

Searchable summary of on demand content

Use this document as a searchable reference to help you navigate the 'on demand' content and find the topics you are interested in quickly and easily.

Content titles, abstracts, institution names and tags are included below so that you can search (Ctrl+F) for relevant keywords. When you find content you would like to view, you can follow the links to the online content from within this document.

Tags include the intended audience you are interested in supporting, e.g. doctoral researchers, research staff, supervisors, research leaders or researcher developers.

Tags also include popular topics, e.g. wellbeing and mental health, research culture, EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion), and employability.

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Library Services building our PGRs' sense of belonging

Abstract:

The postgraduate research (PGR) community at the University of Birmingham is a large and diverse group, with over 4000 PGRs from different backgrounds and at different stages of their lives.

The University of Birmingham Library Services has an important role to play in making PGRs feel valued as members of the research and University community. A wide range of activities, including improved communications and breakout room discussions in workshops, has facilitated a sense of belonging for PGRs, and they are invited to become co-creators of Library Services which work for them.

The 5-minute pre-recorded video and supporting documents aim to:

- Share examples of effective PGR support and communication from Library Services
- Inspire practitioners to review their own practices with a view to improving practice in their own setting
- Provoke discussion on the role of Library Services in supporting PGRs' feelings of belonging

Institution: University of Birmingham

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563092>

Tags: Policy and practice; Supporting doctoral researchers and supervisors; Equality, diversity and inclusion; Wellbeing; Working with doctoral researchers; On demand

How can a Thesis Bootcamp be held in the online environment?

Abstract:

In pre-covid times, the Bristol Doctoral College would aim to run a Thesis Bootcamp, as pioneered by Dr Peta Freestone, twice a year for late-stage Postgraduate Research (PGR) students. These events would take place on campus over three days and provide students with the space to make significant progress on a first draft of their thesis. Support would be provided through writing advice, writing together, social activities and cake! In response to the pandemic, we had to think about how we could recreate this event online and bring together PGR students who are working remotely in all sorts of different environments. This video discusses the online Thesis Bootcamp that we held in March 2021 by focusing on the key questions we needed to consider for the event:

- How could we recreate the feeling of writing together in the same room?
- How could we avoid screen fatigue?
- How could we provide active breaks without access to campus facilities?
- And after the event...what did we learn?

Aims:

- To open up a useful discussion about approaches to supporting researchers in the online environment
- For viewers to identify good practice and consider how this could be adapted for their own researcher development activities
- To identify the challenges of this type of event and open up a discussion about possible solutions

Institution: University of Bristol

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563093>

Tags: Policy and practice; Impact of Covid; Supporting doctoral researchers and supervisors; Skills and personal development; Wellbeing; Working with doctoral researchers; On demand

The job security of biomedical research leaders impacts the scientific rigour of their papers

Abstract:

Reproducibility in biomedical research has received a great deal of attention in recent years. We hypothesized that principal investigators (PI) with unstable contracts are likely to publish less rigorous science than PIs on stable, open-ended contracts.

Various factors, including poor statistical rigour, have been proposed to contribute to poor reliability and replicability of published data. Underlying many of these factors is the pressure to publish, in which researchers feel they need to publish findings of research before they are ready, in order to promote or sustain their research career. There are multiple sources of this pressure but perhaps the most fundamental is a lack of job security due to being employed on multiple fixed-term contracts. The decision to submit a study for publication normally lies with the lead author, typically the PI of the lab performing the majority of experiments. To examine whether unstable contracts lead to PIs publishing less rigorous science, we sampled papers in the field of stem cell biology and compared scientific rigour in four domains (study design, documentation, and appropriateness and interpretation of statistical analysis) with publically-available biographical information to estimate job security.

From 294 records identified through a database search, we identified 43 papers for which the biographical information allowed us to correlate job title to host nation-specific career paths to estimate whether the lead PI (last author) was likely to be employed on an open-ended (stable, n = 22) or fixed-term (unstable, n = 21) contract. We found that papers whose lead PIs had unstable contracts displayed significantly lower rigour in 3 of the 4 domains: documentation, and appropriateness and interpretation of statistical analysis. This research suggests that the increase in the use of fixed-term contracts for PIs in some countries, including the UK, is likely to have a negative effect on reproducibility.

