

IMPERIAL

Early Career
Researcher Institute

POST GRADUATE CAREERS: THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO DO...

Early Career Researcher Institute (acknowledgements Careers Service)

www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/graduate-school/

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Thinking about what to do...

Thinking about your career whether in academia or other areas can be difficult at any time, and, during your Doctorate or Master's it may seem that there is no time. In fact, there is a framework to support you at Imperial to research, make decisions, and take steps to ensure that you have the necessary experience, network and qualifications for a smooth transition into your chosen career.

Career thinking can be broken down into four stages: Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness, Decision learning and Transitions (Law and Watts, 2003). In each of the sections that follow this help sheet briefly defines the stage and provides a summary of what is available at Imperial College London to help you through it, via:

- the **Careers Service** (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers plan your career, explore options, find opportunities);
- the **Early Career Researcher Institute** (www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/graduate-school/ access the courses via www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/graduate-school/professional-development/);
- **Prospects** (www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/your-phd-what-next) an external provider of career resources.

An academic Department / Division Careers Adviser, is also available to you, information regarding this service can be found through your Department / Division or the Careers Service (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/team/dcas/).

Self-awareness

It is important to consider your interests, what you enjoy, what is important to you and your values.

To help

you to do this, think about:

- your actual, preferred and potential personal strengths (qualifications, abilities, aptitudes, practical skills, personal qualities and physical strengths);
- limitations to the above and commitments (personal/time/money etc);
- personal needs, satisfactions, aspirations, your most valued experience.

Workshops from The Early Career Researcher Institute and Careers Service:

[Professional Effectiveness](#) and [Professional Progression](#) courses including Introduction to MBTI® (Myers Briggs®) and Assertiveness, Finish Up Move On +, Career Planning

Careers Service: self reflection (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/plan-your-career/self-reflection/>), career planning (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/plan-your-career/career-planning/>), one to one appointments with careers consultants (book on JobsLive: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/jobslive/>)

ProspectsPlanner can help. It's an online questionnaire, you'll have to register, but it's free. It matches interests to possible jobs, ranking them as poor or good matches. Some results may seem surprising or interesting. It is designed for university graduates but it may come up with relevant possibilities that you hadn't considered):

www.prospects.ac.uk/planner

Talk it over: Careers consultant, friends, family, tutor/supervisor, get some relevant work/voluntary experience, consider what you (and ask what others) have enjoyed about previous courses/work and outside work experience.

Opportunity awareness

This section is about your understanding of the:

- range of opportunities open to you;
- rewards, satisfactions and demands of possible careers.

Workshops from The Early Career Researcher Institute and Careers Service: Networking, Careers, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Working in the UK for International Students, Want to do a postdoc? Webinar Ask the Doctor, relevant retreats

Careers Service: attend careers fairs and talks by employers (advertised on JobsLive), review job adverts (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobs-and-experience/finding-jobs-and-internships/), network with alumni (Imperial College alumni on LinkedIn); one to one appointments with careers consultants (book on JobsLive: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/jobslive/>)

Experience: work/voluntary/job shadowing/mentoring/networking opportunities (New Innovation-Placements via the Early Career Researcher Institute)

Forums and events: Careers Service, Early Career Researcher Institute, Departmental / Divisional, Outreach, Imperial Hub, Student Union events make sure that you're on the right lists so that you get the information e-mailed to you

Prospects: once you have narrowed down what you would like to do, have a look at Prospects job profiles, salaries, options with specific degrees and links to useful organisations (other areas of the site will be useful too):

www.prospects.ac.uk ; www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles
www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree

Consider your options, what you would like to do, any constraints on your choices, look at the Careers Service advice on networking www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/whats-on/networking/ and arrange to speak to someone working in the field ask friends/of friends, see Careers Service initiatives to engage with alumni or the LinkedIn community- www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobs-and-experience/engage-with-alum/

Talk it over: careers advisers, friends, family, tutor / supervisor, get some relevant experience. Think about possible connections for relevant experience / an informational interview...networking: www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/15-helpful-questions-ask-informational-interview [Networking | Administration and support services | Imperial College London](#)

Decision learning

This section can help you to consider: using your preferred skills to make decisions (e.g. collating information, ordering priorities);

- the most appropriate decision making style for a situation (e.g. from impulsive to deliberate);
- risks – balance hopes, priorities and probability of desired outcome occurring;
- accepting responsibility, authority and accountability for your decisions.

Workshops from The Early Career Researcher Institute and Careers Service:

[Professional Effectiveness](#) Programme: Project and Time Management, Assertiveness, Introduction to MBTI, [Research Communication](#) Programme courses and [Professional Progression](#) Programme courses.

Careers Service: careers information, guidance, and exclusive online resources:

www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/plan-your-career/

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobs-and-experience/finding-jobs-and-internships/>

www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1215/making-decisions-about-your-career

Transitions

This section is considered to put the previous stages into practice. Use your skills to cope with changing lives and priorities, and provide relevant evidence of your skills and experience as you:

- prepare and implement: applications, interviews, CVs etc for your career;
- use your understanding of work culture (in departments / organisations / countries);
- relate past experience to future situations to market yourself effectively.

Workshops from The Early Career Researcher Institute and Careers Service: Master's [Doctoral Professional Progression courses](#) (Networking, Effective CVs and applications, Preparing for interviews), [Research Communication](#) and [Research Impact and Enterprise](#)

Careers Service: Guide to CVs and Cover Letters ([CVs and Cover Letters by Imperial College Careers Service - Issuu](#)); support with interviews ([Interviews | Administration and support services | Imperial College London](#)); advice on work experience www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobs-and-experience/work-experience

The International Student team supports working in the UK as an international student: www.imperial.ac.uk/students/international-students/visas-and-immigration/working-in-the-uk/

Experience: work/voluntary/ mentoring/teaching/networking opportunities, Innovation-Placements www.imperial.ac.uk/be-inspired/schools-outreach/ ; www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/

Forums and events: [Early Career Researcher Institute](#), Departmental, [Careers Service](#)

Prospects: job profiles, options with specific degrees, links to useful organisations, and information on applications, cvs and interviews www.prospects.ac.uk/

Bibliography

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