

Researcher Handbook

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Areas of Training at Cambridge

Areas training is available in at the University of Cambridge

- Bioinformatics
- Cambridge University Library
- Department of Engineering
- Engineering Language Unit
- ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership
- Graduate School of Life Sciences
- Language Centre
- Occupational Health and Safety Service
- Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
- Office of Scholarly Communication
- PPD Personal and Professional Development
- Researcher Development Programme (RDP)
- Schools of Physical Sciences & Technology
- Social Sciences Research Methods Centre
- Student Systems
- University Information Services

Researcher Based Skills Training

[All Researcher Development Programme \(RDP\)](#)

[coursesCommunication](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Personal Effectiveness](#)

[PhD Progression](#)

[Postdoc Programme](#)

[Presentation Skills](#)

[Public Engagement](#)

[Research Methodologies](#)

[Research Funding \(for Postdocs\)](#)

[Strategic Career Management](#)

[Teaching Associate Programme \(TAP\)](#)

[Teaching and Learning](#)

[Writing Skills](#)

[Writing Skills Summer School](#)

Personal Effectiveness Skills Training

Personal Effectiveness based skills

[All PPD Personal and Professional Development courses](#)

[Achieving Results](#)

[Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)

[Communication](#)

[Innovation and Change](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Negotiating and Influencing](#)

[People Development](#)

[Relationship Building](#)

[Strategic Focus](#)

[Valuing Diversity](#)

Selecting your training through skills

<https://www.esrcdtp.group.cam.ac.uk/Doctoral-Training/skills-selection>

Research Methods and techniques

Broader Disciplinary Knowledge

Ethical and Legal Requirements

Foreign and Programming Languages

Time and Project Management

Information management and IT Skills

Creative Thinking and Problem Solving

Self Leadership and Resilience

Collaboration and Teamwork

Writing and Presenting with Impact

Teaching and Supervision

Leadership and Mentoring

Career Progression - Applications and Interviews

Career Progression - Finding Funding and Opportunities

Career Progression - Proactive Planning and Networking

Resources and Support

[Researcher Handbook](#)

An overall generic guide to being a researcher at Cambridge

[A guide to grants at Cambridge](#)

This is an overview of how to apply for funding at Cambridge

[Professional Development Training](#) [CamRDF](#) - view the Research Development Framework and training around it

Key Websites

[Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning \(CCTL\)](#)

[Effective Undergraduate Supervision](#)

[Teaching Associates' Programme \(TAP\)](#)

[Personal and Professional Development](#)

[Researcher Development Programme \(RDP\)](#)

[Careers Service](#)

[The Language Centre](#)

[University Library](#)

[Medical Library](#)

[University Information Services](#)

[The Bioinformatics Training Facility](#)

[Social Sciences Research Methods Centre](#)

[Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#)

[Postdocs of Cambridge Society](#)

[Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities \(CRASSH\)](#)

[Postdoctoral Researcher Forum](#)

[Public Engagement](#)

[Cambridge Enterprise](#)

[Office of Scholarly Communication](#)

[Research Operations Office](#)

[Finance Division](#)

Main Training Providers at Cambridge

	<p><u>ESRC DTP - Training</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>ESRC DTP - Resources and Support</u></p>
	<p><u>ESRC News</u></p>
	<p><u>University of Cambridge Training</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>Forthcoming Talks</u></p>
<p>As a postgraduate student, you are able to join any one of these networks. Many of them provide innovative and creative training sessions that are not provided by departments or other central university networks.</p>	<p><u>Strategic Research Initiatives/Networks and Interdisciplinary Research Centres</u></p>
<p><u>See our fellow DTPs and training they offer</u></p>	<p><u>ESRC DTPs across the UK</u></p>
<p>National Resources</p>	<p>The ESRC funds a range of data and methods services to support research and study. It provides resources needed to access high quality socio-economic data and to develop research skills. These services are:</p>



National Centre for Research Methods (see link to the right of this page for forthcoming training). NCRM aims to drive forward methodological development and innovation through a programme of training and events, increasing the quality and range of approaches used by social scientists.

UK Data Service



[The UK Data Service](#): provides access to a collection of over 6,000 high quality socio-economic data sets. It supports data users and works to improve data management.



The [Centre for Longitudinal Studies](#) (CLS) manages four British cohort studies: the 1958 National Child Development Study, the 1970 British Cohort Study, Next Steps, and the Millennium Cohort Study.



[CLOSER](#) supports the use of longitudinal research. Key resources include reading lists and summaries of findings, and a search portal to help find out what data has been collected across all nine studies in the CLOSER partnership.



