

Towards a career path for doctoral students

Sue Rigby

Vice Chancellor, Bath Spa University

Credentialling

- Doctorate from Cambridge
- Research expertise in palaeontology, higher education, arts and culture
- Doctoral supervisor, Leicester and Edinburgh
- Doctoral examiner, various
- Have led faculties of arts, science, social science and engineering
- Trustee, AHRC
- Assessor, Leverhulme Doctoral Centres

Overview

Who regulates research degrees and who should?

How many people should do a doctorate?

Can we be clear about purpose?

Costs and funding, what is a fair deal?

Can we be clear about prospects?

Towards a career pathway for researchers

Regulation

UG provision is regulated by OfS via B conditions

Masters degrees are partly regulated by OfS

Initial teacher training is regulated by Ofsted

Student Loan Company is regulated by the Department for Education

Research Councils are regulated at arms-length by DfE

International student outcomes are not regulated

Doctoral Students are not regulated, though grants may be subject to terms and conditions

What has regulation taught us?

Which of these apply to doctoral provision?

All academics distrust regulation but.....

OfS demonstrated that metrics matter and are powerful

B3 showed us that progression and outcomes matter

TEF demonstrated that enhancement should be ongoing and institution-wide

Ofsted showed us that we need to set expectations and then demonstrate that we have reached them

Suggested self- regulation

Determine key metrics for doctoral provision and collect them institutionally and nationally

Hold providers to account for improvements in these metrics.

Apply an institution-wide enhancement approach to doctoral provision, with KPIs to Academic Boards/ Board of Governors

Set clear expectations of quality in doctoral provision and collect evidence to demonstrate compliance



Because people will supervise them



Because it is seen as a route for elite ability



(Because it is needed if you are already an academic)

Why do people do a doctorate?



More than there are postdoctoral vacancies?



Working academics?



What about the rest?

How many
people
should do a
doctorate?

Vacancies and applications

Contract marker: Academic (excluding atypical) Nationality: All
 Mode of employment: Full-time Sex: All

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Managers, directors and senior officials	410	435	390	445	440
Professional occupations	139,230	142,005	145,320	147,555	149,645
Associate professional and technical occupations	1,080	1,065	1,065	1,080	1,230
Clerical and manual occupations	5	0	0	5	5
Total academic staff	140,725	143,510	146,780	149,085	151,320

[↑ Reset filters](#) | [Download table \(csv\)](#) | [Download source data \(csv\)](#) | [About SB264 Figure 1](#) | [Notes](#)

I have questions or comments

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+ How are HE staff counted by HESA?

The contract marker filter on Figure 1 provides an option to view data on the number of staff on academic atypical contracts. Please note that staff on atypical contracts form a separate population which is not comparable to those on other contract types (see the [statement on the use of HESA staff data](#) for more information). This bulletin does not include information on non-academic atypical contracts. Since 2015/16, atypical staff on non-academic contracts have been excluded from the coverage of the Staff record.



Typical vacancy rate = 7%, annually around 10500 academic jobs in UK

Applicants – minimum....



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Toolkits to enable managers to support the development and progression of early career researchers

Toolkits for developing and sustaining researcher networks

Planning to succeed in your career

Who does doctoral research in the UK?

There are about 100,000 doctoral researchers in UK higher education, and the number has been growing significantly over the last ten years. Around 35,000 people started in 2011/12 and nearly 26,000 graduated in 2012/13 (but not the same people!)

10k vacancies, for all academic stages, c70k applicants means that

>80% of people with doctorates will not get an academic job

Though the chances are higher in less research intensive settings.....

Typical applicant numbers
University of Edinburgh
30-120
Bath Spa University
15-40

What is the purpose of a doctorate?



Being an academic



Industry/commercial R&D



Avoiding a glass ceiling in academic-related roles, eg curator



Self-actualization



Er, not harmful for a range of careers

This is marketing, pure and simple

subject areas

Postgraduate
Research Proposal
Guide



**Reasons to do a
research degree**

Types of research
degrees



How to apply



5. Boost your career

A research degree is a great way to become a subject matter expert or researcher.

A research-based degree is the most direct pathway to an academic job at university. You'll get the skills you need to compete in the university sector. After you graduate you can look at becoming a tutor, researcher or lecturer. Most universities offer post-doctoral research fellowships where you can get paid to hone your skills, carry on researching and get your academic career rolling.

