Welcome

Proctor

“Welcome – or welcome back! – to St Andrews for the start of the new academic year. I’m looking forward to meeting as many of our postgraduates as possible this session, and hope to hear that you are making good progress in your studies as well as enjoying life in this beautiful corner of the world. St Leonard’s offers you a community for events, support and feedback: but it’s only as active as you – the members of our community – can make it. Please do get involved and help us to maintain the lively intellectual and social environment we all thrive in!”

Professor Lorna Milne
Vice-Principal (Proctor)

Provost

“St Leonard’s College was re-launched in 2013 as a postgraduate college dedicated to meeting the needs of this community. Our mission is “to promote a culture and environment in which scholarship, creativity and discovery will flourish.” St Leonard’s provides a unique focal point for our PGR and PGT students and most importantly it is your college. The shape and traditions of this College are gradually forming and I urge you to take advantage of the opportunities for fellowship and intellectual exchange that it offers.”

Professor Derek Woollins
Provost of St Leonard’s College

Pro Dean (Taught Postgraduate)

“As Pro Dean for Taught Postgraduate programmes, I would like to warmly welcome you to the University of St Andrews. Your time at St Andrews will be short in comparison to many new students; therefore in order to benefit from the fantastic opportunities on offer here you will need to start enjoying them right away. Unless a particular event or society is explicitly aimed at the undergraduate students, you will always be made very welcome. Many opportunities are available through the student societies to travel and explore Scotland or engage in sport or other interesting social activities. I hope you make time to get to grips with your new environment, and I will be one of the people helping you to get the best out of the coming years of study. Through the Schools and St Leonard’s College – our virtual postgraduate college, to which you now belong – we are committed to nurturing your skills and to providing the best training to prepare you for the future. The University has much to offer you beyond work, with its excellent sports facilities and lively student community. The coming weeks will be hectic, as you get to grips with your new environment, but I strongly encourage you to take the time to explore and to find your own place in this great town. St Andrews has a long and bright tradition – I look forward to seeing you develop your own place within it.”

Dr Clare Peddie
Pro Dean (Taught Postgraduate)
E prodean-pg@st-andrews.ac.uk
@j_t_palmer

Pro Dean (Research Programmes)

“I am the Postgraduate Development Officer for 2016-2017. This is a new role created to liaise with all services related to postgraduate life that do not fall under the categories of academic or social. These services include CAPOD, Accommodation, Student Services and Registry. I want to ensure that the postgraduate voice is heard on all issues affecting us and to set precedence for future Development Officers for example by setting up monthly meetings with key staff members to ensure I am kept up to date with each area I am responsible for. I am currently in my second year of a PhD in Neuroscience having completed a BSc in the same subject here at St Andrews. I have been involved with the Postgraduate Committee and will continue as a member. I was previously the Secretary (2014-2015) and Extra-ordinary member (2015-2016). Within the Student’s Association I sit on the Students Representative Council (SRC). I hope you have an excellent time here at St Andrews and love it just as much as I do. If you have any questions, comments or issues you want to make me aware of, please contact me. I will do my best to help and take comments on board.”

Dr James Palmer
Pro Dean (Research Programmes)
E prodean-pgr@st-andrews.ac.uk
@j_t_palmer

Postgraduate Development Officer

All matriculated postgraduate students, both taught and research, are automatically a member of both the Postgraduate (PG) Society, ‘the home society’ and St Leonard’s College ‘the home’ within the University, which work closely together to enrich your experience. The PG Society also provides formal representation within the Students’ Association and University. The Postgraduate Society organises events ranging from whisky tastings, ceilidhs to bus trips through the Postgraduate Society Committee. All postgraduates who are keen to get involved with the society are encouraged to attend the committee meetings. We are always happy for new members to join and bring in new ideas about what the Postgraduate Society can offer to the postgraduate community.

Alison Holiday
Postgraduate Development Officer 2016-2017
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www.yourunion.net/pgsoc

Postgraduate Society Committee

@pgsoc

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Postgraduate Society Committee


St Leonard’s College


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**What is your role?**
The Postgraduate Academic Convenor is the hinge between the Students’ Union and the University in terms of representing postgraduate students on academic matters. I share the representative role with Alison Holiday as Development Officer, whose remit is non-academic matters: everything from accommodation through library provision to welfare. In times past there was only one Convenor, but that proved too much to handle unassisted.

