GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2016-2017

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Metabolic Research Laboratories

MRC Metabolic Diseases Unit

Wellcome Trust – MRC IMS Institute of Metabolic Science

Updated, Sept 2016
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Welcome to the University of Cambridge Metabolic Research Laboratories (MRL), which is housed in the purpose-built Wellcome Trust-MRC Institute of Metabolic Sciences (IMS) on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (Addenbrooke’s Hospital site). The mission of both the MRL and the IMS is to undertake basic and translational research relevant to the understanding, prevention and treatment of diabetes, obesity and other related endocrine and metabolic disorders. The MRL also hosts the MRC Metabolic Diseases Unit (MDU), which supports many of our key core facilities, and brings together investigators at the MRL, several Cambridge-based MRC Units and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute.

The MRL is a cross-departmental institute within the School of Clinical Medicine, University of Cambridge. It currently includes approximately 150 scientists, organized into 20 research groups. Each group is led by a principal investigator who is also a member of a ‘home’ University department. At present MRL investigators include members of the departments of Clinical Biochemistry, Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Clinical Neurosciences.

All students at the University are also members of a University Department, usually this is the same department as their supervisor, although occasionally students will be registered in the Clinical Biochemistry Dept even though their supervisor is not. This handbook is intended for all students based at the MRL, regardless of the ‘home’ department. It sets out the responsibilities of individual students, their supervisors, and the systems in place at the MRL, Clinical School and University to help you progress from the more structured undergraduate environment towards independent research where you are able to identify your goals and plan your work on a day-to-day basis to achieve these.

The general information in the booklet applies to all students. However each department has a slightly different procedure for assessing students progress during the 1st year, so the detailed information on assessment procedures applies to students registered in Clinical Biochemistry. Sections that do not apply to all students are clearly marked.

I hope you find studying at the MRL an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Professor Sir Stephen O’Rahilly
Director of the University of Cambridge Metabolic Research Laboratories
Director of the MRC Metabolic Diseases Unit
Head of Clinical Biochemistry Department
As Director of Graduate Education, I would like to welcome you to the Metabolic Research Laboratories. I hope, for each of you, the next few years will be stimulating, career-building and even life-changing. During the first months of your project you will find yourselves on a steep learning curve, with lots of new ideas and techniques to master. As you progress deeper into your PhD, we hope that you will start to think creatively and exercise your curiosity. Following instructions and obtaining novel and interesting results is exciting, but I can guarantee that it is infinitely more rewarding when the idea was your own in the first place!

Do take advantage of the multiple opportunities in Cambridge to improve your transferable as well as your scientific skills. To be a successful scientist you need to be able to communicate your work confidently to scientific colleagues, lay audiences, school children and even the media. You should receive plenty of experience at presenting your work to different audiences. Initially this will be in the setting of small lab meetings, but as your science progresses you will be encouraged to present it to the wider department and at national or international conferences.

I urge all of you to go to, and participate in, meetings in your field. Introduce yourselves (or better, be introduced) to the international experts you respect most. These are the people who will review your papers and grants, who might be future employers, and who might be called upon in later life to write references on your behalf, so go out and socialise with them if you have the opportunity.

Most of all, I hope your experience here will be stimulating and rewarding and that your science will be fun and relevant.

Professor Fiona Gribble
Director of Graduate Education
Professor of Endocrine Physiology
Your supervisor

Each postgraduate student has a Principal Supervisor who is responsible for overseeing their research project and overall progress. Occasionally, your supervisor may choose to delegate responsibility for day to day supervision to a senior member of their research group. In this case you should liaise regularly with your principal supervisor who should have a firm grasp of your project and how it is going.

Your Principal Supervisor should
- Guide you in planning and developing your research project by encouraging you to make a written timetable and plan of what is to be achieved during your project
- Meet regularly with you to discuss your research and comment on your work
- Advise you on relevant literature and ensure you are familiar with relevant techniques and that you attend appropriate training courses
- Ensure you attend appropriate seminars at the MRL and elsewhere, and have the opportunity to meet others working in the same area
- Make a brief assessment of your progress at the end of each term, in writing, to the Board of Graduate Studies
- Inform you if progress is unsatisfactory and arrange appropriate action. Your second supervisor and the MRL Graduate Education Committee might also be involved in this.
- Advise on how to prepare papers for publication and provide timely feedback on draft thesis chapters