[Understanding Society](#) is a major longitudinal survey of around 40,000 UK households. The site contains information on the survey, as well as research articles, reports and policy briefings based on this survey.



The [Administrative Data Research Network](#) enables accredited researchers to access securely held de-identified linked administrative data for research that has potential benefit to society.



[Census and Administrative data Longitudinal Studies Hub](#) enables researchers to access census based longitudinal data selected from census records over time as well as linked material from other administrative datasets (such as health data).

Each service provides support and delivers training, including joint training and can be contacted if you are interested in bespoke training.

Your Training Needs

Suggestion:

It may help for you to take a skills analysis set up specifically for postgraduate students within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences
(<https://training.cam.ac.uk/gdp/course/SkillsSurveyAHSS>)

There are many training providers both within the University and externally. To help you select activities, the training has been selected through a skills selection framework.

Skills Selection



Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

The ESRC requires all ESRC-funded students to undertake high-quality core training, including a compulsory foundation in a broad range of social science research methods, basic research skills, and broader capabilities such as communication and leadership skills. They also expect a rigorous annual training needs analysis (TNA) to be undertaken.

Over the next 4-6 weeks you should undertake with your supervisor a detailed Training Needs Analysis (TNA). This process should work out what Social Science and Personal and Professional Development training you will need.

All information and an example of a TNA form can be found on the University of Cambridge VLE system - Moodle <https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/login/index.php>

Writing your TNA

There are three levels of support when writing your TNA.

- 1) **Your ESRC DTP Training Manager and Cambridge Social Sciences Partnership Manager.** You can sign up for one to one sessions, which will be held in the 2nd week of October.
- 2) **The Cambridge ESRC DTP website.** Below you will see two routes that can help you to identify the various courses available both internally and externally, to select the workshops you think you should attend
- 3) **Your Supervisor.** You should ensure your supervisor supports you in putting this form together properly so that it can act as a 'blue print' for your first year training.

Once you have completed the TNA you should upload using Moodle.

Please note that this does not replace existing processes in your department and you should still follow your individual departmental guidelines regarding the approval of Training Needs Analyses.

Research impact guides

A selection of templates that you can use to understand and explore your research impact:

Stakeholder and public analysis template ([Word](#) | [PDF](#))

Impact planning template including worked example ([Word](#) | [PDF](#))

Social media strategy template ([Word](#) | [PDF](#))

Impact tracking template ([Word](#) | [PDF](#))

[Good practice examples of Pathways to Impact](#) from grant proposals

Good practice examples of impact case studies: a selection of the highest rated (4*) case studies submitted to the UK's 2014 Research Excellence Framework:

Write a winning impact summary

Many researchers find the impact sections of their grant applications among the most challenging to complete. This guide explains exactly what you need to write in the two separate impact sections in a Research Council bid (your impact summary and your pathway to impact), and applies to the impact sections of grant applications for other funders.

A strong impact summary and pathway to impact can make the difference between getting funded or not if your application is tied with others in the “danger zone” near the funding cutoff. Being able to demonstrate [impact is even more important if you are applying for funding for the Global Challenges Research Fund](#), where you have to demonstrate how your work will contribute to Overseas Development Assistance.

[You can see best practice examples of impact summaries and pathways to impact here](#). If you have a good example, get in touch - the more examples we receive, the more useful this resource will be.

What should be in my impact summary?

The impact summary is meant to answer just two questions:

1. Who might benefit from this research?
2. How might they benefit from this research?

To answer these questions, all you need to do is to: i) Clearly articulate impact goals (not dissemination or knowledge exchange goals – that’s part of your pathway to impact); and ii) list (and group) your publics and/or stakeholders. The next two sections explain how...

How can I identify powerful impact goals?

Start by identifying clear impact goals, if possible making them as specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) as possible. Struggling? Try these tips:

- Visualise yourself at the end of your project having achieved an impact that everyone is talking about. Where are you and what can you see? What has changed? What are people saying about how they have benefited?
- Make sure your impact goals aren’t simply about communicating your research findings
- If they are, then ask yourself who is most likely to be interested in your work outside academia, and how those who hear about your work are likely to benefit from or use what they learn
- If you don’t know the answer to these questions, just focus on trying to identify the aspects of your work that you think people outside academia are most likely to be interested in. Then ask yourself why you think they might be interested in this aspect of the work.
- If you’re still struggling, go out and speak to some of the people you think might be interested, and ask them what interests them most, what might make it more interesting/relevant to them, and how they would like to benefit from or use your work
- If you have a goal that is all about communication rather than impact, then you might have a good idea of the sorts of modes of communication you want to use (e.g. social media, film), and an alternative is to work back from the communication method you’re interested in using, to the people who will engage with that method, and then their interests and how they will benefit. Beware that in some cases you may discover that the communication method you want to use will not actually reach people who are interested or can use your work (for this reason it is always best to start with the goal and/or your publics/stakeholders first, before choosing your pathways to impact)