It means nowadays is plenty of committee work for me, and that’s what I get from the representative structures in the Union – mainly class representatives, plus the super-delegate-like Postgraduate Executive Representatives – their view is what gets put forward as the official student position at the higher-level University meetings. So if there’s anything that you have strong feelings about, do get in touch!

"The Postgraduate Academic Convenor is the hinge between the Union and the University in terms of representing postgraduate students on academic matters"  
Euan Grant  
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**What do you study?**
I’m beginning my second year as a PhD student in Divinity. I study the subleties of mediaeval ideas of human nature, and their relevance for modern Christian thinking about human freedom and responsibility, particularly in relation to what is called Original Sin.

**Why did you choose this topic?**
Because all of the modern writers on the topic were missing the point! And whatever you might wish to say about the mediaevals, their whole academic culture was dedicated to getting swiftly and directly to the point, and not moving on again until every possibility for understanding it was explored and exhausted.

**What motivated you to apply for the position?**
Apart from the fact that the role was sitting vacant after the election, and I was beginning to feel like Cincinnati at the farm, I have a fanatical devotion to the ideal of committee governance (it was the mediaeval Dominicans, you know, who have a strong claim to have invented it) – or at least a fascination with the practice.

But apart from peering into the arcane mysteries of university management, I wanted to do whatever I could to make sure that academic representation was sensible, and to see what could be done to make the sense of common enterprise and intellectual collegiality which characterises the School of Divinity a common factor in the academic experience of postgraduates throughout the University.

**What do you want to achieve while you are representing the PGs?**
The University is a pretty small place, but even at this size it’s far too big for change just to be pushed through from the centre. My hope is that the positions which I occupy as Convenor in the Union and the University will let me give heft to anyone who finds that the usual due processes in their departments aren’t solving their problems. I’d love to abolish something – some set of forms or useless structures – but the people who write policy documents and so on are actually a very committed and efficient group of people here, and they’ve generally consolidated enough that slashing and burning is rather out of the question…

**What would you like to happen with PG representation?**
Representation and engagement are great bugbears for the sort of people (like me, it would seem) who end up on committees and in student unions. The problem, of course, is that when things are going well, most people don’t really need to be part of some official body bigger than their classes or seminars, their groups of friends and colleagues. Certainly, I’m personally very happy studying at St Andrews, and I believe that most postgraduates will rub along fine in their degrees, undertaking good research (for following a good Masters course), making good friends, and having a good time. What I would like to say, though, is that the whole structure of representation is there precisely for when this rosy picture falls apart. Whether it’s academic matters, problems with bad supervisors or indifferent departments, or any other sort of concern, Alison and I have been given big, fancy gowns on the strength of our willingness to help whoever we can. If ever we can, don’t hesitate to let us know.

**Thinking about moving on after your PG degree at St Andrews?**
How can the Careers Centre help you?

**Early use of the Careers Centre**
We encourage you to make early use of the services offered by the Careers Centre, so that you can fully benefit from the many opportunities which St Andrews offers. Many employer presentations take place in the first semester, and the Careers Centre communicates closely with Masters students to ensure that you are fully aware of resources and opportunities.

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**What happens in a careers appointment?**
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• to focus on your needs and interests  
• to know where to find the answers and show you where and how to access information to research queries for yourself, rather than knowing the answer to every question  
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Postgraduate Biology Network
Connecting biologists since May 2009
by Barbara & Morag, Bionet Co-Presidents

The postgraduate biology network (or Bionet) was founded in 2009 to bring students in the various buildings and research groups of the School of Biology together. We aim to facilitate networking and knowledge transfer through social events, talks and other educational activities. Our talks are usually on a Thursday evening, in addition to the occasional pub evening and weekend trips.

