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News from Head of School**Distinguished Dissertation Success**

Many congratulations to Paolo Missier who has just been announced as runner up in the highly competitive CPHC/BCS Distinguished Dissertation competition. Following rigorous review, with input from international experts, his thesis on *Modelling and Computing the Quality of Information in e-Science* was judged to be one of three outstanding postgraduate student contributions to computer science during the past year. The award will be presented at a formal ceremony in November, and the thesis will be published on the BCS website. Congratulations also to Suzanne Embury who was Paolo's main PhD supervisor, and to Alvaro Fernandes who has worked hard to improve our profile in the competition. [More information.](#)

Food for Thought

Last week I reported very positive news on student admissions and, in the week that abstract numbers begin to turn into real students, I would like to repeat my congratulations to all concerned. Unfortunately, other student-related news this week has not been so positive. First, following the results of resits, we now know what proportion of UG students who started last autumn will progress to their second year. The answer is a very disappointing 66% – a result that we cannot begin to consider acceptable. Close on the heels of this news, we received a summary of our results in the National Student Survey. These showed a significant drop in Manchester CS student satisfaction in almost every category, making our results amongst the worst both in the Faculty and within the discipline nationally. It does not require much imagination to see a potential causal link. We need to react in a measured way, seeking to understand, in as much detail as possible, what exactly has happened, and taking considered action to improve our performance. I know how hard most of you work to promote excellence in our teaching, and it is clear that it will be possible, to some extent, to 'explain away' these outcomes, but it is equally clear that we have a serious and deep-seated problem that we need to address.

This week we will be 'welcoming' a new cohort of students. As a start, I suggest that we all pay special attention to making them actually feel welcome and valued – using tutorials and other opportunities for contact to help create a caring and supportive environment. It is easy to become cynical, but our students are the lifeblood of the School and we neglect them at our peril.

Chair of School Board

The School Board is in need of a new Chair – as an honorary member of staff Mary McGee Wood is still a member of the Board, but it would not be appropriate for her to continue as Chair. Nominations/ offers/ enquiries to [Mary](#), please – by Monday 29 September, if possible, so we can elect/ approve/install the new Chair at the meeting on 1 October.

Events this Week[top](#)**Arts meets Science, Science meets Art****23 Sep 08**

A series of free Roberts funded summer seminars for postgraduate research students. These seminars have been organised by the Graduate Education

Team and Jodrell bank and are open to research students from the University of Manchester. The series of seminars will explore collaborations across the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. Students are also invited to provide posters about their own cross-disciplinary work.

[More information](#)

BCS International Academic Research Conference **22-24 Sep 08**

The British Computer Society is launching its first International Academic Conference. Full paper submissions are being solicited in all areas of research covering the broad field of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE). The conference will be organized in sessions and mini-tracks, each devoted to a theme or area, and will include a small number of invited presentations. The topics included are deliberately broad to reflect the rich texture and intellectual vigor of CSE. Venue: Imperial College London

[More Information](#)

Regular Seminar Series

See links in contents bar for information on seminar series organised by the School of CS, E-Science North West and National Centre for Text Mining.

Future School Events

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School Board Dates

1 October - Budget Report and Dean attending
26 November - UG Report
4 February - PG Report
25 March - External Affairs Report
6 May - Research Report
1 July - Resources Report
All meetings take place 1530-1700 in IT 407.

Future External Events

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University's Foundation Day Lecture New **8 Oct 08**

Professor Joe Stiglitz, Chair, Brooks World Poverty Institute.
As you may be aware, the University marks its foundation each year with a Foundation Lecture given by someone of renown. The President and Vice-Chancellor would like to invite as many members of staff as possible from across the University to attend this prestigious event. If you are interested in attending, please request a ticket by emailing [Lesley Sisson](#)

Funding Opportunities

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EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowships Call 2008 **30 Sep 08**

EPSRC are offering Postdoctoral Fellowships in theoretical physics, theoretical computer sciences, mathematical sciences and life sciences interface to enable the most talented new researchers to establish an independent research career, shortly or immediately after completing a PhD. The awards are for a period of up to three years and primarily cover the salary costs of the Fellow, travel and subsistence.

