

# CSC Connect and Collaborate Event 2026

Tuesday 20 January 2026 | 14:30-16:00 GMT

QEII Centre, Westminster, London

## Networking in action: building connections through practice

This workshop is designed to equip you with the tools and confidence to forge meaningful relationships in diverse contexts. Through scenario-based activities and interactive exercises, you will learn how to approach academics, practitioners, and stakeholders, articulate your goals effectively, and maintain long-term professional connections. Whether you are seeking guidance for further education, building partnerships for research proposals, or expanding your professional network, this workshop offers practical strategies to help you succeed and unlock the potential of purposeful networking to take the next step in your career journey.

The key objectives of this exercise include:

1. Equip participants with the ability to initiate, maintain, and strengthen professional relationships in diverse contexts.
2. Improve participants' ability to articulate their goals, pitch ideas, and engage in meaningful conversations tailored to specific scenarios.
3. Enable participants to craft strategic approaches for building networks that align with their academic, professional, or project goals.
4. Encourage teamwork by having participants collectively brainstorm and create responses to realistic networking challenges.
5. Provide a safe environment for participants to practice engaging with academics, practitioners, and stakeholders.
6. Emphasise the importance of maintaining connections through follow-ups and sustained communication.

During the session, scholars will work in small groups on four activities:

1. ACTIVITY I: Understanding networking
2. ACTIVITY II: Self-reflection
3. ACTIVITY III: A story or example about building networks shared by the Commissioner
4. ACTIVITY IV: Scenario-based group task

## Programme

Start	End	Activity	Description	Allocated time slot
14:30	14:35	Arrival and grouping	Scholars arrive / sort into groups	<b>05 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
14:35	14:40	Introduction	Introduction to the session	<b>05 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
14:40	14:55	Activity I - A	Understanding Networking	<b>15 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
14:55	15:10	Activity I - B	Presentation from each group Churchill and Gielgud – 90 seconds per ground All other rooms – 3 mins per group	<b>15 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
15:10	15:15	Activity II	Self-Reflection	<b>05 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
15:15	15:20	Activity III	<b>Commissioner's</b> story/ experience about a networking challenge	<b>05 minutes</b>
15:20	15:30	Q & A	<b>Follow up questions for the Commissioners to take</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
15:30	15:50	Activity IV	Scenario-based Group Task <b>(discussion only)</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
–TRANSITION –				
15:50	15:55	Conclude	Wrap-up	<b>05 minutes</b>

## Session break-down

You will work through the following tasks during the session:

### ACTIVITY I - A: Understanding Networking (15 minutes) (GROUP activity)

#### Objectives:

1. Encourage reflection and share collective insights.
2. Understand that networking is about discovering shared interests.

**TASK DESCRIPTION** - Discuss and list at least 01 key point for each question below

#### 1. What is networking?

- Prompt: think about formal and informal networks, joining an existing network, creating a new network, your role in a network

#### 2. What are the benefits of networking in personal and professional contexts?

- Prompt: think about your motivation that drives you to work harder to network

#### 3. What are the perceived challenges in networking?

- Prompt: think locally as well as internationally, rapport building, following up

#### 4. What strategies can you use on social media to build meaningful connections with people outside your current network?

- Prompt: think of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK LinkedIn page

#### DELIVERABLES:

- Use poster papers to write down 01 key point for each question
- Designate a presenter from your group for the next activity
- A summary of key discussion points will be presented by the designated person in the next activity

**ACTIVITY I – B: Presentation from each group – (Not to be allocated more than 15 minutes to this activity – Churchill and Gielgud: 90 seconds per group. All other rooms, 3 mins per group)**



**Objectives:**

1. **Enhanced communication skills:** develop participants' ability to present ideas concisely and clearly in a group setting.
2. **Competence to share collective insights:** encourage the dissemination of diverse perspectives and strategies discussed within groups, benefiting all participants.
3. **Active listening:** foster attentiveness as participants listen to other groups' presentations and reflect on alternative approaches to networking scenarios.
4. **Competence for public speaking:** provide an opportunity for participants to practice presenting group discussions, boosting their confidence in articulating ideas to an audience.
5. **Competence to collaborate:** highlight the value of teamwork by presenting outcomes that represent the collective input of the group.
6. **Critical self-reflection on personal networking plan:** stimulate further thought on the strategies discussed, allowing participants to compare and refine their own approaches based on the shared ideas

