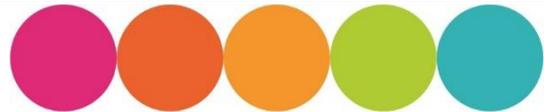


# POSTDOC AND FELLOWS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Tailored support and development for postdocs, fellows and clinicians



## Welcome to the PFDC newsletter

**April 2019**

Welcome to April's newsletter! With the Easter holidays around the corner a reminder that Imperial closes at your usual finishing time on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April and re-opens on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Whilst eating your Easter Eggs you may find it useful to reflect on your personal and academic goals for the year. Please check our [website](#) for any courses which could help you to achieve them. The PFDC Team would like to wish you a happy and relaxing Easter break!



For more information about the Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre (PFDC) please:

- Visit our [website](#)
- Follow us on Twitter
- Contact us with any queries



Note that information about grants and fellowships are posted on our twitter feed.

If you have any information, events or surveys that you would like to advertise which are relevant to postdocs, fellows and clinicians at Imperial, please [email](#) the PFDC team. We would like to hear from you!

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## PFDC in Focus: Pensions Auto-enrolment

If you are not an active member of one of Imperial's pension schemes (USS, SAUL, NHSPS) and you meet certain criteria, you will be enrolled in a pension scheme on 1 May 2019.



### Why is this happening?

All employers are required by law to enrol staff who meet certain criteria in a pension scheme to help people save more for their retirement. We have to make sure all staff are enrolled in a pension scheme every three years, even if you have opted out before.

### When is this happening?

Wednesday 1 May 2019. Unless you are a casual worker and don't get paid in May, your pension contributions will begin in the first month you earn over £833.

### What do I do if I want to be in a pension scheme?

You don't have to take any action. You will receive confirmation of your enrolment from the pensions office and the relevant pension scheme.

### What do I do if I don't want to be in a pension scheme?

Once you have been enrolled in a pension scheme on 1 May, you can opt out if you wish. You cannot do this until 1 May at the earliest. If you change your mind, you can join a pension scheme at any time by contacting the pensions team.

### More information

Further information can be found [here](#).

## 1. New Springboard Trainer – Bernie Babel

The PFDC's Co-ordinator Bernie Babel is now a qualified [Springboard](#) trainer!

Bernie has been with the PFDC since it started and from September will be running the Springboard Women's Development Programme. The PFDC Team would like to send a huge congratulations to Bernie!



The Springboard Women's Development Programme is an award winning international programme which allows women to identify the clear, practical and realistic steps they want to take, and allows them to develop the skills and self-confidence to take those steps.

## 2. PFDC 10 Year Celebration ... An Invitation!



## 3. Blog of the Month

### New year, new career? 10 questions academics should ask themselves

It might be already April but it's never too late (or early) to think about your career choices. This means both your choices so far and your choices for the future. [The Early Career Blog post](#) has great tips to get you started on that thought process, whether you want to stay in Academia or not! You might not find it easy or even find that some questions don't apply to you, but this post will have you reflect on some key aspects of career decision making.

Don't forget the PFDC is here to provide you with support ... Check our [tip sheets](#) or book a [one-to-one](#) and take charge of your career!



## 4. Fellows and Clinicians Bespoke Programme of Support

### Fellows and Clinicians Forum

*Eight researchers. Two experts. Thought-provoking discussions.*

The spring term fellows and clinicians forum, held on 14 March at St Mary's Campus, focussed on building collaborations – ethics, fears, misconceptions and approaches to effective collaborations. A highly enjoyable and beneficial opportunity for honest conversations with academic experts and peers that led to increased confidence and answers to worries about building collaborations.

#### A selection of feedback from the participants:

"Really enjoyed the afternoon and I am very grateful for the time of the speakers. I especially benefitted from the discussion around protecting one's own interest in research collaboration and how to play the game to maximise the chances of success. All very useful to hear from people who have been successful."

"It was great to meet other fellows and clinicians who have similar queries about how to form effective collaborations. It was really helpful to hear the speakers' personal experiences and it was particularly useful to hear that it is OK to send an email to potential collaborators even if you don't know them."

"I found the speakers to be engaging and honest about their experiences. I appreciate them sharing their streamlined approach to get their collaborations going. Involve important people, keep an email trail and stay upfront about expectations would be my takeaways."

"I found it very useful and eye opening...My take home message was that for collaboration: 1- you don't necessarily need to know the people you want to collaborate with  
2- First approach people who complement your expertise to fulfil your idea, next stage is to go broader and involve more senior people and then worldwide if needed 3- Be bold and organized, strategic and hard working 4- You don't need to be the main applicant."

"I very much enjoyed seeing 2 people who had different personalities and were able to make excellent career progress and networking. I appreciated the tips about how to approach potential collaborators by Karen, and will definitely use something along the lines of the email that Channa used. I also liked the suggestions about how to subtly ensure that work is appropriately recognised, etc."