[More Information](#)

RAEng - Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowships New **14 Nov 08**

These Fellowships provide an opportunity for mid-career academics based in UK universities to be relieved of their administrative and teaching responsibilities, for

between one academic term and a year, in order to concentrate on full-time research in any engineering discipline. The award provides a grant to cover the cost of a replacement member of staff for the period of the Fellowship to carry out the teaching and administrative responsibilities of the researcher. A support fund of up to £2,500 is also available as part of the Fellowship.
[More Information](#)

Industrial Secondment Scheme

Open

The Industrial Secondment Scheme provides an invaluable opportunity for engineering teaching staff in Higher Education institutions to gain state-of-the-art industrial experience. Applicable to engineers of all disciplines, the scheme's objective is to enable the secondees to impart the fruits of this experience to their students through teaching, through case studies using up-to-date material and, in the longer term, through course design. The benefits also accrue to the host organization which gains a temporary but highly qualified member of staff, and to the university which has the opportunity of strengthening its links with industry.

[More Information](#)

UoM Knowledge Transfer Challenge

Open

The KT Challenge offers small grants for *concept studies* and *feasibility studies*. If you are interested in developing ideas in collaboration with an industrial partner – developing new technology, or applying existing technology in an industrial setting – please contact [Constantinos Astreos](#).

EPSRC Encouraging Postdoctoral Mobility Between Disciplines

Open

EPSRC would like to encourage the transfer of outputs of research between different research disciplines as well as aiding the career development of EPSRC funded PDRAs. In the first instance an extra year of support will be offered. Transfers between the engineering and physical science disciplines and the life sciences are encouraged. There are no closing dates for proposals.

[More Information](#)

EPSRC ICT Platform Grants

Open

EPSRC invites outline proposals for its information and communication technology platform grants. Platform grants aim to provide world-leading UK groups with continuity of funding for strategic development, longer-term research and international networking.

[More Information](#)

Royal Academy of Engineering Research Chairs

Open

Full-time professorial appointments, in any engineering-related subject. The academy particularly welcomes proposals of a multidisciplinary nature. Funding is provided for 5 years.

[More Information](#)

RAEng Industrial Secondment Scheme

Open

An opportunity for university lecturers in engineering to gain state-of-the-art industrial experience.

[More Information](#)

BBSRC International Scientific Interchange Scheme (ISIS)

Open

To help scientists make and establish new contacts with their international counterparts.

[More Information](#)

RAEng Global Research Awards

Open

Projects in centres of excellence overseas focussing on stimulating wealth creation and improvements in the quality of life.

[More Information](#)

EPSRC Engineering Visits

Open

Support for salary costs and travel subsistence for scientists and engineers of acknowledged standing, either from within the UK or abroad, to visit the investigator's organisation.

[More Information](#)

Prize and Award Opportunities

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We have acknowledged the need to raise the profile of the School both nationally and internationally. Nominating individuals for awards, and working actively with others to ensure that deserving individuals are nominated is one way of doing that.

None currently open

Research Awards

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SCweb2

Funding Body: The Leverhulme Trust

PI: Simon Harper

Award Amount: £112187

Machine Learning for Thread Level Speculation on Multicore Architectures

Funding Body: EPSRC

PI: Gavin Brown & Mikel Lujan

Award Amount: £421442

Theoretical Computer Science; modal/hybrid logic and complexity theory

Funding Body: British Council

PI: Thomas Schneider

Award Amount: £950

SensorGrid4Env

Funding Body: EC

PI: Carole Goble

Award Amount: £496471

Staff News

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Awards and Promotions

None this week

Academic Arrivals

Eva Navarro Lopez - Career Development RCUK Fellow

Academic Departures

None this week

Research Arrivals

None this week

Research & Technical Departures

None this week

Administrative Arrivals

None this week

Administrative Departures

None this week

Sabbatical Leave

Alasdair Rawsthorne: 80% secondment to Transitive Technologies
Oct 07 – Sep 08. - continuing

John Keane: Academic Year 2008/09

Len Freeman: April to Sept 2009

John Gurd: Academic Year 2009/10

Liping Zhao: Sept 2008 to Mid Jan 09, and Mid July 09 to mid Jan 10

Josh Knowles: Feb 2009 for 6 months

Rizos Sakellariou: Lent term 2008-09, Summer term 2008-09, Michaelmas Term 2009-10 (2 semesters)

Xiao-Jun Zeng: January 2009-April 2009

Ning Zhang: January 2009 – June 2009

Vacancies

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Academic Staff

None

Research & Technical Staff

None

Management & Professional Staff

None

Administrative Staff

None