Welcome to the new Graduate School Annual Review

After publishing our twice-yearly Bulletin for the past six years, we decided it was time for a change. Our new style review allows you to see at a glance our key events in 2018. In addition to reading about our Fairbrother Lecture, Doctoral Research Conference, and SPRINT Programme, you can find out about some of the amazing research our doctoral researchers have been carrying out – from how depression affects people’s use of language to looking at where all our hedgehogs have gone.

We have welcomed over 350 new doctoral researchers over the past year, coming from a wide range of countries. We very much appreciate our multi-cultural research community and the richness that their diversity brings to the Graduate School. We also love bringing students together from across the University, hearing discussions, for example, between philosophers and nutritionists, those studying business and those looking into information design. We have seen many new collaborations and interest groups emerge and flourish over the past year.

We are very much looking forward to the year ahead, planning our key events and thinking about how we can support our doctoral researchers even better.

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FRONT COVER IMAGE
“24 hour surveillance” by Ines Serra, Schools of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy, and Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences.
Doctoral researchers in the AHRC-funded South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership have produced a second issue of their academic journal aimed at mainstream audiences. The Question was launched to publish a selection of research, essays and creative writing from the two hundred plus researchers in developing business awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship.

The Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES) helps UK Postgraduate Research Students and postdoctoral researchers to design and editing of the journal. The second issue is themed around conflict and includes contributions from Reading PhD students Anna Varadi (Film, Theatre and Television) and Liz Barnes (History) and contributions from Reading doctoral researchers funded by the partnership.

TRIUMPH AT THE FINALS

MooFree, a team of University of Reading doctoral researchers in the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development and Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science, competed against seven finalists to win two awards at the 23rd National Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES) competition in May 2018. The team won the Environment YES competition and the people’s choice award sponsored by Indigo. MooFree is a –hypothetical –company that uses genetically engineered yeast to produce dairy proteins.

JUST ANOTHER SCIENCE SHOW

Founded in 2018, Just Another Science Show (JASS) is a weekly student radio show hosted by current doctoral researchers Matthew Greenwell and Chanida Fung. Along with co-host Alexander Dean (a fellow doctoral researcher), the JASS team promotes the diverse range of research being undertaken by doctoral researchers, academic and technical staff in science-related disciplines. The leadership programme can be found at reading.ac.uk/gs/leadership

MOST POPULAR RESEARCH PAPERS OF 2018

Altmetric data has shown that the top five papers published in 2018 by Reading researchers have the potential to significantly influence society. If you are interested in becoming a guest on the podcast on Twitter@justanothersci you can listen to JASS every Friday during term time on Junction 11 radio, catch the website justanotherscienceshow.com and follow on Mixcloud.

BEES’ NEEDS WEEK

The University of Reading team included doctoral researchers Yun-Ling Chen and Jin Luo, who threatened to highlight the global threat of extinction to bees and other pollinators who are essential for food growth and contributing to our biodiversity. During the week a Bee Team, including doctoral researchers from the Schools of Agriculture, Policy and Development and Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science, hosted a range of public activities to raise awareness of the pollinators’ plight and exhibited a Bumblearium that enabled people to watch real bees at work.

BEES’ NEEDS WEEK

OCCUPYING THE TATE MODERN

A team from the School of Arts and Communication Design delivered a week-long project on site at the Tate Modern in January this year as part of the TATE Exchange. The programme allows organisations and members of the public to run events and projects on site at the TATE. The Bees’ Needs Week campaign run by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) aimed to highlight the global threat of extinction to bees and other pollinators who are essential for food growth and contributing to our biodiversity. The programme was open to students, graduates, staff and the wider community.

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Plastic-eating MOSQUITOS

There is increasing awareness around the global problem of plastic pollution, particularly in relation to how it affects the oceans and the associated wildlife.

Through new research with Professor Amanda Callaghan, doctoral researcher in Biological Sciences, Rana Al-Jaibachi, has discovered a previously unknown way for plastic to enter the food chain via tiny insects such as mosquitos.

Microplastics (tiny fragments of less than five micrometres) coming from cosmetic items or broken-down larger plastic items, are getting eaten by insects who are unable to tell the difference between their food and the tiny plastic beads. By studying mosquitos at larval, pupal and flying adult stages, the research has shown for the first time that microplastics can be kept inside a water-dwelling animal as they develop from one life stage to another and are then eaten by predators up the food chain.

