

Special interest sessions

SIS A1 - Establishing Research Mentoring Schemes

Presenter: Dr Keith Fildes, Researcher Development Adviser, Sheffield Hallam University

Brief overview:

Sheffield Hallam University has recently set up research mentoring schemes in two subject areas. These are in disciplines that were not submitted as units of assessment in REF 2014, but which had been in RAE 2008. The mentoring schemes were designed to help develop research capabilities within small and emerging research communities.

No evaluation has yet been undertaken - this session will instead talk about the practice of establishing the schemes. It will cover topics such as: determining objectives/target groups, mentoring training, applications, the matching process, structures of the schemes, and plans for evaluation.

SIS A2 - Evaluating DNA forms to identify trends in researchers' development needs

Presenter: Katharine D'Souza, University Graduate School Data Officer, University of Birmingham

Brief overview:

A Development Needs Analysis (DNA) form is used by University of Birmingham (UoB) PGRs to assess their knowledge gaps against the four domains of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF). Completing the form helps PGRs and supervisors to identify activities to address any skills gaps. A pilot project was undertaken to assess if useful information about gaps in skills development provision, or differing needs between groups of PGRs could be extracted using a sample of DNA forms from one department.

We found variation in how the DNA forms were used, variation between PGRs from different demographic groups (e.g. gender splits and differences between first year PGRs and those further into their research), and as a result have identified ways in which use of the DNA could be improved and provision could be targeted. This special interest session will present some of the trends uncovered in development needs across the PGR sample investigated and share some early results from our project to extend the analysis across PGRs from different academic disciplines to assess if the same trends apply.

SIS A3 - Using Webinars to Deliver Researcher Development Courses

Presenters: Dr Rachel Torr, Head of Researcher Development, University of Exeter
Dr Chris Wood, Researcher Development Programme Manager (Early Career Research Staff), University of Exeter

Brief overview:

As part of our interest in exploring different ways of reaching our target audiences, the University of Exeter has introduced a number of webinars as part of the core Researcher Development Programmes on offer in 2013/14. This development is the result of having bought in a series of 9 webinars from an external supplier during the summer term of 2012/13. We have found that the webinars have enabled us to reach our distance learners in a more immediate and interactive manner than was previously possible with our static online modules, enabling them to feel more actively a part of a community of learners. In addition, we have found that campus-based postgraduate and early career researchers have benefited from, and appreciated, the ability to tune in to live sessions from their desks that are typically no longer than 1 hour long. In addition to discussing our experiences of setting up and delivering webinars, those attending will be encouraged to share their own experiences or questions about this mode of delivery.

SIS A4 - Career Past the Doctorate: supporting the career progression of doctoral students

Presenters: Dr Anne Boulton, Reader in the Psychology of Fashion, Birmingham City University
Jayne Sharples, Postgraduate Careers Consultant, University of Birmingham

Brief overview:

Doctoral education is changing, and today's researchers have to be more career aware than in the past. How can we best support them to prepare for the next step beyond the PhD? What is the role of supervisors, funders and the researchers themselves?

In this Special Interest Session we will discuss how academics, career professionals, researcher developers and employers can work more effectively together to support researchers. We will share the voice of researchers: how they are currently playing their part to get what they need from the broader PhD experience; and what they think is missing.

Led by an academic with experience in researcher development and a careers practitioner with a specialist PG role, we will explore enhancements to current ways of working, through consideration of:

- ways to embed career decision making and careers information in skills training and experiential projects
 - ways to enable career conversations between supervisor and PhD researcher with referral route to University Careers Services
 - ways to increase engagement with employers and alumni.
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Vitae Researcher Development International Conference

9 - 10 September 2014 The Midland, Manchester



SIS A5 - Disciplinary, sectoral and national border crossings in the careers of social science and humanities researchers: findings from a European project

Presenters: Dr Chris Coey, Research Associate, University of Salford
Dr Debbie Millard, Research fellow, University of Salford

Brief overview:

In this special interest session we present the results of an FP7-funded project (POCARIM) on the careers, mobilities and impacts of PhD holders in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), conducted across 13 national contexts. We are in the process of preparing a final report and a series of policy recommendations for the funder, which we will present at the workshop.

We find that there are tensions between border crossings of different types (disciplinary, sectoral and national), and the cultures, practices and reward systems which constitute the career structures of SSH researchers. Whilst these border crossings are conducive to innovation and knowledge transfer, policymakers need to be cognisant of the challenges they pose to researchers.

