Choosing the right masters course can be a daunting experience. As well as expecting to move one’s knowledge up to a new level and hopefully improve career prospects, you really want it to be an exciting and worthwhile experience. For me, the attractions were obvious: although the course was new, the environment department was mature and yet not so large as to be impersonal; the staff were leaders in their field but were friendly and approachable and this permeated throughout the department; and the syllabus was sufficiently flexible to enable me to choose the areas of study that I was specifically interested in as well as providing a broad base of compulsory modules that buttressed the course.

My marine group was relatively small, and bonded together amazingly well. This was invaluable in developing team presentations where individual strengths can be harnessed and ideas can be shared. It was also great fun. The course itself offers a wide spectrum of activities from lectures to field trips, workshops to laboratory exercises, and hands-on experience further afield within the marine reserves of South Sinai. For those considering this course and funds permitting, I cannot recommend this last module highly enough. The final highlight of the course is the summer placement where students organise (well in advance!) their own supervised research project, subject to approval. For many, these were around the coast of the UK, but for those with the desire and the resources they can be anywhere in the world.

Everyone expects masters’ courses to be demanding and MEM is no exception. However, the structure, scope and content of the course, the friendly staff and studying with similarly-minded people made the year an unforgettable experience that absolutely flew by.