The implications of this research are that any flying insect that spends part of its life in water can become a carrier of plastic pollution. Flying insects are then eaten in large volumes by predatory insects such as dragonflies as well as birds and bats. The research shows that freshwater plastic pollution is a problem with implications far beyond those of water quality and eventual marine pollution.

These findings have been reported across media outlets including the BBC News and the Telegraph.

RANA-ALJAIBACHI IS CURRENTLY FINALISING HER THESIS.

Why do we create MONSTERS?

Back in September 2018, Evan Hayles Gledhill, who recently completed a doctorate in English Literature, was heavily quoted in an article featured on the Australian News website ABC about an event last summer at the Royal Institution. The article and a linked radio broadcast of the London-based event considered the monsters we create, such as Frankenstein, Dracula and Godzilla, and what they might say about us.

Evan provided expert insight into this area including that: “Monsters were the ultimate emblem of the uneasy borderline separating what science can do and what it should do’. As society advances, people often become concerned that technology had gone too far, for example producing animal-human hybrids and revived corpses like Frankenstein.

It is also possible to link the representation of monstrosity with fear and paranoia within society. “With Dracula, his appearance is suggestive of something not quite right and some people read into that queerness or racial suggestiveness.” Dracula’s prominent hooked nose and hooded eyes, are features that suggest racial ‘otherness’, and the famous neck bolts and visible stitches and scars of Boris Karloff’s cinematic interpretation of Frankenstein’s monster, suggest ideas of disability and illness. Evan suggests that exploring monsters as representations of the negative associations we hold in regard to particular bodies enables us to examine our own fear and apprehension around ‘otherness’.

A former Reference Specialist at the British Library, Evan has run sessions introducing library users to texts about magic, held in the Museum’s collections.

EVAN’S RECENTLY COMPLETED THESIS IS ENTITLED DEVIANT SUBJECTIVITIES: MONSTROSITY AND KINSHIP IN THE GOTHIC IMAGINATION.

Frankenstein, Dracula and Godzilla; what do they say about us?
HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR FEMALE DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

The SPRINT programme

Trainer Chris Cross and her participants are taking a morning break. Her suggestion to try five minutes walking barefoot in the grass of the campus meets with a moment of surprise, but students disappear in small groups nonetheless. Some head for the door to try it, others continue to chat over their coffee.

SPRINT was developed by the Springboard consultancy to focus on development relevant to the study and career issues faced by female students.

The 4-day programme is always face-to-face. Chris is resolute that the benefits can’t be replicated with online training because the programme brings together women who grapple with similar challenges to form supportive networks. Through the group work, researchers are continually testing ideas and solutions, trying them out and getting feedback to help them move forward.

The importance of SPRINT in combating isolation is asserted by feedback. Shweta Band, a doctoral researcher in the School of Law said: “One of the most important outcomes from the SPRINT experience was developing some really wonderful friendships with fellow female researchers. Since we come from different age groups, countries and family backgrounds it is an endless learning and support system that we’ve established.” Women from her 2018 cohort continue to meet online through WhatsApp and in person to discuss their research and progress.

While feedback is overwhelmingly positive, communicating the benefits of SPRINT is not necessarily straightforward with simple metrics. The nature of the programme means that participants are identifying their own obstacles and working towards goals they define themselves. These can range considerably, but a common strand of evaluation comments is that participants manage to unlack a problem that has been dogging them. Shweta feels the programme “helped me think about my core values”.

Overall, Chris says, the biggest benefit is often clarity. “Taking time out to consider the whole of your life, both personally and professionally, gives the opportunity to identify what is really important to you and find new ways to balance those elements.”

WRITE like an Insider

It would be easy to imagine that a good level of English proficiency is enough for successfully writing a PhD thesis. The task may, however, be considerably more complex.

“A good level of English proficiency is only the beginning,” explains Dr Karin Whiteside from the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI). “So much more is involved linguistically in being a PhD student.” She feels it is best to regard the development of the language of academic research as an ongoing journey which is closely bound up with developing knowledge of the field. On this journey, students are building up their technical repertoire and mastering the academic register required for research writing. A big part of this is developing competency in the discourse style that is unique to the particular research community they are joining.

