

Editorial

Moving Forward on Supporting Researchers



These are stimulating times for those who work to support the development of researchers.

One heartening sound came from the Association of Graduate Recruiters: 11% of employers will pay a premium for holders of higher degrees, compared with 6% a year back. But the Graduate Recruitment Survey still shows that many recruiters can't find graduates with the right skills, and one can only speculate whether this is really because such graduates are in thin supply?

Perhaps some recruiters have systems to recruit that don't identify the right people? Perhaps others have unrealistic views of what a university can do to develop inter-personal and career skills in students who have to devote their energies to demanding study and exams?

A hint that an unrealistic expectation of graduate skills is a significant factor was forcefully put in the correspondence columns of *The Times* (9th February). Ample evidence was in the letters from experienced recruiters themselves that employers need to have comprehensive and robust in-house training for their new graduate staff. Any move to a better dialogue between employers and universities must be welcomed if it irons out these problems that employers voice.

More encouragement in the last few weeks. A much more established view in our Universities that the personal development of researchers is an important issue that deserves the attention of senior and influential staff. The UK GRAD Roberts' Forum in Aston (January) made all this clear. The Roberts' money has been a great stimulus to focus the mind of many who were indifferent before. Look out for a new Roberts' resource reporting structure - key performance indicators around provision and take-up are on the way.

UK HERD has achieved a great impetus towards building an infrastructure to support and represent the views of contract researchers in our HEIs. Congratulations to all involved in this critical initiative to set up a sister organisation to UK GRAD. The two bodies are pledged to work together to support the country's young researchers.

Finally, I must commend to everyone **OverVIEW**, the new newsletter especially for Supervisors of researchers, published by UK GRAD. See the back page to find out how to get copies for your colleagues.

Norman Staines
London Hub Coordinator

Local GRADschool

Research and Professional Development Late June 2006

Following last year's meetings that looked at ways in which institutions in the region could work together to provide courses in the GRAD pattern and the setting up of a working party to take this forward, the London Hub is pleased to announce the above three day course on professional development, teamwork, problem-solving and the PhD.

Details of venue and date will be announced shortly

If you are a doctoral research student this is a fantastic opportunity for you to:

- Develop skills to help you with your PhD and in your future career
- Explore your strengths and identify how you work best with others
- Meet PhD students from other disciplines and institutions
- Work with experienced tutor team on your issues and questions

The course is non-residential, but there will be optional activities in the evenings. Students supported by a UK Research Council or certain research charities may qualify for a supported place. The London HUB hopes to offer competitive bursaries to other students.

Contact Kay Dorelli at lon-donhub@grad.ac.uk to register your interest in this GRADschool, and to receive more information when it is available

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Note for the Diary:

**UK GRAD
Annual Conference**

7 September 2006

London

The Roberts' Policy Forum

Aston, 11 -12 January 2006

This is already an important annual event: this year a very wide range of delegates assembled at the Aston Business School to spend the best part of two days immersed in Roberts' issues.

You can read detailed reports from the meeting by visiting the publications section of the UK GRAD website (<http://www.grad.ac.uk>) The Rugby Team was set up a year back and worked hard on the difficult issues surrounding the ways in which the effectiveness of the Roberts' resource allocations might be measured. Their report was received and generally endorsed at the Forum.

It turned out - unsurprisingly - to be very hard to identify key performance indicators for using the Roberts' resource. Each institution has an individual culture and infrastructure to support skills-development and related activities. Bean-counting and box-ticking would be very hard to do in a way that would yield valid comparisons to be made between institutions, or indeed to identify if the new approaches to development stimulated by the Roberts' agenda were improving the skills of our researchers, and hence their ability to do research and build careers.

It will be, all agreed, a long haul to enlightenment. Meanwhile, RC UK remain absolutely committed to the Roberts' agenda, which is excellent news, and will - notwithstanding the Forum discussions - have to identify at least some performance indicators to structure the way institutions report on their use of the resource. This will require wisdom in design and a positive attitude in response. As is often the habit, we might anticipate the individual institution will be able to set their own criteria, within some defined parameters, to measure distance travelled by their enhanced researchers and the wider impact of the Roberts' agenda.

