A warm welcome to the Winter 2015 edition of our Graduate School Bulletin – I can’t believe winter is now upon us and that summer already seems an increasingly long time ago.

Thinking back to those sunny days, the highlight for the Graduate School was our annual Doctoral Research Conference, held in mid-June. It was a fantastic event that received great feedback from students and staff who attended. It was so rewarding for me, and my staff, to see the fruits of much of the work we have done over the past few years in terms of building up a University-wide postgraduate research community. You can read more about the conference in the pages that follow and also view a short film of the event on the Graduate School website. We also have short films of the PhD Researcher of the Year finalists and a number of talks from the Three Minute Thesis competition.

Welcome to our new cohort of doctoral researchers who registered at the start of October. It is always a positive experience to see students mature in so many ways over the time they are with us. Looking forward, we are planning our Seasonal Celebration in December, which will undoubtedly feature a Christmas jumper competition and the annual quiz amongst other things. We are currently considering nominations for the next Fairbrother Lecture which will be held in May 2016. Isabelle Pérès, who gave our first Fairbrother Lecture in 2013, tells us about her life since gaining her PhD later in this Bulletin. You can also read about what some of our other students have been doing, and about some of our events and activities that have taken place over the past few months.

Professor Dianne Berry, Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies

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Joshua Wells, a second year doctoral researcher in the Department of Politics and International Relations, was awarded £320 from the Graduate School Student-led Events fund to organise an interdisciplinary PhD student conference between the University of Reading and University of York on 9–10 October 2015. Thirteen doctoral researchers presented their work along with four guest speakers. Presentations covered a wide range of topics from understanding choice to crisis democracy and conflict. Joshua commented: ‘The idea for the conference was to bring together economics and philosophy PhD students studying similar topic areas in order for them to learn from one another and integrate new ideas and methods into their research. This helped them to critically engage with their own research and learn to defend it against academics from other backgrounds. Inviting students from the University of York to attend allowed Reading students (and vice versa) to be exposed to the culture, popular ideas and ‘school of thought’ from the other university’s departments. The conference was a huge success and has allowed participants to expand their contacts, get perspective on their work and widen their research interests.’

**FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR**

Bill Beck, a PhD researcher from the University of Pennsylvania, USA, has been awarded a prestigious Fulbright award to join the Department of Classics for the 2015/16 academic year. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program is the largest U.S. exchange program offering opportunities for students and young professionals to undertake international graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and primary and secondary school teaching worldwide. During the year Bill will work on a translation of the scholia (ancient commentaries) to the first four books of Homer’s ‘Iliad’.

**PROFESSOR ALEXEI LIKHTMAN**

The Graduate School pays tribute to Alexei Likhtman, Professor of Mathematical Physics at Reading, who recently died in a tragic accident in the USA. Alexei, aged 44, joined the University eight years ago and for the past few years was Director of PGR Studies for the Department of Mathematics. He was a strong supporter of postgraduate research and regularly participated in Graduate School workshops and activities. In recognising Alexei’s achievements and contributions, Dr Stephen Langdon, Head of Department, noted that: ‘His dedication to his PhD students and his research team went well beyond professional duty. He sought to provide a family-like environment for his group, was especially supportive for those who were far from home, and presented himself as an exemplary reference figure for all the young people in his group, full of energy and full of life.’ He will be sadly missed.

**INTERNSHIP: GOVERNMENT OFFICE OF SCIENCE**

Sammie Buzzard, a third year doctoral researcher from the Department of Meteorology, has spent the summer on a Research Council (RC) Policy Internship at the Government Office of Science. RC Policy Internships provide an opportunity for PhD students funded by the UK Research Councils to work for three months in one of a selected group of highly influential policy organisations. Successful applicants have the opportunity to work on a policy topic of interest to both the student and the organisation, by producing a briefing paper, participating in a policy inquiry and/or organising a policy event.

Sammie’s internship involved helping with the work of the Prime Minister’s Council for Science and Technology, a group of highly influential people who advise the Prime-Minister.

**Can you tell us a little about the recruitment process?**

Details of the internship were circulated by email using the department and information was also available on the Research Councils UK website. The internships are for all disciplines and applications are normally in the summer. To apply I had to write an example policy document and then go through quite an intense (but still friendly) interview process. The Westminster placements especially are quite competitive but I got a lot out of just going through the application process.

**Was there anything you did at Reading that helped you to secure your placement?**

My outreach work as a STEM ambassador, my personal science blog and organising Departmental groups and events were all things I could draw on at interview. The panel also seemed really impressed by my mention of going well in the Graduate School’s Three Minute Thesis competition as they’re looking for people who can explain complicated ideas in simple terms.

**What have you enjoyed most about your placement?**

The variety of things I’ve seen. I’ve worked on renewable energy, finance and biological materials, to name a few, and this variety kept the placement interesting. That and the chance to hear the views of leaders in their fields and see how they get things done.

