

Guidelines
for
Graduate Student Supervisors
at
The Babraham Institute

January 2011

CONTACTS

Head of Department – Institute Director – Prof Michael Wakelam

Graduate Studies Tutor – Peter Evans – 540/6406 – peter.evans@bbsrc.ac.uk

Graduate Studies Administrator – Caroline Coursol – 301/6324 – caroline.coursol@bbsrc.ac.uk

Senior Graduate Committee Members

Peter Evans (Chair)	- Inositide
Geoff Butcher	- Lymphocyte Signalling and Development
Anne Corcoran	- Nuclear Dynamics
Myriam Hemberger	- Epigenetics
Nick Ktistakis	- Inositide
Klaus Okkenhaug	- Lymphocyte Signalling and Development
John Pascall	- Lymphocyte Signalling and Development
Jenny Pell	- Signalling and Cell Fate
Caroline Edmonds	- Head of Corporate Affairs
Jill Skinner	- Head of Personnel
Katy Evans-Roberts	- Babraham Biotechnology Ltd (BBT) -- Knowledge Exchange and Commercialization

Caroline Coursol - Administrator

There are also four graduate student representatives on the Committee

The Graduate School of Life Sciences
<http://www.biomed.cam.ac.uk/gradschool/>

The University of Cambridge Board of Graduate Studies
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud>

Frequently asked questions:

- 1) **What are my responsibilities? – Checklist**
- 2) **How do I get students?**
- 3) **How do I find out how to supervise students?**
- 4) **What are my Welfare and Pastoral responsibilities towards my students?**
- 5) **What do students do when they first arrive?**
- 6) **How is student progress assessed?**
- 7) **How do I register students for the PhD degree?**
- 8) **How do I ensure my students get good postdoctoral positions?**
- 9) **How do I get students an exemption from paying University/College fees when they are writing up?**
- 10) **What funds are available for my student when their studentship finishes and they still have not finished their PhD?**
- 11) **How do I get examiners appointed?**

1) Babraham Institute Graduate Student Supervisors - Check List of Responsibilities

To be read in conjunction with “Guidelines for Graduate Student Supervisors at the Babraham Institute” (page number refers)

Before the student arrives

- Read “Guidelines for Graduate Student Supervisors at The Babraham Institute” and the University of Cambridge, Board of Graduate Studies “Code of Practice – Graduate research degrees and certificates of postgraduate studies”
- Attend training course for new Supervisors – if appropriate
- Write and submit suitable project to the Graduate Committee
- Take part in Student Recruitment Open Day, including arranging tours of laboratory and interviewing students (page 6)
- Ensure appropriate and adequate resources are available and organized to enable the student to complete their PhD to the best of their ability and on time

While the student is at Babraham

- Ensure you are available to greet the student on their first day and introduce them to the other members of the laboratory. If this is not possible ensure that their mentor will be available to do this
- Ensure the student attends all parts of the Institute’s compulsory Graduate Induction Programme during their first two weeks at the Institute (page 14)
- Provide adequate computer access and facilities to the student (page 7)
- Encourage the student to join the Cambridge Philosophical Society (pages 14 &17)
- Complete termly reports on the student’s progress to both the Graduate Committee and the University Board of Graduate Studies. Discuss these with your students as they are regarded as open reports (page 14)
- Hold review meetings to discuss the student’s Feasibility Report (2 months), Upgrading Report (8 months) and Thesis Plan (24 months). In addition, hold regular informal review meetings between these times (pages 7/8)
- Following a successful 8 month report, complete the registration section of the third term report for the student and pass it to the Graduate Studies Tutor for signature and submission to the University. If you are using the CamSIS on-line system inform the Graduate Tutor that you have completed your report (page 14)
- From time to time inspect the student’s log to ensure that it is fully and accurately completed
- Ensure the student completes on time all parts of their three year assessment
- Ensure the student knows the procedure for submission of their dissertation and how to apply for the appointment of Examiners including the procedure for approval of title (pages 18/19)

Guidance and Training

(See also the Babraham Graduate Training and Development Guide)