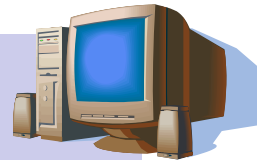
It was abundantly clear, from the conversations throughout the two days, that many people there were quite convinced of the very positive effects of the resource in their own institutions. Our challenge is now to analyse this.

A large part of the Forum considered the ways in which contract researches can be supported, and some fine ideas emerged. These can be viewed at the website (above) and we will write more about them in future issues of *London Hub News*.

NAS

News from UK HERD

Visit the UK HERD website
<http://www.ukherd.org.uk>



UKHERD

Annual Conference

The conference will be held in London on
6 September 2006

Resources for Entrepreneurs

The British Library - Help for entrepreneurs



The library has a Business and Intellectual Property Centre, whose primary aim is to help entrepreneurs/start-up individuals and anyone thinking about going into business in any capacity. This might be a valuable resource for researchers who are planning to enter business or industry, and are looking for information and advice. The Centre has many unique, free resources (many of which are now available online) and in-house information experts, covering market research (we have a huge collection of market research reports); sector and company information; funding information; business and industry news, advice on how to develop a business plan, and more. It also houses the UK Patent Office, and the world's largest collection of patent specifications and literature on patents, trademarks, designs and copyright, with extensive online search tools and advice on using them. We run free patenting workshops for anyone to attend. <http://www.bl.uk/collections/patents/clinic.html>

Further information on all services on <http://www.bl.uk/bipc>

There is also an e-newsletter specifically for Higher Education. This goes out three times a year, and provides information on new products and services, acquisitions and collection updates, exhibitions and events, special offers and partnership projections with the HE community. In order to subscribe you just need to email highereducation@bl.uk

Information from
Annick Ireland, the British Library

**UKCGE European Summer Conference 2006
New Dimensions for Doctoral Programmes in
Europe-Training, Employability and the
European Knowledge Agenda,
Florence, Italy, 6-8 July 2006**



The 12th UKCGE European Summer Conference will be held in partnership with the European University Institute in Florence (courtesy of Dr Andreas Frijdal and colleagues) from 6th to 8th July 2006. The UKCGE European Conference will follow up key issues at the 2005 Ministerial Summit in Bergen, focusing on outcomes and implications for Doctoral programmes in Europe. International Plenary and Keynote presentations will include:

- The Doctorate in Europe – Investment in Excellence for the Future
- The European Knowledge Agenda
- Doctoral programme diversity
- Paradigms for research skills training,
- Impact on Doctoral employability and mobility
- Good practice issues in Doctoral Education

Expansion of the European Higher Education Area has led to diversity of Doctoral

provision, while the biennial Ministerial Summits press for further harmonisation in the quality, content and outcomes of Doctoral programmes – presenting a major challenge to academic Institutions. These and related issues will form the core of parallel Discussion Groups and Workshops at the Florence meeting.

Registration includes lunch, Conference Banquet, all breaks, transport and comprehensive documentation – £270 (equivalent to ca. €380) before the 28th of February 2006.

In partnership with the EUI in Florence, the UK Council invites you to share a unique opportunity in summer 2006, to update and network with European colleagues on Doctoral programme issues in the European context. The European Summer Conference will make an input to the international debate, ahead of the Ministerial Summit scheduled for London, 2007.

To view the full programme and to register your place on the UKCGE European Summer Conference – 2006 please go to our website <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk> for further details

**Windermere GRADschool
20th-24th February 2006**

Places on all of the 2006 Windermere courses are filling up fast and some are fully booked.

There are only a few places left on the Windermere GRADschool in February so book your place now before it's too late! For more information and to apply go to

<http://www.grad.ac.uk/courselist>

What's on in 2006?