A new programme of academic writing courses developed in 2018 by ISLI and the Graduate School focuses on this developing ability. Adding to existing provision for academic language skills, the new courses are specifically targeted at doctoral level writing, including both the thesis itself and research articles. Karin explains that at doctoral level the expectations are both for greater sophistication and for a deeper, more ‘insider’ understanding of the specific disciplinary community, with doctoral researchers learning how to act and write as members of that community.

The three courses cover, in turn, foundational aspects of academic writing at the paragraph level, the structural and language elements of the thesis as a whole, and editing a thesis with the aid of a corpus of relevant academic texts. A corpus is a collection of texts stored electronically to enable both quantitative and qualitative linguistic analysis. Applying research with a specialised corpus can provide students with insight into the unique characteristics of their discourse. “Doctrinal students potentially have a lot to gain from building a representative corpus of writing within their own disciplinary field and learning some basic corpus tools to explore it with,” says Karin. “This puts the power into their hands to improve the accuracy of their own writing independently and to start learning and adopting the specific ways in which writers talk about things in their field.”

Given that the language skills needed to produce a high quality thesis do not neatly overlap with simple English proficiency, is it also the case that native speakers need help with mastering academic discourse too? “Definitely” agrees Karin. “The language of doctoral research is no less of a ‘secondary discourse’ for native speakers than it is for non-native speakers. It has been my experience that native speakers often benefit from the type of teaching of writing we do for international doctoral students.” For this reason ISLI / Graduate School pilot courses geared to native speakers of English may follow in the Summer term 2019.

For further information visit reading.ac.uk/gs/thesiswriting

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Storytelling
The Graduate School hosted its sixth annual Doctoral Research Conference on 20 June.

The Poetry, Rhyme and Rap Competition was established this year for doctoral researchers to submit an entry that captured the doctoral experience in a light-hearted and humorous way. Our audience gave a particularly warm welcome to the six shortlisted finalists. Ruth Barnes, School of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy won with her “PHD ABC” poem. Shweta Band, School of Law, won the People’s Choice award with a poem entitled “The Sound of Music Advice” which was sung to the tune of Do-Re-Mi from The Sound of Music movie.

Twelve finalists, selected from heats conducted earlier in the year, competed in front of our conference audience for the title of Three Minute Thesis 2018 winner. Topics ranged from attitudes towards immigrants in Turkey to the atmospheric implications of meat cooking. Chosen by our Judging Panel, the winner, Willemijn Doedens, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, received first prize for her presentation “Conversations in aphasia: how do we communicate without language?”Willemijn also went on to win the People’s Choice Award.

The Research Life in Pictures Competition was established to showcase the “human side” of the doctoral journey. Doctoral researchers were asked to submit a picture which offered an insight into their everyday life. Shweta Band, School of Law, won first prize for her picture entitled “Of faith and beyond”: The People’s Choice Award was awarded to Kate Massey-Chase, School of Art and Communication Design for “Multiple Lives”.

The Research Image Competition with an overall winner and was presented the PhD ROY 2018 award from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Steve Mithen. Ines Serra, Schools of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy and Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences won this year’s Research Image Competition with an entry entitled “24 hour surveillance”.

This competition allowed researchers to submit an entry that outlined their research and experience at Reading. Christoph Kent, School of Mathematical, Physical and Computational Sciences was the overall winner and was presented the PhD ROY 2018 award from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Steve Mithen. Christoph is currently working as a Catastrophe Risk Modeler at Risk Management Solutions (RMS). RMS is a leading Catastrophe Risk Modeling Company who help financial institutions and public agencies understand, quantify, and manage risk (from earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods, to terrorism and infectious diseases).

You can read about Christoph’s and his fellow nominees’ research in the PhD Researcher of the Year – Finalists 2018 article on page 14. Twenty-eight posters were displayed as part of the Research Poster Competition. The aim of this competition is to allow participants to communicate their research, raise the profile of their research and prepare them for presenting at external conferences.

Jordan Bilborough, School of Biological Sciences poster entitled “Genetic variation conflicts with morphological boundaries in Iberian Narcissus L. Species” won first prize. The People’s Choice Award voted by conference delegates was won by Salem Al-Asady, School of Biological Sciences for his poster entitled “Functional analysis of the iron-uptake activity of the FeoABC system of E. coli”.