Your second supervisor/advisor is another PI who is appointed by your principal supervisor. Although your second supervisor is not usually involved in your day to day research, he/she will take an interest in your general progress and can be a useful source of impartial advice and mentoring. Second supervisors can also be very helpful if you have difficulties you would rather not discuss with your principal supervisor.
Responsibilities of Graduate Students

Just as your supervisor, the MRL, your Department and the University have responsibilities towards you, in turn you have equally important responsibilities. These are to:

- Follow good working practices as advised by your supervisor and in the University Code of Practice for Graduate Students, and the University guidelines on Good Research Practice
- Keep a clear and accurate laboratory notebook describing accurately the research techniques used, the results you obtain (including interim results) and your interpretation of these results
- To submit work as arranged on time and clearly readable
- To take note of guidance from supervisors
- If you experience problems with your research to seek advice from your supervisors or others as soon as possible
- Attend weekly internal and external seminars at the MRL
- Attend the weekly hot topic series (obligatory for MRes students but other 1st year students are also welcome)
- Take up to 8 weeks holiday per year, at times arranged in advance with your supervisor.
- Attend training courses, lectures and meetings as suggested by your supervisor
- Identify and attend appropriate transferable skills training events
- Complete your Personal Progress Log book and keep it up to date (download your Progress Log book from here http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/GSLSRD/progress%20log)
- Attend and present your work at the annual MRL Student Symposium and other events advised by your supervisor or the Graduate Education Committee
- Attend the annual MRL Away Day

Essential reading for all graduate students

You should familiarise yourself with the University Code of Practice for Graduate Students, which make clear what you should expect during your study in terms of supervision, support and assessment, and also sets out what the University and those responsible for your study should expect of you, and with the University guidelines on Good Research Practice
Where to get help and advice

Not everything will go according to plan and it is important to discuss any problems or concerns you might have sooner rather than later. Most problems can be resolved quickly by simple discussion with the right person. In addition to your principal and second supervisors, other members of staff are also able to offer help and advice. Prof Fiona Gribble (Director of Graduate Education) and Dr Maria Adams (Senior Research Manager) are independent and always happy to listen. Your college tutor is also a useful source of personal advice and support.

*It is important that you seek advice sooner rather than later if you have any concerns.*

Other sources of advice include

The *Student Registry* and *Graduate School of Life Sciences* websites include information, links and forms relating to:
- Administration procedures
- Resources, support and training, including transferable skills
- Submitting your dissertation and examination procedures
- Immigration and visa information
- Graduate course fees and funding
- Other relevant dates and information


Annual Leave

All students are entitled to a total of eight weeks holiday per year.

*MRes students* Because of the structure of the MRes year, students should take annual within the designated holiday periods in December, Easter and August, arranged in advance with Dr Maria Adams or Professor Fiona Gribble

*MPhil and PhD students* Annual leave should be agreed in advance with your supervisor.

Employment

Students are permitted to undertake up to eight hours paid employment per week, usually teaching (demonstrating or supervising) during their studies, as long as this does not interfere with your studies.
MRL Graduate Education Committee

The MRL recognises it is important to provide all graduate students with every opportunity for a broad education and a compatible environment in which to complete your research project successfully. Professor Fiona Gribble, Director of Graduate Education, supported by the MRL Graduate Education Committee advises all students and supervisors based in the MRL on matters associated with graduate education. The Committee also oversees graduate education for members of the Clinical Biochemistry Department based in CIMR, and liaises with students and supervisors associated with the Wellcome Trust and MRC CORD PhD programmes who are based outside the MRL.

Current members of the MRL Graduate Education Committee are
Prof Fiona Gribble (Chair, Director of Graduate Education for the MRL and Dept of Clinical Biochemistry. PI in PhD programmes; fmg23@cam.ac.uk)
Prof Sue Ozanne (Deputy Chair, MRL and Clinical Biochemistry Dept. PI in PhD programmes; seo10@cam.ac.uk)
Dr Maria Adams (Senior Research Manager; ma454@medschl.cam.ac.uk)
Dr Anthony Davenport (Clinical Pharmacology Dept, PI in WT PhD programme; apd10@medschl.cam.ac.uk)
Dr Miguel Constancia (MRL and Obs & Gynae Dept, PI in PhD programmes; jmasmc2@cam.ac.uk)
Nick Heeley (Student Representative. Student in WT PhD programme; nh375@medschl.cam.ac.uk)
Dr Giles Yeo (MRL and Clinical Biochemistry Dept. PI in PhD programmes; gshy2@cam.ac.uk)
Ms Karen Laurence (Departmental Secretary; kel44@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

MRL Student Committee

The MRL Student Committee organises various events for students, including the Annual Postgraduate Symposium and a student journal club as well as social events such as cake days, Christmas celebrations, and others – all of which help create an enjoyable environment in which to be a student as well as providing organisers with valuable transferable skills including event management, effective communication and teamwork. Members of the Student Committee also represent the views of students on various MRL committees, including the MRL Management, Graduate Education, IT and General Purposes Committees, to ensure student opinion is taken into account in management decisions.

