

SKILLED PEOPLE



Skilled people

Training and developing skilled individuals to meet national needs.

Funding tomorrow's scientists

We train scientists in a broad range of environmental sciences to sustain the UK science base and industry. We do so through opportunities that include advanced course and research studentships, fellowships and career management.

We also support training where our remit overlaps with that of other research councils, through schemes like the NERC/ESRC studentships and the NERC/EPSCRC-funded Environmental Mathematics and Statistics Programme.

In 2004, we undertook a comprehensive review of our Training Awards Strategy. This included extensive consultation with the community. Some of the recommendations are informing the 2005 Review of NERC masters course provision.

Stock of students and fellows

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Total PhD	1,033	1,017	1,033	1,042
*Masters	333	337	330	325
Fellowships	63	70	77	84

**The number of masters students varies each year depending on how many are part-funded.*

We have also agreed a flexible mechanism for supporting our PhD students for an average of three and a half years (previously three years), which is controlled by the Higher Education Institute departments and our research centres.

We have recently awarded another 30 fellowships across the full range of NERC science. We have supported other fellowships via directed programmes, including a joint NERC/Environment Agency-funded fellowship in post genomics and proteomics. Please see p58 for a breakdown of fellowships by gender. In August, Research Councils UK

awarded the first academic fellowships on behalf of all the research councils. These are designed to move researchers from short-term contracts to permanent positions, making academia a more stable and attractive career. Two hundred academic fellowships will be awarded for each of the five years of the scheme.

More than just research skills...

GRADschools, short courses run by the UK GRAD Programme, help postgraduate students develop their personal effectiveness, team working, communication and career management abilities. These are skills employers often look for. We will pay for any of our penultimate- or final-year doctoral students to attend a GRADschool. This year, 58 NERC-funded postgraduate researchers attended national GRADschools and 23 attended local GRADschools. We get good feedback from participants. One attendee at a course in Brighton said, 'GRADschool was an amazing experience which helped me develop both as a researcher and as a person.'

Lynn Maguire, tel: 01223 448510, email: lynn.maguire@grad.ac.uk

How to tell them all about it

We're committed to engaging with the public about our science, and for the last seven years we've trained our scientists to communicate their research to non-experts. On our two-day courses we teach nine scientists to write good press releases, talk to the public and get their ideas across on radio. We ran six courses this year at NERC's Swindon Office, training nearly 50 scientists. Jennifer Cooke of BGS, who attended a two day course said, 'I was really impressed by the experts NERC brought in – the radio and print journalists. They showed that what we were doing was not just hypothetical. The course really boosted my confidence.'

Sheila Anderson, tel: 01793 411646, email: sand@nerc.ac.uk

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Improving communications at BAS

During 2004, BAS focused on improving internal and external communications. It used a combination of Joint Training Service (JTS), in-house and commercial training to give staff the basic building blocks for effective communications. Courses included scientific and technical writing, presentation skills, communicating science to the public, training for PowerPoint shows using BAS images and templates, and Meet the Media. A total of 77 staff went on the courses, which were well received and significantly advanced BAS's capacity to promote itself to its many audiences.

*Linda Capper, tel: 01223 221448,
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People and prizes

John Lawton, NERC's Chief Executive until April 2005, received a knighthood.

Don Ritchie, chair of NERC's Marine and Freshwater Microbial Biodiversity programme, was awarded a CBE.

John Schellnhuber, Director of the Tyndall Centre, received a CBE in recognition of his contribution to UK-German co-operation.

Stuart Dobson, NERC's safety advisor, and John Dudeney, of BAS, were awarded the OBE.

John Pyle, NERC Centres for Atmospheric Science at Cambridge, and Bland Finlay of CEH Monks Wood became fellows of the Royal Society.

Lloyd Peck, of BAS, received honorary life membership of the Royal Institution of Great Britain.

