

SPOTLIGHT ON POSTGRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

Focus on skills

Broaden your horizons beyond research and hone skills for success outside academia.

“Work out whatever it is you need to do to advance to the next level. But also make sure you have a Plan B.”

Robert Hardwick, BBSRC

WHEN ELIZABETH Duxbury completes her PhD in biology at the University of East Anglia, she hopes to find a faculty job to continue her studies on the role of genetics in ageing. She knows, however, that this might not be an option open to her.

“Realistically, when you read the statistics it’s quite difficult to procure permanent positions in academia,” says Duxbury, who is in the fourth and final year of her programme. In the event that, like many other students working toward science doctorates, she can’t find a faculty position, she’s taking steps to explore other career possibilities and broaden her skillset.

There is a wide range of career opportunities outside academia open to people with a science master’s or PhD. Plenty of those are research careers, in big pharmacology or small

biotechnology companies, chemical companies, manufacturing and the healthcare industry. There are also many non-research jobs that draw on scientific skills and knowledge, in government and policy, regulatory areas, patents and intellectual property, marketing, science writing and education at various levels. Many universities have increased their efforts to inform students of those opportunities and to help them develop skills that will improve the prospects of those with a science degree for landing a job. “As a PhD student or post-doc researcher, you are highly employable,” says Robert Hardwick, programme manager for Doctoral Training Partnerships at the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) in the UK.

Duxbury’s participation in one of these BBSRC training partnerships is why her PhD programme lasts four years, instead of the typical three for the UK. The partnerships aim to provide students not only with scientific training, but a variety of professional development opportunities designed to make them more employable. Students are required, for example, to do a three-month professional internship. Duxbury spent hers in the second year of her programme, at the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology.

Her role was to write a brief summarizing the science behind genetically modified crops so that members of Parliament could consider the technology’s policy implications. She had to research the issue by reading reports, talk to experts, and then translate the science into a relatively short report that would be comprehensible to non-scientists. Duxbury feels that the experience improved her communication skills, built her confidence and expanded her network of contacts. “I found it quite challenging writing that



THINKSTOCK



Elizabeth Duxbury took advantage of work experience to help her decide what career path to take.

concisely,” she says. And she had no time to waste, with only three months for the whole project.

“You’re working to tighter deadlines that you’re used to for PhD research,” which may come in handy in the future when she’s considering job opportunities.

The BBSRC funds about 2000 PhD students every year. Approximately 40% of them stay in academia, Hardwick says. Whatever career path they chose however, he says it’s important that young researchers develop skills beyond those required for bench work, including meeting the goals and deadlines common outside academic labs, and how to work with people with different training and backgrounds. “We wanted to really embody professional skills as a core component of our PhD programme,” Hardwick says.

The council also exposes students to alternative work environments through its CASE studentships programme, which requires them to spend between three and 18 months working with an industrial partner. Partnerships have included pharmaceutical companies such as Bayer and GSK, the food company, Nestle, and Swiss agribusiness, Syngenta.

ELIZABETH DUXBURY



Networking and a proactive attitude are what Iwan Roberts, founder of Puridify, advises postgraduates to focus on.

A different route

The number of students getting science master's degrees and PhDs far outnumbers the demand for science faculty in research universities. A 2014 report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics noted that about 30% of people in the UK who earn a PhD in science go on to postdoc positions, but only about 4% gain permanent academic posts with a significant research component. In 2010 the Royal Society showed that of all those setting out to get a PhD, only 0.45% become full professors. That doesn't mean, though, that a science degree is a dead end.

Iwan Roberts earned a doctorate in biochemical engineering from University College London (UCL), focusing on manufacturing of pluripotent stem cells that might be used to treat age-related macular degeneration, a common eye disorder. But, he found his interests often drifted. "I love science and I find it really, really enjoyable, but I'm not sure if I have the scientific focus needed for a successful academic career," Roberts says.

