Settling In: The Researcher's Guide to Your University

Introduction

It can be challenging commencing at a new university - particularly if you wish to build or maintain your research momentum.

A new staff member needs to acquire many areas of knowledge about how the university and its research practices operate - know how, know who, know when - but it is not always easy to draw out the right information from those around you. In fact, you should allow up to 6 months to develop a sense of how things work. This time can be somewhat frustrating, but very necessary.

This induction module has been designed to help you understand how research works in your university. It suggests an efficient way of identifying the key people, services, and university strategies that are available to support you in your research.

The module operates in two stages:

- First, this written material provides a quick overview of the key research issues with which you need to be familiar. It is designed to provide you with a 'virtual tour' of your university's research context. It will also assist you in identifying the people, services, and knowledge that will be critical to your success.
- Following your review of this material, you will be supported with an orientation program that will personally introduce you to some major agencies and individuals. The program will also foster regular networking with other researchers.

By the time you finish this module, you will have a good understanding of how research operates in your university. Hopefully, you should be able to get down to work in a strong, focused, and efficient manner. This module (including the workshop component) should take approximately 8 hours to complete.

This module is designed for all newly appointed research or academic staff in the university. It is the capstone module to the 'Future Research Leaders Program' suite of 8 project management modules that focus on your research management skills. This module, on the other hand, explores ways by which you can optimise your research strategy.

This module comprises online learning material and a workshop.

You are expected to devote time to reading the online material and carrying out compulsory activities before attending the workshop. This module should take about 3 hours to read and you may need to devote up to another hour and a half to carry out the compulsory activities.

The workshop is based on the assumption that you have completed the reading and carried out the compulsory activities.

This introductory module comprises 7 topics that explore settling into a new research community. Each of the topics explores issues or strategies and offers you guidance on how to consolidate your approach. The topics are very practical and applied. You may find it useful to read the module at this stage and then to refer to it on an ongoing basis as you settle more fully into your university community.

The topics may vary in their usefulness, depending on your prior experience in university research settings. If you are a highly experienced researcher, Topics 1, 4, 5, and 7 may be the most useful to you. Those new to research or with limited exposure to university research are advised to work through all 7 topics.

Feedback from our pilot group indicated that the module was also seen as valuable for later reference as well as for immediate use. You may find it useful to bookmark particular pages that are good sources of information.

This module (and all other modules in the Future Leaders Research Program) comprise the online material you are now reading and a workshop. For all modules, the completion of the online material is necessary before you attend the workshop - the workshop builds on your engagement with the online material and your responses to the activities within it.

Aims

Settling In therefore aims to:

- Explore the research context in your university
- Clarify the university's expectations for researchers and their activities
- Provide some useful tips and strategies to help you settle in
- Assist you in planning your meetings with significant support people
- Introduce some other elements of development that can greatly enhance your performance as a researcher.as a researcher

Learning outcomes

After completing this module you should be able to:

- Relate your research to the wider university and national research context
- Identify and be familiar with the different aspects of research practice
- Clarify your immediate research needs with respect to information, contacts, and resources
- Develop and implement an induction strategy to ensure you have all of the necessary networks and information to get started efficiently and smoothly
- Identify suitable mentors who will be able to assist you, and manage a mentoring relationship to meet your current and future needs
- Commence the process of positioning yourself and your research in your new research community

Content overview

The module comprises the following topics:

1. **The national research context.** Your university strives to generate high-quality research. As an employee you will be expected to support its quest to maintain its reputation, position, and profile. This first topic therefore provides you with a brief outline as to the current national and institutional research context. As a researcher you will also be expected to reflect the strategic priorities, protocols, and practices that have been established in your university. The services which provide the necessary guidance are also introduced.
2. **Settling into your local research community.** The process of orientation operates at two levels: within the university context, and within the local organisational unit (which might be a faculty, research centre, medical facility, regional hub, etc.) This section of your induction module explores the things you need to ascertain within your organisational area. It outlines the questions you will need to ask of your supervisor and colleagues, and the ways in which you can establish your presence. A checklist for your first discussion is offered as a useful tool to assist your initial orientation to your workplace. This section also includes a guide for supervisors to encourage them to adopt better practices aimed at helping new researchers.
3. **Your role as a researcher.** The third topic delves a little more deeply into the research role you may play in the university. You will be encouraged to identify the knowledge and expertise required to successfully work in this university. This section draws on current practices to identify the capabilities that are expected by your employer. By reflecting on these desired capabilities, you may be able to identify areas that require further development either now or in the future. This section also explores the roles, functions, and responsibilities of researchers in other contexts. If you are already a senior researcher you will find this section valuable in exploring the development needs of more junior staff under your care. This topic might bring to light areas of development that you might usefully pursue.
4. **Managing your research priorities.** This topic is important for all researchers. It is a challenge to meet daily demands while also allowing time for long-term priorities. This module provides an overview of how to identify the priorities which must be met and to manage the time spent on them. Career management strategies are also overviewed. The final section of the module outlines some principles for participating in a performance management discussion – a significant mechanism for managing your work role. The topic includes some practical tips which should prove useful.
5. **Research mentorship.** Successful researchers consistently note the importance of mentorship in their career management. This section explores the nature of research mentorship and outlines how a sustainable relationship can be established. It provides guidance on how to identify suitable mentors and the process of establishing the new relationship. This section is very important for all researchers entering a new work setting – whether experienced or novices. A good mentor makes a real difference to your successful entry into the research community.
6. **Progressing your research career.** This introductory module offers you some practical strategies and guidance to assist your initial settling in. However, it is only a small part of what you need to know in order to fully manage your research role. This final section introduces you to the 8 other short modules within the FRLP. It also explores the nature of research management in more detail.