Some jobs require a Master's or PhD and generally pay very well in the private and public sector. You could:

- work in the public or private sector in industrial research and development
- advise on government policy to make an impact on your local region or country
- become a communications expert for your field and share complex research in clear, everyday fashion

University of Portsmouth careers website, March 2024

How well do these topics meet the multiple purposes of a doctorate?

Fiona Miller (School of Media, Arts and Humanities)

Project title: Towards a therapeutic compositional model: can attributes of sound and music be isolated and composed to induce optimum HRV in PTSD sufferers?

Supervisors: Dr Alice Eldridge, Professor Hugo Critchley

Project description: The purpose of this project is to determine whether attributes of sound and music can be manipulated to induce parasympathetic autonomic nervous system activity, with the aim of constructing a framework for creating musical compositions that induce optimum heart rate variability among sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder.



Isabel Maranhão (School of Life Sciences)

Project title: Sequence processing in dyslexic and non dyslexic groups

Supervisors: Professor Miguel Maravall, Dr Warrick Roseboom

Project description: This project will explore how we recognise sequences; stimuli that unfolds over time in a in a particular order. What are the global and local cues we use for sequence discrimination? To achieve this, auditory and tactile sequence processing in dyslexic participants, which potentially show an impairment in sequence processing, and non dyslexic participants will be compared using behavioural and electrophysiological experiments. This project also aims to draw parallels in sequence processing between mice and humans.



Jacopo Medoni (School of Psychology)

University of Sussex
Leverhulme Doctoral Centre

How well do these topics meet the multiple purposes of a doctorate?

PhD project

[The language of visual music: An historical re-evaluation of the visual music canon in search of the origins of correlations between sound and vision.](#)

Funding type: Unfunded PhD type: named project Application deadline: 30 June 2024

PhD project

[Investigating the science of synaesthesia and crossmodal experience as a basis of robust parameters for a visual language of sound.](#)

Funding type: Unfunded PhD type: named project Application deadline: 30 June 2024

PhD project

[How is visual music evolving? From experimental film making to assemblages of old A/V equipment, bespoke combinations of software and hardware to off the shelf units and live performance.](#)

Funding type: Unfunded PhD type: named project Application deadline: 30 June 2024

University of
Dundee

Costs and
funding,
what is a
fair deal?

Self-funding – costs

Philanthropic support

Research Councils?

Self funding

(start with c£50k
ug debt..., and
c£25k pg debt)

lifetime graduate
premium c £100k
for women

SLC loan - £28k over course

Fees - £5k per year (home) + bench
fees tba

Subsistence - £18600

(minimum wage = £22k pa)

Shortfall roughly £42000 over 3
years

International fees are a rip off.....

[PG Study](#) > [All courses](#) > Theology and Religious Studies PhD

2024

Theology and Religious Studies PhD

Full-time: **Three years**

UK fees: **£5,100**

Part-time: **Up to six years**

International fees: **£21,500**

Start date: **Multiple available**

[How to apply](#)



[Postgraduate funding](#)



[Make an enquiry](#)



School of Divinity PhD Research Scholarships

The School of Divinity is delighted to invite applications from outstanding candidates for its Doctoral Scholarships Awards for 2024-2025 entry.

Award

We are offering a number of scholarship awards, which will cover tuition fees and provide a stipend at the UKRI rate. These awards will be tenable for three academic years, subject to satisfactory progress.

All scholarship award holders are expected to be energetic members of their work to the wider student and staff body during the period covering their development opportunities appropriate to their programme of study.

Eligibility

The scholarships will be awarded to new applicants who have applied commencing in September 2024.

Applicants must be of outstanding academic merit and research potential. Applications will be considered from UK/Overseas applicants wishing to study in Edinburgh.

Criteria

Applicants must be of outstanding academic merit and research potential.

Applying

As a guide to competition levels, in the 2023/24 cycle 130 applicants applied for 1 scholarship. The number of available awards may change each year. For 2024/25 we are offering 1 Edinburgh Doctoral College-SPS Scholarship. Ensure you visit the Important Information and Recommendations section before you apply.



The University of Edinburgh

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk> › [scholarships](#) › [sps-awards](#) ›

Edinburgh Doctoral College Scholarship

Grants?

