# Postgraduate Cultures: Careers, Community and Connection

# UKCGE PGR-Led Conference on Careers, Skills and Futures Shaped Through the PhD

## Sherrington Building
## University of Liverpool, 1st July, 2026

## Abstracts & Biographies

**'Pivoting with Purpose: Lessons in Resilience, Resourcefulness and Research Design from an International PhD Student'**

**Dorcas Adebayo, Liverpool Hope University**

The path to a PhD is rarely a straight line, more so, for international students. The path is often marked by visa delays, cultural adjustments, separation from family and the challenge of building a research identity in an unfamiliar environment. This paper shares an honest and reflective account of navigating the first year of doctoral study at Liverpool Hope University and offers insight into the skills that emerged through the process of adapting and rethinking my research.

My research is an interpretive linguistic inquiry into how migrant and refugee women understand and respond to language used during maternal healthcare, and what this reveal about communication, culture and health equity. There have been changes to the original design of this research since realising that accessing NHS consultations posed major ethical and logistical hurdles which could realistically not be overcome within the timeline for this project.

Rather than being held back, I pivoted and redirected the study to centre the women's lived experiences through interviews and focus group discussions facilitated through responsible and ethical community partnerships. These decisions were not retreats. Rather, they were strategic and skills-driven responses to real-world research condition.

This paper reflects on what the journey so far has revealed about the doctoral experience itself. That is how setbacks become competencies, how careful ethical considerations sharpen methodological approaches and how the challenges on the path result in the development of skills central to succeeding as a researcher. Drawing on my reflective log and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, I share practical insights and honest reflections for other early-stage PGRs, particularly international students, navigating unexpected challenges on their PhD journey and asking themselves: "what do I do when the plans are not working?"

**Key takeaways:**

- Practical Strategies for ethical community engagement in sensitive research
- Reframing pivots as professional development opportunities

**Biography**

Dorcas Adebayo is a PhD student in English Language at Liverpool Hope University. Her research explores how migrant and refugee women interpret and experience maternal healthcare communication in the United Kingdom. She draws on Cultural Schema Theory, Relevance Theory, and Appraisal Theory to examine how language around pain, medical procedures, and consent is understood and negotiated across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Dorcas holds a BA and MA in English Language and has prior research experience in idiomatic language comprehension and cultural metaphor analysis. Her research interest is at the intersection of applied linguistics, intercultural communication, and health equity.

**‘From Thesis to Practice: Turning Research Skills into Freelance and Public Work During a PhD’**

**Leila Ainge, Nottingham Trent University**

Doctoral study is often framed primarily as preparation for an academic career. However, researchers are increasingly exploring ways to apply their skills beyond the university while still completing their degrees or doctoral study. This presentation reflects on how research conducted during a Master’s degree evolved into a portfolio of public-facing and freelance activities alongside doctoral study.

Drawing on my experience as a self-funded, part-time mature doctoral researcher in psychology and founder of a research-informed consultancy practice, I will share how academic research on imposter phenomenon and social identity developed into a podcast translating psychological research for wider audiences, undertaking freelance research and insight work supporting authors and small businesses, and developing psychology-informed workshops.

The session will be a short presentation combining personal experience with practical examples of how doctoral research skills can translate into applied and public work. I will also reflect on the identity-based tensions that can arise when combining doctoral research with entrepreneurial activity, including navigating credibility, public engagement, and the boundaries between academic and applied work.

This talk offers a reflective account of how doctoral research can function as a platform for experimentation, communication, and applied impact during the research journey itself.

Participants will gain:

- practical examples of how research skills can translate into freelance, public, or entrepreneurial work
- insight into navigating identity shifts between researcher, practitioner, and communicator
- ideas for creating opportunities during a PhD while maintaining intellectual integrity and curiosity

**Biography**

Leila Ainge is a psychologist, researcher, podcast host, and founder of Ainge Consulting Ltd. Her work explores psychology, social identity, and trust, with a particular focus on freelancers, entrepreneurs, and online communities.

Originally trained as a business analyst and management consultant, Leila has worked across sectors including government, policing, engineering, utilities, and pharmaceuticals. Alongside her part-time doctoral research in psychology at Nottingham Trent University, she has developed a research-informed consultancy practice, combining academic insight with applied and public-facing work.

Leila’s work includes podcasting, psychologically informed research and thought leadership, and workshops exploring identity, ambition, self-trust, leadership, and the

emotional realities of contemporary work. Her approach combines psychological insight with warmth, curiosity, and practical reflection.

Outside of research and consultancy, she volunteers with the British Psychological Society.

**'Finding Voice in Doctoral Spaces: Storytelling, Belonging, and Being a Global Majority PGR'**

**Shameela Yoosuf Ali, Birmingham City University**

This talk is a reflection on voice, belonging, and the experience of navigating doctoral spaces as a Global Majority PGR. Drawing on my personal journey as a doctoral researcher and my work in creative and reflective research cultures, I explore how storytelling and visual methods can spark conversations that often remain silent in formal academic settings.

The usual narratives of doctoral life, progress, productivity, and achievement rarely account for the other realities, such as uncertainty, marginality, and the ongoing effort to be seen and heard.

The talk examines how storytelling can reveal the hidden sides of postgraduate research, such as self-doubt, a sense of being in between, and the pressure to fit into dominant academic norms. It also considers how race, culture, language, and class shape the way belonging is felt, negotiated, or sometimes withheld in doctoral settings. I suggest that storytelling is not just personal or expressive but can also be a critical and reflective practice that allows overlooked knowledge and experiences to be shared.

By focusing on lived experience, the talk asks what can happen when doctoral spaces welcome voices that do not always fit traditional academic expectations. It suggests that inclusion in doctoral education is not purely about increasing participation. It is also about recognising whose experiences, ways of speaking, and knowledge are valued. So, storytelling and visual methods can be a way to find one's voice and imagine a greater sense of belonging during the PhD journey.

**Biography**

Shameela Yoosuf Ali is a 3rd year doctoral researcher in Media and Cultural Studies at Birmingham City University. She works at the intersections of media, sociology, and feminist studies. Her research explores how Sri Lankan Muslim women use Facebook as a space for creative expression, self-representation, and subtle acts of artivism. She is also a writer, artist, and facilitator with a deep interest in storytelling, belonging, and nurturing inclusive research cultures. Alongside her PhD, she leads and contributes to creative, reflective projects that invite postgraduate researchers to think about voice, identity, and knowledge-making beyond words. She is Editor-in-Chief of *FemAsia Magazine*.

