

# UCD CAREERS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS



# WELCOME FROM UCD RESEARCH CAREERS

The following handbook has been compiled by the Research Careers team and aims to supplement the UCD Postdoc-specific Orientation event. Like the Orientation event, it begins with a welcome from our VP for Research, Innovation and Impact, Professor Orla Feely, whose email you will already have received. This note sign-posts you to the wide range of career and professional development services in place for you to avail of during your time in UCD.

There is some information about the context for researcher development in UCD and the funding landscape in Ireland for early career researchers and then multiple contributions from senior academics and Postdocs who have moved into lecturing positions across the University, covering topics like the importance of high-quality mentoring for an early stage researcher, writing research plans, accessing mentored teaching and preparing for academic interviews. Additionally there is a piece on commercialising your research and the people to contact about this. And as it is becoming more important for both academic and cross-sector work after your Postdoc, we also have contributions across disciplines about outreach, impact and community engagement.

There is a part to this handbook - as with the Orientation event - where you are invited to step back from your research project and using the worksheets provided, start considering your career strategy and priorities so you can identify the ample transferable skills you have already got and areas to build on/develop for the future. When you come to meet us for a one-to-one career chat, it's always helpful when you've had a chance to reflect on your own development plan, so that you can better understand what activities to invest your time and energy in for the next few years in order to achieve your goals.

The final part of the handbook, again as with the Orientation event, consists of contributions from a subset of Postdocs who have used the services provided in UCD to take control of their career and move into a variety of positions in academia, funding agencies and transferable skills roles across industries and sectors.

We look forward to your ongoing feedback - on the handbook as on the many events we run throughout the year - and hope you feel you are at an advantage in your professional life as a direct result of accessing them.

## THE RESEARCH CAREERS TEAM

The Research Careers Team is made up of a small group of people working between UCD Career Development Centre and UCD HR People Development & Organisation Effectiveness and working closely with the team in UCD Research & Innovation. For more information, take a look at our website: [www.ucd.ie/researchcareers](http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers)

### YOUR KEY CONTACTS ARE:



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**Twitter** @ucdrscareers



**LinkedIn** UCD Research Careers (Postdocs)

# UCD CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS



Welcome to your new research role in UCD. This message provides you with important information about your career development. Please read it carefully and keep it as a resource.

You are advised to book your place on the postdoc-specific orientation as soon as possible. It is a day-long event, supported by PIs and other professional staff around the University that focuses specifically on how Postdocs can make the most of their experience in UCD to develop their careers. All Postdocs should attend this event.

To help you take charge of your career from the beginning of your contract, you can immediately access your personal Postdoc Career Development Profile through InfoHub. This aims to help you and your PI keep track of your contract start and end date, your professional training, your RMS profile and your career development meetings. The system is set up to facilitate a focused conversation about your career with your PI at least three times over the course of your contract.

Within the first three months of your contract, you should also aim to book a one-to-one meeting with the Research Careers service so that you can get a start on your career strategy to support you in preparing for both academic and non-academic job applications and interviews and learn more about industry opportunities for Postdocs.

As a Postdoc in UCD you are entitled to at least three days development per year to support your current role and your future career development. Keep a check on the live events calendar to identify what funding, training and employability events may be of relevance. At the end of your contract, there is a facility for you to download a certificate from the University that outlines the professional development activities you have taken part in. Keep in mind, also, that development includes your on-the-job training, your attendance at conferences and other professional activities you may be involved in.

Once you have a UCD email address, it is free of charge for you to access researchprofessional - a funding database that you can set discipline and stage-specific alerts on. I recommend you set up your own account and put alerts in place as soon as possible. In three months time you will receive a reminder to update your RMS profile, attend the orientation and book your career development meetings if you haven't already done so. Along with running information sessions about specific funding calls, the Research Office also run short training sessions on how best to set yourself up on both RMS and Research Professional. You can book these through the online calendar as well.

Our research community has worked together to devise these supports and services for you. I hope that you will take advantage of them for your personal and career development and wish you every success.

**Professor Orla Feely**

Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact





# WHO OVERSEES POSTDOCTORAL DEVELOPMENT IN UCD

**Professor Catherine Godson,**  
UCD Conway Institute  
Chair, Researcher Careers Sub-committee



The Researcher Careers sub-committee of the University Research Impact and Innovation group (RIIG) oversees university strategy and policies to support researcher careers. We draw on the expertise of senior faculty and the Postdoc community along with the support of UCD HR, UCD Careers and UCD Research & Innovation to integrate and maximise development opportunities for researchers. As chair of this committee, I am delighted that the work we do is considered so highly, particularly by our community of Post-doctoral fellows and their Principal Investigators. The contributions from academic and professional staff to our quarterly Post-doctoral-specific Orientation event and now to this PostDoc Handbook is, to me, an excellent demonstration of how committed UCD is to the professional and career development of our Early Career Researchers. We hope that you will continue to leverage these resources, in collaboration with your mentors, to develop an effective career development strategy and we look forward to receiving your ongoing feedback.

## Current members of the Researcher Careers Sub-committee

- Professor Catherine Godson, UCD Conway Institute (Chair)
- Professor Cormac Taylor, UCD School of Medicine
- Professor Mark Keane, UCD Computer Science
- Associate Professor Catherine Cox, UCD School of History
- Associate Professor Barbara Dooley, UCD School of Psychology/ Dean of Graduate Studies
- Dr Eoin O'Cearbhaill, UCD School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering
- President/ Chair, UCD Research Staff Association
- Dr David Foster, Director, UCD Career Development Centre
- Claire O'Malley, Director, UCD HR People Development & Organisation Effectiveness
- Triona McCormack, Director of Research, UCD Research & Innovation

*Catherine Godson*



# CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS IN UCD



Over the last number of years, UCD has developed a researcher career structure for researchers, with more open and transparent recruitment and progression. In 2012, UCD was awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" designation by the European Commission under the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) process.

UCD was the first organisation in Ireland to receive the "HR Excellence in Research" designation, identifying UCD as a provider of a high standard working environment for researchers. In particular, it recognises UCD's equitable recruitment and appraisal procedures and its commitment to implement the principles of The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (the Charter and Code). In attaining this recognition, UCD also contributes to the ability of the national research environment and the European Research Area (ERA) to attract researchers. The Charter and Code aims to provide equal rights and obligations for researchers

in Europe through the implementation of principles governing recruitment, ethical and professional aspects of work, working conditions, and career development for researchers.

The UCD Research Careers team based between the UCD Career Development Centre and the HR People Development & Organisation Effectiveness team work closely with UCD Research & Innovation to deliver a wide range of services and supports for Early Career Researchers, specifically Postdocs. To learn more about the funding landscape for Postdoc researchers, what calls are open to you and how best to put a competitive application together, beyond having a structured conversation with your Principal Investigator (PI), take advantage of the UCD Research & Innovation website to better understand the context of the funding landscape in your field.



## PROFESSOR COLIN SCOTT

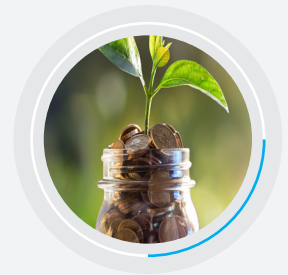
### VICE PRESIDENT FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AND PRINCIPAL, UCD COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW

As a leading global university UCD is committed to offering all members of the community an environment which promotes equality, celebrates diversity and fosters inclusion. This commitment is reflected in the University Strategy 2015-20. A central focal point for promotion of equality in research has been the adoption of a Gender Equality Action Plan for which UCD received Athena Swan Bronze Award recognition in March 2017. This plan commits the University to better understand the data around progression of women in research and academic careers and to devise and implement measures which are effective in tackling barriers to progression for women which have been seen in UCD and in many universities. Other strands of policy work focus on gender identity, provision for those seeking refuge or asylum in Ireland, and on ensuring processes and facilities which provide equal access and support for those with disabilities. To celebrate diversity and foster inclusion

the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group of the University Management Team works with groups across the campus to develop inclusive events and activities, including a range of seminars and speaker events, the marking of key equality days and events, and the sponsorship of the very successful UCD Community Choir (which rehearses weekly, 1pm, Tuesdays on the fourth floor of the O'Brien Science Centre). Our overall ethos is that equality and diversity are the business of everyone on the campus and I hope that all in our research community can contribute to and thrive within this inclusive environment.



