Guide for Postgraduate Research Students

2021-2022
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Welcome to the Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine! We hope that your studies will be enjoyable and rewarding. The postgraduate community (PhD, MSc and MRes students) is very important for the vitality of the Institute and of the University as a whole, and it is our aim to ensure that you receive the best possible research training and get the most from your time here.

This booklet is aimed specifically at PhD and MSc (R) students, though some items assume you’re doing a PhD. It also contains a lot relevant to MSc and MRes students, particularly when carrying out projects. It has been produced to provide you with information about the Institute and the facilities that are available for you to use. You will also receive a copy of the Guidance Notes for Postgraduates produced by the Graduate School of College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences (MVLS) which contains a great deal of useful information about studying for a higher degree.

The Graduate School has also recently launched the ‘PGR Den’ which will contain useful information such as that delivered at the Graduate School’s induction day. PGR Den can be found via the ‘Information for Current Students’ page https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentstudents. The site is a work in progress and will have more information soon...

THE INSTITUTE OF BIODIVERSITY, ANIMAL HEALTH AND COMPARATIVE MEDICINE

The Institute’s research work is very diverse and is organised into four broad and overlapping themes that integrate researchers across the Institute, and link to other research activities within the College and the wider University:

- Ageing, Health & Welfare
- Animal Ecology & Environmental Change
- Infectious Disease
- Evolutionary Analysis

There are a range of discussion groups and shared interest groups covering specific research techniques, taxonomic groups or theoretical areas. Details can be found at https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/research. You are strongly advised to join appropriate groups, and to take advantage of them to build your knowledge and talk about your ideas.

The individual research interests of the academic staff can be seen at https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/staff. Many of us are also members of the interdisciplinary Boyd Orr Centre for Population and Ecosystem Health, the Glasgow Ageing Research Network (GARNER) and the Glasgow Centre for International Development (GCID), which you may wish to join. See their websites at https://www.gla.ac.uk/boydorr, https://www.gla.ac.uk/garnер, https://www.gla.ac.uk/gcid, respectively, for further details.

We also work closely with staff from the Schools of Life Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. Their websites are at https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/lifesciences and https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/vet.

Most of the Institute’s staff work either in the Jarrett, Henry Wellcome or Urquhart Buildings on the Garscube Estate or the Graham Kerr Building and neighbouring Wolfson Link / Davidson Building in the Main (Gilmorehill) Campus. We also have a research facility on Loch Lomond side, the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) with some staff based there permanently, and a second research facility at Cochno Research Farm north of Glasgow.
The academic staff are your colleagues and you should take every opportunity to discuss your work with them – they are likely to have good ideas and advice.

Other people you need to know about include:

**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH CONVENORS**

Postgraduate research convenors are responsible for overseeing your training and progression through your research degree. They deal with problems, advise on regulations, help with applications for research training money and run the annual review process that checks on your progress every year. They are always available through a joint email address, bahcm-pgr-convenor@glasgow.ac.uk, which we generally recommend you use to make sure the message gets to the right person, and in case one of them is away.

**Kathryn Elmer** is the lead convenor and attends most of the university meetings representing the institute. There are also two deputy conveners, **Davina Hill**, who deals especially with issues related to Garscube and research away from Glasgow (Davina is currently off on maternity leave through to 2022), and **Paul Johnson** who deals with IT related issues concerning the University and College’s online systems – such as the PGR reporting system.

**Mark Paterson** deals with all the administrative issues for postgraduates. He knows the rules and will help keep you on the right track. Tier 4 visa holders will check in with Mark. Two check-ins a year (for tier 4 visa holders) will also be done by Student Services – see more information at https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/registry/tier4.

Normally one of us will be able to help or will know someone who can.

**KEY SUPPORT STAFF**

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<td>Jacqueline Coutts</td>
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<td>Jennifer Crawford</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Malcolm</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorna Kennedy</td>
<td>Administrator (Institute HR, PA to Head of Institute)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Paterson</td>
<td>PGR Administrator and Garscube local support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kotryna Ula Kiliulyte</td>
<td>Amin Assistant (room bookings, taxis &amp; viva support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauline Thorburn</td>
<td>SCENE Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Griffiths</td>
<td>Technical Resource Manager / Health and Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ross Phillips</td>
<td>Named Animal Care Welfare Officer (Graham Kerr Building)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Newton</td>
<td>Named Animal Care Welfare Officer (SCENE)</td>
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Contact details for Biological Services staff here: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/biologicalservices/contact/ Please note this link is only available on campus.

Further Details at: University of Glasgow - Research Institutes - Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health & Comparative Medicine - About Us - Information for staff and students - Committees & Groups

**POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE**

The MVLS Graduate School has a Postgraduate Committee with student representation from each Institute, and the Institute has its own elected Postgraduate representatives. These change regularly but they have a joint email address: bahcm-pgr-rep@glasgow.ac.uk. The 2021-2022 reps are **Raheema Chunara**, **John Ogunsola** and **Bethany Smith**. You can contact them informally about anything you’d like support with if you’d prefer to talk to another student rather than one of the convenors.
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Many of you will be working alongside other researchers within a research group, but we think that it is important that you mix with others within the Institute, both to prevent you becoming too narrow in focus and to improve your social life! So please make use of the Social Room in the Graham Kerr Building for a coffee break around 11 o’clock every morning and/or at lunchtime, and in the Level 5 Resource Centre of the Henry Wellcome Building in Garscube at similar times. We also have “Coffee in the Museum” every second Thursday and you are particularly encouraged to attend. One of the Institute staff will provide cakes with the tea and coffee, generally in exchange for some contribution to charity. This takes place in the Zoology Museum of the Graham Kerr Building at 10.30am.

