

The MIGSAA Student Experience

As described in the main document, we have a number of mechanisms for soliciting student comment and feedback on their experience in MIGSAA, including polls and surveys, and we often also receive unsolicited comments from students at all stages of the programme, including during the application process, and from visiting students. What follows is a selection of direct quotes from individual students on how they perceive the MIGSAA programme.

The student experience in the CDT is more than just a focused academic exploration of one area. I feel that if you directly start working on one topic then you associate with a particular working group and don't develop other skills. In MIGSAA the first year gives you a basic knowledge in various areas that help you get more out of unrelated areas to your study focus. Most importantly MIGSAA builds a certain type of character where you are trained to be an inquisitive mathematician, confident in giving talks and writing reports on areas unfamiliar to you. The whole learning experience from first year instils a sense of confidence in researching any area whether it's familiar or not. For example, I came in doubting my abilities to even start a PhD (having not done a masters/with little analysis or pde background) but the first year made me excited about the next three years, not apprehensive. Also, the breadth of topics means that we are able to make great use of both Universities, and we can completely change direction from the intended if we choose to do so.



Surveys are really great for the taught courses offered, because we feel involved in the decision making process and it also means that we enjoy and make good use of the material (we're not taking modules just for the credits!). The only advanced course I have attended so far is Homogenisation but what I find great about it is that the material goes at the speed of the class and changes based on interest...from what I heard this is the norm and material that is of interest to the students is always covered.

A lot of personal growth takes place through all the General Skills activities such as organising conferences and learning presentation skills etc. I think that we will come away knowing how to fit into any working environment - whether we choose to stay in academia or not.



There's also one thing that I didn't know how to fit into any questions but I think is one of the best things about the programme: everyone seems to really enjoy what they are doing. I feel that PhD's sometimes feel slightly overwhelming and when I speak to PhD students they are constantly stressed about their work. With the CDT you get a long time to decide whether your PhD topic or supervisor is right for you and so it seems like the experience is more enjoyable...at least it seems that way!

A CDT where you can benefit wholeheartedly from the experience of academic staff at two great institutions. I can't think of any other place that would allow me to pursue two varying topics at two universities.



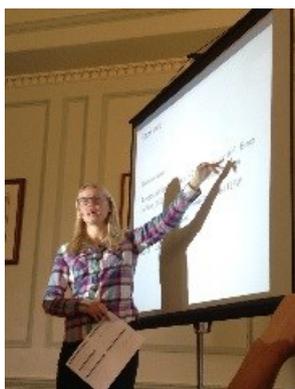
Personally, I have found the experience consistently positive and rewarding. Being put together with a strong cohort of other students, particularly given their diverse backgrounds and interests, has meant that there are always people around to motivate, support, and assist mathematically, as well as making sure that there is no risk of becoming isolated with work. The course structure also provides many interesting opportunities with the wide range of projects and modules available - this breadth of content has been challenging, but that's exactly what I was hoping for when I joined the programme, so MIGSAA hasn't disappointed!

I have gained more knowledge in areas that I probably wouldn't have touched unless needed for my research.

Learning new areas of maths and advancing my knowledge in things that I was more familiar with.



The best part was definitely getting to know unfamiliar areas of maths. It was helpful to see how everything complements each other in making topics more understandable.



I found the advanced courses very interesting as they went in greater depth than other courses I have taken.

One of our best qualities is the really strong, positive cohort atmosphere. The things we've done as a cohort have been really successful (presentation skills, modelling camp, the Burn etc).

From one of the student representatives describing their experience on the Management Committee:

They actually listen to what we say and then do something about it.

From a visiting student:

"I wished I had found the MIGSAA programme last year before I joined my current programme at XX. The depth and more importantly the range of training opportunities in the MIGSAA structure gives students a good taste of different mathematical subjects prior to deciding on the final PhD project."



And from an applicant:

"...the idea of MIGSAA seems so incredibly well conceived and implemented, that no mathematics student could hope for more; in fact, I was astonished at the open day, and I'm very happy I will be staying in Scotland, where, as far as I can see, there are such great people and institutions for mathematics."