Good –
putting
money into
career
development

AHRC fees + £18622pa

BBSRC £4.7k fees, £5k bench fees, £18622

ESRC £4.7k fees, £17668

EPSRC £4.7k fees, £5k bench fees, £18622

MRC ditto

NERC £4.6k fees, £5k-£11k bench fees, £17668

A post- doctoral career bifurcation

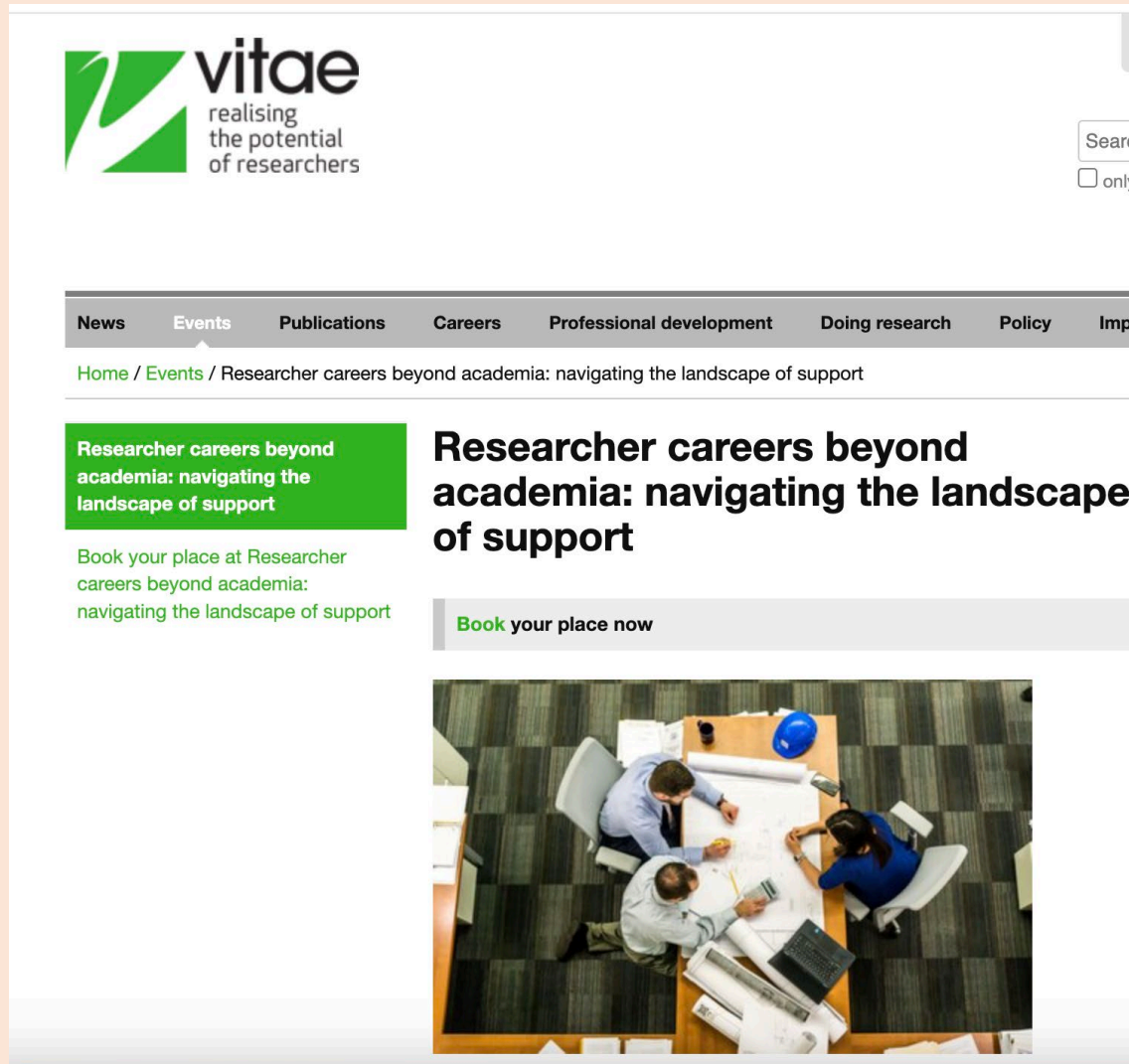
Academic or academic related – subject matter and academic skills important