**‘Beyond the Thesis: Recognising and Communicating Transferable Skills Developed During a PhD’**

**Fatimah Alsulaiman, University of Liverpool**

Doctoral study is often viewed primarily as the production of original research; however, it also represents a significant period of professional and personal development. This presentation explores how postgraduate researchers (PGRs) develop a wide range of transferable skills throughout their PhD and how these can be effectively recognised, articulated, and applied to diverse career pathways.

The purpose of this session is to encourage PGRs to reframe their doctoral experience as a form of career development. Drawing on reflective insights, the presentation will examine key skills developed during a PhD, including problem-solving, critical thinking, project management, communication, and resilience. It will also address common challenges such as imposter feelings, uncertainty about career direction, and difficulties in translating academic experiences into language that resonates beyond academia.

The session will offer practical strategies for identifying and communicating transferable skills, including how to map research activities to employability competencies, tailor professional narratives for different sectors, and build confidence in presenting one’s experience. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on their own development and consider how their doctoral journey can support a broad range of future opportunities.

Key takeaways for a PGR audience include recognising the PhD as a foundation for multiple career pathways; developing confidence in articulating transferable skills; and adopting practical approaches to career planning and professional identity development.

This session is designed to be accessible to an interdisciplinary audience and aims to support PGRs in navigating their future with greater clarity and confidence.

**Biography**

Fatimah Alsulaiman is a third-year PhD student in Cardiovascular Science at University of Liverpool from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She works at Prince Sultan Cardiac Center, where she is involved in cardiovascular clinical and research activities. She is also a member of the Drug Management Team at the center, contributing to safe and effective medication management and healthcare quality improvement. Her research interests focus on cardiotoxicity and cardiovascular therapeutics.

**‘Decolonising English-medium instruction: What English-only policies hide in Bangladeshi universities’**

**A Q M Khairul Basher, Liverpool Hope University**

This 20-minute work-in-progress research paper draws on my doctoral study of English-medium instruction in Bangladeshi universities. English-medium instruction is often presented as a neutral route to internationalisation, graduate employability, and academic prestige. However, institutional policies and promotional discourses frequently privilege an English-only orientation, which can obscure the multilingual practices through which teaching, learning, and assessment are actually achieved.

The paper examines how English-only assumptions are reproduced in policy texts and institutional narratives, and how teachers and students negotiate language use in classroom life, especially students from non-English-medium schooling backgrounds. The study combines document analysis with ethnographic data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews across different disciplines.

Preliminary analysis suggests three interrelated patterns. First, multilingual explanation and scaffolding become necessary but unofficial, which makes access to them uneven. Second, difficulties in participation are often framed as individual language deficit rather than as the outcome of unequal schooling histories and unequal access to academic English. Third, local linguistic resources, including translanguaging and locally rooted Englishes, are often treated as problems rather than as resources for meaning-making and learning. These dynamics point to forms of epistemic exclusion, in which what students know is not always aligned with what counts as legitimate academic performance.

For a broad PGR audience, the paper offers two main takeaways. It shows how doctoral research can make hidden barriers to inclusion visible within higher education, and it reflects on how ethnographic inquiry can generate practical insight into policy, pedagogy, and institutional culture. The discussion will be relevant to researchers interested in accessibility, inclusive research cultures, decolonial perspectives, and the challenge of translating specialist research for interdisciplinary audiences.

**Biography**

A Q M Khairul Basher is a PhD candidate in English Language at Liverpool Hope University. His doctoral research examines language policy and English language teaching in universities using English-medium instruction in Bangladesh through a decolonial ethnographic lens. He has more than 16 years of higher education teaching experience in Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, including work with the British Council. His research interests include sociolinguistics, World Englishes, language policy, teachers’ beliefs, and decolonial approaches to language education.

**'Why PGR Students Should Organise, Attend and Present at Their Institutional Conference'**
**Thomas Bennett, University of Gloucestershire**

My presentation outlines why an institutional conference is significant for a PGR's career prospects and skills development. This is underpinned by the insight I have gained from University of Gloucestershire's annual School of Arts conference, which I have presented at previously, and am lead organiser for this year.

Organising a conference offers PGRs an opportunity to enhance a skill set vital for career advancement – managing budgets and resources, for example, demonstrates credibility for funding applications, while arranging panels thematically, against availability and time restrictions, illustrates creative problem-solving and awareness of multidisciplinary connections between fields. Moreover, it affords PGRs agency in creating a physical, inclusive space – contrasted with 'the often isolated and competitive nature' of postgraduate research[1] – to connect with peers and share a diverse variety of knowledge outputs; this ambition is reflected in our theme, *Creative Environments*. My reflections from managing the conference, and ideas for improvement, offer practical advice for attendees who may wish to run their own event.

Even if not involved in organising, presenting their research enables a PGR to showcase their contribution to their field, and receive feedback to validate or refine their methodologies. Additionally, a paper could form the basis of a potential journal publication, which 'can strongly affect subsequent career success' in academia.[2]

Tangible outputs from UoG's recent conferences evidence these benefits: from the creation of a teacher-mums network to communicate lived experiences for autoethnographic research, to interdisciplinary collaborations (including workshops and festivals) between the School's subject areas, which have provided greater access to industry professionals and teaching experience.

Whatever a PGR's level of participation, an institutional conference is a valuable space for building skills and connections to support personal and professional development and outputs[3] – and one in which, as we emphasised in our marketing, 'multidisciplinary knowledge can be shared, analysed, and transformed.'[4]

**References**

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**Biography**

Thomas Bennett is a second-year PhD student with the English and Creative Writing department at University of Gloucestershire, from where he obtained his BA and MA in the same subject, also. His practice-based thesis comprises a novel and accompanying critical essay examining the

portrayal and ethics of war photojournalism. He works part-time in the University's Course Admin team, and is involved with various projects and events besides, including Outreach sessions for local schools, the annual Creative Writing anthology, and organising the School conference, his experience of which is the basis of his presentation.

**Footnotes**

[1] Daniel Harrison et al., 'Designing Technology-Mediated Peer Support for Postgraduate Research Students at Risk of Loneliness and Isolation', *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2023), Article 10 <https://doi.org/10.1145/3534961>

[2] Keuntae Kim and Jong-Kil Kim, 'Trends in Determinants of Entry into the Academic Career: The Case of South Korea, 1980-2010', *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 10, No. 10 (2015), doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0141428

[3] Catherine A. Cherrstrom, 'Making Connections: Attending Professional Conferences', *Adult Learning*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2012), pp. 148-152.

--Steven Fraser and Dennis Mancl, 'Opinion: Virtual and the Future of Conferences', *Communications of the ACM*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (2024), pp. 32-34.

[4] As stated on our call for papers poster and other communications, courtesy of Isabel Caddy.