Our recommendations centre on the role of mobility in SSH research careers. They have implications for a range of stakeholders: SSH doctoral candidates and PhD supervisors; early career researchers and researcher developers; professionals and academics responsible for the recruitment and reward of doctorate holders in different sectors; and policymakers tasked with funding and steering the research base.

See website: <http://www.salford.ac.uk/nmsw/research/research-projects/pocarim-home>

SIS A6 - Understanding global researcher professional development

Presenter: Jo Chaffer, Lead Trainer Researcher Connect, British Council

Brief overview:

Researcher Connect is a professional development program from the British Council for early career stage international researchers from any discipline. This session looks at the trends and findings from over a year's market research and piloting of the Researcher Connect suite of courses in 6 continents: we consider the lessons learned specifically the implications for UK based researchers (and institutes) engaging in international research partnerships.

SIS A7 - Supervisor development- where next?

Presenter: Erika Hawkes, Postgraduate Researcher Development Officer, University of Birmingham

Brief overview:

The session will be a venture to discuss different institutional approaches to supervisor development and support, drawing on Erika's research at University of British Columbia as a starting point. What role do researcher developers play in training and developing supervisors as well as students. How can institutions move beyond simply ensuring

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supervisors hit QA targets and into a more holistic model of supervisor training- and should they?

SIS A8 - Development of a knowledge exchange lens

Presenters: Pete Mandeville, Research Council Studentships Officer, University of Birmingham
Sara Kinahan, Doctoral Training and Studentship Manager, University of Birmingham

Brief overview:

With a number of the Research Councils now taking a greater interest in the cohort identity of the students they fund, institutions must develop ways of engaging with and developing identity within discreet cohorts.

Given the breadth of DTP models that exist this can be a fairly straight forward engagement (funded research groups) or somewhat complex (institutionally dispersed funded individuals). Further, as Research Council funding through DTPs become less institutional-centric and become more geographical funded through consortia, the nurturing and development of cohort identities changes further.

The session will introduce and discuss a range of exemplar DTP models, and examine how funded PGRs identify with the DTPs that fund them, and look at the best methods of engagement with and develop clear cohort identities within DTP structures both institutionally and through consortia.

The session will provide opportunity for informal discussion and a chance to share experience and best practice on DTP engagement and cohort identity strategies.

SIS A9 - Open Science - what's in it for researchers?

Presenters: Joy Davidson, Associate Director, University of Glasgow - Digital Curation Centre (DCC)

Brief overview:

In a bid to improve research integrity and to maximize public investment, researchers are increasingly under pressure to share their findings with other researchers and with the general public. Rather than seeing this move towards Open Science as a burden, emerging researchers should embrace this new, transparent and more networked way of performing research and creating societal value. Indeed, Open Science offers a range of potential and measurable benefits for both researchers and the institutions that employ them. However, to realise this potential, researchers will need new skills that enable them to undertake a broader range of tasks along the entire research lifecycle - from undertaking new means of collaboration, implementing data management and sharing strategies, to understanding how to amplify and monitor their research profile and its impact.

The session will introduce participants to the potential benefits associated with adopting an Open Science approach and highlight some of the tools and best practices that are available now to help researchers to make the most of their research.

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SIS A10 – Running a Three Minute Thesis Competition - Lessons Learnt

Presenters:

Dr Karen Clegg, Director of the Researcher Development Team, University of York
Helga Smallwood, Research Staff Developer, University of York
Dr Jane Sugars, Project Manager, Vitae

Brief overview:

Audience: This session is aimed at practitioners who have held or have an interest in holding a Three Minute Thesis competition at their institutions.

For the past three years, the University of York's Researcher Development Team has successfully run a research communication competition known as Three Minute Thesis, drawing on the competition invented by the University of Queensland in which research students must convey their key research messages in just three minutes. The University of York entered one of their 2013 finalists to the first National competition held by the University of Leeds, organised by their Students Union, and their finalist won the competition. This resulted in the University of York and Vitae teaming up to deliver and develop a National Three Minute Thesis to be held throughout 2014 with a semi- final at York and the final at the Vitae Conference.

This special interest session has been designed in order to share best practise about the experience of running both internal and national competitions of this nature. It will provide a brief overview of how York organised and developed this model and will provide an opportunity for practitioners to discuss what works and make plans for further competitions.

Broadly the session will comprise:

- Why run a 3MT? - The history of 3MT at York and an overview of the benefits
- How do you set up a 3MT competition?
- What worked/ what didn't?
- Vitae Perspective on plans for 2015
- Discussion and questions from delegates

This session is intended to be interactive, in order to allow delegates to share experiences and discuss plans for the 3MT as a national initiative.