Postgraduate Student Engagement with Professional Development

Professor K T Wann
Former Deputy Dean, University Graduate College
Professor of Cell Physiology,
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Postgraduate Student Engagement with Professional Development

Why is this a necessary agenda?

How might we facilitate / this?

What do we deliver?

What have we achieved?

The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.

(James A. Garfield)
The seven rules of engagement

- Contextualise the landscape
- Make it relevant (needs-based)
- Benefits must be clearly articulated
- Case studies to support
- Manageable agenda to avoid tensions
- Supervisor “buy-in”
- Use every opportunity to promote
Current academic employment landscape

Figure 1.6 Careers in and outside science
The majority of doctorate holders leave academia

- **Academic career**: 18%
  - Academic professorship: 9% of PhD graduates
  - Permanent staff

- **Post-doc**: 34%

- **PhD**: 100%
  - Non-academic career: 66%
    - Public sector
    - NGO
    - Industry
    - Teaching

- **Non-Academic**: 91% of PhD graduates

Source: VRWB
Standing out from the crowd
Important headlines to address
(The changed landscape)

• The modern PhD has been traditionally the stepping stone to an academic career.

• In the last 30 years or so the likelihood of achieving an academic position in the UK has however diminished.

• There is a sense that there is still an overemphasis on the academic track and an under-valuing of other career paths.

• Sample headlines
  • what is the stand alone PhD really worth?
  • the PhD is “broken” and needs a total rethink
  • ditch the current system

Nature (2011), 472
Increasing PhD awareness - Personal and Professional Development

Catch the students early (at induction events)

• emphasise the need to stand out from the crowd (the need to lay down the foundation of the future)

• take ownership of needs (build these into a research plan)

• develop a direction of travel – research methods, presentation skills (networking), publishing, managing time and people, gaining teaching experience, organising meetings, budgeting, developing new initiatives, contributing to the Institutional agenda (student voice), engaging with enterprise activities, considering internships, carrying out public outreach
Increasing PhD awareness - Personal and Professional Development

Have (e)systems in place to interrogate whether the student is engaging with PDP:

- reinforce this agenda at fora / network meetings / events / workshops
- make it part of progression monitoring (six monthly reporting in Cardiff University)
- emphasise the RCUK steer on this
- make it part of the discussion between examiners and the candidate at the *viva voce*, so building it into the examiners’ joint report on the Thesis and the candidate
- indicate that this is examined in PRES (student experience – a metric in league tables)
Increasing supervisor awareness -
Personal and Professional
Development (PDP)

Do supervisors (academic staff) engage in PDP themselves?

• This must come through the Institution (staff development courses) or must be
generated by the staff member themselves (RDF).

• Are there good examples from the doctoral candidates or supervisors that
adopting PDP has tangible benefits? These can be shared.

• Build mentoring of PDP into work allocation models and staff appraisals
(recognition of, and rewards for this activity).

• Is this the domain of the supervisory team (Cardiff) or should there be another
“mentor” involved? (pastoral versus research). Would this create a tension
between what might be conceived as conflicting agendas?

• PRES / REF – implications for the Institution.

• RCUK – a condition of funding (challenges with block grants / inter-Institutional
collaborations).
Supervisor engagement and Inspirational Supervisor Awards

2016: Local Cardiff University award (ESLA) “Outstanding Doctoral Supervisor” (Good practice - recognising, rewarding and awarding)

The Doctoral Academy is host to around 400 workshops/ courses/ lectures/ events/ competitions/ conferences etc
Getting engaged

Several careers events each year: careers inside and out of HEIs (Academia)

Personal and Professional Development (PDP): what it is, and what it can do for you

PDP is…
“A structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.”

Employers inform our processes!
Empowering Doctoral Candidates Through Personal Development Planning

Proceedings
Student – led conferences:

perhaps the “first” experience of engaging with an audience
(exploit this to deliver a message)
c.f. participatory democracy (gamification)
Public Engagement Event
Student Showcase
A quarterly newsletter showcases who we are and what we do
Planning and writing your PhD Thesis
(October 2016)

School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

K T Wann
Professor of Cell Physiology

www.cardiff.ac.uk/doctoral-academy
www.twitter.com/cardiffda
Preventing for your Viva Voce (2015)

Ken Wann, Deputy Dean, University Graduate College
wann@cardiff.ac.uk
The mock viva
(The good and the bad)

- Staged performances
  Cast:
  - Candidate
  - External examiner
  - Internal examiner
  - Chair
The Doctoral Academy hosts major community building events
The Doctoral Academy hosts major community building events

Power of procrastination

PhD comics

Jorge Cham
## Programme Level Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 3.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-3.49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50-3.99</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00-4.49</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.50-5.00</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 4.0 or above</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Results of Feedback Forms

- Usefulness
- Satisfied with Presenter(s)
Impact: Use of training

- Conference Poster
- Postdoc Research Pos. & F'ships
- Lecturing Skills
- Practical Proj. Management
- Word: Working With Long Docs
- Turbocharge Your Writing
- Seven Secrets
- Rapid Reading
- Presentation Skills: An Intro

Legend:
- Red: Used aspects of training
- Pink: Not used but intend to
- Black: Not used and will not use
Table 7: Impact of training on progress of PhD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops/Events</th>
<th>Weighted mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Posters</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turbocharge your writing</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: Working With Long Documents</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Project Management for Your Research</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Secrets of Highly Successful Researchers</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Reading</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Skills: An Introduction</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral Research Positions and Fellowships (Sciences/Social Sciences)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing Skills</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean score: on 5 point scale, 1 = not at all, 5 = very much
Thank you for your attention