While a student, Roberts leapt at any opportunity to explore alternative careers that presented itself, including a three-month internship at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and another as a pharmaceutical management consultant at IMS Consulting Group in London. He took advantage of a joint programme between UCL and London Business School that allowed him to take business courses.

He also took part in the OneStart business plan competition, sponsored by SR One, the venture capital arm of GSK. His company, Puridify, won the £100,000 prize. Puridify, which develops purification technologies for drug manufacturing, has since raised millions more and employs 13 people. "I didn't always intend to be an entrepreneur," he says, "but I always intended to go into industry by building my CV."

Roberts' advice for current students? "Give any type of opportunity a go." And try to meet as many people as possible, especially by attending scientific conferences. "Network like crazy."

Centres for Doctoral Training

University College London (UCL) runs several Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT), funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, which cover everything from photonics to materials science to financial computing. Graduate students have a choice of about 200 courses in a variety of skills, such as statistical data analysis, experimental design, presentation skills, as well as scientific, grant proposal and CV writing. Each course is worth a certain number of points, and students must earn a minimum of 20 points each year.

Students are also required to take a professional skills course in their first term, developed in conjunction with Vitae, an international career development programme based in Cambridge, UK. The course covers ethics, responsible innovation, the role of professional bodies, the significance of professional registration and licensing, and other issues working engineers need to know about. The centre also invites alumni to speak to students about a wide variety of career paths, which can be eye-opening, says Gary Lye, director of UCL's Industrial Centre for Doctoral Training in

Bioprocessing Engineering. "There are still some people who enter the PhD and think I'm going to do earth-shattering research and go on to be a professor and nothing else matters," he says. "When they hear from all the other alumni and realize that there are other, rewarding and important careers, they bend a bit."

Beyond the UK

Outside the UK, there's also a growing emphasis on getting students to think about more than just professorships. "The trend now is to prepare the students for a wider setting, not only in an academic career, but in the real world of companies," says Konstantina Yannakopoulou, head of CYCLON-HIT, a programme training young researchers to develop carriers for antimicrobial substances, and professor of chemistry at the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the National Center of Scientific Research, "Demokritos," in Athens, Greece.

The scheme is part of the Marie Curie Innovative Training Networks programme, in which universities, research centres and companies collaborate to train PhD students in academic settings and in industry. They also seek to get people working

and studying in countries outside their own, which Yannakopoulou says not only exposes them to new career opportunities, but also gets them to learn to deal with different people, a useful life skill.

In the US, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) promotes career training through its Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) awards, which support programmes to train graduate and doctoral students for biomedical research careers outside of academia. The BEST awards provided \$13.7 million to fund postdoctoral offices at a number of US universities and medical schools, to offer career counseling and training services to their students. The awards last for up to five years, after which the institutions will report on what was successful and what didn't work, in the hope that other universities can implement similar programmes, says Patricia Labosky, the NIH Program Officer for BEST. Such services, she says, can be valuable even to students who stay in academia.

Young scientists should be thinking about possible career options as early as when they're deciding on which graduate school to attend, and should take into

consideration the sort of career services and training offered by their potential schools, says Labosky. They should ask about the CV writing and job interview skills they teach, whether they hold networking events, and how they help their trainees explore career options. Many of the better schools now provide such information on their web pages for prospective students.

This emphasis on thinking about careers outside of academia is part of a culture shift that hasn't fully settled in, she says. "I don't think it was ever discussed when I went to grad school. It was just sort of assumed you would go become a principle investigator."

Many students still feel that the most desirable path is to a full professorship, and Hardwick says there's no point in telling them they won't achieve that, just as long as they put some time into thinking about other options. "If that is your Plan A, absolutely fine. Work out whatever it is you need to do to advance to the next level," he advises. "But also make sure you have a Plan B."