Industry/sector related - subject matter and non-academic skills matter

Not – non-academic skills critical, having a narrative for an employer

These pathways do not generally intersect later on

Vitae has good resources for leaving, but is it still seen as a deficit outcome



The screenshot shows the Vitae website header with the logo 'vitae realising the potential of researchers' and a search bar. A navigation menu includes 'News', 'Events', 'Publications', 'Careers', 'Professional development', 'Doing research', 'Policy', and 'Impa'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Events / Researcher careers beyond academia: navigating the landscape of support'. The main content area features a green box with the title 'Researcher careers beyond academia: navigating the landscape of support' and a sub-headline 'Book your place at Researcher careers beyond academia: navigating the landscape of support'. Below this is a grey button labeled 'Book your place now' and a photograph of three people in a meeting around a table.

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers

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 only i


News Events Publications Careers Professional development Doing research Policy Impa

Home / Events / Researcher careers beyond academia: navigating the landscape of support

**Researcher careers beyond
academia: navigating the
landscape of support**

Book your place at Researcher
careers beyond academia:
navigating the landscape of support

Book your place now



Future funding prospects <10%



Nature

<https://www.nature.com> › nature-index › news › how-i... ⋮

How institutions can better support their postdoc fellows

2 Feb 2022 — Horizon Europe's flagship Marie Curie fellowship, for example, has a success rate of **just 15%**. ... The success of independent postdoc fellowships ...



Stroke Association

<https://www.stroke.org.uk> › sites › default › files PDF ⋮

Postdoctoral Fellowships (previously ...

Postdoctoral Fellowships (previously called Senior Research Training. Fellowships) success rates. Year. Number of applications. Number of. Awards. 2009. 4. 0.



The British Academy

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk> › documents PDF ⋮

Postdoctoral Fellowship Outline Stage 2022-23

This scheme is extremely competitive, and the **success rate in recent years has rarely exceed 10%**. The Academy will typically receive hundreds of ...

12 pages

Towards a career pathway for early researchers

- Develop future-favourable doctoral theses
- Be honest with students about funding futures
- Be clear about academic career options, by supervisor?, subject and EDI
- Help people leave an academic route, or explore less research-intensive settings
- Ensure Universities take a responsible approach to doctoral progression
- Work with research organisations to develop fair pathways to senior standing



Future-favourable PhD topics


♥ Beyond Representation: Painting as Embodied Practice

 [University of Dundee](#) > [Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design](#)


Practice-based PhD project that understands painting as an intuitive embodied act that goes beyond representation, that is, the concrete realisation of something seen or thought.

[Read more >](#)

Supervisor: Mr P Braham

 30 June 2024

 PhD Research Project

 Self-Funded PhD Students Only



[More Details >](#)


We have 9588 PhD Projects, Programmes & Scholarships


♥ Thinking Nature Thinking

 [University of Dundee](#) > [School of Humanities](#)

The project is located at the intersection of philosophy and poetics, between the conceptual labor of exploring and the poetic labor of inventing the idea of nature. [Read more >](#)

Supervisors: Dr F Ruda, Dr H Yeung

 30 June 2024

 PhD Research Project

 Self-Funded PhD Students Only



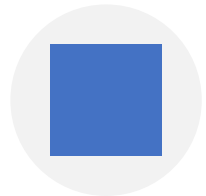
[More Details >](#)

Towards a career pathway for early researchers

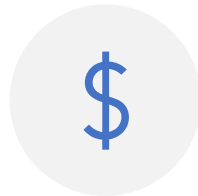
- Develop future-favourable doctoral theses
- Be honest with students about funding futures
- Be clear about funding directions, especially EDI
- Help people leave an academic route, or explore less research-intensive settings
- Ensure Universities take a responsible approach to doctoral progression
- Work with research organisations to develop fair pathways to senior standing



A University strategy for doctorates



Internally regulate doctoral provision, using a metrics-based, enhancement-led approach



Only supervise doctorates that are externally funded or are viable for external funding



Only supervise a few more doctorates than the post-doc opportunities in that field



