

University Graduate College



University Graduate College Newsletter

Sept - Nov 2012

Welcome!

We are pleased to present the fourth issue of the University Graduate College Newsletter. In this issue, we hope to offer a warm welcome to our new postgraduate students, as well as all students embarking on a new academic year. On **page 2** you'll find out about our Starting Out event – a must for all new postgrads – which will help ease you into your first days as a researcher. The Graduate Centre is also hosting a range of social events for Welcome Fortnight, which should help you to get familiar with the Graduate Centre and local area, and meet fellow students. See **page 3** for further details.

On **page 6**, three of our current postgraduate students give a valuable insight into their first days as a researcher and offer some handy tips and advice for those facing the same challenges.

Whether you're just starting out or are well into your research career, our Guide to Twitter on **page 7** will tell you why and how you should be using this social media tool to help with your research. Don't forget to follow the University Graduate College **@CardiffUGC!**

For those PGRs looking to get involved in something a bit different, you can find out all about becoming a Student Conference Committee Member on **page 7**. As well as being a great way of meeting new people, being a Committee Member is an excellent opportunity to develop a range of valuable skills.

The University Graduate College's programme has a keen focus on exploring career options, both within and outside of academia. On **page 4**, find out why you should be thinking about your career options from your first days as a researcher..

We would like to offer our congratulations to the students who have been awarded PGR Initiative funding for their projects in the recent round of applications. On **page 8**, find out more about these projects, as well as how you can apply for funding in the coming year.

As usual, a lot has been going on at the University Graduate College over the last few months. On **page 3** you will find an update on the new postgraduate facilities at the Heath Park, and throughout the newsletter you can find out about the changes we have made to our **website** and visual identity (including our new



logo, below). On **page 4** we also offer an update on the work of our four Programme Teams.

As well as all the work being undertaken by the University Graduate College, we are also entering a time of change for the University as a whole. Staff may be aware but PGRs possibly less so. Our new Vice-Chancellor, Prof Colin Riordan, has initiated a re-organisation into three Colleges, each headed by a Pro Vice-Chancellor, and has appointed a further three Pro Vice-Chancellors to form a new senior team. We will be working with Prof Patricia Price, PVC for Student Experience & Academic Standards) to continue to address researcher priorities in this new structure. More information will follow.

Introducing! We would like to extend a warm welcome to Morganne Pritchard, who has recently joined the University Graduate College team as a Clerical Officer, on secondment from her role in Registry.

www.cardiff.ac.uk/ugc
www.twitter.com/cardiffugc



Starting Out

Embarking on a new research degree

can be daunting. At the University Graduate College, we want to help make starting this new chapter in your life as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. One of the ways in which we do this is through our Starting Out induction event. This event is a great opportunity to meet other research students and begin to develop those important personal and professional networks. It provides an introduction to research at Cardiff University, including rights and responsibilities, the facilities and services offered by the University and the University Graduate College, the Graduate Centre, and presentations by existing students on starting and



enjoying your research programme. Importantly, the event will introduce the training and development opportunities at Cardiff University and enable you to begin planning your skills development.

Starting Out is designed to complement not duplicate your school induction provision

By the end of this event participants will have:

- a better understanding of the nature of the research degree
- become familiar with University regulations and systems
- developed awareness of sources of help and support
- gained an understanding of the background and requirements of the Researcher Development Framework and how this affects

them

- understood the importance of monitoring their personal and professional development
- gained an overview of the training opportunities available

October sessions conclude with either lunch or cheese and wine. Mid-year sessions include additional topics not covered at school inductions, and lunch.

Dates:

Tuesday 9 October 09.00 – 14.00
Thursday 11 October 13.00 – 18.00
Monday 22 October 09.00 – 14.00
Tuesday 22 January 09.00 – 15.30
Thursday 25 April 09.00 – 15.30
Monday 15 July 09.00 – 15.30

Book now via our **website**.

- **Sarah Brasher**
 University Graduate College Officer

The University Graduate College is pleased to announce the launch of our brand **new website**. We hope you enjoy the changes we've made. These include:

Easier navigation – we've reordered the pages to ensure that all content is a lot easier to find, particularly in our 'Training and Development' section.