The Rhyming PhD that is my theme, A is for advisor, a thing rarely seen, B is for the books, that we really should read, C is for coffee, the drink that we need, D is for degree, the thing that we chase, E is for experiments, at which we are ace, F is for free food, the best thing in the place, G is for Gradable, for which we are keen, H is for home, a place rarely seen, I is for intelligence in which we are lacking, J is for jobs, on which we hope to get cracking, K is for knowledge transfer to which we submit, L is for Lunch, whenever we get it, M is for the methodologies, that we are abusing, N is for notes, so often confusing, O is for objective, of which we had one? P is for procrastination, of which this poem is some, Q is for questions, of which we have many, R is for results, of which we haven’t got any, S is for stipend, soon rapidly gone, T is for thesis, which we labour upon, U is for undergrads, who fill up the place, V is for VIVA, towards which we race, W is for why, Why are we doing this? X is for X-axis, the start of our graphs, Y is for Y-axis, which we should have if only for taights, Z is for ZZZZZZ’s, the sleep that we’ve missed, This is my PhD, an alphabetical list!
Do people suffering from depression have a more black and white view of the world?

**PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION USE LANGUAGE DIFFERENTLY**

The "language of depression" can have a strong effect on others. The poetry and lyrics of Sylvia Plath and Kurt Cobain are examples of this, with both having killed themselves after suffering from depression.

Mohammed Almosaiwi, doctoral researcher in Psychology, has identified a class of words that can accurately help to predict whether someone is suffering from depression. Computerised text analysis methods have allowed processing of extremely large amounts of data in minutes helping us to identify linguistic features which humans may miss. Using personal essays and diary entries by people who are known to be depressed, as well as work of artists such as Cobain and Plath and sections of spoken words from the depressed, have helped provide a broad resource.

In terms of the style of the language, the lab in which Mohammed is based conducted a text analysis of 64 different online mental health forums with the outcome being that "absolutist words" such as "always", "nothing" or "completely" were found to be better markers on the forums than pronouns or negative emotion words. From the outset, Mohammed predicted that those with depression would have a more black and white view of the world and this is consistent with his findings.

Understanding the language of depression can help us understand the way those with symptoms of depression think, but it also has practical implications. Researchers are combining automated text analysis with machine learning (computers that can learn from experience without being programmed) to classify a variety of mental health conditions from natural language text samples such as blog posts. Such classification is already outperforming that made by trained therapists. Importantly, machine learning classification will only improve as more data is provided and more sophisticated algorithms are developed. This goes beyond looking at the broad patterns of absolutism, negativity and pronouns already discussed. Work has begun on using computers to accurately identify increasingly specific subcategories of mental health problems – such as perfectionism, self-esteem problems and social anxiety.

It is of course possible to use a language associated with depression without actually being depressed. Ultimately, it is how you feel over time that determines whether you are suffering. But as the World Health Organisation estimates that more than 300 million people worldwide are now living with depression, an increase of more than 18% since 2005, having more tools available to spot the condition is certainly important to improve health and prevent tragic suicides such as those of Plath and Cobain.

Mohammed was lead author on a Clinical Psychological Science research paper which Altmetric has placed in the top 5% of all research outputs it scores. Mohammed’s findings have been widely reproduced in the press and the article for The Conversation has been read several million times.

MOHAMMED HAS RECENTLY SUBMITTED HIS PHD THESIS FOR EXAMINATION.
**Finalists 2018**

**ANNUAL REVIEW 2018**

The PhD Researcher of the Year (ROY) award recognises and celebrates excellence in postgraduate research at the University of Reading. The five researchers featured here were selected to represent our five research themes (Health, Food, Environment, Heritage and Creativity, Prosperity and Resilience) in the 2018 competition. Each research division was asked to nominate one student for the award and the five Research Theme winners / finalists were selected on the basis of their academic excellence, progress as well as their communication skills.

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**ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH THEME WINNER AND PhD ROY WINNER 2018**

**CHRISTOPH KENT**

School of Mathematical, Physical and Computational Sciences — Changing our Brains and Minds: Exploring the effect of the bilingual experience on brain structure, function, and cognition

“Something more than one language is thought to have several consequences for both the brain and mind. My research is at a cross-section of neuroscience, linguistics, and psychology. I study the various neural and cognitive impacts of learning and using an additional language and how these impacts are modified with changes to language experience over the course of lifetime.”

