A new academic year is upon us, with over 250 new research students joining us in early October. As ever, these students come from a wide range of countries and backgrounds and will be studying across a broad range of disciplines.

Although the majority of our research students join the University in October, we are seeing an increasing number start their programmes in January and in the spring and, in response to this, we now repeat our University-wide induction programme in early January and early May.

Year on year, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of Reading Researcher Development Programme (RRDP) course bookings. Last academic year, we filled over 3200 places on the programme. This year, we have new courses on topics such as impact, finance, and employability. Feedback from participants shows us that most sessions are highly valued and help students not only to work on their PhD more effectively, but also help them to prepare themselves for the next stage of their career development.

Since the last edition of this Bulletin, we held our inaugural PhD Research Conference. This was a hugely successful event, attracting over 250 research students from across the University. You can read all about the event in the pages that follow. There is also a great set of short films covering the event on the Graduate School website – well worth a watch. We will be running the Conference again in June 2014 and will be announcing details of associated competitions early in the New Year. We are also excited about holding our first doctoral student public lecture in May 2014, which you can read about later in this Bulletin.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our research students a productive and happy year with us and thank members of staff across the University for all that they do to support our students and make their time here a successful and rewarding one.

Dianne Berry, Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies
October ushers in the season of festivals in India and it’s wonderful to get an opportunity to be in Kolkata (Calcutta), one of the sites for my PhD fieldwork and enjoy the cleaner autumn weather; which for the rest of the year is mostly polluted due to heavy construction works and madden-ing traffic. In the last couple of decades large scale construction sites have become an everyday experience in contemporary India due to its economic globalization and subsequent rapid rate of urban development. Globalization has caused a drastic environmental, economic, and socio-cultural metamorphosis of Indian metropolitan cities, and an important part of this transformation is the landscaped beautification of urban public open spaces which are the focus of my research.

I am exploring the complexities associated with landscape design by studying four large scale urban public open space developments from four different metropolitan cities in India. With its traditional, historical, and cultural legacies on the one hand, and a new found neoliberal economic power driven by industrial and modern state building aspirations on the other, India is proving to be an intriguing arena to understand how power and politics play an important role in shaping the urban environment.

Graduate School welcomes new Felix Scholars

The Graduate School had the pleasure of welcoming the University’s latest cohort of Felix Scholars at a reception held on 30 October. The event was attended by Felix Scholars, along with key academic and administrative staff. The highly prestigious Felix Scholarships are awarded each year to PhD and Master candidates from India and developing countries, following a fiercely competitive selection process involving three Universities: Reading, Oxford and the School of Oriental & African Studies. Professor Dianne Berry, Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies, said ‘Felix Scholars are consistently among our most impressive students, as shown by their having secured such a respected studentship. We are delighted to be able to welcome our new intake of Scholars to Reading.’
Three Minute Thesis Competition
The Graduate School received over 40 entries for the Three Minute Thesis competition and, through a series of heats, 12 presentations were shortlisted for the conference. Each finalist had to describe their research clearly and succinctly to a non-specialist audience in an engaging way and in no more than three minutes...no easy task! Subjects ranged from 'Artificial volcanoes – really?' to 'Motion planning for multiple autonomous vehicles'. The judging panel had the challenging task of choosing a winner as all presentations were of an extremely high standard and no one exceeded the three minute cut off! Jessica Sage, a part-time PhD student from the Department of English Literature, was awarded first prize with a passionate presentation entitled 'Questioning constructions of the child in Lewis Carroll’s photographs'. The runner-up was Isabelle Peres from the School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences / School of Pharmacy with her talk 'Cannabis and epilepsy'.

Research Poster Competition
The Research Poster competition was particularly popular with conference delegates eager to view and discuss the 27 posters on display during the refreshment break. The judging panel, chaired by Professor Christine Williams, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, awarded first prize to Jennifer Wickens from the School of Agriculture, Policy & Development. Jennifer’s poster was entitled ‘Pollinator flow across agroecosystems’. Runners-up were Kerstin Thirswall (School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences), Lorna Zischka (Department of Economics) and Petra Verlinden (Department of Archaeology).