“Coffee@Garscube” is held one Thursday every month in the Resource Centre (HWB), with cakes and other goodies provided by a research-team (MarkP will send out an email beforehand). A bar is run every Friday evening from about 5/5.30 either in the pods on Level 5 in the Michael Stoker Building at Garscube or in the Level 5 Resource Centre. This is usually attended by a small group of PhDs and postdocs, but anyone is welcome. Finally, in normal times, we run a bar known as the Friday Fox after the 4pm talks on Friday in the Museum in Graham Kerr to encourage people to socialise after the talks. When it is back up and running, do come along to support it! Note that taxis can be booked to take you from Garscube to the main campus for talks – just email any of the Admin staff.

You should also make sure you are on our social mailing list bahcm-social@glasgow.ac.uk, which you can do by emailing sympa@lists.cent.gla.ac.uk with “subscribe bahcm-social” in the subject or body of the email, from the email address that you wish to receive the emails. This will inform you about social events such as our regular Friday night trips to local pubs (again, when things return to normal!), visits to Cochno Farm at weekends where some of the institute can be found hard at work on the community allotment, and meals with visiting speakers, etc.

There are two Facebook groups run by the institute: one to coordinate the Friday night social occasions https://www.facebook.com/groups/217683908272058 , and a second for the Institute’s podcast https://www.facebook.com/naturallypod .

The Institute also has three twitter accounts that promote our activities. You are encouraged to follow us at @IBAHCM, @sceneUofG for SCENE and @ibahcmT for the PGR student comms team, and to contribute pictures and updates, particularly about field work, meetings and presentations by either tweeting at us, e- mailing bahcm-webteam@glasgow.ac.uk or joining the @ibahcmT team! Have you taken any good photos or video content of your lab research or field-trips? Contact our Comms Team. They’re always on the look out to illustrate their social media work.

Finally, the Institute also arranges a series of larger social events through the year such as a Welcoming Party for Masters students in September and PhD students in October, and a Christmas Party or Ceilidh (pronounced ‘Kay-Lee’ – Scottish music and dancing). These may well be running virtually again this year, more’s the pity!

MAILING LISTS AND BAHCM CALENDAR

The Institute maintains several mailing lists that are used to share information about our research and social activities. You can see the available mailing lists and how to subscribe at https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/studentstaff/communications/emailmailinglistinfo/ . You can manage your subscriptions and explore all the university’s mailing lists through the online system at https://lists.cent.gla.ac.uk/sympa, logging in with your student id and password. You should be automatically subscribed to all our internal mailing lists – bahcm-phd@glasgow.ac.uk, bahcm- postgrad@glasgow.ac.uk, bahcm- research@glasgow.ac.uk, bahcm-announce@glasgow.ac.uk (and bahcm-social@glasgow.ac.uk), which are hopefully self-explanatory. If you find you’re not, please contact the convenor team at bahcm-pgr-convenor@glasgow.ac.uk, as the first five are closed lists that only we can subscribe you to.

BAHCM events are also available on the Institute google calendar, which is available at https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/events/institutegooglecalendar/ with instructions on how to add it to your regular calendar at https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/events/bahcmcalendarevents/.
**WEBSITE PROFILES**

PGR students can have Research profiles created for them by using the [Online T4 Registration](#) link. We encourage all postgraduate students to establish and maintain research profiles, which can be excellent promotional tools to present your research activities.

T4 is the Content Management System (CMS) web publishing tool that is fully supported by the university’s web team and IT Services. It offers the easiest way for members of the university to create their own web pages and profiles. Presently, over 90% of university websites are published via T4. For further details on how to use T4, please visit the [University’s Guide To Web Publishing Section](#). Should you encounter any difficulties, or just need to ask some advice, please email bahcm-webteam@glag.ac.uk.

**OVERSEAS STUDENTS**

The University has an International Students Welcome Programme and the International Student Support Team can help with many issues throughout the year – please see [https://www.gla.ac.uk/international](https://www.gla.ac.uk/international).

**HEALTH, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS**

The Institute’s students routinely work in remote locations, up mountains, under water, on ships and boats, with wild animals and in laboratories with chemicals and microorganisms. These activities have inherent risks but are essential to our work. We can only do these things if the people doing them are trained and/or supervised well and if the potential risks are assessed and planned for.

Your safety while working in the laboratory or in the field is of paramount importance. An important contribution to this is carrying out a “risk assessment” for all activities before you do them. This is mostly just common sense, but doing an assessment helps identify possible problems that might not have been obvious and helps you make sure that you are prepared if things do go wrong.

This is not just mindless bureaucracy, please do risk-assess your work, think through what you are going to do and make sure you are prepared. It is also a legal requirement of the University to minimise risk and your legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect yourself and others.

Your supervisor will be the first person you turn to for advice, but depending on the issue you might need to turn to other specialists in the Institute or beyond. There is detailed advice on the Institute’s safety pages, so please do refer to them at [https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/studentstaff/healthsafety/](https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/studentstaff/healthsafety/).

We want you to have a great time at Glasgow, but doing a PhD is sometimes stressful. Don’t let worries get on top of you. There are a lot of things we can do to help, including using expert counsellors or giving you time off to get on top of any problems. The counselling service also provides courses in mindfulness and other mental tricks to help you deal with stress and look after yourself. Doing such courses counts towards your PhD training, so why not give them a try?

Please don’t be embarrassed if you’re struggling, there are ways that we can support you and everyone needs a little help from time to time – see [https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/counselling](https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/counselling) for more details. You can also find a link to our local ‘Getting Help’ document here [https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/studentstaff/informationforpostgraduates](https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/studentstaff/informationforpostgraduates).

