



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
informatics



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Philosophy, Psychology
and Language Sciences



UK Research
and Innovation

CDT in NLP Student Briefing

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NLP

UKRI CENTRE
FOR DOCTORAL
TRAINING

A Warm Welcome to our New CDT Cohort!



Welcome

What is a CDT? What is the CDT in NLP?

- CDT = Centre for Doctoral Training.
- In a nutshell: a large training grant for 14–15 students per year.
- Combines research and **training over 4 years**.
- Students learn together in **cohorts** ...
- ... but not in a silo: CDTs should bring together a broader community (incl. academic, industry, public).
- emphasis on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- CDT in NLP is one of 18 CDTs in AI across the UK.
- Our CDT: partnership between **Informatics** and **PPLS**.
- Scope: computation and language, broadly construed.

- Natural language processing
- Computational linguistics
- Speech technology
- Dialogue
- Language and vision
- Information retrieval and visualization
- Computational social science
- Computational cognitive science
- Human-Computer interaction
- Assistive and educational technology
- Psycholinguistics
- Language acquisition
- Language evolution, language variation and change
- Linguistic foundations of language and speech processing
- Design Informatics

- **Interdisciplinary:** students from different backgrounds — in disciplines and demographics. ED&I is important!
- **Collaborative:** students and supervisors work together, are exposed to different viewpoints and working styles.
- Students take courses to complement background.
- But should start research from day one.
- So, teaching should complement practice.

- Working with **outside partners** (mostly from industry, but not only).
- **Responsible research and innovation** activities.
- **Public engagement** activities.
- **Events and workshops** to foster all of the above.
- Participation of **aligned students** from outside the CDT.
- Students expected to help with programme delivery after year 1: work as teaching assistants, tutors, etc.



Mirella Lapata: principal investigator; scientific programme, main UKRI contact, EAB liaison



Ivan Titov: director; recruitment and selection; overall programme delivery



Björn Ross: equality, diversity, and inclusion; pastoral support



Frank Keller: training coordinator; taught component, responsible research and innovation



Simon King: PPLS liaison; coordination of programme delivery/recruitment, public engagement



Sally Galloway: overall programme delivery and administration

CDT in NLP: What is our Logo?



A Kelpie is a shape-shifting water spirit inhabiting the lochs and pools of Scotland. It is usually described as a black horselike creature, able to adopt human form.



- **Student talks / reading activities:** run by students; details to come
- **CDT/ILCC Seminars:** one or more per month
- **Distinguished Lectures:** 2 per annum
- **Language Lunches:** alternate months, student-run, jointly with PPLS
- **Student Rep Meetings:** 1–3 per semester
- **Firbush Team Building Trips:** Autumn and Spring the school
- **Your own event: FUNDS AVAILABLE!**

Student Wellbeing Services: Chaplaincy, Counselling, Disability Service



student groups,
societies,
meetups



courses,
career management,
training workshops

Doctoral College: training and support for PhD students across the university

- Raise any concerns with supervisor, cohort peers, mentors, CDT coordinator, student reps.
- Acknowledge the diversity of the people who attend UoE/Informatics:
 - EUSA Campaigns
 - Respect at Edinburgh
 - Edinburgh Race Equality Network
 - Staff Pride Network
 - Disability and Learning Support Service
- Don't be afraid to ask for help!
- CDT Slack: email rimvydas.rubavicius@ed.ac.uk for access.

- PhD with Integrated Training (new UoE degree type)
- 4 years: 75% research, 25% taught
- Students select courses to complement their training
- Students take 180 course credits over 3 years.
- The following courses are compulsory:

Year 1	
Doing Research in NLP	[20 credits]
Group Project in Advanced NLP	[20 credits]
Individual Project in Advanced NLP	[40 credits]
Year 2	
Case Studies in AI Ethics	[10 credits]

- This leaves you with a choice of 90 course credits.

Programme Structure: An Example

Year 1	Doing Research in NLP [20]	Foundational courses [40]	Group Project [20]	Individual Project [40]	PhD research
Year 2	Specialist courses [30]	Case Studies [10]	PhD research		
Year 3	Specialist courses [20]	PhD research			
Year 4	PhD research				

Programme Structure: An Example

Year 1	Doing Research in NLP [20]	Foundational courses [40]	Group Project [20]	Individual Project [40]	PhD research
Year 2	Specialist courses [30]	Case Studies [10]	PhD research		
Year 3	Specialist courses [20]	PhD research			
Year 4	PhD research				

- Complete Training Needs Analysis form
- Review it with your supervisor
- Discuss course selection with them at the earliest opportunity

Deadline for selecting Courses: 29 September 2023
Please submit course choices to Sally by 25 September 2023

- Changes to your course selection are possible, but only until the **end of week 2** of the semester the course is in.
- Again, discuss changes with your supervisor and then submit them to Sally.