A new and improved 'news and events' page – this new -look section will help you keep up-to-date with the very latest news and events, as well as letting you easily browse past news stories and events. You can also subscribe to the posts that are most relevant to you (e.g. any stories about Humanities or Physical Sciences) through our RSS feeds, to guarantee the right news and event posts come straight to you.

New ways to connect – on the new site, you will find various ways to stay connected to the University Graduate College, for instance via Facebook and Twitter. We want you to be able to interact with us in the ways that suit YOU.

Documents and Resources – we will use this section to post any documents and resources that we think might be relevant to researchers. As well as any forms you might need, you will also find links to interesting articles and free downloads.

New Website



Did you know? The University Graduate College is now on Facebook. Visit www.facebook.com/universitygraduatecollege and click 'like' to show your support. Thanks!

Heath Park Graduate Centre

For some time, the University Graduate College has been aware of the lack of study and social space at the Heath Park Campus to accommodate the many postgraduates based there. Over the last six months, plans have really taken shape, and we are pleased to announce that October 2012 will see the opening of a graduate space at Heath Park, located on the 2nd floor of the Main Building.

The space will consist of two separate rooms. One room will be used as a study facility, with laptops that can be used to connect directly

to the network, and desk space that can be used for individual or group work. This room will also be used for some of the University Graduate College workshops. Please check the new University Graduate College Programme for further information.

The other room will be a designated social space, with a mixture of sofas and soft seating with coffee tables, to allow you to take some well-earned time out from your studies.

There will also be a projector and big screen which will enable you to enjoy DVDs, Freeview TV, and a Nintendo Wii. If you would like us to

organise any events, or you wish to use this space for any specific postgraduate events, we encourage you to email the Graduate Centre at: Grad-Centre@cardiff.ac.uk – we would love to discuss this further with you.

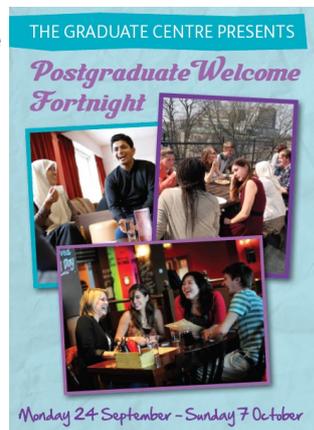
The space will be ready for the start of the new academic term. Make sure to check our **website** for the official opening party! We hope that this space will be of great help to all of you based up at Heath Park.

- **Terri Delahunty**,
Head of University Graduate College Administration

The Graduate Centre is really looking forward to an action packed, fun-filled program for this year's Welcome Fortnight. We wanted to continue to offer some of the popular events of previous years, like the Vice Chancellor's address, which this year will see the new Vice Chancellor Professor Colin Riordan give his first welcome to all new postgraduate students. There will be opportunities to make new friends at our Meet & Mingle events, and to relax at our ever-popular Quiz & Pizza nights. We will also continue to show movies every Saturday evening.

This year, we are excited to be holding some one-off events especially for Welcome Fortnight. Current postgraduate students have offered to organise a '**Coffee Crawl**', to connect new postgraduates with the best local cafes to keep their caffeine levels topped up. We will also be taking students on a guided tour of Cardiff Bay.

One of the biggest one-off events taking place over Welcome Fortnight is the '**Graduate Centre's Street Market**', which will see a variety of local and international food producers serve up some tasty treats as you peruse the vintage clothing, bric-a-brac, and books. *The market is being hosted by **Riverside Farmers Market**, and if you haven't checked them out yet you definitely should!*



Welcome Fortnight

On top of all of that, we have a couple of new regular events starting up. Every Friday afternoon from 5.30pm, we will host '**#FollowFriday**' – a live music set with a variety of acts from local singer-songwriters to international musical genres. What better way to start the weekend than winding down in the Cafe Bar. '**The Sunday Chill**' will give a different experience every week, from games nights, open-mic evenings, and one-off student-led activities.

Our main focus this year is to offer ample opportunities for you as the student to engage with what your local community has to offer you. We also aim to encourage events that display the diversity of international cultures that make up our student population. If you have any ideas for events, be sure to email: Grad-Centre@cardiff.ac.uk.

With so much going on, we encourage all new and existing postgraduate students to make every effort to get to as many of the

social events as possible. Welcome Fortnight takes place:

24 September – 7 October.

For more information on Welcome Fortnight be sure to visit our **dedicated webpage**. Or keep up to date by liking our **Facebook** page or following us on **Twitter**.