Nick Heeley (nh375@medschl.cam.ac.uk) currently leads the MRL Student Committee. Please get in touch with him if you would like to get involved, suggest events, etc.
Training

Both the MRL and University are committed to providing the highest standard of training for all graduate students. This includes the specific training directly associated with your research project as well as more general voluntary training in ‘transferable skills’ that will be valuable both for your research and your career in areas such as such as scientific writing, statistics, project management, presentation skills, and other personal and professional development courses.

Safety training

Each employee of the University and each student working in the University have responsibility to take care of their own safety and for the safety of others.

Students must attend the compulsory University General Safety and Chemical/Laboratory Safety courses in the first week in October. These are compulsory for all students and are repeated later in the year for those starting at different times. Courses can be booked online at http://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/training/graduate-safety-course/current-timetable-venues-and-handouts

In addition, all students are encouraged to attend the sessions on
Safe use of pipetters and computers
Biological safety
Glass and sharps hazards
Cryogenic hazards
All courses can be booked online at
http://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/training/graduate-safety-course/current-timetable-venues-and-handouts

Before you start to work in the lab you should read and familiarise yourself with the Departmental Safety Document (available at http://www.mrl.ims.cam.ac.uk/intranet/Health+Safety/) and return the signed form to say you done so and agree to follow the regulations. In addition, during your first two weeks here (October starters), you are must attend the mandatory safety sessions provided by the University, and the chemical safety course. These are compulsory for all students. These courses are repeated later in the year for those starting at different times.
Researcher Development
Researcher Development (RD) encompasses all of the learning and development that you might wish to experience and acquire during your time in Cambridge. It is needed to provide you with the skills and experiences that you need both today and for the future, whatever that might be. The structure for your RD is provided by the Cambridge Researcher Development Framework, which tells you about the competencies you need to gain to meet the goal of becoming a professional researcher.

RD activities include topics such as
- Personal Skills e.g. Leadership and Resilience
- Professional Skills e.g. Presentation Skills and Time management
- Career-related Skills e.g. Writing CVs and Interview Technique
- Academic Skills e.g. Paper writing and Teaching
- Entrepreneurial Skills e.g. Commercial Awareness and Innovation

Core Skills Training Programme
All students should complete the Core Skills Training Programme (CSTP), which provides a starting point for your research development, aiming to

- Help you identify your existing skills and skill gaps
- Gain training in key areas of personal effectiveness and communication
- Provide a foundation for further skills development in subsequent years
- Gain recognition of training upon completion of the CSTP

You will be sent an enrolment invitation by the GSLS. Once enrolled, the course will be available on your Moodle course list.

The programme has four components
- a skills analysis survey to help you identify which skills you need to develop – we recommend you do this in the first month of your studies
- time management training, a key skill for being a researcher
- presentation and performance training as it is just as important for scientists to be able to communicate their research to other people as well as being able to obtain results in the lab
- scientific writing to help prepare for report writing that you will need in your first year and throughout your studies

If you complete the CSTP you will receive a certificate from the GSLS.

Within Cambridge there are many providers of RD activities. For example, training is also available from the University Information Services, University Library and the Careers’ Service. All courses organised by the University must be booked on line - be aware that some are extremely popular and get booked up well in advance. If you reserve a place on a course but aren’t able to attend, you must let the organiser know so they can offer the place to another student.

Training opportunities at the MRL
All students are expected to attend the weekly ‘internal’ and ‘external’ seminars that take place at the MRL to learn about research taking place throughout the Institute and elsewhere. You should also attend and present your work at lab group meetings and more experienced students will present their work at internal seminars.
Students at the MRL also participate in the annual MRL Student Symposium and the IMS Away Day, presenting either a poster or giving a short talk, depending on their stage of research.

Attendance at the weekly ‘Hot Topic’ sessions is compulsory for 1st year MRes students. Hot topics are optional for all other 1st year students, although as they are often interactive and require some preparation, you should let Karen Laurence know a few days in advance if you plan to attend.

