

*EU Tempus BioN – 23/9/2010*

## Research & PhD education at the MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit

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## UK Research Councils

- 7 Research Councils in the UK (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk>):
  - Arts and Humanities (AHRC)
  - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences (BBSRC)
  - Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPSRC)
  - *Medical Research Council (MRC)*
  - Natural Environment (NERC)
  - Economic and Social Research (ESRC)
  - Science and Technology Facilities (STFC)
- Supported by UK government to facilitate science
- Similar to NIH, AoF, DFG, not so much RAS
- Total budget: 2008/09 £3.11 billion ≈ €3.7 bln
- Grants and own institutions
- Single administration
- No *academy* bodies

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## Medical Research Council (MRC)

- <http://www.mrc.ac.uk>
- Goals:
  - Encourage and support research to improve human health.
  - Produce skilled researchers.
  - Advance and disseminate knowledge and technology to improve the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the UK.
  - Promote dialogue with the public about medical research.

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## Medical Research Council (MRC)

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk>

- Started as independent scientific body in 1919
- Non-governmental research organisation – supported by UK Parliament grant-in-aid itself
- Annual budget 08/09 of ~£700 mln =~ €840 mln
- ~2/5 given as grants and ~3/5 as intramural funding
- 32 intramural Units and Institutes across the country. Total ~4000 people.
- 3000 grant recipients
- 1300 peer reviewed publications a year (2008)
- NOT part of the National Health Service but working closely with it.

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## MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit (MRC CBU)

<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk>

- Founded in Cambridge in 1944 as Applied Psychology Unit (APU)
- Among former directors: Donald Broadbent, Alan Baddeley...
- Unit's remit changed in the 90's. Since 1998 it is known as the CBU. Director: W. Marslen-Wilson
- ~145 people (scientists, students, support, admin, visitors etc)
- Not part of Cambridge University!

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## MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit (MRC CBU)

- <http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk>

Main research groups:

- Attention
- Emotion
- Speech and language
- Memory and perception
- Methods research and infrastructure

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## MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit (MRC CBU)

- <http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk>

Main methodologies and facilities:

- Behavioural testing
- Neuropsychology (Addenbrookes Hospital)
- EEG since 2000 (64-ch Neuroscan and now 128 BV ActiCap)
- fMRI – Simens Tim Trio 3T scanner since 2005
- MEG – Electa Neuromag 306-channel since 2007
- Range of eye-tracking systems, etc.

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## Education at MRC CBU

<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk>

- CBU is a research-only institution
- Not part of University
- No obligation for staff to teach or practice
- Still, MRC has a goal of *producing skilled researchers*, so there is a number of teaching-oriented activities in collaboration with universities and schools:
  - Visiting students
  - Summer placement students
  - Part II undergraduate projects
  - Doctoral (PhD) theses

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## PhD education at MRC CBU

<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

- CBU can provide basis for PhD thesis work
- Lively postgrad community of 20+ people
- Supervision - normally 2 supervisors per PhD student
- Facilities – fMRI, MEG, etc.
- Lectures and seminars at CBU and in Cambridge
- Annual application deadline for PhD programmes in December

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## PhD education at MRC CBU

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- Registration: students have to be registered at a University
- CBU is not educational institution and does not give degrees – PhD degrees are granted by universities
- Normally, this is Cambridge University – they will accept the student as long as the CBU supports the application and *there is financing*
- It does not have to be CU, enrolling at another UK/European University is possible (but more cumbersome)

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- Finance: there is no charge for PhD program at CBU
- But: UK universities charge tuition (and other) fees
- EU students pay over £3K a year to study at Cambridge, non-EU ~£15K
- Finance should be demonstrated to become enrolled: fees *and* maintenance (~£10K p.a.)
- Grants are available from MRC and other institutions

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## PhD education at MRC CBU

<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

Procedure:

- Contact potential supervisors in advance
- Submit application (incl. research plan) electronically
- Shortlisted candidates *always* interviewed
- Selected candidates *can* be recommended for grants
- MRC studentship (normally 3 per year): covers tuition and maintenance for EU students for 3 years
- Other studentships managed centrally by CU

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<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

Successful applicants enjoy 3 years (well, up to 4, but not money for the 4<sup>th</sup> year) of endless fun in Cambridge: punting, rowing, football, pubs, week-end trips to London plus some cutting-edge research on the side...

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Thank you!

Questions? Comments?