



NERC CDT in Oil & Gas Training Committee

Virtual update on Covid-19 situation

14:00 Tuesday April 7th 2020

Attendees

Andy Aplin (AA), Andy Bell (AB), Anna Clark (AC), Cathy Hollis (CH), Lorna Morrow (LM), Andy Robinson (AR), Zoe Shipton (ZS), John Underhill (JU)

Agenda, meeting notes and action listing

1. Cancelled residential course list

Currently Spain fieldtrip, Pembrokeshire fieldtrip, Science Communication course, Peak District careers event*, Alps fieldtrip

*Virtual replacement to be discussed later.

Co. Clare field trip still to be decided. AC and JU to contact Peter Haughton re online option.

(Note subsequent to meeting: PH confirmed Co. Clare field trip postponed until 2021 – 21/04/20).

Science Communication course to move online as contributor, David Schulz is able to present 1.5 days material online – AC to inform students

2. Update on course cancellation policy - 3 months' notice now given on course status, eligibility of online training courses for inclusion on TA transcripts for those who cannot complete 100 days of training?

Online courses to make up shortfall? ZS - have to be able to use these as an additional way to provide valued input and avoid congestion next year as everyone catches up on activities that were postponed. AA supportive of acceptance of online training given the level of uncertainty and agrees that there is no real alternative. CH agreed and suggested we try to collate available pre-approved courses and advertise them to students. ZS student well-being issue, particularly for those losing out on field and lab programmes, should be given something positive to do. Need to compose list of possible online courses e.g. NERC, EPSRC, EAGE, PESGB, Nautilus. CPD accredited courses should be automatically approved, but Training Committee Chair (AA) and JU still need oversight of and to approve lists.

Students to be helped to reach 100 days before and possibly after graduation, but still be given transcripts showing training days regardless of days completed going forward? Full approval by committee for transcripts to be issued irrespective of number of days completed, but will still show courses missed as a consequence of COVID -19 emergency measures.

GSL has relaxed accreditation rules (AA), (*Note subsequent to meeting: GSL confirmed accreditation on 20/03/20 for CDT Training Academy programme to October 2023. No guidance yet available on GSL assessment of CDT transcripts which may be submitted post-COVID 19 as part of Chartered Geologist application but flexibility will be shown - LM*). AB- if students may have done courses in the past that could now count, could they be retrospectively approved? Committee agreed (this already happens). JU thinks students should propose possible courses, but these would still be subject to aforementioned AA/JU approval.

AR - what constitutes training; conferences, workshops, seminars? JU - conferences out of scope, along with some workshops – depends on interactive nature, involving participants from different organisations and show some alignment to CDT themes. Keen to show more flexibility. AC - learning outcomes should define what constitutes a course. LM – is self-directed online learning now in scope as this had been ruled out as this type of learning did not meet the CDT's ethos of sharing knowledge and experience? JU - both should be allowed, should show flexibility. Can be temporary relaxation. Students must be put first. Committee agreed self-directed online courses could be considered for inclusion subject to approval.

CH - how many students will struggle to make 100 days? LM -2016 cohort all currently missing 5 mandatory days (Careers - June 2020 cancelled), and only 3 of 31 students in the cohort have made the 100 day requirement people if Careers doesn't go ahead in some format. If Careers course does go ahead in a virtual format, 15 students will still not have completed the 100 day requirement. Students who have missed courses last year (often due to internships or PhD fieldwork) and anticipated picking them up this year are facing particular difficulty.

Split of mandatory/elective components in the 100 day requirement was not discussed.

ZS - do we want to be encouraging the students to be branching out beyond their research area? JU – students have always been encouraged to use elective options as an opportunity to either go deeper into a subject linked to their research or to broaden their experience beyond the narrow research focus so we should encourage inclusion of any topic. AA - exceptional circumstances at present. Give as much flexibility as possible. Approved by committee.

AR - some way of recording internships on transcripts? A number of students completed projects and modules & seminars at Equinor. JU - difficult to include the entire internship period, but if individual corporate modules can be identified for inclusion, that may be helpful. AB - puts pressure on those who did not do internships for whatever reason and they should not be disadvantaged as a consequence.