Please email suggestions for themes for the next forum, to be held on Wednesday 3 July 2019 (3-5 pm) at SK Campus to PFDC Consultant [Lenne Lillepuu](#)

The **purpose** of the forum is to provide our fellows and clinicians with a regular platform to interact, share expertise and build cross-discipline contacts across the College with the aim to enhance their careers. It provides an opportunity to interact and learn from senior colleagues – senior fellows, Deans, HoDs and diverse experts within the College and outside. The **format** will continuously evolve along with changing needs and priorities.

## 5. PFDC Writing Retreat

*Twenty researchers. Two consecutive days. Tremendous progress.*

A successful two day writing retreat, where 20 Imperial researchers (non-clinical and clinical) across all faculties benefitted from dedicated space, breath of expertise and mentoring to produce a piece of writing such as a fellowship application, a manuscript or a paper, was held earlier this month. The success is evidenced by fantastic feedback from the researchers and the tremendous progress the researchers made during the retreat.



A selection of feedback below highlights how the intended objectives of the retreat were met:

“The retreat gave me the possibility to close the door to my day to day activities and concentrate in a quiet and isolated environment.”

“The writing retreat has allowed me to dedicate time to make significant progress in writing an important paper.”

“It has brought about a great sense of clarity and emphasised an importance of vocabulary choice, language structure and developing a clear narrative while writing. I have strongly benefitted from this course and feel better equipped to carry out my grant writing.”

“1:1 meetings with experts from Centre for Academic English were particularly encouraging and have made me rethink how I write and will undoubtedly improve my productivity and output.”

“1:1 session with bibliometrics expert from the Library was very useful in planning the impact sections.”

“I have always been slightly mystified by how to structure my writing. This retreat helped me to make the structure of my writing a lot clearer. It has also made me feel more confident about future work.”



“To dedicate time and space provided during the writing retreat with colleagues was incredible.”

“It is really rare to have the opportunity to receive support like this for an activity as important as writing”.

“Being away from Imperial helped me focus.”



**Call for applications for future writing retreats will be released within the next few months. Stay tuned!**

**[Take a look](#)** at the two day writing retreat schedule for a clear idea of what the writing retreat involves. Any questions – **[please email the PFDC Team](#)**

## 6. Pop Ups

**Pathways for Postdocs:  
Career perspective and opportunities from the corporate world  
Monday 8 April 2019, 15:00-16:00, SALC 1, South Kensington**

Career perspective in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG): working in marketing, innovation & market research in a global world.

We have invited a manager from one of the largest consumer goods company to share her professional experience and ideas about opportunities of career in the corporate world.

Please sign up for the event via this [Qualtrics link](#)

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**Pathways for Postdocs:  
Your gateway into start-ups  
Wednesday 10 April 2019, 12:00 – 13:00, SALC 1, South Kensington Campus**

**Deep Science Ventures** ([dsv.io](http://dsv.io)) support scientists to build ground-breaking ventures from scratch.

An increasing number of researchers are crossing over from years in the academic realm into start-ups. It's fast-paced, impact-driven and enables a rare degree of independence. As some of the scientists at Deep Science Ventures have put it: "Anywhere else, you join someone else's vision for what a perfect workplace is. The most valuable thing about building a company is that you get to build the place where you go to work every day." Finally, it is arguably the most direct and rewarding way to transfer your research skills to creating something of tangible value fast.

The million dollar question is, of course, how does one even get started? How to validate the "good" ideas, how to mitigate the inherent risk, how to build a killer team? How to attract capital for continuous growth? For interesting answers to these and many other questions that you have about the world of a scientist entrepreneur at Imperial, join an unconventional workshop with Deep Science Ventures, experienced venture builders and science geeks at heart.

Please sign up for the event via this [Qualtrics link](#)

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**Pop Up: Getting started with Idox GRANTfinder  
Thursday 11 April 2019, 14.00 – 15:00, SALC 9, South Kensington Campus**

The College has subscribed to **Idox GRANTfinder 4 Education**, an online provider for research funding information, offering a searchable database of funding opportunities.

This Pop Up will highlight the key functions of GRANTfinder from how to login in, the search functions, alerts and news bulletins.

Please sign up for the event via this [Qualtrics link](#)

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**Pop Up: What's your Research Vision?  
Wednesday 17 April 2019, 10.00 – 12:00, SALC 6, South Kensington Campus**

A clear idea of your research vision is essential as you progress on the academic career path.

- Do you have a defined research vision?
- How well can you articulate why your research is important?

- Can you explain how your research fits in to the bigger picture?
- What will change in the field because of your research?

An explanation or discussion of your research vision is often required in both fellowship and lectureship applications and in interviews.

This Pop Up will provide the opportunity for you to explore key questions to help you develop and map out your research vision and provide you with time to get feedback on your answers and to give feedback to peers.

