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Title of training:	Navigating new academic environments
Date of training:	14 March 2024
Number of attendees:	15
Work package number:	WP2

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Training held: 14 March 2023

Weblink(s): <https://sareurope.eu/sar-resources/networking-for-researchers-at-risk/>

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Training Workshop 3 – Navigating new academic environments

Date: 14 March 2024

Time: 3pm – 4pm CET (1 hour)

Trainer: Dr Karly Kehoe, Professor of History & Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Communities

Participants: 23

- Gender split: the group of 15 participants consisted of 6 women (40%) and 9 men (60%)
- Countries of origin: The participants were originally from Afghanistan (6), Ukraine (2), Syria (4), Turkey (2) and Myanmar (1)
- Career stage: R1 (1), R2 (7), R3 (4), R4 (3)
- Disciplines using the Frascati Manual: Social Sciences (6), Natural Sciences (5), Engineering and Technology (2), Humanities and the arts (2).

Selection Process

- In line with the Grant Agreement, invitations for the interactive training were shared with a number of current clients and recent alumni of programmes assisting researchers and scholars in Europe (PAUSE, PSI, SAR, Cara, SRF). Invitations were shared by each partner or associate partner with researchers from their own list of researcher-clients who had previously indicated an interest in further training/development opportunities relating to this topic.
- In line with the Grant Agreement, there will be opportunity for all clients (researchers at risk) supported by partner organisations within the consortium to participate in at least 1 interactive training over the 3-year project. For the in-person training associated with the project's annual platform if there is more interest than space allows, priority will be given to researchers in Germany for Berlin-based training, and researchers in France for the Paris-based training.
- Data gathered from training registrants included: personal data needed for the purposes of logistics of training registration (email, name, contact number); country of origin, gender; ideas for topics to address in future interactive trainings; researchers' career level; discipline, broad research field.

Format

- The interactive training was held online in a group format led by an experienced trainer. The format prioritised interactive and direct participation by each attendee and allowed for attention to individual queries and contexts. The training was not recorded in order to encourage robust and unfiltered participation by all attendees and in consideration of the

security of each scholar. This format was arrived at based upon previous experience shared by organisations within the consortium experienced in organising trainings and workshops for researchers at risk, including based on feedback from participants following past events.

- This format allowed any questions to be answered throughout the session and ensured sufficient time for follow-up questions and discussion at the end of the session.

Topic

- The topic provided an opportunity for specific and interactive follow-up training following the Inspireurope+ public webinar held in October 2023 on ‘The Power of Networking’. The webinar took a broader approach to this topic listed under D2.4 in the GA, whilst the interactive training session focussed on navigating and integrating into new academic environments, ensuring it was applicable to all researchers regardless of discipline.
- The trainer, Dr Karly Kehoe, is currently a Full Professor of History and Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Communities at Saint Mary’s university in Canada, with extensive experience as a recognised research leader at both national and international levels. She has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications. She is convenor of the Scottish Historical Review Trust, fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and co-editor of the Histories of the Scottish Atlantic book series with Edinburgh University Press. Dr Kehoe is also Founder of three major international and national initiatives to support academic researchers displaced by war, conflict and/or persecution.

Agenda Overview

The session was intended for researchers at risk to provide them with information and guidance on navigating new academic environments:

1. Expectations

Initial discussion explored setting expectations from the offset, looking at the competitive nature of academic environments, cultural differences and dealing with rejections.

2. Networking

This section of the sessions focussed on three key areas; sharing your expertise, collaboration and social media.

3. Transferrable Skills

The final part of the session looked at transferrable skills and the concept of reimagining your work, thinking strategically about how to network outside of academia and apply your skills in this setting.

Q&A

The final part of the session was dedicated to any answering participants’ questions which had not been addressed during the training. Questions that were asked [paraphrased here for clarity]:

1. Should a CV include publications?
2. Is it OK to discuss your research before it is published? Should you wait until it is published to present it at a conference?

3. Can you discuss a possible research position with an academic even if there is currently no advertised opportunity?
4. Do you have examples of a good CV?

Observations

- Participants were keen to ask questions verbally.
- Questions at the end of the session were only asked by more early career researchers (R2 or below).
- Interest largely sat within CV writing.
- There were immigration related questions that could not be answered as they were beyond the expertise of the trainer engaged. Participants were encouraged to reach out to their host institutions or relevant partner organisation for immigration-focused queries.

Summary points

- Several participants were interested in further resources and guidelines on CVs.
- Participants requested the trainers' slides be shared with them.

Evaluation/Feedback

- Feedback forms have been sent out to all participants. The form template can be found in Annex B.

Participant guide and resource list

- Researchers were provided with the slides from the session, including links to useful resources. The trainer also provided a copy of her CV as a reference point for those in the social sciences and humanities. She is also collating additional CVs to be shared with participants.



Navigating new Academic Environments

S. KARLY KEHOE

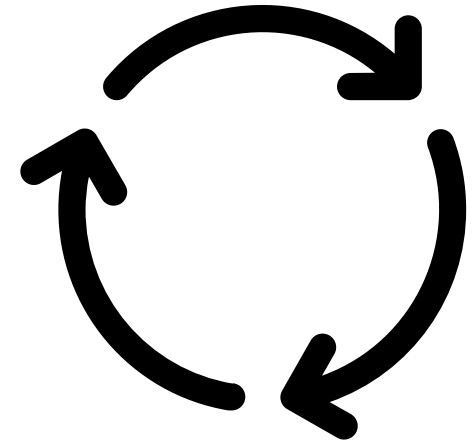
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, SAINT
MARY'S UNIVERSITY, CANADA

Giving yourself the best chance

EXPECTATIONS

NETWORKING

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



Expectations

- ❖ UK and European Academia is very competitive
- ❖ There are major cultural differences - understanding these matter
- ❖ You will be expected to publish
- ❖ You will be expected to attract research funding
- ❖ You will be expected to collaborate across multiple institutions
- ❖ You will be expected to be able to handle rejections (happens ALL the time)

Competitive academic environment

- **Attitude** is critical
- Be **honest** about your strengths and weaknesses
- Be **proactive** – it's your future.
- Look for **opportunities** and engage with them
- Sometimes it's about being in the **right place at the right time**
- Give yourself a **time limit** – then move on

Cultural Differences

- **Accept** that there are major cultural differences
 - Work out what they are
 - Ask questions to help you understand the UK system
- **CVs and Cover letters are different** – know what information goes in and what stays out.
- How do you address someone? **First impressions matter.**
- **Subtexts.** You need to learn how to read them.