- **Chris Lawrence**,
Graduate Centre Operations and Events Manager

Careers Corner

At the start of your PhD,

the prospect of applying for jobs may seem like a long way off. In fact, for many, the PhD provides an opportunity to become immersed in the intellectual delights of academia, and employment is something to be thought about later on. Nevertheless, it's important to recognise that the PhD is one stage on the occupational pathway, and will certainly lead onto other things. So it's worth giving some thought right at the start of the PhD experience to the sorts of skills that are going to be developed over the

next 3-4 years, and how to keep track of these. Possibly the most exciting part of each research project is the acquisition of specialist skills and knowledge relating to the subject area. These are the skills and knowledge that help to identify a person as, say, an education specialist, an engineer or a musicologist. At last you get to call yourself a researcher and feel that glow from working on something unique. But each PhD will also involve developing advanced research skills such as critical thinking, academic writing, analytical skills and data management. Equally importantly, the PhD will develop a range of professional skills, such as project

management, communication skills, self-management and networking. Often, students do not realise until well into their PhD (if at all!) that they are developing such a broad skill-set. Therefore, you should start as you mean to go on; recognise that your PhD experience *will* provide added value when it comes to applying for jobs, and reflect on your skills development as you progress. Find out more about how to do this at our new January workshop: 'The Researcher Development Framework: Using the RDF to Plan and Evidence your Skills'

- **Charlotte Whitehead**
University Graduate College Officer

The latest news from our four Programme Teams

Programme Teams News

Building Capacities

The Programme Team met three times in the year – November, February and May. The autumn meeting considered management information on PhD enrolment against targets and received reports on international student recruitment and Home/EU recruitment. It also agreed the allocation of the MRC Doctoral training grant and of endowment funds. The main agenda item for the February meeting was the PGR Priority Map. Two major priorities are evaluation of postgraduate recruitment strategies and development of the postgraduate recruitment web pages. The May meeting continued previous work and also agreed the allocation of President's Scholarships to themes.

Graduate Facilities

The Programme Team met twice, once in December and once in April. At its first meeting, it considered facilities related issues from PRES and received the annual report of the Graduate Centre. It also had presentations from Library and Information Services staff on provision for PGR students. The spring meeting discussed the PGR Priority Map, and also received updates on progress on the Hadyn Ellis Building and a Heath Park graduate centre. The latter is due to open very soon; though we cannot be precise at the time of writing, it is hoped that it will be within a week or start of the start of term.

Training & Development

The Programme Team met three times in the year – October, February and May. In addition to its main outcome – the UGC Programme 2012-13, which will be distributed in early September, the Team also agreed and later, received reports on, a pilot project for PGRs who teach to be supported through individual application to the Higher Education Academy. The outcomes of these applications will be known in the next month. The Team also received outcomes from PRES, discussed Welsh Medium Provision, Enterprise, and Public Engagement; reviewed and commented on the PGR Priority Map; and approved the budget for the UGC Programme.

Assuring a Quality Experience

Two meetings were held, one in October and one in February. The October meeting considered PhD submission rates and data from Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and agreed actions for follow up of both. The February meeting considered the PGR Priority Map, additional analysis from PRES, the Student Charter, the revised UK Quality Code chapter relating to research degrees, and the Annual PGR Monitoring Exercise. Note: the outputs of the Annual Monitoring exercise were considered by a separate review group, operating under the Academic Standard and Quality Committee.

My UGC

“Having worked at the University as

a Graduate Assistant for three years, I was lucky enough to be offered the position of Communications Officer for the University Graduate College in late 2011. I already knew about the aims and work of the University Graduate College, and was really excited to get spreading the word about this relatively new part of the University. Since starting in this role, I have been able to get a real feel for the breadth of work the



University Graduate College does, and I feel proud to be part of an organisation which offers an unparalleled range of support for postgraduates.

I love to see students engaging with the University Graduate College, and one of my aims in this role is to get more students utilising social media to interact with the University Graduate College, and one another. At the recent Student Conferences, I have been setting up a live Twitter feed on the Café Bar screen so that delegates can see what others are tweeting about the event. Even if it's just how good the snacks are (social media posts and food do seem to be inextricable!), it's great to see students utilising social media to get involved. I could talk all day about the benefits of Twitter for researchers, and on page 7 you'll

find some examples of this, as well as a quick guide to getting started on Twitter. It takes just minutes to set up an account, and having had several previously sceptical researchers tell me of Twitter's 'invaluable' benefits to their work, I highly recommend giving it a go.

