

Postgraduate studies at SCRI

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Postgraduate training at SCRI provides an environment that allows technical and intellectual competences to flourish and equips students with modern scientific skills suitable for a range of scientific careers. Training in research skills and techniques is an essential element in the development of a research student. Students have the opportunity to use the considerable knowledge, techniques and technologies available at SCRI and their associated universities. The outcome is a partnership that makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the research areas at SCRI.

The Institute is involved in the training of around 60 students at present, with about half supported through the very successful and highly competitive joint studentship programme. This programme is funded jointly through SCRI and the student's university. It has led to the highest student population at SCRI to date. This highly motivated group enhances scientific life at SCRI and positively challenges SCRI staff through vibrant scientific questioning and by developing novel techniques. The rigorous and demanding nature of the studentship is monitored through a process that





Susan McCallum won the Innovation Prize at the 2009 Student Competition.

requires a written report and short presentation with a selected impartial scientific advisor every six months. These meetings challenge the student with a different point of view and provide a record of their scientific and academic progress. The meetings are complementary to the monitoring system at the University at which the postgraduate student is registered.

The students at SCRI have established a committee that holds meetings and offers a chance for students to discuss aspects of postgraduate life and concerns. Two students are also members of the Institute University Interactions Committee (UIC) that deals with all aspects of postgraduate research at SCRI. They provide a valuable link between students and the function of the UIC. Informative occasional presentations were given in 2009 by members of staff to give advice on topics and skills relevant to postgraduate research.

SCRI played host to this year's Postgraduate Student Competition as part of the Scottish Research Institutes' annual Science for Life lecture. The competition involved an incredibly high standard of talks, confidently

presented and defended. This was very much a celebration of the work going on around the Scottish Research Institutes. SCRI was represented by Susan McCallum 'Marker assisted breeding for sensory characteristics in red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus* L.)' and Lindsay McMenemy 'Plant mediated interactions with the large raspberry aphid', our winners of the internal SCRI student competition. Lindsay went on to win the competition following on from her success as runner-up in the 2008 Student Essay Competition run by the Royal Entomological Society.



The moment SCRI's Lindsay McMenemy learned she was the winner of the 2009 Scottish Research Institutes' Student PhD competition.

This year we welcomed postgraduate students to the Master of Research (MRes) course titled 'Crops for the Future' for the first time. This is a joint venture initiated between the University of Dundee College of Life Sciences and SCRI. The course provides a framework for advanced study in practical and theoretical aspects of crop bioscience through lectures from SCRI and Dundee University staff and through practical demonstration of modern agricultural and plant science practices.