- Ensure the student is aware of all Health and Safety policies and procedures and receives appropriate and timely training as required
- Ensure the student is aware and adheres to good laboratory practice
- If required, ensure the student is aware of the correct Home Office procedures and has the appropriate licence required for the project
- Provide regular and conscientious guidance to the student about their research project, including suggestions for background reading, and theoretical help on defining and refining the aims and rationale of their project
- Train the student, or arrange for training to be provided by others, in all aspects of science relating to their PhD project, including techniques, skills processes and procedures
- Ensure the student attends all compulsory training courses and encourage him/her to attend other courses and career development opportunities, including Laboratory and Programme seminars, Institute lectures, and University seminars, lectures and workshops (page 14)
- Encourage and assist the student to take part in the Institute's Schools Open Day
- Ensure student presents regularly at lab talks
- Encourage the student to present their work at National and International conferences and to present posters both internally and externally. (It is compulsory for all students to provide posters for the Institute's Annual Posters Day)
- Encourage and assist the student to participate in awareness opportunities and training for a wider range of science
- Discuss career opportunities and methods of researching potential job vacancies

Welfare

- Be aware that you have a Duty of Care to your student. Be available to discuss and help resolve any welfare issues which may arise and know where to advise the student to go to seek further help (pages 12/13)
- Advise the student on possible support and hardship funds and travel grants (pages 16/18)

2) How do I get students?

The Institute usually takes on around 12 – 15 new PhD students each year. It is recognised as a postgraduate teaching Department of the University of Cambridge and all our students are registered for a University of Cambridge PhD degree. The Institute only takes on full time students and does not run an MSc programme.

The Institute organizes a PhD Recruitment Open Day in January each year to which selected students (usually around 40 – 50) are invited to discuss their research interests and to view the Institute's facilities. During this visit the students make two laboratory visits, to meet project leaders and their groups, and are also given an academic interview by two other project leaders. The scores from these visits, together with a score for their CV, are collated by the Graduate Committee and form the basis of offers for available studentships.

The Institute receives a number of quota research studentships and quota CASE (Cooperative Industrial Studentships) studentships from the BBSRC every year in the form of a Departmental Training Account. It also has an MRC Training Account which can support a number of other studentships.

It is also possible for supervisors to apply for specific studentships for projects to be run in their groups by applying for BBSRC Strategic Studentships and MRC Capacity Building Studentships, as well as specific studentships awarded by various charities. CASE studentships are also awarded to specific supervisors since they require the supervisor to have arranged to carry out a specific project of interest to the industrial partner.

The Institute frequently takes on students from overseas. Non-UK EU nationals can presently only be awarded studentships on a "fees only basis" and are required to obtain their living expenses from other sources, unless they have been resident in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of their course when they are eligible for full funding. Non-EU nationals are not eligible for Research Council Studentships. They need to demonstrate to the University that they can guarantee funding for all three years of their PhD course before they arrive in Cambridge. They usually obtain this funding from various national scholarship schemes or from schemes like the Gates Scholarship Programme run through the University of Cambridge. The University web-site gives more information about possible funding sources.

The Graduate Committee has the responsibility for approving ALL proposed graduate student projects before they are submitted for fellowship, scholarship, CASE agreements or quota applications.

The Institute has strict guidelines on how many students an individual supervisor may have in their group at any one time. These are set by BEC in consultation with the Graduate Committee. Currently, they are set at no more than three students working actively at the bench with a fourth student writing up. Permission to exceed these guidelines will only be granted by the Graduate Committee in exceptional circumstances and only if the Committee is consulted before any agreement has been made between a supervisor and a potential student and before any applications for funding have been made.

3) How do I find out how to supervise students?

Information on the best practices to adopt for graduate supervision is provided in many places. New Supervisors must read the University of Cambridge, Board of Graduate Studies “Memorandum to Supervisors of Graduate Students”. In addition, it is compulsory for all new Babraham Supervisors to attend the Introductory Course for New Supervisors run annually by the Staff development Office of the University of Cambridge. It is best for all new supervisors to attend this course as early as possible in their supervisory career and Personnel will organize this for you.

You are reminded that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the student completes all parts of their assessment, attends training courses, takes part in the Institute Schools day and attends both Laboratory and Programme seminars as well as all Institute Lectures.

Student computers:

The Institute Computer Strategy Committee and the Graduate Committee have agreed that it is the project leaders’ responsibility to provide computer access for their students. It is recommended that all students have access to their own computer.

Much other useful information and advice can be obtained by reading the Institute Graduate Programme Outline (reproduced below) and the Graduate training and Development brochure which is available on line. Another source of useful information is the Graduate School of Life Sciences web site (see below). Supervisors would also find it useful to read the following publications by the Board of Graduate Studies: Submitting your thesis for the Ph.D., MSc. and M.Litt Degrees and a Guide to Examiners for the Ph.D, M.Sc., and M.Litt.Degrees.