**SAFETY IN THE LABORATORY AND AQUARIUM**

If your project involves the use of any chemical or materials that are classified as being hazardous to health you will have to conform to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Act (COSHH). You should discuss the safe use of any such chemicals with your supervisor. Their use is likely to require special precautions including the use of protective clothing e.g. gloves, eye shields and fume cupboards. All supervisors must complete a COSHH Risk Assessment Form outlining the procedures to be followed. You must sign this form to confirm that you understand the procedures that must be adopted when working with such chemicals. It is imperative that you abide by all the procedures at all times. The IBAHCM Safety Policy Statement, relevant forms (e.g. COSHH) and other information is available from the Institute.
Safety pages here: https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/studentstaff/healthsafety/

Please refer to the Safety and Environmental Protection Service (SEPS) pages for guidance and training on matters connected to workplace health and safety and environmental protection in the University https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/seps/

Work in the aquarium often involves the use of electronic items such as cameras, lights, instruments and computers. Many aquaria use electric pumps and filtration systems. Water (especially seawater) and electricity is a bad combination! Before using electrical equipment in the aquarium you should discuss it with your supervisor and with staff from the bioelectronics unit.

Remember that not only should you take all precautions to ensure your own safety but also to ensure that your (or anyone else’s) activities do not pose any risk to others.

**SAFETY IN THE OFFICE (OR WHEREVER ELSE YOU USE A COMPUTER)**

You should make yourself familiar with the risks of repetitive strain injury and other problems associated with the use of computers and keyboards. Really do read this as it’s a serious problem (probably the most dangerous thing we do, in the long term). See https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/seps/az/computers

**SAFETY IN THE FIELD AND AWAY FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

It is of the utmost importance that you are aware of the potential hazards before undertaking fieldwork of any sort. You must attend our Fieldwork Safety Course and then discuss these matters with your supervisor and complete a Fieldwork Safety Assessment Form before the work is undertaken. Ideally, you should not work alone in the field. Before you leave make sure that you have informed someone where you are working and your times of departure and return. Anyone whose project is likely to involve the use of small boats must discuss this with Prof Colin Adams at SCENE. The Safety Coordinator (see below) also has copies of other publications on fieldwork safety which you should consult. The University holds special insurance cover for staff and research students carrying out field work. If your project involves significant amounts of fieldwork you must ensure that your name is added to the University’s list.

Your supervisor should arrange this for you. Further advice on safety matters can be obtained from members of the Safety Committee and the Safety Coordinator.

**DIVING**

Research diving in the UK is governed by the Diving at Work Regulations (1997). This sets standards of training and supervision for anyone involved in diving as part of their project. For more advice on this please see the following web page https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/seps/az/diving

This page also includes contact details of the Institute’s representatives on the Diving Advisory Group. All diving activities must be approved in advance by this group.
INSTITUTE SAFETY OFFICERS

The most up-to-date information on the BAHCM Safety Committee is available here:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/studentstaff/healthsafety/safetycommittee/

- Lisa Ranford-Cartwright (Convener of Committee, Institute Safety Adviser & CL3 Lead)
- Kate Griffiths (Safety Coordinator)
- Katarina Oravecova (Bacteriology Lead)
- Brian Shiels (Parasitology Lead)
- Neil Evans (Physiology Lead)
- Martin Llewellyn (Molecular Biology Lead)
- Christina Faust (International Fieldwork Lead)
- Jacqui Coutts (Management Representative)
- Ana Monteiro (Area Safety Lead HWC)
- Maria Capstick (Area Safety Lead Gilmorehill)
- Matt Newton (Area Safety Lead SCENE)
- Winifred Boner (Committee Structure Bridge)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

David McLean (University Safety Officer, Fire Prevention Officer, Radiation/laser/UV Safety/Biological Safety)
See SEPS (Safety & Environmental Protection Service) website at https://www.gla.ac.uk/mygla/SEPS

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT FIELDWORK, MEETINGS, OR RESEARCH OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY

LONG RESEARCH TRIPS AND FIELD WORK:

For long trips away from the campus (more than one month), ALL students must fill out an Application to Pursue Research Furth of Glasgow form with their supervisors. You must use the form for our Institute, which can either be obtained from the Institute Office or https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/studentstaff/healthsafety/downloadabledocuments/.

This form asks for the reasons and details of the visit and your supervisory arrangements while away. Use the precise dates you will be away, but if you are not sure of your return date then err on the side of excess. You must confirm on the form that you have the appropriate insurance.

If the work requires a Risk Assessment, after drafting it with your supervisor you should send it to the Safety Coordinator for review and approval. You will likely be asked for some revisions so make sure you allow ample time to complete your Risk Assessment before you intend to travel. A Risk Assessment is not needed if you are doing work at an off-campus site that has safety systems comparable to Glasgow Uni (e.g. a lab at another university). In that case you should do your safety assessment at that site when you are there.

Whether you are travelling abroad or within the UK, you must arrange travel insurance through the University. It is available on your MyGlasgow page on the left-side banner under “Travel Insurance”. This will provide very comprehensive cover so if there are any problems, you will be glad you did! This includes field work, research visits, meetings, conferences, etc.

The Furth must be approved by a Graduate Convenor to be valid and must be done before you depart. After you and your supervisor sign the form, send it by email to a PGR Convenor to be digitally signed. If the work requires a Risk Assessment then the approved version of the Risk Assessment must be submitted with the Furth. After the Convenor has approved the Furth, s/he will send the signed form by email to the MVLS Graduate School, to the Safety Coordinator for filing, and to you.
Students in the UK on visas must keep the Institute informed of their location and, in particular, any work or trips away from Glasgow. Separate guidance on procedures will be provided directly from the GraduateSchool.

**SHORT TRIPS:**

For shorter trips for research or meetings (less than 1 month, not for field work or involving other hazards) a Furth of Glasgow form is not needed. Leave details of your location and contact details with your supervisor and/or the Institute Office. However, if the short trip is for field work or involves other hazards, then you must still do a Risk Assessment with your supervisor and have it approved and filed with the Safety Coordinator.

If you are travelling abroad for any duration or within the UK overnight or longer, you should arrange travel insurance through the University. It is available on your MyGlasgow page on the left-side banner under “Travel Insurance”. This includes short research visits, meetings, conferences, etc.

Students in the UK on visas must keep the Institute informed of their location and, in particular, any work or trips away from Glasgow. Separate guidance on procedures will be provided directly from the GraduateSchool.