ZS – Lab techniques training could also be included - could be an exercise where students are asked to showcase all training they have received. Students at Strathclyde gain course credits by compiling record of all training received, and this is then checked/approved by their supervisor. Agreed as a potential solution. ZS - will forward copy of Strathclyde training record spreadsheet that students and supervisors complete in order to gain credits at Strathclyde and can be modified for CDT use.

3. Careers Event - online replacement important to complete 2016 cohort training programme. Additional content, interactive exercises and talks required.

Mandatory course - final year - affects whole cohort. A good way of making sure that two thirds of this cohort can still meet 100 days training requirement. Need to find additional elements to programme. Need to fill 5 days.

JU - virtual interviews via skype? AR - keen on idea of trial interviews with HR person, feedback given on short interview session. AR happy to put name forward. JU - students to video themselves in advance? Receive feedback? ZS - Be interviewed with other students as audience? CH agrees could be useful. Badley Ashton or CGG - job application letters

ZS - rank 5 CVs in 1 minute. Viva training? Uni Glasgow has DVD of mock viva (Maggie Cusack), ZS to contact Maggie, create exercises around video content? JU - How to craft informal talk pre-viva? AA - students can all give 15 minute talk and others feedback on that. Summarise 3 years' work in 15 mins, useful skill.

Careers event has also included a field trip in the past - JU keen to include a virtual trip with a worked project but also a clear link to Career theme e.g. cover the commercial info of interest to a company exploration manager.

Virtual fieldtrip opportunities – AA - Geospatial Research Ltd have already run virtual fieldtrips on commercial basis and Durham in discussion with them for virtual trips as a replacement in the current emergency. ZS - geotectonics mailing list, people keen to create and share resources. AC - students to give and share talks on their fieldwork. ZS - multiple skills learned during fieldwork, get students to reflect on what they have learned. Fieldwork best practice? Ask what students feel they have best learned from fieldwork. JU - Ian Sharpe a useful contact for such? John Howell - role of virtual reality in the field? ZS - seeking contact in FieldMOVE.

AR - CDT alumni to be utilised to talk about their careers as part of the course?

ZS - Sense about Science, communicating science outside of academia - online resources. ZS will look up and supply to CDT Management Team, who will follow up with the course provider.

4. Potential for contributing to international virtual fieldtrip efforts?

https://nagt.org/nagt/teaching_resources/field/field_working_group_sign_up.html

5. UKRI advice on extensions of periods of study resulting from interruptions to study due to COVID-19.

LM - Advice issued to students and supervisors with link to UKRI page on 26/03/20. LM checks page regularly and will circulate relevant updates as they are received (latest update circulated to students and supervisors on 15/04/20) No-cost extensions are the default position and UKRI lists some examples of circumstances that would lead to a costed extension. Advice is that as was the situation pre-COVID, grant underspend should be used in the first instance - impact to be demonstrated at end of the grant. Impacts must be shown and justified once underspend is gone in order to access additional funds to cover increase in costed extensions, sickness pay etc. Level of proof required is unclear. LM has had conversations with Andy Lloyd at NERC and current view there is that NERC will not want to make case by case decisions, but the level of proof required in order to be reimbursed for grant overspend relating to additional payments is not yet specified. Students have been advised to report impacts now, or as soon as these become apparent to LM. JU - how would non-NERC funded students be handled? LM - this is a current issue, down to individual universities to determine what funding is available - hope they would follow the UKRI position but CDT not in a position to enforce this for HEI match-funded students. JU - Risk of 2-tier system between NERC and match-funded students. LM - this already exists in some instances e.g. Disability allowance not available to non-NERC students from the grant. .