To me, the University Graduate College is all about enhancing the experience of postgraduate students, and I am excited to be harnessing the potential of great tools like Twitter to take this one step further.

Remember to follow the University Graduate College @CardiffUGC, and happy tweeting!”

- **Jadine Wringe**,
University Graduate College
Communications Officer

Dates for Your Diary

We are pleased to present a selection of upcoming events and other important dates for your diary.

Please note that advance bookings must be made for all events. For the full schedule, please visit: www.cardiff.ac.uk/ugcp

SEPTEMBER

19 - New University Graduate College Programme available via Schools

OCTOBER

4 - iSolve Introductory Session
9 - Starting Out

11 - Starting Out

16 - Famelab Training

22 - Starting Out

31 - The Effective Researcher (The End Is In Sight)

NOVEMBER

1 - Training and Development Programme Team Meeting

8 - Building Capacities Programme Team Meeting

12 - Graduate Facilities Programme Team Meeting

21 - Staying Motivated

26 - University Graduate College Board Meeting

A New Visual Identity

identity which

Since launching in January 2011, The University Graduate College has been keen to increase its visibility throughout the University. We have been working hard on developing a visual



complements that of the University,

and helps us to put our stamp on all University Graduate College activity. So it is with this in mind that we are pleased to be launching our new University College logos (pictured left). We hope you like them as much as we do, and that they will help you to easily spot University Graduate College activity and events.

Over To You

Three of our current PhD students open up about their early days as a researcher...

“Starting Out as a PhD student can be a daunting experience, particularly if you’re new to



Cardiff. My first piece of advice would be to get to know people – staff and students – in your department. These will be your support network for the next three years. Get friendly with your School’s administrative staff – they can be a huge help when the pressure’s on, when you’re struggling with deadlines or funding requests. Establish early on with your supervisor what’s expected of you in the first six months. Ask for a copy of your School’s progress review form to give you an idea of the types of boxes you’ll need to tick. At this early stage you’ll have time to attend lots of training and seminars. Get a copy of the University Graduate College Programme and keep an eye on their training sessions online. Visit and browse as many of the libraries as you can. Above all, don’t forget that the University is on your side, and they have an interest in you contributing to your School and completing your PhD.”

- John Caulfield, Welsh

“I will always remember



the call from RCBC Wales in September 2009, informing me that following my interview I had been awarded a three-year PhD studentship. I was elated and surprised - I had never expected to be successful with my funding application. While I worked my notice as a staff nurse, I started attending courses provided by the University Graduate College, offering me insight into the new world that I was entering. The first few weeks of courses, literature searching (with support from a librarian) and supervision meetings flew by, and I relished every minute. It was a luxury to be able to spend hours reading and critiquing the literature, mapping and developing my ideas, while realising the leap from undergraduate to postgraduate study. The journey has been incredibly enjoyable, challenging and rewarding - the best three years of my life.”

- Jessica Bailie, Nursing and Midwifery Studies

“Despite having already



completed my undergraduate degree at Cardiff University, the first week of induction for starting a PhD was still a daunting task. My School (Earth and Ocean Sciences) advised me to attend one of the ‘Starting Out’ Induction Events held by the University Graduate College within the first month of starting my research. This proved to be a very useful form of networking; I met people outside of my research group and from different academic schools. Most importantly, the event introduced me to the University Graduate College. I discovered that there are many great courses run through the University Graduate College Programme, and throughout my first year I have taken advantage of some of these. They have helped me to become the most productive, active and efficient researcher I can be, whilst bringing me up to speed with the technical software and computing techniques I will need to complete my PhD.

- Milly Deany, Earth and Ocean Sciences

A Guide to Twitter

It's possible that you think of Twitter as an indulgent forum in which to spill your innermost thoughts on the X Factor and what you've had for breakfast. So why should an already busy researcher take the time to use it? Far from being a circus of the mundane and the inane, Twitter can actually be an extremely useful tool for researchers: helping them to connect with one another, keep updated about news in their field, ask questions and share knowledge. A Twitter account is quick and easy to set up, and will help you build up a web presence for your research. So why not give it a go today? Here are some tips on getting started.

