

Draft Report from the Student Programs working group – Human Communication Science Network

Core Members

Emery Schubert (Chair)	University of New South Wales
Sally Andrews	University of Sydney
Helen Chenery	University of Queensland

Remit: To determine how we can encourage and support students in undertaking interdisciplinary research within the funding rules of ARC networks.

State of play after 27 January 2005 kick-off meeting

The Student Program WG committee and the comments from the network-kick-off provided some excellent ideas about the direction in which Student Programs should go. After considering the comments and feedback, it seems that there should be four tiers of student programs:

A. Web based activities and physical resources

B. Small Grants

C. Large Grants

D. Special Programs:

Student demanded lectures.

Short papers for comments at HCS meetings.

A. The Web based activities should start with:

Each HCS Network Member nominating:

- (1) a list of topics and keywords in which they have expertise, including a selection of topics for students. The topic list could include current topics being supervised, and prospective topics. Perhaps a link to the Network member's supervision page?

This list would be used as a resource for students seeking mentors, co-supervisors etc. and should appear on the each member's profile (at least for non-student members).

- (2) a list of resources recommended for students (by the Network member) wishing to obtain information (particularly introductory information) about a

topic related to their area(s) of specialisation. The resource list could include recommended texts, web sites, on-line tutorials and so forth. Each resource should be annotated, be easy to update, and provide space for student feedback. This resource might even include or lead to the formation of a physical library space where students (and network members) can access things such as textbooks which have been recommended by Network/Student members.

Each of these lists (1) and (2) should be available on each Network member's profile, and amalgamated in a student area of the web (that is, fully linked). The information should be gathered iteratively (eg. a student makes a request, and the HCS member responds by adding something to the resource section of their profile, or checks what other members already have). The HCS Network Web Administrator manages this flow of information.

B. Small Grants & C. Large Grants

The grant schemes are to support students to develop the interdisciplinary skills of students. There should be a relatively easy to access scheme which supports potentially many students for smallish requirements, such as partial or local travel, purchase for, or access to, resources described in A(2) above, and so forth. This 'Small Grants' scheme should be for grants up to a maximum of, say, \$2000 per student. Maybe up to 30 could be awarded per annum (budget pending), and students can apply once a year for three years (3 year limit is to encourage completions). If fewer than two awarded, a final one could be awarded at submission to support application for interdisciplinary post-doc or similar. We need to start developing an application form, closing date, award date, and a fairly simple form of assessment and administration. Perhaps the selection could be made by the Student Programs WG and an administrator, with Exec committee to help with any problems.

'Large Grants' would be for special projects, such as visits to labs for longish periods. The recipient would be expected to present at a HCSNet meeting (which they should include in their application). The application should be sent out for review. They should be for amounts of up to \$10 000, though maybe in exceptional circumstances they could be larger. An upper limit of 5 can be awarded per year. A student can only receive one of these for the current life of the Network.

Should we offer 5 biannual Large Grants, and make them up to \$20 000, to cover extended overseas trips (or portions thereof), and so forth. Anything over \$2 000 could still be considered, so \$20 000 could be an absolute upper limit, and \$10,000 typical (?). Biannual allotments would increase the prestige, and reduce admin costs. That way, there would be two rounds of 'Large grants' for the current life of the Network.

They should be based on criteria such as quality of the program and potential impact on the field of Human Communication Science.

Criteria common to both grant schemes:

1. Applicant should demonstrate interdisciplinarity of the proposal (e.g. developing in a field outside their home discipline).

2. Proposal should demonstrate significant relationship with Human Communication Science.
3. Excellence. The proposal should demonstrate quality, regarding matters of resources used, planning and outcomes. Applications should demonstrate how their proposal will move the field of HCS forward. This criterion is particularly important for Large Grants.
4. Fairness. The funds should be distributed fairly. For example, students should have limits on the number of times they can apply successfully. There should not be a perception that a small number of supervisors are obtaining most of the funds for their students, and so forth. The applicant should show evidence of having tried to be funded elsewhere, if appropriate, and explain what proportion of expenses are covered by other organizations. Should we put a limit on the number of students with the same supervisor who can apply? What further checks should be in place to ensure that these schemes are administered fairly? . This criterion is particularly important for Small Grants.
5. Supervisors must be members of HCSNet, for at least 6 months?
6. The application contains a clear rationale, plan, list of expected outcomes, and detailed budget, fully justified budget.

Perhaps a little more discussion is required here but, again, we should start thinking about application forms and administration. Further we could leave the first round fairly opened in terms what is funded, and review the process for the next round.

D. Special Programs:

i. Student demanded lectures.

'Half day/2-hour interdisciplinary lecture on topics and lecturers chosen by students. While these are not workshops, summer schools or conferences, they would be best placed along side an existing conference/event (including, and especially, HCSNet meeting).'

Refer to earlier proposal about Student Demanded Lectures for more details.

Any modification?

Should we continue with this idea? Seems that we should, but we also probably don't want too many programs. Administration may be a little complex (i.e. selection criteria for topics and presenters, finding a venue).

ii. Short papers for comments at HCS Network meetings.

Students present a brief (5 to 10 minute) overview of a topic in which they are having interdisciplinary, HCS problems, and specify problems they are having or envisage. The session finishes with questions being answered (and asked) by members of the audience in a collegial, encouraging environment for 5 to 10 minutes. The aim here is to provide students with instant access to the knowledge within the HCS community, and to form new connections and relationships with follow-ups after the session. The audience will benefit from being exposed to some of the topics which students are working on.

Such a session could take up 1.5 to 2 hours of a HCS Network meeting, with 4 to 8 papers selected from a series of brief abstracts submitted by the prospective student presenters. There is no reason why 'grown-ups' couldn't apply, but preference should

be given to students. Papers could be selected from submitted abstracts by the Student Programs WG committee.

Other issues

We should prepare some questions for the HCSNet Exec. Please add!

For each scheme we need to start consulting with other WGs, especially regarding web-based resources, promoting the various schemes, a space for physical resources (library), etc. Is there any thing we should be keeping in mind to fit in with other WGs?

Any comments or ideas which have been omitted or misrepresented in this document should be clarified by the Student Programs Working Group, and by anyone who attended the roundtable session at the kick-off meeting. Further comments, suggestions and discussion are warmly welcomed from all.

Emery Schubert