**‘Beginning with the End in Mind’**
**Amy Birch, University of Liverpool**

A PhD is long enough to feel open-ended, yet short enough that the years can slip by without a clear sense of direction. This 30-minute session will help you step back from the day-to-day and take a deliberate look at where you’re heading. We will use guided visualisation and goal-mapping to identify what needs to be completed at each stage of your PhD, and spot where there may be intense periods, to enable you to factor in wellbeing and support when it will be need. You’ll leave with a personal plan and a single concrete step to take in the coming month.

**Biography**
Amy is a senior researcher developer with 15 years’ experience working in UK and Irish Higher Education institutions. She is passionate about championing fair and equitable opportunities for researchers, delivering leadership and professional coaching, and developing policies that enable a positive research culture and environment for all. She lead’s The Academy’s career and professional development programme for all staff who research at University of Liverpool, including cross-institutional projects to deliver an integrated development offer enabling them to excel as research leaders and academics.

**‘PhD Career Paths in an AI Landscape’**
**Ben Carter, Careers Consultant & PG Lead**

It’s never too early to wonder where your PhD may take you – before you know it, the research is written up and the question looms: “What are you planning to do with that PhD?” This session will help you answer that question by considering some of the cardinal directions for PhD holders: academic, non-academic and meta-academic careers. Dr Ben Carter (himself a UoL PhD graduate) will offer insights and resources on how best to navigate a career landscape made murkier in recent years with the arrival of AI tools. Come with questions; leave with hope.

**Biography**
https://www.linkedin.com/in/bencartercareers/

Ben has made a career out of Careers, and currently offers guidance and support to students at The University of Manchester. A self-proclaimed ‘lapsed scientist,’ Ben acquired his Chemistry PhD at the University of Liverpool, before enjoying time as a Research Associate at the Centre for Materials Discovery. Ben moved out of research in 2011 to take up his first Careers Adviser role at the University of St Andrews. He also served there as a Researcher Developer, helping research staff and students explore and realise their potential. Since 2015 he has been back in northwest England, supporting students and researchers in the Faculty of Science & Engineering at UoM. For networking purposes, ask Ben about meta-academic careers, Scouting, tabletop games, and badgers.

**'Resisting "Isolation" in the Doctorate'**
**Emma Cripps, University of Portsmouth**

Doctoral study is often positioned as a lonely and isolating journey, in part due to the requirement to undertake independent research (Quality Assurance Agency, 2020). However, Douglas (2023) suggests that independence does not mean having to work alone. Whilst the importance of peer support amongst doctoral researchers is evident within the academic literature (Bojovic, 2024), university initiatives designed to enable peer connection and support may not always be accessible, desirable or sustainable. Evidence of peer support communities established and maintained entirely by doctoral researchers is under-described, which may reflect a scarcity of these communities in practice.

Eager et al. (2023) suggest that the doctoral experience can be enhanced through feelings of being part of a supportive research community, and that this should be considered part of the professional development of doctoral researchers. However, the additional effort, time and commitment required by individual doctoral researchers to organise, facilitate, maintain or participate in a peer community may not be feasible, especially for those with significant time constraints due to responsibilities beyond their doctorate. Establishing meaningful connections and ensuring self-care during doctoral study can be difficult, however there is a need to move beyond current conceptions of isolation and loneliness (Gravett, 2023).

In this lightening talk I will reflect on my experience of establishing and facilitating an online peer 'working' retreat for doctoral researchers across my institution. I will share insights into creating and maintaining an online space that focusses on mutual support and connection and resists the dominant discourse of isolation. Delegates will gain an understanding of the value that doctoral researcher-led communities can offer in supporting meaningful connections and professional development. Consideration will be given to the opportunities and challenges of establishing a peer-community and delegates will leave with practical tips to enable them to establish their own community if they wish to.

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**Biography**

Emma Cripps is a part-time doctoral researcher at the University of Portsmouth whose research explores UK doctoral education, with a particular focus on non-traditional doctoral experiences, including those studying part-time or by distance learning. Drawing on the practitioner perspectives of researcher developers alongside the situated experiences of doctoral researchers themselves, her work examines the generic development practices and environments that shape the doctoral experience.

**'Understanding the Part-Time Doctoral Journey: Challenges, Support, and Supervisory Relationships'**

**Tania Goddard (she/her), Salford University**

Part-time doctoral researchers make up a growing and diverse proportion of the postgraduate research (PGR) community, yet their experiences, support needs, and supervisory relationships often remain under-examined. This interactive workshop invites PGRs and supervisors to explore the unique challenges of part-time doctoral study and to reflect on how institutions can better support this important group. Drawing on research examining experiences of both part-time PhD students and supervisors, the workshop will open a collaborative space to discuss how structural, relational, and personal factors shape the doctoral journey.

By incorporating both student and supervisor voices, this workshop offers a holistic view of part-time doctoral study and will highlight shared challenges as well as differing expectations.

Key areas for discussion will include supervisory relationships, access to development opportunities, time management and workload balance, feelings of belonging or isolation, and the additional pressures faced by part-time students who frequently juggle employment, caring responsibilities, and research. Through guided group activities and open dialogue, the workshop aims to surface both common issues and diverse experiences within the PGR community.

The purpose of this session is twofold: to raise awareness of the structural and relational barriers that part-time doctoral researchers encounter, and to co-create practical, realistic strategies that support both students and supervisors. By centring equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in these discussions, the workshop seeks to foster a more inclusive research environment and lay the groundwork for future research and institutional change that strengthen the part-time doctoral experience.

**Biography**

Tania Goddard is a self-funded PhD student in the School of Health and Society at the University of Salford. She was awarded a Doctoral School bursary to explore the challenges of part-time doctoral study, with a particular focus on equity, support, and supervisory relationships. Alongside this, her doctoral research examines whether Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) presents a barrier to justice within the criminal courts of England and Wales. A qualified solicitor, Tania brings interdisciplinary experience across law, psychology, and education, using her research to highlight how doctoral study can inform both professional practice and institutional change.

**'A Reflection on Experiences as a Teacher-Researcher During EdD Study'**

**Rachael Groves, Liverpool Hope University & Class Teacher, The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School, Warrington**

This presentation will examine my experience as a teacher-researcher completing an EdD research project whilst working within the primary education sector. It will consider the impact of the doctoral research on career development in terms of the skills and knowledge gained and subsequently applied to my professional role.

