



# DEVELOPING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES THROUGH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS:

Interns@strathclyde programme

Professor Ray Land, Ms. Cherie Woolmer, Ms. Alison Mitchell.

## Introduction

Internal funding was awarded in 2008/09 to develop research internships for undergraduate students in their 3rd year of study. 27 placements were allocated and stipends were paid to each student over the summer. The internships themselves varied, providing opportunities for students to interact with established research groups and external professional partners/agencies.

## Undergraduate research development programme

In addition to the internships, students attended a new undergraduate research development programme which was designed and delivered by the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement (CAPLE). This programme was offered to students from the interns@strathclyde programme and the existing EPSRC vacation bursary scheme.

The programme was designed to introduce students to the broader aspects of research activity and to introduce them to different aspects of research activity and to encourage them to think about how they could build upon the experience to undertake further postgraduate study or pursue a research or enquiry-focused career. This programme addressed, amongst other issues:

- planning and Preparing for the Internship;
- communicating research and public engagement;
- attending the University's Research Day and a Dragon's Den competition;
- building research networks;
- exploring the Impact of Research;
- writing a research bid;
- producing and presenting Conference Posters.

Students worked in multi-disciplinary groups for all activities.

The programme is aligned closely with Strathclyde's fostering of research-teaching linkages and its strategic positioning as a leading international technological university.



## Outputs

All participants from both schemes were required to produce academic reports which included a short reflective statement on personal development. They also produced posters for a presentation evening at the end of the summer. The posters were judged by a panel of academics and a Principal's prize was awarded for the best poster from each scheme.

Extracts from reflective statements

"As far as considering research as a career path goes, I most definitely will. The experience has given me a very real idea of what the field is like".

"It has provided an opportunity for me to practise my skills on writing an academic report and making a poster. Because I am an overseas student, it is important for me to learn what a proper expression is in an academic essay"

"The whole scheme, from start to finish, has been tailored in a way that you are certain to gain new skills from it"

"It has also given me the opportunity to see how the work I have studied and done in the past three years of maths can be applied to real life situations. This is extremely important to me as it proves there are numerous opportunities for me in terms of careers when I gain my qualification".

## Looking forward

- The internships and development programme will run again in summer 2010. Further enhancement of this work will include:
- Developing a peer-reviewed undergraduate research journal
- Presenting the posters at the University's annual Research Day event
- Including case-studies of inter-disciplinary research undertaken at the university



University of  
**Strathclyde**  
Glasgow