February

- 16-17 The Missenden Centre for the Development of Higher Education, Gearing up for RAE 2008 (2), Missenden Abbey
20-24 National GRADschool, Windermere
28 UK GRAD SWW Hub Good Practice Event, Millenium Stadium Cardiff

March

- 13 Careers in Focus: Professional Services, London
13-16 Local GRADschool, Oxford
20-25 National GRADschool, Windermere
23-24 The Missenden Centre for the Development of Higher Education Seminar, Examining doctorates, Missenden Abbey
23 UKCGE Training the Trainers: Research Ethics Support for Postgraduate Managers, London. For further information visit <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk>
30-31 The Missenden Centre for the Development of Higher Education Seminar, Effective supervision developing best practice, Missenden Abbey

April

- 3-5 Developing the Postgraduate Manager, Manchester
7 Careers in Focs: Investment Banking, London
7 UKCGE Training the Trainers: postgraduate admissions procedures - academic and statutory implications, Manchester. For further information visit <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk>
20-21 7th Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference: Knowledge Creation in Testing Times, Adelaide, South Australia
24-27 National GRADschool, Brighton
27-28 The Missenden Centre for the Development of Higher Education Improving retention, completion and success for doctoral students
28 Careers in Focus: Management Consultancy, London

May

- 8-13 National GRADschool, Windermere 3
22-26 National GRADschool, Midlands

June

- 5 Careers in Focus: Careers in Academia, Manchester
8-9 The Missenden Centre for the Development of Higher Education Beyond RAE2008: building a long term research strategy
12 White Rose Interpersonal Skills School Part 1, Leeds
12-17 National GRADschool, Stirling
20-22 Developing the Postgraduate Manager, Manchester
Date TBA Local GRADschool, London
26-29 Environmental GRADschool, London
27-29 Personal Skills Development GRADschool, Wales

July

- 3 Careers in Focus: Careers in Academia, London
3-7 National GRADschool, Windermere
6-8 UKCGE European Conference 2006: New Dimensions for Doctoral Programmes in Europe, Training, Employability and the European Knowledge Agenda, Italy For more information Visit <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk>
18-19 White Rose Interpersonal Skills School Part 2, Sheffield
28-2Aug National GRADschool, Exeter

September

- 4-8 National GRADschool, Cambridge
4-8 Local GRADschool, Bangor
6 UK HERD Annual Conference, London
7 UK GRAD Annual Conference, London
18-20 Local GRADschool Oxford
18-21 National GRADschool, Newcastle

October

- 2 Careers in Focus: Careers in Academia, Cardiff
10 Training the Trainers: Developing Doctoral Supervisors - Responding to Changes in Context, Pedagogy and Diversity Workshop. For further information visit <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk>
10-14 National GRADschool, Brighton

November

- 6-10 National GRADschool, Windermere
13 Careers in Focus: Careers in Academia, Glasgow

*unless otherwise stated information
on these events is available at
<http://www.grad.ac.uk>*

Francis Vella reports

Eurodoc: The Voice of Young Researchers in Europe

<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Formally established in 2005 in Belgium as a not for profit international association, Eurodoc (www.eurodoc.net) is the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. It is currently composed of the national organisations of young researchers from 21 countries from all across Europe¹. In addition, it also gathers a number of representatives from a handful of countries interested in joining Eurodoc but that are yet to meet the requirements for membership. Thus, Eurodoc is a young organisation that keeps growing. New applications for membership are received every year, and one can take the measure of the progress when considering that representatives of only 9 countries were present when Eurodoc was first created in 2001, in Uppsala (Sweden).

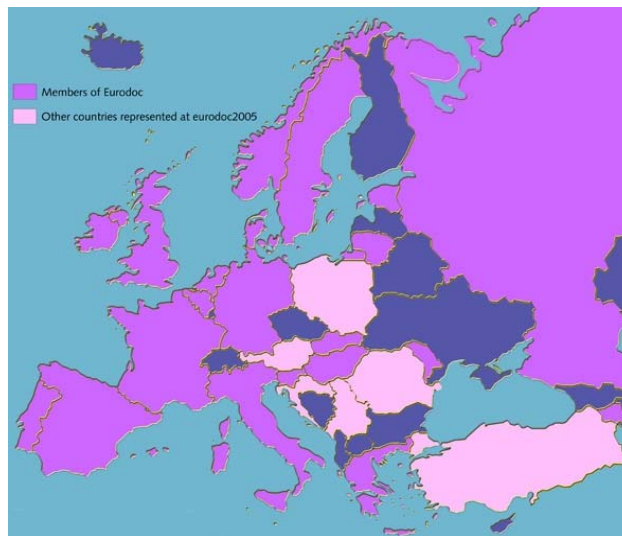
Since then, much work has been produced by its benevolent crews². Eurodoc's role is to represent, assist, defend and inform in order to advance the quality of doctoral programmes and the standards of research activity at the European level. To that aim, Eurodoc tackles the key issues within its workgroups, some of which have now produced their first recommendations³. An annual conference is also held every year in order to allow young researchers across Europe to meet and interact with top level policy-making stakeholders. The next conference will take place in Italy (Bologna, 9-12/03/2006) and will address a number of key issues such as innovation, mobility and career, the quality of doctoral programmes, and the latest European instrument that directly targets researchers: the European Charter and Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers⁴.

