that any work submitted late without the 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.

In nearly all cases, personal difficulties can be managed through extensions. However, in the case of very severe problems this may not be possible. In these cases, you may need to apply for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account by the Examinations Board. Your personal tutor or course director will be able to advise whether this is appropriate in your case. Note that the mitigating circumstances procedure does not apply to chronic conditions. These should be managed with the support of the Disability Advisory Service: www.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice

Applications for mitigating circumstances must be received within ten days of the date of the assessment deadline and must be supported by independent documentary evidence such as a doctor's note. The mitigating circumstances procedure and form can be found at: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/>

Whatever difficulties you may be facing, it is always best to get in touch with your lecturer or personal tutor sooner rather than later and before an assessment deadline if you can.

Assessing essay assignments

Assignments for the academic modules 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 essays 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. However, you must also ensure that your essay does directly address the question posed, or undertakes the task set, in the assignment brief.
- 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, usually to support a particular interpretation of the issue.

A good academic argument has the following characteristics:

- Its steps are logically founded and developed. Recourse to emotional argument is usually avoided.
- Factual information and other evidence 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.
- All information is accurate and correctly attributed.

- 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 introduction clearly states the thesis that is to be presented in the rest of the essay.
- The argument is well structured, with clear conclusions.
- The discussion is elegant, stylish and concise.
- The essay is presented in grammatically correct English, with few (ideally no!) typos.

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.

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:
<https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-observer-style-guide-a>.

For punctuation, see an abbreviated version of the widely-used guide by Larry Trask: 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 academic 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.

Where you have included other types of material in your assignment, such as pictures, you should include a credit to the source in the picture caption. This does not need to appear in the bibliography.

Practical work should be referenced according to the professional norms of the medium, but you may also be asked to submit a separate list of source material, including copyright details where appropriate.

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: 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 be in 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 how to reference different types of work: www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/reference-management/harvard-style/

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, an online newspaper article, a website, a journal article and an essay from an edited collection:

BBC, 2016. Cities. *Planet Earth II*. BBC One, 11 December.

Bousé, D., 2000. *Wildlife Films*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Holliman, R., 2016. What has science communication ever done for us? *The Guardian*, 10 May, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2016/may/10/what-has-science-communication-ever-done-for-us>.

Science Media Centre, 2020. *Press Briefings*,
<https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/working-with-us-for-journalists/briefings-for-journalists/>.

Silverstone, R., 1984. Narrative strategies in television science – a case study. *Media Culture and Society*, 6: 377-410.

White, H., 1981. The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. In W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.) *On Narrative*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1-23.

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: 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: 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: 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: 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: www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/find-books-articles-and-more/document-delivery/. 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: 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 following journals may also be of some interest and are either accessible through the library's catalogue or include open access articles on their websites:

British Journal for the History of Science
British Journal for the Philosophy of Science
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 <https://wellcomecollection.org/collections>.

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 apply through Imperial Library Services to register at Senate House. See: 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. Regulations vary from library to library but in some cases it may be possible to sign in as a visitor or get access

during the holiday periods. 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 <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/> can be useful for tracking down any hard-to-find works that you need for your studies.

Facilities

Email

Email is the best way of contacting staff and most 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. For help setting up your email, see:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/ict/self-service/connect-communicate/email/how-to-guides/setting-up-and-using-email/>.

Research expenses

A small discretionary fund is available to contribute to unavoidable expenses associated with your project work. Such claims must be agreed in advance by Stephen Webster and will not be paid until the relevant receipts have been submitted.

Science Communication area (S312 Sheffield)

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. When using any of the department computers or equipment, please ensure you follow rigorous hygiene procedures.

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. One of 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 to our students. 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. Please check with Liam if you want to know the availability of the room.

Please observe the following rules when you use the computers:

- Wipe clean using before and after use with the disinfectant wipes provided.
- 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 or in the cloud 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, noise should 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 the member of staff is there. If you need access to an office for equipment or other materials, please ask a member of staff for help.