Outline of the Babraham Institute PhD Programme (reproduced from the web)

• [Outline](#) • [Graduate Committee](#) • [Student Personal Committee](#) • [Training](#) • [University of Cambridge affiliation](#)

The aim of our Graduate Programme is to train talented individuals for future roles in science and technology or in the communication and wider application of these disciplines. We provide an environment that provides students with a profound knowledge base in one of our research areas (see below) and aims to sharpen critical abilities through exposure to the discipline of hypothesis-driven research. The Institute also encourages excellence in the communication of scientific results and ideas within the Institute as well as to the wider scientific and non-scientific community.

The Babraham Institute is an international focus for innovative research in post-genomics, studying gene function in cells, organs and systems. Details of our scientific programmes can be found on www.babraham.ac.uk. The Institute is fully equipped for state-of-the-art biological research including: innovative molecular biology, stem cell manipulation and transgenesis, real-time laser scanning confocal microscopy, fluorescence-activated sorting of cells, gene targeting and knockouts, mouse models of disease, mouse/rat behavioural testing and proteomics.

Babraham offers a first-class Graduate Training Programme: while the emphasis is on qualifying students for a career in research at international level, careful attention is also paid to transferable skills and career advice so that those few students electing not to stay at the bench can instead use their skills productively. Students are not 'extra pairs of hands' to be squeezed into a lab whenever possible, but instead a carefully selected, valued and nurtured addition to academic life at the Institute.

Babraham has achieved excellent external evaluation of its Graduate Programme and we

are committed to ensuring that the Programme evolves to yet higher standards of excellence. Three- or four-year PhD studentships are available depending upon the previous experience of the candidate.

Babraham has achieved excellent external evaluation of its Graduate Programme and we are committed to ensuring that the Programme evolves to yet higher standards of excellence. Three or four year PhD studentships are available depending upon previous experience and the report from the recent assessments of the Institute's Studentships and Fellowships Training Scheme can be [downloaded here](#)

The [Corporate Report 2001 - 2005](#) describes the major improvements we have introduced to our Graduate Programme in recent years. [The Graduate Committee](#)

The Graduate Programme is run by the Graduate Committee chaired by the Graduate Studies Tutor. The Committee consists of five project leaders, three heads of management and four student representatives. The Committee has a variety of functions including the recruitment of new students, the monitoring of student progress, the coordination of pastoral care and supervising student transferable skills training. It is also the main body through which student issues are represented to the Babraham Executive Committee.

Student Personal Committee

Within the Institute each student has a personal committee which supports them through his/her studies. This consists of their 'Supervisor' with whom he or she has day-to-day contact to plan and monitor work (particularly during the first few months) and to advise on the putting together of the thesis. Another point of contact within the Institute is the 'Mentor': usually someone working in a similar field, the Mentor acts as a second point of call for the student and can offer broad advice on experimental design, laboratory techniques etc., and day to day questions in the absence of the Supervisor.

In addition, each student has an 'Assessor'. This person is from another laboratory, or may be from outside the Institute, and acts to review the student's progress independently. Formal assessments occur at fixed points throughout the 3 or 4 years of the PhD course. Students write a 2 month Report to ensure that they are clear with the aims and objectives of their thesis project and that all the necessary reagents and equipment are in place for their studies. They write an 8 month Registration Report to ensure that the aims of the project are being fulfilled and that no unexpected complications have arisen with their project. Both reports are formally considered, together with the student's training needs, at an interview with the student's Personal Committee. The recommendation of this Committee on the 8 month Report is considered by the Graduate Committee who will recommend whether the student should be formally registered with the University of Cambridge for the PhD degree.

The student writes a Thesis Plan outlining the work they have already carried out and the work they need to finish off for each of the potential chapters at the beginning of their 3rd year (and it is revised at the beginning of the 4th year for 4 year studentships). This report is reviewed in meetings with the student's Personal Committee who report to the Graduate Committee.

Formal training

In addition to training given in the laboratory, the Institute offers a variety of courses to equip students with a range of transferable skills suited to future job markets. The training courses are continually monitored and updated by the Graduate Committee following student feedback. They consist of a number of compulsory core courses, together with optional training courses individually tailored to the needs of each student. Students get the opportunity to experience teaching small groups of University undergraduates in supervisions and, in addition, to demonstrate and explain research techniques to sixth form students during the Institute's Annual Schools Open Day.

