Impact of the Graduate Schools’ Transferable Skills Development Programme
Caroline Hargreaves, Paul Seldon and Elaine Walsh*

*Elaine Walsh Senior Lecturer, Imperial College Graduate Schools, elaine.walsh@imperial.ac.uk, www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschools

Transferable Skills Development
The Graduate Schools have an award winning skills development programme to enable postgraduate students to reach their potential. We provide training in: Research Management; Personal Effectiveness; Communication Skills; Networking; Teamworking; Career Management; Entrepreneurship and Global Skills.

Our transferable skills programme is envied both nationally and internationally. Among many contributors are academic departments including the Business School, dedicated tutors and external consultants. Using British Council funding we collaborate with Tsinghua and Shanghai Jiao Tong Universities in China, Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore and the University of Hong Kong.

Evaluation and Evolution
From the inception of the programme we have carried out research to ensure that our courses meet students’ needs.

We use course evaluations, student surveys, focus groups and encourage feedback from individuals and student representative bodies.

Evidence
We have qualitative and quantitative evidence that our courses change attitudes and develop skills.

Responses from third and fourth year PhD students to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) showed that students appreciate the importance of the training programme and that the Imperial College London programme compares favourably with those of other universities1 (Figs 1&2).

Fig 1. Late stage PhD views of the importance of the training programme1

Fig 2. Percentage of PRES respondents for whom experience of transferable skills programme exceeds expectations2

Impact
An important part of our programme is the Research Skills Development residential course, which was shown to have a statistically significant positive impact on students’ perceptions of their skills (Figs 2 & 3)3,4,5.

Fig 2. Pre- and Post-course PhD student perceptions indicate a positive impact of the residential course on a variety of skills3,4,5.

Table 1. Percentage of students in faculties exceeding the requirement (Fig 4)

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<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Percentage exceeding requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>3.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>3.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>2.7*</td>
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4. Personal impact of the Residential Course (n = 271)

Fig 3. PhD students who attended the residential course felt that they were more able to learn independently1.

Student Views
Flexible and high quality programme: “I like the fact that you can pick and choose basically what suited you rather than it being very prescriptive”, “the choice of lecturer is superb and all are experts at what they do”.

Meets evolving needs: “It was completely relevant and useful and covered most of the skills I needed at that point in my PhD” (Finish Up, Move On course).

Affective benefits: “Courses reassure students that their experiences are ‘normal’ so it is comforting and gives you several ways to tackle problems”.

Students attend more courses than the amount required for transfer (Fig 4).6

Fig 4. Students attend more than the required number of courses.

Employer and Supervisor Views
“It is very useful for students to see how skills they didn’t know they had can be applied to practical real-world situations/careers. It is also useful to help students develop these skills so that when they leave Imperial they are more prepared for industry/commerce.”

The programme: “helps the students present themselves and make what they have done relevant to potential employers”.

Ongoing Research
A current study of student perceptions of employability and entrepreneurship will enable further enhancements of the programme.

For more information contact us at the above address.