

IMPERIAL

Early Career Researcher Institute

**Enabling doctoral students to
collaborate in
interdisciplinary and
international research
contexts**

Imperial College London



Project aims

Design and **pilot** an **inter-institutional online modular course** where participants:

- Enhance their interdisciplinary and international communication and collaboration skills
- Discuss with Principal Investigators, researchers and postdocs about the challenges of working in an international and interdisciplinary research group
- Discuss with research services about opportunities (e.g. postdocs, funding)
- Discuss with careers services about CVs and cover letters

International and interdisciplinary collaboration through communication

Required competencies: Technical attributes and “the ability to work in globally dispersed teams across different time zones and cultures” (Royal Academy of Engineering, UK)



We work in international and interdisciplinary contexts, where different languages, cultures and disciplines are constantly in contact

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Critical communications enhance the ability to work in a diverse and inclusive environment

International and interdisciplinary collaboration through communication

Critical communications also entail understand the experience of non-native speakers and non-subject experts



- Acceptance: ability to appreciate international and interdisciplinary similarities and differences (diversity in «scientific and cultural» background = reservoir of knowledge)
- Adaptation: ability to include the diverse perspectives when working in international and interdisciplinary groups (flexibility, open mind)

Our offer

Inter-institutional Global Fellows Programme:

- Opportunity to practice international and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration skills
- It reaches a low number of participants
- Not inclusive because of travel and time commitment
- Not environmentally sustainable

Our offer and what students asked us to provide

Global Fellows Programme:

- Opportunity to practice international and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration
- It reaches a low number of participants
- Not inclusive because of travel and time commitment
- Not environmentally sustainable
- Need for a more **sustainable** and **inclusive** programme
- Focus on **interdisciplinary** and **international communication** and **collaboration** for their **doctorate and beyond**
- Focus on possible **future careers** in **different institutions** and **contexts**

Who is involved in the design

- The project is funded by Imperial Global Fund
- Co-created with NTU Singapore Graduate College
- Our collaboration supports the course rationale: a course about international and interdisciplinary collaboration designed through an international and interdisciplinary collaboration

Timeline

- **Step 1: Understand the cultural contexts** – by March 2026

In-person delivery to Imperial and NTU students of an existing course + collect the **students' perspectives** to tailor the teaching approach to the students' needs

- **Step 2: Verify the suitability of the teaching approach** – by June 2026

Online delivery of the same course to a mixed audience of Imperial and NTU students + **SPP** + collect **students' perspectives** to refine the course

- **Step 3: Co-design the course** – by September 2026

Collaboration with NTU colleagues and the **SPP** to design the course

- **Step 4: Co-Deliver the pilot** - by October 2026

Delivery of the new course in collaboration with colleagues from NTU + **SPP** + collect and analyse **feedback** to refine the course

- **Step 5: Add this course into the ECRI and NTU provision**

How we work with students

Students are co-creators:

- we designed the project based on students' feedback on the GFP
- a student programme partner (SPP) throughout the project
- collect suggestions from participants at different stages of the project

Their voices will allow us to tailor the course to their specific needs and create a meaningful lifelong learning opportunity.

How we work with students

Student Programme Partner

- Involved in the design of activities
- Bring case studies
- Speaker to bring their direct experience

Participants at the different stage of the project from Imperial and NTU

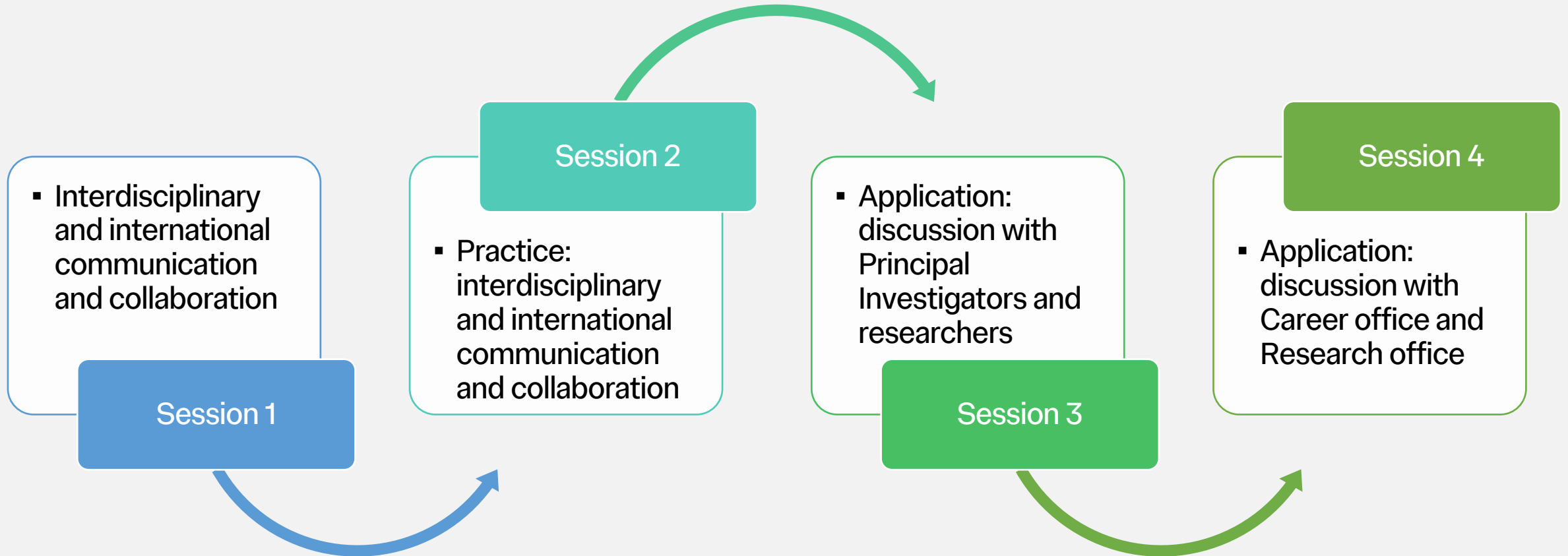
- Share needs and suggestions
- Verify the teaching approach



What students want

- Share their experiences as students
- Receive information (about funding opportunities, career)
- Listen to Principal Investigators and postdocs experiences to get their perspectives
- Discuss with them
- How to write a CV and a cover letter for the 2 contexts

What we have co-created (preliminary design)



What we have learned: benefits for us and for students

- Co-creation is “humanisation”, it is important for students, much more appreciated by students not used to it
- Being a role model (our collaboration for the course design) for students increases the engagement
- Our *super partes* perspective increases the engagement, students are not worried to be judged
- Mixing institutions prompts students to do better, students do not see “competitors” but “role models”
- Mixing institutions is an opportunity for students to understand different contexts and prepare for their future careers

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