**EXPERIMENTS USING ANIMALS**

Any experiments on vertebrates (whether carried out on captive or wild animals) that may cause any stress to the animal or that involve the use of anaesthetics will probably need to be carried out under a Home Office Licence. Work on certain invertebrates also requires a licence. At present this is limited to cephalopods, but decapod crustaceans are likely to join the list soon.

Separate licences are required for the project itself and for the person carrying out the experiment. Project licences are usually held by the supervisor and generally cover all of the work of a particular research group, while each research student carrying out such experiments will need their own Personal Licence. These licences usually take several months to be issued and require attendance at a training course. If you think you may need a licence you must plan this well in advance of any proposed experiments and should discuss it with your supervisor and Dan Haydon, Director of Institute, who is responsible for Home Office Licence work in the Institute.

**ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS**

In all cases you should of course minimise the number of animals used and look after their wellbeing, regardless of whether they are legally protected. For work with humans there is a separate ethical review procedure. Going through the process helps make sure that your work is done to the highest standards both ethically and scientifically. https://www.gla.ac.uk/mls/informationforstaff/researchadministration/collegeethicscommittee

Many people come in to the areas of work covered by the Institute out of interest and concern for the environment or the welfare of humans and other animals. It is important that we minimise our own impacts on these things in the course of our work. Consider the energy and water footprint of your work, use video conferencing and public transport where you can to reduce travel costs, turn off lights and equipment when you are not using them and use the recycling facilities. The Institute drafted a Sustainability Policy in summer 2020 which seeks to minimise the adverse impact of travel. This advocates that all members of the Institute should adopt a mindset in which they evaluate (a) whether travel is necessary and justified, and (b) how they can travel in the least environmentally damaging manner.
POSTGRADUATE TRAINING WITHIN THE INSTITUTE

The Institute aims to provide you with the highest standard of research training. In addition to the help and guidance provided by your supervisor, you will also be assigned an assessor and you will be required to attend a number of training courses when you arrive (see below). The Institute also takes great care to monitor the progress of its research students. Details of our monitoring procedures are given below:

SUPERVISION

Your supervisors will be responsible for most aspects of your research training. Your lead supervisor will probably wish to see you at least weekly, especially during your first year, and should over time discuss all of the following with you:

- Overall research strategy
- The sequence of your experiments or field research
- Detailed planning and technical aspects of experiments. Your supervisor is responsible for ensuring that you follow safe working practices both in the laboratory and in the field. You must discuss all aspects of safety with your supervisor and ensure that you follow his/her guidance (see above)
- Statistical analysis, data interpretation and the presentation of results
- Whether you should consult with another member of staff about a specialist technique with which your supervisor is not familiar
- The writing up of your PhD and the production of scientific papers

Remember to discuss the design of your experiments or fieldwork before starting each piece of work, and to discuss things with all of your supervisors, particularly if you are uncertain about advice from your lead supervisor. However happy you are, however, you must have at least two supervisors. A great deal of time can be wasted by carrying out poorly designed experiments, which need to be repeated. In addition, keep very detailed records of all your work; poor records of your experiments can cause real problems when you come to write up your thesis. Second and subsequent supervisors may well cover particular aspects of your research training. There also may be times when your supervisor is away from the Institute, on holiday, through illness or working elsewhere. On these occasions you must consult your second supervisor or your assessor (see below) on all matters of safety.

ROLE OF ASSESSORS

It is the Institute’s policy to ensure that all postgraduate students are assigned two assessors. Your assessors may not be a specialist in your research subject, as his/her role is to monitor your progress and to provide additional advice when needed. You must meet with your assessors once or twice in your first year and once a year thereafter until you submit your corrected thesis after your viva. Please also feel free to discuss any aspects of your research with your assessors, second supervisor, or any other member of staff.

In the unlikely event that you are unhappy with something and can’t resolve the problem by talking to your supervisor(s), then ask your assessor or one of the postgraduate convenors for advice.

TRAINING COURSES

The College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences runs training courses that are essential for your research training and that all postgraduates must attend. Some are simply compulsory (students not based in the West of Scotland can get exemptions), others are worth credits, of which you need 20 to graduate. Compulsory topics include “Research Integrity”, “Preparing for the Viva” and “Writing your Thesis”. Details are available at https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentpgrstudentinformation/skillstraining/, including how to apply for credits for courses not run by the Graduate School, and other things that are eligible for credit such as giving talks at conferences. The new Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service also offers an expanding repertoire of courses for postgraduate students with details at https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/leads.
In addition, you will also be required to attend a course in Laboratory and Field Safety run by members of the Institute to provide you with further information on safe working practices that are especially relevant to activities within the Institute. Specialist training such as Sea Survival courses may be required for some projects and are delivered by external organisations.

There is a fund to support “student-led” training courses and activities. If you have ideas for ways to develop your skills in leadership, teamwork, communication or anything else likely to enhance your career then discuss these with other students, your reps, and the PGR convenors and they will help get you the money.

**RESEARCH SEMINARS**

During your time as a postgraduate student you should not only aim to gain expertise in your research field but also to improve your knowledge and understanding of other biological subjects. You should aim to discuss your work with your colleagues and to find out what they are doing. Such discussions often stimulate new ideas and may help your progress. It is particularly important for research students spending long periods away from the main building, either at SCENE or on fieldwork, to make every effort to spend some time talking to other postgraduates. One of the benefits of being in a large College is the opportunity it provides to talk to people working on many aspects of biology and you must take advantage of this.