Module facilitator at your University

Accessing the module material

Now that you have read this introduction, you can access and navigate your way through the module content via the "Settling In" Organiser link in the navigation bar at the top left of this page or in the bar below. If you wish to print this page you can generate a pdf file via this printer icon [ ]. A pdf file for each topic in this module can be generated using the printer icon to the left of each topic title on the Organiser page.

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Organiser

Topic	Subtopics	Activities	At your University
Introduction			At your University
1. The research context Understanding the national and institutional contexts of your research (For each topic, read the topic material via the link in this column before reading the subtopic material)	1.1 Working as a researcher in a research-intensive university	Optional activity - Induction interview checklist	At your University 1.1
	1.2 Getting published		
2. Settling into your local research community What you need to know within your organisational area	2.1 Planning your meeting with your supervisor	Discussion with your supervisor	
	2.2 Setting up your research and web profiles		At your University 2.2
	2.3 Building your research networks		
3. Your role as a researcher Identifying your role, capabilities, and needs as a researcher	3.1 Working as a researcher	Optional activity - Self-reflection	
	3.2 Researcher roles and contributions		
4. Managing your research priorities	4.1 Priority management	Optional activity - Personal reflection	At your University 4
	4.2 Time management		
	4.3 Career management		
	4.4 Managing your performance	Optional activity - Roles and responsibilities	
	4.5 Managing your research projects		
5. Research mentorship The nature and usefulness of research mentorship	5.1 What is mentorship?	Optional activity - Self-reflection	At your University 5.1
	5.2 Why is mentorship important for researchers?		
	5.3 Types of research mentors		
	5.4 The successful mentor		
	5.5 The successful mentee		
	5.6 Identifying suitable mentors		
	5.7 Initiating a mentoring relationship		
	5.8 Sustaining the relationship		
6. Progressing your research career How to investigate the nature of research project management in more detail	6.1 An outline of the "Future Research Leaders Program" modules		At your University 6
	6.2 How module participation can help you		

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Topic 1: The research context

It is very important that researchers understand the organisational context in which they will work. This section explores the working context for a researcher working in a research-intensive university within the Australian higher education sector.

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic you should be able to:

- Describe the national context in which research operates
- Outline the key features of your own university's research strategy
- Identify the university's expectations of you as a researcher.

Topic content

Read the following notes.

1.1 Working as researcher in a research-intensive university

1.2 Getting published

Activities – Induction interview checklist

At the end of this module you will be asked to meet with a range of representatives who can assist you in settling in to your local research community. In preparation for this meeting, you will need to think about the questions you would like to ask. There are many likely issues that you may have identified during this first topic. For example, are you sufficiently familiar with the way Australian research works? Have you a sound understanding of the standards of performance expected of you? How does your research fit into the university's strategic priorities?

Now is the time to record any questions you would like to explore more fully with a colleague at the end of this module. Click on the i®Induction Interview Checklisti⎺ link below to download an MS Word (or rtf) file. Save it and progressively add your responses to the file as you work through the module.

Induction Interview Checklist (MS Word)

Induction Interview Checklist (rtf format)

Pursuing the topic further

There have been a number of external hyperlinks provided throughout this module. While they are provided to enable you to explore issues of interest further, it is recommended that you simply note their presence for now and come back to them when you need to explore an issue more deeply.

Acknowledgement

Dr Campbell Thomson, Director, Research Services at UWA contributed to the content of this topic.

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1.1 Working as a researcher in a research-intensive university

Go8 universities are leaders in research, conducting over 60 per cent of the research in Australia and winning more than 70 per cent of competitive research grants. As a researcher within a Go8 university, it is important that you understand the environment in which you work to ensure you are in the best position to contribute to the research community and your university's research position.

The sections below will give you an overview of the most important frameworks and organisations which shape the Australian research environment.

a. Research funding

Research funding is offered by numerous organisations, both public and private. The largest and most important funding bodies for Go8 universities are the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The *Australian Research Council* (ARC) is a national research body which administers funding for research grants through its national competitive grants programs in research fields other than medical research.

The *National Health and Medical Research Council* (NHMRC) administers funding for health and medical research.

The ARC and the NHMRC offer funding schemes for individual and group research and at different career stages. Granting schemes include fellowships, project costs, research infrastructure and research undertaken with industry or government partners.

These granting schemes are highly sought after, with Go8 universities heavily represented in the successful allocations.

The ARC and NHMRC granting schemes are regularly revised and researchers are advised to keep abreast of changes by regularly reviewing current information online via the URLs provided above, and to ensure good communication with their research office and school administration.

In addition to the national research councils, a large number of organisations offer both small and large grants for research. Your university research office or equivalent should be able to provide you with a full list of opportunities.

Some prominent examples of organisations funding research are:
Cancer Council Australia and its members are the leading funders of independent cancer research and related activities in Australia. For information about Cancer Council research funding programs, visit their website: http://www.cancer.org.au/research.htm

The *Heart Foundation* offers a range of awards across a variety of categories for research into heart, stroke, and blood vessel disease. For details, visit their website: http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/RESEARCH/FUNDING/Pages/default.aspx

The *Ian Potter Foundation* makes grants for general charitable purposes in Australia that advance knowledge and benefit the community in the areas of the arts, community wellbeing, education, environment and conservation, health, medical research, and science. For more information, visit their website: http://www.ianpotter.org.au/

b. Strategic research priorities

The strategic research priorities (SRPs) were developed by the Australian Government and are designed to focus Australian research into areas that will contribute significantly to the economic, social, and environmental needs of Australia.

