

Awards



Rungnapa Tagun, a PhD student in the Department has received the 2014 Anglo Thai Society Award for Environment for her work on the impacts of pesticides on aquatic systems in Thailand. Rungnapa

attended the award ceremony on the 18 November at the Thai Embassy in London where she received her award from Narisa Chakrabongse, founder and Chief Executive of River Books.

New research funding

Professor Alistair Boxall and Dr Roman Ashauer have secured a 9.8m Euro EC project to work on environmental assessment of pharmaceuticals. Alistair is coordinating the project which involves leading researchers from academia and the pharmaceutical industry. The project, entitled iPiE (Intelligence-Led Assessment of Pharmaceuticals in the Environment) aims to develop a framework for identifying the potential risks of pharmaceuticals to the natural environment. In the future this framework will be used to better target environmental testing requirements at an early stage in drug development programmes.

A year in industry

From 2015/16 we will be offering Year in Industry variants of all our undergraduate degrees (BSc and MEnv). Any student who achieves an overall mark of at least 55% at the end of their second year will be eligible to transfer onto the Year in Industry Programme; with the placement year taking place after year 2 teaching and assessment. The placement year will run from June/July for 9 - 12 months and will be paid at a rate typical of the industry your placement is in. A placement year will be a real asset when it comes to finding a job after graduation - in fact the placement itself may lead to a job.

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Environment matters

The newsletter for Environment students and applicants

February 2015

www.york.ac.uk/environment

Welcome

Welcome to our February 2015 newsletter. There is great excitement across the Department as we prepare to move to our new home next to the campus lake over summer 2015. Students across all programmes will benefit from the purpose-based facilities and we will be particularly pleased to welcome the first cohort of students onto the new programme in Human Geography and Environment. We've tried to give you a flavour of departmental life within the newsletter. Read on to find information about new members of academic staff, a further improvement in the excellent employment record of our graduates, and the introduction of a Year in Industry option for all our undergraduate programmes. We had a record intake of PhD students in October 2014, including students from Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the USA as well as closer to home. The global reach and significance of research and teaching of environmental issues is a major responsibility, but also a wonderfully enriching part of departmental life.

Professor Colin Brown
Head of Environment Department

New Environment Building



There is very rapid progress on our new Environment Building. Steelwork and laying of floors is complete for both office and laboratory wings and our contractors Morgan Sindall are commencing construction of walls and roofs. We are on schedule for the department to move into its new home ahead of the start of autumn term 2015. Follow progress from the links on our homepage or via Facebook.

New arrivals

We are very excited to be welcoming three new staff members in 2015. Dr Karen Parkhill (previously at Bangor) and Dr Joshua Kirshner (previously at Durham) are joining us to help lead the development of our new Human Geography and Environment (HUGE) degree, which accepts students for the first time in October 2015. In addition, Dr Richard Payne has joined our team of physical geographers as a new lecturer in Environmental Geography.



Josh is interested in geographies of development, energy and infrastructure transitions, and human migration in southern Africa and Latin America. He is trained in Anthropology and City and Regional Planning, and since graduate school has worked in Human Geography, with recent collaboration with International Relations, Science and Technology Studies and Environmental Studies scholars.



Karen's interests span geographies of risk and energy. Her interests include using innovative qualitative methods to explore public and stakeholder perceptions of energy supply, climate change, energy demand and geoengineering. Karen completed her Ph.D. in the School of Planning and Geography at

Cardiff University. She then spent several years with the Understanding Risk Research Group – an interdisciplinary team at Cardiff University. More recently she was a lecturer in human geography at Bangor University. Karen is currently the Chair of the Energy Geographies Working Group of the Royal Geographical Society.



Dr Richard Payne started as Lecturer in Environmental Geography in early January. Richard joins us from the University of Stirling where he held a research fellowship. His research interests are in peatlands and environmental change using both ecological and palaeoecological approaches. Richard will be teaching Environmental Hazards.

IES accreditation



In fantastic news for our students, and the Department as a whole, all our undergraduate degrees (including MEnv) have recently received accreditation from the Institute of Environmental Sciences. This means that all our graduating students will now receive accelerated progress to Chartered Scientist status. See: <https://www.the-ies.org/> to learn more about the Institute of Environmental Sciences.

Employability news

Some very encouraging news for our graduating students is that the number of our graduates in graduate level employment and further study has risen by 11.4% this year. In addition, 100% of our graduates achieving a 1st and 71% of those achieving a 2:1 went into graduate level employment/study.

Prozac harming bird populations



Dr Kathryn Arnold has been working on the effects that the increase in human-consumption of antidepressant drugs may be having on bird populations. Her work, (along with Alistair Boxall and Ph.D. student Tom Bean) focused on how drugs like Prozac become concentrated in worms and invertebrates that live close to sewage works, and which are then consumed by birds. Significant impacts were observed on the appetites and mating habits, and these were attributed to the uptake of antidepressants in the birds. This work was published in a special issue of the journal: 'Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society', and Kathryn also features on the BBC TV programme 'Autumnwatch', the 'Today' programme on Radio 4, as well as in numerous newspaper articles.

Athena SWAN



The Environment Department has been awarded a Bronze Athena SWAN award, recognised under the national scheme which celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and supporting the careers of women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) in higher education. Head of Department, Professor Colin Brown said: 'We have always striven to provide a supportive and family-friendly work environment and to offer equal opportunities to all staff and students. I am delighted to see this underlying ethos reflected in the Bronze Athena SWAN award.'

Energy Efficiency

Dr Charlie Burns acted as an expert panellist at an event organised by UCL's Energy Institute on the implications of the appointment of a new European Commission for the EU's Resource Efficiency Agenda. The discussions will be fed into a report commissioned by the European Commission's European Resource Efficiency Platform.

Exceptional

Roman Ashauer has been selected from more than 1000 reviewers as one of 12 Exceptional Reviewers of 2014 by the scientific journal Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry. After already winning the same award in 2013 as well as the Excellence in Review Award by the journal Environmental Science and Technology in 2012 this is another acknowledgement of the integral role that good peer reviewing plays in science.

HuGE

Our new BA/MEnv in Human Geography and the Environment (HuGE) is currently recruiting, and will run for the first time from September 2015. See: <http://www.york.ac.uk/environment/undergraduate> for more information.