# THE IRISH FUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS



There are a variety of Research Funding Agencies in Ireland, but the two largest are Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC). SFI is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research. SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The Irish Research Council (IRC) manages a suite of inter-linked research schemes, funding scholars at various career stages including one to two year postdoctoral research fellowships. In recent years, Science Foundation Ireland and the Health Research Board have partnered with UK-based agencies to extend opportunities for postdoctoral fellows in a variety of Health and STEM fields. In particular, the HRB-Wellcome Trust and SFI-Royal Society partnerships have opened schemes which allow Irish-based postdoctoral researchers to compete for funding with their UK-based counterparts for prestigious funding.

There are a number of other agencies, such as Enterprise Ireland, Health Research Board, Environmental Protection

Agency, Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, that also provide research funding that is available to Postdoctoral Fellows in Ireland.

The best way to search for a funding opportunity that is relevant to your area of research, is to use Research Professional. Research Professional is an online platform providing access to an extensive database of open research funding opportunities, as well as a source of research policy and practice news. This is accessible on the UCD campus, where you can create a user account allowing you to log in to the service from anywhere in the world and create personalised email alerts to keep you informed about new developments in your areas of interest. When you've identified a call you want to apply to, you can contact [proposalsupport@ucd.ie](mailto:proposalsupport@ucd.ie) directly to find out more about the specific supports (i.e. information workshops or a read-and-review service) open to you.



**PROFESSOR CECILY KELLEHER,**  
COLLEGE PRINCIPAL, HEALTH & AGRICULTURAL  
SCIENCES AND CHAIR, TOP MED 10 MARIE  
SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS COFUND  
PROGRAMME

We are very fortunate here in UCD to have a wealth of institutional research supports in place. These supports and resources have been developed to give you the research and transferrable skills you'll need for your future career, whether that's in academia, industry or beyond. Indeed, UCD is unique in Ireland and competitive internationally in this regard – our framework for research staff is the basis for our success in securing funding for a number of Marie Skłodowska Curie training and career development postdoctoral fellowship programmes based here in UCD. Both in my roles leading a research team and as the Principal of College of Health and

Agricultural Sciences I see the benefits that this breadth of training, workshops and one-to-one guidance gives to early career researchers and I would encourage you to make the most of these opportunities during your time here in UCD.



# CONSIDERING MY JOB AND MY ACADEMIC CAREER

- Mentoring
- Research
- Teaching
- Academic Interviewing
- Commercialising your research
- Impact & Outreach
- Public Engagement







# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A GOOD MENTOR

**Prof Cormac Taylor,**

UCD School of Medicine and recipient of the Nature Award for Mentoring in Science 2014 outlines how important being a mentor has been to his career

As a principal investigator, I truly believe that the opportunity to mentor a postdoc is both a privilege and, if done well, a wonderful opportunity to generate a personal legacy that continues to give long after one's own research career has come to an end. In supporting the career development of my trainees, I believe it is of vital importance to promote their scientific independence and encourage them to develop their own research niches. This frequently involves providing the opportunity for those in the lab to take the ideas developed during their training and make it their own by, for example, providing the opportunity for them to be senior/last authors on papers and reviews. I believe the provision of opportunity for students and fellows to spend time in international collaborators labs is key to giving them a broader international view of how science is done.

I strongly believe that my primary legacy as a scientist will stem from the progress of people I have trained and the success that they have in their future careers. Since establishing an independent research lab in 2001, I have mentored seventeen PhD students and nine postdoctoral fellows. People who have trained in my lab have hailed from Germany, Spain, India, Italy, Mauritius, Cameroon, the UK, Portugal and Ireland giving the lab an important international flavor. I have intentionally maintained a lab of no more than six to eight carefully selected students and fellows with the specific aim of ensuring that I have sufficient time to give to each individual a high level of mentorship. I maintain an open door policy and feel that as a mentor, it is my duty to ensure that each person under my supervision generates the high level of scientific achievement required to pursue a successful career in international science.

Postdoctoral research fellows in my lab are encouraged and supported in their applications for career development grants (e.g. I am currently mentor to lab members who hold an SFI SIRG award, a HRB career development award and a National University of Ireland postdoctoral fellowship). Senior research fellows in my lab are given the opportunity and encouraged to publish last author papers in order to develop their career possibilities (e.g. three postdocs in the lab have recently published last author papers).

While academic mentorship is my main priority with my trainees, I try to develop close working and personal relationships with the members of my lab. I believe that it is important to develop a strong culture of enjoyment and pride in one's work and we frequently have social events and attend conferences as a group to enhance this.

While it is difficult to teach personality skills, I continually emphasize to my trainees the importance of personality in science. A strong academic can be greatly helped by an ability to interact socially with other scientists. I am lead singer in GI distress, a rock band made up of scientists which can be an important ice-breaker at conferences and meetings ([www.facebook.com/GIdistress](http://www.facebook.com/GIdistress)).





# THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING GOOD MENTORSHIP AS AN EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER

**Dr Eoin Cummins,**

Lecturer/ Assistant Professor in Physiology, School of Medicine and Recipient of SFI Career Development Award suggests a multiple-mentor model



The early stages of a research career are filled with opportunities and challenges, new responsibilities and often increased freedom. The decisions that you make in these early stages are instrumental in shaping your career, often for years to come. For this reason I believe that it is essential that early career researchers receive good mentorship to help them navigate this time of flux and come out the other side more qualified, more supported and more confident.

My advice to an early career researcher starting out would be to seek counsel from two different mentors to help them in their career. The first should be an established senior academic, preferably one who knows the local environment well but also has experience in working in other institutions. This may or may not be the principal investigator in your lab. This person can serve as a sounding board for queries and help you to position yourself as well as possible for the next stage of your career in academia or elsewhere. The second mentor might be someone closer to your own careers stage (maybe 3-4 years ahead) with whom you can share experiences. This way you can identify successful strategies to advance while avoiding pitfalls that could obstruct. Such a mentor might for example have been successful

in publishing in a journal you are targeting or in securing funding from a source you have marked.

Using this dual-mentor approach you can benefit from a wealth of knowledge from experienced researchers who can help you to create networks, develop independent research areas and navigate the local political landscape while at the same time availing of advice from your peers who have just been on such a journey and are happy to share their experiences.

Choose carefully and try to identify a senior mentor who has a track record of mentoring past lab members to faculty positions in academia and leadership roles in business/industry. Good luck!

# WHY DO I NEED A RESEARCH PLAN?

**Professor Walter Kolch,**

Director of Systems Biology Ireland, with some wise words on why it's best to start your research plan as early as possible.



Did somebody tell you that your PhD was the most defining phase in your professional life? You are not done. Your postdoc is when you can put all the things you learned to good use. Whether in academia or industry, your postdoc likely will be about excelling in research and producing papers that will advance the field – and your career. How will you manage?

"We cannot predict the future, but we can invent it." (Dennis Gabor, Nobel Laureate Physics 1971). Invention requires creativity and a plan, in this case a research plan. Having a head full of ideas is like having a collection of butterflies – its beauty only comes out when properly arranged and displayed. Planning is what turns ideas into reality. However, planning research is not only figuring out the logistics. Much creativity is produced during planning.

The best way to organise your ideas is to discuss them with colleagues, friends and mentor. Usually, this will give you new ideas and often improve the ones you had. It also will give you more clarity about which ideas are more important than others, and which ones can be the beacons guiding you through your research. By its very nature, research is bewildering. It is a search, and the most difficult decision is where to search. A plan helps enormously. Make the plan before you start searching and refine it while you re-search.

