

**With Sponsorship from the British Academy**

**In association with the AHRC-funded Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership**

**Beyond PhD: Post-Doctoral Fellowships and Career Development  
in the Arts and Humanities**

**College Court Conference Centre, University of Leicester**

**9.30-17.30, Monday 19 May 2014**

**10.00-11.00 Session 1. Introduction and Post-Doctoral Opportunities.**

Chair: Professor Sharon Monteith (M3C Director UoN)



**Professor Sharon Monteith welcoming the delegates and opening the conference**

**10.00-10.10** Ken Emond (British Academy) on the British Academy's view of the success of its Post-Doctoral Fellowship scheme

In this introductory talk Mr. Emond gave a brief overview of the British Academy's Post-Doctoral Fellowship scheme. He touched on the Academy's partnership with the AHRC and discussed some of the 40 events sponsored by the British Academy this year in a new initiative.

Mr. Emond went on to stress the British Academy's commitment to early career researchers, stating that over the next five years (2013-18) 10 million pounds per year will be spent on 180 fellowships altogether, with 45 new awards each year, and 150 fellowships running simultaneously – making this the largest single programme of its kind.

Further, Mr. Emond commented on the success of the scheme, informing the audience that 70% of the Academy's former Postdoctoral Fellows are in permanent academic posts and over 80% are pursuing academic careers. In sum, the British Academy is very proud of scheme and the success it has had providing early career researchers with the funding and skills necessary to pursue outstanding careers in both academic and non-academic sectors.

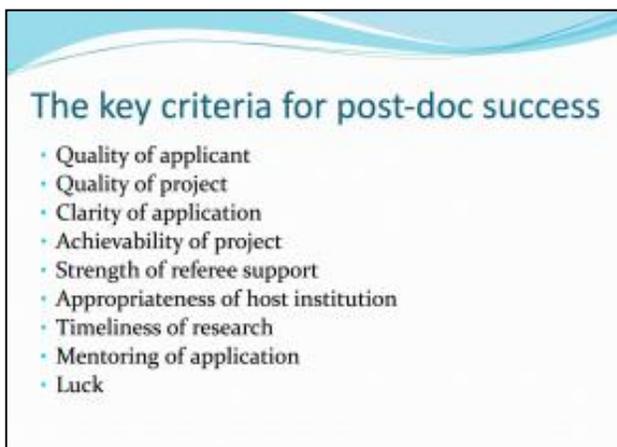


**Ken Emond detailing the British Academy's Post-Doctoral Fellowship scheme**

**10.10-10.30** Professor David Mattingly (M3C Site Director UoL, former BA PDF) on the transformation of the Humanities Post-Doctoral scene following initiation of BA PDF scheme

In his talk, Professor Mattingly discussed the vision and aims of the conference, giving a brief overview of the conference programme, and providing reflections on the importance of a postdoctoral fellowship and how provisions for them have changed in the years since completing his own BA fellowship. To begin, Professor Mattingly indicated that this conference was designed to promote British Academy events outside of London, and in this case, was an initiative of the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership. He went on to express his desire to see a larger number of excellent PhD students progress to post-doctoral positions in the Midlands, and hoped that this conference would raise awareness among PGRs and Post-Docs of the desirable skills and research experiences necessary to improve employability in both academic and non-academic sectors.

He stressed the difficulty of finding an academic position in today's competitive environment, but used his own personal story to illustrate how important the British Academy fellowship was to his own success in his respective field. After covering the programme for the day, Professor Mattingly then closed with some useful tips for postdoctoral applicants - focusing on the importance of a stellar CV and the quality, clarity, and achievability of the application and proposed research project.