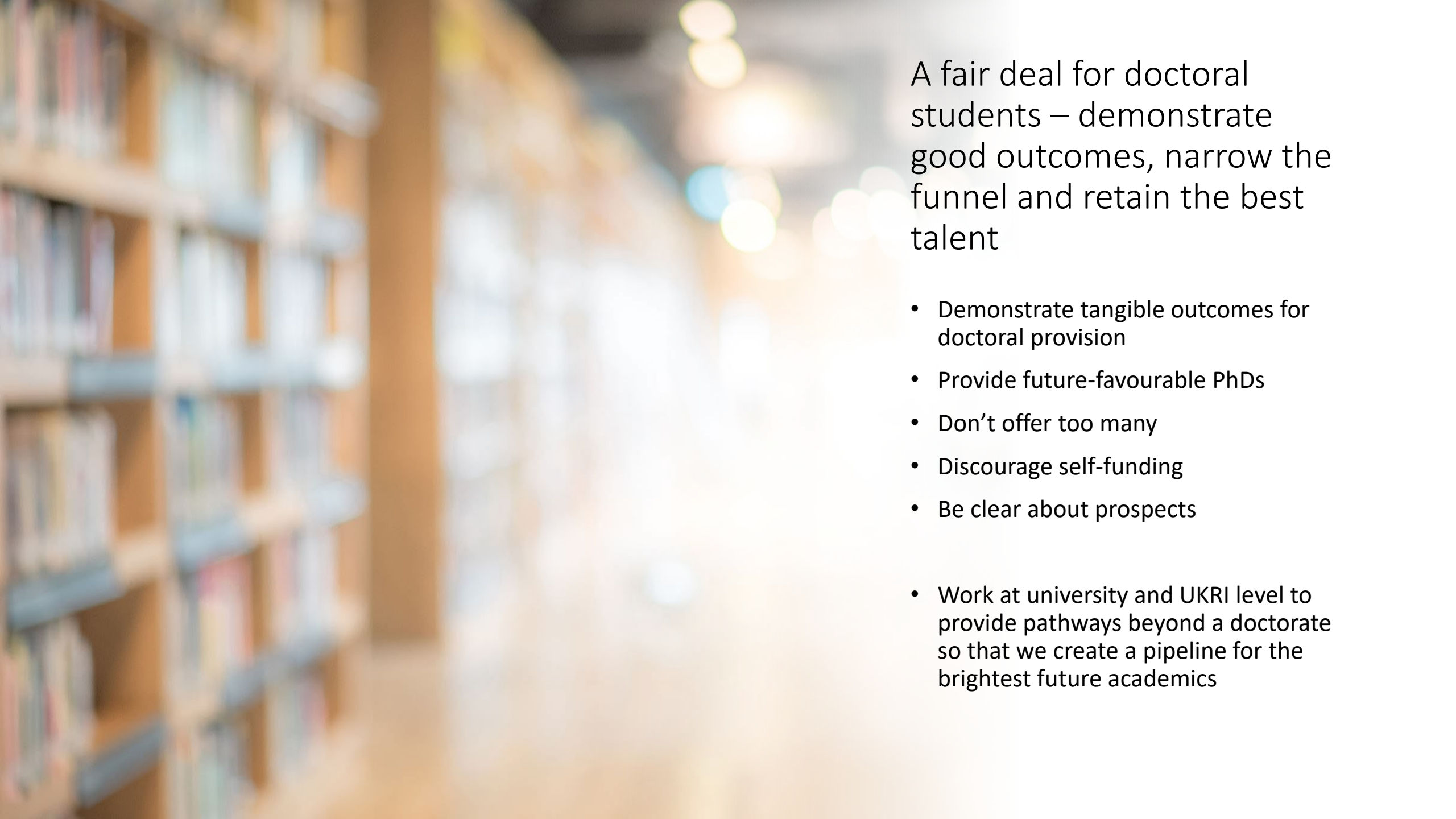
Only allow successful academics to supervise doctorates



Internally train and promote good doctoral students onto a career pathway to lecturer

A Research Council career path for doctorates

- Only fund doctorates where there is a good chance of a post-doc in that field
- Only fund a few more doctorates than the post-doc opportunities in that field
- Insist that doctoral titles are future-friendly
- Develop pathways to train and promote good doctoral students onto a career pathway to lecturer, being clear about EDI goals in so doing



A fair deal for doctoral students – demonstrate good outcomes, narrow the funnel and retain the best talent

- Demonstrate tangible outcomes for doctoral provision
 - Provide future-favourable PhDs
 - Don't offer too many
 - Discourage self-funding
 - Be clear about prospects
-
- Work at university and UKRI level to provide pathways beyond a doctorate so that we create a pipeline for the brightest future academics