During your postdoc you only need to organise yourself and your own research. Afterwards, you will need to organise your team and its research. So, do not put research planning off. Start when you start your postdoc. Because, creativity and planning put together generate innovation, and "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." (Steve Jobs, cofounder of Apple).



## WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION

**Associate Professor Catherine Cox,**

School of History & Archives, with practical tips on how to write a grant application – whether it's for the Arts and Humanities or another discipline.

Writing a successful grant application is a skill. Grant applications require time to write and should be clear and easy to read. Crucially, the application should excite the reviewers and convince them that you are the right person! Communication is key: write in an engaging, clear style. The project needs a 'catchy' title, an engaging and comprehensive abstract, as well as a convincing description of the research project. The prose should be accurate, and precise – *don't use jargon!*

Have a well-defined hypothesis and set of research questions that convince the reviewers of the importance and originality of the project. The project description should include explicit details of the projects' objectives, methods, and plans for the research. It should address the career development of principal investigator(s) and project team members.

The track record of the applicant(s), in terms of publication, grant management supervision and mentorship is important. These demonstrate your ability to deliver. Ensure *you* are ready to apply, and include details of your experience and expertise on the application form.

Ensure your collaborators (if you have any) also have the required expertise and track record – a good fit!

Include a strong discussion of the outcomes of the project. These range from peer review publications (articles and monographs), public engagement activities, career development, etc. These should be exciting but also feasible and match the skills and expertise of the research team.

Ask for feedback from experienced colleagues who are willing to read your application.

Give yourself enough **time** for reflection and proof reading/editing. A successful application is always coherent and comprehensive throughout the whole application.

Be familiar with the terms and conditions and applicants' guides as well as other relevant documentation. Make sure you follow funders' instructions meticulously. Include all requested information and complete *all* sections.

Be ambitious, exciting BUT feasible!

As part of the Research Skills & Career Development programme of events both **Walter Kolch** and **Catherine Cox** run workshops for Postdocs on grant-writing and scientific paper writing. Keep a check for them on the live events calendar: <http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers/eventscalendar/>

# POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING AND WHERE TEACHING FITS IN – A SUPERVISOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr Barbara Dooley,  
Dean of Graduate Studies



Where does teaching fit with post-doctoral training? This question can only be answered when a post-doctoral fellow has discussed the career track they wish to pursue. Early on in training each post-doc should discuss their career aspirations with their supervisor. A key question to answer is whether or not to pursue an academic track. Then the supervisor can mentor you in achieving that goal. If the goal is an academic post, next consider how to develop your CV. What are the key components of a CV for applying for an academic post? Research output will be the number one decider whether or not you are called to interview. To then add value to your CV, you should be able to demonstrate teaching experience and administrative tasks associated

with teaching (e.g.) use of Blackboard and Gradebook – skills that are transferable from one institution to another. Discuss with your supervisor what opportunities they may have to support you. Your post-doc research expertise will be directly aligned with your supervisor. This may open opportunities to give a master-class at graduate level or give some lectures as part of an established module. Supervising is another form of teaching. Seek opportunities to shadow or co-supervise minor dissertations. For example project supervision at undergraduate and/or minor dissertations at graduate taught. And finally get a teaching qualification if you can – in UCD there is a Teaching and Learning seminar series specifically for Postdocs!



## TEACHING – A POSTDOC'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr Amanda Fitzgerald,  
Lecturer, UCD School of Psychology

When considering my career development as a post-doctoral researcher, I discussed with my mentor how I would go about gathering teaching experience, particularly, as I was interested in pursuing an academic career. Firstly, a strong piece of advice I received from my mentor was to obtain some professional training in university teaching and learning. On foot of this, I undertook a one-year Professional Certificate in University Teaching and Learning which assisted me with developing a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies. This qualification boosted my confidence to try interactive approaches to engage students in the modules I was co-lecturing on. I also developed my teaching philosophy statement, which facilitated me to convey clearly my teaching values and beliefs. This really stood to me at a later academic interview when I was asked 'What's your philosophy of teaching?'. I sought teaching experience within UCD School of Psychology, however, I

also sought opportunities in other schools and external institutions. One piece of advice I would give to postdoctoral researchers is to make sure you are proactive and seek out opportunities where possible. For example, it's a good idea to let other academics know you are interested in gaining teaching experience in your related field. Another way to gain knowledge of teaching is to ask an expert in teaching if you can shadow/observe their lectures for a few hours. It's also important to see how other opportunities such as supervisory experience of undergraduate projects or mentorship of research assistants can contribute to your teaching portfolio.



# ADVICE TO POSTDOCS PREPARING FOR AN ACADEMIC INTERVIEW

**Professor Joe Carthy,**  
College Principal, Science



First off, focus on the job description which may be narrow or broad; for example, it may be a post to replace an existing academic with very specific requirements. In this situation, you need to show that you can address all/most of the requirements in the job description. Your focus should be on the specific research field or teaching topics that are being sought. Don't worry if you don't have experience of everything in the job description - perfect candidates rarely exist.

However, if the post is a new one requiring the best person from any of a number of areas in a school/department. In this case, you need to show that you excel in your area, are carrying out world class research; have the ability (and ideally some experience) as well as the interest and motivation to teach well. Do not underestimate what is involved in university teaching, some postdocs make the error that it is only a matter of teaching along the same lines as they themselves were taught. If you have not had the benefit of professional teaching development then it's time to starting looking for it as soon as possible.

Next, prepare well:

- (a) Make sure your CV is well laid out and addresses the requirements of the post - get a couple of PIs in your field to check this for you
- (b) Perform similar checks for your covering letter - typos and mis-spellings are a big no-no!
- (c) Do at least one mock interview even if it's only with your peers. However do not be afraid to ask your supervisor or other academics for 30 minutes to help with this.
- (d) Take advantage of the Research Careers team and communications supports in the University to assist you with the above. There are a lot of supports in place for postdocs in UCD.

Practice your presentation many times. If you have 10 minutes, finish in 8 - DO NOT OVERRUN.

Ignore as far as possible what is outside of your control. Do not be concerned with who is on the interview board, "what they are looking for/ what they may think of you" - focus on the post. Do not be concerned with who else may or may not be applying

At the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any questions or anything to add. Only ask a question if you have a genuine one - do not make up one "that sounds good". You may have want to conclude with a sentence expressing your interest/passion for the position, if you feel that this did not come through during the interview.

Finally, you may or may not get the post. If you are unsuccessful, don't beat yourself up, especially if you have prepared well. Most often, it comes down to one candidate on the day who was more impressive (in the board's view) than you were. This is completely outside of your control. They may have more relevant experience or simply more experience or they simply "fit" the requirements a little better than you do. If possible, seek some feedback from the chair on your performance and in particular are there things you could improve on in future interviews.



# COMMERCIALISING YOUR RESEARCH

## NovaUCD,

the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre, is the hub of knowledge transfer activities at University College Dublin.

**NovaUCD** works to support the commercialisation of intellectual property developed as an output of the research activity taking place in UCD. NovaUCD provides a range of courses for researchers, at all stages, from spotting good ideas, to commercialisation via licensing or start-up companies.

### Key programmes include:

- UCD Sprint - a 1 day programme tailored to a Research Centre.
- UCD Commercialisation Bootcamp <http://www.ucd.ie/innovation/researchers/commercialisationbootcamp/>
- UCD VentureLaunch Accelerator. <http://www.ucd.ie/innovation/researchers/venturelaunchaccelerator/>

## Technology Transfer

You've done all the hard work in applying for the research grant, spent countless hours doing the research and may now have results that might be patentable and/or have commercial potential. So what do you next? Complete the NovaUCD Invention Disclosure Form (IDF). [www.ucd.ie/innovation/researchers/submitadisclosure](http://www.ucd.ie/innovation/researchers/submitadisclosure). Once received by NovaUCD the process outlined below will commence.

### A. Review and assessment of invention :

The IDF will be reviewed by the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the invention and to complete any gaps in the information provided. Central to the discussions will be an assessment of the commercial potential and patentability of the invention. Funding opportunities aimed at developing the research further will be discussed.