The Institute's Graduate Committee oversees a training credit system to ensure that every student accumulates the level of transferable skills training required by the Research Councils. This scheme was developed in association with the University of Cambridge Graduate School in Biological, Veterinary and Clinical Sciences as a strategy for the

implementation of additional 'Roberts' training and the use of the associated new funds. Based upon a survey of ongoing best practice, we have developed a system of credits that recognises and extends the existing transferable skills training given at the Institute. Credits are given both for attendance at formal courses but also for learning through experience activities, such as giving journal clubs or seminars, attending appropriate conferences or participating in events such as the Institute's Schools Open Day. There are caps to the number of credits that can be gained in particular areas of activity to ensure each student achieves a balanced portfolio of training.

Babraham's students currently exceed the target 10-days per annum training recommended by the Research Councils at this level. The new credit system applies to the October 2005 student intake onwards, although existing students may use the system as a template for completing their own training, if they wish.

The following are some of the courses available to students:

- Experimental design and data management (Good Laboratory Practice, Home Office courses)
- Research environment: ethics, funding, health and safety
- Communication skills: oral presentation, effective poster production and presentation, scientific writing, team working and leadership skills
- Interpersonal skills: career, networking, time management
- IT skills: Microsoft Office software, www, e-mail, bioinformatics, reference management
- Science in the commercial environment: intellectual property, entrepreneurship and business planning; Careers Research Advisory Centre courses

Affiliation with University of Cambridge

Babraham has the status of a recognised postgraduate institution within the University of Cambridge; all our students are registered within the Faculty of Biology for the PhD degree. In addition, our project leaders are full University supervisors and the Institute Director acts as a 'Head of Department'. We ensure that all our new Supervisors, and those new to Babraham, undergo supervisory training through the University of Cambridge.

Babraham students account for almost 6% of the total postgraduate population in the Faculty of Biology at the University. All PhD students are affiliated to one of the colleges at the University, which provides accommodation options and a focal point for social activities within the University. The Babraham Institute is proactively involved with the Graduate School of Life Sciences (www.bio.cam.ac.uk/gradschool/) within the University, which co-ordinates and provides training, network and career support for all postgraduate students in the biological sciences in Cambridge.

Students are encouraged to make full use of the expertise and skills training available at Babraham and within the University of Cambridge, in particular those provided by the Gradschool.

Opportunities and requirements

- Students are expected to attend all Babraham Lectures, Scientific Programme seminars and laboratory talks.
- Students are expected to follow the training schedule as outlined in the Graduate Training and Development Booklet
- Students are encouraged to participate in the Schools' Open Day held in March each year.
- Students are expected to present their work at national and international conferences. Funding is available for travel.
- The Institute is uniquely placed in the UK, being close to several other excellent establishments involved in biological research. Students should take every opportunity to visit these and to attend seminars there (keep your eyes on the notice boards).
- All students are registered with the University of Cambridge and therefore, with a College. It is hoped that they will participate fully in University and College life.

Graduate School of Life Sciences (reproduced from web page)

<http://www.biomed.cam.ac.uk/gradschool/degrees/supervising.html>

The supervisor's role

The supervisor has primarily a teaching role. PhD students undoubtedly do have the potential to increase the supervisor's research productivity, yet a PhD (or an MPhil) is largely about training. The student needs to complete the degree with a grounding in both specialist and transferable skills, and an understanding of scientific method, creativity, problem spotting and problem solving. Before committing yourself to take on a research student, ask yourself whether you have the time to devote to teaching that student, and whether the resources exist in your group to give the student an adequate training and research environment.

What students expect from you

1. Regular and conscientious guidance about their research project. This includes help with background reading, technical help (either personally or arranging for them to be helped by others) and theoretical guidance (defining and refining the aims and rationale of the project).
2. Regular meetings. You may well see your students frequently, and this is as it should be. Note, however, there are a few designated meetings, which have defined objectives and critical timing. They are recorded in the [Student Log](#), which all students have to complete.

These are:

Meeting	Purpose
Initial (first month)	Outline project; provide background reading Agree initial techniques and research work
Training needs (year 1)	Discuss training including all forms of skills and courses
Project feasibility (~ 3 months)	Review initial results; assess feasibility of project
Progress (1st year report)	Review progress. Discuss first year report
Training needs (year 2)	Discuss what further skills need to be developed this year
Progress (year 2)	Assess progress. Discuss additional training needs.
Progress (year 3: start)	Discuss plan for thesis. Draw up timetable for completing work and writing thesis .
Training needs (year 3)	What training can usefully be achieved this year
Progress (year 3 end)	Is thesis on target. There will be a supplemental year if student is on a 4-year course

3. Ensuring that the student maintains his/her Student Log. The accuracy of this Log is the responsibility of the student, though you are asked to sign to confirm attendance at meetings and courses.