One way of learning about other research in the Institute is to attend the research seminars. There are two main regular types of seminar within Institute. On Wednesdays (usually at 1-2pm) there are seminars given by visiting speakers chosen to cover a range of research fields and last an hour. You can see the programme of external seminars here: University of Glasgow - Research Institutes - Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health & Comparative Medicine - About Us - Seminars & Events - Institute seminars. On Friday at 4pm the postgraduates give shorter and more informal presentations of their proposed and/or recent research – these are designed to give you practice in giving research talks and feedback on your work. **You must give at least one talk (approximately 10 mins plus 5 mins questions) in your first year to discuss your proposed research, and longer talks (approximately 20 mins plus 5 mins questions) in your second and third years.** This series of seminars is organised by the postgraduates themselves and the programme is available here: University of Glasgow - Research Institutes - Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health & Comparative Medicine - About Us - Seminars & Events - Internal seminars. After completing your thesis and in the run-up to your viva, you must also give a full length (hour-long) talk. In addition, members of the Institute often arrange extra informal seminars given by visiting scientists or members of the Institute who would like to practice a talk (e.g. before giving it at a conference). Different research groups also hold informal discussion groups on particular topics or types of research methodology. All the other Institutes and Schools in the University run their own seminar programmes.

Progress in science often arises from interdisciplinary ideas so don’t confine your interests merely to those areas covered by the Institute. Perhaps a new idea may come to you from attending a wide range of seminars, from archaeology to immunology.

There is often a communal taxi arranged to ferry people between the Gilmorehill and Garscube campuses for talks and, if not, taxis can be arranged via Lorna Kennedy for those at Gilmorehill or Mark Paterson for Garscube (See Taxis and Transport). These are paid for by the Institute. However, many changes are currently happening due to COVID-19, and seminars will be attended remotely for the foreseeable future.
DEMONSTRATING
Many postgraduate students help to demonstrate to undergraduate classes. Apart from the financial benefits, demonstrating provides useful teaching experience. The number of demonstrators needed will vary from year to year, but if you wish to become a demonstrator you must discuss this with your supervisor. Demonstrating restricts the amount of time for research and, for this reason, you may find that your supervisor will want to place limits on the amount of demonstrating that you carry out. You must complete an Atypical Worker Registration form – details are at https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/lifesciences/postgraduate/demonstrator. Send this to the School of Life Sciences Office, Bower Building and attend a training course before becoming a demonstrator. It may also be possible, once you are well into your project, to set an aspect of it as an undergraduate project. If you have an idea of this kind, make sure to discuss it with your supervisor.

At Garscube demonstration help is often required for classes with veterinary students. Some of this work requires you to have veterinary training whilst other classes are more general. Lissann Wolfe is the contact for this. People are also usually required for OSCE (exams) help at certain times of the year and training for these are required.

MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS
The MVLS Graduate School and the Institute takes care to monitor the progress of all postgraduate students to ensure that your work is progressing well and that you are on schedule to submit a thesis within 3.5-4 years. The requirements for each component are detailed at https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentpgrstudentinformation/ pgranualreviewprocess/. An assessment is made at the initial and annual review as to whether you are suited to a PhD. Readmission to study occurs at the beginning of October each year and is dependent on a satisfactory report of progress (see also below).

FIRST YEAR ASSESSMENTS (INITIAL REVIEW)
A) Training & Development Log: In the two months immediately after starting, all first-year PGR students must carry out a training needs assessment and hold a researcher development meeting with their supervisors (currently https:// www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentpgrstudentinformation/pgranualreviewprocess/ #d.en.503974,initialreview – this link may change, connect from above) . These documents should be uploaded on the PGR review portal and be completed before your initial review.

B) Literature Review: In the first three months, students write a literature review and project plan. There is some flexibility in the form of the literature review, but it should be approximately four pages, use a reference manager such as EndNote – https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/it/software/bibliographic/#/endnote – or Mendeley – https:// www.mendeley.com – and include an outline project plan for the first (hypothesis led) studies (approx. 0.5 page with identification of any potential hurdles/pitfalls). See the Grad School site for more details https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentpgrstudentinformation/pgranualreviewprocess/ #d.en.503974,initialreview,annualreview
Feel free to discuss the scope with your supervisor in advance and you should get feedback on your report from your supervisor before submitting. Your supervisor might also be able to show you some examples of good literature reviews. Your report should be formally submitted to supervisors and assessors through the online postgraduate review (PGR) system at https://www.mvls.gla.ac.uk/PGRPR. This site will also tell you who your assessors are (note the site only usually goes live for the new academic year in November).

C) Initial Review meeting: The assessors meet with/interview the student in the fourth month (ordinarily January/February for October-start students). Your lead assessor will provide you with written feedback via the online annual review system. You will receive a notification to your email address when this is done and you will have to sign off that you have received the feedback. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange to meet with their assessors.

D) Seminar: To further help us assess your progress throughout your PhD, you will be required to give a short seminar to other members of the Institute in the Friday Seminar Series in Year 1 (usually spring) and Year 2 (usually autumn/winter). In your third year you will give a presentation either in the Friday Seminar Series or at a SIG.

ANNUAL REVIEW:
The annual review process comprises (A) a report and (B) an interview with your assessors and is done each year for all students.

A) Reports:
There are three main reasons for asking you to write an annual report. Firstly, it helps us to determine whether you are making satisfactory progress. Secondly, a well-prepared report will provide a useful basis for your thesis: it is worth spending time on your report for this reason alone. Thirdly, by writing about your work you will be forced to think carefully about what you have done and what you plan to do.

The document should report all, or a significant part, of your progress over the year and is approximately 3000 words in length – not significantly longer. This section should either be in the style of a journal appropriate to your discipline (particularly useful if you are indeed drafting a paper at the moment!), or in another style that your supervisor is happy with (such as a report documenting progress over the year, with results as appropriate). In addition, there should be a 500-1000-word section at the end of the report outlining the following year’s work with potential pitfalls and solutions identified. This should include a Gantt chart or similar timeline. See the MVLS Grad School guidance for more details https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/currentpgrstudentinformation/pgrannualreviewprocess/

The research councils or other leading bodies often require an annual report of your progress – many of them through ResearchFish at https://www.researchfish.net. You will receive emails about this if you are due to complete ResearchFish.

The deadline for submitting your annual review report is 30 June.

