

Preparing for an Academic Career

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Today

- What is an academic career really like?
 - What are the qualities a successful academic needs?
 - What do I need to do to give myself the best chance of success?
 - What do I need to know to plan my career?
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“In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”


Dwight D. Eisenhower

1890 – 1969

Thirty-fourth President of the USA



Do you know enough about what an academic career is really like?

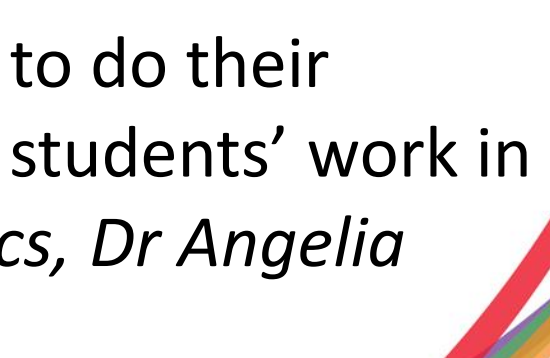
- Talk to academics you know
 - Read profiles and listen to career stories e.g. www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk/about/stories
 - Explore Vitae resources: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1354/Research.html>
 - Read job adverts e.g. www.jobs.ac.uk
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What are the positive and negative things about an academic career?



“I greatly enjoy my job. I especially like the variety and variability – there is no typical week and there is a lot of travel involved.” *Lecturer Dr Simon Brocklehurst, Earth Sciences*

“Every colleague that I have who has children, waits until the children go to bed and then resumes work. Most colleagues I know either choose to do their emails, or read PhD or undergraduate students’ work in the evenings.” *Senior Lecturer in Politics, Dr Angelia Wilson*

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An Academic Life

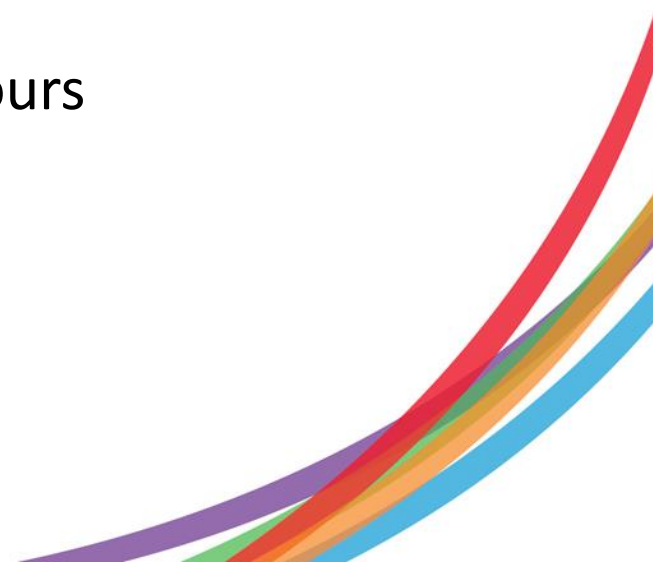
From www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk

PROS

- Variety
- Travel
- Research
- Flexibility
- Intellectual freedom
- Teaching
- Challenge

CONS

- Competition for jobs
- Temporary contracts
- Funding pressures
- Rejection
- Lonely
- Long hours



Essential Qualities of a Successful Academic

- Networking
- Time management
- Resilience
- Presentation skills
- Leadership and management




Challenges in transition to job – from former PhD students

Academic

1. New skills/experience/
knowledge required
2. Lack of teaching & course
design experience
3. Limited no. of
jobs/competition
4. Faster pace / workload
5. Independent working
6. Getting funding

Outside academia

1. Adapting to new working
environment
 2. Lack of relevant skills/sector
knowledge/ experience
 3. PhD too specialised /
overqualified
 4. Competition for jobs
 5. Employer ignorance of PhDs
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Academic and Professional Development Programme

- 22 Oct Writing for the Media
- 30 Oct Using research skills outside academia
- x Nov Writing a Thesis

www.lse.ac.uk/study/PhDAcademy/events-and-courses.aspx

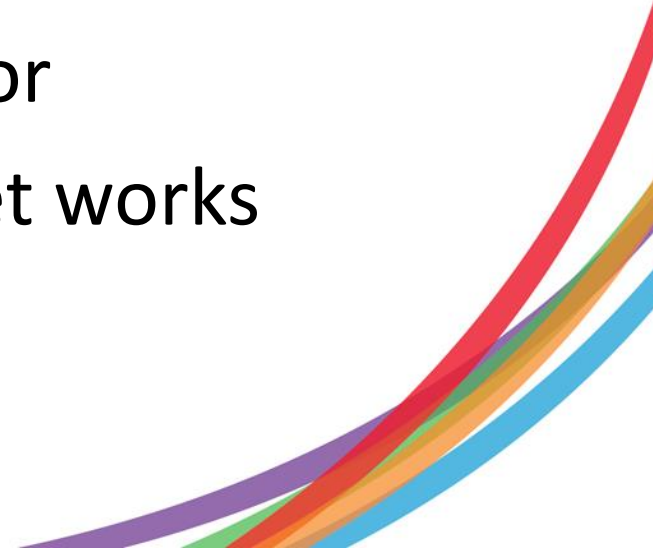


“Academic careers are then
sorely beset by chance.”