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Saint Andrews BioNetwork
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Social events include occasional pub evening and a weekend trip

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Lessons from Lecturing

by Kirsty Graham, third-year PhD student, School of Psychology & Neuroscience

In April, I went from never having lectured before to giving three lectures in two days. In that whole month, I gave five lectures over three weeks. I had helped in tutorials, but I had never stood in front of a class of expectant undergrads. My first surprise was how few undergraduates attend lectures. A study at Harvard found that about a third of the students were present at their first lecture, I asked my cousin who is a teacher and a violinist how he had felt when he started teaching. He said, “I tried to think of teaching like a performance, and that helped me to get over my nerves”. Great advice for musicians and actors, maybe less so for those who get stage fright. I found that what helped me was the realisation that I had new knowledge for these students, knowledge that I now took for granted, but remembered being excited to learn when I was an undergraduate myself.

The two undergraduate lectures that I delivered were on great ape evolution and social learning mechanisms. I also gave a series of three lectures for the St Leonard’s College Lecture Prize. This was really fun, because I got to propose the lectures that I wanted to give, I was accepted for the prize, and then I got to write and deliver entirely my own lectures. I chose to give them on animal communication, covering a number of species along themes that built from lecture to lecture: from signals to meaning to syntax. The lesson here was that preparing a lecture from scratch takes much longer than you’d think. I laboured over small details, wanting to make the lectures (like the prize stipulated) open to all levels of students across all disciplines. Overall, I really enjoyed giving the lectures. The undergraduate lectures were the most satisfying – it’s a huge ego boost to hear from students that they “loved your lecture; it was really clear and precise”. More practically, it’s satisfying to pass knowledge on to other people. If you get the chance to give lectures during your PhD, it may be daunting, but I highly recommend it to give yourself a taste of teaching. I look forward to lecturing as part of my job as I move higher in academia.

Kirsty Graham
@kirstyegraham

St Leonard’s Lecture Prize Series
Reflections from a Panel Member

by Mattias Eken, second-year PhD student, School of History

This year, I had the pleasure of being asked to help select the winners for this year’s St Leonard’s Lecture Prize series. Having never before been on a panel of this kind, I thought I should briefly say something about two things that struck me during the process. The first is the simply astonishing creativity and ability of St Andrews students to come up with fascinating topics for lectures. It genuinely is true. This year we had over twenty applications and many showed simply fascinating approaches to interdisciplinary issues and how they could be portrayed in an engaging lecture series. One of the lectures this year will combine such different things as Shakespeare and cognitive science. I would never have thought of that! So, my first advice is very simple if you are reading this and thinking about putting your name forward for next year’s series: do it! It does not matter how weird or strange your idea may seem at first. If you think it is worth talking about then we want to hear about it. What have you got to lose?

What second observation is of a more practical nature. If you want to get on the good side of the judging panel from the start then follow this top tip: put your name in every file. With three to four files per candidate to review it can (and usually does) get very confusing if each file does not have the candidate’s name in it. No one likes an annoyed panel member. Least of all their office colleagues. So if you are thinking of proposing a lecture, or for anything you submit to be reviewed for that matter, do us all a favour and put your name in the file. Having said that, I hope you will join me at this year’s St Leonard’s Lecture Prize series. The topics are simply fascinating and I look forward to seeing what other weird and wonderful ideas are out there in the future!

What is the St Leonard’s College Lecture Prize?
It is a competition hosted by St Leonard’s College to give postgraduate students the opportunity to deliver an original series of three research-based lectures.

Who selects the winner?
There are two panels one for Arts and Divinity and the other for Science and Medicine. Proposals will be judged by a panel of staff and students from the appropriate Faculty.

What could I win?
There are two prizes of £300 will be awarded to the postgraduate students selected to deliver the lectures.

When do I give my lectures?
Successful applicants will deliver their lecture series around March/April.
Attending a conference as a student can sometimes be harrowing. Individuals can feel anxious about having their presentations scrutinised by more senior academics, and networking turns into a requirement rather than a natural side effect of integrating with other attendees. On the other hand, student-led conferences can be rewarding. Attendees are provided with a comfortable and relaxed environment to socialise and spark conversations with other early-career researchers. In March, the University of St Andrews hosted the Third European Student conference on Behaviour and Cognition. Over 50 students from countries across Europe, such as Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria attended, and ranged from undergraduates to PhD students. The organising committee created a warm and friendly environment by encouraging academic discussions, most of which stemmed from the exciting research projects presented by the 18 student speakers.

