Update from the Dean

How is your term going? All of a sudden, it seems to be autumn, leaves are falling and the clocks have been turned back. For many, this is a time that they instinctively start to hunker down for the winter. But for me the start of the academic year has been marking the start of my planning cycle for more years than I care to admit. This isn’t something that comes naturally to me. For a long time, I used to resist planning - I found it too constraining - I wanted to see how projects or ideas ‘unfolded’. Besides, I never seemed to find the time.

The internet is full of inspirational quotes about planning, most of which can be summed up by this one from American army general and statesman, Dwight D. Eisenhower "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.". So, how are your plans for 21/22 coming along?

My theme for this year is progression towards an inclusive PGR community - see the ‘Middle Ground’ event taking place tomorrow. What is your theme? Where do you want your focus to shine? Is this the year you step up as an expert in your discipline, expand your professional network or master a new skill set? If so, our PhD Spotlight competition might be the place to start. Sometimes I find it more helpful to imagine myself this time next year looking back and weighing up what I have achieved.

Once I have a broad theme in mind, I can then identify my focus for each quarter of the year ahead. Then, I try to decide on a priority project or activity for each month in this quarter. And so a detailed project plan emerges.

Part of my planning is also thinking about Plan B/C/X. Because, another piece of military wisdom is “No plan survives first contact with the enemy”. But while many genuinely unexpected things could happen over the next year (global pandemic anyone?!), identifying your priorities for the year could help you to hold your course in a storm or provide a framework for making an informed decision about changing direction.

Particularly helpful is finding out how others have dealt with changes to their plans. And the PGR-led *How to thrive and survive in your PhD* series will be meeting this month to explore the subject of ‘Finding your pathway to survive your research project: What to do when things are not going as you planned’. Hopefully, by having thought in advance about what could go wrong, this can help you to retain a sense of control over your project if life doesn’t pan out as expected.

So, enjoy your planning - revel in the anticipation of what you will be creating and learning this year! And let us know at YGRS how you get on.

Warm regards,
Kate

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**Middle Ground event: issues faced by Black students**

The University’s Student Expert Panel is hosting a ‘Middle Ground’ event to normalise difficult conversations and encourage individuals to understand and recognise different perspectives. Attended by members of the University Executive Board, the event on Wednesday 10 November will focus on issues faced by Black students.
Middle Ground event – normalising conversations about race

**Develop your research communication skills and raise your profile**

The PhD Spotlight poster competition is an opportunity for researchers from all disciplines to demonstrate the value of their research to society.

Enter the PhD Spotlight competition for the chance to exhibit your research as part of YorkTalks, a key University research showcase event, and to win prizes. Application deadline: 5pm on Monday 29 November 2021

- **PhD Spotlight competition**

**Induction event presentations available**

Missed the York Graduate Research School induction event or want a refresher? You can now view all presentations on the YGRS web pages. The York Graduate Research School induction event provides an introduction to all professional support available to you as a postgraduate researcher and gives an opportunity to celebrate the success of our current students and alumni. Hear from the Dean, the Research Excellence Training Team, the Library, IT Services, Careers, Student Hub, GSA and more.

- **Induction presentations now available**

**York Researcher Professional Development and Skills Programme 2021/22**

The Research Excellence Training Team (RETT) delivers a comprehensive programme of professional development and skills training for all researchers at the University.

Find out what’s on offer by viewing the York Researcher Professional Development and Skills Programme 2021/22.

- **Professional and Career Development for Postgraduate Researchers**

**Research Data Management 101 online tutorial**

All postgraduate researchers have a responsibility to properly manage the data they create, collect or use during the course of their research. Get to grips with the principles and practice of good research data management by completing the RDM 101 online tutorial in the VLE.

- **Research Data Management**

**Research computing support**

The research computing team has an extensive wiki page showcasing some of the training and facilities offered by the University. We also have an online introduction to research computing course and a quick start guide for Viking, which may be of interest to those who wish to use some of the computational research facilities offered at York.
Impact Fortnight 2021: Place and Research Impact

This year’s Research Impact Conference is a series of online events from 15-26 November considering what “place” means for us as a University for Public Good. The events will include talks from internal and external speakers considering the landscape of “place” as it applies to our civic mission and our work on a global scale, and we will also provide more hands-on impact training sessions.

Mentoring and buddying support

Our buddy scheme is open to new postgraduate researchers to pair with an existing PGR to help you settle into your York research experience. If you’re a new PGR, sign up for a buddy. If you’re an existing PGR, sign up to be a buddy.

Our mentoring scheme is for 2nd, 3rd and final year PGRs. Discuss and develop your skills, behaviours and approaches to your research and explore professional development and career plans with a more experienced postdoctoral researcher. To find out more, there are two online briefing sessions on Monday 15 November and Wednesday 24 November. The closing date for mentee applications is Wednesday 8 December.

When things are not going as planned

Join us on Wednesday 24 November for the next session in our How to thrive and survive in your PhD series. The subject this time is ‘Finding your pathway to survive your research project: What to do when things are not going as you planned’.

The sessions are organised by PGRs for PGRs and help you address issues you might be facing in a supportive environment. Register your place.

New video resource: York GTAs share teaching advice

See experienced York Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) share practical advice with newer GTAs in new videos produced by Academic Practice. Hear GTAs’ practical tips on facilitating seminars, preparing for labs, marking, and managing your time.

Before you can teach at York, you will need to complete our Introduction to Teaching and Learning course. This allows you to acquire the knowledge and skills to establish yourself as a confident, enthusiastic and effective teacher and is an induction into Higher Education teaching and into working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at York. The training comprises two weeks of self-study and a face-to-face (or online) seminar.

GTA call for contributions and save the date
There is a call for contributions from staff and students on experiences of learning and teaching during the Autumn Term 2021-22 for a session on Tuesday 14 December. The Learning and Teaching Forum in collaboration with PDLT are inviting contributions from staff and students to talk about your practice / experiences / perspectives / feedback with a particular focus on how approaches to learning developed during the remote teaching phases of the pandemic inform current practices. Deadline for contributions: Friday 26 November

- **Reflections on learning and teaching in the Autumn Term 2021-22**

### Career Management for Academic Researchers - online course

The Career Management for Early Academic Researchers MOOC is open and is available to all researchers between October 2021 and July 2022. This is a bespoke online course developed by specialist researcher careers consultants at the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Sheffield. It is a four part/week course and has been designed for research students and staff who are exploring their career options and preparing for the next stage in their career, whether in academia or beyond.

- **Career Management for Academic Researchers**

### Silent Zoom writing support

The Silent Zoom Writing Group (SZWG) is an online writing group for academics, postgraduates and creatives. SZWG offers community, accountability, and structure by hosting daily online writing sessions for participants to share goals and write together in solidarity. It aims to demystify the writing process, promote healthy and sustainable working habits, and provide a space in which participants can share the process (ups and downs) of research and writing.

- **Silent Zoom Writing Group (SZWG)**

### Turn your research into a startup

Conception X is a deep tech venture programme that helps PhD students turn their research into early stage startups. To find out more about the programme and how you can apply, sign up for a Discovery Session on Tuesday 16 November and hear from alumni teams about how Conception X has helped them get where they are.

- **Conception X Cohort V**

### Recent opportunities on the blog:

- **JOB OPPORTUNITY: Community, Events & Welfare Coordinator**
- **MEDMaths 2021 – Virtual Careers Talk led by Statisticians in the Pharmaceutical Industry (PSI)**
- **Global Biobased Businessplan Competition (G-BIB)**

All these news items and more can be found on the [Research Student Community blog](http://www.york.ac.uk/YGRS)

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