**TASK DESCRIPTION** - The designated person from each group presents succinctly what the group will have discussed in ACTIVITY I – A.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- Designated presenter from your group presents in key points from Activity I - A

–TRANSITION –

**ACTIVITY II: Self-reflection (05 minutes) (INDIVIDUAL activity)**

**Objectives:**



1. **Self-reflection on networking goals:** participants will identify and articulate their primary motivation for networking, fostering a deeper understanding of their personal and professional networking objectives.
2. **Defining ideal networking connections:** by listing characteristics of a person, they would like to network with, participants will develop clarity on aligning their networking efforts with their goals, ensuring targeted and meaningful interactions.
3. **Action-oriented networking:** participants will commit to a specific networking action to take after the workshop, encouraging accountability and practical application of the skills learned.
4. **Linking motivation to strategy:** the activity will help participants connect their motivations for networking with actionable strategies, promoting intentional and goal-driven networking practices.
5. **Encouraging proactive engagement:** by setting clear intentions, participants will feel more confident and prepared to take initiative in future networking opportunities.

**TASK DESCRIPTION** - Each participant is asked to write down on an A4 sized paper:

- What is your motivation to network? (list **one reason**)
- Write down **three characteristics** of a person you would want to network with. These characteristics must align with your motivations/goals for networking, for example characteristics based on skills, knowledge, field of expertise, profession.
- List **one networking action** that you will take in this event after this workshop concludes.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- Use plain paper to write down responses to questions above (stationery will be provided)

–TRANSITION –

**ACTIVITY III:** A story or example shared by the **Commissioner** about their experience where they were able to overcome a networking challenge. **(05 minutes)**

**Q & A:** This time slot will be used to let Scholars ask follow-up questions to the Commissioner **(10 minutes)**

**Objectives:**



1. **Inspiring participants through real-life examples:** demonstrate practical approaches to overcoming networking challenges by sharing a relatable and authentic story.
2. **Providing a learning opportunity:** offer participants insights into effective strategies and behaviours for tackling obstacles in building professional connections.
3. **Fostering engagement and reflection:** encourage participants to reflect on their own experiences and think critically about how they can apply similar solutions to their networking challenges.
4. **Normalising networking challenges:** highlight that challenges in networking are common and can be overcome, fostering a sense of resilience and motivation among participants.
5. **Building trust and credibility:** strengthen participants' confidence in the session by highlighting the commissioner's expertise and real-world experience.
6. **Encouraging storytelling as a networking tool:** demonstrate the power of storytelling in connecting with others and creating impactful relationships.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- No deliverables

–TRANSITION –

**ACTIVITY IV: Scenario-based Group task (20 minutes) (GROUP activity)**

**Objectives:**

1. **Developing problem-solving skills:** encourage participants to analyse real-life or simulated situations, fostering critical thinking and the ability to devise effective solutions.
2. **Enhancing teamwork and collaboration:** promote active collaboration by requiring group members to share ideas, discuss perspectives, and reach a consensus.



3. **Practising real-world applications:** provide participants with an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, improving their readiness for real-world challenges.
4. **Building communication skills:** strengthen participants' ability to articulate their thoughts, listen actively, and communicate effectively within a group.
5. **Encouraging creativity and strategic thinking:** inspire participants to think creatively and strategically when addressing the complexities of the scenario.
6. **Fostering engagement and participation:** create an interactive and dynamic learning environment where participants actively engage in the task and contribute to group outcomes.
7. **Reinforcing key learning objectives:** enable participants to connect the activity to the workshop's overall goals, such as networking, leadership, or problem-solving.
8. **Boosting confidence in decision-making:** provide a safe space for participants to practise decision-making and gain confidence in handling similar situations in the future.

**Task DESCRIPTION** - Each group will be allocated one scenario to work on.

You will discuss key strategies amongst yourselves that might help you to respond effectively to the given scenario. While you are welcome to share personal experiences, you are expected to be succinct, ensuring that everyone in the group can participate.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- No deliverables

– THE END –