Institution: University of Edinburgh

Link: <http://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563094>

Tags: Policy and practice; Policy and strategy; Research culture; Working with supervisors; Policy makers and strategic leaders; On demand

A guide for researcher developers to organise, plan and deliver research consultancy projects between industry and early career researchers

Abstract:

Engaging with industry is one of the most trending topics in the researcher development space. This has been further encouraged by initiatives such as the ESRC Accelerating Business Collaborations fund which was created with the sole purpose of boosting interactions between Early Career Researchers and industry. There is a myriad of activities that can promote researcher engagement with industry, consultancy projects being one of them.

Code-Switch Consultants, a University of Manchester staff start-up, has designed a six-month Research Consultancy Programme as a training placement for PhD and postdoctoral researchers in which researchers engage with businesses via MBA-style consultancy projects. Our Research Consultancy Programme provides researchers with in-demand industry skills through learning by doing. In the programme, they are immersed in a real project, work in multi-disciplinary teams towards a common goal, and work as consultants with business clients to produce the project deliverables, including a Project Initiation Document, research reports, business reports and evaluation reports.

Since launching in March 2020, Code-Switch has successfully delivered two presentations of the Research Consultancy Programme involving 52 SHAPE and STEM PhD and postdoctoral researchers from academic institutions across the UK and 12 business projects. In this poster, we will use our experience and the lessons we have learned to guide researcher developers in the planning and delivery of impactful consultancy projects between Early Career Researchers and businesses. We will share our insights into engaging with businesses, training and coaching, selecting the right software and tools and keeping the teams engaged.

Institution: Code-Switch Consultants

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563083>

Tags: Researcher careers; Skills and personal development; Supporting research staff, managers and leaders; Exhibition; Working with doctoral researchers; Working with research staff; On demand; Exhibition

Game-based researcher training: practical, evidence-based approaches

Abstract:

The global pandemic has stretched our ability to engage with learners, both remote and face-to-face. Research has demonstrated that game-based learning (GBL) is one of the most engaging and effective ways to teach and learn. But how can game-based learning be practically implemented in researcher training? How might such training align with the Vitae RDF? What game-based learning techniques are available to us in varying teaching environments?

We propose to host an interactive online mini-game as part of #VitaeCon2021. In this game, 'players' (#VitaeCon2021 participants) will be trained on one core competency from the Vitae RDF. Afterwards, participants will be shown a dissection of the game and its evidence-based approaches to learning and teaching. Participants will then be given suggestions on how to develop similar GBL techniques to use in their own researcher training.

These teaching approaches will align with the Vitae RDF (especially domains A, C, and D) and are based on our training experiences at the Edanz Learning Lab here in Japan, China, and elsewhere across SE Asia.

Institution: Edanz Learning Lab; Kaetsu University (Tokyo)

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563084>

Tags: Equality, diversity and inclusion; Skills and personal development; Researcher development framework (RDF); Exhibition; Working with doctoral researchers; Working with research staff; On demand

Researcher Development for Practice Researchers

Abstract:

Practice researchers face distinct challenges in academia relating to a lack of understanding about what constitutes practice research and the different forms it can take; the incompatibility and additional resource required to present multi-format outputs in national research assessment frameworks such as the REF; the preservation and searchability of practice research and consequently, the visibility of practice research as part of the wider research landscape. These issues can be amplified in multidisciplinary higher education institutions where it may be harder to provide tailored systems of support.

This poster presentation aims to raise awareness of the career development needs for practice researchers who may have different training and support needs to mainstream academic communities. Drawing on the recommendations of a recent report that focuses on ways of increasing the visibility and accessibility of practice research in the UK (Sahin & Bulley, May 2021), the poster explores the kinds of centralised researcher development structures, frameworks and mechanisms that might usefully complement departmental training opportunities and mentoring programmes. It also considers the role that professional support services might play in establishing or modifying existing researcher training programmes to appropriately scaffold researcher development for practice researchers at all career stages. This is an early-stage research project and any feedback, suggestions or comments are readily welcomed.