The five themes of the strategic research priorities are:

- Living in a changing environment
- Promoting population health and wellbeing
- Managing our food and water assets
- Securing Australia's place in a changing world
- Lifting productivity and economic growth.

Please refer to http://www.industry.gov.au/research/Pages/StrategicResearchPriorities.aspx for a detailed description of each strategic research priority and its associated priority goals. Researchers applying to either the ARC or NHMRC will be required to outline how their proposed research project will address one of the above SRPs. The SRPs may change in the future so it is important to check their currency online before embarking on a grant application or any other justification of research in relation to the national research priorities. Your research proposal can be at an advantage if you can show strong alignment between your research (including the research infrastructure of your university) and the SRPs.

c. Excellence in Research for Australia

The Australian Government has established a research quality and evaluation system, the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative. The ARC developed and administers ERA on behalf of the government. You can read more about ERA here: http://www.arc.gov.au/era/default.htm

ERA assesses research quality within Australia's higher education institutions using a combination of indicators and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts. For the 2012 assessment, the ERA uses leading researchers to evaluate research in eight discipline clusters, which are:
Cluster 1: Physical, Chemical and Earth Sciences (PCE)
Cluster 2: Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA)
Cluster 3: Engineering and Environmental Sciences (EE)
Cluster 4: Education and Human Society (EHS)
Cluster 5: Economics and Commerce (EC)
Cluster 6: Mathematical, Information and Computing Sciences (MIC)
Cluster 7: Biological and Biotechnological Sciences (BB)
Cluster 8: Medical and Health Sciences (MHS)

The first ERA assessment covering all disciplines took place in 2010. You can see the results here: http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_2010/outcomes_2010.htm. Results are displayed by institution and by field of research code (FoR).

The process of evaluating areas of research strength has placed considerably more pressure on researchers to develop collective areas of research strength to achieve a critical mass in defined discipline areas. It also emphasises the importance of each researcher ensuring they are research active and generating creditable outcomes. This can be particularly challenging for those new to academe where research and teaching must be balanced.
As the ERA process continues, it is a good idea to remain up-to-date by checking the ARC website frequently for updates and information: http://www.arc.gov.au/era/default.htm

d. Responsible research

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research was developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, and Universities Australia and is designed to guide researchers and institutions in responsible research practices. The code covers a number of research-related areas, including management of research data, supervision of research trainees, publication and dissemination of research findings, authorship, peer review, conflicts of interest, and research collaboration across institutions. In order to receive grant funding from either the ARC or NHMRC, a university must comply with the Australian Code. Researchers must therefore both understand the contents of the code and ensure that they comply with it in the conduct of their research.

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research can be accessed at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm. For further information on aspects of the code, please review Module 3: Governance and Compliance

The research context at your university

Excellent research: expectations and implications

As a researcher you play an important role in maintaining and/or expanding the research outcomes for your institution. Your performance as an excellent researcher will depend on many factors, including your own research skills, knowledge and capabilities. Researchers in our universities are expected to perform to a very high standard, with outcomes often incorporating:

- Quality publications in internationally reputed journals, monographs or other appropriate sources, depending on your discipline
- A credible and sustained track record, including presentations on your research at national and international conferences or other events
- Funded research – particularly from Australian Competitive Grants sources
- Successful research which is well-conceived, soundly executed and followed through with publications
- Collaborative research with industry, other researchers and increasingly, cross-disciplinary research

These expectations will vary from discipline to discipline, but they reflect a strong concern for the ongoing strengthening of both our individual and collaborative research outputs. It is important that you build a strong understanding of the performance outcomes that you should be aiming to demonstrate. You will able to clarify these expectations through your discussion using your Induction Interview Checklist at the end of this module.

For the moment, take a short break and think about the picture you have developed of this university's research infrastructure and focus. If there are any gaps in your knowledge, record them on your checklist record.

(Note that on the final subtopic page of each topic, the Next > link in the navigation bar below returns you to the first page for this topic, so you can review the topic as a whole and complete any activities listed there before moving on to the next topic via the Organiser page.)

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1.2 Getting published

A good publication record is very important if a researcher is starting out or in the early stages of establishing a research career. Publications are important criteria when considering candidates for academic positions, and publication track record is vital. There is a strong focus on the number of publications, the journal where an article was published, and publication impact (usually measured via the number of citations that a publication receives).

It is easy to obtain publication records from the **Web of Knowledge**. There is also a new index that is used, the h-index or Hirsch-Index. The h index is defined as the number of papers with a citation number higher or equal to h. In other words, a scholar with an index of h has published h papers each of which has been cited in other papers at least h times. Additionally, citations and other research impact metrics are used for international rankings of universities and disciplines. Poor placement of publications can therefore negatively impact on university rankings.

This means it is important that papers are submitted to the right journals. Once a paper has been submitted it is too late to change your mind and place it somewhere else. It is very much the responsibility of the Chief Investigator, the supervisor of a postgraduate, the head of the research group, and the head of department to mentor researchers in their department about publication strategies so that all parties benefit. It is the responsibility of established researchers to enhance the career of their students. Every author on a publication, as well as the employing institution, benefits when a published article achieves a high number of citations in a short time. Equally, little happens if the article is published in a journal that few people read.