The research centres on play-based learning (PBL); a topic which is currently central to many key debates in the education sector. Research supports the effectiveness of PBL to facilitate holistic development in early education (e.g. Clark, 2020). Despite the wealth of evidence, the implementation of PBL remains generally limited to early years pedagogy with the value of play being prominent throughout early years policy and guidance (DfE, 2021). The current socio-political context in England, driven by a culture of performativity (Roberts-Holmes, 2015) means that PBL beyond the early years is limited (Fisher, 2022). My doctoral research inquiry stems from the need to develop an understanding of current practices and stakeholder views, to bridge the gap between policy and practice. As a primary school teacher, I will consider how my doctoral researcher experience dynamically influences and informs my career practice and development.

I will also reflect on the ethical implications of being an 'insider researcher' discussing both the benefits and drawbacks of working within the field of study across various stages of research including participant recruitment, data collection and analysis phases.

**Biography**

Rachael is a part-time EdD student at Liverpool Hope University. She has also worked full-time as a primary school teacher since 2017. Rachael gained a First Class BSc (Hons) degree in Psychology from the University of Liverpool in 2016 before completing her PGCE with Liverpool Hope University in 2017. Whilst teaching, Rachael went on to complete her MEd in Professional Practice in 2019. As a doctoral researcher, Rachael's research focuses on perspectives surrounding play-based learning, something which she is passionate about having spent much of her teaching career working in early years and key stage 1 classrooms.

**‘“I Am Because We Are”: Reflections on the importance of community in navigating the doctoral journey’**

**Ebenezer Ishola, University of Dundee**

The focus and purpose of the contribution – This contribution is based on a personal reflection on the need to build connections and interact with colleagues through the doctoral journey. The purpose is to highlight possible benefits that can be derived from actively engaging in different forms of activities outside one’s doctoral research in the sense of reading, writing and related activities.

Key ideas or takeaways for a PGR audience – The doctoral journey is often described and experienced as an isolating process where the burden of success or otherwise rests solely on the doctoral researcher. For instance, the 2024 Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies expects students to demonstrate the production of new knowledge that advances knowledge in a discipline through original research or other forms of advanced scholarship. To achieve this target, students are meant to be supported by supervisors, in addition to other formal mechanisms for support where provided. Outside of this institutional setup, doctoral colleagues as a peer group can provide a valuable avenue to navigate and overcome the potential challenges that could occur through the PhD journey. Drawing on *Ubuntu* (I Am Because We Are), communal relations with doctoral colleagues can contribute positively to the wellbeing and success of doctoral students. Through a reflection on my experience, I discuss how peer support has helped in addressing instances of impostor syndrome, as well as providing value through peer review and feedback, sharing information about and attending training events together, relieving stress through social events, and developing professional networks for the future.

**Biography**

Ebenezer is a postgraduate researcher in the Division of Education and Society at the University of Dundee. His PhD research explores equitable inter-university partnership among universities in the Global North and Global South regions. In addition, Ebenezer has interests in building community among postgraduate researchers in Scotland. In demonstration of this interest, Ebenezer is part of the Associate Officers for Student Engagement team at the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS), as well as the co-lead of the SGSSS/SGSAH International PGR Network and Global Majority PGR Network.

**‘Development Beyond the Project: A Reflective Workshop for PGRs’**
**Dr Theadora Jean (she/her), King’s College London and the Next Generation Research SuperVision Project (RSVP)**

Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) can develop a wide range of skills, identities, and capacities throughout their degree—but many of these can remain unacknowledged or underdeveloped, shaped by the hidden curriculum of academic life. This interactive 30-minute workshop is designed to help you take ownership of your development by strengthening your sense of agency, independence, and confidence as a researcher. It offers a peer-led, future-oriented space to explore how you can actively shape your path rather than simply navigate it. This workshop was developed in response to the growing pressures and diverse needs of PGRs as part of the Next-Generation Research SuperVision Project (RSVP). RSVP aims to transform research supervision culture and practice in accordance with values such as collaboration and compassion, which this workshop seeks to cultivate.

In the session, you will work with reflective models that help you evaluate your strengths, needs, and ambitions, making visible the tacit expectations that often influence your doctoral experience. Through guided activities and shared discussion, you will identify where you have autonomy, where your skills need support in developing and how you can communicate your aspirations more effectively within your supervisory relationship and broader research environment.

A central component of the workshop is an adaptable development-planning template designed to be co-created with your supervisor. In this workshop, you will begin completing the template during the session through structured self-reflection. This process empowers you to articulate your goals, clarify what you need to thrive, and establish a clearer sense of direction—skills that support both independence and long-term career development. Key takeaways include:

- Greater confidence in recognising and articulating your strengths as a researcher.
- Practical tools for exercising agency and independence in your development.
- A personalised development plan-in-progress that you can build on after the session.

This workshop helps you see yourself not just as a doctoral student, but as an emerging professional shaping your own trajectory.

**Biography**

Dr Theadora Jean is a Doctoral Development Officer for RSVP, based at King’s College London. She serves as Theme Lead for PGR Careers & Development, acts as the EDI Champion across RSVP, and is Project Manager for the PGR Leads Project at King’s.

**‘Co-producing knowledge across continents: community-engaged research as a model for postgraduate collaboration’**

**Bilkisu Kuchazi, Manchester Metropolitan University**

This presentation explores how community-engaged research can cultivate postgraduate cultures of collaboration, connection, and impact beyond traditional academic boundaries. Drawing on a doctoral research project examining the public health impacts of oil and gas exploration in Nigeria, it highlights the development of transnational, place-based partnerships between a UK university and local communities in a low- and middle-income context.

The session reflects how postgraduate researchers can intentionally build and sustain collaborative networks that extend beyond formal institutional structures. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study involved close engagement with community leaders, locally recruited advocates, and multisectoral stakeholders. These partnerships enabled culturally grounded data collection and supported the co-production of knowledge in resource-constrained settings.

Delivered as a reflective, case-based presentation, the session will offer practical insights into the opportunities and challenges of conducting collaborative doctoral research. Key issues include managing geographically dispersed teams, navigating cultural and power dynamics, and fostering trust and engagement across diverse stakeholder groups.

For a postgraduate audience, the session provides actionable strategies for designing and sustaining meaningful collaborations, particularly in international or community-based research contexts. It demonstrates the value of informal and place-based networks and highlights approaches that enhance inclusivity, adaptability, and research impact.

This contribution aligns with the conference theme by illustrating how postgraduate researchers can shape collaborative cultures that are globally connected, locally grounded, and socially responsive.

**Biography**

Kuchazi Bilkisu Mohammed is a pharmacist, researcher, and PhD candidate in Health, Professions at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research focuses on the public health and environmental impacts of oil and gas exploration in low- and middle-income countries, with interests in environmental health, climate change, and community participation. She has over a decade of experience spanning hospital pharmacy practice, teaching, public health research, and quality management. Bilkisu has contributed to multidisciplinary research in gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, pharmacy practice, and lifelong learning. She is passionate about translating research into policies and practical solutions that promote sustainable development and healthier communities.

