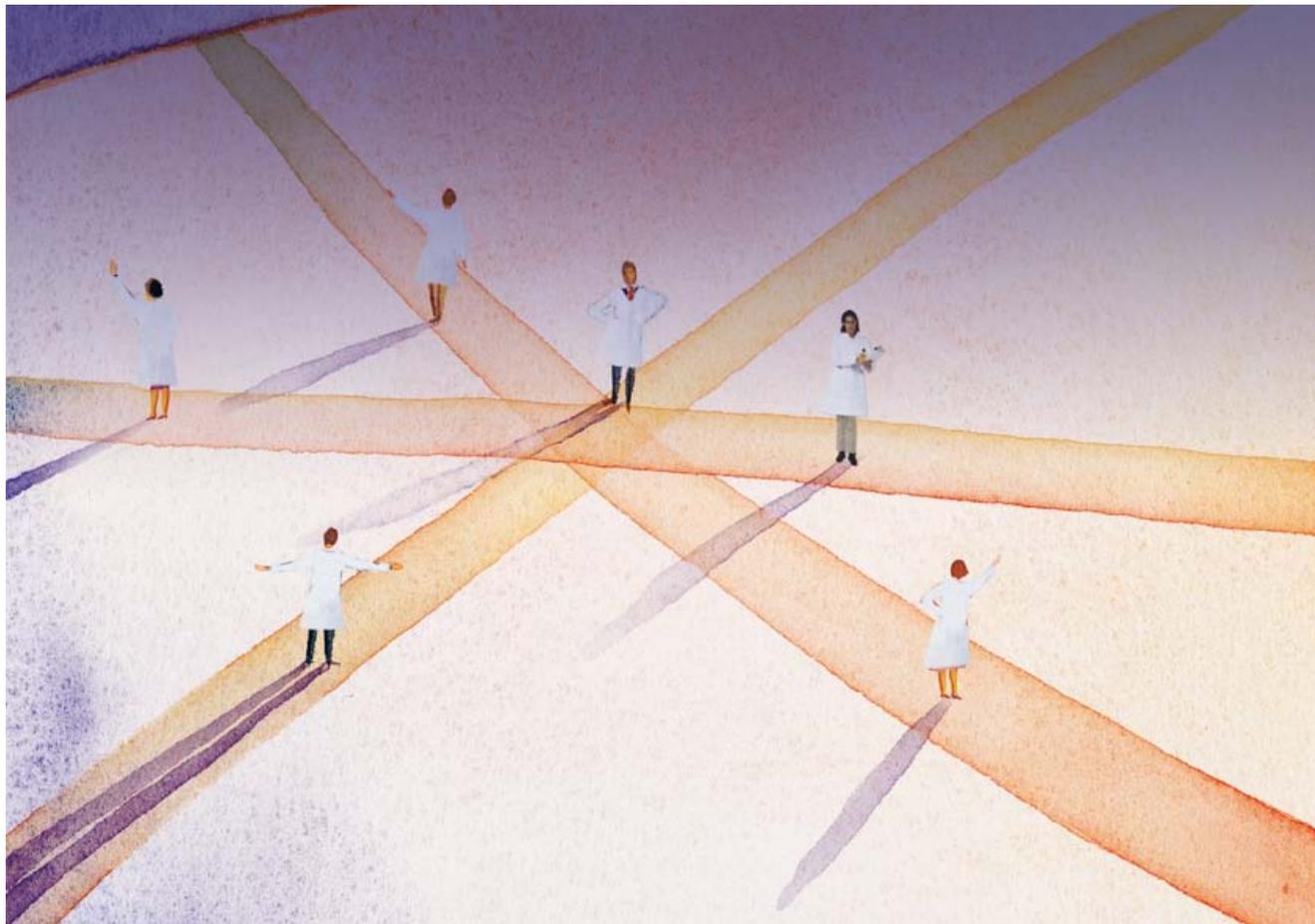


Developing future scientific leaders

Pathway to Independence

Vitae Conference Handout 2013



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Timetable

Tuesday 29th January 2013	
18.00	Registration, drinks and buffet reception
20:00 Keynote address	Professor Paul Workman , Deputy CEO and Head of the Division of Cancer Therapeutics, ICR
Wednesday 30th January 2013	
09:15 Welcome	Dr Celia Caulcott , Director, Innovation and Skills, BBSRC
09:30 Developing a Viable Independent Research Proposal	Dr Chris Bakal , Dynamical Cell Systems Team Leader, ICR Dr Sally Leever , Academic Director, CRUK London Research Institute Dr Darren Logan , Genetics of Instinctive Behaviour Group Leader, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
12:15 Securing and Negotiating a Team Leader Role	Dr Elizabeth Murchison , Junior Research Fellow, University of Cambridge/Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute Professor Paul Workman , Deputy CEO and Head of the Division of Cancer Therapeutics, ICR
13.30 Lunch	
Chair: Dr Chris Bakal – Institute of Cancer Research	
14:30 Funding Applications: How to keep the money coming in	Professor Chris Marshall , Head of the Division of Cancer Biology, ICR Dr Len Stephens , Head of the Signalling ISP department and Associate Director, The Babraham Institute <i>With Dr Danielle Hoyle and Dr Shoshanna Isaacson, Wellcome Trust</i>
16:00 Review, planning and panel Q&A	Chair: Celia Caulcott Chris Marshall, Paul Workman, Chris Bakal, Sally Leever, Elizabeth Murchison, Len Stephens, Jane Langdale
17:00 Summary and close	Celia Caulcott, Director, Innovation and Skills, BBSRC
19.00 Refreshments and poster session followed by dinner	
Guests joining: Lesly Huxley, The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, and Beata Pedziwiatr, Vitae	

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Thursday 31 st January 2013	
09:00	Welcome to Day 2: Professor Jane Langdale , Head of the Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford
09:15 Case Study: Journey from Postdoc to PI	Dr Claus Jørgensen Cell Communication Team Leader, ICR
10:00 Recruiting the Best Team	Dr Darren Logan Genetics of Instinctive Behaviour Group Leader, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute Dr Eleftheria Zeggini , Applied Statistical Genetics Group Leader, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute Dr Claus Jørgensen Cell Communication Team Leader, ICR
11.30 Delivering Science Through People Part 1	Dr Andrew Reynolds , Tumour Biology Team Leader, ICR
12.30 Lunch and case studies	
13.30 Delivering Science Through People Part 2	Case study discussion
14:30 Enhancing your Collaborations <i>Incorporating coffee</i>	Dr Nessa Carey , Pfizer Dr Darren Logan Genetics of Instinctive Behaviour Group Leader, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute Dr Eleftheria Zeggini , Applied Statistical Genetics Group Leader, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
Review and Close 16:00 - 16:30	Professor Jane Langdale , Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford

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Application process

The programme is open to post docs from ICR, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and BBSRC/BBSRC sponsored institutes who are currently applying or will be applying for independent research roles within the next 18 months. Places are limited and details of the application process follow below.