**What are your plans for the final year of your PhD?**

Having this short break has really helped me to think clearly about where I’ve got to in my doctoral research and what’s left to do and how to plan my time around this. There’s lots of writing up to come.

**Has your internship altered your thoughts about your future career path?**

I was always intending to have a career in research and this experience hasn’t changed that, but this opportunity has given me a much better understanding of how science fits into policy and this is definitely something I’d like to be involved with in the future.
Over 200 doctoral researchers, as well as Heads of School, supervisors and Deans gathered for the third annual Graduate School Doctoral Research Conference, which took place in the Madejski Lecture Theatre, on 18 June 2015. The Conference celebrated the research being undertaken by Reading’s vibrant doctoral researcher community.

The four PhD Researcher of the Year finalists gave presentations on their research and their experience of studying at Reading. These finalists were selected to represent each of the four University Faculties in the competition. Adeyinka Adewale (Henley Business School) and Graeme Marlton (Faculty of Science) were announced as joint winners of the Year finalists (from left to right) Kristina West, Graeme Marlton, Rui Cataerino and Adeyinka Adewale.

Conference delegates gave a warm welcome to the 12 finalists of the Three Minute Thesis competition (3MT) who presented their research on subjects ranging from thought-controlled devices to female fertility. Bridget Ogwezi (School of Construction Management and Engineering) was chosen as the winner by our judging panel for her presentation entitled ‘A naturally adaptable façade element’. She also went on to win the People’s Choice Award voted for by the conference audience.

The Research Image competition was won by Shirley Keeton (School of Biological Sciences) for her image entitled ‘Nuclear activity in sub-cellular galaxies’. Her image showed a group of six actively dividing breast cancer cells using fluorescent markers. The joint winners of the People’s Choice Award were Katie Barfoot for her ‘A brain full of blueberries’ image and Will Mastanka for his photograph of a weather balloon launch entitled ‘Up, up and away’.

Twenty-seven research posters were on display as part of the Research Poster competition. George Savill (School of Agriculture, Policy and Development) won first prize with his research poster entitled ‘The relationship between genotype, yield and environmental factors on protein distribution in the wheat endosperm’. Ollie Ellingham (School of Biological Sciences) closed the conference with a Science SLAM performance on his PhD research entitled ‘Powdery Mervix?’. With the help of some human trees and talcum powder he explained his research on the identification of fungal plant disease in an informative and highly entertaining way.

The Graduate School would like to thank all the doctoral researchers who contributed to another fantastic Doctoral Research Conference. Find out more about the Doctoral Research Conference, including videos of some of the Three Minute Thesis presentations and PhD Researcher of the Year interviews: www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/gs-home.aspx
FEATURE

A CELEBRATION OF THE FELIX SCHOLARS

On 11 June 2015, the University was delighted to host a reception for recipients and guests of the prestigious Felix Scholarships.

Attending this event were more than 60 guests, including a range of current Felix Scholars from Reading and from the two other universities involved in the scheme (the University of Oxford and the School of Oriental and African Studies). We were also delighted to welcome several representatives of the Felix Foundation itself.

Since 1991, the Felix Scholarships have made over 400 awards to talented, underprivileged students from India and a number of other developing countries, with the aim of furthering their postgraduate education by attending a selected UK university.

On display at the event was a range of posters (as well as an audio-visual experience from a music scholar) showcasing the impressive work of Felix Scholars from each of the three universities. The assembled guests heard from the Vice-Chancellor, Sir David Bell, Alan Brinnington (Trustee of the Felix Foundation) and from Professor Van der Chauhan (secretary to the Felix Foundation), who all highlighted the importance of the scheme in supporting gifted students with the potential to contribute to the development of their home countries.

A PHD... BUT WHAT COMES NEXT?

Dr Isabelle Pére (PhD 2015) undertook her doctorate jointly within the School of Pharmacy and the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences. Isabelle’s PhD was part of a larger research project investigating the use of a compound (CBDV) from the cannabis plant to treat epilepsy and was funded by GW Pharmaceuti
cals and Otsuka Pharmaceutical.

In spring 2014, Isabelle delivered the first Grad School Fairbrother Lecture.

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

Since my PhD, I have worked on improving my professional and language skills in order to find a job in Germany. I gained some work experi-
ence in industry and undertook a course to allow me to find a job outside of academia and with a focus on clinical research. I have now
started a great new job as Project Manager for a company involved in the analysis of biological samples taken to test new medicines for the
treatment of cancer during clinical trials. My key responsibilities are the management of difer-
te departments within the company, as well as budgets, timelines and logistics in order to
ensure that a project runs smoothly.

Was there anything that you did at Reading that you feel has helped you in your new position?

