Session recording

The Informatics Graduate School Induction session (Tue 15 Sept 2020) will be recorded and so we are required to inform you of the following:

a) What the recording is for and how it will be used - The recording is taking place to allow all new students commencing their PGR programme with us in 2020/21 to revisit and review the information covered during the course of the presentation. We will use it for the purpose of inducting new PGR students who commence at other times of the 2020/21 academic year.

b) Who will have access to it - The recording will be uploaded to the Informatics Graduate School webpage here: http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/new-students

c) How long the recording will be kept - We will keep this recording for one year, at which point it will be deleted.

Confirmation of Attendance

To allow us to confirm your attendance in EUCLID (part of the University’s matriculation process), please write your UUN in the Chat.

IGS Contact Details

igs@inf.ed.ac.uk
Introduction to the Informatics Graduate School

Prof Bob Fisher
Director of IGS

Dr Mary Cryan
Deputy Director of IGS
What is the Informatics Graduate School (IGS)?

- Large cohort of postgraduate research students
- Degrees: MScR, MRes, MPhil, PhD
- Academic and administrative staff (ISS)
- Information sources for postgraduate student

http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs
Graduate School staff and their roles

- **Director (Bob Fisher)**
  - Recruitment, selection, funding & scholarships, with support from the Institute PGR Selectors
  - Graduate School policy
  - College and University representation

- **Deputy Director (Mary Cryan)**
  - Advice and on course programme support - interruptions, suspensions, extensions, annual reviews, research relationships, student experience
  - Networking events
  - Transferable skills and research training courses

- **Personal Tutor, PGR (Jane Hillston, John Longley, Michael Fourman)**
  - Mentoring and pastoral advice

- **IGS and CDT administrative team members**
  - [http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/contact](http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/contact)
Our Community of Research Students

- **484** research students currently studying in Informatics
  - From **63** countries: 24% UK, 40% EU, 36% OS
  - Spread across 6 Institutes (20-70 in each)
- **112** new PGRs this year (so far) selected from ~1100 applicants
  - 98% full time, 2% part time
  - 24% female, 73% male, 4% undisclosed
  - 22% UK, 38% EU, 41% International
- **65** new students commencing on Institute PGR programmes
  - starting Sept (29), Oct (10), Nov-March (26)
- Plus **47** new students in CDTs from September
  - 14 in Natural Language Processing (NLP)
  - 5 in Robotics & Autonomous Systems (6 more at Herriot Watt)
  - 13 in Biomedical Artificial Intelligence
Exciting Informatics!

- World-leading academic staff (140+), post-docs (150+), support teams (130+), and you!
- Specialised labs, including manipulating, flying, rolling, and walking robots
- 100s of GPUs, access to 1000+ core CPU machines
- 6 Research Institutes with main focus on: theory (LFCS), communication (ILCC), AI (AIAI), learning (IANC), systems (ICSA), robotics (IPAB) plus many other topics
- Seminars, visitors, conferences
- 50+ taught courses that you can access
- Commercialisation support (top startup department in UK)
Coronavirus and Your Research

• Situation unpredictable
• Maybe:
  • Meet supervisor via Skype/Teams/…
  • Schedules for desk or lab access
  • Restricted building access (e.g. not usual 24/7)
  • A lot of working from home
  • Few (or no) face-to-face social events
• Rules may change to stricter or looser with little notice
• Sad, and not ‘Normal busy life in Informatics’
• Our priority: keep you and everyone else safe
Covid-19 Support Service

• Some of you have travelled to Edinburgh to base yourself here (or will travel soon).

• You may need to "self-isolate"/quarantine on arrival – or maybe at a later date if you are potentially exposed to the virus.

• The University has a Covid Support Service for students living in private accommodation: https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/living-in-edinburgh/covid-support-service
  • There is a form to fill, to obtain help with food, practical matters, during self-isolation.
  • (a small number of relevant people in) the School will be notified of your status.
Starting your PhD...

