

Graduate School's Statement for Athena Swan Award Submissions

Award Winning Provision

Informed by an External Advisory Board, the Graduate School's award winning and sector leading provision delivers accessible and inclusive professional development opportunities which ensure students develop the skills and attributes, which are highly valued within academia and a broad range of employers. In 2017, the Graduate School was recognised nationally at The Guardian University Awards in the category Best Student Experience. The School was also shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award in the category Outstanding Student Services Team.



Professional Development Programme

The Graduate School's professional development programme is designed to support non-native students and those with particular development needs as well as challenging and inspiring more experienced students. There are a wide range of basic level and more advanced level courses to choose from such as:

- Research Impact
- Research Integrity and Ethics (Plagiarism, Intellectual Property, Copyright and Science Research and Integrity)
- Societal Engagement
- Computing Skills
- Teams and Communication
- Writing for Success
- Perfecting Presentations
- Teaching
- Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, including Enterprising Women
- Careers

As well as this wide range of short courses, students have the opportunity to develop global leadership skills and intercultural awareness by attending one of the School's a Global Fellows Programmes.



Students at the 2017 TUM-Imperial Global Fellows Programme in Munich

The Graduate School has championed the use of digital technology to promote engagement, inclusivity and interconnected learning by developing an innovative package of digital professional skills training. Provision includes a suite of online and blended learning courses as well as webinars. This provision ensures that part-time students, students on placements abroad and clinicians can readily access professional development opportunities at home or in hospitals or wherever they are in the world.

The College requires all research students to attend a minimum number of Graduate School courses but there is no compulsion for Master's students. In 2016-17 there were 9000 attendances at Graduate School courses, over 4000 of which were from Master's students indicating the value Master's students place in this provision. Find out more about the Graduate School's provision by reading its annual report [here](#).

Education Research - To what extent is there gendered participation and interaction in professional development provision by STEM post-graduate students?

The Graduate School is currently undertaking educational research which aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which postgraduate professional development courses at Imperial College have gendered participation (enrolment)?
2. Why is participation gendered, and to what extent is this influenced by the language and images used in titles and course promotion?
3. In what ways is in-class engagement and interaction gendered? How is this shaped by learning resources and materials used, and by pedagogy?
4. What are the implications of gendered participation and interaction for students, the STEM sector and learning and teaching of professional development courses?
5. What can be done to reduce any negative impact of gendered participation and engagement? (i.e. recommendations for policy, practice and research)

The results of this research will be used to develop Graduate School provision and will be shared more widely with departments and the College.

Supporting Student Resilience, Wellbeing and Mental Health

In line with Imperial's Strategy 2015-20 to "prioritise the mental wellbeing of the student body, recognising this as both a moral imperative and a pre-requisite of academic success," the Graduate School's remit now includes the support and wellbeing of research students. The Graduate School's provision is designed to complement the support provided to students via the College's Student Counselling and Mental Health Service. Over the last two years, the Graduate School has developed a package of support, the key elements of which include embedding resilience training within courses as well as specific courses delivered in partnership with Student Counselling and Mental Health, a coaching programme and new online resources for supervisors.

Coaching

The doctoral student coaching programme is open to all research students and is designed to focus on self-development issues and supporting students to develop effective partnerships with supervisors. It provides students with the space and gives them the opportunity to talk, independently from their academic department, about challenges they may be experiencing as they study for their doctorate and beyond.

Cohort Building

The Graduate School's Cohort Building programme aims to enhance support for doctoral researchers, improve the research environment and build a sense of community. As well as delivering cohort skills training, the School also makes available a Research Community Fund which students can access to support student-led cohort building activities. In 2015, the Graduate School's cohort building programme was shortlisted for the Outstanding Student Services Team Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award in recognition of its success.



Support and Development for Supervisors

The Graduate School has led the development of the College's Support and Development Framework for Imperial College London Supervisors. Provision includes mandatory training for new supervisors and support for existing supervisors via Focus on Best Practice in Supervision Workshops. Further, the Graduate School has developed a new online course for supervisors called, "Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Imperial's Doctoral Students." A brand new online guidebook for supervisors was launched in spring 2017 (<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/supervisors-guidebook/>).

Facilitating Interdisciplinary Discussions and Networking

The Graduate School also delivers a number of high profile events each year which increases the visibility of postgraduate students across the College and offers further opportunity to network and to showcase the research being undertaken by research students. Events include the 3 Minute Thesis Competition and Annual PhD Summer Showcase.