4. Ensuring that the student receives adequate specific and transferable skills training. The Research Councils and some other funding bodies now insist on this aspect of training for research students. This training will not interfere with the student's research, but will supplement it.

5. To be clear about what you expect from him/her, in terms of lab/field or clinical work, contact with you, relations with others in your group, access to equipment etc. and the requirements of [first year reports](#).

What you should expect from students

1. To be available when requested, but also to initiate meetings themselves when appropriate.

2. Adherence to the agreed research procedures, training programmes etc. and diligence.

3. Strict adherence to good practice. This includes both using equipment safely and expeditiously, correct Home Office procedures (where applicable) and acceptable behaviour (i.e. towards you and other members of your group).

4. Correct and verifiable record keeping.

5. Active contribution not only to the practical aspects of the research, but also to its planning and initiation. This is likely to be more apparent as the student progresses; at first there will be considerable need for guidance, but this should diminish as the research proceeds. Students should be encouraged to become progressively more independent.

Problems with students: mediation procedures

If you have problems with students, please take early action: avoid this problem becoming chronic, or escalating in any way. If you have difficulty in resolving problems yourself, it is important to recognise this. All students should now have an adviser, who may play a part in problem solving. The Chair of your DGEC and your Head of Department are also available for consultation.

The Graduate School gives all new students a copy of the document on its [Mediation procedure](#) in their welcome pack. In addition it provides [supervision feedback forms](#), which can help pick up any problems at a very early stage.

Training for supervisors

Please consider carefully whether you might benefit from any [Personal and professional development courses](#). Although it is likely that those who have never supervised a research student will be most in need, it is also possible that those with experience might benefit from some of the sessions. In particular you may want to consider the programme for [Principal Investigator Development](#).

4) What are my Welfare and Pastoral responsibilities towards my students?

As a supervisor you have a duty of care to all your research students and have a responsibility to ensure that they are able to cope with any welfare issues that they may encounter during their time in your group. As one of the people who meets students on a day to day basis it is often the Supervisor who is able to notice the first signs of a problem arising with a particular individual. In most cases the sooner a problem is tackled the easier it may be to resolve.

You should realise that many students now come to their graduate studies with quite a high degree of unavoidable debt which is stressful in itself. On top of that relationship problems, illness or death of a parent or other close relative, their own illness or even simply the time and physical demands of working full-time at the bench, may be too much to cope with at times.

Students at Babraham have access to a wide range of pastoral resources which the student can be directed to if you feel you are not able to provide the help they need to resolve a particular problem. Thus, within the Institute they can approach other members of their Personal Committee, the Graduate Studies Tutor, any other member of the Graduate Committee they feel comfortable talking to or any member of the Institute Staff Support Group (details on the Babraham Intranet home page). Your students can also access help on welfare issues from the Graduate Tutor of their College or from the University of Cambridge Counselling Service (13/14 Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1QA, Tel No. 01223-332865).

The Counselling Service is really very good and you should encourage your student to consult them if you think they could be helpful. Unfortunately, depression/confidence problems appear to be increasing in Cambridge students. The abstract below from the Graduate School website explains in more detail how signs such as changes in the pattern of attendance (irregular) at work and changes in eating habits or noticeable weight gain or loss may be important symptoms to look out for. It also emphasises the need to assure your student that in admitting to a problem they will not be discriminated against academically. The Counselling Service works to a Code of Confidentiality and will only involve other people with the students explicit approval. The basic message to get across is that it is better to seek help sooner, rather than later.

The University Counselling Service

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/new/counselling.html>

Being a graduate student is fun, but it can also be stressful. Many of you will be new to this University, or even this country, and it is quite common to find that adjusting to the life of a graduate student takes some time. Even those of you who were undergraduates here will find life in your new role surprisingly different. This is not to say that graduate student status is a life-threatening condition, but perhaps there should be a "health warning" attached. Many students will experience some kind of emotional or behavioural disturbance at some time during their studies. A recent survey showed that one-third of students reported academic problems as giving either "quite a lot" or "a great deal" of worry. Financial and social/personal relationship problems are also relatively common. Many people experience some of the symptoms

associated with such difficulties at some point in their lives. Most are just normal reactions to common life events, but sometimes they can become more serious.

In an institution that strives for excellence, the pressure to succeed can be intense, which also means that stress levels can run high. It is quite likely that you will suffer the effects of this at some stage in your post-graduate programme. If this presents you with a problem, then you may find it solved through talking to friends or family, supervisor, college tutor, or a nurse, GP or chaplain. However, there are times when it may be right to seek help away from the familiar daily environment and the **University Counselling Service** is there for just that purpose. You will not be alone: the Service works with around 1,000 students each year and the numbers attending are growing. It offers not only personal and group counselling and support, but access to medical help in the (rare) cases where this is needed.