Although the new Charter and Code represent a very soft piece of EU legislation, Eurodoc's contribution to the document clearly highlights the role Eurodoc can play at the European level, and the fact that it has built, along the years, a number of close relationships with some of the major European stakeholders in Research and Higher Education. Eurodoc regularly acts in partnership with the European Commission and in particular, within the Directorate General for Research, with its directorate for Human Resources and Mobility. It also interacts closely with the European University Association within the frame of the Bologna process to advance the quality of doctoral programmes across Europe. Finally, Eurodoc has also recently established a partnership with Careers in Europe⁵, in order to foster the opportunities of recruitment for PhD holders in the private sector.

These collaborations provide Eurodoc with the necessary means and support to tackle the immensity of its task. At the turn of this new century, the need for research and researchers is greater than ever. Given their numbers (a common estimate often quoted in Europe is 500.000) young researchers contribute a significant proportion to our research output. Yet the demands are much contrasted. On the one hand, governments, institutions and funders are keen on recruiting young researchers for short term appointments, but on the other hand, they refuse to make any financial commitment to offer them enough stable positions. The resulting situation is disastrous, not only for young researchers, but for science as a whole, let alone our social values and the competitiveness of Europe on the international scene.

Fortunately, this trend is being tackled by a European directive⁶, but much remains to be done if the targets of the Lisbon agenda are to be met at the end of this decade. Many countries in Europe do not seem to have taken the necessary measures to push for this crucial investment. The recent announcements for the 7th Framework Programme are nonetheless a reminder that, once again, our national problems may well find their solution at the level of European cooperation.

But tackling the problems of young researchers is not just a remote



question of global economy. With numbers approaching 50% of all research staff, young researchers are an integral part of the labour workforce in research. Yet, they are plagued with a lack of recognition, career perspectives, funding or social benefits. Despite the usual variations and the mosaic of situations, this picture is surprisingly accurate throughout Europe. Who would be surprised that, in these conditions, the attractiveness of research careers drops to an all-time low, and that less and less students enrol into science-based courses?

What is needed is largely described in the European Charter and Code. The future of our research and our economy lies at the heart of human resources management in research. For PhD candidates, it means that contractual agreements must be signed between them and their supervisors. It means that evaluation of supervisors must be based on supervision, and should include PhD candidates, colleagues and superiors, much to the example of what is done in some of the major international companies and called 360 degree evaluation. In addition, young researchers must be represented in the decision making bodies of their institutions to ensure that their interests are fully understood. Finally, it is necessary to recognise that PhD candidates are professionals, early-stage researchers. In return for the research work they conduct, they must be paid accordingly, with all social benefits.

And all the European institutions need to fully realise the consequences of their lack of investment in their young researchers before it is too late. Even in the UK, albeit significant steps have recently been taken following the Roberts' review, young researchers are facing constant problems with funding: increased part time PhDs, persistence of a large fraction of non-funded PhD candidates, not to mention for those who are paid that the current PhD stipend still falls short of any pension cover. This lack of interest or support can potentially backfire. In France, a recent statement qualified such a stipend (libéralité) as illegal work. These contracts are now to be withdrawn. But legal arguments need not be. In the end, with the creation of a European labour market for scientists and the resulting increased mobility, only the most attractive institutions will survive. It is not too late to react and commit to the principles of the European Charter and Code.

Francis Vella
President

¹As defined by countries memberships to the Council of Europe.

