

AccessEd: Researcher Development Programme Researcher Engagement and Reflection Log

Workshop: [Transitioning to a Career: Mapping Opportunities](#)

Outline

This worksheet is designed for you to reflect on the key learning steps from the training workshop you attended and think about workshop learning outcomes in line with your learning portfolio.

We encourage you to make a note of your responses in a word document or otherwise, ensuring your record your reflections and consider what legacy this will have after the training has finished.

Consider the following actions that you might take in relation to this workshop engagement and reflection log:

- ✓ Consider sharing your reflections with your peers – Commonwealth Scholars and others
- ✓ How can you best record your notes and reflections to best suit your own individual style of learning?
- ✓ How might you use reflections from this worksheet log in the future to contribute towards learning in other workshops?

A. Self-reflection: Skills development

1. Below is a list of **technical / 'hard' transferable research skills'**, as discussed during training.

Rate your perceived strengths in the following areas. This is helpful for understanding what further training opportunities you could pursue and develop as part of your research degree – for translating into the world of work later! (1 = no expertise, 5 = high expertise):

	Data analysis
	Proposal writing
	Managing projects
	Managing or coordinating project teams
	Presenting and pitching ideas
	Practical coding, graphic design or data management tools
	Budgeting and managing project finances
	Comfort with new technology; common software suites
	Total (max: 40)

2. Below is a list of **professional / 'soft' transferable research skills**, as discussed during training.

Rate your perceived strengths in the following areas. This is helpful for understanding what further training opportunities you could pursue and develop as part of your research degree – for translating into the world of work later! (1 = no expertise, 5 = high expertise):

	Time management
	Critical analysis of issues
	Managing sensitive relationships
	Conveying complex information simply
	Ability to manage senior relationships
	Persuading and negotiating
	Adaptable and responsive to team needs
	Total (max: 35)

3. What was your biggest learning takeaway from the workshop?

4. How will you apply what you have learnt today to your research/studies, and how does it complement your learning portfolio?

5. What is one commitment you will make to improving your 'hard' or 'soft' transferable research skills?

E.g.

Skill: Presenting and pitching ideas

Action: Regardless of a public engagement event that I might have approaching, I will convene a group of peers / researchers to pitch X idea, and practice presenting this in front of the group. I aim to do this in X month, have X attendees, with X call to action for those in attendance.

Skill:

Action:

B. Self-reflection: Learning in relation to Transitioning to a Career

6. During training, we discussed 4 broad steps for 'where to start' when identifying job roles. These included:
- Checking job role terminology, which varies per country
 - Comparing similar jobs in the UK versus abroad and their differences
 - Researching a company's existing team to understand where the job fits
 - Checking the seniority of the role (not always apparent in job title)

Find a job role online that you might be interested in. Explore steps (a) – (d) for this role, writing your findings below.

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

7. We discussed that a key part of mapping your skills as a researcher to a job advert often involves effectively 'decoding' or interpreting the language. Building on our discussions, write three examples of wording you have seen in job adverts that often requires decoding. What is the true or central meaning of this terminology? What is the employer looking for exactly with these?

8. We covered the essential tips for writing a strong cover letter, including 'catching the hiring manager's attention early'. Your first two sentences should be clear and direct. Practice drafting your initial two sentences of a cover letter for an example job description you have found. This can be adapted and used time and again, but tailored for the role and context.

9. There are many ways to approach writing your CV, and you may need to draft different versions that are suitable to the main types of role you are applying for. Seeing different example versions of CVs is helpful. Ask friends or acquaintances to see a version of their CV. Take note below: What elements of this (format, wording, approach) would you like to adopt? What do you think does not work well with their format?

10. We discussed some practical tips for dealing with job rejection. You can practice 'getting good at' this process as part of your degree. Next time you get a rejection of any sorts (e.g. funding application, request for support etc.): (a) Ask for feedback – show commitment to self-development and review, (b) Identify learnings – what are the recurring problems? (c) Build a plan – how to address the issue identified? (d) Build resilience – stay constructive, see it as an opportunity to learn.

C. Tools to takeaway: Transitioning to a Career

Below is a list of further tools that can be used for transitioning to a career.

(i) Non-academic PhD jobs

Non-academic PhD jobs	
PhD subject	Job / industry
PhD in the Arts	Publishing, events management, digital marketing
PhD in Biological and Medical Sciences	Pharmaceuticals, genomics, clinical care
PhD in Business and Finance	Accountancy, data science, consultancy
PhD in Chemical Sciences	Chemical engineering, patents, food technology
PhD in Earth Sciences	Construction, environmental protection, mineral surveying
PhD in Engineering	Management consultancy, finance, aeronautics
PhD in Humanities	Civil service, content production, editorial
PhD in Law	Investment, teaching, public engagement
PhD in Maths and Computing	Finance, investment, web development
PhD in Physical Sciences	Software engineering, data science, sound engineering
PhD in Social Science and Health	Social work, public health, epidemiology

(ii) PhD career guide

Check out the PhD career guide, which contains career information, blocks and resources for different fields outside of academia. Developed by PhDs, for PhDs.

D. Further reading tip....

Articles:

- <https://www.findaphd.com/advice/doing/phd-non-academic-careers.aspx>
- <https://researchstudentcareers.wordpress.com>
- <https://versatilephd.com/phd-career-finder/> (based in North America but relevant in many countries)
- <https://thinkaheadsheffield.wordpress.com/category/careers-beyond-academia-sheffvista/case-studies>
- EXAMPLE CVs: <https://bit.ly/32bhgbA>

Humanities:

- <https://cheekyscientist.com/career-opportunities-for-humanities-phds/>

STEM:

- <https://cheekyscientist.com/top-10-list-of-alternative-careers-for-phd-science-graduates/>
- <https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/science-alternatives/>
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors>
- <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/media/pdf/careers/resources/10-career-paths-for-phds.pdf>