With a strong concern for the environment, the organisers strove to achieve a ‘green’ conference. For instance, they printed conference programmes on recycled paper, provided attendees with recycled water bottles, and served only vegetarian or vegan lunch options. Although the change in food options was at first controversial, attendees seemed nothing but supportive of the decision. When the conference ended, the organisers were overwhelmed by the wave of praise from students and plenary speakers, who seemed not only impressed by the conference but grateful for the opportunity to attend.

When the conference ended, the panel discussing "Small States in a World of Inequality" included Matthew Crandall (left) from Tallinn University; Catlyn Kirna from Tallinn University; Sarina Theys from Newcastle University; Kristin Eggeling; and Gabriele Giovanni (right) from Northumbria University.

The European Student Conference on Behaviour and Cognition
by Georgina Glaser, PhD candidate, School of Biology

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With a strong concern for the environment, the organisers strove to achieve a ‘green’ conference. For instance, they printed conference programmes on recycled paper, provided attendees with recycled water bottles, and served only vegetarian or vegan lunch options. Although the change in food options was at first controversial, attendees seemed nothing but supportive of the decision. When the conference ended, the panel discussing "Small States in a World of Inequality" included Matthew Crandall (left) from Tallinn University; Catlyn Kirna from Tallinn University; Sarina Theys from Newcastle University; Kristin Eggeling; and Gabriele Giovanni (right) from Northumbria University.

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Santander Research Mobility Award 2016
by Kristin Eggeling, School of International Relations

Thanks to the generous support I received from the Santander Research Mobility Award, I was able to travel to and present parts of my doctoral research at the International Political Science Association (IPSA) World Congress for Political Science that took place in Poznan, Poland between 23 and 29 July 2016. At the congress, I participated in a panel on the role of small states in world politics, where I served as a discussant for a colleague’s paper, and presented a piece of my own original research entitled ‘Small in size, big in perception? Qatar’s use of cultural diplomacy as virtual enlargement’. Next to receiving invaluable feedback to get my paper fit for publication, I also had the opportunity to discuss my work with leading academics in the field, and got the chance to network with scholars from all around the world. Attending and presenting at the IPSA Congress has thus helped me to improve my transferable academic skills, and provided me with new ideas on how to continuously improve the quality of my doctoral research. Again, I would like to thank Santander and its support through the 2016 Research Mobility Award, without which I could not have attended the congress.
Four Stages in a Field Research PhD

by Kirsty Graham, third year PhD student, School of Psychology & Neuroscience

Doing fieldwork for your PhD is incredibly rewarding, but it also changes the balance of your workload so that the bulk of writing can’t happen until your last year. Now that I’m in my third and (hopefully) final year of my PhD, I’m looking back on what worked and what I wish I’d known earlier. My research topic is gestural communication of wild bonobos, for which I conducted two six-month field seasons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This article is less of an instructional guide and more of a ‘heads up’ for things to expect when your PhD involves fieldwork.

**The Preparation**

My first semester of first year was spent reading. Someone recently told my partner “read as much as you can in your first year, because after that, there’s not enough time!” I tend to agree. It’s important to cover as much reading as possible in the first year, and then you just have to keep up with new articles as they come out. Google scholar alerts really help to keep up with new publications – I left them running while away on fieldwork, so I didn’t miss anything and came back to a pile of interesting new studies.

"It’s important to cover as much reading as possible in the first year, and then you just have to keep up with new articles as they come out"

**The Fieldwork**

Fieldwork is the fun part. My fieldwork was at Wamba in Northern DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), at quite a remote field station. We didn’t have internet, only a satellite box with which we were allowed to send and receive only two emails a week. Electricity was solar powered. We had pit toilets and bucket showers. In the field, there are no distractions, only research. I was out most days following the bonobos in the morning and inputting data in the afternoon/evening. In your free time it’s a good opportunity to read those long classics that you’d never otherwise have time for (I got through Ulysses and War and Peace, among many others!). The Innocent Anthropologist is a great book to read about fieldwork – whether or not you’re an anthropologist, I can guarantee you’ll relate to a lot of the situations.