JU - NERC has contacted their funded students individually regarding impact of current restrictions on ability to complete research- may be a misunderstanding as LM and others had not been aware of this. ZS - EPSRC have not been contacting students. Everyone advised to log impacts day by day at Strathclyde. No consistent approach visible across different universities and research councils. AA - lapetus - spreadsheet sent around to log issues. AA to forward this to LM who will revise and circulate to all CDT students encouraging them to maintain a current log to present as evidence at a later date as mitigating circumstances. ZS - numerous impacts on students requiring sick leave or caring leave - need to document every impact on students. CH - difficult to quantify impact on individuals. LM to compose email to students offering the COVID-19 Impact Diary spreadsheet as a means of logging impacts of current pandemic on their studies, including some examples of possible impact e.g. delay in replacing broken laptop, delay in accessing emergency dental treatment.

6. Training Academy budget

LM – The TA budget financial model shows that the CDT is in a position to cover training costs for 2018 cohort with some surplus based on the current committed subscriptions. Efforts are ongoing to recover as much of the costs for cancelled courses as possible. Clear that there will

not be much training activity in 2020, postponed to 2021. LM confirmed that there are no further annual subscriptions expected for the Oil & Gas CDT.

7. CDT online seminars - Creation of an online resource of 15 minute talks given by CDT students on their research

Fortnightly slot with 2 x 15 minute seminars, starts Tuesday April 21st. A good way of bringing the students together online. CDT to purchase pro Zoom or continue to borrow Manchester’s access? JU supports getting pro version. Could be used for Careers course for example.

CH - invaluable experience for students to deliver online seminars. Anticipation of growth in popularity. Supervisor support should be sought.

AR - record attendance for numbers dialing in to online meetings, people want to connect with others and attend events, ability to dip in and out is very useful.

8. Any Other Business

AR - on-going situation may well impact on Equinor internships for summer 2020. Decision awaited (*Note subsequent to meeting: All Equinor internships have been cancelled for summer 2020*). JU – anticipates some angst for students at missing out on internships this year particularly anyone who has declined an offer to take up one with Equinor. JU mentioned that flexible suspension of studies offered at HW means it would be possible for a student still to undertake the internship at a later date to ensure the opportunity were postponed rather than cancelled. He asked if the same policy was applied at other HEIs but there was no data available from other Universities. CDT to be as flexible and accommodating as possible. Companies may be facing difficulties in taking on students in future.

ACTION	AGENT
Contact Co. Clare course leader, Peter Haughton, re likelihood of course going ahead and option for online version	AC. PH confirmed that very unlikely Co. Clare will go ahead, and that he is currently fully occupied transferring UG and PGT courses into online versions so has no capacity to do the same for the CDT trip unfortunately
Communications course to be reinstated on-line?	AC contacted course presenters and David Schulz can present his material online to cover 1.5 days so that will go ahead. AC/JU will explore other offerings (Sense about Science?) as possible replacement for Ceri Harrop’s sessions which she is not able to reproduce online.

ACTION	AGENT
Inform students that online courses, including those using self-directed learning, will now be considered for inclusion on training record subject to the existing pre-approval process being followed	LM
Provide copy of Strathclyde training record spreadsheet for amendment to suit CDT recording purposes	ZS
AR to provide interview via Skype practice session for online Careers course	AR. AC to follow up
Badley Ashton / CGG to be asked to provide session on job application letters for online Careers course	AC to follow up with CH for contacts/details of session content
Seek permission for use of Glasgow's Viva Practice DVD (Maggie Cusack) for online Careers course	ZS
Seek session leader for pre-viva talk practice for students, to be critiqued by peers, and commercial lead for virtual field trip for online Careers course	JU
Contact Geospatial Research Ltd for quotes for virtual field trips. Other possibilities are being collated already via BSRG and Geotectonics mailing lists	AC
Devise student-led session on benefits/highlights of field work for online Careers course. Ian Sharp suggested by JU. Also FieldMOVE by ZS	AC / ZS / JU
Devise alumni-led session on career choices for online Careers course	AC / JU
Contact Sense about Science as alternative Science Communications course provider	ZS / AC. Introduction made, but costs currently exceed current CDT budget

ACTION	AGENT
AA to provide COVID-19 impact diary template to LM who will amend and circulate to CDT students	AA / LM. Template provided, amended and circulated to students on 15/04/20