As a postgraduate student at Cambridge you are also entitled to attend undergraduate lectures; this can be particularly useful to get you up-to-speed if your PhD is in an unfamiliar area. If you do this be polite and introduce yourselves to the lecturer before the start of the lecture.
RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University of Cambridge's guidelines on Good Research Practice emphasise the importance of integrity and rigour in all research carried out at the University. The policy covers openness, supervision, training, intellectual property, the use of data and equipment, publications of research results and ethical practice.

http://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-integrity/good-research-practice

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of unfair practice involving defined as submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity.

It is not acceptable or tolerated by the University or the MRL/Clinical Biochemistry and, if detected, could lead to expulsion from the University and failure to obtain your degree.

Examples of plagiarism include copying (using another person's language and/or ideas as if they are your own), by:

- quoting verbatim another person's work without due acknowledgement of the source
- paraphrasing another person's work by changing some of the words, or the order of the words, without due acknowledgement of the source
- using ideas taken from someone else without reference to the originator
- cutting and pasting from the Internet to make a pastiche of online sources
- submitting someone else's work as part of your own without identifying clearly who did the work. For example, buying or commissioning work via professional agencies, or not attributing research contributed by others to a joint project.

It is your responsibility to read, and ensure that you understand, the University’s policy on plagiarism (http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/).

If in doubt, always cite the source where you obtained the information/work you are referring to.

You must clearly identify contributions from others, including instances where you include data or figures generated by others. You should also include a general acknowledgement when you have received substantial help, for example with the language and style of a piece of written work.

All students are required to include the following statement at the front of all rotation project reports, 1st year reports and project proposals. This must be signed and dated.

I confirm that the material in this report/project proposal is not copied from any published material, nor is it a paraphrase or abstract of any published material unless it is identified as such and a full source reference is given. I confirm that, other than where indicated, this document is my own work.

Name: Date:

The examiners must be in no doubt as to what is your own original work and what is not.
Turnitin

The University subscribes to the Turnitin®, database to help detect plagiarism in written work. All students should be aware that, if suspicions are raised, their work will be submitted and reviewed using this text-matching software.

- Policy on the use of Turnitin UK text-matching software (2016-17)
STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE METABOLIC RESEARCH LABORATORIES

4-year PhD programmes (Wellcome Trust PhD programme in Metabolic and Cardiovascular Disease, and MRC Programme in Obesity and Related Metabolic Diseases)

The MRL is the base for inter-disciplinary, 4-year Wellcome Trust PhD Programme in Metabolic and Cardiovascular Disease. Students on this programme enroll for an MRes degree in the 1st year. After successfully completing this first year, and following the recommendation of the course examiners and with the support of a PhD supervisor, students undertake a 3 year PhD project in years 2-4.

Master of Research (MRes)
During the first year programme students undertake three mini-projects in different laboratories, selected to gain experience of different experimental approaches and working environments. You will spend 10-11 weeks in the lab during each project, following which you prepare a written report (Michaelmas- and Lent-term projects) or poster presentation (Easter-term project) for formal assessment and feedback. Michaelmas- and Lent-term projects are assessed in short vivas, and you will present your Easter-term poster at the MRL Student symposium.

Arranging rotation projects
Shortly before the start of each term you should contact supervisors whose work particularly interests you and arrange to speak to them about potential projects in their lab. Supervisors are generally very happy to make time to discuss potential rotation projects. However, you need to bear in mind that PIs are busy people, with many academic, administrative and, often, clinical commitments. It is not realistic to expect them to rearrange appointments to make time to see you, and always let them know as far in advance as possible if you are not able make an arranged meeting.

Clearly, it is advisable to do some background research into the area before you meet a potential supervisor. You should also be aware that there is no obligation for a supervisor to accept a student, no matter how much you might want to work with them.

Core course
Alongside your lab rotations students attend weekly 'hot topics' sessions together with modules focussing on experimental techniques. Attendance is compulsory - if you are not able to make a session because of illness or other good reason, you should email Karen Laurence and the session leader in advance to let them know.

Research Seminars
Students are expected to attend lab group meetings and research seminars in the department or institute where you undertake your rotation projects.