### B. Protecting the invention:

The TTO shall evaluate the IDF to decide if the invention can be protected. If your invention is potentially patentable then NovaUCD will engage a patent agent to do this work. If the invention is not patentable then it may be best protected through other methods.

### C. Commercialisation Strategy :

The TTO will work closely with you to identify the optimal route for the commercialisation. The two main routes for commercialisation are licensing the invention to an existing company or to a new company (start-up).

### D. Marketing and licensing inventions:

If the decision is made to commercialise the invention via licensing to an existing company, the TTO will prepare a non-confidential summary of the invention, in consultation with you, to send to potential licensees. Any revenues received by NovaUCD will be shared with you in accordance with UCD's Intellectual Property Policy. [https://www.ucd.ie/nova/technologytransferresearchers/ucdippolicy/ip\\_policy\\_summary\\_feb\\_07.pdf](https://www.ucd.ie/nova/technologytransferresearchers/ucdippolicy/ip_policy_summary_feb_07.pdf)

### E. Supporting start-up companies:

If the decision is made to commercialise the invention through the creation of a new company the TTO will assist you in the establishment and development of a start-up company.

## Who can help you ?

Please see the NovaUCD website for staff listing <http://www.ucd.ie/innovation/aboutus/teammembers/>

# A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO DEVELOPING AS AN ACADEMIC

**Professor Mark Keane,**  
Chair of UCD Computer Science.



Perhaps the real challenge in developing as a postdoc is to be cognisant of your next step to a full-time faculty position. While it is hard to do, if you can (even minimally) prep yourself for that next position then you should. So, if possible do a little bit of teaching (not too much as you need to build up your research); do a little bit of admin (if you can, acquire some organizational/management skills by taking

some initiative); and develop your relationship to others in your research area (Have you talked to the main players? Do they know you? Would they support your job application?). Do not think narrowly, think about developing all the aspects of the future job that you are moving towards.

## IMPACT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN UCD - WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Research Impact is the impact that happens beyond academia is defined by the Research Councils UK and Science Foundation Ireland as "The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy." Economic and societal impact is a relatively new focus area and research funders now place a lot of emphasis on the demonstration and articulation of the impact and benefits of investing public money in research. Impact forms an important part of the assessment criteria for evaluation of research proposals used by national and international funding agencies.

Impact needs be considered up-front and throughout the research process in order to generate better research outcomes and contribute to greater impact. UCD Research & Innovation has developed a toolkit of supports and resources to help you plan, capture and communicate the impact of your research. Supports include an Impact Guide and Impact Planning Canvas to assist researchers in developing impact sections for funding proposals and a website to help researchers leverage social media to promote their work to enhance its visibility, citation rate and overall impact.

Public engagement describes the interactions a researcher or research group might undertake to connect in a meaningful way with various 'publics' and stakeholders. Historical models of outreach were based on a deficit model with the researchers 'telling' the public about an issue or subject. Research institutions

are now shifting from one-way communication models and public engagement models to a more involved model where collaboration and cooperation is key and provides opportunities for mutual learning for the research community, the public/s and other stakeholders. Several agencies have developed toolkits and models for engaged research and public engagement. To develop your public engagement practice you can learn more through this online toolkit or find out more about public engagement and engaged research see NCCPE and IUA Engaged Research Report.

National and European funders understand the value of public engagement, engaged research and PPI (Patient Public Engagement) and require specific detail on public engagement activities, evaluation and impact as part of their funding criteria.

Speak with your local school or institute manager to find out more about the outreach/ public engagement already happening in your discipline so you can take part if you want to.



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – UCD CONWAY INSTITUTE

**Elaine Quinn,**  
Institute Manager (Communications & Education)



Since the inception of UCD Conway Institute, the objective of 'building bridges to the wider community' has been an integral part of the strategic vision. Researchers are encouraged and supported in their efforts to communicate the outputs of their work and engage with audiences outside of academia. We build capacity for public engagement practice through delivering science communication training for our researchers that will allow them to confidently participate in engagement activities.

We work with researchers across the public engagement spectrum in a broad range of initiatives from communication to consultation to co-creation of research projects. Often we will work in partnership with colleagues across UCD to facilitate the development and delivery of public engagement activities. These initiative all aspire to better connect the work of the research institute with society.

The *Amgen Biotechnology Experience* is an example of a funded science education initiative involving staff and researchers from Systems Biology Ireland and UCD Conway Institute. It provides training for secondary school teachers in molecular biology techniques, facilitates equipment and consumable loans to schools and enables teachers to carry out these laboratory experiments with pupils in the classroom.

The *Patient Voice in Cancer Research* is an initiative to involve those living with a cancer diagnosis and their families in shaping and informing the future landscape of cancer research in Ireland. Through a series of open forum events, the aim is to identify the questions and needs that matter

most to those living with a cancer diagnosis and those most likely to improve the relevance of cancer research. Researchers involved in this public-patient involvement (PPI) in research initiative have a unique opportunity to directly engage with those most likely to benefit from the translation of their research findings.

In addition to creating stories for online and social media that highlight the significance of research findings, we encourage researchers to capitalise on opportunities to talk about their research in the context of national or global narratives. Examples include World Health Day; health promotion or awareness drives such as Movember and Breast Health Day; as well as fundraising events such as the Irish Cancer Society's Daffodil Day.

There is ample opportunity for early career researchers to become actively involved in the Institute communications group that organises and facilitates engagement activities.

Contact: Elaine Quinn, Institute Manager (Communications & Education)

Email: [elaine.quinn@ucd.ie](mailto:elaine.quinn@ucd.ie)







# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON THE PRISONS PROJECT

**Dr Holly Dunbar,**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of History



Being involved in public engagement looks great on a CV, but it also offers a great opportunity to communicate your research clearly to a broad audience and can be lots of fun too. On the Wellcome-funded project, 'Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000', we have prepared a wide-ranging programme of public engagement events.

A lot of our activities involve arts and theatre. In July, we will be putting on a theatre piece based around prisoners' experiences of solitary confinement, which will be performed in Coventry, Dublin and Belfast. Our other activities include a photographic exhibition on prisoners and their families, hosting policy workshops, and working with school children. Being involved in public engagement offers the opportunity to aid young people, policy makers, NGOs, government officials and the general public to reap benefits from your research.

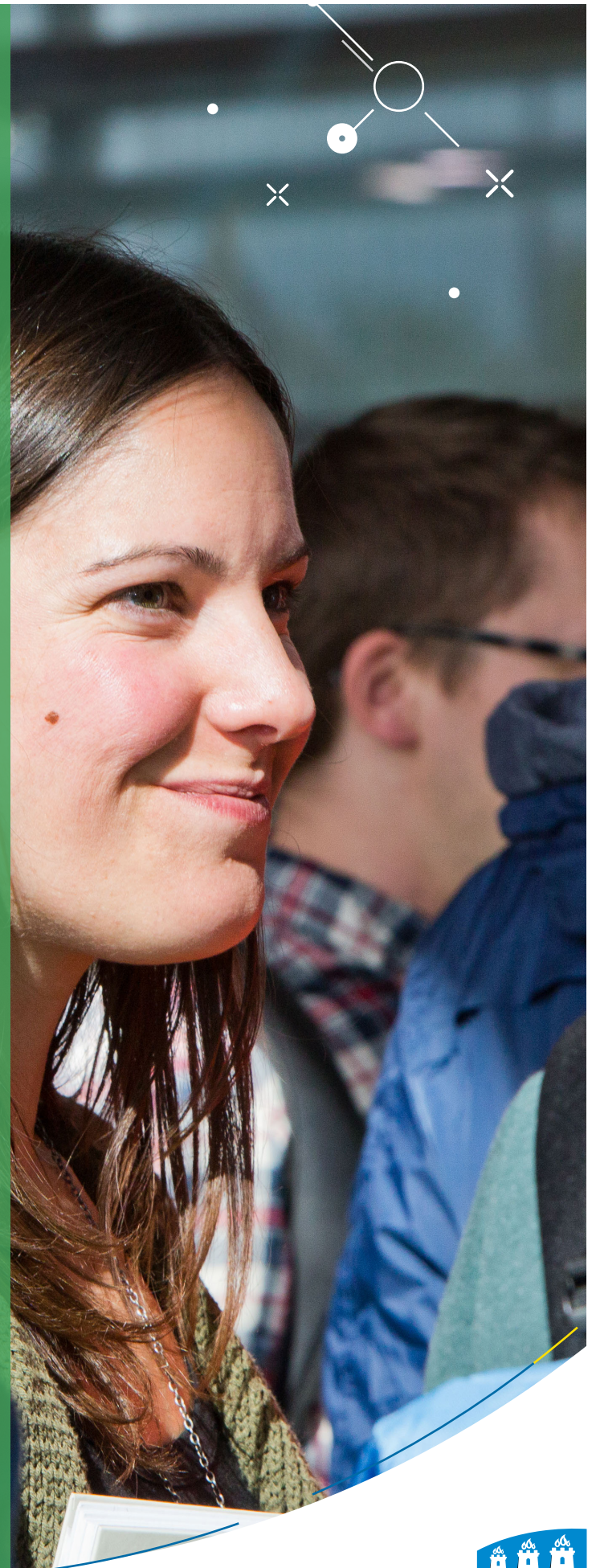
Public engagement events work best if they are based around your current research, particularly the aspects of it which you are most passionate about. Engagement is different to writing an academic article, so make sure what you do is accessible and appealing.