**‘Beyond the Degree: Constructing Wellbeing Among Women Doctoral Students’**
**Caterina Contreras Matté, Universidad Católica del Maule, Chile**

Doctoral education involves a highly heterogeneous population, where multiple factors interact, including individual characteristics, the features of doctoral programmes, and interpersonal relationships, all of which may affect students’ wellbeing. In recent years, increasing pressures to publish, secure research funding, and participate in academic conferences have intensified demands on doctoral students, raising concerns about their mental health. Within this context, adequate levels of wellbeing may function as a protective factor, supporting the development of adaptive strategies to cope with the challenges inherent to doctoral training. This study presents a literature review on the current state of research regarding the wellbeing of female doctoral students. The findings reveal a limited number of studies that explicitly address wellbeing as a central construct among women in doctoral education. The results highlight three main lines of research: studies focusing on mental health, those incorporating a gender perspective, and those examining wellbeing in doctoral education. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions shaping doctoral students’ experiences. Low levels of wellbeing may negatively affect academic performance and institutional productivity while increasing the risk of doctoral attrition. Women appear to be particularly vulnerable to these challenges, often experiencing role conflict, mental overload, social pressures, and the persistent influence of gender stereotypes. In this context, it is essential to create supportive environments that foster the development of women scientists and protect their academic trajectories, which may otherwise be hindered by factors associated with wellbeing.

Proposal: the session will present the current state of research on wellbeing and inclusion in academia and will be followed by a participatory discussion aimed at identifying potential strategies to support researchers’ wellbeing. The discussion will be informed by evidence from previous studies on initiatives implemented in other universities, as well as by the experiences of doctoral students.

Key ideas: wellbeing in doctoral education, gender perspective, women in academy

**Biography**
Caterina Contreras-Matté is a physiotherapist certified in maternity, family care, women’s health, and well-being. She is a doctoral student in psychology at Universidad Católica del Maule, Chile, where she is developing research focused on women, and well-being. She is currently collaborating with a multidisciplinary research team on a National Research Project.

**'Finding My Voice: Navigating Insider Identity, Relational Methodology and Researcher Growth in the PhD Journey'**

**Nicola Mawer, University of Hull**

This interactive workshop explores the development of the researcher's voice during the PhD, with a particular focus on the complexities of conducting insider research. Becoming a postgraduate researcher involves not only developing a project but also cultivating an authentic and grounded voice. For insider researchers, this process is further complicated by blurred boundaries, shifting identities, and the emotional labour of researching within a community one already belongs to.

Drawing on my arts-based qualitative portraiture methodology, I will share how working with collage and portraiture's central themes of voice, relationship, and presence both supported and, at times, challenged the emergence of my researcher identity. My PhD involved co-constructing knowledge with participants through visual and relational methods that foreground voice and connection. Navigating multiple roles, facilitator, listener, collaborator, and community member, required constant reflexivity. Rather than approaching insider identity as a methodological problem, I used portraiture's relational principles to build trust, encourage shared ownership, and ethically position my own voice alongside participants' without overshadowing or diminishing them.

The workshop will combine short inputs with reflective and creative exercises inspired by portraiture to help PGRs consider their own developing researcher voices. Through guided reflection and collaborative discussion, participants will explore how their methods shape their identity, how positionality influences decision-making, and how insider perspectives can enrich both research processes and personal growth.

By sharing practical strategies and lived insights, this workshop offers PGRs tools for navigating impostor feelings, boundary tensions and identity shifts, and invites researchers from any discipline to engage with voice, relationship, and ethical presence in their own work.

**Biography**

Nicola Mawer is a fourth-year part-time doctoral researcher in Education at the University of Hull, where she is also employed as a Specific Learning Differences tutor. She holds an MEd in Language, Literacies and Dyslexia. Her research examines the lived experiences of female students undergoing screening, assessment, and diagnostic processes for dyslexia. Employing a participatory feminist framework, she utilises portraiture methodology to centre participant narratives. As an insider researcher who experienced the diagnostic process during her undergraduate studies, she brings critical reflexivity. Her practice is quality assured through PASSHE membership and seeks to inform equitable and inclusive higher education practices.

**"PGR Students' Career Development in the UK: Experiences, Insights and Opportunities"**

**Dr Fiona McBride, Senior Researcher Developer (Prosper) and Kerry McElroy, Stakeholder Development Manager (Prosper), University of Liverpool**

As the purpose of the PhD has extended to equip individuals with the skills necessary to embark on careers across a range of sectors, the importance of career development has grown. Despite sustained policy and funder support for a broader conception of the PhD, awareness and acceptance of this shift remains uneven. Careers beyond academia continue to be positioned as 'alternative', even though they represent the predominant destination for most doctoral graduates.

Commissioned by UKRI, PGRs and stakeholders across the UK were invited to share their views. In total, over 161 PGRs and 44 stakeholders shared their views and experiences through several opportunities to participate. Drawing on the insights from participants and underpinned by the review of literature and current practice, a series of tentative, interconnected recommendations are proposed. They are intended as catalysts for further conversation and collaboration, intended to contribute to the sector's ongoing efforts to enhance PGR career development, outcomes and research culture.

In this interactive session, participants will:

- Explore the report's key findings,
- Gain a clear overview of the proposed recommendations, and
- Actively reflect on how these align with their own professional identity and values.

The discussion will invite participants to connect the recommendations to their everyday practice, turning insight into action

**Biography**

Fiona McBride is a Senior Researcher Developer within The Academy at the University of Liverpool, where she leads Prosper – an innovative model of postdoc career development designed to unlock postdocs' potential to thrive across multiple career pathways, both within and beyond academia. Fiona has played a key role in Prosper from its start in 2019 as a Research England Development (RED) fund project, co-ordinating its pilot cohorts, developing and co-creating the Prosper model and resources. She is a former postdoc, holding a doctorate in Chemistry (specialising in surface science).

Kerry McElroy is Prosper's stakeholder development manager, playing a key role in accelerating the roll-out of Prosper across UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Kerry has also worked in the University of Liverpool's Careers and Employability team, where she led a funded project to develop a graduate scheme for the Liverpool City Region. Before joining the University, she spent eight years in recruitment and talent development at global financial services firms Blackstone and Morgan Stanley. Kerry holds a BA in Modern Languages from the University of Oxford.