Max Weber
German Sociologist
1864-1920



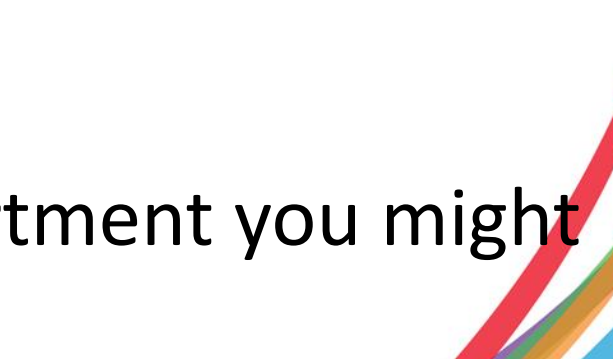
Key Principles for Minimising the Role of Chance

1. Produce and disseminate excellent research (easier said than done)
 2. Teaching experience (?)
 3. Understand your discipline
 4. Understand the academic sector
 5. Understand how the job market works
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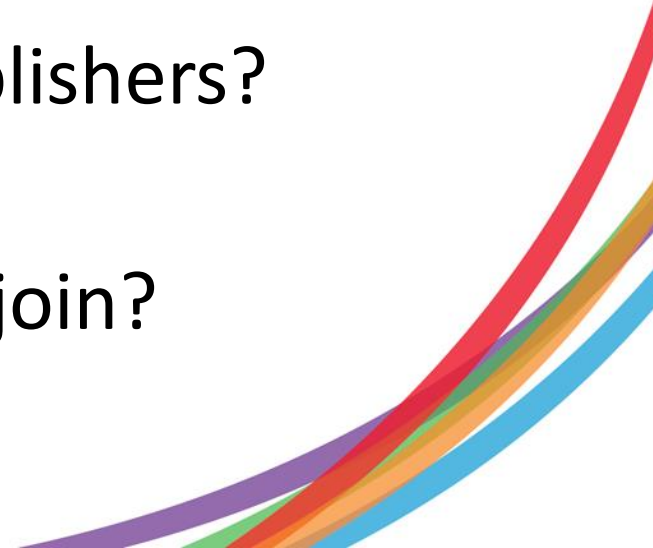
1. Research – making an impact!

- Understand how the quality of research is measured in your discipline
 - Publish – start as early as possible
 - Aim for quality over quantity and choose the right form of publication (journals, books, conferences...)
 - Good references are vital
 - Think about collaborations, opportunities for interdisciplinary work
- 


2. Teaching – get the most out of it

- Don't allow teaching to 'take over', demonstrate time-management
 - There are different types of teaching (one to one, groups, lecturing, course development, marking, assessment, ugrad, pgrad)
 - PGCertHE
 - Think about what sorts of department you might ultimately work in
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3. Understand your discipline

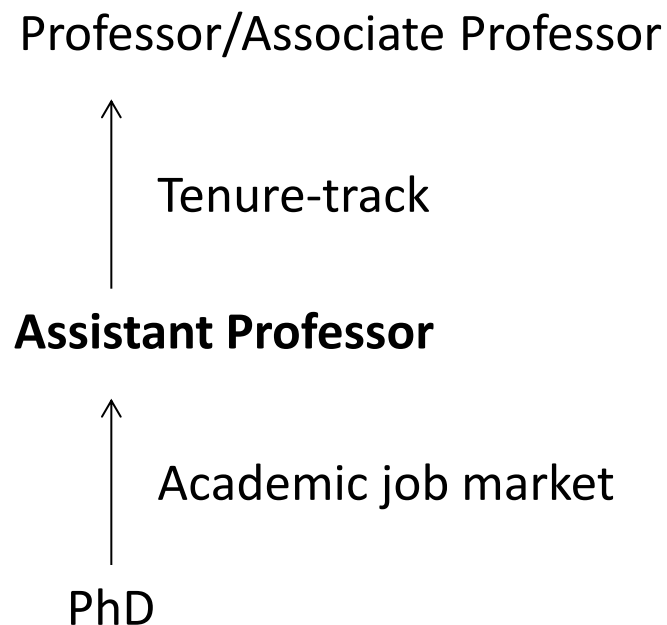
- What discipline do you fit within?
 - Who else works in this discipline?
 - What are people working on and where does your research fit in?
 - How is research funded?
 - What are the top journals? Publishers? Conferences?
 - What networks exist? Can you join?
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4. Understand the academic sector