Think about targeting people who will either be interested in, or could gain something, from learning more about your work. Outreach is not just about putting your work out in the public domain, but making it useful for specific groups. Garnering more attention for your research can attract more students to your discipline, influence policy or legislation, or foster debate about key issues. Our project sees outreach and engagement as integral and complementary to our academic research.



# CONSIDERING MY CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The next five years
- Planning your development
- Useful worksheets





# CAREER PLANNING: THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

**Naomh O'Connor**

Research Careers Manager

For links to referenced articles 1 - 7, see:

<http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/09/22/career-planning-the-next-five-years/>



It is becoming more and more apparent that (1) having a doctorate and being an expert in your field does not automatically set you on a fixed career path. In fact, (2) devising a focused career strategy is now becoming part of the job of successful researchers.

Many postdocs I work with find that, because of the need to focus on day-to-day activities, there is little time or mental energy to consider the future. So, when it comes to completing the Career Development section of a fellowship application or answering the 'where do you see yourself in five years?' question at an interview, they feel unprepared and uninspired.

One of the workshops I facilitate is called 'Creating a Job-seeking Strategy for Researchers'. In it I recommend a three-step process for beginning to structure your career-plan. It's not so different to a research project in that it involves your imagination, collecting and analyzing facts, and then creating a timeline with short and long-term goals. The earlier you start, the more comfortable the process will be for you, but even if you only have a few months left, this model helps put you more in control.

## STEP 1:

IMAGINATION - CONSIDER YOUR PRESENT SITUATION AND YOUR IDEAL FUTURE.

1

Often, having invested so much of themselves in their PhD or their current project, researchers are not sure what they want from their career anymore. To 'unstick' this way of thinking, it is useful to consider the following questions, first from your current experience and then from the perspective of your future self, five years down the line: what do you like about your current day-job? What do you dislike about it? How would you currently describe your career? How much

do you earn at the moment? How many hours a week do you work? Describe your life outside of work.

The benefit of imagining yourself five years from today, answering the same questions about your job, salary and working hours is that it can help you clarify how exactly you would like to describe your job and your personal life in five years. More (3) probing questions here.

## STEP 2: COLLECT FACTS, ANALYZE OPTIONS.

# 2

The next step involves turning abstract ideas into concrete facts. If you know someone who is currently living all or some aspects of your ideal life, contact them and ask them how they got to where they are. If you don't know anyone like this, expand your network. For example, if you are trying to secure funding, identify people who are one fellowship ahead of you and get as much solid information as you can from them about their experience. If you're curious about non-academic roles, start with some desk-based research: a LinkedIn 'people search' with your PhD title in the search field will help you spot what other people with

your background call what they do every day. Once you have identified appropriate job-titles, examine relevant job descriptions online for mandatory and desirable criteria to clarify what are realistic options for you. As another careers expert puts it, (4) collect data on yourself. And for academic careers in particular, make sure to (5) assess how competitive you are.

## STEP 3: PROJECT CAREER.

# 3

When you feel clearer about what you want and you are equipped with facts about how to get there, you can then prioritize how best to use your time and energy plugging the gaps. While your medium-term plan might involve a stint with another university/in a company, your short-term/six-month plan could include a personal (6)skills-gap analysis, a career conversation both with your PI and a careers expert and weekly searches on job portals, LinkedIn and funding databases like (7)researchprofessional, as well as attending grants-writing seminars and non-academic careers sessions.

It is important that you use your Postdoc to clarify your goals, collect information about your options, build your network and find an expert team to help you on your path. This may not make the distant future less ambiguous, but it will put you in charge of how you steer the next six months into your medium-term future.

### Useful Articles/Resources

- 1 — Having a doctorate and being an expert...  
<http://www.nature.com/news/the-future-of-the-postdoc-1.17253>
- 2 — Devising a career strategy  
<http://hal.grenoble-em.com/hal-00794944/document>
- 3 — Probing questions link:  
<http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/04/23/job-search-probing-questions>
- 4 — Collect data on yourself:  
[http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/08/13/career-a-or-b-making-the-decision?WT.mc\\_id=FBK\\_NatureJobs](http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/08/13/career-a-or-b-making-the-decision?WT.mc_id=FBK_NatureJobs)
- 5 — Assess how competitive you are:  
<http://www.nextscientist.com/leave-academia-before-postdocs/>
- 6 — Career gap analysis link:  
<http://www.jobs.ac.uk/media/pdf/careers/resources/career-planning-for-phds-ebook.pdf>
- 7 — Research Professional  
<https://www.researchprofessional.com/sso/login?service=https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/>

# PLANNING YOUR DEVELOPMENT

**Eamonn McHugh,**  
People Development & Organisation  
Effectiveness | UCD Human Resources



As part of your ongoing professional development it is important to make time to develop/enhance your skills which will make you more efficient and proficient in the long term. To kick start the process, you should first complete a self-assessment of your current development using the four core competencies (outlined below) as a framework for this reflection. This self-assessment will help to identify current development needs and pinpoint areas for development over the next 9-12 months.

## PLANNING YOUR DEVELOPMENT – GETTING STARTED

PD Fellow	PI/Mentor
<b>STEP 1: COMPLETE SELF-ASSESSMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Download development plan from the Research Careers website, see page 26 for development plan</li> <li>Clarify goals and identify needs</li> <li>Explore development options available</li> <li>(<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers/">http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers/</a>) across the four competency areas</li> <li>Share self-assessment with PI/Mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review PD Fellow's self-assessment</li> </ul>
<b>STEP 2: PLAN &amp; IMPLEMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with PI/Mentor to discuss and agree Development Plan</li> <li>Record outcomes of the meeting</li> <li>Review and request training and development opportunities through Online Events Calendar via UCD Connect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with PD Fellow to discuss and agree Development Plan</li> <li>Agree date for next meeting to review progress</li> </ul>