**Key tips for PDF applicants**

**10.30-10.40** Dr Lara Pucci (UoN, former BA PDF) on making the most of a self-initiated project



**Dr. Lara Pucci discussing her self-initiated Post-Doctoral research**

Following the introductory presentations, Dr. Lara Pucci gave the audience a specific look at how the British Academy Postdoctoral fellowship allowed her to pursue a self-initiated project. In her talk she recounted her own personal story, discussing why her application was successful and how the British Academy fellowship worked to further her career. She highlighted the diversity of the scheme as she received her PhD in Art from University of London and went on to complete her postdoctoral work in the department of Italian Studies at the

University of Manchester. Dr. Pucci went on to explain how successful postdoctoral projects must be 'new', and go far beyond the PhD, tackling different areas of research. She discussed how she benefited from moving institutions and disciplinary setting (from PhD to Post-Doc), and indicated that variation between mentors, professors, and universities is very important for well-rounded postdoctoral projects. She concluded by focusing on what worked to make her postdoctoral experience so successful, highlighting the benefits of research-led teaching, institution variation, and integration into the department.

**10.40-10.50** Dr Marc Scully (UoL) on making the most of the post-doctoral experience as an RA on someone else's project

Having just heard about an individual, self-initiated project, Dr. Marc Scully talked to the audience about his postdoctoral experience as a Research Assistant on someone else's project. Dr. Scully is currently working on the project: 'The Impact of Diasporas' which is based in Leicester and Nottingham, and is a five year multi-disciplinary research programme (2011-2016) funded by the Leverhulme Trust. While Dr. Scully came from a social science background, he now finds himself working with scholars from arts and humanities and genetics. However, he says this inter-disciplinarity has allowed him to gain new perspectives on his work and create new research avenues and opportunities that would not have existed otherwise. While he touched on having some general fears about losing touch with his 'core' discipline when working as an RA on a project based in another discipline, he has found that being involved with scholars of varying backgrounds has allowed him to learn a great deal and widen his research in addition to providing him with valuable team skills.

**10.50-11.00** Discussion

**11.30-12.30 Session 2. Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Interdisciplinarity, Networks, Impact and Public Engagement**

Chair: Martin Halliwell (M3C Site Director UoL)

**11.30-11.50 Dr Turi King (ECR, UoL) Interdisciplinarity and the Richard III project**



**Chair Martin Halliwell introducing Dr. Turi King**

To begin this session, Dr. Turi King explained her role as the molecular geneticist on the Richard III project at the University of Leicester. She started out in archaeology and anthropology at Cambridge, switching to genetics at postgraduate level to acquire enhanced interdisciplinary skills. She focused primarily on the interdisciplinary nature of the project, and how the combined expertise of scholars from the University of Leicester and other universities in the UK and Europe helped make it successful on an

international scale. In her discussion she detailed the process of the project and all those who played an integral role, emphasising how a combination of resources and interwoven disciplines was essential for reaching the end result. In sum, by combining multiple skill-sets and engaging with the public and wider audiences, this project has set the stage for future large-scale collaborative efforts.

**11.50-12.05 Dr Lawrence Green (Site Director, BCU), Collaborative Partnerships with Creative Industries**

In this talk, Dr. Green covered various types of collaborative projects with creative industries (CI) in which PGRs and Post-docs from his university had participated, enabling them to gain valuable work experience. He discussed how opportunities exist with all types of creative industries, ranging from start-ups to large corporations, and focusing on anything from fashion to oral hygiene. As the audience had previously heard from several speakers about the difficulty of finding an academic position, Dr. Green instead examined the benefits of a 'para-academic' career, outside of academia. He emphasised how many opportunities exist that draw on the transferable skills one acquires while obtaining a research degree, and went on



**Dr. Lawrence Green discussing collaborative partnerships outside of academia**

to exhibit several case studies detailing the type of work involved with such an endeavour. He concluded by stressing the real value of creative partnerships, again stating that alternative careers for researchers outside of academia exist if one is willing to expand their horizons and look in the right places.

**12.05-12.20** Dr Naomi Irvine (Research Staff Development Officer, UoL), New frameworks of researcher support in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Further emphasising the theme of interdisciplinarity, networks, and public impact, Dr. Naomi Irvine spoke about the needs and support systems available to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century researcher. She began by looking at some critical factors for all research-based careers including the concept of a 'linear' career, the acquisition of transferable skills, job security, responsiveness to opportunity, and the importance of funded research and the retention of it in the UK. Following this, Dr. Irvine talked specifically about the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which is designed to give researchers the structure and vocabulary to best assess work opportunities both in and outside academia, in addition to allowing them to highlight and articulate their strengths and transferable skills. Further to this, she touched on the key principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (2008), which focus on recruitment and selection, recognition and value, support and career development, diversity and equality, and implementation and review. For more information on both the RDF and the Concordat please go to [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk).

