

Informatics Graduate School Research Training — PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research



Our Programme

We currently have 250 students studying for PhD, 6 students studying for MPhil, and 15 students studying for MSc by Research.

Each student is allocated to a Research Institute which provides office space and research facilities, with supervision by a member of teaching staff from that institute and one or more assistant supervisors. Supervision of research straddling discipline boundaries is by two equal co-supervisors, one outside Informatics.

The officially-allocated time to completion of a PhD is 3 years (MPhil: 2 years; MScRes: 1 year) plus time for writing up. Average time to actual completion is close to 4 years (MPhil: 3 years; MScRes: 1 year).

Recruitment and Funding

Application numbers are buoyant with 361 applications for 2006/2007 entry. Places were offered to 75 students, and 73 of these (97%) were taken up. All of these numbers, especially applications, have been steadily increasing over the past several years.

The availability of funding is the main limit on student numbers. This applies particularly to non-European Union students who pay higher fees and who are not eligible for some funding sources.

2006/2007 PhD intake

By Research Institute: ANC/Neuroinformatics DTC: 14 + 9 MScRes, CISA 9 + 2 MScRes, ICCS 17 + 1 MScRes, ICSA 6, IPAB 3, LFCs 10
By country: UK 23; Europe 29 (DE 7, GR 4, ES 4, IT 4, AT 1, DK 1, FR 1, IE 1, NL 1, PL 1, PT 1, SK 1, SE 1); Non-EU 19 (CN 8, US 2, IN 2, AO 1, CO 1, HK 1, ID 1, IL 1, JP 1, SG 1, TW 1)

By funding source: University sources 16 (Informatics 11, central funds 3, Wolfson 3, ORS 3); Funding councils 41 (EPSRC DTA 13, EPSRC grants 7, Neuroinformatics DTC 20, ESRC 2) Other 24 (EU grants 8, EU Marie Curie 1, Microsoft 2, China Scholarship Council 1, SFC grant 1, UKIERI 1, Stanford Link 1, BRE Trust 1, Foreign government source ≥ 2 , Self-funding ≤ 5)

NB: Many students have funding split between several sources.

Specialist Courses

First-year PhD students in LFCs spend part of their time on a programme of courses and seminars covering advanced material in Theoretical Computer Science. These include:

Category Theory, Communication & Concurrency, Complexity Theory, Computation & Logic, Computer-Aided Formal Reasoning, Database Theory, Domain Theory, Formal Programming Language Semantics, Gröbner Bases, Modal & Temporal Logics, Type Theory

Other first-year students are required by their supervisors to attend MSc courses that are relevant to their planned topic of research.

None of these courses are formal requirements for completion of PhD study.

Interdisciplinary Research

Various formal and informal structures help to create research communities in areas that bridge School boundaries.

An example is the area of language research, which bridges Informatics, Linguistics and Psychology. Two formal cross-School structures in this area are HCRC and CSTR. An informal structure is the "Language at Edinburgh" group which meets for a buffet lunch and poster session once per month.



Transferrable Skills

The acquisition and development of generic research and transferrable skills is an important part of postgraduate training. Short courses covering a wide range of skills are available to research students through the Postgraduate Transferrable Skills Programme. Courses include:

Effective Presentations, Effective Writing, Communicating Science to Non-Specialists, Poster Production, How to be an Effective Researcher,

PhD Thesis Workshop, Mapping your Mind for Speed Reading, Intellectual Property Rights, Career Strategies, Time Management, Project Management



Alumni

Famous PhD graduates include many highly-placed academics, industrial researchers, and successful entrepreneurs.

Some academics: Gerry Altmann, Aude Billard, Jose Carmena, Peter Dayan, Geoffrey Hinton, Bob Kowalski, Wei Li, Eugenio Moggi, J Strother Moore, Steve Muggleton, Fernando Perreira, Gordon Plotkin, Mads Tofte, Glynn Winskel

Some industrialists and entrepreneurs: Bob Beattie (MD of Meta Vision Systems), Andrew Blake (Microsoft Research), Luca Cardelli (Microsoft Research), Andrew Fitzgibbon (Microsoft Research, Emmy award winner), Douglas Gurr (Bluebeath Holdings), Lincoln Wallen (Electronic Arts, CTO of mobile division)

Social

Each October, a group of PhD students and staff spend a few days at the University's Firth Bush Point Field Centre on Loch Tay for outdoor activities interspersed with short talks about student and staff research projects.

