



SPHERES Newsletter #1 – October 2016

Welcome to the first SPHERES newsletter which aims to enhance communication and partner engagement across the DTP. It will be published 4 times per year – issue #2 is due in December 2016. Your feedback on any matter is welcome.

News

Welcome to Cohort 3

On October 1st we welcomed our 3rd cohort of 27 new DTP students. We now have a total of 80 students across our six host departments studying topics ranging from the Earth's interior, through surface biosphere processes to chemistry of metal atoms in the upper atmosphere. CASE partners for the Cohort 3 include the British Geological Survey (BGS), United Bank of Carbon and the Environment Agency. Of particular significance this year, we have our first student, registered in the School of Biology, who will be based full time at our partner Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) at Wallingford.



Into the Blue

Students from across our DTP are playing prominent roles in NERC's outreach event [Into the Blue](#) from October 25th-29th in Manchester. This event will bring alive the world of environmental science and research by immersing visitors in a hands-on science exhibition at Manchester airport's Runway Visitor Park. Displays on river pollution, volcanic ash and invasive species are being developed and demonstrated to the public by Sarah Fell, Sarah Letsinger, Lauren Marshall, Hana Pearce, Claire Harnett, Will Fincham and Cat Shannon. For more information see our news article [DTP students head 'Into The Blue'](#) on the DTP website.

Good Fieldwork Practice: Slowing the Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species

Thanks to Cat Shannon, Will Fincham and colleagues online training is now available for staff and students at the University of Leeds to learn about reducing the spread of invasive species. The Better Biosecurity e-learning course has been produced by the University of Leeds in collaboration with the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat, the Environment Agency and Cefas. For more information (with links to enrol) check out our news article [Slowing the Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species](#) on the DTP website.

2017 NERC DTP Managers Conference in Leeds

Every year the Directors and Managers of the 15 NERC DTPs across the country meet to share information and discuss progress with NERC. We will have the pleasure of hosting the 4th annual meeting in Leeds next June (date to be confirmed). By holding the event in Leeds we should be able to invite a number of local DTP colleagues to attend.

Training Update

Biosphere Day

The DTP's biosphere day took place on September 23rd at Devonshire Hall, to complete the programme of SPHERES workshops for 2015-16. The theme for the day was urban ecology and we were fortunate to have a great line up of speakers, including external speakers from Natural England, Leeds City Council and the Woodhouse Ridge Action Group. Read more [here](#).



Joint Careers Workshop Event with CENTA and EAO DTPs

On March 22/23 2017 we will be joining forces with the [EAO DTP](#), based in the Universities of Manchester and Liverpool, and the [CENTA DTP](#), which is a consortium of 5 midlands universities, to provide a 2-day Careers Workshop for our 3rd year students. This is our first joint training event with other DTPs and will be held in central Manchester. Day 1 will be a series of careers training workshops and surgeries, such as career options, interview skills and CV writing, followed by a networking dinner. For day 2 there will be a large number of external companies attending and the programme will consist of a careers fair, mock interviews, industry panels, and one-to-one appointments. A sign-up for the event will be sent out to 3rd year students shortly.



Recruitment 2017

Recruitment for cohort 4 in 2017 is now underway and we are in the process of uploading projects to the DTP website. The key dates in this year's process are:

- Monday 9th January 2017 – Application deadline for candidates
- Monday 12th – Thursday 16th February 2017 – Interviews take place in Leeds

All potential supervisors should ensure that they (or co-supervisors) are around during the interview week to meet with potential candidates.

There is still time for external partners to get involved with projects for 2017 starters. Please take a look at the available projects on our web page (<http://www.nercdtp.leeds.ac.uk/browse-projects/>) and contact the lead supervisor to discuss your potential involvement.

Dates for the Diary

Forthcoming training events:

- FastTrack Impact Training Day, 2nd November 2016, University of Leeds.
- Publishing and Presenting Workshop (2nd Year Students), TBA November 2016, University of Leeds.
- Atmosphere Day, TBA December 2016.
- Careers Workshop (3rd Year Students), 22nd and 23rd March 2017, Manchester.
- Teamwork and Leadership Away Day (1st Year Students), 20th and 21st April 2017.
- DTP Annual Student Conference, 25th and 26th May 2017 (TBC), University of Leeds.
- Geosphere Day, TBA June 2017, University of Leeds.

Alternative PhD Advice #1

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

THESIS OUTLINE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. ← chapter #'s
- 6.
- 7.

5 = "That's IT??"
6-7 = "Not bad"
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":

THESIS OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION
2. LITREVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. CONCLUSIONS

You're half way done!

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:

2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
4. (THAT STUFF YOU DID YOUR FIRST YEAR)
5. (STUFF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING NOW)
6. (MAKE STUFF UP)
7. CONCLUSIONS

(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years

So, how's your thesis going? i have an outline!

JORGE CHAM © 2006

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From *Piled Higher and Deeper* by Jorge Cham (www.phdcomics.com).

Further Information

For further information on the DTP please email:

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or check our webpages:

- www.nercdtp.leeds.ac.uk (External web page)
- www.nercdtp.leeds.ac.uk/internal (Internal pages for students, staff, partners. Email N. Richards for access)

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