1.2.1 Finding a journal to get published

An analysis of 7,528 journals covered in the 2005 Journal of Citation Reports revealed that as few as 300 journals account for more than 50 per cent of cited articles and 25 per cent of published articles. A core of 3,000 of these journals accounts for about 75 per cent of published articles and over 90 per cent of cited articles. So the important task is to select the right journal.

In terms of research journals, terms used to describe the level of quality are often used interchangeably, for example refereed, scholarly, peer-reviewed, and academic. There are different levels of peer review. For example, journals may use editorial peer review (editorial board), peer review by experts in the field, or blind peer review by experts in the field.

Choosing the right journal is important and the following sections describe aspects of some useful criteria in selection.

1.2.2 Recognition factor

Well-recognised journals exhibit some or all of the following characteristics:

- Readily recognised and also used by your peer group
- Usually easy to get copies (through libraries, online, etc.)
- Built-in readership numbers through things like affiliations with a professional society (whose members get the journal as part of their membership package)
- It is listed in relevant content-based databases and searchable through various search engines and library databases
- Published and relevant industry data may be quoted through the popular press (with the journal as the source).

1.2.3 Type of publication

The article being submitted needs to fit with the scope and direction of the journal. So it is important to review previous journal editions to confirm that the sort of article to be published is consistent with the publication strategy and direction in order to make the best match possible.

Different types of articles are published by different journals. Some publish review articles and editorials; others publish technical reports such as new research findings, case reports, letters to the editor, supplements, and original articles. The readership of each journal is different, reflecting the differences in their content. It is important that the journal chosen actually publishes the type of article you intend to submit.

1.2.4 Citation and impact factor

Citations and impact factor are important measures of academic achievement and are often used in evaluating academic excellence by funding agencies in the awarding of project funding and by universities

in the appointment of staff. The impact factor of a journal is calculated by dividing the number of citations to publications in the journal over the previous 2 years by the number of articles the journal published. In other words, the impact factor reflects the citation rate of the 'average' article in a journal (and not that of a specific article). However, it is important to be aware of whether the citation rate of a particular journal is increasing or decreasing. Despite a range of views on the validity of the impact factor as a measure of research quality, it is an important consideration in deciding which journal is best to publish in.

1.2.5 Editorial office standards and efficiency

This consideration relates to how easy it is to meet the requirements of the journal and whether clear and unambiguous instructions are easily accessible to prospective authors, including the process for dealing with a submitted article. This includes the referee and review process and what the expectations are for getting constructive feedback on work submitted, and how long it will take to get that feedback. Some journals have a high rejection rate and authors need to understand how long it will take to be advised of acceptance or rejection.

1.2.6 Publishing and distribution factors

The final presentation of an accepted article is an important consideration, including what opportunities the author will have to sign off on proofs. Distribution includes how many people get the journal, including through professional association membership and other distribution mechanisms (libraries, library databases, and so on). Obviously, the broader the distribution of a journal, the greater the chance of an article in the journal being seen, and therefore being cited.

In addition, authors should check whether they will have the right to make their own copies of the individual article separate from the journal's own web-site publication. For example, can the author load it onto their own university's web-site for free download?

1.2.7 Costs

Many journals charge no fees to authors. However, many charge either a submission fee, an acceptance fee, or a per-published page fee, and this needs to be understood. Some journals also charge where tables, figures, and diagrams need to be reproduced in colour. Sometimes colour is necessary (particularly in the case of scientific images), so in selecting a journal this needs to be taken into account as part of the decision-making process.

1.2.8 Governance and funding of the journal

This can be a sensitive issue, but it is important to know that the editorial staff of a journal will treat your manuscript in a fair and equitable manner, so there needs to be some sort of policy in place in terms of processes for selecting articles. This is difficult to understand for new or less well-known journals. In addition, financial security is an important consideration for new and emerging journals, and things like having issues that appear on time are important indicators of such security. Many commercial organisations have policies that do not allow them to advertise in journals that have not got a specific period of successful production and distribution so that they don't buy advertising in journals that won't be around in the longer term.

1.2.9 Checklist for choosing a journal

Authors have a lot of choices for publications. The following checklist is a quick summary of the preceding sections.

Table 1.2: Checklist for choosing a journal

Criteria	Question
Content	Is the content focus of the journal aligned with yours?
Fit with research article	Does the journal publish the type of research article (i.e. letter, article, review, original research) that you want to publish?
Impact factor	Does the journal have a high impact factor? (check if increasing or decreasing)
Author instructions	Can you get these easily? And do they clearly explain what you need to do and the process of submitting an article for publication?
Review process	Do you know what will happen to your paper when it is submitted (i.e. how long will it take to know whether it is accepted or rejected, what type of feedback you will get etc.)?
Cost	Will there be any cost associated with submitting an article? If it is accepted will there be a cost and will there be any additional cost for colour images, figures etc.?
Track record	Does the journal have a track record of publishing on time and will it still be in business in a couple of years' time?
Distribution	What reach does the journal have to the kind of people you want to read your article (to maximise its chance of citations). Is it distributed to people in a professional association or profession that you wish to target? What sort of numbers get published and where is it distributed (i.e. just in Australia or overseas, and if so where and how many?)
Peer opinion	What do your colleagues think? Do they know and recognise the journal and recommend this one or others?

