

**RESEARCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
A COURSE FOR PhD STUDENTS**

at

**Easthampstead Park
(Wokingham, Berkshire)**

Tuesday 26th June (evening arrival) to Friday 29th June 2007

Dear Participant,

We look forward to welcoming you to the Research Skills Development Course. The purpose of this letter is to ensure that you have all the information necessary to get the best from the event. The course aim, outline programme and joining information are attached.

The course has been designed to develop both personal and research effectiveness. Our aim throughout will be to maximise the relevance of the course to the needs of a PhD researcher. To help to achieve this, the various sessions will be highly participative and influenced by your contributions. So, please spend some time reflecting on your current challenges and come prepared to share these together with your thoughts, feelings and insights as we move through the programme.

The course is designed to address a number of development areas, such as personal effectiveness, team working, networking and communication skills. Please come along with a positive attitude and prepared to work hard. The more you contribute, the more you will gain from the course!

Please arrive on Tuesday 26th June for registration at 6.30pm. Please congregate in the Lounge/Bar area from this time on, where you will be invited into the Terrace Restaurant at 7pm for dinner. The course will commence after dinner with essential orientation activities. We look forward to spending three very productive days with you all.

Best regards,

Esat Alpay and Elaine Walsh

Senior Lecturers
Graduate Schools
Imperial College London

RESEARCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

A Course for PhD STUDENTS

AIM

To provide postgraduate research students with an opportunity to build their understanding, skills and confidence in the key areas of team and project development in order to enhance their overall effectiveness as they pursue their research studies.

This will be achieved through:-

- A safe, yet challenging course environment that will encourage participants to explore and identify the key elements of team working, networking, effective communication, planning and project management
- A balanced and structured programme of exercises and review sessions that will provide a variety of learning situations allowing participants to identify and take away relevant lessons
- A range of group situations where participants will be encouraged to share feedback with their peers on their overall effectiveness
- A learning journal and course notebook which will be offered to aid the learning process of participants in their own working environment
- Encouragement to create an ongoing level of support from their learning groups that will enable continuing networking, coaching and further group interactions

A programme overview of the Research Skills Development Course

Tuesday

Evening	<p>Creating the Learning Environment Welcome, Introductions Aims and Objectives Ground Rules</p>
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Wednesday – Research Skills

Morning	<p>Group and Team Skills / Time Management Indoor / Outdoor Activities and Reviews Group Problem Solving Time Management for the PhD</p>
Afternoon	<p>Creativity and Problem Solving Individual and Group Project Planning Research Planning Review of the Day</p>
Evening	<p>Social Awareness Exercise</p>

Thursday – Self Awareness and Relationships

Morning	<p>Group Skills and Personal Awareness Communication skills – personality types Team dynamics Inter-team Activities and Reviews</p>
Afternoon	<p>Communication – Conflict / Collaboration Influencing skills Self awareness Giving and receiving feedback</p>
Evening	<p>Course Dinner</p>

Friday – Succeeding in Research

Morning	<p>Research Collaboration and Challenges Working across disciplines Question Time</p>
Afternoon	<p>Transferring the Learning Exploring Research Challenges Final group activity and review Close</p>

JOINING INFORMATION

Start and Finish Times

This is a residential course. Registration begins at 6.30pm on Tuesday 26th June 2007. Course activities will begin promptly at 7pm. On arrival please report to the Main Reception, where you will be assigned your bedroom.

As a courtesy to other course members please ensure that you arrive in plenty of time.

The course closes on Friday 29th June at approximately 4:15pm.

Please note that the course is demanding and presents a full work load to participants. Please do not bring other work with you to try to do on the course – you will not have time!

Venue:

The course will be run at Easthampstead Park Conference Centre, near Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3DF. Website: www.eastpark.co.uk

Travel by Plane

The nearest airport is Heathrow, which is approximately 27 miles from the conference centre. Train links are available or a taxi will cost approximately £35-55 each way, depending on time of day, size of vehicle and waiting time. Please contact Excel Cars on 0118 977 5555.

Travel by Train

The nearest stations are Bracknell or Wokingham. It is then a short taxi ride from either station, although Bracknell is slightly closer.

For Bracknell, direct trains run from Waterloo and take about one hour. There are also Bracknell trains from Paddington, but you must change at Reading. Journey time is also about one hour.

Please consult [National Rail Enquiries Online: The Gateway to Britain's National Rail network](#) for more details and allow some time for delays!

Below is a list of taxi firms for each station. The fare should be about £8-10

Bracknell

A1 Taxis - 01344 306303/421777

F & D Taxis - 01344 484844 /421211

Wokingham

Bees Taxis - 01189 888080/07932748512

Prestige Cars - 0118 9890890

If you wish to drive, you can find directions to the venue at:

<http://www.eastpark.co.uk/about/travel.asp> Free car parking is available on site.

Meals and Refreshments

All meals and refreshments will be provided throughout the course. Please ensure you have let the Graduate Schools office know of any special dietary requirements before the start of the course.

There is a cash bar in the evening open until 10:30pm. Please be aware there is no cash point facility on site, so you are advised to bring with you enough money for the three days. The bar provides both alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks and some bar snacks.

Clothing

Dress will be casual throughout the programme.

Some of the activities will be run outside in the grounds. Please do not be concerned, these are what we call 'low-level' activities and we use the outdoors as a more memorable learning environment.

Your fitness will not be tested, but your 'weather-ability' might! For courses taking place in winter, ensure you bring plenty of warm clothes and warm sleeping attire. If the course takes place during the summer months, please bring sunscreen. You may spend varying times up to 60 minutes outside depending on the nature of each activity. So please come prepared to work outside. For this reason, suitable footwear is also essential. **You must bring waterproofs with you**, as outdoor activities will not be cancelled due to rain.

In the case of **extreme** weather conditions, we will modify or provide alternative exercises which can take place indoors.

Accommodation, Venue and Contact Details

All bedding and towels are provided by the venue. Accommodation is not en-suite, but there are separate blocks of toilets and bathrooms for males and females. All bedrooms have tea and coffee making facilities and wash basins. Toiletries are not provided.

The venue is non-smoking throughout.

There will be no internet/email access at the venue.

The telephone number of the conference centre is 0118 978 0686. This is staffed at all times (24 hours). Venue staff can take messages for the course tutors.

If you are running late for registration or in the event of an emergency please call the course tutors direct on **07747 495567**. This mobile will be turned on for 24 hours a day immediately prior to and for the duration of the course.

General Notices

Photography: Throughout the course, various photographs may be taken of the activities and sessions, and used on the website and/or for publicity materials. By your presence at this course, you grant your permission for your likeness to be included in work which may be used to promote Imperial and its education activities. If you are however uncomfortable with this, then please let the Course Directors know.

Data Protection: Participants' names and departments / divisions / faculties will be made available to other attendees on the same workshop. Participants' data are stored in a database for the purpose of recording attendance at workshops, providing statistical information and maintaining individuals and faculty / departmental / divisional training records.

Disclaimer: Neither Imperial College London nor Easthampstead Park Conference Centre can accept liability or responsibility for any loss or damage of personal property, including motor vehicles and their contents, however so caused.

Any Questions

If you have any questions please contact the Course Directors, Elaine Walsh on 020 7594 1566 or Esat Alpay on 020 7594 1567 (e.alpay@imperial.ac.uk).

We look forward to working with you for these three days!