- [Download the Fast Track Impact Planning template](#) for a structured method of linking impact goals to publics/stakeholders, research findings and pathways to impact. If you find it hard starting with the goals, try and start by identifying your publics/stakeholders and what they might be interested in, and then work back from there to your goals **How do I know who might benefit from my work?**

Now you've got some clear impact goals, you need to identify the publics and/or stakeholders that will benefit when these goals have been achieved. Here are some tips to make this easy:

- If you have limited knowledge and experience of publics/stakeholders working in your area, team up with a colleague who knows more. If you have time and contacts, consider inviting someone from outside academia who works with the people you want to help, and get them to advise you on the key groups you need to reach out to
- For stakeholders, consider the relative interest each group or organisation has in your work, and their relative influence over your ability to achieve your impact goals. This influence could be negative (blocking you from achieving impact) or positive (enabling you to achieve things that would not have been possible without their help)
- For publics, in addition to considering their relative interest in your work, consider the extent to which different groups (e.g. demographics, interest groups) might benefit from your work
- See the graphics below for examples of actions you can take with each of the categories of publics and stakeholders that emerge from this analysis
- Reach out to as many of the groups that emerge as benefiting strongly or being highly influential before you submit your grant application to get their feedback and help with your pathway to impact. This will lead to a stronger, more credible pathway and will give these groups a greater sense of joint ownership, making them more likely to engage if you get funded
- [Download the Fast Track Impact stakeholder and publics analysis template](#) to do a full analysis. You won't have room to put all of this information in your impact summary or pathway, but you will be able to use this information to group publics and stakeholders into categories (e.g. third sector, business, policy, or different sectors, socio-economic classes or interests), make strategic choices about who to highlight as key collaborators and give you a level of detail that will make your impact summary and pathway highly believable

This infographic shows how you can identify, categorise and prioritise publics and stakeholders for engagement, prioritising publics who will benefit most, and identifying the most influential stakeholders who can help you achieve impacts:

Which publics to engage?



Which stakeholders to engage?



What are the essential things every pathway to impact should include?

According to [JeS Help](#) the Research Councils are looking for four things: 1) activities that actively engage relevant stakeholders/publics; 2) meet their needs, interests and priorities; 3) have a plan (including "timing, personnel, skills, budget, deliverables and feasibility"; and 4) explain your track record with stakeholder/public engagement and impact.

I did [an analysis of pathways to impact that led to 4* impact case studies](#), which identified a number of important points. [The Research Councils have great advice of their own here](#), and at the bottom of the page are links to advice on writing pathways to impact by each of the Research Councils. Here, I have tried to boil this mountain of advice down to the 10 most important things you need to make sure you don't forget:

1. Be specific

The number one piece of advice is to be specific. Tell reviewers exactly who you will work with (not just Government, or even a particular department, but the specific policy team and if you have it the name of your contact in that team). Specify your goals clearly, with specific indicators that will tell you when each goal has been met. Explain how you will do each activity in credible detail and why this is the best way of achieving a specific impact e.g. instead of social media, identify the platform you will use, who you will target that is on that platform, and what impact goals you will be able to preferentially achieve via this medium.

2. Demonstrate demand or interest in your work

Find evidence of growing public interest in the issues you are studying, numbers of people attending public engagement events or watching programmes linked to your subject. Demonstrate that stakeholders want/need your work, and if possible co-develop your pathway to impact (and in some cases the whole project) in collaboration with them. Establish an advisory panel (there is actually peer-reviewed evidence that these lead to impact more than many other pathways) and name the people you have invited, indicating where they have confirmed involvement.

3. Check you have activities to reach each of your goals

Systematically check if you have activities that will take you to each of your impact goals, and that you have identified activities that match the needs and preferences of each public/stakeholder group you identified in your impact summary.

4. Make it two-way

Where possible focus on two-way engagement with publics and stakeholders rather than one-way communication of findings, so you get feedback and can adapt your approach to be as relevant and useful as possible. There is [research evidence](#) that projects that co-design outputs in collaboration with the people who need them, achieve greater uptake of their outputs because they are more relevant and people have a sense of shared ownership. Even for communication outputs like policy briefs, getting feedback from your target audience during the writing process can significantly increase the likelihood that your communication hits its mark.