(Subtopic 1.2 was developed by Dr Delyth Samuel of the University of Melbourne.)

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Topic 2: Settling in to your local research community

If you are commencing at a new university, you will have a huge amount of learning to accomplish over the first 6 months. You will need to build your networks, your knowledge of who is expert and helpful, and a sense of how things are done, and clarify what is expected from you in terms of performance. This topic is designed to provide you with some prompts for the in-depth discussions you should undertake with your supervisor and other relevant colleagues. It will assist you with fast-tracking the assimilation process.

This topic will assist your research induction meeting with your supervisor. It complements the formal research orientation program that your university or faculty may offer. The end of this topic will be a guided conversation with that person – and possibly others you have identified as significant sources of assistance.

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic you should be able to:

- Meet with your supervisor to clarify your working context, discuss your performance expectations, career, and development needs
- Identify the important sources of knowledge and who you should make contact with
- Engage with appropriate research networks that support your research
- Set up your research and web profiles
- Meet with other local experts to address any knowledge gaps identified through reading this module.

Topic content

Read the following notes.

2.1 Planning your meeting with your supervisor

2.2 Setting up your research and web profiles

2.3 Building your research networks

Optional activity - Commencing your focused discussion

Complete this activity after you have worked through the subtopics.

Now save your amended induction interview checklist onto your computer for use in the meeting with your supervisor. At this point you are ready to meet them for a focused discussion on who and what you need to know. Make an appointment and ask that the meeting be scheduled for 1 hour. Prior to the meeting send your personalised meeting checklist to your supervisor for consideration. (Remember that you will also have to forward them the username and password that you were given to access these materials.)

Getting Started in a New University: A Guide for Research Supervisors

This resource provides some useful pointers for your supervisor on what you have been doing and how you may be supported. Don't forget in your meeting that you are aiming to achieve four outcomes:

- To identify who and what you should know
- Clarify the performance expectations against which you will be measured
- Agree on your performance and development goals for the coming year
- Identify mechanisms for helping you to reach your development goals.

Good luck!

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2.1 Planning your meeting with your supervisor

Topics 1 to 5 will provide you with a number of prompts about the ways in which you can move smoothly into your new community. At this point, you are encouraged to think about who and what you need to know to readily manage your research role. The following prompts are drawn from the different topics covered in this module. The Induction Interview Checklist you downloaded in Topic 1 provides you with an online tool where you can jot down any thoughts or questions as you work through this topic. At the conclusion of the topic you will be able to use it as the basis for a meeting with your supervisor. This meeting will be aimed at gleaning the information you still need as well as clarifying the performance expectations that you will be working toward.

The Higher Education Context

The following overview summarises some of the areas we have covered, and highlights the particular aspects which might be worthy of discussion during this meeting.

Topic 1: The national research context

It is suggested you should build a good understanding of the following standards and processes.

- How research works in your university
- The standards of performance required of researchers
- The university's strategic priorities.

Do you feel confident in knowing how these areas operate? If not, go to the Induction Interview Checklist and identify the questions you would like to explore.

Topic 2: Settling into your local research community

This is more broad in its focus, encouraging you to think about how research is managed in your university. Do you feel you have a good sense of how project management operates? Some of the prompts raised in this topic include the following:

- Do you understand how the research grants process works in your university?
- Do you have the necessary skills to manage the financial side of a research grant?
- Are you sufficiently versed in how researchers manage staff and research students in this university?
- Does your local area have particular stakeholders with whom it works closely? Is this important for your work?
- Do you have a good understanding of your likely role in any research project with which you will be associated?

Topic 3: Your roles as a researcher

This identifies a range of research capabilities that are important skills for any researcher. Consider if any of the following require further development over the coming years. Go to your Induction Interview Checklist file and note any areas that need to be followed up and be actively developed by you.

- Self management
  - Time management
  - Career management
  - Media skills
- Working with others
  - Communication skills
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Relationship management
  - Human resource management skills
  - Research mentorship
  - Collaborative research
- Research skills and capabilities
  - Analytical skills and critical thinking skills
  - Budgeting and contract management
  - How the university and research processes work
  - Project management

- Stages of researcher development and your current role and their implications.

Topic 4: Managing your research priorities

This explores some very important elements of work management. This is the time to start thinking carefully about your skills in coordinating your long and short term goals. In particular, you will need to be quite clear as to what is expected of you and how you can meet those expectations while keeping longer term goals in focus. Topic 4 suggests some valuable questions for including in your preliminary discussions with your supervisor. These are listed below to assist your reflection, but are also included in the Induction Interview Checklist, where you can also make further notes.

- Clarification of your university's and research centre's research priorities and directions
- Discussion of the required performance outcomes you will be expected to demonstrate
- Agreement on new aspirational research goals to be achieved in the coming year
- Review of support and resources available to assist with your research (including start-up grants)
- Identification of skills or capabilities that require further development, and
- The cultural expectations and contributions you will be expected to make.

Topic 5: Research mentorship

This affirms the importance of identifying and nurturing effective relationships with mentors (and mentees). At this stage, you need to identify what you need from a mentor and to consider whether assistance in gaining a mentor is desired. If you do wish to have assistance, consider the following questions:

- What type of mentor do you wish to find?
- What are your primary concerns at present?
- Who have you contacted or investigated to date?
- Would you like an orientation mentor?

Again, include any responses on the checklist.