²www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=40

³www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=290

⁴[http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/C\(2005\)576%20EN.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/C(2005)576%20EN.pdf)

⁵www.careersineurope.com

⁶http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/l_175/l_17519990710en00430048.pdf

Jane Sugars writes

News from the UK GRAD Centre for Excellence

The UK GRAD Programme began 2006 as we intend to go on – in consultation with sector representatives at our annual Roberts Policy Forum. The event, held in Birmingham over two days, was attended by representatives from funding bodies plus 58 UK HEIs, and produced some useful outcomes.

Professor Ian Diamond, chairman of the RCUK Executive Group, member of the Funders' Forum and CEO of ESRC, opened by acknowledging both the importance of the Roberts Agenda and the partnership between RCUK and the HEIs that is driving it forward. Iain Cameron, Head of the Research Careers and Diversity Unit at RCUK, reviewed year 2 Roberts reporting and looked towards the autumn when HEIs will be asked to report against KPIs recommended by the 'Rugby Team' which was set up at this event last year.

Participants were asked to comment on the draft recommendations, and these were broadly endorsed, although some changes will be made to the wording. A comprehensive report from the Policy Forum will be available at the end of February (including the final Rugby Team Report), but here are some outcomes in outline:

- RCUK and HECCE will look into commissioning a study on the impact of recent policy and funding changes on early career researchers (doctoral students and 'postdocs')
- RCUK have agreed to publish the Roberts reporting requirements for 2005/06 and beyond by Easter 06



- There was a clear message from participants that RCUK should continue to require specific annual reporting on the use of Roberts money, even if changes are made to the funding mechanism. Reporting should concentrate on demonstrating continual improvement
- UK GRAD have agreed to analyse the contents of the Database of Practice later this year in order to illustrate the richness of UK provision
- UK GRAD and UK HERD will produce a memorandum of understanding to

ensure that in their work to support doctoral researchers (UK GRAD) and research staff (UK HERD), synergies are exploited and duplication of effort is avoided

Why not join the 'Rugby Team Virtual Correspondance Group'? The current debate is 'What should replace the Rugby Team?' To join, contact sarah.every@grad.ac.uk.

Over the course of this year, UK GRAD is planning to build on the relationships we already have with all our stakeholder groups. Recent changes to the UK GRAD website included a new interface for academic supervisors and we have recently produced the first issue of 'overVIEW', a bulletin aimed at supervisors and seeking both to inform on relevant national policy and to promote postgrad development opportunities beyond the purely academic. The London Hub will be distributing hard copies in your region, but individuals can order single copies from orders@grad.ac.uk. See overVIEW online at <http://www.grad.ac.uk/supervisors>. We are also aiming to increase our dialogue with employers during 2006. Our first event aimed at employers entitled 'Recruiting the brightest and the best: Why PhDs

are a better bet' was held in London on January 26th. The event attracted interest from several employers and a report will be posted on the UKGRAD bulletin board soon. An emerging theme was that employers are unaware both of the potential benefits of employing holders of doctorates, and of how to reach them.

CRAC, the not-for-profit company who hold the UK GRAD Programme contract, have recently undertaken a short contract to make recommendations to the Funders' Forum on a proposed web-based career-paths resource. The resource would aim to make career structures in research more visible to early career researchers. In addition to consultations with representative groups, and analysis of previous research, a survey aimed at doctoral researchers has been undertaken. Watch this space!

Other news – the UK GRAD Bulletin Board has a new subscription facility that should make it much more useable. Simply subscribe to a forum, topic or author and receive notification by email whenever a new posting is made.

Jane Sugars
UK GRAD Programme
University Networks Manager
(jane.sugars@grad.ac.uk)

UK GRAD Mentoring – more than just a training course



GRADschools are a challenging, engaging and stimulating learning experience that allow junior and senior managers to concentrate on all aspects of their behavioural interactions with others.

The courses are residential and offer staff from universities, and from public and commercial companies, a challenging and engaging learning experience. Each GRADschool brings together up to 90 researchers working towards a doctoral degree, up to 10 mentors, plus 10 tutors drawn from all walks of life who act as facilitators on-course. The presence of real managers and team workers as GRADschool Mentors on a GRADschool helps participants to broaden their outlook and enhance their commercial awareness and employability, whilst participants form demanding and realistic teams for mentors to work with.