B) Annual Interviews
The annual review also includes an interview/review meeting with your assessors. The assessors will not necessarily be specialists in the field of your research and it is valuable experience for you to explain your work to others who are not experts in the field. In our experience, they are often able to contribute new perspectives. The discussion will normally be around an hour long. The questions at your interview can cover any aspect of your work. They may be about the overall aims of your project, how far you have progressed, details of experimental and statistical procedures, your understanding
of other work in the field and how your work relates to this. You will receive some feedback on your report. The interview
will provide you with valuable experience for your PhD viva and you should aim to speak clearly about all aspects of your
research. The interview also provides you with an opportunity to express any concerns that you have about your project, its
supervision, or the facilities available to you. As with the initial review, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange the
annual review meeting with their assessors.

Following the interview, the lead assessor will prepare a brief report giving feedback about your report and your
performance in the interview and upload this to the annual review site. If there are concerns about any aspects of your
work or progress these will be relayed back to your supervisor. It is hoped that any problems can be overcome, in the
first instance, through further discussion with your supervisor. Any student whose progress is giving
cause for concern may be required to be interviewed by the Postgraduate Convenors. Following consultation with your
supervisor, the Committee may insist that the student must satisfy the Committee that the student has the dedication
and ability to complete their thesis by, for example, meeting certain deadlines with respect to the completion of certain
experiments or pieces of written work. Any student whose progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory may not be allowed to
continue into their second or third year.

ANNUAL REVIEWS IN THE FINAL YEAR (4th YEAR FOR PHD OR 2ND YEAR FOR MSC(R))
In the final year of your studies, things should be wrapping up and we hope progressing smoothly. Fourth year ‘thesis-
pending’ PhD students whose thesis submission deadline with the MVLS Grad School falls between July and November do
not need to do a full report and interview. In that situation, please fill out the annual review form showing the timeline for
chapters completed vs incomplete and saying what date you will submit and if you have done your Intention to Submit
form. Your supervisors sign off on this and must also agree that you will submit on time. Your assessors will check this on
the system and sign off, but you do not need a review meeting.
If you are in your 4th year (or 2nd year if MSc(R)) but your deadline is later in the academic year than November, then you
must do an annual review in the standard annual review cycle. However, this can be a briefer report with more emphasis
on final write up plans, thesis chapters and their organisation, chart of work to complete and timeline of work and chapter
completion, and viva preparation.

ANNUAL REVIEW TIMELINE - SUMMARY
This is a summary of the timetable based on an October start date (italics only applies to first years, underline only applies
to DTP students who started their PhD with a 6-month rotation):

October-November: Carry out training needs assessment and researcher development planning (excluding MVLS-DTP
students).
End of November: Have training and development planning meeting with supervisors and upload to the PGR review system
under ‘initial’ tab.
End of December: Submit literature review and project plan through PGR system (along with training needs assessment and
researcher development doc from Oct).
End of January/February: Book and hold your meeting with assessors.
End of May: DTP students should carry out training needs assessment and researcher development meeting
with supervisors.
End of June: Deadline to submit annual reports. For MVLS DTP students, this will be a lit review with a PhD plan as per
normal initial assessments, but it will be recorded as an annual review. Students should contact their assessors to check
their availability for the annual review meeting.
July-August: Assessors and students carry out annual review interview. Assessors submit their report as soon as possible
after and students to sign off. Annual review process should be completed in this window.
First week in September: Deadline for all aspects signed off and a completed annual review. Any issues with progression
must be resolved. Students approved for progression and re-registered on MyCampus.

Failing to get your annual review signed off in any year results in you being unable to register in September for the next
academic year. You won’t be a student anymore, so no pay received, cancellation of any UK visa, no access to buildings, etc.
You do not want this to happen. It is critical to your PGR progress that you engage with this system.
FIRST YEAR TIMETABLE FOR START DATES OTHER THAN OCTOBER

Unfortunately, things get a bit complicated for students with non-standard start dates. The standard start time is 1 October and that is when the academic year and its cycle of activity begins. The University requires that you participate in an annual review at the end of that academic year if you started between October and May, even if for some students it will only have been a short time since starting. The expectations of what you will have achieved will be commensurate with the time since arrival.

If you started between November and January (inclusive), then you should complete your training needs assessment and initial review within the first 3 months of your start and not later than 1 April. Your annual review will be on the standard annual review cycle (i.e. due June 30).

If you start between February and April (inclusive), you will have only one review, held in the standard annual review period, and that will be a hybrid of an initial review and an annual review. This should include: your training assessment and your researcher development log (as per an initial review), a literature review, and a preliminary project plan. Some DTP students (such as MVLS-DTP) start their thesis project in this window after doing rotations Oct-April: in that case your researcher development and training plans should already have been done earlier through the DTP; now you submit a literature review and project plan for your main project at the annual review. If you did not do a training needs assessment in your rotations then please do it now.

If you start between May and September (inclusive), you will operate on the standard academic year with regard to initial review and annual review, i.e. as if an October-start. You are encouraged to start earlier with the training skills and researcher development planning process with your supervisor, and drafting your literature review. You may not appear on the PGR system until November.
RESEARCH FACILITIES

EQUIPMENT
The Institute has a wide range of equipment for carrying out biological research. Occasionally you may require certain items that are not available in the Institute. It is possible, however, that they are available elsewhere in the University. Your supervisor will help you to locate items of equipment that you need. Further advice may be obtained from the Chief Technician.

COMPUTERS, EMAIL AND PRINTING
Most research groups within the Institute have their own computers located in their research laboratories. In addition, there is a cluster of computers in the Institute’s computing room (situated off the Museum in the Graham Kerr Building) available for use by students. The computers have a range of statistical, graphics and word processing packages. The cluster and most of the computers throughout the building have access to the Internet and email. You should contact Prof Rod Page (Ext 4778) or MVLS IT Support Unit (Ext 4800 or email address helpdesk@it.gla.ac.uk) if you have any queries regarding computing facilities within the Institute. You will be allocated your own personal University email address shortly after matriculation.

