

**UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies  
Training and Research Programme**

Information Paper

**Update on the Reading University and  
JNCC MOU**

January 2011

For other documents from  
**UKOT & CD Training and Research Programme**

Visit: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5130>

To find out more about JNCC Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies  
programme see <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/ukotcd/>

To find out more about the JNCC see [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk)



## **UPDATE ON THE READING UNIVERSITY AND JNCC MoU**

Professor Ken Norris, University of Reading, 19 Jan 2011

The aim of the MoU is to facilitate links between the OTs and CDs and the UK research community to improve research training and support for biodiversity conservation (and potentially other environmental needs) in the OT/CDs.

The role of the University of Reading is to act as a hub to connect the OT/CDs with various components of the UK research community based in UK Universities. This role involves either helping address a particular OT/CD training or research need directly, or helping OT/CDs contact relevant expertise in other UK Universities.

Specific activities cover a number of areas. These are outlined below, together with an update of progress (or lack of activity), and some suggestions for how these areas could be taken forward in the future.

### Develop opportunities for University of Reading students (and those from other institutions) to do research projects in the UKOTs and CDs

- We have invited various MSc courses (in Reading and Exeter) to publicise MSc research opportunities to the OT/CDs, which some have done. We have also received contact from the Isle of Man outlining potential projects that have been circulated to MSc Course Directors. However, activity has been limited.
- MSc courses in the UK on biodiversity conservation (and other areas of environmental science) have grown considerably over recent years. This provides a significant opportunity for the OT/CDs to access well qualified and motivated students to work on targeted, short-term research projects.
- Although we can issue calls for research ideas for MSc students it is really helpful to have a list of potential project titles from the OT/CDs with a couple of sentences outlining what the project might involve. An example that we received from the Isle of Man is attached (Annex 1). These are very helpful to students looking for a project who have specific interests.
- Ideally, MSc Course Directors need to circulate project titles/outlines to students in October each year. The students then usually finalise their project plans in the Spring Term (i.e. before Easter) and then undertake them in May-July, before writing up and submitting in August and September. If project lists/outlines are circulated to University of Reading in September each year then we can pass them onto relevant MSc courses.
- JNCC is considering establishing a small scholarship fund to facilitate MSc student participation in OT/CD research projects, and this is likely to attract students.

### Develop opportunities for UKOT and CD students to study at the University of Reading

- There is an under-graduate student, Helen Lazleer, currently studying at the University supported by a UKOTA Scholarship.
- There are plans for JNCC to fund an MSc scholarship at the University of Reading, starting in October 2011. We are currently considering potential MSc courses, across the environmental sciences, to include in a call for applicants.

Develop opportunities, where possible, for UKOT and CD students to take internships at the University of Reading

- To date, we have had no contact from students about possible internships.
- In the past, we have hosted UK and overseas student interns (usually for about 1 month) to help develop their research skills. Students have been at under-graduate and post-graduate levels. Usually we are approached by a potential student with an idea for what they'd like to do, and we then host their visit and facilitate their interaction with researchers with expertise and experience relevant to their interests. Projects vary but often include data analysis, the drafting of reports or papers, and the development of funding proposals.
- UKOT and CD students need to be made aware of this opportunity.

Explore the possibility that the UKOT and CD Steering Group becomes affiliated to the University

- This possibility is currently being discussed within the University.

Develop opportunities for UKOT and CDs skills training in research publication

- We have had no contact concerning this opportunity.
- This activity has parallels with internships. There is considerable expertise and experience that the OT/CDs could access.
- Individuals/organisations with interests in publishing their research need to be made aware of this opportunity.

Develop and promote the University of Reading as a one-stop-shop for OTs and CDs to link into UK academia

- This activity was designed specifically to help the OT/CDs access UK-based expertise to develop research plans and proposals that address particular research needs identified by the OT/CDs. To date this opportunity has not been used.
- The recent call for proposals on invasive, non-native species provides a timely example of the opportunities that are being missed. There is considerable research interest and expertise in the UK HEI research community on the ecology and management of invasive species, yet very limited involvement in proposals submitted under this call. We can help facilitate new links that would hopefully bring new thinking and ideas into research relating to key issues such as invasive species.
- Individuals/organisations in the OT/CDs need to be made aware of this opportunity.
- This activity could also be used to provide input to research infrastructure development, such as the establishment of a research centre or institute.

Develop a web site to support the training and research programme

- I plan to start this work now.

Review OTs and CDs research priorities and work with the OT/CDs to apply for funding to address one or more of these

- This activity complements the idea of a one-stop-shop by taking forward research plans and proposals to potential funders. If the one-stop-shop starts to help provide links between OT/CDs needs and UK research expertise, then developing funding proposals will be a natural development of this process. Making people aware of the one-stop-shop and its role is therefore important.

Explore the potential for similar links with the University of Exeter

- These links are developing. For example, University of Exeter has issued a call for MSc projects, and will be involved in future activities.

Professor Ken Norris.  
University of Reading.  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

**Annex 1: Ideas for MSc projects on Isle of Man, Liz Charter, 4 Jan 2011**

**Department of Environment Food and Agriculture ideas**

- Analysis of technological options for countryside change/habitat loss monitoring incl remote sensing/satellite imagery. We have 1991 phase 1 survey and several sets of aerials photos since 2000.
- Invasive Non native species strategy
- Peat depth and economic value of carbon storage in Manx uplands
- Looking at potential impact of climate change on biodiversity, strategy to address

**Manx National Heritage ideas**

- Wildlife conservation management on archaeological sites
- Risk analysis of a potential longtail eradication campaign on the Calf
- Comparison of wildlife value of different boundary features eg on Meayll Peninsula and practical maintenance considerations
- to look at the erosion of drift by run-off water trapped above, or diverted by, major hill-land boundaries, particularly the 'Mountain Hedge', in terms of understanding the geology, dating of the boundaries and the habitats and niches created.
- Investigation of Wildlife Act Schedule 8 invasive alien plant species on MNH property eg montbretia, three-cornered leek – priorities for management etc