**"Dual Identities: The PhD Student as Staff Member"**
**Madeleine Murphy, InFrame Leadership Developer, University of St Andrews**

PhD candidates who hold staff roles can experience tension between being "students in training" and being relied upon as core contributors to teaching, research, and community-building. PGR recognition as colleagues varies widely across institutions (and is debated in the sector [1]), and this unevenness has tangible consequences for how PGRs understand their place in research cultures. This workshop surfaces these dynamics and explores how visibility of PGR contributions shape more inclusive and equitable research environments. It additionally highlights the hidden curriculum and implied expectations around professional identity that accompany holding a dual role. It brings to light challenges reported by PGRs, like inconsistent pay scales and expectations, limits on permitted working hours and what happens when these are exceeded, and wellbeing pressures related to stipend adequacy and living costs [2].

Part 1- Wicked Questions (single identity)
In the session, participants will be invited to choose one of their dual identities (staff or student) and interact with others from that single perspective. Using Wicked Questions from Liberating Structures [3], groups probe contradictions inherent to their position (e.g., "How can I be both a learner and a lecturer?"), which helps illuminate how challenging it can be to "stay" in one role. This also highlights the influence of implied expectations, School-level variations, and pay practices on everyday academic life.

Part 2- 25/10 Crowdsourcing (dual identity and action)
Participants will then reintroduce their dual identity to generate concrete actions by sifting the group's powerful, actionable ideas (25/10 Crowdsourcing [3]). Outputs will focus on clarifying pay alignment, identifying safe processes around working hours, ensuring recognition for culture contributions, and strengthening wellbeing supports [4] tied to living costs.

Facilitator will establish neutrality and psychological safety, ensuring that participants feel able to share experiences without judgment. Delegates will leave with a replicable toolkit of activities and implementable changes to strengthen a culture in which PGRs are recognised as valued colleagues.

**References**
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[2] Bhatnagar, A. (2022, August 16). The PGR-led campaign group organising for liveable stipends. Wonkhe. https://wonkhe.com/blogs/pgrs-against-low-pay-the-student-led-campaign-group-organising-for-liveable-stipends/
[3] McCandless, K. and Lipmanowicz, H. (n.d.). Liberating Structures. https://www.liberatingstructures.com/

[4] Stead, J., Gracia, L. and Riva, E. (2025), An Investigation Into the Wellbeing and Loneliness of PGR Students and the Effectiveness of Institutional Support Strategies. Eur J Educ, 60: e70067. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.70067.

**Biography**

Maddie is a Leadership Developer on the InFrame Project at University of St Andrews. Her background is in geoscience, and she completed a PhD in 2024 and two short postdoctoral positions in the UK + US, so she brings a strong knowledge of the challenges STEM researchers and ECRs face. She is passionate about helping often-undervalued members of the research community access development opportunities as well as supporting folks to adopt transparent practices in research, co-authorship, and publishing. Maddie is thrilled to be part of this event, and she is a major people-person who is always happy to chat!

**‘Neurodiversity: A Hidden Challenge in Doctoral Study’**
**Varun Padikal, Newcastle University**

Many doctoral researchers navigate hidden challenges during their PhD, often without fully recognising them. In this talk, I share my journey as a first-generation doctoral researcher who completed undergraduate and postgraduate training in India in astrophysics, worked in optical instrumentation designing telescopes, and later transitioned to a PhD in neuroscience at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. Despite an interdisciplinary academic trajectory and good academic performance, I was recently diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) affecting visual processing and literacy efficiency. This late diagnosis prompted a re-evaluation of persistent challenges I experienced throughout my PhD and earlier academic journey, particularly in reading fluency, structuring extended writing, and proofreading. My experience highlights the ongoing misconception that learning difficulties are incompatible with academic success and demonstrates how such challenges can remain hidden, among students who develop compensatory strategies. This contribution aims to challenge prevailing narratives around learning difficulties, raise awareness of neurodiversity within doctoral education and invites the academic community to reconsider how success, ability, and support are conceptualised within PhD training environments, while encouraging more inclusive practices for postgraduate researchers.

**Biography**
Varun Padikal is a PhD candidate at the Biosciences Institute, Newcastle University, funded by the Reece Foundation. His research explores how changes in eye movements could support the diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease. Before moving to the UK, he completed a master’s degree in astrophysics in India and worked on telescope development, bringing an interdisciplinary background in astronomy, instrumentation, and neuroscience.

**'Navigating research design challenges as a Postgraduate Researchers: Lessons learned and practical strategies'**

**Vishakha Pandey, Newcastle University**

Postgraduate researchers often develop essential research, organisational, and reflective skills that remain hidden within day-to-day doctoral work, yet these skills significantly shape both research progress and professional development. This session draws on my experience designing the experimental component of my PhD project, focusing on public and farmer perspectives of social sustainability in UK livestock systems. Through this process, I encountered a range of conceptual, methodological, and practical challenges that many PGRs face across disciplines including clarifying research purpose, identifying appropriate analytical frameworks, managing uncertainty, incorporating feedback, and balancing ambition with feasibility. By sharing these experiences, my aim is to have an open and an honest, peer-led conversation about the realities of navigating complex research design decisions during the PhD journey which could encourage PGRs to share practical insights and strategies that others can learn from.

**Key takeaways for a PGR audience:**

1. Practical strategies for handling uncertainty and iteration in research design.
2. Approaches for integrating feedback from supervisors, peers, and external experts.
3. Insights into balancing rigour, feasibility, and methodological fit.
4. Reassurance that challenges in research design are normal, shared, and manageable.
5. Networking, a very significant skills to have.

Overall, the session aims to support PGRs in feeling more confident, reflective, and empowered as they navigate their own evolving research pathways.

**Biography**

Vishakha is a second-year PhD student at Newcastle University and an applied social scientist. Her research focuses on assessing social sustainability in the UK - a perfect blend of people and animals. Currently, she is conducting pilot testing for her experimental research designs, which investigate public perceptions of social sustainability in the UK context.

**‘Being a small fish in several big ponds: Navigating interdisciplinary research and variable levels of expertise’**

**Luke Richardson, University of Sheffield**

Interdisciplinary researchers (IRs) face unique challenges and possess unique advantages in the academic landscape. Unfortunately, there is little guidance out there on how to be an IR. In a nutshell, all PGRs can feel like small fish in big ponds when starting out: Interdisciplinary PGRs face the same challenge, but must be a small fish in several different big ponds. This session will aim to ask the practical and awkward questions: How can IRs compete? What is the real value of interdisciplinary research? How do you navigate interdisciplinary research and present yourself confidently as a future expert without bluffing over missing knowledge? How do you manage all this while fighting off imposter syndrome? This session will be a workshop/interactive presentation designed to collaboratively create frameworks for navigating interdisciplinary research. We will canvas ideas about what interdisciplinary research actually looks like, how IRs manage these challenges, what challenges/difficulties IRs have faced in their journey, and collaborate to compile a suite of techniques and experiences to choose from, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

Key ideas and takeaways:

- Fraternity: Meet and resonate/commiserate with other IRs.
- Mental health: How expectation management, picking battles, and appropriate assertiveness can protect against impostor syndrome and burnout.
- Advantages: Reflect on and appreciate the genuine strengths and unique opportunities in interdisciplinary research.