Institution: Goldsmiths University of London

Link: <http://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563085>

Tags: Policy and practice; Equality, diversity and inclusion; Skills and personal development; Research culture; Working with doctoral researchers; Working with research staff; On demand

Prosper-ous Postdoc Career Development: Early Evidence on the Effectiveness of Engaging with Prosper's Web Portal

Abstract:

Prosper is a project seeking to develop an innovative career development model, preparing postdocs to thrive in multiple career pathways, with a particular focus on options beyond academia. This Research England-funded project started in October 2019 and is due to finish in March 2023, led by the University of Liverpool and working alongside partners at the University of Manchester and Lancaster University. One of the project's main deliverables is the creation of a web portal of career development resources. The Prosper portal hosts a suite of self-reflective tools to help postdocs identify their values, interests and skills, case studies with former-postdocs now working in careers beyond academia, tips on how to build professional network, advice on CV writing and insights from employers working in a range of industries. This is currently freely accessible to all staff members at the University of Liverpool, before a further roll-out to the partner institutions this summer and a national, sector-wide roll-out after March 2023.

This presentation seeks to showcase initial evidence of the positive influence that engagement with Prosper's web portal seems to have on postdocs' career development. Data used for this presentation are drawn from the pilot launch of Prosper portal to a pool of self-selected postdocs. An entry and exit survey was used to track any change brought to postdoc pilot participants as a result of their engagement with the portal resources. This presentation highlights the main findings arisen from the entry-exit survey comparisons, which, among others, include an increase in participants' confidence in a variety of career development skills, as well as an increase in their willingness to consider career options beyond academia. Consequently, this presentation aims to showcase the potential of the Prosper web portal to act as a beneficial, asynchronous, self-paced career development resource for research staff.

Institution: University of Liverpool

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563097>

Tags: Policy and practice; Researcher careers; Skills and personal development; Supporting research staff, managers and leaders; Working with research staff; On demand

The Energy 100 Challenge: A case study of a virtual, real-life problem-solving challenge for doctoral researcher' skills development

Abstract:

The Energy 100 Challenge was a problem-solving challenge run by the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) to help doctoral researchers develop soft skills whilst tackling a real-life Energy related problem. The problem, 'What are the technological, social and policy barriers that are stopping the Midlands becoming a low-carbon industrial cluster by 2030', was based on the UK Industrial Strategy's mission to 'Establish the world's first net-zero carbon industrial cluster by 2040 and at least 1 low-carbon cluster by 2030'. The key learning objectives were that participants would learn transferable skills such as creative problem solving and collaborative multidisciplinary working in a virtual environment whilst tackling a real-life problem that is linked to their broad research area of interest. The Energy 100 Challenge reached out widely during the initial on-line phase to engage a broad group of people (66 participants) who proposed 103 potential technological, social and/or policy barriers. These potential barriers to the Midlands becoming a low-carbon industrial cluster by 2030 were then sorted into nine distinct clusters, from which five were chosen to investigate in more detail during a six-week virtual workshop and tutorial series undertaken by a smaller subset of participants (22).

This talk will cover the key elements of the of the challenge, present a brief 'how to guide', highlight the outcomes and learning for the participants and provide a blueprint for how it may be adapted to create a model that is transferable to other disciplines.

Intended outcome:

Aims:

- Participants will be able understand how to design and deliver their own real-life based problem-solving challenge.

Institution: Loughborough University

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563087>

Tags: Supporting doctoral researchers and supervisors; Skills and personal development; Working with doctoral researchers; On demand

A Brief Introduction to the Centre for Postdoctoral Development in Infrastructure, Cities and Energy (C-DICE)

Abstract:

This presentation will provide a brief overview to the Centre for Postdoctoral Development in Infrastructure, Cities and Energy (C-DICE) which is a new, innovative project with a vision for transforming the postdoctoral development landscape. Funded by Research England the £4M, 4-year programme is creating novel opportunities to enhance postdoctoral skills, both in deep technical capabilities and providing opportunities for broader employability, networking, industry engagement and personal development. Drawing on a network of 18+ HEIs, plus many other partners and stakeholders, including Vitae, and bringing together two consortia which have received £400M in UKRI investment in facilities (UKCRIC and ERA), the project has the ambition to simultaneously drive forward research and innovation towards net zero carbon in the infrastructure, cities and energy domain whilst developing the talent and capabilities of postdoctoral researchers, who are the leaders of the future who will be fundamental to achieving net zero carbon. A key outcome of the project is a roadmap for postdoctoral development, co-created with partners and researchers, which will inform policy developments both for UK research funders and beyond.

Aims:

- This recorded presentation will outline the programme, partners, opportunities and ambition for the project.