**HEALTH RESEARCH THEME WINNER**

**VINCENT DE LUCA**

School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences — Changing our Brains and Minds: Exploring the effect of the bilingual experience on brain structure, function, and cognition

“Something more than one language is thought to have several consequences for both the brain and mind. My research is at a cross-section of neuroscience, linguistics, and psychology. I study the various neural and cognitive impacts of learning and using an additional language and how these impacts are modified with changes to language experience over the course of lifetime.”

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**FOOD RESEARCH THEME WINNER**

**NIKOLAOS KOUKIASAS**

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development — Leaf specific weed control in vegetable crops

“Weed control in field vegetables in the UK is increasingly challenging due to the loss of herbicides and pressures from policy makers and consumers to lower pesticide inputs. My research in collaboration with Concurrent Solutions LLC (USA) is to develop a robotic weed killer — a novel droplet applicator applies herbicide droplets to individual weed leaves which avoids all direct applications of herbicide to the crop and soil. This engineering solution achieves a paradigm shift from spraying whole fields and relying on select herbicides.

“Things will inevitably go wrong during the course of your research. However, all of these experiences are invaluable. If you learn from them! Problem solve when things go awry and be reflective in your mistakes and mishaps.”

**HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY RESEARCH THEME WINNER**

**MARK PLAYER**

School of Arts and Communication Design — Punktopia: intermedial aesthetics and heterotopic spaces in Japanese punk film productions

“My PhD focuses on a unique movement of DIY film production that came to prominence in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, known as jishu seikaku eiga, meaning “self-made” or “autonomous” film. My research seeks to analyse how these “do it yourself” films interrelate with the country’s punk music/culture scene and the radically changing film industry.

“Slowly developing confidence in your subject is a truly rewarding experience and you never know what opportunities may present themselves as you progress.”

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**PROSPERITY AND RESILIENCE RESEARCH THEME WINNER**

**PHATCHARASIRI (ANGIE) RATCHARAK**

Henley Business School — Emotional labour in leadership identity construction among healthcare professional managers

“It is widely recognized that managers are often expected to express certain emotions to influence employees’ attitudes and behaviours in relation to wider organisational goals. My research builds on organisational behaviour and psychology lenses to consider emotional labour processes in which managers work on leader identity to gain mutually accepted leader-follower relationships whilst maintaining their own well-being.

“I have learnt how to manage my time effectively — allocating time to other interests. With this, I found that some great research ideas often come into my mind when I am spending time outside my study. I do believe that having a happy life is a first step for someone to become an excellent researcher.”
Where have all our HEDGEHOGS gone?

Ben’s research involved setting up a number of hedgehog footprint tunnels in rural areas throughout the UK and then returning to check for visits from our prickly friends.

Perhaps the most striking finding from Ben’s research is that it suggests hedgehogs are largely absent from significant areas of the countryside and locations where they would be expected to be present.

Ben says: “We found that although hedgehogs were generally widely distributed across England and Wales, they were actually found at a worryingly low number (21%) of sites. We also found that hedgehogs were absent from 71% of sites that did not have badger setts either, indicating that both hedgehogs and badgers may be absent from large portions of rural England and Wales.”

It may not be common knowledge but hedgehogs and badgers have a somewhat complex relationship. Badgers are predators of hedgehogs but they both share the same food supply. The spin-off finding of this study is that over one-quarter of the rural sites did not show evidence of either hedgehogs or badgers.

There is an assumption that changes in rural landscape usage is having an impact on both hedgehog and badger populations in rural Britain. Ben goes on to say: “The results also indicate that hedgehogs may be using areas of human habitation as a sort of ‘refuge habitat’. This was evident across all scales (from small villages to cities), becoming more pronounced with greater urbanisation. Residential gardens potentially offer a number of advantages for hedgehogs and enable them to escape some of the problems associated with the rural landscape. Therefore, houses, villages and towns bordering more rural landscapes are important areas for hedgehogs and may become increasingly so if we continue to see the rate of declines we are currently witnessing in rural Britain.”

Ben’s findings were recently published in a top journal Scientific Reports, in a paper on which he was lead author. His findings have received widespread interest in the press including by The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Mail, The Telegraph, The Independent, CountryLife magazine, BBC Radio 5 Live and The Express and Ben was interviewed by Sky News, BBC Radio Wiltshire, BBC Radio Berkshire and BBC South Today.

WHERE HAVE ALL OUR HEDGEHOGS GONE?