**12.20-12.30** Discussion

**14.00-16.00 Session 3: Break-out sessions** divided into four rooms, with each session repeated (allowing each delegate to attend 2/4 sessions)

**14.00-15.00 Break-out session 1: Presenting Yourself Effectively in CVs and Cover Letters** Facilitator: Naomi Irvine (Research Staff Development Officer, UoL)

Number of attendees: 58

In this first Break-out session Dr. Naomi Irvine covered some of the key 'dos and don'ts' of CV and cover letter composition. She began by looking at common mistakes made when composing a CV and/or cover letter, such as excessive length, poor structure, inclusion of unnecessary information, and lack of attention to the specific requirements of the position sought. She followed this by discussing the principles of an effective CV, which included making good use of space, putting your best evidence first, and tailoring your CV appropriately depending on the nature of the post/employer.

Dr. Irvine then went on to describe how CVs are assessed, stressing the brief amount of time given to each by shortlisting panels and reinforcing that many potential employers are initially looking to reject the majority of CVs received. She then elaborated on the differences between chronological/academic CVs and skills-based CVs, highlighting length and style as key differentiators. Next, Dr. Irvine discussed the principles for effective covering letters, emphasising length, specificity, and direction. This was followed by several group activities in which delegates exchanged and critiqued each other's CVs, and then read and examined a sample cover letter. For more information on exemplar CVs please see [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk).



Dr. Naomi Irvine discussing CV assessment

**14.00-15.00 Break-out session 2: Communicating with a Range of Audiences.**  
Facilitator: Dr Ceri Gorton (Cultural Development Manager, Oxford City Council)

Number of attendees: 42

Dr Gorton's session focussed on careers in the cultural sector as alternatives to an academic career. The presentation began with a survey she conducted among culture professionals on their 1) educational backgrounds, 2) how their studies helped them to work in the cultural sector and 3) what skills from their studies helped them most in their jobs. Her survey showed that the level of education is a primary factor in acquiring a job however other skills such as retail, catering and marketing experience and public engagement were also very significant in securing a position. Her second survey question, whether studies helped cultural professionals working in the sector resulted in an overall positive answer, whereas the third survey question highlighted the importance and applicability of transferrable, analytical and management skills acquired during higher education. In the second half of the session the perspective was reversed, and focused on how the cultural sector could benefit from employing people with arts and humanities doctorates. Dr Gorton pointed out that generally PhD graduates have received rigorous academic training but lacking hands-on experience and emphasised again the significance of transferrable skills such as creativity, critical and analytical thinking besides acquiring practical experience. A group exercise centred on outlining, organising, funding and managing a cultural event covered the final few minutes. The activity re-capped on the session's key issues: pitching a cultural event to the right audience, working closely with funding partners/institutions and planning ahead.



Dr. Ceri Gorton on communicating with a range of audiences

**14.00-15.00 Break-out session 3: Internships and Work Experience.** Facilitator: Professor Sharon Monteith (Director, M3C Doctoral Training Programme, UoN) with Jane Brown (M3C Manager, UoN)

Number of attendees: 25

Professor Monteith began with the introduction of the Midland3Cities Doctoral Partnership programme; collaboration between three major cities: Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham and their six universities. The partnership programme is setting out to build bridges between regional organisations, and between the region and national/international organisations in ways that underpin early career research and career development. According to the survey carried out by Vitae on career destinations, about half of the early career researchers participated in the survey had a definite career in mind, whereas the other half would consider multiple alternative careers. She highlighted that the partnership programme provides opportunities to engage with the private, public and third sectors, access new networks and communities, and to build a portfolio for multiple career paths. On the other hand early career researchers can provide partners with new perspectives that might help refine research questions, add capacity, new content and resources to collaborations. She pointed out that industry employers often describe potential employees with academic backgrounds in PhD research as ‘highly qualified but skills deficient’. They are often perceived not to meet the needs of the sector and to be missing technical, international, business and innovation skills. The final part of the session centred on group activities emphasising the importance of transferrable skills, networking and finding relevant initiatives that can be attractive to employers from a non-academic sector.