## PLANNING YOUR DEVELOPMENT – GETTING STARTED

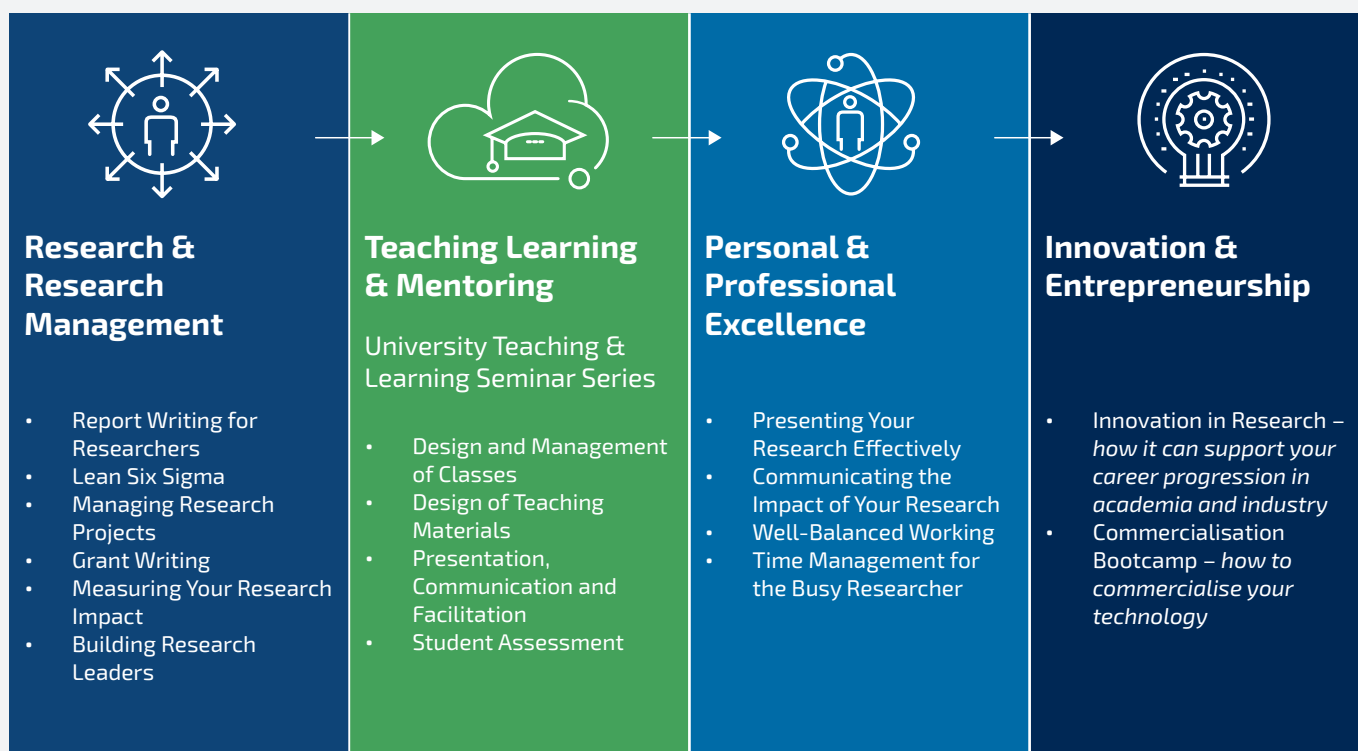
PD Fellow	PI/Mentor
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### STEP 3: REVIEW & FEEDBACK

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with PI/mentor to review progress since last meeting</li> <li>• Update/amend plan as where appropriate</li> <li>• Following meeting with PI/mentor postdoc to login into their Postdoc Career Development Profile in Infohub where they can record details of meeting. See inside back cover for log-in details.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular progress review with PD Fellow</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

3

## Core Competency Areas & Selection of Development Programmes Available



# CONSIDERING YOUR CAREER PRIORITIES




Knowing what motivates you and gives you fulfilment can guide you to make more balanced choices for the future. It can also help you focus your time and energy on development activities and career avenues that bring you the rewards that matter to you.

The exercise below is modified from Vitae's 'The Career-wise Researcher' ([www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets)) which uses information gathered by researchers for researchers. Consider how important each of the following values are to you. Consider also the questions overleaf.

POTENTIAL MOTIVATOR ↓		SCALE 1 - not important 5 - very important
1.	Job security	
2.	Good income	
3.	Flexible working environment	
4.	Working alone	
5.	Variety	
6.	Contact with people	
7.	Feeling appreciated	
8.	Pursuing excellence	
9.	Professional recognition	
10.	High level of responsibility	
11.	Helping others, benefitting wider community	
12.	Status within an organization	
13.	Status outside an organization	
14.	Using technical expertise	
15.	Opportunity to be creative	
16.	Challenging work using my abilities and skills fully	
17.	Specific geographic location	
18.	Working on a team	
19.	Managing other people	
20.	Opportunity for promotion	
21.	Managing major projects	

# RESEARCHING YOUR CAREER: HOW DO YOUR CAREER PLANS FIT INTO YOUR LIFE PLANS?

(CONSTRUCTING YOUR FUTURE **5 YEARS** FROM NOW)

Aspect of life ↓	Today's date: .....	6 months from today .....	+5 years ..... 20 .....
<b>My workday</b>  (couple words to describe it)			
<b>My Career</b>  (what I think when I think of that)			
<b>Family/ home life</b>  (couple words to describe it)			

# PROMPT SHEET FOR RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT



The following prompts are designed to help you think more about your research and your career. Quickly complete the following sentences.

The reason I do research in this area is:

The cutting edge/ future for my field is:

If I had unlimited funding to spend in my field I would:

The most exciting thing about my work is:

My research funding plan (type of funding/ call that would suit me at each stage)

Currently	2 -3 years from now	Up to 5 years from now	+ 5 years from now
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

As a teacher, I believe in:



In order for students to learn best they need:

If I was to go back and teach my undergraduate self something (difficult) the approach I would use would be:

In 5 years time I will be  years old.

When I think about the future I feel:

Three places where I would most love to work (be specific)

1 —

2 —

3 —

Besides research and teaching, what attracts me to the academic life is:

The additional contribution/s I can make to a department is/are:

If I could do anything else with my life without having to retrain what I'd love to try is:

### Summary introduction to colleagues/ an interview panel:

- ✓ My name
- ✓ My research field
- ✓ Why I love what I do
- ✓ My research funding ideas
- ✓ My teaching philosophy
- ✓ What I have to bring to a school/ department
- ✓ What sets me apart

# YOUR CURRENT ROLE – COMPETENCY ANALYSIS



Based on your own self-assessment and feedback from others, jot down in the following table the competency areas that you want to develop over the next 12 months. Included in this section are some questions to help you with

your reflection which are not intended to be exhaustive. As part of this self-assessment process you can also start to explore development options available for continuing with your competency development.

Competency Area	Prompt Questions to Aid Reflection	Competence Achieved and Areas for Development
<b>Research &amp; Research Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What new methodologies have you devised to solve complex problems?</li> <li>• How familiar are you with the main funding agencies and national strategies in your research area?</li> <li>• What experience do you have of managing a research project?</li> <li>• How would you assess the level and reach of your research writing/publications?</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal &amp; Professional Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective are you in communicating your research to expert and non-expert audiences?</li> <li>• Have you identified and taken advantage of opportunities to network and collaborate?</li> <li>• How would you assess your ability to influence and work with others as a peer and as a leader?</li> </ul>	
<b>Teaching Learning &amp; Mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What contribution have you made to teaching activities that support development of PhDs and/or MSc students?</li> <li>• Would you describe yourself as a Mentor to others?</li> <li>• How would you assess your understanding of how people learn?</li> </ul>	
<b>Innovation &amp; Transferable Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and in what areas of your work have you shown your innovative ability?</li> <li>• Have you thought about or are you aware of how you might commercialise or market your research?</li> <li>• How would you rate your understanding of what skills (other than discipline specific) organisations and institutions are looking for in someone with post-doctoral experience?</li> </ul>	

# YOUR CURRENT ROLE – DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Using the information from your self-assessment, and in conjunction with your PI/mentor, discuss and agree on a strategy for your development. It is recommended that you commit up to three development goals over the development

period. Keep in mind that the skills and competencies that are most useful for professional and career development are not fixed, but continuously change based on experience, context and goals.

## Research & Research Management

*Ability to translate critical and original thinking into published research and to manage a research project through all stages of the lifecycle*

Objective/Goal (eg. To co-author a journal; to submit article to appropriate peer-reviewed journal; to improve skills in writing research proposals)	What action/s are required to achieve this objective/goal (to include training/development programmes, career support, mentoring, coaching and on the job training – please refer to Events Calendar for details at <a href="http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers">www.ucd.ie/researchcareers</a> )	By when?