PhD Programme Symposium
MRes students will present a poster of their Easter term research project at the annual MRL Student Symposium. Other students will either present a poster or give a short oral presentation, depending on their stage of research.
MRes Annual Timetable 2016-2017

Michaelmas Term 2016
Mon 3 – 11 October Induction programme
11 October Michaelmas term project-selection deadline
12 October – 19 December Michaelmas project (1st lab rotation)
13 December MRL Retreat
22 December catch-up meeting with programme organisers (exact date and times tbc)

23 December – 6 January No timetabled activity (holiday and time to write up 1st rotation project)

Lent Term 2017
6 January Lent term project-selection deadline
9 January Michaelmas project report deadline
9 January – 24 March Lent project (2nd lab rotation)
24 March catch-up meeting with programme organisers (exact date and times tbc)
25 March – 7 April No timetabled activity (holiday and time to write up 2nd rotation project)

Easter Term 2017 (Easter weekend 14-17th April)
7 April Easter term project selection deadline
10 April Lent term report deadline
10 April – 23 June Easter project (3rd lab rotation)
26 June catch-up meeting with programme organisers (exact date and times tbc)
12 June PhD selection deadline
26 June – 1 August PhD proposal write-up
13 July Easter project (poster) deadline
Mid-late July (date tbc) IMS Student symposium
1 August submission deadline for PhD proposal

1 August – 1 September No timetabled activity

1 – 18 September MRes vivas with external examiner (specific dates to be confirmed in July)

All students continuing to a PhD must be in Cambridge from 1 September 2017

MRes students should expect to take up to 8 weeks holiday throughout the course of the year, arranged in advance with Dr Maria Adams
Choosing your PhD project
The experience gained during your rotation projects is invaluable when deciding the project you wish to pursue for your PhD. You should discuss the possibilities with prospective supervisors before coming to a decision in early June and, once the decision is finalised, writing a research proposal in the form of a grant application. This PhD proposal forms a major part of your first year assessment. For students funded by the Wellcome Trust, it is also used as a basis for a request for additional funding to cover the costs of animal work for the 3 years of your research project.

Assessment procedures

Guidelines for Rotation Project Reports, 2016-2017
Michaelmas and Lent term projects
Reports for rotation projects for Michaelmas and Lent terms should be written in the style of a paper in a journal appropriate to the topic. Normally this will include a Title page, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions, References, Tables and Figures and, if necessary, Appendices. The word limit is 8000 words (not including References and Appendices), but this is the absolute maximum and most reports are far shorter. For a report on a short project, the Introduction is likely to be longer and the Results section shorter than in a published paper.

You should include the following statement (signed and dated) following the title page:

I confirm that the material in this Project Report is not copied from any published material, nor is it a paraphrase or abstract of any published material unless it is identified as such and a full source reference is given. I confirm that, other than where indicated, this document is my own work.

The report is essentially your own work, but your project supervisor will offer general guidance in writing, and should see and comment on a draft. Make sure you send your draft to your supervisor in good time for them to do read the report and make meaningful comments. We strongly advise you to stay in Cambridge while preparing each report so you are able to access journals, as well as discuss your work and its wider implications with your supervisor and lab colleagues.

You should prepare 3 print copies of your report, keep one for yourself, and hand in the 2 remaining copies. Please also email an electronic copy to Maria Adams to keep on file.

There’s no need for elaborate binding, either use the ring-binding machine kept behind the level 4 reception (ask Karen, Madeline or Sam to show you how), or use a hole punch and plastic wallet to keep the papers in place.

Easter term project
The report for the Easter term project will be in the form of a poster, which is assessed at the annual student symposium in July.

Deadlines
Michaelmas project report 9 January 2017
Lent project report 10 April 2017
Easter project poster 13 July 2017

Please respect the deadlines; they have been set so that the report from one project is complete before you become seriously immersed in the next.
If you think you might be delayed in handing in a report then let Maria Adams know as soon as you can.

Your reports will be read by two assessors (the supervisor of the project, plus the supervisor of your next rotation project). There will also be a short 'viva' with the two assessors, after which they will submit brief written comments. Both the report itself and the written assessments will be available as part of the material seen by the MRes examiner. You will also have copies of the written assessments for feedback.

**Final MRes Assessment**
The final MRes assessments take place in September of the first year based on the reports from rotation projects and PhD proposal plus a viva examination with internal and external examiners. Students must successfully complete the MRes and be accepted into a lab for doctoral research to continue to the PhD.

**Transfer to PhD**
At the start of the second year, programme students, as all PhDs in the University, are registered as probationary PhD students. Students whose primary supervisors are not based at the MRL will transfer their registration to their supervisor’s home dept, and continuation after the 1st (probationary) year depends on satisfactory performance following the assessment procedures in place in the home department. The procedures that apply in the MRL (ie, students registered in the Clinical Biochemistry Dept) are outlined on p19-20.
**PhD study**

All PhD students at the University of Cambridge are initially enrolled as ‘probationary’ PhD students (otherwise known as NOTAFs). Only after successfully completing your 1\(^{st}\) year will you be registered as a ‘full’ PhD student.