5. Link to your impact track record

Talk about your track record on achieving impact, ideally with the groups and issues linked to your proposal. It is difficult to "prove" that you will be able to do what you are suggesting you will do, and some of the best evidence you have is a track record of having delivered impacts for these groups in these areas in the past. If you haven't got a track record yourself, consider bringing someone into your team who does and get them to work with you on your pathway to impact.

6. Build in impact evaluation

Have a plan for evaluating whether or not you are moving towards or away from impact, which will tell you when you have achieved your goals. The process of identifying indicators will help you identify clearer and more credible impact goals. Thinking in detail about how you will know if you achieved impact will often identify risks and challenges that you can plan for, making your plan even more credible. You can build in any costs of monitoring and evaluating impact into your proposal.

7. Cost it

Cost your pathway to impact and justify your request for these resources (if you are short of room in your Justification of Resources you can refer reviewers to your pathway to impact and vice versa). This shows how seriously you are taking impact, and adds credibility to your claim that these activities will actually happen. Some directed calls for proposals from the Research Councils in the past have suggested approximately 10% of the total budget should go to support Pathways to Impact. Researchers typically put in significantly less than this, fearing negative feedback from reviewers on their "value for money", but anything between 5-10% is reasonable.

8. Weave in impact to your research plan

If possible weave your pathway to impact into your research plan, cross-referencing to it from your case for support at relevant points.

9. Keep it simple

Use plain English and make your pathway to impact stand alone (e.g. spelling out acronyms), as a lay member of a funding panel may only read the impact related parts of your proposal in any detail.

10. Seek specialist impact pre-review feedback

Don't rely on academic pre-reviewers to provide feedback on the impact sections of your proposal. Instead, seek feedback from someone in your University who specialises in impact, or if possible, get feedback on these sections from someone who works with the publics or stakeholders you want to benefit.

What if I am doing pure research that will not have any impact?

It is really difficult to come up with any sort of impact for some very pure, non-applied projects. In this case you cannot get away without producing an impact summary and pathway to impact if you want funding from the Research Councils. You don't have to use all the characters and pages you are given, but you do need to think about what the next steps might be, even if these happen many years after your research is done, that might possibly provide economic or societal benefit. You don't have to be right and no-one will hold you to this - just make some educated guesses. Do not however be tempted to include additional benefits for academics, students and the academy in this section, or you may risk your pathway to impact being deemed "unacceptable", requiring you to revise it before funding can be granted.

What are some of the most common mistakes people make in their pathway to impact and impact summary?

I've reviewed proposals for five out of the seven Research Councils and sat on funding panels for a number of Research Councils, EU and national governments. Here are a few of the most common mistakes I have seen:

- No clear impact goals (or the goals are just about communicating the research to stakeholders or publics)
- Benefits for researchers and the academy are included in the impact summary and/or pathway to impact, commonly including training and career benefits for early career researchers and students, and conference and workshops that will mainly be attended by researchers. Cut and paste them into your academic beneficiaries section and start again. If you genuinely want to include capacity building for your research team or students as part of your impact, explain how they will be able to use their skills and experience outside the academy to generate societal or economic benefits, and consider how you will these achieve these benefits at scale, and evidence that they actually happen
- Social science data collection methods are replicated from the case for support in the pathway to impact, claiming that the knowledge or engagement gained from these methods will generate impact

- Public engagement for the sake of it – you have a clear pathway to impact via policy or industry and the reality is that your work is so niche, very few members of the public would be interested, but you're going to bore the socks of a bunch of unsuspecting passers-by because you felt you had to add public engagement into your pathway to impact
- Vague plans lacking detail are rarely credible
- The impact summary is copied and pasted into the pathway for impact or vice versa
- Even worse, copying and pasting from someone else's pathway to impact

Finally, many people remove any impact goals and associated activities that are uncertain or high risk, leaving only a small number of highly conservative outcomes and activities, that fail to inspire or excite reviewers or panel members. Your funder will not expect to see every goal achieved in the same way as your research objectives, so the risks of dreaming big are relatively low, and the higher you aim, the higher you are likely to reach. You should however only ever promise to do things that are credible and feasible, that you intend to actually pursue.

If you have spotted something I've missed or disagree with anything I've suggested, please comment below. In the meantime, [check out these best practice examples of impact summaries and pathways to impact](#). If you have a good example, get in touch. I believe that by sharing good practice, we can spread innovation, drive up standards in grant writing and improve the likelihood that research delivers impact.