## Personal & Professional Excellence

*Ability to operate effectively and manage self and others*

Objective/Goal (eg. To be more actively involved in managing project; to improve my team and project management skills)	What action/s are required to achieve this objective/goal (to include training/development programmes, career support, mentoring, coaching and on the job training – please refer to Events Calendar for details at <a href="http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers">www.ucd.ie/researchcareers</a> )	By when?



## YOUR CURRENT ROLE – DEVELOPMENT PLAN



### Teaching, Learning & Mentoring

*Ability to transfer knowledge to individuals and groups using a variety of learning methods*

#### Objective/Goal

(eg. To gain more teaching experience; to develop my teaching skills; to gain experience supervising PhD students)

#### What action/s are required to achieve this objective/goal

(to include training/development programmes, career support, mentoring, coaching and on the job training – please refer to Events Calendar for details at [www.ucd.ie/researchcareers](http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers))

#### By when?




### Innovation & Transferable Skills

*Acquiring knowledge and experience that support alternative career options*

#### Objective/Goal

(eg. To generate a more extensive network of contacts in industry; to gain understanding of commercial potential of research)

#### What action/s are required to achieve this objective/goal

(to include training/development programmes, career support, mentoring, coaching and on the job training – please refer to Events Calendar for details at [www.ucd.ie/researchcareers](http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers))

#### By when?






## YOUR CURRENT ROLE – DEVELOPMENT PLAN



### Additional Comments

### Interim (mid-contract) Review & Feedback Date:

*(PI in conjunction with the PD Fellow to insert a brief summary of progress 12 months into contract)*

### Final (end of contract) Review & Feedback Date:

*(PI in conjunction with the PD Fellow to insert a summary of discussion to capture PD Fellow's assessment of development, key feedback points and any other aspects of the discussion deemed worthy for inclusion)*

### Next Steps

- 1 — Following meeting with your PI/mentor please login into your Postdoc Career Development Profile in Infohub where you can record details of this meeting.
- 2 — Register for training and development courses as agreed with your PI/mentor through Events Calendar.
- 3 — If training course/development opportunity is not currently on offer please discuss with your PI/mentor to explore options or contact a member of the Research Careers team.

# CONSIDERING MY FUTURE: WHAT DO POSTDOCS DO NEXT?

- Previous postdoc profiles



# PREVIOUS POSTDOC PROFILES



**Name: Dr Lynne O'Shea**

Current Role: Assistant Professor in Anatomy,  
UCD School of Medicine

## **Scheme: Irish Research Council Enterprise Partnership Scheme Postdoctoral Fellowship (2014)**

I applied for this fellowship while working as a Research Associate in Human Assisted Reproduction Ireland (HARI). My IRC project "Molecular assessment of cryopreserved ovarian tissue and in vitro culture of primordial follicles and oocytes", with HARI as my enterprise partner, allowed me to bridge the gap between clinical and biomolecular research.

Obtaining this fellowship has significantly enhanced my academic career. It enabled me to prepare high impact publications in the field of reproductive biology. It allowed me to develop international collaborators, further developing my professional maturity. It facilitated my participation in high quality international and national conferences, which significantly enhanced my academic profile. Since receiving this fellowship I have obtained an Assistant Professor position in the UCD School of Medicine. In addition, I have received two IRC New Foundation Awards (2015 and 2016) and was awarded the Merck Serono Grant for Fertility Innovation (2016). As such, this fellowship was imperative for my development as an independent researcher.



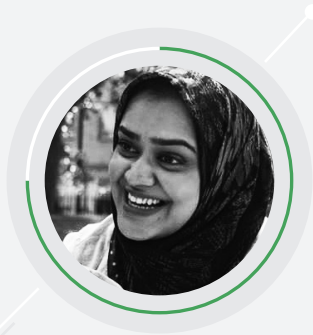
**Name: Dr Gordon Cooke**

Current role and location: Lecturer, IT Tallaght

Between 2008 and 2016 I worked in the Conway Institute in UCD as a Postdoctoral researcher. I look back on my time there as a great learning experience. There were many aspects to my role that shaped me into the person I am now, as Lecturer in IT Tallaght. If I had to think of one thing that I'm thankful for doing while I was in UCD it is that I engaged with people across the campus by joining a number of committees. The committees I worked on were wide and varied and included the Research Staff Association, the Conway Institute Steering committee, the Student Summer Research Awards organising committee, the Special Committee on Postdoctoral Career Development and the Irish Federation of University Teachers.

What they all gave me was a great insight into how an organisation, like UCD, functions. They not only allowed me to give my input to key areas of interest to me but they also added variety to my work and they expanded my personal network. Through participation on these committees I was able to grow my own leadership skills and expand my knowledge of what is required to run a large organisation. In interviews I was able to give concrete examples of how I not only had the skills required for the role but also the wider transferable skills to differentiate me from other candidates. As a Postdoctoral researcher, in whatever field, you have a lot to offer an organisation like UCD. You don't have to join every committee but pick one or two that you maybe feel passionate about or have an interest in. Never stay on the same committee for too long as you may become stale. You can always join another one where you can develop further. Participation in this type of forum can only add to your skillset.





**Name: Dr Fariha Shaikh**

Current role: IRC Postdoctoral Fellow, School of English, Drama and Film, UCD moving into a permanent lectureship in Birmingham University

**Title of scheme/ fellowship: Irish Research Council Internship**

The IRC advertised for positions through their IRC mailing list. Their internships are advertised to their fellows and not to those funded by other organisations. I undertook a range of work while at the IRC from data analysis, to writing position papers and strategy statements, helping with evaluation panels and organising career training events. Other Postdoc interns also worked in communications and on EU reports.

I started the IRC internship when I was five months into my one-year Postdoc. At the time, I knew that the chances of getting a full-time academic position were slim - the statistics speak for themselves - so I knew that I needed more time to secure a book contract with a publisher first. I considered that working at the IRC would both give me the time that I needed to develop a book proposal and give me experience of working in a research-related area. The internship gave me a clear understand of how national funding bodies work and the kinds of challenges facing universities and research environment in Ireland more broadly. It also gave me time to think through my current book proposal and make way with my second project.



**Name: Dr Niall O'Brien**

Current role: SFI Fellow (Performance Improvement Division)

**Location/employer:** Science Foundation Ireland, Dublin

**Title of scheme/fellowship:** Science Foundation Ireland Fellowship Programme

I started to consider my options outside of academia entering the final year of a 3-year postdoctoral research fellowship. While I enjoyed research and was eager to stay in the scientific area, I was more interested in the bigger picture perspective, having contact with a wider range of fields and working on the application and impact of research. Talking with UCD Research Careers and meeting SFI staff and Fellows at postdoctoral career events, it became clear that a SFI Fellowship would help me gain experience in all of these areas. The Fellowship documentation also outlined 10 well defined roles available at SFI, each of which could help steer my career in a particular direction.

I am currently based in the Performance Improvement Division, where we analyse the performance of the research SFI funds and the SFI funding schemes. This involves data analysis, developing impact metrics and reporting to Government on SFI actions. I am also seconded to other departments within SFI to gain experience in pre-award activities such as reviewer sourcing and post award activities such as site reviews of research centres. As a Fellow, you are given ownership of projects, but are also assigned a mentor for support and guidance and a tailored training programme based on your career goals. How involved you are in other SFI activities is up to you, with active working groups on gender, open science, data and website redesign.

The Fellowship allows me to demonstrate and develop skills I already possessed outside of academia, such as project management, teamworking and data analytics. I am also learning new skills related to data privacy, data confidentiality and tendering. I am gaining insights into government/funder/academic interactions and how the impact of research is measured by different stakeholders. Overall, the Fellowship has presented me with career avenues I had not considered before, such as Government/EU roles, university research and technology transfer offices and other research funders, as well as data analyst roles in industry.