When you become a GRADschool Mentor you work within a small team of postgraduate researchers on activities based on real events in different spheres of employment.

A GRADschool focuses on facilitation skills, self awareness, personal development, leadership skills and understanding and using team dynamics and ensures that each participant leaves the programme with greater self-awareness and a comprehensive development plan to optimise their effectiveness at work.

These are not like any other 'training' courses. GRADschool Mentors usually have at least 2 years' work experience and the role would be perfect for new 'Roberts' support staff, for postdocs, or for other staff working in roles suitable for a recently- qualified PhD.

Visit the UK GRAD website for more detailed information about the role, the 2006 dates and venues, how to book and to read about the experiences of previous mentors:
<http://www.grad.ac.uk/mentors>.

Contact Louise Atkin at UK GRAD for more information (Tel

GRADSchools -Training opportunity for New Tutors

We are pleased to tell you that a GRADSchool New Tutor UK training workshop is planned for 24th-25th February 2006 in Manchester. This workshop is specifically aimed at those thinking of or intending to tutor on, local GRADSchools. Places will be allocated on first-come first-served basis, and are still available. The next training session for local GRADSchool Tutors will be held in London and is planned for July (dates TBC)

Who should attend?

The workshop is suitable for anyone who is considering becoming a Tutor for a local GRADSchool (i.e. a GRADSchool run by HEI staff), or who has already tutored on a GRADSchool but would benefit from additional training and practice in facilitation skills.

It is essential that anyone attending the New Tutor Training should have a well-formed idea of what a GRADSchool is, what it is trying to achieve, and of the role of the Tutor team. Ideally, a potential New Tutor will have attended a GRADSchool, or visited one, before embarking on the training. Visits to GRADSchools can be arranged by contacting the GRADSchool team, or by contacting Kirsteen Newton for all national GRADSchools. A list of GRADSchools currently planned can be found at

http://www.grad.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/GRAD_courses/Postgraduate_researchers/Course_Search/pledcfaje?mode=courseSearch .

If you are unsure about whether the workshop is for you, or have any specific questions, please contact Jane Sugars at UK GRAD to discuss jane.sugars@grad.ac.uk

Tutoring on national GRADSchools

Anyone wishing to be considered as a tutor for the national GRADSchools Programme (i.e. centrally-run courses) should first contact Kirsteen Newton for details of the types of tutor currently being sought, and should attend a training workshop aimed at national GRADSchool tutors. The training is broadly similar for local and national tutors, but national GRADSchool-specific sessions include an element of information relevant only to that group, whilst local GRADSchool-specific sessions take into account the diversity of Programmes coming under the GRADSchool banner.

Further details

The workshop is offered free of charge, including overnight accommodation and meals, although participants are expected to pay their own travel expenses. The workshop will start on the evening of the 24th and run until late afternoon on the 25th.

How can I apply?

An online application form is now available for the February workshop and this can be accessed via the website at

http://www.grad.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Tutor_Servlet/plefbLecc?mode=localtutorwshopapp

The Changing Face of the PhD

As most people in higher education are aware, the PhD has changed enormously over the past forty-odd years. In an attempt to try and capture some of the changes over time and also the things that have stayed the same, we will be publishing a series of articles over the coming months by Fiona Denney, drawn from people's experiences of studying for a PhD over the past 40 years. The first article looks at what it was like to do postgraduate scientific research in the late 1950s.



Ron Denney was 22 years old when he started his PhD. He held the position of a salaried research assistant, which was funded by the then London County Council. He was the first PhD student that his supervisor had, working on a project concerning anti-carcinogenic drugs. Over the three years that Ronald researched for his PhD, his supervisor was able to develop his research team and became responsible for three research students during that time.

