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## News from Head of School

### Opportunity to obtain Funded PhD Students: Proposals Required

The Faculty is in the process of negotiating an agreement with CONACTY, the Mexican National Council on Science and Technology, which it is hoped will lead to significant numbers of Mexican PhD students studying in Manchester (up to 10 per year in relevant schools). The scheme has been in operation for a year in Mechanical and Civil Engineering, and there will shortly be a visit by the Dean to Mexico that it is hoped will finalise agreements in other technical areas. All accepted students go through normal school entry processes, and in addition are interviewed by university representatives who travel to Mexico. This seems like an important initiative at a time when research funding, including school funds for studentships, is likely to be increasingly difficult to come by.

We are being asked to provide brief project descriptions (1 Page) plus CVs (1 Page) for supervisors for at least 10, and preferably more, PhD projects. The following are priority areas identified by CONACTY that seem relevant to the school; a fuller list is available from the following [presentation](#):

- Information technology:
  - Development of a semantic search engine
  - Autonomous vehicles
  - Electronic libraries/document management
  - Knowledge management in global collaborative networks
  - Quantum optical information
  - IT for health support of the elderly
  - Intelligent video surveillance systems
  - Distance learning support
  - Context driven decision making for collaborative engineering
  - Integration of information from diverse sources
- Electronics and materials:
  - Nano materials development (polymers/ carbon) and uses (e.g. to produce low priced housing materials)
- Non – nuclear energy:
  - Nano materials for application in photovoltaic devices
- Aeronautical and space research:
  - Automated control of aerial vehicles using computer controlled vision.

As such, if you have research interests in (or relevant to) the above areas, please feel encouraged to follow up this opportunity. For each project description, please state the topic that it relates to most directly. Please provide the project descriptions and CVs to Bernard ([bernard.strutt@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:bernard.strutt@manchester.ac.uk)) and Ros ([rosalyn.cooper@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:rosalyn.cooper@cs.man.ac.uk)) by 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

## Events

### Open Faculty Meeting slides available

The slides from the previous open faculty meeting are now available [here](#). You will need your central University user-name and password.

### Machine Learning seminar series

22 Feb 10

Mean-field and Monte Carlo Musical Scene Analysis  
Charles Fox, University of Sheffield

14:00, 2.19 Kilburn Building

[ML seminar website](#)

**Conjunctive Query Answering in Description Logics**

**24 Feb 10**

Prof Carsten Lutz, University of Bremen

14:15, Lecture Theatre 1.4, Kilburn Building

**Open meeting – Insight in to the Higher Education Academy**

**10 Mar 10**

John Pritchard, Assistant Director (Institutions) will be holding an open meeting for Manchester staff from 10.30 – 11.30 am on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. He will be giving an overview of the role of the Academy, its mission, and the role of the subject centres, and taking questions. This is a great opportunity to find out how you can get involved in the work of the Academy, how you can receive accreditation for your teaching and learning practice, and how the Academy can help you in your professional development.

If you would like to attend please register your interest with [Emma Stonier](#) in the Teaching and Learning Support Office and you'll be sent more information when the details are confirmed.

**Royal Academy of Engineering Regional Lecture**

**11 Mar 10**

18:00, Lecture Theatre C9 Renold Building followed by a Reception at 19.00

Keith Ridgway OBE FEng, Research Director and HEFCE Business Fellow, Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre with Boeing at Sheffield University.

The talk will examine the challenges facing manufacturing engineers when producing high-value products and components. The presentation will demonstrate how technology can be used to address these challenges and produce these items better, cheaper, faster and greener.

Admission free. [Email Sue Neesham](#) for further information.

**NaCTeM seminar: Text Mining in the Biograph Project**

**17 Mar 10**

Professor Walter Daelemans, University of Antwerp

12:00, LG.010, MIB building

[NaCTeM page](#)

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## Funding Opportunities

**Reminder: European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Investigators Grant Call for Applications**

**24 Feb 10**

Applicants for the prestigious ERC Advanced Grant are expected to be active researchers who have a track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years. Although there are no restrictions regarding age, nationality, or current place of residence, the Principal Investigators should be exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions. Principal Investigators of Advanced Grant proposals will be expected to demonstrate a record of achievements appropriate to their field(s) of research. Potential Principal Investigators may include leading scientists in Europe and those of the European community overseas or non-Europeans wishing to establish themselves in Europe to pursue ground-breaking, high-risk research that opens new directions in their respective research fields or other domains.

ERC Advanced Grants allow exceptional established research leaders in any field of science, engineering and scholarship to pursue frontier research of their choice.

[More information](#)

**Google PhD Fellowships extended**

**School deadline: 19 Mar 10**

The [Google European Doctoral Fellowship Programme](#) has a new deadline of 1 April 2010. The School will need time to decide on its nominations therefore the internal deadline is 19 March 2010.

## Reminder: NWDA Innovation Vouchers Funding Opportunities

Innovation Vouchers are designed to help Northwest businesses owners, entrepreneurs and social enterprises to purchase a knowledge provider's expertise to develop innovation and enhance business.

The scheme provides a voucher up to £8,000 to growing businesses and social enterprises and was set up to encourage and make it easier for more people to engage with the knowledge base; in particular universities and further education colleges.

The way the scheme works is that companies apply for an NWDA voucher ([see here](#)) that can be spent on one of a number of knowledge providers registered with the scheme. The University is registered. In the voucher application, a company briefly describes the problem they wish to have addressed. Knowledge providers can submit an expression of interest to do some work under the voucher. The company then chooses a knowledge provider to work with.

The scheme is managed on behalf of the University by UMIC. If anyone is interested in following up this call, they should contact [Laura Etchells](#) at UMIC.