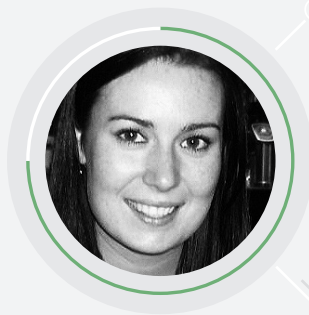
**Name: Dr Oonagh Giggins**

Role and location: Clinical trial lead, Novartis  
Global Services Centre, Dublin

#### Title of Scheme: SFI Industry Fellowship

I attended an information session on the SFI IF programme organised by the UCD Career Development Centre. Following the session I discussed the programme with my supervisor and together we identified a suitable industry host to partner with for my fellowship.

The SFI IF has given me invaluable experience of working in the corporate environment and has allowed me to develop new skills that I wouldn't have been able to develop in an academic setting. The fellowship has given me a unique perspective of engaging with senior leads across the multiple franchises in Novartis, allowing me to expand my professional network across Novartis' many international sites. Through this fellowship and through the training I have received while with Novartis, I can now identify a greater range of opportunities for myself within this industry.



**Name: Dr Louise Rocks**

Role and Location: Scientific Programme  
Manager, Science Foundation Ireland, Dublin

Two and half years into my postdoctoral contract I began to question whether continuing on the academic career path was right for me. However, I wasn't sure of what other options were available to me. I met with the UCD careers team on a number of occasions to explore the numerous opportunities that were available. The Science Foundation Fellowship stood out as a perfect opportunity to expand and formalise my project management skills and develop a network of contacts within the Irish funding and research landscape, whilst remaining close to the front line of the top research in Ireland. The benefits that I have gained have far surpassed my expectations, including but not limited to strategic development and implementation, national policy, communication and Influencing. The training and mentoring afforded to me over my fellowship were instrumental in recently obtaining my new, current role of Scientific Programme Manager.



**Name: Dr Charles Nwankire**

Current role: Data Scientist, Bank Of Ireland,  
Baggot Plaza, Dublin

I would consider myself a highly passionate scientist with strong business acumen, which I believe contributed to my Irish Research Council fellowship award in 2014 at UCD. During the course of the fellowship, I applied and secured a place at the NDRC FutureHealth program. It was at this high profile start up/mentoring network that I saw myself through a 'different mirror' - with an inherent desire to make a difference through entrepreneurship.

I subsequently sought career counselling with UCD Research Careers where I was supported to do a gap analysis in order to identify transferable skill sets that I would need for my next move. This way, I started to set out a clear plan to achieve those skill sets. I attended several networking events run by the Careers office and spoke to a number of people in the Data Science space. At one of these networking events, I met with some Novartis top management staff who spoke passionately about how they wanted to enrich Novartis with top talents. I subsequently applied for a position in Novartis as a Market Research Analyst and was hired. This was a great experience and the transition to industry was perfect for me; I learnt a lot. Just over a year later, there was a unique opportunity at Bank Of Ireland to work as a Data Scientist and I was hired for this exceptional role.

My advice to Post-Docs seeking to make this transition to industry is: don't hold back - you have all it takes. Get some support in analysing your skills and getting your CV ready, then try and you will see what a positive outcome you will get!





### Dr Louise Dolphin

**Role and Location:** Research Coordinator at 'Headstrong', moving into new role of Advisory Consultant at PWC

My Postdoc (2014-2015) in the UCD School of Psychology involved analysing and disseminating data from the My World Survey: Ireland's National Study of Youth Mental Health. Prior to this I completed a PhD in 2014 in the area of Youth Mental Health. My current job title is "Research Coordinator" in Headstrong. Headstrong is a non-profit organisation supporting young people's mental health in Ireland. My key responsibility is to support the implementation of Headstrong's Research Programme through the analysis of data, and by providing high quality and methodologically robust research and evaluation. My role also involves dissemination of this research to a wide audience both internally and externally. I work on a fantastic team, providing line management to two Research and Evaluation Officers.

A PhD in a relevant discipline (e.g. Psychology, Social Science) was an essential requirement for this role. The key skills my PhD and Postdoc gave me that helped me transition into this role were project management, data analysis and dissemination skills. So far, I have really loved working in a busy, fast paced organisation and I enjoy taking on the challenges of working with a live, rapidly expanding dataset. Seeing the "on the ground" applications of the evaluation analysis is very exciting, as is working with a variety of teams in-house (e.g. Clinical team, Communications team).

My advice to postdocs would be a quote I have borrowed from the great Tim Minchin: "Be micro-ambitious. Put your head down and work with pride on whatever is in front of you... you never know where you might end up. Just be aware that the next worthy pursuit will probably appear in your periphery. Which is why you should be careful of long-term dreams. If you focus too far in front of you, you won't see the shiny thing out the corner of your eye."



### Name: Dr Michelle Trenkmann

**Role, Location:** Associate Editor Nature Communications

I did my PhD in Molecular Biology in Switzerland and after a short Postdoc there I moved to UCD with a 2-year Government of Ireland Fellowship. After starting a second postdoc at the Conway Institute I started looking for jobs as an editor for a science journal. I've always enjoyed doing peer-review and discussing papers and the broader picture of science. I used naturejobs.com for my search and I focused on Nature journals (but I also applied at PLoS and eLife).

I spoke to people working there to get an idea of what it's like and what to expect with regards to the application process. One very useful advice was to look for Locum positions; it gets your foot in the door and gives you your first editorial experience. I started as an Associate Editor at Nature Communications in February 2017 and it has been great so far. The learning curve is steep, the job is varied, it's fast-paced (many decisions to make on a daily basis), interesting and stimulating. The company culture is great and it offers a lot in terms of career development (either editorial or into the business part of the company).



# ACCESS YOUR ONLINE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

**Career Development Profile for Postdoctoral Researcher - Mirjam Heinen**

**Personal Details**

Staff Photo:

ID Number: P01034262

Name: Dr Mirjam Heinen

Job Title: Post Doc Research Fellow Lvl II

Research Grant: R12280 - National Nutrition Surveillance

School / Unit: School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science

Email Postdoc: tst2\_mirjam.heinen@ucd.ie

Managing Principal Investigator: Cecily Kelleher

Active on CoreHR: No

Welcome Sent: 28-Sep-15

Reminder Sent:

Access: [RMS Profile\\*](#)

Access: [Career Certificate](#)

\*Postdocs should ensure their RMS Research Profile is active and up to date.

**Current Contract**

Details of current contract showing the start and end date as recorded on the CoreHR system.

Start Date	Expected End Date	Contract Type
01 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2020	Fixed Term

**Career Development Meetings**

Details of career development meetings as recorded by Post doc or by UCD Careers. For PI to approve record of meeting, click the Edit button.

[Add a New Meeting](#)

Edit	Date of Meeting	Meeting Type	Met With	PI Approved	Delete*
	26 Feb 2016	Careers - Exit Meeting	Naomh O'Connor	No	
	11 Mar 2015	Careers - Development Meeting	Naomh O'Connor	No	
	13 Jan 2015	Careers - Introductory Meeting	Naomh O'Connor	No	

\*You may only delete career development meetings that you have recorded

- 1 Log onto UCD Connect
- 2 Click the Infohub icon
- 3 Select the Human Resources tab at the top of the page
- 4 Select My Details
- 5 Select My Development Workspace

## UCD RESEARCH STAFF ASSOCIATION

The UCD RSA was formed on the 11th of August 2010. The aim of the association is to promote the interests of research staff in University College Dublin and in doing so to create a working environment which encourages excellence in research and serves to attract and retain high quality researchers. We also promote networking and support to researcher staff within UCD. The UCD

RSA committee comprises 4 Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) and also a member of the Irish Research Staff Association (IRSA). Membership is open to all research staff. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, please e-mail [rsa@ucd.ie](mailto:rsa@ucd.ie).





*We can't deliver a research intensive community without a strong and vibrant Postdoc population*

Prof Orla Feely, VP Research Innovation & Impact



📅 Book events and careers meetings at:  
[www.ucd.ie/researchcareers.ie](http://www.ucd.ie/researchcareers.ie)



@2017

- UCD Career & Professional Development for Postdoctoral Fellows

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