Please sign up for the event via this [Qualtrics link](#)

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**Pop Up: Non-academic CVs and Cover Letters**  
**Wednesday 17 April 2019, 14.00 – 16:00, SALC 6, South Kensington Campus**

Are you considering a different career? Have you ever wondered how to translate your current postdoc skills to fit a job description?

During this interactive pop-up session, you will:

- Learn how your research skills can be translated to non-academic roles
- Learn how to interpret a job description and how to draw on your current skills to give evidence of your expertise
- Look at a range of non-academic jobs
- Discuss issues of how to give examples of leadership, client focus, customer awareness, industry, teamwork
- Look at how to write non-academic CVs and Cover Letter

Bring a copy of your own CV and any non-academic job descriptions that you have seen and that may be of interest.

Please sign up for the event via this [Qualtrics link](#)

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## 7. Upcoming Courses

The PFDC courses for the 2018/19 academic year are filling up quickly! Below are courses which still have spaces available May.



*\*\* Please note that due to unforeseen circumstances the 'Designing and Delivering Research Projects in Academia' course which was due to take place in March is currently being rescheduled.*

### [Interviewing for an Academic Position](#)

**Wednesday 1 May 2019, 9:30 - 16:30**

This course is designed for postdocs who are aiming to pursue an academic career. The Careers Service will help you to gain an insight into the academic application process and discuss how you can gain relevant experience for your CV. You will observe a mock academic interview, find out how

to prepare for an academic interview and improve how you come across. The competition for academic positions is intense; get one step ahead by attending this course.

### **[Making the Most of Your Postdoc](#)**

#### **Wednesday 9 to Friday 10 May 2019, Residential**

*Making the most of your postdoc* is designed to equip you with the skills and resources you need to achieve success as a postdoc and launch your career as a researcher. It is a three-day residential course for postdocs in their first two years. In a structured and supportive environment facilitated by experienced trainers, you will gain a thorough understanding of your career options and develop tools and techniques to help you set and reach a series of short, medium and long term goals to maximise your success as a postdoc and plan for your next step.

### **[Interviewing for a Position outside Academia](#)**

#### **Monday 13 May 2019, 9:30 - 16:30**

Preparation is a key element of the job application process, especially for interviews. This course is designed for postdocs who are looking to move into a non-academic environment and will help you to understand and prepare specifically for the interview process. Run by the Careers Service, there will be an opportunity to practise and develop your interviewing skills.

### **[Meeting Management](#)**

#### **Wednesday 15 May 2019, 9:00 - 12:30**

Meetings are so often unproductive, with unclear objectives. In this interactive workshop, you will develop a more effective approach to meetings. We will explore best practice on how to: not have meetings; develop buy-in of key meeting stakeholders; create positive communication pre and post meeting; facilitate the engagement of all attendees. We will develop your key skills in: meeting facilitation; decision making; listening and questioning.

### **[Time Management for Postdocs](#)**

#### **Friday 17 May 2019, 14:00 - 17:00**

"I don't have time to get it all done", "I don't have time to write that paper", "My PI/students/family keep asking me to do things". Being a postdoc can be a frantic, reactive and stressful time but it doesn't need to be, this course is aimed at those who would like to take back some control over their time.

### **[Lectureship Applications: What You Need to Know to be Successful](#)**

#### **Wednesday 22 May 2019, 9:30 - 16:30**

This course will introduce you to the lectureship application process. A recently successful lecturer will share their experiences of the application and interview process and a senior academic will talk about the process that is undertaken to recruit a new lecturer in a question and answer session. You will gain an understanding of the different requirements for lectureship applications, including hints and tips as to what to include in both your research and teaching statements. The course will also cover how you can highlight your evidence of esteem and ideas on how to gain further teaching experience. In the afternoon you will have an opportunity to write an application and take part in a practical exercise providing insight into the review processes.

**Please book onto training with ICIS: Sign in and click 'My Training' – Search for the course – Click: Enrol.**

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## 8. Blog - Life as a postdoc: why I personally couldn't imagine doing anything else



Dr Elaine Fuertes, a postdoc in NHLI, provides an insight into the perks of being a postdoc, from international travel to independently developing research with potentially important public health impacts.

You can access the blog post [here](#).

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## 9. Brexit Comms – Imperial EU Webpages

Due to the constantly changing politics around Brexit and the unprecedented uncertainty that this causes, Imperial's EU webpages are being updated on a daily basis by the public affairs team, and are clearly marked when new information and advice is available. This includes information about the guarantees in place even if the UK leaves without a deal; the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) for EU/EEA and Swiss citizens currently living in the UK which opens fully on 30 March; government funding to [underwrite Horizon2020](#) programmes open to third country participants; and [home fee and financial support guarantees](#) for EU undergraduate and postgraduate students starting their course in 2019/20. There are also pages with specific FAQs for [staff](#) and [students](#).

To access Imperial's EU Webpages please click [here](#).

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