**Biography**

Luke is an interdisciplinary researcher with experience in Zoology, Evolutionary Biology, Optical Physics, Remote sensing, fieldwork, molecular biology and bioinformatics. He holds science communication in extremely high regard, and has produced large sculptures for display in Sheffield’s Millenium Gallery, given talks in pubs, organised conferences, spoken in secondary schools and at protests, and won People’s Choice at Famelab Midlands 2024. Currently, he is applying his efforts to enhancing our understanding of how extremophile red algae interact with and change the climate in the European Alps. He hopes to use his meandering career path to guide others in the interdisciplinary research space.

**'Navigating a PhD Near the End of a Career: Minority Experiences, Personal Motivation, and Post-Doctoral Pathway'**

**Nicola S. Ryan, Kingston University**

Undertaking a PhD later in one's academic or professional career remains an under-explored experience within postgraduate research communities. While doctoral education frequently centres on early-career trajectories, the motivations, challenges, and post-PhD pathways for mature or end-of-career researchers receive less attention. This talk will draw on personal experience as a part-time PhD student, nurse academic and clinician in private practice to highlight the "minority" nature of this journey—and why it matters to the wider research culture.

It will examine how undertaking a PhD at a later career stage intersects with issues of identity, motivation, belonging, and future professional direction. I will explore the emotional and practical realities of navigating doctoral work while juggling supervisory, clinical, educational responsibilities as well as personal responsibilities such as ageing parents and preparing for retirement —framing this within the conference theme "Would a PhD be career enhancing?"

**Key takeaways for a PGR audience would include:**

- Understanding the drivers and barriers for late-career doctoral researchers.
- Insights into sustaining motivation and academic connectedness in part-time and hybrid roles.
- Reflections on what a post-PhD future may look like beyond the more traditional academic pathways.
- Considerations for building more inclusive and supportive research cultures that acknowledge diverse PhD journeys.

The talk aims to contribute to encourage discussion and awareness of a more reflective PGR environment that values the breadth of experiences shaping today's research landscape.

**Biography**



Nicola Ryan is a nurse academic at Kingston University, teaching within the mental health nursing field on undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Her teaching focuses on evidence-informed practice and inclusive education. She has previously worked in community CAMHS teams in the NHS and also works in private practice with children and young people to carry out mental health and neurodevelopmental assessments and psychological therapies. Nicola is a part time PhD student at Kingston University focusing on preregistration education for student nurses with a focus on neurodiversity and cooccurring conditions in children and young people.

**‘Becoming a Researcher: Identity, Paradox, and the Crafting of Scholarly Maturity’**
**Silas Yenbon Sebire, Edge Hill University**

Postgraduate researchers are often encouraged to focus on skills, outputs and milestones, yet the deeper work of becoming a researcher, including identity shift, uncertainty management and the development of scholarly maturity, is rarely discussed. This concise 30-minute interactive workshop creates a focused space for PGRs to reflect on who they are becoming as scholars and to explore the productive tensions that shape doctoral life across disciplines.

The session introduces four developmental paradoxes that commonly emerge during a research degree: confidence through uncertainty, independence through interdependence, clarity through complexity and brevity through depth, the challenge of expressing complex thinking in concise, high-stakes formats such as abstracts, vivas and applications. These tensions are presented as normal features of researcher development that can strengthen confidence, communication and decision making when recognised and worked with intentionally.

The core activity is a guided identity snapshot using rapid, structured reflection. Participants identify what they are letting go of, what they are growing into and what remains unresolved in their researcher identity. They then select one paradox, map how it appears in their current journey and identify one practical strategy they can apply in the next four weeks.

Key takeaways for PGRs include a clearer understanding of the identity dimensions of doctoral study, a simple reflective tool for ongoing development, language to articulate growth in academic and non-academic contexts and reassurance that the tensions of becoming a researcher are shared, normal and navigable. This workshop is suitable for PGRs across all disciplines and stages who want a focused, reflective and practical approach to understanding their scholarly development.

**Biography**

Silas Yenbon Sebire is a nursing scholar with over a decade of clinical experience and six years in academia. A Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, he is a multi-award scholar with a distinguished record of leadership and professional service. He contributes to national and international nurse leadership networks through clinical and academic leadership and professional governance, including service within the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association and Nurse Educators Group. He also serves on the UK Nurse Leaders Community of Practice facilitation team. As a PhD researcher at Edge Hill University, his work strengthens nursing leadership in evidence-based practice.

**‘Learning to communicate: Skill development for success as a PhD student’**
**Kaydee Shepherd, Leeds Beckett University**

Training programmes for doctoral students emphasise research skills, academic writing, and topic expertise, often with less focus on communication. Yet doctoral students must work within diverse contexts, making communication a fundamental skill to develop. This may include working with the supervisory teams and research participants, as well communicating within applied or collaborative environments with clinicians, policymakers, governance bodies, and interdisciplinary colleagues.

This presentation will offer insights into how communication skills can be developed and adapted across different settings, based on reflections from a PhD embedded within the NIHR-funded evaluation of Complications of Excess Weight Clinics. Requiring communication across diverse contexts, from families with lived experience to clinicians and research governance processes, this research environment provides a uniquely rich setting for building communication skills. Specifically, three key reflections will be discussed: (1) Research needs translating- different audiences require different explanations; (2) confidence comes through practice- repeated opportunities to communicate help build confidence and clarity; and (3) navigating research systems is a skill- from working with supervisory teams to engaging with clinicians, researchers, and governance bodies.

The presentation will encourage doctoral students to reflect on their own communication experiences and identify areas for development. Drawing on examples from a PhD embedded within an NIHR-funded evaluation, the session will share practical approaches to developing communication skills across different research contexts. Through honest reflections on both successes and challenges, it will emphasise the value of learning through experience and building confidence over time. Attendees will leave feeling empowered to seek opportunities to present, collaborate, and engage with diverse audiences as part of developing their communication skills for future careers.

**Biography**

Kaydee Shepherd is a second-year PhD student within the Obesity Institute at Leeds Beckett University. Her qualitative research explores the intersection of higher body weight, eating difficulties, and support delivery in children and young people. Her work focuses on assessment and treatment pathways for this population, with a particular interest in multidisciplinary, patient-centred approaches. Kaydee is passionate about amplifying patient voices, with public and patient involvement and lived experience perspectives informing her research throughout. She is currently planning creative co-creation workshops with children and young people to inform future policy and practice recommendations.