Careers

Graduates of both the MSc in Science Communication and the MSc in Science Media Production go on to a range of careers including 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: 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 to get into the habit of looking at job adverts early on. 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 Mailing Lists at www.jiscmail.ac.uk.

Many previous science communication job adverts have been aggregated on the blog <http://scicommjobs.wordpress.com> (twitter feed: @ScicommJobs). Although not updated any more, 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, tweet 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: 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

You are responsible for looking after your own health and safety and that of others affected by your College-related work and leisure activities. You must:

- comply with all local and College policies, procedures and codes of practice and with the arrangements which the College has in place to control health and safety risks.
- ensure that your activities do not present unnecessary or uncontrolled risks to yourself or to others.
- attend appropriate induction and training.
- report any accidents, unsafe circumstances or work-related ill health of which you become aware to the appropriate person.
- not interfere with any equipment provided for Health and Safety.
- inform your supervisor or the person in charge of the activity in cases where you are not confident that you are competent to carry out a work or leisure activity safely, rather than compromise your own safety or the safety of others.

Keeping you safe is a top priority for us. During the coronavirus pandemic the College has been guided by the latest official government guidance. Government guidance may change in the UK over the course of the year. The College will regularly update its plans for keeping you safe campus. You can find the latest guidance on the measures the College is taking for your safety, plus information about the healthcare support available to you at: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/covid-19-status/>

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. Where 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. Remember, when you are in an online meeting or class, you don't have to stare at the screen the whole time, any more than you would stare at someone you were sitting with!

Ensure that when you are at a computer 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 lifting or carrying equipment or heavy objects. There is unlikely to be any lifting or transporting machinery available to help you so 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 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 are on location, this should be reported to us immediately, preferably by phone to Liam Watson:

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 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 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

The Graduate School is responsible for the postgraduate experience at the College and we work closely with the Students' Union to ensure that when decisions are being made, which affect your time at Imperial, your voice is heard.

Another important aspect of our role is to offer you a free and exciting range of professional development opportunities which you can access wherever you are in the world.

Our team of tutors have a variety of research and other career experiences. We understand the importance of developing professional skills and our programmes will help you to progress in your academic studies and research and will prepare you for your future career. Whether you wish to pursue a career in academia, industry or something completely different, professional development training will improve your personal impact. You will also get to meet students from other Departments when attending our courses.

The Graduate School runs exciting competitions throughout the year which are an opportunity to broaden your knowledge as well as to meet other students and have fun.

Our primary way to communicate to you will be through our monthly newsletter. However, do check our website, blog and social media platforms to keep up to date with all the latest activities available to you.

Finally, Imperial College is an extremely exciting, stimulating and diverse environment in which to work, to study and to research. Do make the most of all that the College and your programme has to offer.

Term Dates

Autumn term: 3rd October 2022 – 16th December 2022

Spring term: 9th January 2023 – 24th March 2023

Summer term: 1st May 2023 – 30th June 2023

Science Communication dissertation deadline and SMP summer project deadline:

Monday 18th September 2023

Staff Contact Details

	<i>room</i>	<i>e-mail</i>
Liam Watson (<i>Science Communication Unit Administrator</i>) 0207 594 8753	S312C	liam.watson@imperial.ac.uk
Felicity Mellor (<i>Course Leader, MSc Science Communication</i>)	S312B	f.mellor@imperial.ac.uk
Gareth Mitchell	S312A	g.mitchell@imperial.ac.uk
Julia Pitts	S312A	j.pitts@imperial.ac.uk
Robert Sternberg (<i>Course Leader, MSc Science Media Production</i>)	S312A	r.sternberg@imperial.ac.uk
Stephen Webster (<i>Director, Science Communication Unit</i>)	S312D	stephen.webster@imperial.ac.uk