

## **PGR Tips on using humour in your doctorate**

Undertaking a doctorate is a serious commitment and a career choice worthy of grave deliberation... But don't forget there are still plenty of chances to let your sense of humour shine through! Humour will allow you to forge a bond with people and get you through the tougher days of your doctorate,

When applying these tips in practice, always judge your audience and the situation very carefully. Be sensitive that not everyone may understand that you are joking and take into account cultural and language differences. Humour can help you stand out, but you don't want to stand out for the wrong reasons and let this overshadow your work. You needn't be a comedian or be good at telling jokes to use humour effectively.

### **Make your work more memorable**

Employing humour in a presentation provides a hook for people to engage with and remember you and your work. You can use both visual and verbal humour, using funny slides, anecdotes and analogies. Again, you want people to remember the research you present, so remember it's not just about the jokes. Know your audience – humour might not always be appropriate. Follow the rule: when in doubt, leave it out....

### **Team building and collaborations**

Research is undertaken by humans and human interaction is an important element. Humour can be important in building rapport within your research team, with your supervisors and with any collaborators. Sharing a laugh does not have to be done face to face. Humour can be used in problem solving, enhancing creativity, team building, and improving communications without ever telling a joke.

### **Broach a difficult subject**

Broaching a difficult subject, whether it is with your supervisor or when negotiating (see an earlier [PGR tips on that subject](#)) can be made easier by using a bit of humour.

### **Share the fun**

Has anything funny happened to you during your research? Did you do something exceedingly daft or get involved in a silly misunderstanding? Make sure you share these things with colleagues especially fellow PGRs! It will help you see things that you may have felt could only happen to you are actually a shared experience.

### **When the going gets tough**

Humour is a great stress buster and can help you release some of the tension of your intensive research. Sometimes it helps to think what a member of the general public would make of the niche you are researching...Need some light relief? Check out [the PhD comics](#) about the (American) experience of doing a doctorate.

### **Remember why you started in the first place**

Most researchers embark on their doctorate because of passion for their research subject. Why did you think it would be fun or at least worthwhile to spend several years of your life devoted to this?