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2.2 Setting up your research and web profiles

As part of your long-term research strategy, you need to actively work on increasing your profile in the wider research community. When people commence at a new workplace they often find it difficult to devote sufficient time to building and maintaining their profiles. And yet your *profile management* is a routine that should be regularly undertaken as it is a major way by which people find out about you and your research.

There is an art and science to profile management. A challenge for many researchers is that the profile is inaccessible to others less familiar with the research. Here is a challenge for you: write a short paragraph on your research focus that would entice others to feel excited about what you do and how it could impact on the community. If you find this hard, don't despair, but don't give up either! Each time you revisit the statement, you will find it becomes more 'people friendly'. Keep your audience in mind.

Your web and research profiles need to be constructed for two audiences: research peers who will be looking to see what you have achieved and how creditable your work is, and those with less in-depth knowledge of your field. The latter audience might include potential industry partners, possible research collaborators from other universities, students seeking postgraduate supervisors, and colleagues within your own university. Your web and research profile may operate in a number of different formats:

- As a curriculum vitae which can be attached or amended for different purposes
- As part of an academic portfolio which explores your career activities, processes, achievement, and goals
- As a web-based profile which promotes you and your research outcomes to interested parties
- As a profile on research databases to encourage other researchers to contact you with opportunities or queries
- Or in many other formats, depending on your context and roles.

In all cases, it is important to keep your profile current. Set a time in your calendar every 3 months to review your profiles, and keep a list of them to ensure all are updated. This can also be a good time to consider how your long and short term priorities are tracking.

It can be helpful to have a critical reader review your profiles and CV. A mentor can offer very useful insights into how well you are promoting your talents and capabilities. You may also wish to have a non-research acquaintance read your profile. They will give you good feedback on whether it was understandable!

Keeping your profile current is an important professional task. If your profile includes publications, seek assistance from your administrative support staff to regularly input your latest published work. You may also find it useful to update your profiles at the start of each year as you set new performance targets and review your achievements.

At your university

You may prefer to create your own list of services and to bookmark these. You may also wish to discuss your profile with your supervisor. There may be other avenues for promotion that are known within your local community.

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2.3 Building your research networks

Activities set out in the last topics have encouraged you to think about the research network within your local community and to consider how you might build your connections with other professional communities. The following tips may prove helpful as you commence the process of establishing your presence.

- Ask others who they would recommend as good contacts
- Find out about local meetings and activities and introduce yourself
- Consider volunteering onto a state executive of the leading research network relevant to your field. This is a great way to move into the circle
- Make sure you take the time to attend networking functions and aim to meet at least two new people
- Encourage your mentor to take you to some functions and introduce you
- Consider inviting key people to lunch to talk about common research interests
- Ask advice from your supervisor and mentor.

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Topic 3: Your role as a researcher

There has been considerable research recently on the nature of research work and the way it influences the development of a researcher. This topic will explore the research role you may play in the university. You will be encouraged to identify the knowledge and expertise that you currently possess and the development you will need to undertake to work successfully in this university. The section draws on current research in universities to identify the capabilities that are expected by your employer. You are encouraged to reflect on these capabilities to identify areas that may require further development now and in the future. This section also explores the roles and functions of researchers at other levels of responsibility. If you are already a senior researcher you will find this section valuable in exploring the development needs of more junior staff under your care. This topic is particularly useful in identifying areas of development that need to be pursued.

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic you should be able to:

- Explain the general capabilities which all researchers should be able to demonstrate
- Describe the different contributions early career, mid-career, and research leaders might make to a research community
- Pinpoint your current needs for research development using the Research Career Continuum
- Identify current and future development needs.

Topic Content

Read the following notes.

3.1 Working as a researcher

3.2 Researcher roles and contributions

Optional activity: Self reflection

Take some time to think about your current skills and capabilities. How well are you suited to the roles described here? Are there particular areas you would like to develop further? Make a note of these so that you can discuss them with your supervisor following Topic 6. Use your Induction Interview Checklist to record your thoughts.

If you have ready contact with research centre leaders or senior researchers, you might like to interview them and explore how they manage their leadership role and research output. Explore the career process that brought them to this role. What were their influences? What skills would they like to develop further? What advice would they offer you in planning your next career step?

Pursuing the topic further

You may be interested in exploring the roles of researchers more fully. A more detailed overview of the various roles can be found at:

Debowski, S. (2004) Cultivating hidden assets: the developmental needs of university career researchers. *Research and Development in Higher Education* 27: 127–135.

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3.1 Working as a researcher

There are many different models for employing researchers in universities. In some cases, the researcher's role includes teaching responsibilities. In other cases, researchers may be employed to focus solely on research. Despite these differences, researchers across your university face similar challenges in managing the overall work role and concomitant expectations for achieving sound and reputable research that is widely published and of high impact. This section will highlight the necessity of managing your career, your ongoing development, and your relationships. Of course, there is also the need to maintain the impetus and focus of the research itself.

Recent research across the Group of Eight universities (Debowski 2006) has identified a number of important skills and capabilities that researchers should feel able to undertake and perform – no matter what their level of appointment. These generic attributes are listed below. As you read them, consider how you have recently demonstrated these capabilities. If you feel that you could benefit from further development in any area, note it down for reference later.

Research is primarily a self-managed process. The researcher must ensure that he or she has the appropriate expertise and capacity. There is also a need to plan for both long and short term goals, so that the researcher's full potential is realised. There is increasing recognition that researchers need to be proactive in seeking opportunities to gain recognition for their research and to promote the work of their university. A strategic researcher also takes advantage of opportunities to build new strengths that will be of value in the future. Self management is therefore one of the three generic attributes outlined here. Three elements can be identified: time management, career management, and media skills.