A Couple More Things about Courses

- Types of courses: Level 9, Level 10, and Level 11.
- Courses are 20 credits or 10 credits (only exception: Individual Project).
- You can take **at most 30 credits** of courses at **level 9 or 10**; all other courses have to be at level 11 (master's degree level).
- The **Degree Programme Table** (also in the programme handbook) specifies the official requirements and lists foundational and specialist courses.
- In addition to foundational and specialist courses, you can freely choose up to 20 credits per year (30 in year 2).
- Not all courses are offered every year.
- Use the **PATH Tool** to help with course selection.

What do you do if your favorite course is not listed in the DPT?

- Check if you can fit it in as optional course.
- Alternatively: get permission to substitute a course in the DPT with another suitable course.
- This is called a **concession**.
- Discuss this with your supervisor first, then apply to Sally for a concession; teaching co-ordinator decides.

Some Advice on Selecting Courses

- Students are strongly encouraged to select a broad set of course: If you have an informatics background, take some linguistics/psychology courses relevant to your PhD research, and the other way round.
- Aim for a course load of around 120 credits in year 1.
- Try to balance courses equally across the two semesters; bear in mind that Doing Research in NLP (NLP-DR) spans both semesters.
- You also need to leave time to work on your PhD!
- You are not normally allowed to go on internships or on holiday while you're taking courses. (Short absences are fine.)

Annual Review and Progression

- Each year, there is an annual review: you submit a report on your PhD research so far, which is then assessed by a committee.
- The review covers research, course performance and broader CDT involvement.
- Students in year 2 or higher also give a presentation as part of their annual review (talk or poster).
- Whether you progress to the next year depends on your course marks and on the outcome of the annual review.
- Full guidance on the annual review will be issued to students and supervisors in late spring.

In a given year, in order to progress to the next year, a student needs to:

- pass all obligatory taught courses taken with a mark of at least 50; and
- pass at least 2/3 of all taught credits taken with a mark of at least 50 in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
- attain an average of at least 50 across all taught credits taken in this year; and
- be awarded a grade of at least “good” by the annual review panel in the annual review for this year.

No resits are allowed. Students who do not meet the progression criteria will not be allowed to progress to the next year of study; they may submit for an MSc by Research.

If you only take a single course in a given year then these rules apply to that course: you have to pass it at 50 to progress.

Skills Development and Additional Training

The Business School offers courses on entrepreneurship and innovation; you can take them as part of your regular course selection, e.g.:

- Innovation-driven Entrepreneurship
- Technology, Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation
- Design, Entrepreneurship & Innovation

The Institute of Academic Development (IAD) offers a large programme of [PhD training courses](#) (not for credit), e.g.:

- Managing Your Research Project,
- Effective Conference Posters
- Collaborative Writing and Publishing
- Social Media: Sharing, Connecting and Building an Audience

The School of Informatics offers subject-specific PhD training courses, e.g.:

- How to do an Informatics PhD
- Preparing For 1st Year Review
- Informatics PhD Thesis Workshop
- Preparing for your Viva

Together with other CDTs, we've designed a course on **career planning** for PhD students; this is offered to 2nd year students.

Fill in your TNA and discuss which skills development with your supervisor.

A number of training courses are **required** for CDT students, including:

- Data Protection Training; Data Protection in Research
- Unconscious Bias
- Research Ethics and Integrity
- Good Practice in Research Data Management

These are typically short online courses delivered through Blackboard Learn. Please see the programme handbook for more details.

Other Things that are Good to Know

Student reps:

- Select your reps by 29 September. Sally will explain.
- Ask current reps (listed in the handbook) what this entails.

Computing: CDT students have access to:

- the 108 GPU [ILCC Cluster](#), includes a dedicated CDT partition
- the 124 GPU [School PGR cluster](#)
- the 160 GPU [EIDF GPU Cluster](#), a university-level facility
- there will be an intro to cluster computing in NLP-DR

Research training support grant (RTSG):

- each student has £7500 to spend on conferences, summer schools, research expenses, small items of equipment
- Sally will explain the application process

I Wasn't Really Paying Attention

What about marking criteria?
Who do I complain to?
What if I need an extension?
What if I have special circumstances?
What if I need to withdraw?
What about computing?
Who pays for my travel?



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It's all in the [programme handbook!](#) Read it :)

- Weekly fire alarm testing is carried out
 - on Thursdays at 11.30 am in the Informatics Forum
 - on Wednesdays at 11.00 am in Appleton Tower
- Should you hear the alarm any time other than this, please make your way out of the building and gather at the designated meeting points outside the building.

- Course selection to Sally by **25 September** for upload before 29 September. item
26 October: student reps meeting
- November: Firbush trip
- November: Meet the Supervisors afternoon tea
- Spring 2024: Industry Day
- Spring 2024: External Advisory Board meeting

Any Questions?