He completed his doctorate in 3 years and went on to lecture for 3 years before pursuing post-doctoral research in the USA for 2 years, which was followed by a lectureship at the University of Greenwich

per week, which was paid extra, and mainly consisted of demonstrating. Ron was also asked, in his final year, by his Head of Department to deliver some lectures, which provided invaluable experience

wanted to pursue political interests outside of the lab. At points during his PhD studies, Ron stood for election to the local council in Dagenham, Essex, and was occasionally needed by the local branch of his political party to perform duties during the working day. At times, this conflicted with his teaching obligations, but fortunately there was a pool of approximately a dozen other PhD students who could be financially-persuaded to take his classes for him!

Name:	Professor Ronald Colin Denney
Age:	69
Occupation:	Forensic Scientist
Year of PhD Completion:	1961
Title of Thesis:	Synthetic Approaches to Lignans of Phenyltetrahydronaphthalene Class

Ron studied at Sir John Cass College, then part of the University of London and lived at home with his parents in Romford, Essex throughout the duration of his research programme.

back in London. Ron's PhD experience was fundamental in building his experience of teaching and lecturing. He tells that all the research assistants and students did additional work of about 6 hours

for him and stood him in good stead in his future academic career.

Whilst the additional income was important, Ron tells that it sometimes got him into some difficult situations when he

Ron describes the atmosphere with his fellow PhD students as being "fantastic" and says that they formed a lively, happy, enthusiastic group who shared ideas and knowledge actively. At the time, there were about six

people working in his laboratory, who were all male, young and white, British students. They were supervised by three supervisors in total, one of whom was female. In addition, there were a further 6 students working in the next-door lab, only one of whom was a woman, and the 12 all got on extremely well together. At the end of Ron's studies, he tells that increasing numbers of minority ethnic students began to obtain PhD studentships in the lab and this really marks the beginning of the diverse environment that we are familiar with today.

Further differences between the PhD experience then and now that Ron tells of, concern working habits in the lab. Ron says that, because Sir John Cass College was based in the City of London, there was no weekend access at all. As a result, the majority of the students began work at about 9.30am in the morning and worked straight through until 7 or 8pm in the evenings, 5 days per week. When asked about taking regular breaks, Ron says that things were so different in the lab then that most people didn't take fixed breaks, but instead brought food and even a regular lunch-time pint of beer into the lab. Ron notes that most days of the

'there were no computers or electronic access to journals'

week, he ate his lunch at the side of the workbench and if he felt he needed to take a break, then he would take a work round Leadenhall Market or Tower Hill, taking in some of the sights that still inspire many of us in London today.

In addition, Ron draws attention to the fact that there were no computers or electronic access to journals, and although the students did have access to a photocopier in the library, this actually complicated things for them. Copyright rules concerning the photocopying of journal articles were very unclear and unhelpful at the time, imposing heavy restrictions on the

number of pages and copies that could be made. In terms of producing the final thesis, Ron paid a friend to type up his work. Because of the technological limitations of the time, 4 sheets of carbon paper were used in the typewriter to produce the final 5 copies that he required, and all of the molecular structures and diagrams had to be drawn in by hand, using unostencils, which took 2 weeks of extremely long hours to complete.

Despite these obvious differences between the PhD then and now, Ron draws attention to some of the similarities by talking about the process as one of extremely hard work. He reflects on the fact that one of the most critical points of a full-time PhD comes after the first 6 months are over, and applies now just as it did then. At this point, he comments, students don't feel that they know where they are going, they are not sure that their supervisor is right or that the advice other people have given them is right either. Students feel at that point as though they have made virtually no progress at all and want to give up. Particularly, he says, if they have problems in getting on with their supervisor.

It certainly seems as though some things never change!

To sum up, Ron comments that:

"In the 1950s we were left very much to ourselves with little guidance. I think the use [today] of post-graduate training courses, some assessment on progress and mentors are all for the better, but should not detract from the original research concept."

*Fiona Denney
Queen Mary,
University of London*

Career Development – FOR LIFE

CRAC, the Careers Research & Advisory Centre, is a leading independent charity within the education and training sectors. Based in Cambridge, we operate a national programme of c.300 dynamic, experiential career development courses for students and staff at schools, colleges and universities. **The UK GRAD Programme** is the UK's main provider of personal, professional and career management skills for postgraduate researchers. The UK GRAD Programme is supported by CRAC, and is based at its offices.