This content was commissioned and edited by the Naturejobs editor

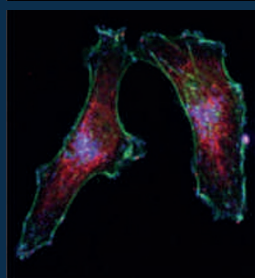


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Application deadline: 8th January 2016

Interviews: These will take place from 27th to 29th January 2016

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PhD Studentships in Cancer Research at the University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge has selected cancer as one of its strategic research initiatives, highlighting the paramount and timely importance of cancer research.

Graduate students play a vital role in the continuing success of research in Cambridge and gaining a studentship is an excellent opportunity to start a research career in an environment committed to training outstanding cancer research scientists of the future.

We seek highly motivated and talented students to join our research teams by joining our PhD programmes set to commence in October 2016. In addition to the excellent research facilities and supportive colleagues in their own departments, students will have access to a wide range of talks, courses and other activities organised across the University.

For further information about the available projects, including eligibility criteria and how to apply, please consult the appropriate website.

The following projects are available:

Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute PhD Studentships

<http://www.cruk.cam.ac.uk/jobs-and-studentships>
Closing date: 30 November 2015

Exploring the role of modified bases in nucleic acids
Shankar Balasubramanian

Exploring the role of modified bases
Shankar Balasubramanian (in Department of Chemistry)

Genomic and functional analysis of circulating tumour cells in breast cancer
Carlos Caldas

Regulation of immune killer cell function by Hedgehog signalling
Maïke de la Roche

Identification of the transforming mechanism of the C11orf95-RELA fusion in ependymoma
Richard Gilbertson

Novel combination approaches for the treatment of pancreatic cancer
Duncan Jodrell & Frances Richards

Systems biology of multicellular interactions in cancer
Martin Miller

Evolution of transcriptional control in tissues and cancer
Duncan Odom

MRC Cancer Unit PhD Studentships

http://www.mrc-cu.cam.ac.uk/grad_students.html
Closing date: 25 November 2015

Oncogene-induced remodelling of cellular networks: a systems biology approach using optogenetics and next-generation microscopy
Alessandro Eposito and Ashok Venkitaraman

Characterising the mechanistic drivers of lung cancer progression
Carla Martins

Dissecting the role of fumarate as an oncometabolite
Christian Frezza

Modelling the survival and proliferation of cancer cells in metastasis
Ben Hall

Cambridge Cancer Centre PhD Studentships

<http://www.cambridgecancercentre.org.uk/studentships>

Closing date: 30 November 2015

The Cambridge Cancer Centre is a partnership between the University of Cambridge, Cancer Research UK and Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust which brings together academic researchers, clinicians, and industry collaborators based in the Cambridge area.

All projects are interdisciplinary, with more than one department being involved in each and the Principal Supervisor is listed first.

Epithelial cell dynamics during postnatal growth; relevance for oesophageal cancer development

Maria P. Alcolea, Wellcome Trust/Medical Research Council Stem Cell Institute
Benjamin D Simons, Cavendish Laboratory, Department of Physics and Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute

Pre-metastatic niche: vascular and immune compliance with invasive and metastatic breast cancer

Cristina Branco, Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience
Christine Watson, Department of Pathology
Randall Johnson, Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience

Development of novel methods to image leukocyte infiltration within tumours as a biomarker of immune checkpoint inhibition
Ferdia Gallagher, Department of Radiology
Edwin Chilvers, Department of Medicine
Klaus Okkenhaug, Babraham Institute
Pippa Corrie, Department of Oncology

Consequences of centrosome amplification in p53 null and Kras positive pancreatic organoids

David Glover, Department of Genetics
Meritxell Huch, Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute

Genomic and genetic approaches for the identification of TNBC genes

Walid Khaled, Department of Pharmacology
David Adams, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
John Marioni, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI)/Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute/Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute

Dynamics of Neural Stem Cell Fate Decision and Proliferation in a 3D Human Brain Model System