**‘The disabled PhD student: navigating a PhD with a disability or chronic illness’**
**Charlie Wilson (they/he), Kingston University**

Doing a PhD is a challenge for anyone, it requires intense focus, commitment and drive. Unfortunately, having a disability is also a challenge that requires a large amount of learning and navigating. The two experiences don’t seem as though they would be compatible. Yet, I have known many disabled PhD students and academics, and many with chronic illnesses, it is not as rare experience as people may think. In this 5-10 minute presentation I will go through my lived experience as a disabled PhD student, how I’ve managed, how I’ve adapted my work structure to best benefit both myself and my academics, and the compromises I have had to make. I will discuss the challenges with accessing support, the importance of pacing and the radical idea of taking a break. I intend to demonstrate that chronic illness or disability need not be the end of a PhD dream, and that for some of us, at least, it is possible to come out the other side, irrevocably changed, but still in one piece. It just requires a different way of thinking about things. Increasing disability representation is vital to have a flourishing academic community, and I encourage all universities to adapt to the disabled student to gain a vaster variety of voices in a constantly growing world.

**Biography**
Charlie Wilson is a final year PhD student looking at autism representation in modern film and television through a practice-based lense. They are a photographer, poet and aspiring academic.

**“Women in STEM - Careers, Families & More”**

**Dr Helen Clough** is a Senior Lecturer in Statistics in the Department of Livestock and One Health within the University of Liverpool’s Institute of Infection, Veterinary and Ecological Sciences (IIVES). Her research lies at the interface between statistics and the fields of public health, infectious diseases and the veterinary sciences. Recent research interests include the use of routinely collected surveillance data to provide insights into the spatial and temporal epidemiology of human gastrointestinal infections. Helen is additionally Director of the University of Liverpool’s MSc. in Emerging Infections and Pandemics programme. She is an active member of the IIVES Athena Swan committee and provided data analysis for the application which led to the IIVES 2024 Silver AS award. She took a four-year career break to look after her (now teenage) daughter when she was small and currently works at 0.8FTE so is well-versed in the challenges of balancing an academic career and parenthood in a less than full time role.

**Dr Shreyashi Dasgupta** is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the Department of Geography and Planning, University of Liverpool. She is also the Outreach lead for Geography within the School of Environmental Sciences where she works to make the discipline more accessible and engaging to people from a wide range of backgrounds. She is a part of the Liverpool Women in Science and Engineering (LivWise) community. Her interest in gender and fieldwork led to a recent pilot project exploring how new mothers, particularly early-career researchers navigate the demands of fieldwork alongside caring responsibilities. Shreyashi has also shared her findings on The Developing Academy podcast in an episode titled ‘Motherhood in the Academy: How care, fieldwork, and institutional logics shape research-led-teaching’. She previously co-convened the ‘Women in the Field in South Asia’ interdisciplinary network at the University of Cambridge.

**Dr Frances (Fran) Sherratt** is an NIHR Advanced Research Fellow, based in the Department of Public Health, Policy & Systems. Fran’s Fellowship focuses on making clinical trials more inclusive by using behavioural science to improve communication. Fran has worked at the University of Liverpool since 2015, primarily conducting qualitative studies embedded in clinical trials to improve informed consent and trial recruitment. She is part-time, balancing work with being a primary carer to her two young boys.

**Prof. Anna Slater** received her PhD in supramolecular chemistry from the University of Nottingham in 2011. Following postdoctoral positions at Nottingham and at the University of Liverpool she took up a Royal Society-EPSRC Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship in 2016 and a Royal Society University Research Fellowship in 2021. She was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2021 and to Professor of Chemistry in 2022. Alongside the Slater group’s (https://www.agslatergroup.com/) work across supramolecular chemistry, chemical engineering, organic materials and automation, Anna has worked on inclusion and accessibility in STEM with WISC (Women and Inclusion in Supramolecular Chemistry), is a disabled and neurodivergent academic, and has two children aged 7 and 11.

**"Roundtable Discussion: Career Pathways in the Humanities and Social Sciences"**

**Dr Bernadette McBride** is an academic, writer, film director, and creative practitioner. She won an award for the 'Biggest Impact on the City of Liverpool' in 2019, she was shortlisted for the Manchester Fiction Prize in 2020, and in 2022 she was shortlisted for 'The best UK nature-based social prescribing project' for her work as a creative practitioner in communities.

Bernadette is an academic working on research around environment, emotion, and affect across contemporary literature, especially the short story. She holds an MRes and PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Liverpool funded by the John Lennon Memorial Scholarship.

**Dr Jasmin Johurun Nessa** completed her PhD in International Law at the University of Liverpool in 2024. She is currently a Research Associate in International Law at the University of Bristol and a University Teacher in Law at the University of Liverpool. Jasmin is Co-General Editor of the *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law*. She has also acted in proceedings before the International Criminal Court, and appeared before the International Court of Justice on landmark cases.

**Dr Campbell Price** received a BA (2005), MA (2006) and PhD (2011) in Egyptology from the University of Liverpool, where now he is an Honorary Research Fellow. Since 2011, he has been Curator of Egypt and Sudan at Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, one of the UK's largest Egyptology collections.

Campbell has undertaken fieldwork in Egypt at the sites of Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham, Saqqara and at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. He has published widely on ancient Egyptian material culture and its interpretation. Recent books include Brief Histories: Ancient Egypt (Orion, 2024) and (with Stephanie Boonstra) Ancient Egypt in 50 Discoveries (Egypt Exploration Society 2025). Current research centres on understandings of the ancient Egyptian face in art history, museum encounters and popular culture.

Between 2021 and 2025, Campbell was Chair of Trustees for the Egypt Exploration Society, the UK's biggest charity supporting and promoting Egyptian cultural heritage. He has lectured extensively throughout the UK, and internationally, and regularly comments and advises on Egyptological themes for TV and radio.

**Dr Laura Radcliffe** is Director of the North-West Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (NWSSDTP), the UK's largest ESRC-funded DTP, spanning five universities and 21 social science pathways. She is also Co-Chair of NARTI, a research training network spanning 17 northern institutions. She is Reader in Organisational Behaviour at the University of Liverpool Management School. Her research focuses on work-family dynamics and inclusive workplace practices, particularly for diverse family forms. Her research has informed organisational policy and practice across a wide range of partner organisations including Shell, Nationwide, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. She also has a substantial methodological programme on qualitative diary methods, and is co-author of *Qualitative Diary Methods* (Sage,

2025). She is Associate Editor of the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Consulting Editor of the International Journal of Management Reviews.