Careers planning – a guide to resources for research students

We offer information, advice and guidance to research students* as part of the University’s commitment to support the career development of researchers.

Career planning and generating career ideas
The main career options open to research students and staff, are as follows:

- **Continuing with a research career**, either in academia, a research organisation or a research role in an organisation outside academia
- **Developing your expertise in a less research-orientated area**, such as working in an occupation related to your subject knowledge or non-teaching/research roles in academia
- **Moving into a different direction altogether**, by selecting a career that utilises your transferable skills or develops other interests.

Career planning can take time, depending on how clear you are about your career direction. It may involve some or all of the following: assessing your skills, abilities and experience; reflecting on your career priorities and values; exploring your options; decision making; and working out how to achieve your goals. The Careers and Placements information sheet *Career Planning* outlines the resources available online and at Careers and Placements, but there are also resources specifically targeted at research staff and students. These include:

- **Moving on in your career: a guide for academic researchers and postgraduates**, Ali, L & Graham, B, Routledge *
- **Successful research careers**, Delamont, S & Atkinson, P, Society for Research in Higher Education & the Open University Press *
- **So what are you going to do with that? Finding careers outside academia**, Basalla, S & Debelius, M, University of Chicago Press *
- **Academic career handbook**, Blaxter, L, Open University Press *
- **Managing your academic career**, Grant, W & Sherrington, P, Palgrave
- **From postgraduate to social scientist**, Gilbert N, Sage
- **Building a successful career in scientific research**, Dee, P, Cambridge University Press
- **Academic to biotechnology**, Gimble, J, Elsevier
- **Vitae website** – [www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers)
- **Manchester University - An Academic Career** [www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk)
- **Careers and Placements website** lists resources relevant to anyone planning their career [www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets)

* Available for loan in the University Library and for reference in Careers and Placements

Researching and confirming your ideas
This is particularly important if you are considering changing direction into a less research-orientated area or are contemplating a complete change of direction. It could involve: researching the career area, including potential employers; arranging work experience or shadowing; asking for an advisory interview with an employer; undertaking voluntary work; attending conferences or training events and other networking activities.
Useful resources include:

- **Research Councils UK Careers in Research** case studies providing insight into life as a researcher and different career paths [www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/percase](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/percase)
- **Beyond the PhD website** offers film and audio case studies of different career options in the arts/humanities [www.beyondthephd.co.uk](http://www.beyondthephd.co.uk) (note this is a legacy site – resources are useful but not recent)
- **Prospects website** lists details of hundreds of graduate occupations and can be particularly useful if you are considering moving in a different career direction [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles)
- Prospects also has a section titled **Your PhD – what next?** with information on both academic and non-academic jobs [www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/your-phd-what-next](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/your-phd-what-next)
- **Manchester University - An Academic Career** [www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk)
- **Careers and Placements Information Room** holds reference resources, some of which are also available from the University library
- **Alumni networking events, Careers and Placements’ Working In events and graduate profiles and mentors** [www.york.ac.uk/careers/profiles](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/profiles)
- **Social media**, particularly LinkedIn and its many industry and interest groups, and Twitter.

**Careers Advice and guidance**

You are also welcome to discuss your career plans with a Careers Consultant. If you are away from campus you may use our e-mail guidance service. Appointment bookings and queries can be made through the Careers Gateway ([www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway)). For more information see information sheet, **Facilities and support for research students** [www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets)

**Research Excellence Training Team (RETT)**

The RETT serves to provide all researchers, students and staff (research associates, assistants and fellows) with the support and development opportunities to excel in their chosen fields and careers. They offer a range of development opportunities including career management workshops, which can either be taken together or stand alone. For more information visit [www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/training-forums/research-excellence-training-team](http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/training-forums/research-excellence-training-team)

**CVs, Applications and interviews**

- The **Careers and Placements website** has information about the application and recruitment process, [www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/apply/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/apply/), and you can also use the CV and interview guides on the VLE [www.york.ac.uk/vle](http://www.york.ac.uk/vle)
- The **Vitae website** also has information about marketing yourself to employers, including examples of CVs for academic and non-academic jobs [www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers)
- The **Prospects website** has advice on how to handle interview and assessment activities, including links to websites where you can practice psychometric tests [www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips.htm)
- Practice psychometric and aptitude tests can also be accessed on the **Careers and Placements website** at [www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/apply/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/apply/).

You are also welcome to discuss your CV/application with a member of Careers and Placements staff who will give you advice on content and layout. If you are worried about handling the interview process you can discuss this at a careers appointment. See our **Talk to us** page for more details.

We run workshops for the Research Excellence Team on career planning, applications and interviews. These are advertised in SkillsForge, [www.skillsforge.york.ac.uk](http://www.skillsforge.york.ac.uk) (log-in required).

There are many resources that you could use in your search for job vacancies, including social media, but what is best for you will depend very much on the sector and type of opportunities you are looking for. For some types of
work, opportunities will be widely advertised, but for others speculative approaches may be the norm, which will require a more proactive approach and willingness to network and make contact with potential employers.

- Employers take part in a wide range of recruitment presentations, fairs and workshops on campus and many advertise job opportunities on Careers Gateway, [www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway). Some employers will have vacancies specifically for people with postgraduate qualifications and/or will welcome your applications for graduate opportunities. See the Careers and Placements website for more information [www.york.ac.uk/careers](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers) - use the sections, What’s on and Look for work.

- There are many general and specialist job vacancy websites, of which the following are good starting points:
  - [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk) - a wide range of jobs, academic and non-academic in further and higher education
  - [www.findapostdoc.com](http://www.findapostdoc.com) - job opportunities for PhDs
  - [https://academicpositions.eu](https://academicpositions.eu) – European job site for academics, researchers and scientists
  - [www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway) (search Opportunities)
  - [www.propects.ac.uk/jobs_and_work_experience.htm](http://www.propects.ac.uk/jobs_and_work_experience.htm) - advertises job vacancies but also has information on specific occupations and sectors, including links to vacancy sources
  - [www.yorkshiregraduates.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiregraduates.co.uk) - graduate opportunities in the Yorkshire region.

See our information sheets on Job Hunting for more ideas ([www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets))

- Other ways of finding vacancies and postgraduate employers include:
  - Newspaper websites, specialist publications, journals and mailing lists
  - Recruitment agencies, for temporary and permanent contracts. Search on [www.agencycentral.co.uk](http://www.agencycentral.co.uk) or [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com)
  - Professional associations - information and sometimes job vacancies
  - Social media, particularly LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com))
  - Conferences and training events – great for networking
  - Personal contacts and networks
  - Specialist web portals
  - Business directories.

* Research Staff

Our primary focus in Careers and Placements is to support University of York students and graduates. If you are a member of research staff and also a York graduate, or if you have graduated from another university within the past 3 years, you are entitled to use our services with some restrictions. If you do not fit into these categories you can still access support from the Research Excellence Training Team (see above). You may also use our online and information room resources. More information on our eligibility criteria can be found at [www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/careers/staff/services-to-staff](http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/careers/staff/services-to-staff)

**Please note:** The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Careers and Placements cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.

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