Institution: Loughborough University

Link: <http://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563088>

Tags: Policy and practice; Skills and personal development; Supporting research staff, managers and leaders; Working with research staff; Workshop; On demand

Adaptability to the rescue: Managing career transitions in turbulent times

Abstract:

According to Mark Savickas' (Savickas 2005, 2012) Career Construction theory suggest ways to navigate periods of transition by developing Adapt-ability - a way of "connecting [these] experiences through the present situation to the preferred future" (Savickas 2013 :159). Research conducted as part of my 25,000 word Masters dissertation in Careers Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education investigated whether the Career Adapt-ability Inventory (UK) would generate discussion and encourage reflection when used in career interactions with PGR. In addition, how the findings could inform the delivery of careers support and enhance professional practice. Data was collected using Reflective Fieldwork Sheets on CAAI-UK completed during 1:1 career appointments and from questions answered during focus groups. Using the CAAI-UK, the concept of Adapt-ability is explored via four dimensions - Concern about the future, ability to take Control and make decisions, Curiosity to explore options and Confidence to pursue aspirations.

The findings suggest there are benefits of using the CAAI-UK in career interactions, for both clients and practitioners:

- A useful resource to generate discussion, easily encouraging a questioning (coaching) style, and deep reflection about current career situation
- Information gathered gives meaning to career development and how this meaning can be used to enhance Adapt-ability across all the four dimensions
- A visual record of answers enables clients to identify actions, of their own volition, that are individual to their current career situation and could increase commitment to action
- For practitioners keen to develop their practice – a comprehensive resource to work at an individual level, making the best use of precious interaction time
- Versatility to use with individuals or small groups.

Institution: Loughborough University

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/618074>

Tags: Policy and practice; Supporting doctoral researchers and supervisors; Supporting research staff, managers and leaders; Working with doctoral researchers; Working with research staff; On demand

A strategic vision for talent development programmes for post-docs

Abstract:

A productive Talent Development Programme arises from a specific strategy for researchers' careers aimed at: analysing needs, allowing turnover and monitoring the effects of this action.

During the difficult path to scientific independence, a professional kit of competencies and high-value support is key for a successful academic career.

Politecnico di Milano's long-term strategy starts from a researcher-centric analysis: a process affecting the career, interacting with internal processes and grant office activities. This path arises from the competencies developed by the grant office and deploys a set of services supporting ESR in taking impacting steps at the beginning of their career.

Aims of the content:

- Discuss the Talent Development Programme at POLIMI: a long term strategy
 - The process
 - The role of soft skills in strengthening the ESR profile
 - The results

Institution: Politecnico di Milano

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/612509>

Tags: Policy and practice; Policy and strategy; Skills and personal development; Supporting research staff, managers and leaders; Working with research staff; Policy makers and strategic leaders; On demand

Application of a Student-led Individually Created Course (SLICC) and the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to capture the experiential learning of interdisciplinary PhD students on an industry project

Abstract:

OPTIMA is the EPSRC and MRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Optical Medical Imaging, which aims to train interdisciplinary researchers in optical technologies to address key clinical questions. OPTIMA PhD students undertake 180 credits at SCQF11 (RQF/EQF 8) in healthcare innovation and entrepreneurship, and we co-developed a Student-led Individually Created Course (SLICC) as a 20 credit course delivered virtually during the lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020.

The SLICC is a reflective learning and assessment framework providing academic credit for experiential learning. Students define their own learning experience and outcomes, with a clear structure supported from the outset by their SLICC tutor. The SLICC framework helped students own and co-create their learning experience with our industrial partner, Canon Medical, which led to a deeper student engagement drawing on their own research expertise. Eight students worked in pairs to co-develop their projects with Canon Medical. The four projects focused on clinical pathways including; cancers, Parkinson's disease, and Multiple Sclerosis. Then, with the students, we built in interim evaluation and final evaluation of the course, with informal feedback sought from the industry partner after the interim and final reviews.

To assess the impact of the course on their professional development, we chose to use the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) developed by Vitae (2010) as part of the e-portfolio. The students' learning experiences were transformative in nature, individually and collectively. The flexibility and agility of the SLICC mechanism, combined with the RDF, empowered the students to plan their skills development, and recognise their own experiential learning with respect to developing as a researcher.

Aims:

Institution: University of Strathclyde

Link: <https://connectionsweek2021.vitae.ac.uk/agenda/session/563098>

Tags: Policy and practice; Supporting doctoral researchers and supervisors; Researcher careers; Skills and personal development; Researcher development framework (RDF); Working with doctoral researchers; On demand