**The Analysis**

Oh, video coding! I got back from fieldwork with about 359 hours of video footage, which I then had to watch, look for gestures, and re-watch the gestures in slow motion while coding them. For every two months of fieldwork, it took one month of video coding. Another student told me, “however long you think you’re going to take to code the video, double it”. It was good advice.

"The Thesis Bootcamp’ workshop revolutionised my writing. It gave me confidence to know that I can write quickly if I have to, and I found the Pomodoro technique is a nice writing tool"

**The Writing**

So far, I’ve found that writing and analysis go along hand in hand. First, I’ll write an abstract that helps to guide my analysis. Then I’ll analyse my data. Then I’ll come back and write a paper or chapter around it. Often I’ll feel I’ve come to the end of what I need to analyse for a chapter, but upon writing realise that there is something else it would be nice to include.

The ‘Thesis Bootcamp’ workshop revolutionised my writing. It gave me the confidence to know that I can write quickly if I have to, and I found the Pomodoro technique is a nice writing tool.

On top of reading, there’s a lot of preparation for fieldwork and, aside from all that, planning and refining the research methods that you’ll be using.

No matter how you collect your data on fieldwork, we’re likely in the same boat – I had to wait until all my data was collected and all my video was coded before being able to start analysis. This means that while other students who are doing discrete experiments might have been able to analyse and write as they went along, you have to wait until the end and then write up the same amount all in one go. On the bright side, your supervisor can’t ask for “just one more experiment” in your last year.

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Fieldwork and travel advice

“There are two main places within the University webpages to check for information on fieldwork and travel”

1. The St Leonard’s College Resource webpage explains when work is classed as field work, who you should notify and what you should do before any work begins.

   For further information check: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/pgstudents/stleonards/resources/fieldwork
   www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/strategypolicy/policy/postgraduate

2. The University provides guidance on university travel insurance, trip planning and fieldwork risk assessment for more hazardous activities. Before you leave on fieldwork you will need to do a travel risk assessment.

   Information can be found on the Environmental, Health and Safety Services Moodle page:

The following is available:

- Travel advice and updated (eg. for Zika virus).
- Information on the use of Airbnb.
- Planning and risk assessment material.
- Travel insurance information including geographical restrictions.

Who you should notify?

- Supervisor / Director of Postgraduates.
- PGR Pro Dean
- Registry to update your Location of Studies
- EHSS (Environmental, Health and Safety Services)
- International Cultural Adviser if you have any visa issues.
Looking back to PhD and ahead to Civil Service

By Dr Nino Kereselidze, PhD in International Relations, St Andrews, 2015

Nino Kereselidze embarked on a PhD in International Relations at the University of St Andrews with full University and external funding in 2012 and graduated quite unprecedentedly under three years. In all instances she was selected on a highly competitive basis. In this article Nino shares her experience at St Andrews with advice for those who contemplate to apply and in acknowledgment of the funding she received.

For Nino, three years of full time postgraduate programme was labour-intensive and even more so was managing funding from a number of prestigious institutions during various stages. Her advice to international postgraduate applicants is that the university is the first place to start. Embarking on her degree would have been impossible without the University of St Andrews Postgraduate Scholarships and the School of International Relations (IR) scholarships.

“The breadth of support that this university offers to students in every dimension is remarkable”

Postgraduate study is a mixture of thesis writing, courses, training, teaching, public lectures, conferences and publications

National government’s support to international education stays at the core. It was a strong returning commitment that enabled Nino to win the government scholarship founded by the Prime Minister of Georgia the final year. Nino firmly believes that bringing academic and civil society perspectives in civil service is what needs to be done in Georgia. Since she defended her dissertation on Foreign Policy of the European Union in the South Caucasus, joining the European Integration Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has been the right place to contribute. Immediately after graduation she got an offer from the foreign office building on her previous work at the Embassy of Georgia to London and United Nations International Maritime Organisation.

“Completing PhD is utterly impossible without a genuine guidance of a supervisor”

Last but not least, continuity with the research community at the University by contributing to the “Theory of Knowledge” course with four presentations over the academic year. The position carries a stipend of £400.