When setting up an account, choose a username that you will be happy using publicly. You might want to consider how anonymous you'd like to be, and whether that 'witty' moniker you've come up with will still seem funny a few years down the line. Ditto your profile photo. It is highly recommended to have your



own photo, but you might want to consider whether that picture of yourself in the pub in fancy dress is the most appropriate image to showcase yourself. Use the small 'personal info' section to say a bit about yourself and your research interests. This is also a great opportunity to provide a link to your own website or blog if you have one.

So who should you follow on Twitter?

You can of course follow your friends and favourite celebrities if you want to keep up with them, but from a research point of view, there are far more useful users you could be following. Twitter allows you to connect to millions of users worldwide, giving you an unparalleled chance to find people with the same research interests as you, or whose research could help with yours.

You can also follow relevant organisations and news channels, to keep up to date with news and developments in your area of interest.

Hashtags are a pretty useful feature in helping you to find people with the same interests, too. For instance, type in #phd, and you'll find endless posts of PhD-related news and musings. If you want to join in a global PhD conversation, follow the #phdchat posts every Wednesday night.

Once you've found the right users to follow, make sure you get involved! Log in regularly to see what people are talking about, and join in the conversation yourself. Retweet posts which you think are interesting, and send replies to voice your own view. Utilise your new-found contacts to ask questions and gauge opinions. Suddenly you'll find there are limitless numbers of people to consult for your research.

If nothing else, joining Twitter and finding people with the same research interests as you can help you to feel less isolated whilst doing a PhD, and remind you that what you are doing is worthwhile, inspiring to others, and capable of starting a global conversation.

Follow the University Graduate College @CardiffUGC

Every year, the University Graduate College supports a number of student-led conferences, which provide opportunities for students in different disciplines to present their work to each other, to share and develop their research interests, and to establish mutually beneficial interdisciplinary links. These conferences are a great way for students to develop their presentation skills in a supportive and friendly environment and help them to feel part of the wider research community.

We are currently inviting researchers to join the conference steering committees for our Speaking of Science, Voice of Humanities and Spotlight on Social Sciences conferences. Joining a committee will give you a fantastic opportunity to get involved with organising an academic conference that will not only

give you experience and skills in this area, but also enable you to meet researchers in other Schools (and institutions) whose



research may well link in with your own.

If you would like to join the steering committee, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing Rebecca Green at UGC@cardiff.ac.uk. Places will be offered on a first come, first served basis. To ensure as broad and even a spread as possible across disciplines, we welcome postgraduate research students from all Schools.

Get Involved!

PGR Initiatives

Funding Initiatives For PGR Students

Twice annually, the University Graduate College invites postgraduate research students to submit applications for PGR initiative funding.

This funding is a great opportunity for researchers from different disciplines to come together to discuss shared research interests, and helps students to develop transferable skills by giving them an opportunity to work collaboratively to organise events.



We are pleased to announce that successful applicants from the most recent funding round are as follows:

Applicant 1	School	Applicant 2	School	Project Title
Helen McKenzie	ENCAP	Simon Jenkins	SHARE	A one day conference entitled 'Transgression, Trespassing and Taboos in the Long-Nineteenth Century
Manon George	CLAWS	Francesca Dickson	EUROP	Law, Policy and Politics in Wales Conference
Anna Jensen	BIOSI	Grainne McNamara	MEDIC	Interdisciplinary Conference on Fertility, Pregnancy and Development
Will Webberley	COMSC	Wil Chivers	SOCSI	Computer Science and Social Science Collaborathon and Hackathon
James Vafidis	BIOSI	Panagiotis Tziogkidis	CARBS	Cardiff University Interdisciplinary User Group for the 'R' Statistical Software
Victoria Silverwood	SOCSI	Sophie Chambers	CLAWS	Theory and Method in Criminological Research - An Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Day

Deadlines for submitting an application for 2013 funding are 5pm on: **Friday 18 January & Friday 21 June**
 For further information, please contact Dr Afia Ahmed in the University Graduate College:
UGC@cf.ac.uk, 029 2087 9408

*We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the University Graduate College Newsletter. If you have any feedback or queries, please contact **Jadine Wringe** at: **WringeJ@cf.ac.uk** or **www.twitter.com/cardiffugc***