Madeline Lancaster, Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology
Benjamin D Simons, Cavendish Laboratory, Department of Physics and Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute

Characterising the alterations of haematopoietic stem cell niches and their functional implications in B cell malignancies
Ingo Ringshausen, Department of Haematology
Elisa Laurenti, Wellcome Trust/Medical Research Council Stem Cell Institute
Clive D'Santos, Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute

New synergies between magnetic hyperthermia and drug delivery for cancer therapy

Andrew Wheatley, Department of Chemistry
David Fairen-Jimenez, Department of Chemical Engineering



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www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/prizestudentships

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INSTITUTE

Graduate Studentships – Cell Biology of Cancer

The Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute is one of Europe's leading cancer research centres, supporting cutting edge work into the molecular mechanisms of cancer development. The Institute provides an outstanding research environment, underpinned by state-of-the-art core services and advanced technologies with special emphasis on imaging, metabolomics and in vivo models.

We are looking for students with a very good degree in a life sciences subject and an aptitude for experimental work, who are highly committed to pursuing a PhD and a career in cancer research. The Beatson has an excellent reputation and success record in training its graduate students. Students, whilst being trained at the Institute working within our research groups, will matriculate with the University of Glasgow.

Projects are available in the following groups in 2016:

Laura Machesky Migration, Invasion and Metastasis

Michael Olson Molecular Cell Biology

Kevin Ryan Tumour Cell Death

Stephen Tait Mitochondria and Cell Death

Studentships are funded for four years, starting in October 2016. The annual stipend will be £19,000. Further information and details of how to apply can be found on our website www.beatson.gla.ac.uk.

Closing date: 20th November 2015

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Imperial College London



October 2016 - PhD studentship opportunities

MRC-PHE Centre for Environment and Health

Imperial College London and
King's College London

The MRC-PHE Centre for Environment and Health is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for leading cutting edge multidisciplinary research on the health effects of environmental pollutants. We are delighted to welcome applications for our Centre funded 3-year PhD studentships to start October 2016. Studentships will be based at the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics (Imperial College London), and/or Analytical and Environmental Sciences Division (King's College London).

Studentships will include tuition fees and a minimum stipend of £15,700 to £17,500 per annum

For more information and instructions on how to apply <http://www.environment-health.ac.uk/centre-studentships-2016>

Closing Date: 15th December 2015

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Four year MRes/PhD programme in Developmental Neurobiology – intake 2016

Outstanding research training will be provided at the internationally recognised Department of Developmental Neurobiology at King's College London, utilising state-of-the-art techniques in various model systems. Projects will form part of three overlapping and interacting research programmes: Making a CNS: from Models to Human, Assembly and Plasticity of Neural Circuits and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Applications are welcomed from a wide range of academic backgrounds: from molecular and cellular biology, developmental biology, electrophysiology and computational neuroscience to the physical and mathematical sciences.

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- **Year 2-4 - PhD:** an original research project, transferable skills, seminars and conferences

Projects are available with the following group leaders:

Laura Andrae	Synaptogenesis and neurodevelopmental disorders
Esther Bell	Molecular mechanisms of neural induction
Juan Burrone	Synaptic physiology and plasticity
QueeLim Ch'ng	Information processing in neuroendocrine circuits
Jon Clarke	Morphogenesis and neurogenesis in the zebrafish CNS
Uwe Drescher	Molecular analysis of the development of neural circuits
Anthony Graham	The neural crest and neurogenic placodes
Matthew Grubb	Activity-dependent neuronal plasticity
Sarah Guthrie	Motor neuron development and diseases
Robert Hindges	Synaptic specificity in the vertebrate visual system
Corinne Houart	Signalling centres in the control of forebrain complexity
Clemens Kiecker	Transcriptional control of vertebrate forebrain development
Ivo Lieberam	ES cell-based models of neuromuscular circuits
Andrew Lowe	Population codes in visual processing
Eugene Makeyev	Post-transcriptional control of neural gene expression
Oscar Marin	Development of the cerebral cortex in health and disease
Martin Meyer	Development and function of the zebrafish visual system
Beatriz Rico	Neural networks assembly and brain disorders
Setsuko Sahara	Development and circuit formation in mouse and human brain
Rita Sousa-Nunes	MicroRNA regulation of neurogenesis
Guy Tear	Molecular mechanisms of axon guidance in Drosophila
Darren Williams	Dendrite development in Drosophila
Richard Wingate	Development of cerebellar-like circuits