Media skills are valuable for any researcher. Increasingly the impact of research projects and publications are affected by good profiling in the media. You should ensure you have a good personal webpage on the university website, and well constructed profiles through public avenues (e.g. Community of Science (COS) database), and that important research achievements are highlighted in the university's publications or broader marketing channels. The media can be a useful channel to build public awareness (and potential-sponsor awareness) of your research. For example, the ability to write about your research in an engaging way that can be understood by the public is a very useful skill.

Working with others

Researchers interact with many different people. They may work closely with colleagues, supervise more junior researchers and staff, or work with sponsors and other stakeholders. An effective research program relies on people who can work well with others. Six aspects are worth specifically noting:

Communication skills (both verbal and written) are foundational skills for any researcher. While it is important to be able to write and converse on academic matters, it is equally important to be able to communicate in a sociable and respectful manner with other colleagues. The capacity to communicate clearly, coherently, and constructively is important in order to successfully work with others. If your first language is not English, monitor how well people are responding to you. There are many avenues of support which might assist you – including advanced language courses and coaching. Your mentor may be able to assist you.

Interpersonal skills are critical – particularly for those working collaboratively. Interpersonal skills cover a range of capabilities. Aspects to consider include the ability to listen and consider other points of view, a willingness to adapt and take a different approach to accommodate the needs of others, a valuing of diversity, and a desire to work with the strengths of others.

Relationship management is a third area which strongly relies on the ability to work with others. Relationships with colleagues, stakeholders, and other significant people require consistent attention and commitment. These relationships thrive on regular contact, common interests, respect, and an ability to work, as well as the development of common goals. In some cases, your relationships may be 'virtual' (internet-based) relationships – straddling time and distance barriers. In these cases, you will need to put considerably more effort into the establishment and maintenance of those relationships. Teams demand even more focus on the maintenance of effective relationships.

Human resource management skills to work with students, junior colleagues, and across larger research groups also play a major part in most researchers' activities. From the moment you commence supervision of an honours or postgraduate student, you will need to build a strong understanding of how to recruit, select, manage, and develop other people. Your university will have many expectations and policies about how you manage people. In particular, you will need to comply with some basic codes of conduct and follow the necessary policies and protocols. The process of research student supervision is particularly important as you will be required to demonstrate your understanding of and compliance with the university's policies, deadlines, and standards. Supervision and collaboration with team members also requires sensitive interaction with others and knowledge of the university's own standards, codes, and protocols.

Research mentorship strategies (as both mentor and mentee) are a fifth aspect of working with others. The mentoring relationship is a particularly important component of a researcher's life. In your work you will hopefully experience the pleasure of being both a mentor and mentee. Evidence from Go8 researchers indicates that mentoring is a most powerful learning experience. The qualities and commitment you bring to that relationship will be a major determinant of whether such a relationship successfully grafts and holds.

Collaborative research requires some additional skills to successfully work with other colleagues. As well as the various attributes noted above, it is most important to have a clear understanding of how intellectual property will be managed and the ways in which ownership and responsibility will be assigned. The partnership relies on a strong basis of trust and respect for the other individuals as people and as reputable researchers. The need to share ideas and contribute to a collective research strategy also requires a willingness to operate flexibly and constructively.

Research skills and capabilities

Although you may have come to this university with a raft of well-established research skills, there is a continual need to refresh and expand your skills. Each year, new and improved research methods emerge and need to be monitored. Thus, it is most important to take the time to maintain your professional research skills base and to attend any suitable conferences or courses which can assist you in keeping up to date. In addition, you will no doubt have other research skills and capabilities which your university will expect you to demonstrate.

Analytical skills and critical thinking skills are clearly part of any research activity, as is the capacity to generate innovative ideas. Researchers progress from being novices through to experts in many areas of their work. As you become expert in various areas you will be asked to share some of that knowledge and expertise with others – as a teacher but also as a knowledge source.

Project management is a must for all researchers. Each research project you undertake will require careful planning, management, and evaluation. This orientation module explores the process of project management to highlight the various areas that you should be able to demonstrate and control. Your university expects that you will have the necessary skills to successfully manage the time, people, funds, relationships, and risks attached to any project for which you are responsible.

Budgeting and contract management expertise has become an increasingly important aspect of research practice. If you apply for and receive a grant or a research contract, you will be expected to manage this aspect of your work with due diligence and a careful reflection of university practice. You will also need to comply with the granting body's requirements. Every researcher needs to be skilled in managing budget and contract processes. These skills may include knowing how to view and read budget reports, search spreadsheets, use pivot tables to change the report view, and monitor staffing and other expenditure reports.

Knowledge of ***how the university and research processes work*** is critical to your work. This orientation module is designed to provide you with a broad overview of the main aspects of process and practice with which you should be acquainted. However, this will need to be supplemented by an ongoing monitoring of changing policy and systems. You may also need to spend some time learning about the various reporting and performance monitoring tools that are used to record your own research performance.

Your ***information and technology*** skills are critically important. Most of us have acceptable capabilities in using the main applications. However, there are many advanced strategies that can greatly enhance your work. It is important to update your technological literacy (and library retrieval skills) on a regular basis. While we are educated in our preferred ***research methodologies***, new and improved research approaches constantly emerge. Researchers need to keep pace with new technologies. This may sometimes require further formal learning.