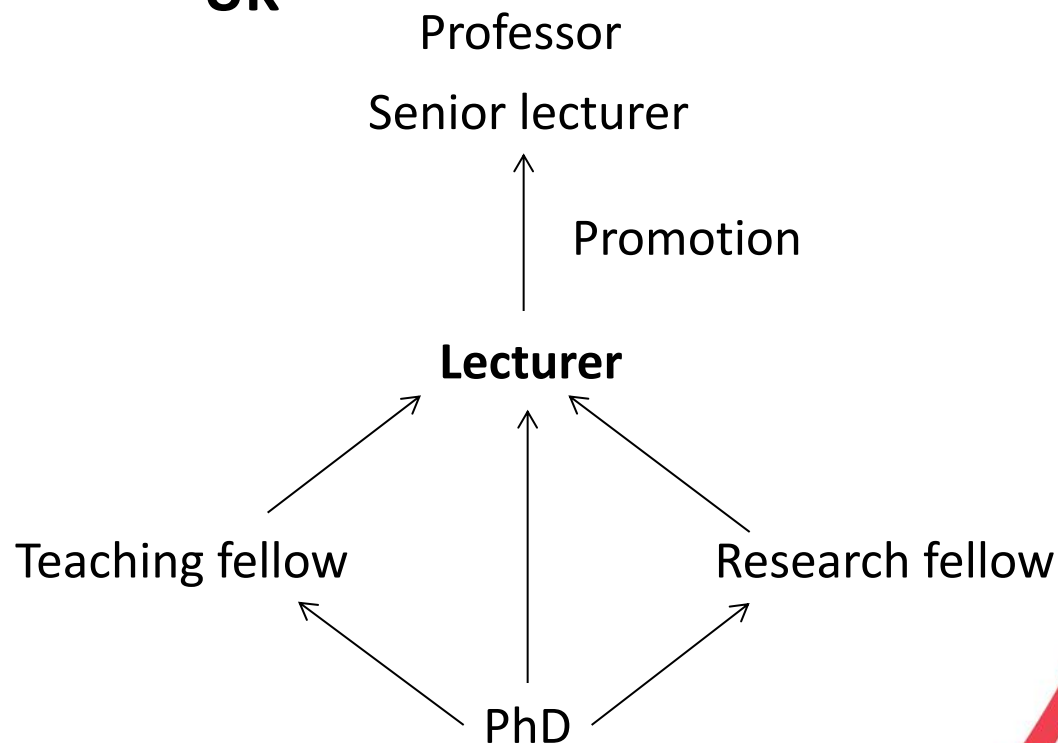
- Each country has its own system
 - Understand the structure of the career paths
 - How do universities differ? e.g. Ivy League, Russell Group
 - How are universities funded?
 - How are universities measured? Eg REF
 - Keep up to date with news Eg THES)
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Academic Career Paths

US



UK



4. Understand the academic sector

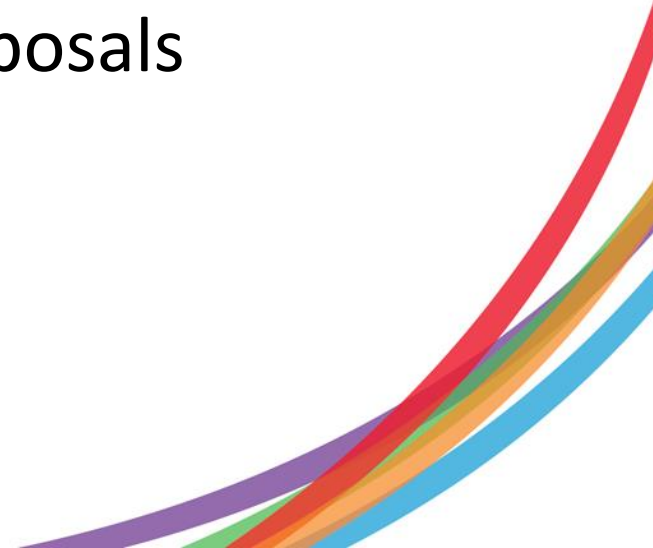
Web information




Understanding the UK Academic Job Market

PhD Careers Seminar

5. Understand how the job market works

- Understand the timescales/job market cycle.
 - Where are positions advertised?
 - When are positions advertised?
 - How do you present yourself in a CV, cover letter?
 - Writing research statements/proposals
 - Writing teaching statements
 - Interviews
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Getting your own funding – one example

- British Academy postdoctoral fellowships
 - Tough competition for these!
 - Applications around Autumn
 - Award starts following autumn
 - Don't have to have submitted thesis to apply
 - Must have finished PhD within last three years
 - Anyone eligible if they have a PhD from UK university
 - Need to have arrangements in place with host institution
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Looking for vacancies

Academic360.com is a meta-collection of internet resources for academic job hunters in the US, Canada, UK and Australia.