For more details go to www.kcl.ac.uk/devneuro

UK and EU applicants are eligible for a full award. Candidates should have or expect at least an upper second class degree (2:1) in a subject relevant to the department's research programmes. If applicants possess a lower second class degree (2:2) then a research-based MSc at merit or distinction level is required. English language competence criteria apply.

Applications will open on 2nd November 2015 and close on 3rd January 2016. All applicants must complete and submit an online application, please see the above link.

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Angela Lee

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The Department has internationally renowned programmes in a broad spectrum of sciences relating to medicine, including:

- Cardiovascular Medicine
- Diabetes, Endocrinology & Metabolism
- Genes, Genetics & Genomics
- Haematology & Pathology
- Immunology
- Regenerative Medicine & Stem Cells
- Acute Stroke



Further details on the application process and the wide range of projects available can be found at:
www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/rdm-scholarships

The closing date for receipt of applications is 8th January 2016

The Radcliffe Department of Medicine actively promotes a family friendly working environment





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- Training in entrepreneurship and commercialisation.
- Opportunities to exchange ideas and disseminate research results at student conferences, innovation and commercialisation events, business ideas competitions, and outreach events.
- More details may be found at: <http://www.graphene-nownano.manchester.ac.uk/>

How to apply

Applications are invited from graduates with first or high upper second class degree (or equivalent) in experimental physics, materials science, nanoscience/nanotechnology, theoretical physics, condensed matter theory, or mathematical physics.

Applications should be made online at: <http://www.graphene-nownano.manchester.ac.uk/how-to-apply/> specifying 'Graphene NOWNANO CDT & Lloyd's Register Foundation' under 'research title'.



U267900R

PhD and Postdoctoral positions available

**Genetics of Disease,
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- Genetic basis of type 2 diabetes
- Genetics of circadian rhythms and sleep in health and disease
- The genetics and pathology of deafness
- The role of cilia in development and disease
- Disorders of sex development
- Bioinformatics of mouse models of disease
- Statistical genomics

We are seeking outstanding **postdoctoral researchers** who are highly motivated, with a good knowledge of genetics and an interest in using the mouse as a model system. Candidates must have published in a peer-reviewed journal, be capable of critical thinking and have the ability to formulate fundamental questions in their areas of interest that can be tested experimentally. See our website for the posts available and individual closing dates (www.har.mrc.ac.uk).

Our **PhD students** register with the University of Oxford and embark on a 4-year PhD programme, with an initial rotation in two laboratories. Candidates must have a first class or 2.1 honours degree, or equivalent, in biological science or a related discipline. Please send the application form available at www.har.mrc.ac.uk/students with a CV and cover letter to studentapplications2016@har.mrc.ac.uk. The closing date for PhD applications is **31 December 2015**.

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www.imperial.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/icphd

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Clinical & Experimental Pharmacology
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Cancer Research UK studentships are 4 years and core funding includes generous stipend, full tuition (home/international) and bench fees. Students from within the UK, EU and internationally are welcome to apply.

Closing Date: Thursday 19 November 2015 (24-00 hrs)

Interview Date: Tuesday 12 January 2016

For full project details, entry criteria and to make an application for October 2016 intake, please visit our website: www.cruk.manchester.ac.uk/Education/PhD-Studentships



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