A PhD is a huge project and you’re basically the project manager. You have to learn how to
address your PhD question in the most efect-
tive way, making sure that it’s feasible within the
time and resources you have. You learn to
problem solve and adapt – it’s likely that your
PhD will take you down a slightly diferent path
that you originally embarked on! I learned all of
these things during my PhD. Although it was
the most challenging thing I’ve ever done, the
tings that I’ve had to learn along the way have
definitely helped me in my new job and for the
rest of my career.

Where do you want to be in 5 years?

In 5 years, I still see myself in project man-
gement. I like having a problem to solve, while having the opportunity to commu-
nicate with several diferent departments
within the company, as well as external cus-
tomers. And I will definitely stay within clinical research. I sometimes miss working in the
lab, but I really enjoy what I do now. I still feel
that my job makes a diference and that I play an important role in the development of new medicines.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Reading’s University Challenge team saw off over a hundred other universities and colleges to make it through to the television rounds of this year’s show, the fth time that the Univer-
sity has managed to do so.

The Graduate School was well represented with team members Jan Kamieniecki and captain Sammie Buzzard, both doctoral researchers, from the Department of Meteorology. Other team members were undergraduate student Lewis Blackshaw and Master’s student Macdonald Ukah.

Despite facing tough opposition from past champions Imperial College London, the Reading team still gained a respectable 110 points to Imperial’s 285. Reading showed their knowledge of Scotland in Shakespeare, and chemistry, but fell short on programming lan-
guages questions. Ultimately Imperial College were much faster on the buzzer! Sammie said afterwards that she was ‘proud of her team’s efforts,’ and that although Imperial College were ‘a very polished team’ she would much rather be at Reading.‘

TRAVEL BURSARY SCHEME

VISIT TO ROVINJ, CROATIA

David Edgeley, a third year doctoral researcher in the School of Pharmacy, was awarded a Travel Bursary to attend the 29th European Crystal-
lographic Meeting (ECM29) in the city of Rovinj, Croatia on 23–28 August.

Here is David’s post-award report: ‘The purpose of attending the ECM29 was to give a presentation to showcase the research work of my group to a wider audience. I delivered a talk entitled ‘Application of DFT to SDPQ of multicomponent crystal structures’ which was well received. Indeed, it appears that there will be a number of collaborations as a result. The ECM29 provided me with an invaluable oppor-
tunity to learn, share and collaborate with other researchers in my field, but the outreach
and development aspect of the conference resonated most strongly with me, as taking the first steps in an academic field can often be the most difficult. Throughout the pro-
gramme there was a series of microsymposia covering the history of crystallography and how to build a career as a professional sci-
entist. In particular, a microsymposium entitled ‘How to?’ addressed some of the questions surrounding ‘academia vs industry’, ‘how to survive in academia’ and ‘early career steps’, all of which are particularly relevant as I write up my PhD thesis. I found a talk discussing how to get initially recognized as an academic, particularly enlightening, as success in science isn’t just about good research, but also about having a good personal brand so that people take note of your results. The broad research programme and the ‘outreach and devel-
oment’ theme of the ECM29 served as a reminder of the ‘bigger picture’. The confer-
ence was a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends, meet new scientists and develop new ideas.’

Further information about the scheme can be found on the Graduate School website: www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/ Developmentopportunities/gs-travelbursary.aspx
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2016
GRADUATE SCHOOL & HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

The Graduate School’s Leadership Programme will take place on the 8, 9 and 29 February 2016 and is now open for applications. Taking place at the Henley Business School’s Greenlands campus, this intensive leadership programme, designed specifically for doctoral researchers, is led by Dr Claire Collins and Dr Bernd Vogel. Now in its fourth year, the programme attracts students from across the University who have a wide range of professional backgrounds and experience. The aim of the programme is to help participants improve their understanding of leadership and to recognise the importance of leadership skills in relation to their own career ambitions.

For further information, eligibility criteria and to download an application form, go to:
www.reading.ac.uk/gs/Leadership_programme.aspx

Please note that the closing date for applications is Friday 11 December 2015.

FAIRBROTHER LECTURE 2016

Save the date! The Graduate School’s third annual Fairbrother Lecture will take place on Wednesday 4 May 2016 in the Henley Business School.

This is a public lecture delivered by a current, or recently graduated, Reading doctoral researcher. Further information will be announced in the new year on the Graduate School website:
www.reading.ac.uk/gs-fairbrotherlecture.aspx

HAVE YOU SEEN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL’S NEW FILMS?

Recently added to the Graduate School website www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool are a number of new films showcasing the diversity of doctoral research taking place at Reading:

• Interviews with the PhD Researcher of the Year 2015 finalists
• A selection of talks from the Three Minute Thesis Competition 2015
• An overview film of the Graduate School Doctoral Research Conference 2015

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