UK and some international:

- www.jobs.ac.uk

US:

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- HigherEdJobs.com
- <http://www.academiccareers.com/>

Europe:

- EURAXESS job site: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/index>
- www.academicjobseu.com

Australia:

- www.seek.com.au



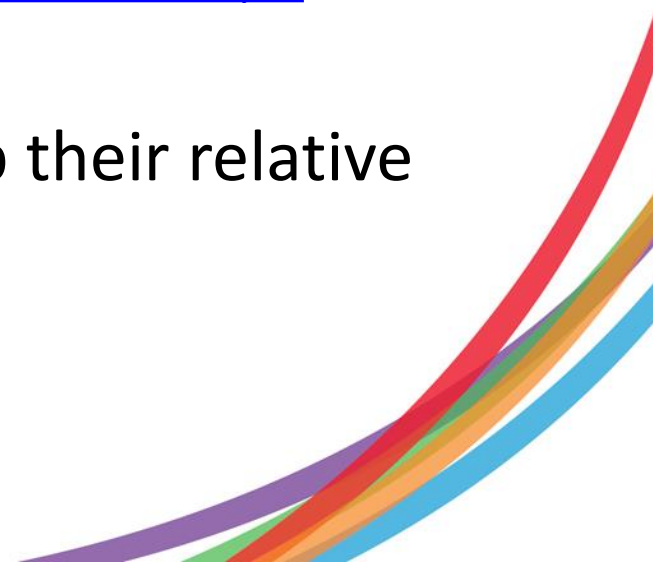
But how will you fit it all in?

- Timely completion of a high quality thesis is your priority
- Review your working practices, organise your time


<http://vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/14885/Helping-researchers-with-time-management.html>

<http://vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/Vitae-Balanced-Researcher-June-2008.pdf>

- Evaluate different choices, weigh up their relative value to you



PhD Careers Appointments

- Book at a time that suits you through Career Hub
 - Usually Wednesday and Friday afternoons, 2pm to 5pm, 30 minutes, PhD Academy
 - Term-time and holidays
 - Academic or non-academic career discussions
 - Career review
 - CV feedback, cover letters, practice interviews
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**Events for PhD students and research staff
Michaelmas Term 2015**

Planning an academic career 14 October, 1-2pm

Using your research skills outside academia 30 October, 9-11am

Understanding the UK academic job market 30 October, 1-2pm

Supporting yourself financially through a PhD 11 November, 1-2pm

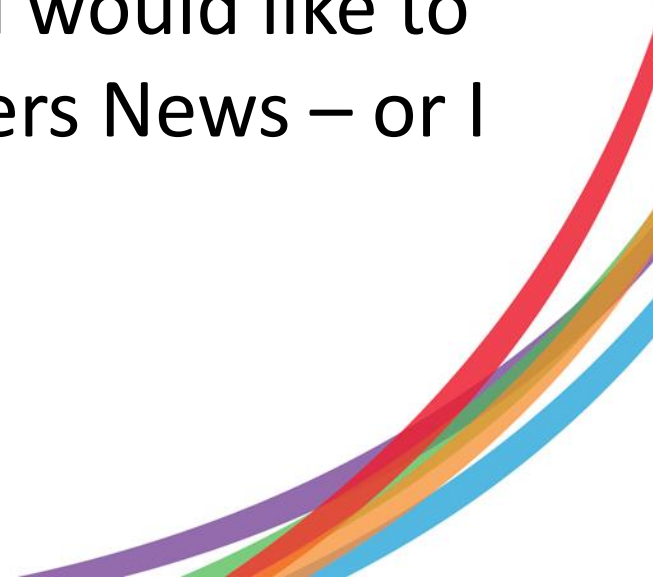
CVs and cover letters for jobs outside academia 27 November, 1-2pm

Book on [Career Hub](#)

30 minute one-to-one PhD careers appointments

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Career Hub

- <http://careers.lse.ac.uk>
 - Book appointments, view job opportunities, see careers events listed
 - Update your own preferences
 - **VERY IMPORTANT:** tick that you would like to receive job alerts and LSE Careers News – or I can't contact you!
- 

Further Support

- Book one-to-one appointments and find out about PhD careers seminars through Career Hub:
<http://careers.lse.ac.uk/>
- PhD section on Careers website
<http://tinyurl.com/LSECareersPhD>
- Keep up to date with PhD Careers Blog
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/careers/>