We anticipate high demand and ensure consistency, the partner organisations will use the same selection process to ensure all post docs have a fair chance of being selected. To ensure that the panel making the decisions have the relevant information to inform the selection process, you should submit:

- An up to date copy of your academic CV (including a synopsis of your current research focus).
- A cover letter outlining the future direction of your science in a future team leader role, steps you have taken to date to prepare for and obtain such a role, and how you see the programme assisting with this (max 1 side of A4).
- A letter of recommendation from your team leader.

Areas that the selection panels may take into consideration when selecting applications include:

- Quality/impact of publications
- Presentation record at national and international level
- Letter of recommendation from current PI
- Patents/commercial applications of research
- Proposed future plans and visions for research projects
- Funding, awards and prizes to date
- Commitment to achieving an independent role
- Experience of supervising and mentoring junior researchers

ICR applications should be submitted to pathway@icr.ac.uk.

Applications will be reviewed by the ICR Research Directorate/equivalent committees and decisions will be made in the November meeting, with participants advised of the outcome shortly afterwards.

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Pre-course work: Developing an Independent Research Proposal (*developed by Sally Leever, LRI*)

You are asked to prepare a short research proposal for discussion with the group and speakers at the Pathway to Independence event. This proposal should be for yourself and two others, funded for 5 years. It should be pitched at a panel who do not work directly in your field e.g. a research council funding panel.

1. Research Question

Please state what you consider to be the key question that is being addressed by your proposed set of experiments. For research that is not driven by an underlying hypothesis, please state the importance of the proposed studies.

2. Background

Describe the background to the project in three short paragraphs (1-3 sentences per paragraph):

3. Aims of the project

Describe three aims (questions you'll address) and how you'll achieve this (experimental approach/techniques), you should aim for one sentence for each point.

Experimental Aim 1

How will you achieve it?

Experimental Aim 2

How will you achieve it?

Experimental Aim 3

How will you achieve it?

4. Perspective

Summarise what you expect to get out of this research project and where it will lead you (1-3 sentences per paragraph).

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Feedback from Participants

24 participants attended from a number of leading UK research institutes (ICR, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, BBSRC institutes including Babraham, John Innes, Moredun, as well as partner organisations EBI, LRI and the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research).

Participants submitted applications and were selected by research committees from their own institutions based on criteria outlined on the website (<http://training.icr.ac.uk/pathway>).

Participants identified the following key learning points

- As a PI you need a scientific vision and to see the bigger picture – not just a plan for the next set of experiments you want to do.
- There are a variety of routes and approaches to securing an independent position.
- You have the right to negotiate in terms of the offer/package. Don't rush to accept the first offer you get.
- A number noted the usefulness of individual feedback on their project proposal pre-course work.