### Outline of procedures for probationary PhD students

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<th>Supervisor responsibilities</th>
<th>PhD student responsibilities</th>
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| Pre Oct  | • Inform Maria Adams or Fiona Gribble of students arrival  
• Select second supervisor and inform Maria Adams |                                                                                              |
| Oct      | • Meet with student to discuss project and any training required  
• Attend Compulsory University Safety course  
• Take online induction course from the Graduate School  
• Meet with supervisor to discuss project and any training required  
• Meet with second supervisor  
• Complete your Skills Analysis Survey | • Review Skills Analysis Survey  
• Identify areas for training and attend courses/other training as appropriate |
| Dec      | • Formal meeting with student to discuss progress  
• Complete termly progress report on CAMSIS | • Review Skills Analysis Survey  
• Identify areas for training and attend courses/other training as appropriate |
| April    | • Formal meeting with student  
• Complete termly progress report on CAMSIS | • Review Skills Analysis Survey  
• Identify areas for training and attend courses/other training as appropriate |
| June     | | • Start to prepare 1\(^{st}\)-year report  
*Students not registered in the Dept of Clinical Biochemistry should follow 1\(^{st}\)-year report guidelines in their ‘home’ dept* |
| July     | | • Make and present poster at the annual MRL Student symposium  
*All students at the MRL regardless of the home dept* |
| July     | • Choose 2 ‘internal’ examiners, (one of whom is usually the 2\(^{nd}\) supervisor) and arrange date for the 1\(^{st}\) year viva  
*Supervisors from depts other than Dept of Clinical Biochemistry should follow 1\(^{st}\)-year report guidelines from their home dept* |                                                                                           |
| July-Aug | • Send the 1\(^{st}\) year examiners report to Maria Adams | • 1st year viva  
• Meet with supervisor and/or 2\(^{nd}\) |
| Throughout the year | • Complete termly reports outlining student progress on CAMSIS. Reports required in December, April and August-September | • Identify and attend relevant transferable skills courses. Record courses attended  
• Meet regularly with your supervisor and record outcomes  
• Attend internal and external IMS seminars  
• Attend Hot Topics sessions as appropriate  
• Attend other seminars as relevant |

**1st year report (Students registered in Clinical Biochemistry Department)**

You should discuss the content of your 1st year report with your supervisor at an early stage and start writing it by June of your 1st year (Sept for Jan starters, and Dec for April starters). The main purpose of your report is to assess your suitability for registration for a PhD. It also provides an opportunity for a thorough review of project objectives and progress by both student and supervisor. The assessment is based on a written report that is read by two PIs (one of whom is normally your second supervisor) and discussed with you in a viva. Your project supervisor can also be present at the viva as an observer, but is not one of the assessors.

Your report should be in the general form of a research paper in an appropriate journal (such as *Diabetes* or *J Biol Chem*), using the Instructions to Authors provided by the journal. You should find it useful experience of assembling a manuscript for journal publication (although the balance of text at this stage will probably be weighted more towards Introduction and Methods than Results).

The report should include:

- Title of the project, with names of student and supervisor
- Abstract (<1 page)
- Introduction (3-5 pages) describing the background to the project and aims of your studies
- Methods (including clinical material where relevant)
- Results giving a concise account of data obtained to date
- Discussion (3-5 pages), in which results are interpreted and related to relevant literature, and plans for future studies are outlined
- Appropriate Figures and Tables, each with a title and full legend
- A list of references cited in the style of your chosen journal
- A list of abbreviations where necessary
- A statement of the total word count of text

The total length of text (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) should be ~5000 words.
You are not expected to spend more than three weeks preparing your report and should complete it in less if you are efficient and have been organizing your thoughts and data in advance. Copies of your finished report and your Personal Progress Log should be given to both your assessors and to your supervisor a week before your viva. Following your viva, copies of the approved and, if necessary, corrected report should be bound and one copy given to Maria or Fiona for the Departmental records, and another to your supervisor for use in your lab.

If you have any questions you should discuss these in the first instance with your supervisor, and then if necessary with Fiona or Maria.

**1st year viva**
Your supervisor is responsible for selecting two appropriate examiners for you, one of whom is usually your 2nd supervisor, and for organising your viva at a mutually convenient time. Discussions in the viva will not necessarily be restricted to details of the experimental work in your report, but might also cover relevant background and general information so it is important that you develop a broad knowledge of your area of research and read widely throughout your PhD. Following the viva, your assessors will write a joint report on any issues and recommendations arising from the viva, and your suitability for registration for a PhD. Your supervisor will then submit a report on CAMSIS stating whether they recommend you are registered as a full PhD student.