Grants for Early Career Researchers

Cambridge Humanities Small Research Grants Scheme

Applications are invited from any researcher active in the arts, humanities and social sciences holding a current contract of employment as an independent researcher with either the University or the Colleges. Postgraduate students are not eligible to apply.

Funding of £1,000 - £20,000 is available per application. Travel and consumables may be requested. Applicants may not apply for their own salary costs. The objective of the funding is to enable researchers to conduct small-scale research activities, that enable them to bid successfully for larger-scale funding, and/or to generate publications, and/or to contribute materially in other ways towards the research objectives of their home institution.

February September

British Academy / Leverhulme Small Research Grants

The Academy welcomes applications from recent post-doctoral graduates. In order to be eligible, you must have successfully passed your viva voce examination and completed any corrections. Affiliation to a UK academic institution is not a requirement for Small Research Grants, which are open to all postdoctoral scholars resident in the UK.

Funds are available to facilitate initial project planning and development; to support the direct costs of research; and to enable the advancement of research through workshops or conferences, or visits by or to partner scholars. Applicants may seek support for any combination of eligible activity and cost up to the overall limit of £10,000 over two years.

May

Royal Geographical Society Small Grants

Preference will be given to early career researchers.

Up to £3,000 to individuals for original desk and/or field based research in any area of geography.

January

Early-career researchers grants

Eligibility

Funding available

Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships

All candidates must hold a doctorate or have equivalent research experience by the time they take up the Fellowship. Applications are invited from those with a doctorate who had their doctoral viva not more than five years from the application closing date. Applicants must not yet have held a full-time permanent academic post in a UK institution, nor may Fellows hold such a post concurrently with the Early Career Fellowship.

The Trust will contribute 50% of each Fellow's total salary costs up to a maximum of £36,000 per annum for three years and the balance is to be paid by the host institution. Each Fellow may request annual research expenses of up to £6,000 to further his or her research activities. Fellowships are normally tenable for three years on a full-time basis, but requests to hold the award part-time over a proportionately longer period will be considered.

March

Horizon2020 Marie Curie Individual Fellowships

Applicants must be in possession of a PhD or have at least four years full-time equivalent research experience. The applicant must move or have moved to the country where the host organisation is located.

Monthly living allowance (€4,650), mobility allowance (€600/month), family allowance (€500/month), research, training and networking costs (€800/month) over two years.

September

AHRC Leadership Fellows

Applications to the scheme will be welcomed for research in any subject area within the AHRC's remit. Proposals may be for research at a range of stages of development, provided that substantial high quality research outputs are planned to emerge directly from the Fellowship.

The early career route of the Leadership Fellows scheme provides funding for periods of between 6 and 18 months. Proposals with a full economic cost of between £50,000 and £250,000 may be submitted. Open

Student Funding Search

<https://www.student-funding.cam.ac.uk/>

Search awards offered by the University of Cambridge for study at Cambridge (departments, faculties, colleges, central offices and other internal sponsors). Overseas students should also consult the Cambridge Trusts' search facility - <https://www.cambridgetrust.org>.

Different Research Perspectives

[Start online course now](#)

This free course, Understanding different research perspectives, explores the development of the research process looking at the different perspectives from which an issue or phenomenon can be investigated; and highlights the main methodologies that can be used to investigate a business issue.

By looking at different perspectives/approaches to issues and phenomena, different research methodologies and ethical considerations this course will sustain the development of a research study, from the initial idea of what to investigate; to the elaboration of specific research questions; the research design, strategy and methodology.

Social Media Toolbox

[A range of social media tools to help you work smarter, claim your online presence and keep pace with technology](#)

[The Value of Blogging and Microblogging](#)

[Benchmark your research – Mendeley, Stats, ORCID profile, Scopus and ScienceDirect](#)

[Webinar – How to promote your article for maximum impact](#)

[Improve your knowledge and skills in publishing academic research](#)

[Big Ideas – latest trends and innovations in publishing and academic](#)

[Networking – how to make the most over every opportunity and promote your research to your peers](#)

[Research Solutions – discover new ways and train yourself for effective and efficient research skills](#)

[Career Planning – from starting a PhD to navigating your way to becoming a journal editor – planning your academic career starts here](#)

Training and Advice on Publishing

[Training. Advice. Discussion. Networking](#)

Free online lectures. Interactive training courses. Expert advice. Resources to support you in publishing your world-class book or journal article. Certificates to recognize your efforts.

Run by Elsevier Publishing Campus