Upcoming events and funding

The next step is matching funding from external sources. Open Society Foundations (OSF) with Global Supplementary Grant Program (GSGP) enabled Nino to get her research project off the drawing board. In her final year Nino was awarded a bursary from the Thomas & Margaret Roddan Trust. Besides managing co-funding, handling multiple tasks and staying focused is a key. Postgraduate study is a mixture of thesis writing, courses, training, teaching, public lectures, conferences and publications. Soon Nino was a tutor on undergraduate modules and carried out her research in the School of International Relations. Apart from that she worked as an Assistant Warden for Student Services and assisted at matriculation for Registry. As she often shared with other founding members of the Georgian society at St Andrews: “Patience with procedures coupled with perseverance are essential elements for such accomplishments.”

Completing a PhD is utterly impossible without the genuine guidance of a supervisor. Nino remains deeply respectful of unwavering enthusiasm with which her supervisor Professor Rick Fawn, Director of the Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies (MECACS) has supported her to orchestrate her work, and continues to train the academic and policy community.

As Nino says: “The breadth of support that this university offers to students in every dimension is remarkable.” Nino’s fieldwork in Azerbaijan and Armenia was made possible with the Field Research Grant. Other than that, the Centre for Academic, Professional and Organisational Development (CAPOD) was a useful place not only for skills development courses, they also supported her with Research Development Funding.

Another dimension of the doctoral studies is participation at conferences. In this respect, the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net (ASCN), University of Glasgow, and University of Nottingham provided Nino with excellent platforms to present her work outside St Andrews.

The Associate Researcher is to provide Sixth Form students at the St Leonard’s school with a link to the research community at the University by contributing to the “Theory of Knowledge” course with four presentations over the academic year. The position carries a stipend of £400.

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Scottish Researchers Monkeying Around

By Emmie Bryant, third year PhD student, Psychology & Neuroscience

Given the world class research occurring at our institution, I don’t think it would surprise you to know that the University of St Andrews owns a primatological field station. It may however surprise you to know that you will find this field station in Scotland, about halfway up the hill in Edinburgh Zoo. The Living Links to Human Evolution Research Centre was established in 2008 in partnership with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, and since its inception has played host to many researchers from the Scottish Primate Research Group. Researchers from St Andrews, Stirling, Edinburgh and other universities in Scotland and the north of England come to Living Links to undertake studies with captive primates living in large naturalistic enclosures. Both observational and experimental studies are often involved in studying how the monkeys interact with each other and with their environment, while experimental research seeks to understand how the monkeys think by giving them puzzles. All of the work is non-invasive and designed to be intellectually enriching. After the welfare of the monkeys themselves, public engagement is a top priority of the centre. Experiments take place in dedicated research rooms viewable through large windows from the visitor decks, so everyone who comes through the centre can watch the research in action.

Living Links houses two mixed-species groups of brown capuchin monkeys and common squirrel monkeys, who are naturally found living together in the rainforests of South America. More than sixty monkeys in total live at the centre. There are two groups, East and West, and the facility is set up like a mirror image. Each side has two indoor enclosures, one for each species, and a large outdoor enclosure. This design was set up with in mind, so if it is necessary for a study to use a control group it is possible to do this with other variables (such as diet and environment) controlled for.

So what is it like to be a researcher there? I am studying memory in the capuchin monkeys and have been based at the centre for the last 12 months. All research has to first be approved by the University’s ethics committee, and then by the team of senior researchers and keepers at Living Links to ensure that there are no negative welfare implications for the primates. Once your study has been given the seal of approval, you receive your coveted researcher badge and start training.

The first stage of almost any study is to ensure you can reliably identify all the monkeys. When I first started, I took some convincing that I wasn’t just looking at thirty identical monkeys – and I struggle with human faces! How was I going to be able to tell all these monkeys apart? Luckily, the wonderful team of dedicated keepers and the presence of researchers who had been there before me provided me with a wealth of different identifiers I could use. While one person would identify Figo by his large ears and narrow face, someone else would know him because of the dark spot on his left cheek. The alpha males are the easiest to learn because they are simply so much bigger and more butch than the other group members, but gradually I began to tell them all apart. Now, a year later, I can even see the subtle family resemblances between siblings.