The Departmental Graduate Education Committee recommends three possible outcomes following the 1st year assessment:

- **Satisfactory progress.** Registration should be transferred from ‘probationary’ PhD student to ‘full’ PhD student.
- **Conditional progress.** There are some concerns although these are not sufficient to indicate the student will not be able to submit an acceptable thesis within 4 years. This option is intended to help focus both student and supervisor on achieving a successful project, and it is generally expected that a revised report and follow-up review will be completed within 3 months.
- **Unsatisfactory progress.** There are sufficient grounds to indicate a student is unlikely to complete an acceptable PhD thesis within 4 years they should be recommended to submit a masters thesis.

After you are registered for your PhD you should meet with your supervisor and second supervisor to discuss any matters arising from the report and viva, and your plans for the coming year.
### 2nd year PhD students (students with 4-years PhD funding should also follow this plan in year 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Supervisor responsibilities</th>
<th>PhD student responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Skills Analysis Survey and plan accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Give a research talk at the annual MRL Student symposium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
<td>• Meet regularly with student to discuss progress</td>
<td>• Identify and attend relevant transferable skills courses. Record courses attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete termly reports outlining student progress on CAMSIS. Reports required in December, April and September</td>
<td>• Meet regularly with your supervisor and record outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend internal and external IMS seminars</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Attend other relevant events</td>
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### Final year PhD students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Supervisor responsibilities</th>
<th>PhD student responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>• Formal meeting with student to discuss time-frame for completion and structure of thesis</td>
<td>• Make a thesis plan identifying and detailing any work still to be done</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review this plan with your supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Skills Analysis Survey and plan accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>• Formal meeting with student to review structure of thesis and plan time-frame for completion</td>
<td>• Formal meeting with supervisor to review structure of thesis and plan time-frame for completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend the annual MRL Student symposium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-Sept</td>
<td>• Send ‘Appointment of Examiners Form’ to the Higher Degrees Office. The Higher Degrees Office will then ask you to complete a ‘Nomination of Examiners’ form. This should be done asap to avoid unexpected delays</td>
<td>• Send ‘Appointment of Examiners Student Application Form’ form to the Degree Office 2 months before you are due to submit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Remind supervisor to nominate your examiners</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bind and submit your thesis to the Degree Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
<td>• Complete termly reports outlining student progress on CAMSIS. Reports required in December, April and September</td>
<td>• Identify and attend relevant transferable skills courses. Record courses attended</td>
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<td>• Attend internal and external IMS seminars</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Attend other seminars as relevant</td>
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</table>
Submitting your thesis
Information on how to submit your thesis and arrange appointment of examiners is available on the Board of Graduate Studies website (http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/exams/).

Your thesis must be submitted within 4 years of registering for your PhD

The minimum time for submitting your PhD thesis is 3-years from the date of registration (ie no earlier than the 1st day of your 9th term), and the final deadline for submission is the last day of your 4th year of study. The Board of Graduate Studies will email both you and your supervisor at the start of your fourth year to tell you that your deadline is 12 months away.

Students are required to live in Cambridge while writing up, and you must apply for leave to work away if you would like to write up elsewhere (this is not recommended as it will inevitably reduce access to your supervisor, colleagues and other resources).

Following your PhD viva, minor corrections should be completed within three months, major corrections within six months, and resubmission of the thesis should be completed within 12 months unless otherwise stipulated by the Degree Committee.

What happens if you are not ready to submit by the end of your 4th year?

At the end of your 11th term, BGS will email a further warning of the deadline and remind you to apply for an extension if you think you will need it. If you have still not finished by the end of your 12th term you will be taken off the student register. If you know you cannot submit on time, you must contact the Degree Committee and either Ken Siddle or Maria Adams at least one month before the last day of your 4th year for advice.

The Degree Committee will be sympathetic to applications to defer submission if there is evidence of a good reason for the overrun and the thesis is nearly ready to submit. An extension of up to a term can be granted at any one time. The Degree Committee may also allow you to intermit if you are unable to work for a period of months. Intermission is granted for a minimum of one term, with a maximum of three intermissions (3 terms) during the PhD course. Intermission ‘stops the clock’ as far as registration is concerned, but it is difficult to grant in retrospect so it is vital that you explore the possibility of intermission immediately you have a problem, rather than waiting until you run out of time.