A Theatre Director and part-time PhD student in Film, Theatre and Television, Judy Hagerty Lovett, has brought the world’s first adaptation of the Beckett novel How it is to the London stage. The production has received positive reviews including being described as a “mesmerising adaptation” by The Stage and “ambitious” and “ingenious” by The Telegraph.

Judy is co-founder and Artistic Director of Gare St Lazare Ireland who have been presenting critically celebrated performances of Beckett’s work for more than 20 years. Supported by her Reading supervisors and with exclusive access to the world-leading Samuel Beckett Collection held by the University’s Special Collections, Judy directed the first ever stage interpretation of Beckett’s novel How It Is. The production took place in the Everyman Theatre in Cork (February 2018) and in London’s Print Room (May 2018). Judy said: “My PhD at Reading has offered me huge insight into my own practice and has given me the confidence to voice that truly”.

Judy’s practice-based PhD focused on a performance of the first section of How it is with Gare St Lazare Ireland and collaborators including award-winning sound artist and composer, Mel Mercier, and actors Conor Lovett and Stephen Dillane. Reading’s Department of Film, Theatre and Television specialises in practice-based research and held the first Arts and Humanities Research Council doctoral award for a practice-based PhD in Theatre in 2000. Gare St Lazare Ireland’s performance made innovative use of the atmospheric into nineteenth century proscenium theatre at the Print Room. It explored the instability of Beckett’s narrative voice, how the imaginative landscape can be adapted to live performance, and how the humour and poetry in the prose is revealed as it is spoken by the performers.

Professor Anna McMullan, from Judy’s supervisory team says: “Many of our students were already successful professional practitioners but sought to do a PhD at Reading to inform and enrich their practice”. The University of Reading holds the unique Beckett Collection which, in combination with long-standing staff expertise, makes for a particularly rich environment in which to undertake practice-based doctoral research.

Previous graduates in Theatre at Reading have included Sarahjane Scalfs and her Company SJ, and live performance artists Traci Kelly and Martin O’Brien.
FUNDING SUCCESS for Doctoral Training

The University was successful in receiving funding for two Doctoral Training Partnerships in 2018.

1

AHRC SOUTH WEST AND WALES DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP (AHRC SWW DTP2)

The SWW consortium was successful in applying for funding from the AHRC for its second phase to provide innovative postgraduate research training and develop the next generation of academics in the Arts and Humanities. The DTP – a collaboration between the University of Reading and eight other Universities (Abertystwyth, Bath Spa, Bristol, Cardiff, Cranfield, Exeter, Southampton and UWE) – will receive funding over five years to deliver training and supervision to postgraduate researchers starting in autumn 2019. It will offer a total of 200 postgraduate research studentships, and Collaborative Doctoral Awards across the full spectrum of the AHRC’s discipline areas, with an emphasis on synergies between academic and non-academic partners, such as Historic England, Arts Council South West and Aardman Animations. The funding will also offer joint supervision of students, sharing of resources across the consortium, student-centred and student-led events, industrial and international placements, conferences and the fostering of peer support networks.

Professor Edward Harcourt, the AHRC’s Director of Research, Strategy and Innovation, said: “The AHRC support for the next generation of arts and humanities researchers is critical to securing the future of the UK arts and humanities sector, which accounts for nearly a third of all UK academic staff”.

TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT
SWW-AHDTP.AC.UK/ABOUT/SWW2

2

NERC SCENARIO DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

The University of Reading successfully led an application for funding for the second phase of the NERC SCENARIO DTP. The consortium is led by Reading and comprises six other partners: University of Surrey, Institute of Zoology, National Centre for Atmospheric Science, British Geological Survey, National Centre for Earth Observation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Twelve studentships per year will be funded by NERC and will be offered by competition to the best and most promising students who wish to undertake postgraduate research in one of the seven SCENARIO themes. The first cohort of NERC SCENARIO DTP2 will start in autumn 2019.

Professor John Methven, the academic lead for SCENARIO at Reading said: “DTPs train the scientists of tomorrow by providing the scientific, professional and technical skills that increase the UK’s scientific capability to solve environmental problems. This funding comes as our first students successfully complete the first phase of SCENARIO DTP programme, all of whom have walked into jobs in the environment sector”.

FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT
NERC.READING.AC.UK/NERCSCENARIO/HOME

Is your phone your FOOD CRITIC?

