

## Tip sheet: Quick-fire networking: 15 suggestions to build your network and enhance your visibility

Here is a series of activities and approaches you could take to develop your networks and networking skills and enhance your visibility and impact. None of them involve awkwardly approaching strangers at a conference! Some are quick, some more time consuming and they add together to make a big impact. Which of these *could* (and will) you start doing?

### 1. Boost the audience of your research outputs

Think about all the ways you can boost the readership and impact of your articles so that more people get to see what you are doing. There are some great suggestions in the University of Edinburgh's [guide to boosting the impact of publications](#).

### 2. Engage in open research

[ORCID](#) provides a persistent digital identifier (an **ORCID** iD) that you own and control, and that distinguishes you from every other researcher. Make use of tools like [preprints](#), [figshare](#) and institutional repositories to share your work and engage with a wider audience. Use hashtags and share posters or a summary of your publications on twitter.

### 3. Have a collaborative mindset

Whenever you meet someone new in a work context – whether they are focus is research, teaching, policy, professional services within the College, let your first thought be ‘How could we collaborate?’ and ‘What could I offer you’. If you can develop the habit of collaboration curiosity you will be looking for reasons to connect and it will make you naturally curious about the other person and so more likely to ask good questions and actively listen which, in turn, will build trust.

### 4. Be consistent:

Consistency across different ways of communicating, whether online or face to face will help people to understand who you are and where your interests might overlap and helps to build trust. In talks, presentations, emails and articles: are you using the same phrases and words in your descriptions of yourself and your work?

### 5. Have keywords

If you were searching for a journal article, it's likely you'd use keywords. What keywords or phrases would represent you as a researcher? Research themes? Challenges? Techniques or soft skills? Sectors? Create a small set of key words or phrases and make sure they are used consistently whenever you communicate about yourself.

### 6. Engage with your [Industry partnerships and Commercialisation](#) team

It's their job to develop links between researchers and industry - they may know of funding that will enable this or may have contacts to introduce to you if you have a compelling offer or request. They may also be running networking events

## 7. Connect with a funding programme manager

Programme or portfolio managers at funding bodies want to speak directly to researchers so that they can help you to submit high-quality proposals to the most relevant schemes. They can also connect you to potential collaborators or stakeholders. Make sure you know them, and they know you. Contact a portfolio/programme manager and ask them to comment on a one-page summary of an idea you have. Better still, invite them to the College to speak to a group of colleagues about upcoming schemes and to share good practice. That will help you to network within the College as well.

## 8. Review your online profile

Make sure your profile is up to date and ask someone else to review it and give you feedback. It's the first place someone will look to learn about you – make sure it reflects you and where you are going. [Engage in our suggested activity to review your online presence.](#)

## 9. Attend an event

Work through the [‘review your network’ worksheet](#) and find a gap that you want to address. Is there a particular type of event, training course, workshop, consultation, or conference, that you could participate in, which might allow you to become more visible and develop more connections (or deepen existing ones) in this area? Don't overwhelm yourself – just pick one small thing to do that will move you forward a little.

## 10. Organise an event

If there isn't an event or a network in your area- why not organise one? Better still, delegate this to your team if you have one. Taking the lead to organise an event (workshop, conference, 'ignite talks', sandpits etc) is a great way to make sure that everyone attending knows you are, as well as seeing you as someone who invests in the health and direction of your discipline. If you don't have the time or resources to organise an event, maybe it's something smaller like a journal or book club, seminar, podcast or even just a twitter conversation.

Invite a small number of industry contacts to a short workshop (online or face to face) where you can each share current interests, expertise, future plans and challenges. Time spent just listening to each other's perspectives can help to quickly build trust and rapport and find ways that you could start working together. You may even be able to get funding to have sessions like this professionally facilitated (ask your local research support team or Head of Department).

## 11. ‘Stratify’ your introductions

How do you describe your work when you meet people? Can you write down three or four different levels of description, depending on someone's own area of expertise or interest? Starting with a simple non-technical explanation, becoming more detailed. Practice them and have them ready to use when you are 'on the spot' meeting someone for the first time. Here's some advice on drafting a short pitch that provides [a useful structure for researchers.](#)

## 12. Use your email signature:

Your email signature is also a place to indicate what you're interested in. "Here's my latest tweet...", "Contact me if you want to know more about xxxx". "Here's my latest article:"

### **13. Share future plans**

The new people you meet are interested in ‘future you’. They will be interested in engaging with things you will work on next. Be sure to talk about these in presentations and in your online profile. “I’m interested in working on XXX next – please get in touch if you’re interested in discussing or working with me on this” or “I’ll be working in the following places/ with the following people in future, let me know if you have experience or contacts I could use” or “I’d like to set up a special interest group on XXX ...contact me if you would like to join”.

### **14. Write short lay articles or blogs**

Writing for an industry magazine or an article for [The Conversation](#) can hugely (and rapidly) widen your audience and potential networks. The joy of this kind of writing is that it is much shorter than an academic article, and doesn’t involve the peer review process, so is much quicker as well.

### **15. Consult your media team or write a press release**

[Your media team](#) are experts in finding channels to disseminate your research to a wide audience. Can you take advantage of their social media feeds or get your name on their list of experts for press queries? Arrange a conversation with them to get advice on how you can boost the visibility of your research or your group.