Comments on speakers/format:

- A clear positive of the programme was having a range of speakers in attendance at different levels or stages of their career. Talks from recently appointed junior team leaders were very useful to illustrate variety of ways to achieve a team leader position.
- If the programme is run again in future it would be good to include more speakers who've got lectureships in universities rather than pure research institutes (the nature of the partners meant a heavy research institute bias).
- Networking with speakers and other delegates, and the collaborative aspect of the programme, was very valuable (benefit of residential programme).
- Day 1 was the most useful. The aspects of management covered on day 2 needed longer to discuss and might have benefitted from a more structured format.

Generally a number of delegates reported feeling more confident, informed and focussed on their quest to become independent researchers having attended the programme. They strongly support the running of this programme again for future cohorts. Two delegates have subsequently reported successful awards of fellowships/independent position since the course.

Feedback from Speakers

Feedback from the speakers indicates that the programme was both better than anticipated and generally 'fitted the bill' delivered by speakers that brought contrasting stories and

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different experiences. A number of speakers indicated that they would have found this opportunity highly valuable, had they had it at the start of their career as a PI (none, as far as we knew, had received any formal training in how to prepare for PI positions when they were at the stage delegates were at). Most speakers report that it was apparent that participants were finding out about aspects of becoming a group leader that they may never have considered, for example, recruitment and people management. Both speakers and organisers recognise that some of the content of the sessions overlapped and that there should be more interactive exercises. It was also suggested that speakers should be invited from Universities to help delegates see the bigger picture. A number of speakers indicated that they themselves had also gained a lot from participating in the programme, through hearing experiences and approaches colleagues from other institutes/universities had taken,

The speaker observations suggest that whilst delegates were doing great science and were clearly talented, the workshop had illustrated to them how important it is to develop a clear, long-term vision for their research and future career, something they hadn't seemed to have considered beforehand in much detail. The speakers also noted a perceived lack of confidence in delegates' ability to sell their research to prospective funders/employers, and to negotiate for a good start up package, suggesting this might be an area to explore further in the future.

Next steps and recommendations

1. The interactive aspects of the programme such as the discussion of individual project proposals were rated as some of the most useful parts. Speakers and delegates recommend more interactive exercises, particularly for the management aspects on day 2.

Action: Broaden and strengthen/encourage more interaction and participation during sessions by working with speakers to incorporate use of active exercises and keep the off-schedule times to allow for informal discussions between speakers and participants.

2. The majority of speakers on the programme worked at research institutes, so more information and experiences could have been covered around becoming a lecturer, balancing research with teaching/administration, which poses a significant challenge.

Action: A follow-up event might delve in to this further, including more contributors who were recently appointed to university posts. Future running of the Pathway to Independence programme should involve careful consideration of the balance of speakers from universities versus research institutes.

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3. Feedback from delegates indicates a bias towards biomedical research (cancer specifically).

Action: Consideration to be given to whether it would be more useful to split biomedical and non-biomedical researchers in to separate programmes, or whether more speakers from a range of scientific disciplines could be involved.

4. Whilst delegates had a lot of knowledge about funding mechanisms they appear to be naïve about how grant committees work. This could be addressed by an appropriate speaker providing an explanation on how grant committees work and going through all sections of a grant application form.

Action: invite speaker who is experienced at sitting on grant committees to explore this further as a follow-up event.

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Follow-up meeting, The Library, The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 23rd September 2013

Aims of this session

1. Strengthen networks between delegates through provision of informal opportunities and group work
2. Explore two key themes out of the scope of the initial 2.5 day residential programme:
 1. Explore further what it is like to move to a university for a PI position through talks and discussion with junior and senior university academics.
 2. focus on financing of research/managing grant funding
3. Link this event with feedback to evaluate 8 months on, where our delegates have gone (progress) and the impact of our programme.

Programme:

10.30 Arrival, coffee

11.00 Welcome – Prof Jane Langdale, University of Oxford. Reflection on past 8 months in small groups,

- 1) How have I developed my science/professional skills?
- 2) How have I progressed my career?
- 3) What were the key messages for me from the Pathway to Independence?

12.30 Introduce a practical activity e.g. Given a pot of money from an early career grant e.g. David Phillips. How do you manage that funding? Dr Fiona Hemsley, ICR

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Grants activity in groups- David Singleton and Laura Pickles, ICR

15.00 Being a lecturer – Jane, with another speaker (junior PI). Delve more in to balancing research with teaching in HE, getting top lecturer jobs, career trajectories in HEIs

16.00 Coffee

16.30 Second speaker on setting up a lab in a university. Incorporate activity. Dr Rita Sousa-Nunes, Kings College

17.30 Close and drinks reception