The Lecture, established in 2014, is named after Jack Fairbrother, who in 1929 became the first student to be awarded a PhD from the University. The lecture is an annual event at which a current, or recent, Reading doctoral researcher presents their work to a wider audience.

During the post-lecture reception, audience members were able to discover more about the diverse range of doctoral research taking place at Reading. Five outstanding doctoral researchers from across the University took part in a research display, showing how their research is making a difference outside of academia: Vincent Deluca (Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences); Anna Freeman (Geography and Environmental Science); Rita Goyal (Henley Business School); Sophie Payne (Literature and Languages) and Suzannah Ravenscroft (Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences).

YOU CAN WATCH RODRIGO’S TALK AT READING.AC.UK/DS/FAIRBROTHER2018

Rodrigo Zenun Franco, a doctoral researcher in Computer Science delivered the 2018 Fairbrother Lecture on Wednesday 21 March to over one hundred audience members.

Non-communicable diseases kill 40 million people each year, and healthy diets and physical activity play a key role in reducing the risk from diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Research from the University of Reading found personalized nutrition advice to be more effective for dietary change than general population recommendations such as the “Eat 5 a day.” Rodrigo has developed an app that can deliver tailored dietary advice to an individuals’ phone, tablet or computer. This nutrition app has the potential to improve health-related food choice on a large scale. This work is supported by the British Nutrition Foundation and the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Rodrigo undertook an undergraduate degree in Brazil before coming to Reading for his MSc. His PhD is co-supervised by Dr Faustina Hwang (Biomedical Engineering, School of Biological Sciences) and Professor Julie Lovegrove (Hugh Sinclair Unit of Human Nutrition, School of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy).
A PhD... but what comes next?

A doctorate prepares you for more than working in academia

DR RUPINI DEEPA RAJAGOPALAN

Rupini Deepa Rajagopalan from the Henley Business School was awarded her doctorate in 2017. Her research was motivated by the desire to investigate the impact that corporate illegal behavior (Environmental, Social or Governance (ESG) violations) corruption, human rights, etc.) had on the financial markets. In March 2018 she was offered the position to develop and build the ESG capabilities of the Wealth and Asset Management division of Berenberg Bank in Germany. Having worked in the finance sector before undertaking her PhD, Rupini had missed the excitement of being in the industry and close to the market and is delighted to be in a position that allows her to put her theoretical knowledge and doctoral research findings about ESG topics into real practical use.

DR EMILY HANCOCK

Emily Hancock gained her doctorate in 2013 from the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences. Her PhD looked at the role that the emotions of shame and guilt play in criminal activity and risk-taking behaviour. Following her PhD she worked in the UK Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for 3 years and then returned to a Post-Doctoral position within the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences at Reading. Earlier this year she was offered a position working at the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – the funder of both her PhD and Post-Doctoral position. Her new role is split between two teams: International Development and International Strategy. In International Development she works on the Raising Learning Outcomes programme. This £20 million programme has commissioned world-class social science research that addresses key questions on learning outcomes in developing countries. Within the International Strategy team she works to establish and maintain the international partnerships required to deliver ESRC’s goals.

DR CAMPBELL MURN

Whilst employed by the Hawk Conservancy Trust, Campbell Murn undertook a part-time PhD in the School of Biological Sciences, to describe and outline the ecology of the critically endangered white-headed vulture in Mozambique and South Africa. He has continued to work at the Trust as Head of Conservation and Research since finishing his PhD in 2014. The Trust works with organisations and conservation groups across the world, to deliver conservation, education, rehabilitation and research programmes for birds of prey. One area covered is the poisoning threat facing vulture populations in Africa. This threat has grown rapidly with the increasing slaughter of elephants by poachers and the intentional and targeted poisoning of elephant carcasses. Poachers aim to escape detection by conservation and law enforcement staff who are alerted to a kill when they see carrion birds in the sky over a carcass. New research undertaken by the Trust has shown that this practice will lead to local extinction of vulture populations. A project developed with partners at the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the University of Reading, to provide poison response kits that neutralise poisoned carcasses and a training programme to field staff in high-risk areas in southern and south-eastern Africa, has been shown to significantly reduce these deaths. “A PhD is hard. Dive deep and get immersed in a subject about which you are passionate. Don’t do it because you think you have to; do it because you want to.”