Resources Manager, UK GRAD

The UK GRAD Programme is seeking an experienced individual to lead, manage and develop our web-based learning materials. The materials are intended to support universities deliver personal development to research staff, and to support researchers themselves to assess and develop their own skills.

You will understand the needs of the postgraduate market and ensure that our products continue to meet these needs. You should have excellent communication skills, the ability to work with multiple stakeholders and be an effective project manager. You will have a background in training or developing learning materials, with experience of commissioning and developing online resources.

This is a rare opportunity to join an exciting national programme and work in a dynamic and supportive working environment. This is a fixed term contract until December 2007.

For full job descriptions for this role, please visit www.crac.org.uk. To apply, please send a covering letter focusing on how your skills and experience match against the role, along with your CV to: Pamela Longcroft, Head of Human Resources, CRAC, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX or by e mail to: Pamela.longcroft@crac.org.uk. Closing date for applications is 24 February 2006



Institutions supporting the London Hub



Communication Skills Development Graduate Skills Scheme

The Grad Skills scheme is run by the Centre for Science Education, Sheffield Hallam University.

Grad Skills is a new programme of skills training similar to our Researchers in Residence (RinR) scheme. The RinR scheme, which has been running for 10 years, was mentioned by Sir Gareth Roberts as a good example of a scheme offering "real-world" skills development. However this scheme is only available to Research Council UK (RCUK) or the Wellcome Trust funded researchers.

In order to ensure that non Research Council funded researchers can benefit from this activity we have established our Grad Skills scheme. This scheme can form part of a researcher's transferable skills training and as stated in the QAA Code of Practice:

Precept 18 - Institutions will provide research students with appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development
And

From the Skills training requirements for research students (QAA Code of Practice)
Section E - Communication skills

4. Contribute to promoting the public understanding of one's research.

So what is Grad Skills?

The basis of the programme is to place PhD and postdoctoral researchers into secondary schools anywhere in the UK for short placements. It all takes about a week and that includes a day's training. It offers researchers an opportunity to enhance their personal and professional skills, especially those in communication. It will also give individuals an idea of what teaching is like today.

Once an application has been received each researcher is invited to a briefing day of their choice. This will provide an insight of what can be expected during the placement. We will help with ideas of what can be done and how to plan to make sure that every researcher gets the best possible experience during their time in school. Throughout every placement we will be available to offer practical support and advice. On completion of a placement each researcher is issued with a document for inclusion in their CV, job applications, PDP, etc.

This scheme offers a practical and flexible opportunity which can fit into your busy schedule. For further information regarding the scheme please contact Carly McDonald/Nicky Fuller at the Centre for Science Education, Sheffield Hallam University on 0114 2254876 or email c.mcdonald@shu.ac.uk.

**BREAKING
NEWS**

OverVIEW

New Bulletin for Supervisors

A first port of call as the source of information for academics who supervise postgraduate researchers. Available in pdf format or as a hard copy. Email londonhub@grad.ac.uk for your copy (*let us know how many printed copies you require*)

PDP

2005 Autumn update

on emerging practice on the use of PDP for postgraduate researchers now available in print from londonhub@grad.ac.uk or via the website at <http://www.grad.ac.uk>

New Hubs

Two new UK GRAD regional Hubs have been set up

East of England (Coordinator Rodney Day
email: r.day@herts.ac.uk)

and

South East (Coordinator: Gill Johnston
email: sehub@grad.ac.uk)

How to contact us and Newsletter contributions

London Hub News is the newsletter of the London Regional Hub of the UK GRAD Programme. It is composed and edited by Kay Dorelli, Hub Project Officer and Norman Staines, Hub Coordinator.

Contributions are welcomed. E mail londonhub@grad.ac.uk for a copy of Instructions to Authors. In addition, if there are topics you wish to see discussed or relevant meetings you wish to publicise we should be delighted to hear from you. **The next issue will be published in April and deadline for receipt of contributions will be 31 March 2006.** If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter in the future please let us know. You can get in touch by calling **Kay Dorelli**, or **Norman Staines** as follows:

Tel: 020 7848 4461 or you can also e mail us at londonhub@grad.ac.uk or visit our website: <http://www.grad.ac.uk/londonhub>