If you are taken off the register you will lose your student status and will
• lose the right to use University or College facilities
• become liable to pay certain taxes and repay student loans
• your student visa will no longer be valid

You will need to apply to be reinstated when your thesis is ready to submit and you will normally be given a month after reinstatement to deliver the thesis to The Board of Graduate Studies.

Late submission also counts as a black mark against the department’s ‘4-year submission’ record and will affect future funding for the department.
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

The MPhil in Medical Science is research-based and lasts for 12 months (full time). During this time, you must complete a research project, which is submitted as a written Dissertation of less than 20,000 words (not including Tables, References, Figure legends and Appendices), on a subject approved by the Degree Committee for the Faculties of Clinical Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. You will be assessed by oral examination on both your Dissertation and broader knowledge of your chosen area of research. The thesis shall provide evidence to satisfy the Examiners that a candidate can design and carry out an original investigation, assess and interpret the results obtained, and place the work in the wider perspective of the subject.

The ideal programme of study for a Masters degree will:

- Comprise in-depth study of a specific topic
- Require the student to critically examine the background literature relevant to their specific research area
- Provide the student with an environment that encourages originality and creativity in their research
- Give the student an opportunity to develop skills in making and testing hypotheses, in developing new theories, and in planning and conducting experiments
- Provide the opportunity to enlarge the student’s view of their broader research area, its theoretical foundations and the specific techniques used to study it
- Provide, through constructive feedback of written work and oral presentations, an opportunity for the student to develop skills in written work, oral presentation and in publishing the results of their research in high-profile scientific journals.

You should attend internal and external seminars and opportunities, as for 1st year PhD students and are encouraged to attend transferable skills training to broaden your experience further.

In mid-November, you will receive an email asking you to complete a brief, self-assessment report, based broadly under the terms ‘progress’, ‘problems’ and ‘plans’, that will be reviewed by your Supervisor and College Graduate Tutor simultaneously for feedback and comment as necessary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date*</th>
<th>Supervisor responsibilities</th>
<th>MPhil student responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pre-Oct | • Inform Maria Adams or Fiona Gribble of students arrival  
        • Select second supervisor and inform Maria Adams |                             |
| Oct     | • Meet with student to discuss project and any training required | • Attend Compulsory University Safety course  
        • Attend Compulsory Graduate School induction course  
        • Meet with supervisor to discuss project and any training required  
        • Meet with second supervisor |
| Nov     | • Review and discuss the self-assessment report with the student | • submit a brief, self-assessment report, outlining your progress, any issues identified, and future plans |
| Dec     | • Formal meeting with student to discuss progress  
        • Complete termly progress report on CAMSIS | • Review Skills Analysis Survey and plan accordingly |
| April   | • Formal meeting with student to discuss structure of MPhil dissertation and timeline for completion  
        • Complete termly progress report on CAMSIS | • Formal meeting with supervisor to discuss structure of MPhil dissertation and timeline for completion  
        • Start to prepare dissertation |
| July    |                                                                 | • Attend and present work at the annual MRL Student symposium |
| May-Sept | • Send ‘Appointment of Examiners Form’ to the Higher Degrees Office. The Higher Degrees Office will then ask you to complete and return a ‘Nomination of Examiners’ form. This should be done asap. | • Send ‘Appointment of Examiners Student Application Form’ form to the Degree Office 2 months before you are due to submit  
        • Remind supervisor to nominate your examiners and get their agreement to examine you  
        • Bind and submit your thesis |
| Throughout the year | • Complete termly reports outlining student progress on CAMSIS. Reports required in December, April and August-September | • Identify and attend relevant transferable skills courses. Record courses attended  
        • Meet regularly with your supervisor and record outcomes  
        • Attend internal and external IMS seminars  
        • Attend Hot Topics sessions as appropriate  
        • Attend other seminars as relevant |

*Assumes October start date, Dates should be adjusted for students starting in Jan or April.
**Submission of dissertation**

The final deadline for submission of your MPhil thesis is the last day of your 3rd term (ie 12 months of study). If the end of your 12 months is approaching and you know you will not make this deadline you should discuss with your Supervisor and apply to the Degree Committee in good time to extend the deadline. The Degree Committee assess applications for extensions on a case-by-case basis.

*If you do not do this, the Degree Committee may take you off the register.*

Information about how to submit your thesis, arrange for appointment of your examiners and apply for a deferral of submission is available on the Student Registry website [http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/current/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/current/)