Rejections

- Rejections will happen all the time – this is nothing personal, this is the way the system is.
- **Publishing:** The peer-review process is robust and essential. Feedback can be harsh.
- **Funding** is hard to get. Applications are very labour-intensive.
 - Make sure you spend enough time preparing a good application – a lot more writing than you're used to
 - Initially, it's going to be more helpful if you collaborate with others in established positions who will be the grant lead.
- **Jobs:** There are a lot of factors at play behind the scenes that have nothing to do with you such as university politics/funding concerns/research cohorts/areas of expertise
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help:** if you don't understand something, ask for support in understanding it. It doesn't hurt to ask for feedback – you may or may not get it. It's nothing personal.

Networking

- ❖ Networking matters A LOT
- ❖ Help people learn about you and what you have to offer – you might fill a gap in someone’s research team
- ❖ Expanding your pool of potential collaborators & may help with a job
- ❖ Learning new approaches to research & teaching
- ❖ Social media is important – but be careful!

Sharing Your Expertise

- **Attend** conferences, seminars, workshops, talks regularly
 - People will start to know who you are
 - You can speak with people about your shared interests
 - You can keep up to date with that's happening in the field locally
- **Offer to present** your work
 - Is there a department/institute/centre that you could reach out to and enquire about opportunities to present your work at seminars/lecture series?
 - Is there a way you could get involved with some of their activities – just to learn about how things work
- **Upload your papers** and other outputs to academia.edu, ResearchGate (find out what is used most in your field). This will allow people to see what you've already done.

Collaboration

- **Join** professional associations/societies in your field to ensure you keep up with what's going on
- **Reach out** to individual researchers who have good track record of collaborations (requires research)
- **Baby steps** – this will take time but think about the work you would like to do and then identify people who might like to do it with you.
- **Be willing to engage** with established researchers in the UK on their terms – they don't know you.
- If it comes to developing a grant, **understand the restrictions** of the funding, what your status needs to be in advance (last minute surprises are difficult).
- **Don't bully** or put too much pressure on people – you don't know what they're juggling and what they can cope with.

Social Media

- **Do** have a social media profile if you feel comfortable (LinkedIn – X – Facebook)
- **Do** make it professional (you might need a personal that is locked and a professional that is public)
- **Do** Be positive
- **Don't** engage in public debates
- **Don't** criticize universities/colleagues/departments (people will google you and your social media profiles)
- **Do** post about research in helpful ways (share information, announce publications, congratulate colleagues, talk about important developments in your field, etc.)
- **Don't** post all the time – looks like you have nothing else going on.

Transferable Skills

- ❖ Most PhD holders will not get a position in academia – regardless of discipline.
- ❖ It is unlikely that you will find a position that is directly connected with your research so how can you reimagine your work?
- ❖ You have significant transferable skills – what are they? Do you need additional ones?
- ❖ Where might these skills be most useful?
- ❖ How can you think about your work in new ways?
- ❖ Networking outside of academia matters

Reimagining your work

- **Do** know your field but don't be a hostage to it – where can your work take you?
- **Don't** be too narrow in your focus – how can your work be applied more broadly?
- **Don't** assume a job excludes you – how might it include you?
- **Do** be versatile! Being able and willing to pivot is useful – it will also help you to see all that you have to offer.
- **Do** think about which aspects of your work give you the most positive energy – how might this be harnessed outside of academia?

Additional Skills

- Additional training is always a good thing
- What skills do you need or want to build up?
- What criteria are you missing?
- What interests you?
- Are there external organisations you can get involved with to help you make new friends? Building a broader support network is a critical skill.

Networking outside of Academia

- **Don't** be so attached to the idea of an academic job that you can see other opportunities
 - Give yourself a time limit
 - What are your skills (know these)
- **Do** think strategically when you attend conferences/seminars/workshops – do people there highlight any external partners?
 - What are they and how can you connect?
 - Are there ways to connect with those organisations in non-academic settings?
- **Do** some research on how expectations differ in terms of CVs, cover letters, interviews.
 - Give yourself a time limit
 - What are your skills
 - What interests you



Inviting Feedback: Training on Navigating New Academic Environments

The Inspireurope+ project would welcome your feedback on our interactive training on Navigating New Academic Environments for researchers at risk, held on 14 March 2024.

Please note that your responses to this evaluation are strictly confidential and anonymous. If you have questions, please contact inspireurope@mu.ie

* Required

1. Overall, how would you rate the interactive training on navigating new academic environments for researchers at risk ?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2. Do you have any improvements to suggest for future interactive trainings?

3. Was the interactive training too long, too short, or about the right length of time? *

- Too long
- About right
- Too short

4. Did the interactive training advance your knowledge about navigating new academic environments for researchers at risk? *

- Yes
- No
- Other

5. What additional information, if any, would you have found helpful?

6. Do you have suggestions for future interactive training topics for researchers at risk in Europe?

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