

FELLOWSHIP AHOY!

++ More than Lucky: Exploring how post-doc professional networks are activated in gaining research fellowship awards.

**++ what they talk about when
they talk about their fellowship...**

why did I do this
work?

“I was just really lucky”

right place right time
lucky to get a good PI
lucky to be on papers
lucky light bulb idea
chance meeting

++ what they talk about when thinking about fellowships...

why did I do this work?

"I'm not that lucky"

not independent yet
not an ideas person
not enough papers
not confident enough
not a good writer

++ development framework

Securing independent funding can be viewed as a significant career transition (Bazeley, 2003)...

and is viewed as a key aspiration by many researchers during their post-doctoral career stage (Akerlind, 2005).

Luck is a component in gaining funding (van Arensburg & van den Besselaar, 2012; Porter, 2005)...

but individual agency is a driver for academic career development (McAlpine *et al*, 2014; Clegg 2008).

++ what do successful research leaders do?

**Craft a distinctive high-profile
researcher identity**

**Connect with others in their
global research field**

**Garner valuable social capital
through high value peer and
collaborative networks**

Recent, socially situated models of
academic and researcher
development.

(McAlpine *et al*, 2014; Bolden *et al*
2012; Harris & Nolan, 2014)

++ research questions

1

what agentic behaviours do researchers demonstrate in the pursuit of a research fellowship award?

2

who is in the professional social networks of research fellowship applicants and enhance their success?

++ research study design

allows us to look at the interplay between each research fellow's social situation, their actions, and their understanding of their success (Orleans, 2008; Bryman, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews with 25 research fellows (13 F / 12 M) across 8 Russell Group Universities.

18 STEM / 7 non-STEM.
17 UK / 8 non-UK

PLUS: network analysis form

**++ researchers actively
develop in 5 (+1) ways**

data on your
handout

what agentic
behaviours do
researchers
demonstrate in the
pursuit of a research
fellowship
award?

**Awareness
Ideas
Application gameplay
Confidence
Resilience
+ Networking...**

**++ 12 contact types actively
collected by applicants**

who is in the
professional social
networks of research
fellowship applicants
an enhance their
success?

Principle Investigator at time of application
Another **senior academic** colleague
Head of Dept/School/Discipline
Host or Mentor for the Fellowship award
A Current Research Fellow
Peer Applicant
Collaborator on the application
Referee for the application
Career Mentor (formal or informal)
Grant Capture Manager within the HEI
Researcher Development Professional
Spouse / Partner

++ essential components of the network?

Career Champion

facilitates access to the resources needed to develop and write the application. They contribute to fellow's academic development, and expand the applicant's network outside their current organisation.

Tour Guide

insider knowledge of call, processes, logistics and how to navigate the internal application systems. the 'go to guy' with a good network within academic support services at the researcher's current organisation.

++ Summary & Recommendations

how can we support?

All fellows sought to actively recruit appropriate contacts to support or enhance their applications.

How can we broker wider institutional and cross institutional networking?

Applicants who felt 'ready' to apply had been given some time to 'practice' at acting independently, leading projects and pursuing their own ideas.

How can we take researchers seriously and value their ability to **lead** projects?

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