- Be Bold – choose an exciting, challenging topic
- Get advice from your supervisor!
- Develop your skills in parallel with your research:
  - IAD courses (e.g., How to do an Informatics PhD, Research Ethics)
  - Get to know other PhD students (Piazza, Institute/CDT meetings)
  - Things are different this year .... We want to plan other ways to help students connect. Ideas for us?
  - Seek outside interests - work/life balance.
- Supervisors are human – work with them
- Think about where you are going, and plan for your career
Be an effective PhD student ...

- PhD time is precious – manage it carefully
- Address problems; don’t let them fester
- Read extensively, widely and continuously
- Write early and often
- Plan your research around paper submissions
- Define small, measurable goals
- Get feedback from supervisors and colleagues about your plans
- Be rigorous in your work
- Learn from the best role models in research
- Take control of your own destiny…
- Read the Researchers’ Handbook (Bundy et al.)
- “Code” for Supervisors and Research Students!
  [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf)
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

• Informatics has a lot of variety: different nationalities, cultures, religions, genders, sexualities, races, abilities, etc. We treat all equally, and with dignity and respect.
• It may have been different where you come from, but now you are here.
• Enjoy your freedom and give it generously to others.
• 15min “Unconscious Bias” course linked at the University Respect site.
• Language is tricky, and misunderstandings do not mean conflict or disagreement:
  • British English: ‘take a class’ = be a teacher
  • American English: take a class’ = be a student
• Ask if you are unsure

https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/respect
Social Relationships

• Make friends – you will know them your whole life
• And not just people from your home country
• Meet at conferences, visit in their home countries, …
• Romance and even marriages sometimes happen (rarely - you are here to study!)
• But:
  • ‘No’ means ‘no’. (i.e. ‘I am not interested’).
  • Different cultures have different ways to say ‘not interested’. If you are not getting a definite ‘yes’ after 1 or 2 invitations, let it go…..
  • Anything ‘edgy’/out-there best avoided.
  • Stop trying if it’s not a definite ‘yes’.
• Harassment is treated seriously
In case of problems

http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/phd/student-support/resolving-problems

- Points of contact depend on the kind of issue (and who it may involve)

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Your Principal Supervisor</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Your Assistant Supervisor(s)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Your Institute or CDT Director, or CDT tutor</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Head of Graduate School</td>
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<td>· Bob Fisher</td>
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<td>Personal Tutors for Research Students</td>
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<td>· John Longley</td>
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<td>· Jane Hillston (Head of School)</td>
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<td>· Mike Fourman</td>
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<td>Deputy Director of Graduate School - Mary Cryan</td>
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<td>Head of School (Jane Hillston)</td>
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<td>Dean of Students (Anthony Maciocia)</td>
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- Normal points of contact are for general guidance
- If you have a sensitive issue to discuss you can contact any of the above, but we recommend talking first to Deputy Head of Graduate School or a Personal Tutor
Personal Tutors

- The CDTs have “pastoral support” tutors (Mirella Lapata for NLP, Michael Herrmann for RAS, Ian Simpson and Meriem El Karoui for Biomed-AI).

- For all PhD students, we have general postgraduate research tutors (Jane Hillston, John Longley and Mike Fourman).

- Independent academic advisors who can be consulted in case of difficulties that cannot be resolved through normal supervisory mechanisms.

- Can offer advice on certain issues that students may not want / be able to discuss with their supervisors.

- Liaison with the Deputy Director of the Informatics Graduate School (Mary).

- Students may request a consultation with either male or female Personal Tutor if they have a gender preference.

- May point students to various forms of non-academic counselling.
GET TO KNOW YOUR UNION

UCU EDINBURGH IS A TRADE UNION THAT REPRESENTS ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

You are eligible to join UCU if you are:
- Teaching and research staff
- Library, administration and computing staff
- UoE grades 6-10
- A postgraduate student

WHY JOIN A UNION?