(Supervisors please note the following for your students)

If you notice some of the following signs, then it is probably time to take note: persistent absenteeism or lateness, self-neglect, poor concentration and performance, impatience, changed behaviour and appearance, difficulty sleeping, difficulty in eating or over-eating, nightmares, lack of motivation, over use of alcohol/drugs, feelings of isolation, withdrawal from peer group, obsessional attitude towards work, a desire to be perfect and an unrealistic pre-occupation with failure. But, note, you do not have to exhibit all these symptoms. You may, in fact, be exhibiting some, but maybe ignoring them, or pretending they do not exist. However, if your friends spot some of these in you, then listen to them.

You may fear that in admitting to a problem you will be discriminated against academically and it may affect your future career. That is not so. The Counselling Service works to a Code of Confidentiality and will only involve other people with your explicit approval. And the University is here to help you successfully complete your post-graduate programme, otherwise it would not have offered you a place.

So, what is the message? If you, like so many of us, find that your reaction to any number of common life events makes life difficult for you, seek help from any of the sources indicated here and do it sooner, rather than later.

5) What do students do when they first arrive and what other courses are compulsory?

When students first arrive at the Institute they attend a compulsory Graduate Induction Programme for their first week. The aim of this course is to provide a foundation in key skills needed for future work and assessment. It introduces essential skills such as: 'good laboratory practice' and experimental design, basic computing and statistics, library skills, molecular biology and database mining, safety, animals and the Home Office, intellectual property and a tour of the Site including specialist equipment.

In the First Year students will attend a number of courses designed to meet their specific needs as well as the following compulsory courses:

Induction (inc. Health and Safety)

Statistics

Presentation skills

Technical writing

Poster production and presentation

Time Management

Team Development

Equality and Diversity Awareness

Harassment Awareness

Poster Design

In the Second Year the students will attend the following compulsory courses:

Intellectual property & Knowledge Transfer

From PhD to Professional

Writing a research fellowship application

Year 3 is kept as free from courses as possible so that students can focus on lab-based research.

When students first arrive make sure they join the **Cambridge Philosophical Society**. This can provide them with extra funds when their studentship finishes and also gives out Travel grants (see Section 7).

6) How is student progress assessed?

As a supervisor it is expected that you will have day to day contact with the student and so will probably be the person most able to assess the student's progress. You will be required to make termly reports on the student's progress to both the Graduate Committee and to the University Board of Graduate Studies. The University will request reports from you as required by e-mail and you can fill your report in on-line using the Cambridge Supervision Reporting System (CSRS), which lies within the student record system, CamSIS. (You will need an id and password to use this system. This can be obtained by contacting the Institute Graduate Studies Tutor, currently Dr Peter Evans). Please remember that these are now regarded as open reports and should be discussed freely with your students. You should e-mail a copy of all your reports to Caroline Coursol for your student's file. The Institute would expect you to notify the Graduate Committee at an early stage if you have any

concerns. Students will also make a self-assessment of their progress on a termly basis.

The student's progress is formally assessed after 2 and 8 months and at the end of their second year by their mentor and assessor as outlined in the Babraham PhD Student Programme. Their progress is also assessed by informal termly self assessment forms.

7) How to I register students for the PhD degree?

After 8 months at the Institute students are required to write an 8-month report containing a detailed literature review and a report on the results they have obtained to date. This report is read by the Mentor and Assessor who will submit a recommendation to the Graduate Committee whether or not to register the student formally for the PhD degree. Registration is usually retrospective to the time that they started their PhD studies.

To formally register students for the PhD degree with the University the supervisor needs to fill in the third term Registration Report for the student which has a registration section at the end. This can now be done successfully on-line at CSRS provided that the Graduate Committee has received a positive recommendation from the student's Mentor and Assessor. Please e-mail a copy of your report to Linda Notton for inclusion in the student's file and also e-mail the Institute Graduate Tutor (currently Dr Peter Evans) to inform him that you have submitted the Registration Report for your student. He will then confirm the recommendation of the Graduate Committee on-line.

8) How do I ensure my students get good postdoctoral positions?

You need to start thinking of postdoctoral positions for your students at the beginning of their third year if you wish to get them into high quality laboratories which frequently plan their postdoctoral intake at least 12 months in advance.

Thus, the Institute recommends that you have an informal discussion with your 3rd Year students early in the academic year, so that they can begin to think of appropriate labs to consider for postdocs, and also so that potential postdoc advisors can begin to seek funds for your student if they do not have any currently available.