**14.00-15.00 Break-out session 4: Getting Published.** Facilitator: Professor Nahem Yousaf (M3C Site Director NTU), with Matthew Frost (Senior Commissioning Editor, Manchester University Press)

Number of attendees: 72

Professor Nahem Yousaf and Senior Editor Matthew Frost detailed the ins and outs of getting published. Prof. Yousef began the session by suggesting that researchers target one or two specific publishers relevant to their specific field, rather than sending out enquires to many different publishing houses. He then spoke about how editing is now up to the writer more than ever before, and that it is important for young researchers to develop these skills early on in their careers. He concluded by encouraging delegates to publish early, starting with short articles, and then leading to a monograph – however, not necessarily one’s PhD, as not all PhDs translate readily into books.

Next, Mr. Frost spoke about the history and direction of Manchester University Press, and stressed the importance of targeting the right audience via publisher selection. He went on to highlight current changes taking place in publishing due to the influx of online sources and availability of digital material, and mentioned how early career researchers can help dictate new technologies and ways of disseminating. This was followed by a brief discussion concerning topics such as the REF, publishing ethics, PhD embargoes, timeliness of publication, and expected price and profits related to publication.



**Matthew Frost, Senior Commissioning Editor of Manchester University Press**

**16.30-17.30 Session 4: Final break-out sessions** divided into two groups 16.30-17.30. These will be mainly Q&A discussion sessions

**16.30-17.30 Break-out session 5. Applying for Post-Doctoral Funding.** Facilitator: Dr. Diana Spencer, (M3C Site Director UoB), with Ken Emond and Jack Caswell (British Academy)

Number of attendees: 65



**Jack Caswell discussing the application process**

This breakout session featured Jack Caswell as the first speaker, and he began by explaining the roles and values of the British Academy - which is designed to provide funding and a voice to individual researchers who demonstrate excellence, independence, and distinctiveness in their work. While Mr. Caswell stated that the Academy does not prioritise by thematic priorities or by subject area, they do emphasise the importance of the excellence of the research, and are interested in knowing if the research is relevant to international engagement, languages and quantitative skills.

He followed this by detailing the annual budget of the Academy, the majority of which was spent on research and international engagement. He then discussed the post-doctoral fellowships offered by the British Academy, focusing on eligibility and the application

process. Next, the competitive nature of the fellowships was made clear in the success rate numbers that hover around 5-6% every year (last year- 802 applicants for 45 awards). Ken Emond was the following speaker in the session, and his talk focused on the various fellowships, research grants, and awards provided by the British Academy. He spoke about the evaluation criteria for these opportunities, which emphasise the originality, feasibility, and specificity of the application, as well as the intended outcomes and potential of the proposed project. He also touched on the various events organised by the British Academy on a yearly basis, and the various trainings and resources available to successful applicants. For more information on this topic please see [www.britshacademy.ac.uk](http://www.britshacademy.ac.uk).

**16.30-17.30 Break-out session 6. Career Planning beyond PhD and Post-Doc.** Facilitator: Professor Wendy Scase (UoB, former BA PDF), with Dr Naomi Irving (UoL) and Jane Brown (M3C Manager, UoN) focusing on career planning and applying for follow-on funding.

Number of attendees: 26

This discussion session was led by three presenters. First Dr Naomi Irvine discussed scenarios that may emerge after completing a PhD or a Post-Doc, preparing for personal, financial and other eventualities. Then she handed out a questionnaire in order to highlight that early career researchers leave higher education with vast number of transferrable skills applicable both in the academic and in the non-academic sector. Dr Jane Brown focussed on opportunities offered by the Creative Industries followed by an exercise centred on professional and transferrable skills and their relevance in securing a position. Finally, Professor Wendy Scase summarised the issues raised during the session. She highlighted the US based but increasingly international sites of #Alt-academy, #Altac and #Postac for alternative job opportunities before moving on to answering questions from the audience. In summary, early career researchers were encouraged to actively seek out suitable jobs both in academia and outside academia, focus on producing quality research and developing a range of transferrable skills.



The panel fielding questions from the audience