REPRESENTATION IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM AT WORK
NEGOTIATION OF YOUR PAY AND CONDITIONS
PROTECTION FOR TAKING INDUSTRIAL ACTION
SOLIDARITY ACROSS THE SECTOR
ACCESS TO SPECIALIST NETWORKS
SECTOR REPRESENTATION TO GOVERNMENT & EMPLOYERS
PARTICIPATION IN WORKING GROUPS
ACCESS TO PUBLICATIONS & CAREER RELATED MATERIALS
CPD TRAINING INCLUDING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, VOICE CARE & GETTING PUBLISHED
SOCIAL EVENTS
POWER IN THE HANDS OF WORKERS!
COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UNIONS

POSTGRADUATE MEMBERSHIP

Joining UCU is FREE for postgraduate research students! Visit www.ucu.org.uk/join to sign up.

Why should I join?
Unions work most effectively when they have a strong membership base. Because Unions negotiate for our collective interests as researchers, workers, and learners, the number game matters the more we are, the better our chances of securing better conditions for all of us.

Working together
Being part of a Union means being part of a collective that holds the University to account. Together, Postgraduate Research students are amongst the most transient in the University, but we can have a real and lasting impact on our working and learning conditions through collective organising.

A helping hand
As a member of UCU, you have the backing of the union behind you. If you have a problem you need help solving. As Postgraduate Research students, we often slip between the cracks, straddling student and employer status. UCU can help make sure your rights are respected.

Membership benefits
UCU can help with all sorts of issues: problems with supervision or other departmental relationships, demystifying contracts, support for paid training, lobbying for improved work/study space, making sure your employment rights are met, and more.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO, VISIT WWW.UCUEDINBURGH.ORG/POSTGRAD-AND-POSTDOC-NETWORK
University and College Union (UCU) – Postgrad and Postdoc network

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**There are 2 main types of union**

**Service Union**
- Run by paid representatives appointed by union leadership
- Focuses on negotiating with management on behalf of members
- Offers members services in exchange for dues

**Organising Union**
- Run by the workers themselves, rather than paid representatives
- Works for members’ collective interests, often through direct action
- Often provide tools, guidance, funding, and other resources

**UCU Edinburgh is a hybrid**

Your union is run by voluntary reps who are also workers. They are voted in by members.

Much of the work, organising, and priority setting is carried out by active members like you!

Engages in both direct action and negotiation with management, depending on the issue.

Provides caseworkers, training, publications, legal advice, research, representation, and social events.

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**How you can get involved**

**Anti-Casualisation Campaign**
The Anti-Casualisation Campaign aims to improve the working conditions of fixed term, fractional, and/or hourly paid workers. More broadly, it seeks to combat the increasing drive of academia towards more reliance on casualised labour.

**Working Groups**
- Current working groups include:
  - BAME Working Group
  - Disability Working Group
  - Academic Planning Working Group
  - LGBTQ+ Network
  - Family and Caring Working Group

Do you have another idea for a working group? Let us know!

**Social Events**
- We run a number of social events throughout the year, including:
  - Film screenings
  - Lunches
  - Crafting sessions
  - Solidarity rallies
  - ... And more! Join us!

**Local Contacts**
- If you don’t have much time, you may want to become a local contact. This will not require much work but involves mostly being the face of the union in your department/school/area and distributing leaflets or posters now and then.

**Join Committee**
- Committee can have up to 20 ordinary members. Ordinary members should represent as broad a spectrum of membership as possible and may include roles with a particular short-term focus or requiring specialist knowledge to assist the officers. We want to hear from anyone who would be willing to serve on Committee.

**Casework**
- Casework means helping out other members with their queries and problems. It is very rewarding work and you can choose yourself how much work you take on. New caseworkers are provided with training.
University and College Union (UCU) – Postgrad and Postdoc network