Printing and photocopying for PGRs at the Pullprint machines is covered by the Institute’s Tracked Printing budget line. Please contact MarkP or Lorna if you have issues with your account not linked to a charge.

The Institute has several wifi networks, the main one being the “eduroam” network. You can log into this from any device once you have set it up – the instructions for configuring it are at https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/it/eduroam. This network is available across the University and at many other institutions in the UK and overseas.

The University has very strict rules about inappropriate use of computers and internet sites, and the penalties for any infringements are severe – please see https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/it/regulationscommitteesandpolicies

STORES AND ORDERING
The College stores department at Gilmorehill is located at 6 Thurso Street, and is available online at https://www.mvls.gla.ac.uk/Stores. The store at Garscube is located in the basement of the Urquhart Building, but access is granted (electronically) through the Thurso Street store in the first instance. You can obtain a wide range of consumable items including chemicals, glassware, stationery and computer discs from the stores and the costs of all items ordered will be charged to your supervisor’s budget. You must complete a requisition form which can be done online. The registration form and other details can be found at https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/informationforstaff/facilities/mvlsstores. Your supervisor must sign the form before sending it to Jenna Millar, CMVLS Stores, 6 Thurso Street or to Michelle Pearson, Urquhart Store, Garscube. Once access to online ordering has been authorised, you will be able to log on to the online ordering menu by using your GUID and password. Financial restrictions on research budgets mean that you should be careful in the use of consumables. Any items such as special chemicals which are not held in stock can be ordered by contacting the stores personnel. To do this you should complete an order form which should be signed by your supervisor before being passed to the stores supervisor.

However, it may be simpler to use standard ordering. Standard ordering (not through stores) is carried out by emailing mvls-order-requests@glasgow.ac.uk with an order form and “250 Order Request” or “250 Order Request Garscube” as the subject. These can be delivered to the Urquhart Stores by putting VETS2 in the delivery details box.
**ANIMAL HOLDING FACILITIES**

The Graham Kerr Building possesses good aviaries and freshwater and marine aquaria. To use these facilities you should discuss your requirements with your supervisor and then with Mr Ross Phillips (Aviary and Aquarium Manager Ext 2453). Further fish and bird holding facilities are located at SCENE (Rowardennan), Garscube Estate and Cochno Farm. For information about using facilities at SCENE please discuss with your supervisor and then contact Matthew Newton, SCENE Research Manager.

**BIOELECTRONICS UNIT**

The College Bioelectronics Unit is located in the basement of the Graham Kerr Building. Consultation with your supervisor is necessary before any work can be carried out. You should then contact Mr Jakub Czyzewski (Head of Unit) for design development of any instrument or repair. You should be aware that the cost of materials will be charged to your supervisor’s research budget. You can download the request form from [https://www.gla.ac.uk/bioelectronicsunit](https://www.gla.ac.uk/bioelectronicsunit).

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT UNIT**

The Graphics Support Unit provides a full graphic design service to College staff and students which is located in the West Medical Building. Please email them on mvlsgraphics@glasgow.ac.uk.

**HISTOTECHNOLOGY**

The School of Life Sciences Central Histotechnology Service is located in the Laboratory of Human Anatomy, Thomson Building and is well equipped for the production of material for light microscopy. David Russell (ext 6390) is in charge of the Histology Laboratory and can provide help and advice in preparing material. There is an associated microscope and imaging laboratory.

**INTEGRATED MICROSCOPY FACILITY**

The Integrated Microscopy Facility is located in the Joseph Black Building and has facilities for both transmission and scanning electron microscopy. Training and help in all aspects of sample preparation and the use of the microscopes can be arranged through Margaret Mullin (Ext 4893). If your project is likely to entail the use of these facilities, you should discuss this with your supervisor who should then liaise with Margaret. Costs will be charged to your supervisor’s research budget.
TAXIS AND TRANSPORT
The institute provides a taxi service for work-related transport needs between the Garscube estate and the main campus at Gilmorehill. To book a taxi, email Lorna Kennedy at lorna.kennedy@glasgow.ac.uk or Mark Paterson at mark.paterson@glasgow.ac.uk if based at Garscube. We want to encourage collaborations between the sites and so it’s fine for people to move back and forth when necessary.

The Institute also has a minibus and a car that may be used for fieldwork. Before using a vehicle for the first time, you should contact University Transport Services who will arrange for you to take a driving test (please note that if you have very limited driving experience you may not be able to drive the vehicles yourself). It is essential that you abide by these regulations as failure to do so may result in you being prevented from using the vehicles. To book a vehicle you must complete a booking form at the Enquiry Office in the Graham Kerr Building, have this signed by your supervisor and hand this in to the Janitor. Also write your booking in the diary in the Institute Enquiry Office, giving your name, telephone number and purpose of the booking. Your supervisor will help you with this until you are familiar with the system. The vehicles are usually heavily booked so it is essential that you use the vehicles for the minimum amount of time possible. Please cancel any bookings as soon as you know that the vehicles are not needed on that occasion. Institute vehicles should not be away from the Institute for several days at a time but vehicles can be hired if this is needed and additional vehicles are also available from the University garage.

BUDGETS
A certain amount of money will be allocated each year to cover the costs of your training (including, for example, buying equipment and attending conferences). You should discuss your research budget with your supervisor and be aware of the costs associated with different components. The amount of involvement you have in spending decisions will depend on your supervisor, the project, and the budget available. You should have your supervisor’s approval for purchasing and it is up to you and your supervisor how this is decided. A special fund also exists for training designed to increase your “transferable skills”, such as leadership and communication, available through the graduate school.

STUDENT EXPENSE CLAIMS FORMS
As of January 2019, Central Finance require any student expense claim forms to be submitted by Institute administration staff on behalf of the student. Students cannot submit the reimbursement request to Finance directly. Admin staff require a completed Student Expense Claim Form, along with scanned copies of the associated receipts – these must be merged into one complete document (see How to merge documents on Sheet 2 of the form) ready to e-mail to central Finance.