Researcher of the Year Competition
The PhD Researcher of the Year Award featured presentations by the four Faculty nominees. These outstanding third year doctoral researchers delivered presentations on their research areas and reflected on their time at Reading. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir David Bell KCB, presented Katherine Livingstone from the School of Agriculture, Policy & Development with the PhD Researcher of the Year Award for 2013. Katherine’s PhD research investigates the role of milk and dairy products in cardiovascular health. Katherine’s research has taken her to conferences and seminars from Finland to China. In the week following her award for PhD Researcher of the Year, Katherine won a prestigious Rank Nutrition Prize for PhD students.

We asked delegates what was good about the conference...

Three Minute Thesis presentations were outstanding
Wish I had taken part...
Educative, informing, encouraging and challenging
Good to interact with researchers from other Departments
So interesting to hear about research going on across different Faculties

PhD Research Conference
The Graduate School’s inaugural PhD Research Conference on 14 June 2013 attracted around 250 doctoral researchers and staff from across the University. The event showcased the diversity of doctoral research at Reading and featured researchers from across all four Faculties.

Missed the Conference?
An overview of the Conference, the winning Three Minute Thesis competition talk and the presentation by the Researcher of the Year are all available to view as short films at www.reading.ac.uk/gs-phdconference.aspx
### Features

#### Spotlight on electronic deposition of theses

Increasingly, research is a global activity. The availability and visibility of research via electronic means is now something many researchers take for granted both when disseminating their own research and when seeking access to that of others. Research at PhD level is no different to that and University policy now requires that doctoral researchers deposit an electronic copy of their thesis. Below is some guidance on the process, the benefits and where to find more information.

**What is electronic deposition?**

Electronic deposition is one element of the process of thesis submission for doctoral researchers at Reading. It entailed on or after 1 October 2012. You are required to deposit an electronic copy of the final version of your thesis into the University’s digital Institutional Repository, CentAUR.

**What are the benefits to me?**

As a researcher, you will know that visibility of research outputs is of high importance to your future career. By making your thesis available via the stable and secure platform offered by CentAUR, you will be significantly increasing the chances of your work being seen and will be a tangible means of raising your recognition and profile with potential collaborators, employers and funding bodies.

It is increasingly the case within UK universities that doctoral theses are deposited not just in hard copy but also via electronic means, in similar fashion to other research outputs. As a result of the national trend towards electronic deposition, our researchers are also able to benefit from access to research outputs from within the University and beyond.

**What I am required to do and when?**

When the time comes to deposit the final copy of your thesis, you will need to provide an electronic version (normally PDF) of your thesis alongside two hardbound copies. This will be your responsibility to ensure your Thesis Deposit Form is completed (see Exams Office website for latest version) and deliver two handbound copies of your thesis, the electronic version on CD or DVD and the signed Thesis Deposit Form to the Examinations Office no later than the specified deadline.

**What training is available on this process?**

A compulsory training module (Creating your electronic thesis') has been developed to help guide you through the process of electronic deposition, including:

- Copyright issues / Using other people’s content
- Restricting access to your thesis
- Referencing and avoiding plagiarism
- The overall process of submission

This module will be accessible to all current doctoral researchers via BlackBoard from November 2013. It will run training courses, as these teach you skills that you might find very rewarding, whilst being leaders in their field of research.

**What if I need to restrict access to my thesis?**

There are circumstances in which you may wish to restrict access to your thesis, or cannot make it accessible online for reasons of copyright or other issues. The training module ‘Creating your electronic thesis’ will provide you with the information you need on issues such as copyright, and will also help you make a decision on whether you should request a restriction or embargo.

**Further guidance**

The Graduate School’s guidelines on electronic deposition of theses, including links to relevant information elsewhere, can be found at: www.reading.ac.uk/gs-etheseshome.asp

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### A PhD…but what comes next?

Maxwell Parfitt was until recently a PhD student in the School of Systems Engineering. He came to Reading in 2004 as an undergraduate and studied for a BSc in Computer Science and Cybernetics. He fell in love with research and the University of Reading campus and continued on to undertake an MSc in Engineering and Information Sciences followed by a PhD in Computer Science. He was awarded his PhD in June 2013.

**Why did you select to stay in Reading for your PhD?**

The choice to stay in Reading for my PhD was simple as I found the academic staff in my Department very supportive whilst being leaders in their field of research.