Once you’re comfortable with identifying the monkeys, you’re ready to start your observational study. However for my research, I need to work with them face to face to give them memory tasks, so the next stage for me was to learn how to work with them safely. Once I had donned my fetching boiler suit and protective gloves, I entered the research rooms and started learning how to use the cubicles. Via the use of moving plastic slides, the array can be configured into two rows of continuous tunnels connecting the indoor and outdoor enclosures, or up to four separate cubicles on each row. This means that monkeys can be separated from the rest of the group if necessary, which is often helpful for certain cognitive tasks and also enables low-ranking monkeys to participate without having their rewards stolen by more dominant group members. Research is completely voluntary; a researcher simply opens the sliding doors, and any negative welfare implications for the primates. Once you’re comfortable with identifying the monkeys, you’re ready to start your observational study. However for my research, I need to work with them face to face to give them memory tasks, so the next stage for me was to learn how to work with them safely. Once I had donned my fetching boiler suit and protective gloves, I entered the research rooms and started learning how to use the cubicles. Via the use of moving plastic slides, the array can be configured into two rows of continuous tunnels connecting the indoor and outdoor enclosures, or up to four separate cubicles on each row. This means that monkeys can be separated from the rest of the group if necessary, which is often helpful for certain cognitive tasks and also enables low-ranking monkeys to participate without having their rewards stolen by more dominant group members. Research is completely voluntary; a researcher simply opens the sliding doors, and anyone can take outside in front of the others. Other studies range from tool use to social learning, to watching how the monkeys socialise the most with to seeing how and where they rub their heads. As for me, my experience working with the monkeys has been incredibly fun and very rewarding. I have become very attached to the little critters, and through all the frustrations you would expect from a PhD working with animals I don’t think I’d have it any other way. When I joined the university in 2013 and heard then-current Living Links researchers talking about monkeys as if they were people, I thought they were utterly bonkers. After just a few weeks with them, I was doing exactly the same.

“We When I first started, I took some convincing that I wasn’t just looking at thirty identical monkeys – and I struggle with human faces! How was I going to be able to tell all these monkeys apart?”

Pictured in front of My Primate Family Tree is Dame Anne Glover, former Chief Scientific Adviser in Scotland who also served as the Chief Scientific Adviser in Europe. Capuchins are on the bottom left of the tree with the smaller squirrel monkeys.
Development opportunities

Online training resources

We realise that you will not always be able to attend face-to-face workshops and events. For that reason, in order to give you access to development opportunities at a time and place that suit you, we have a range of online training courses and other resources available.

For more information:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/capod/students/ pgresearch/online-training-resources

Postgraduate X-Change seminars

The X-Change seminars provide a great opportunity for Postgraduate students from all Schools and at any year of study to present their work to an interdisciplinary audience. This is a fabulous chance to get used to public speaking and building your confidence for engaging with your peers. It is useful to consider how other people may think about your research.

Every seminar is followed by a free networking lunch from 1-2 pm for all participants (including the audience).

For further information:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/capod/students/ pgresearch/gradskills/x-change

Tips and experience

What researchers say about GRADskills

All of it was very beneficial, very well structured and pertinent.

The presenter made the topic very interesting and relevant. Terrific!

I’ve found M-Skills workshops attended to be a great way to meet other postgrad students and learn skills that are helpful to me right now, and into the future.

I found my first semester to be a whirlwind. Having a chance to learn about how to organise my time and work has been great. I know I’ll use these skills after graduation too.

What last year’s M-Skills students said...

GRADskills Innovation Grant & PG Conference Fund

The GRADskills Innovation Grant and Postgraduate Conference Fund are a means by which research postgraduate students are encouraged to think more creatively about ways in which their transferable skills development can be facilitated. This can either be via innovative projects to develop training resources or activities that can be made available to postgraduate students through the GRADskills programme or via organising a conference for other postgraduate students.

• Funding up to £2,000 is available for Innovation Grant projects.
• Matched funding of up to £1,000 is available to support postgraduate conferences.

Applications are invited from research postgraduate students and staff at the University of St Andrews for funding:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/capod/funding/innovation

You can read all final project reports from the CAPOD webpage: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/capod