It is always hard to know exactly when students will finish their PhDs and be available to take up postdocs. However, an exciting postdoc in a high quality lab, potentially in a foreign country, must be one of the best carrots to give students to finish their writing up!

9) How do I get students an exemption from paying University/College fees when they are writing up?

After students have completed 9 terms of research and are no longer using experimental facilities when they are writing up, they can make an application to the Board of Graduate Studies to get an exemption from paying the University

Composition Fee (see below how they should go about doing this). They can also approach their College for a parallel exemption from paying College fees. Their College Graduate Tutor should be able to help them seek this College exemption

Exemption from the University Composition Fee (reproduced from web page)

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/funding/costs/exemption.html>

You will pay both types of fee to your College, usually in full at the beginning of the academic year.

- University Composition Fee (UCF) - Tuition fee
- College Fee

Fee Liability for PhD (NOTAF, CPGS)

You are liable to pay the UCF for the minimum number of terms:

- 9 terms full time (3 years)
- 15 terms part time (5 years)

After this time you enter a 12 month 'writing up' period and will normally be automatically exempt from payment of the UCF. The Board of Graduate Studies will notify you by e-mail when you are made exempt. Prior to ET 09, PhD students needed to complete a paper application to apply to be 'Exempt' from the UCF after their 9th term. This process has now become automatic - there is no need to apply.

However, your Faculty may request the continued payment of fees beyond the minimum period if:

1. you are making substantial use of University facilities, beyond the minimum period, or
2. sponsorship for your fees is available beyond the minimum period (ie Research Council award), or
3. your PhD course is of longer duration (applies to certain courses in Physics)

Your College Accounts office is informed of your fee liability each term by the Board of Graduate Studies (through the 'Fee Bill'). Your College will inform you if you are liable for fees beyond the minimum period.

Other exemptions from fee liability:

1. Intermision (suspension) of studies for ill health etc.
You may be eligible for exemption from the payment of fees during the period of intermision
2. Leave to Work Away from Cambridge - for overseas fieldwork etc.
You may be eligible for exemption from fees with the approval of your department. Note this does not apply to students beginning PhD study on/after October 2010

Please note:

While the Board of Graduate Studies determines your liability for the UCF, your liability for the College fee is determined by your college. The college will usually, but not always, follow the UCF. You will need to talk to your College directly about applying to be exempt from your College Fee.

10) What funds are available for my student when their studentship finishes and they still have not finished their PhD?

There are a number of funds which can be accessed to provide additional support at the end of a studentship if a student overruns. These include both University and College hardship funds and specific grants from the Cambridge Philosophical Society (see details below but you need to have been a member for over a year to access the funds).

Research Studentship Fund (reproduced from web page)

<http://www.societies.cam.ac.uk/cps/studentship.htm#research>

The Cambridge Philosophical Society has established a Research Studentship Fund for the award of one or more studentships or grants for research in any of the natural sciences or any branch of technology or mathematics. The purpose of these awards is to provide for the continuation of an exceptionally promising piece of research beyond the usual standard of the PhD or alternatively to allow extra time for the completion of a PhD thesis which has been delayed by circumstances outside the applicant's control. Awards will be tenable for a period not exceeding three months and will be made at rates comparable to Research Council maintenance grants. The Society cannot make any contributions towards fees, travelling expenses, etc.

Applicants for awards must be Fellows of the Philosophical Society of at least one year's standing at the closing date for applications. They must be Registered Graduate Students of the University, though in exceptional circumstances this latter condition may be waived. In making awards the Society will have regard to the specific piece of research proposed, to the proven ability of the applicant, and to the other sources of funds for which the applicant may be eligible. Applicants should describe the aims of their research and report on progress to date including a full explanation for any delays which have occurred. A reasoned estimate of the time necessary for these research aims to be achieved should be provided.

Each applicant should ensure that their application is supported by written statements from their supervisor and one other referee which should be sent IN CONFIDENCE to the Executive Secretary at the Society's office to reach her no later than the closing date.

Applications for awards must reach the Executive Secretary of the Society by **31 March** or **30 September**. Payments will be made at agreed intervals after application to the Treasurer of the Society. Successful applicants will be required to furnish a report of the work carried out during the tenure of the award. Application forms are available from the Executive Secretary, Cambridge Philosophical Society, Arts School, Bene't Street, Cambridge CB2 3PY (telephone 334743).

Also in [Word](#) or [PDF](#) format.

NB: Applicants should also seek other possible sources of funds, including their College and Department.