DR ROSALYND ROBERTS

Dr Rosalynd Roberts, was awarded her doctorate from the School of Law in 2011. Following her PhD Rosalynd played a central role in prosecuting the war crimes committed during the conflict in the Former Yugoslavia. Acting as a Legal Officer in Chambers at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia between 2011 and 2017, the majority of her time was spent assisting the judges in the much publicised case against Ratko Mladic, who was finally convicted of crimes including genocide in November 2017. Since July 2018 Rosalynd has been appointed Legal Adviser on War Crimes and Rule of Law for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this role she reports and advises relevant actors on trends observed in the domestic adjudication of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Rosalynd was awarded the University of Reading Alumni of the Year 2018 award and was invited to give the annual Alumni lecture in March 2019.

“One of the biggest challenges during my PhD was during what is called the ‘Second-year blues’. This is when I had a dip in motivation and a fear that I was unable to complete the PhD. One way I got over this was by discussing my feelings and accomplishments thus far with my PhD supervisor. This not only boosted my confidence but allowed me to set realistic goals.”

“Don’t do it because you think you have to; do it because you want to.”
Preparation to Teach AFHEA Pathway

What is the AFHEA pathway?
This short taught programme aims to support a selected cohort of doctoral researchers to work towards and apply for recognition for their work in teaching and supporting learning, in order to attain AFHEA.

What is AFHEA?
Associate Fellowship (AFHEA) provides recognition of professional practice around supporting teaching and learning in Higher Education. It provides the entitlement to use post-nominal letters AFHEA and is increasingly sought by employers across the sector for appointment and promotion purposes.

Can I apply to be on the pathway?
This is a competitive process. In order to be eligible, you will have already attended Preparing to Teach and have sufficient teaching hours (a minimum of twenty hours across the academic year) which will enable you to engage in supporting teaching and learning, as well as having support from your supervisor and Head of School (or equivalent).

Would you like to find out more?
VISIT READING.AC.UK/GS/AFHEAPATHWAY

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT FROM A MEMBER OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL TEAM

The Centre for Quality Support & Development (CQSD) and the Graduate School are launching an exciting new pilot as part of the University of Reading’s HEA accredited FLAIR Framework.

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Would you like to find out more?
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A PERSONAL ACCOUNT FROM A MEMBER OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL TEAM

The CQSD staff were hugely helpful in the taught workshops, sharing (and modelling) a wealth of good ideas and best practice in teaching. This extended too to their support of my written work. All of this combined to increase my confidence in teaching, inspiring me to reflect on how I teach and how to apply what I’ve learned to improve students’ learning experiences. I’m grateful for how holding AFHEA status gives recognition of these things – I’m hoping it’ll be helpful when I come to enter the job market!.

Oliver Wilson, AFHEA Part-time doctoral researcher / Graduate Teaching Assistant

Open Farm

Upon arrival friendly professors (with sweets) from the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development showed our two boys how to drive the tractor.

We then progressed to the welly throwing range, I set my family “do their best” before I stepped up, ready to demonstrate a throw of international standing. The straight-line distance was awesome, but the direction was hopeless. My welly traversed a barbed-wire fence and landed in the adjacent field.

After sheepishly helping to rescue the welly I turned down the invitation to have a second try.

As we entered the farmyard we knew there would be loads to see. The tractor tour included stops to allow us to talk to staff and students about the crop research being done on the farm and in the broader environmental context in the University. We heard some fascinating and very accessible information about various things including the use of “charming” parasitic wasps to control pests and the cultivation of ancient wheat.

After the tractor tour, spines still intact, we went into the barn to look at the bees. I had no idea there were so many different kinds and sizes of bees as I viewed the numerous specimens on display. The Bumblebiarium (great big transparent box) allowed us to see live bees buzzing around. I chatted to a knowledgeable PhD student about pollinators and their importance.

There were hands-on water experiments looking at infiltration of rainwater through different surfaces and a flooding simulator with Lego bricks to divert the flow of water as engineering structures would do. We also enjoyed meeting some young cows and learning how much methane gas they produce (much to the hilarity of our boys).

We had a brilliant time not just being on a real working farm, but – and this was the big difference – being able to talk to staff and doctoral students about the important research Reading is doing in agriculture and the environment. With all the health and safety considerations these days, it was refreshing to be in a safe environment but also to be able to throw ourselves into the hands-on stuff.

Having grown up in the countryside and moved to Reading around 20 years ago I was keen to take my family along to experience the University’s first Open Farm Sunday.