**What did you enjoy about studying at Reading?**

The University has been a great place to study and work as the campus is beautiful all year round with plenty of open grassy space to relax, meet friends and just take walks to help clear your mind and work on challenges. The academic and support staff all take an interest in you as a student, but probably more importantly as a person, so that by the end of your studies you have grown as an individual as well as a student.

**What were your biggest challenges during your PhD and how did you overcome them?**

My biggest challenge during my PhD was the thesis writing as I am not naturally a person to just sit at a computer and write. I found it very difficult to get started and make the time to write, but the Graduate School provided many different development courses that I was able to attend free of charge, which helped me to learn non-academic skills such as time keeping and how to reference correctly. They also had workshops on how to structure a thesis and how to convey your message in writing.

**Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give a new 1st year PhD student?**

I would say get involved with social activities, such as the Students’ Union (RUSU) clubs and societies, as everyone needs a mental break and a social outlet, but always ensure that you’re leaving yourself enough time to work on your research. I also recommend going to the Graduate School run training courses, as these teach you skills that you might feel you already have, but everyone can learn something new and this will help you in your studies.

**Did you find the Graduate School helpful during your studies?**

The Graduate School Breakfast Clubs are a good way to meet new people from different departments around the University, as you could never imagine how much is happening here at Reading! The Graduate School gives you a quiet place to relax and work away from undergraduates, with the staff always available to help sort any problems that you might be having. It also runs an annual research conference which gives you a chance to present your work in a friendly environment, which is great practice before going off to external conferences.

**What have you been doing since you were awarded your PhD?**

I have moved into a Research Fellow position in the School of Construction Management to develop exciting new Virtual Reality technologies for use within the construction industry. My position is allowing me to continue research which I find very rewarding, whilst building up my teaching and publishing record which will enable me to move into an academic role in the future.
Going public with PhD research – the new Fairbrother lecture

The Graduate School recognises the important contribution made by doctoral researchers to the wider research community. Therefore, we are pleased to announce a new initiative: the Fairbrother lecture; an annual public lecture which will be delivered by a current, or recent, Reading doctoral researcher. It is named after Jack Fairbrother, who in 1929 was the first person to be awarded a PhD from the University of Reading.

On Thursday 15 May 2014, the inaugural Fairbrother lecture will take place in the Henley Business School. This first lecture will be given by Isabelle Pérès, a doctoral researcher who is jointly supervised by Dr Claire Williams, School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences and Dr Ben Whalley, School of Pharmacy.

Isabelle’s lecture will discuss the research she has undertaken to develop an epilepsy treatment from non-psychoactive components of cannabis. This exciting work has resulted in clinical trials and the treatment of children with severe and drug-resistant epilepsy.

Further details of the event will be available on the Graduate School website and in the University’s Events Diary.

Leadership programme for PhD students

In April 2013 the Graduate School, in conjunction with Henley Business School, ran its first leadership programme for PhD students: ‘Making a difference as a leader – developing your leadership potential’.

This three-day intensive programme – led by Dr Claire Collins and Dr Bernd Vogel of the Henley Business School – has been designed specifically for PhD students, enabling them to improve their understanding of leadership and to consider the importance of leadership skills in relation to their own professional ambitions.

The programme took place at both the Greenlands and Whiteknights campuses and attracted 31 students from a range of subject areas and backgrounds. Many remarked that this was one of the hidden benefits of taking part; the chance to exchange ideas with students they might not otherwise get to meet.

Reflecting on what they had gained from their involvement in the programme, one participant commented: ‘A chance to think about my future vision, meet other PhD students, learn about the distinctions of management and leadership. A chance to think about the future – a break from normal study worries.’ Other positive comments included:

• Felt special! Exposed to two great course leaders.
  Had not taken time to analyse the issues surrounding leadership before.
• It puts us into a self-reflection mode. I understand myself better after the programme.
• This is something I have never thought about. It is great the University has given us such a brilliant opportunity.

The Graduate School is delighted to announce that ‘Making a difference as a leader’ will be running in 2013–14. PhD students have already been notified by email about the application process and details are also available on the Graduate School website www.reading.ac.uk/gs-leadership.aspx