The two documents you’ll need in order to complete the form are:

1) Student Expense Claim Form – Go to www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/finance/downloadform/ and click on “Student Expenses Claim Form” to download this form.

2) Account Codes – (This link will only work on campus) To download this form, go to https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/bahcm/about/studentstaff/generalindex/financeexpenses/ and click on “Account codes”.

Enter the Claim Amount – you can enter an amount which is the sum total of similar receipts (e.g. if you have 5 receipts for food, then these can be scanned onto one “receipt” page, and a total indicated in one row). The Account section is the code that Finance need to describe what the claim is (e.g. food - 7465, conference - 7240). These four-digit codes are listed on the Excel Account Codes spreadsheet indicated above.

The Sub-Project code is the budget code that your supervisor would like to charge the expense to. This is normally in the form of a six digit number which ends with a -01. You must confirm with your supervisor.

The Description of Expense is what will appear in the Budget Holder’s statement – so a short description(e.g. your name & date & activity [e.g. conference]) would always be helpful.

Lastly, add a digital signature and ask your supervisor to sign (or our Head of Admin – Jacqui Coutts (Jacqueline.Coutts@glasgow.ac.uk) in the event your supervisor cannot sign it), before emailing all the paperwork (claim form and all receipts) to IBAHCM admin staff. Admin staff also require the Supervisor’s confirmation email.
STUDYING AT GLASGOW

The Student Services Enquiry Team is your first step to Student Services at the University of Glasgow at https://www.gla.ac.uk/students/sset . Further information on all services and facilities available to you at the University can be found in the Student Portal at https://www.gla.ac.uk/students .

HELPFUL LINKS

- Student Absence, Suspension and Withdrawal https://www.gla.ac.uk/mygla/registry/staff/absence
- Code of Assessment (includes information regarding absence/incomplete assessment) https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/policies/assessment/codeofassessment/guide
- Student Services enquiries (including instructions for downloading certifying letters and HEAR/transcripts) https://www.gla.ac.uk/mygla/students/sset
- International student support https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support
- English as a foreign language https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/mlc/languagecentre/efl
- International student handbook https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/internationalstudenthandbook
- International family network https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/familynetwork

ATHENA SWAN

The Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine has held an Athena SWAN Departmental Silver Award since October 2016. This award recognises IBAHCM’s commitment to the advancement of gender equality in research and employment in higher education, but also more widely our commitment to representation, progression and success for all. Our Silver award outlines our future plans to continue developing our diverse and inclusive culture. Please see this link for further details: https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/athenaswan

UNION

As postgraduate research students, you may well be thinking about a job in academia in the future. As such you may be interested to know that there is a union that represents all academic staff in all UK universities (as well as staff in further education colleges). The University and College Union has a branch in the University of Glasgow (UCUG) with about 1,400 members at the time of writing (UoG has about 3,000 academic staff). The union deals with all pay negotiations, including for graduate teaching assistant (GTA) positions on undergraduate and postgraduate courses that many of you may be involved in, as well as many other issues including individual casework and general issues around working conditions. Students can join as affiliates for free – https://www.ucu.org.uk/join – or as full members with voting rights (also free!) if they are working as GTAs – see https://www.ucu.org.uk/free for further details. If you’d like to talk to someone about the union, see https://www.gla.ac.uk/mygla/ucu/ for this year’s GTA contacts or speak to Richard Reeve, who is also MVLS’s Union rep.

HOLIDAYS

Students are entitled to take up to 8 weeks holiday a year, the same as staff – this breaks down into 31 working days (~6 weeks) at your discretion, and 9 days of official university holiday, mostly around Christmas and New Year. The days the university is shut (including those 9 days) are given at https://www.gla.ac.uk/mygla/humanresources/all/worklife/publicholidays/public, and other information on leave policies and work-life balance are given on those pages, though note those rules are for staff and so the system is slightly different for students in that the reporting happens through supervisors, rather than through the central HR system. Note also that for international students, absence from work does have to align with visa (and reporting) requirements, so do be aware of those rules too if they apply to you. Note that it’s not always possible for us to have holidays when we’d like because of constraints of field seasons, conferences, etc., and so dates have to be agreed with supervisors. This is an unfortunate fact of life but shouldn’t stop you trying to have holidays when you can!
**STUDENT ORGANISERS**

To keep the Institute functioning, we expect all PGR students to contribute to its activities by taking on a role as an organiser of some kind during their studies, either as a student rep or running a shared interest group, for instance. As we said earlier, the student reps this year are Raheema Chunara, John Ogunsola and Bethany Smith. They can be reached at bahcm-pgr-rep@glau.ac.uk. Antonia Hilbig and Kathrin Loosli run the Friday PGR seminar series if you need to get in touch about your annual talks. You can contact the student Comms Team through a joint email address – bahcm_communications@glasgow.ac.uk if you’d like to get in touch or to participate in one of their Spotlight articles. Last but not least, the Friday Fox will need running when such events reopen. Do get in touch with us when that happens if you’d like to help out.

*Your Postgraduate Convenor Team (Note: Davina is currently on Maternity leave through 2021-2022)*

Kathryn Elmer  
Paul Johnson  
Davina Hill

...and your Postgraduate Student Representatives

John Ogunsola  
Bethany Smith  
Raheema Chunara

And finally...

We hope to continue improving and enhancing the experience and training of postgraduates in the Institute. We also welcome ideas on the sorts of training you feel you need. The Institute contains a wide range of expertise to help you in your development as a scientist, has good facilities and is close to an outstanding range of natural environments. Take advantage of all these assets. A research degree is often hard work and the challenges can be very daunting. Your supervisors and all the supporting staff really want you to succeed and are here to help. Good luck!

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Website: https://www.gla.ac.uk/bahcm/studentstaff/informationforpostgraduates