



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Research Masters in Biomedical Sciences, University of Edinburgh

Transition(s) the practice supports: Through and out

Abstract: The broad field of biomedical sciences in College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh has established a series of interlinked Masters (MSc) by Research programmes, which offer students an ideal transition from undergraduate study to an academic research environment and further postgraduate PhD study. Students develop specific technical skills whilst permitting exploration of the field of study and academic research environment. As importantly, students develop the key transferable graduate attributes of problem solving, critical appraisal, project management, scientific writing and communication, together with interpersonal skills, which provide an ideal transition to PhD study. And if the student decides that a PhD is not for them, they have gained graduate attributes to offer other professions.

Description: The University of Edinburgh College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine offers a well established group of interlinked Masters (MSc) by Research programmes, within the broad field of biomedical sciences. These programmes permit students to gain deep insight into working in an academic research laboratory environment, either in a field of study they have already identified during their undergraduate degree, or to explore a wider or new range of fields.

These MScs by Research provide essential career exploration to determine if they wish to continue in this academic research environment with further postgraduate study in a PhD. The programmes each offers two substantial 20 week research projects of their choice. Programmes work according to the same timetable and assessment scheme. This allows students to interchange and do projects on topics in different fields. Within the timetable, all students on all programmes come together to undertake core introductory teaching, and a wide range of skills workshops throughout the year of study. Programmes also have combined presentation and poster sessions, permitting students to gain experience showcasing their work to the academic community. These interlinked sessions build a supportive student network and integrate students into the wider community of academic practice.

If during their MSc by Research, the student decides that PhD study is not the next career step for them, they can explore other career



enhancement
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options with the Careers Service, and can offer a suite of professional graduate attributes that fit with a wide range of other careers. However, for most students, their MSc by Research confirms their interest in academic research. It represents the ideal next career step to demonstrate a student's professional and academic skills, and their commitment to academic study, evidenced by the high rates of students successfully gaining and completing PhD studies.

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