Travel Grants

<http://www.societies.cam.ac.uk/cps/studentship.htm#research>

Application forms for travel grants are available to print off as [Word](#) or [PDF](#) documents.

([Get the free Adobe Acrobat PDF Reader here](#)).

Please:

- print clearly using black ink.
- ensure you append a brief statement of the relevance of the proposed travel to your research.
- ensure that a letter of support is sent to the Society's office by the closing date. In the case of a Graduate Student the letter should come from the Supervisor.
- submit original application form, photocopies are not acceptable
- ensure that your application is submitted before you travel
- give details of your funding body if you are a Graduate Student
- make full enquiries about the availability of air or rail tickets at low cost, to ensure that the estimated travel expenses given in the application form are the lowest that are possible

Note:

- closing dates for applications are **1 February, 1 May, 1 July and 1 November**
- grants are usually between £50 and £250
- preference will be given to projects involving the promotion of research rather than the presentation of results

11) How do I get examiners appointed?

Full information is given on the Board of Graduate Studies website
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/>

About three months before submission (reproduced from web page)

The Board will write to you at the appropriate time to tell you what to do.
 (However, they do not seem to be doing this currently, so do not rely on them to contact you!)

About three months before submission

1. *Submission date*

- You must not submit your dissertation before the first day of your 9th full-time (15th part-time) term for the PhD, or 6th full-time (10th part-time) term for the MSc or MLitt, unless you have been granted exemption from up to 3 full-time (5 part-time) terms of research
- You are expected to submit your thesis for examination no later than the last day of your fourth year if you are a full-time student and the last day of your seventh year if you are a part-time student (30th September if you are an October starter) unless you have been granted permission to defer your submission deadline. This deadline is the same for all three Degrees, but most MSc/MLitt candidates should aim to submit around the 7th full-time (12th part-time) term.
- The day you hand in your dissertation (or the day it arrives at the Board's office) will be the date recorded in your student record as being your submission date. This date is reported to funding bodies in response to their requests for submission statistics. The only exception would be if your deadline date falls on a weekend or during a public holiday, in which case, the date entered will be that of the last working day before the weekend or holiday.

2. *Deferring submission*

You may apply for an extension online using your self-service pages (see: [Deferring your dissertation submission date](#)). This requires a written endorsement from your supervisor. When seeking an extension, be realistic about the date of your submission. There is heavy pressure on Departments for all PhDs to be submitted within 4 full-time (7 part-time) years of starting. Your Degree Committee may not agree to grant an extension beyond 4 (7) years, except in cases of illness (supported by a medical letter) or other grave cause.

3. *Applying for appointment of Examiners*

You should apply for the appointment of Examiners at least two months in advance of submitting your dissertation on a Appointment of Examiners Application Form which is available from the Linda Notton or Peter Evans. You may also have to apply for your thesis title to be approved. Please check with your Degree Committee about this.

If you expect to leave the country soon after submission you must bear in mind that you will be expected to attend a viva voce (oral) examination in this country. You should state on the application form for the appointment of Examiners the proposed date of your departure, allowing at least eight weeks between the date of the submission and the proposed date of departure.

The Degree Committee will do its best to arrange your oral examination as quickly as possible, but please bear in mind that it is sometimes difficult to find a suitable examiner, or the most suitable person may not be free to act within a tight timetable.

The appointment of examiners may take some time, particularly if your application for appointment is submitted during a vacation.

4. Approval of the Title

The subject of your research is provisionally approved at the time of your admission and confirmed in more specific terms when you are registered as a candidate for a research degree.

When applying for Examiners to be appointed, your Degree Committee may ask you to propose the precise title of your thesis. Your supervisor may also be invited to indicate his or her support for this title which will need to be submitted to your Degree Committee for approval.

5. The Summary

The summary must be written in English and should consist of a piece of connected prose forming an abstract of the dissertation and be about 300 words in length. If at all possible, it should be accommodated on one side of A4 sized paper. It should bear your name and the exact title of your dissertation at the head of the page.

If you submit a soft-bound thesis in the first instance, you will need, when submitting the final, hard-bound, copy of your thesis, to provide a further, loose-leaf, copy of this summary, identical to that bound into the final version, for the University Library file.

The summary will be considered by the Examiners and, if the dissertation is approved, be deposited in the University Library for consultation and inter-library loan.

NOTE: Babraham students are also required to deposit a copy of their thesis with the Babraham Library. The costs of the production of this copy of the thesis will be met by the Institute (Please see Babraham Librarian – Jennifer Maddock for details of reimbursement).