These generic attributes are necessary for any researcher to function effectively. You may find that some of these are more fully developed than others. This is to be expected. At this stage, it is important to consider which are well established and which need further nurturing. Jot down any areas that you feel are potential areas of concern. These will be picked up later in our final review of this module.

While these are generic skills, it is natural that some will assume a higher priority than others, depending on your research context. Table 2.1 summarises the areas and their likely importance, depending on your research focus. A space has been left for you to consider how important each capability is. You may like to identify the top three development areas you would like to focus on. Make a note of these in your Induction Interview Checklist for discussion later.

Table 3.1: Generic research capabilities
(Rating: *** = very important, ** = quite important, * = of some importance)

Capability	Small project/ individual research project	Project team	Large research program	Your context
Time management	***	***	***	
Career management	***	***	***	
Media skills	**	**	***	
Communication skills	**	***	***	

Interpersonal skills	**	***	***	
Relationship management	*	**	***	
Human resource management	*	**	***	
Research mentorship strategies	**	***	***	
Collaborative research	*	**	***	
Analytical/critical skills	***	***	***	
Budgeting and contract management	***	***	***	
Understanding the university processes	***	***	***	
Project management	**	***	***	

Reference: Debowski, S. (2006) Critical times: an exploration of recent evaluations of researcher development needs. *Research and Development in Higher Education* 29: 81–86.

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3.2 Researcher roles and contributions

To date we have explored the broad skills that a researcher should display – at any level of appointment. However, not all skills and capabilities operate across the spectrum. There is an increasing understanding of how researchers grow into new roles and responsibilities as they move toward more senior appointments. While there is no fixed progression and people can transition to quite different roles rapidly, there is also evidence to suggest that the following stages are commonly reflected in the career paths of researchers.

This section therefore outlines the different roles that researchers may play and the important capabilities that are desirable for researchers to have. Again, as you review these areas, consider which of your capabilities perhaps need further bolstering. And if you are a senior researcher, consider how you will promote the development of these skills in your junior team members.

If you have time, please read the following information about early career researchers, midcareer researchers, research leaders, and research leaders. If not go straight to The Future Research Leaders Program modules.

Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

The term *Early Career Researchers* has been used as it is widely understood across our sector. It is taken to mean those researchers who have completed a PhD and are seeking to consolidate a research career.

However, ECRs may also be people who are in the process of completing their research degree – particularly if they have come from a business or clinical background. Early career researchers can demonstrate a great diversity of background and experience and are not necessarily younger staff. Many researchers bring considerable experience from other work settings, including overseas appointments and long track records in professional roles. While most may be young, there is strong evidence of an increasing number of older academics seeking a different career path through research. Thus, this term is meant to reflect the commencement of the research journey as the knowledge learnt in a PhD is translated into the business of developing and implementing research grants and seeking avenues for publication and research dissemination.

In general, the largest issue facing ECRs is the establishment of a viable research niche. The PhD does not necessarily transition into a sustainable research focus that complements the university's research priorities or the foci of the research area to which the ECR is appointed. In this case, the researcher may need to 'adapt' the research focus to complement these priorities. The consolidation of a research focus can take some time and may require careful discussion with other researchers. A challenge for many ECRs is that time is limited. *Establishing a creditable track record is a critical priority*. The goal of any early career researcher should be focused on being a Chief Investigator (CI) by midcareer. Despite needing to clarify and consolidate a research focus, many early career researchers are also expected to teach, supervise, and take responsibility for seeking new grants. They are also expected to build a publication record as quickly as possible. If this is your context, think carefully about your time and work role management. While the teaching is an important element of your work, it can become all-consuming. A balance between research and teaching is critical. Steady progress in research needs to be maintained, particularly in the first 5 years after a PhD.

There are five critical areas that an Early Career Researcher needs to consolidate in the first years of research. These are briefly described below.

- *Induction* to both the local research area and the broader university context ensures the individual is well informed of the strategic, political, and practical context in which research operates. Researchers who enter university without taking time to become familiar with the university's context, as well as their local research environment, can greatly impair their effectiveness. New and inexperienced researchers need to be well guided through the complex world of university research. Such guidance may be provided by a supervisor or mentor.

- *Grantsmanship* skills need to be cultivated. New researchers have much to learn in terms of grant seeking models, avenues for funding, sponsorship strategies, university and grant body contacts, and the practical skills of developing grant proposals. While an individual can work through these processes through trial and error, there are major benefits in drawing on existing models and seeking guidance from experienced researchers. Peer review of grant proposals, and mentors who will guide the researcher through that process, are two highly valued avenues for learning.

- *Development of a credible track record* is a critical goal for any early career researcher. A balanced research profile needs to be achieved. The nature of that profile can be different for each researcher. However, publishing in high quality journals, presenting refereed papers at international conferences, and building a profile within the relevant disciplinary community are core elements of a track record. Supervision of honours and PhD students through to successful completion in a timely fashion also

contributes to a strong track record. Advice and support from more experienced researchers can be very helpful in identifying the best journals and conferences. An important issue in establishing this track record is to ensure that you are profiled in any publications drawing on your research. (The attribution of authorship is discussed in Module 3.)

- **Life as a new researcher** also must be navigated carefully during those early years of working in a research-intensive university. Early career researchers need to initiate and cultivate research networks, establish mentoring relationships, develop a career strategy, and ensure effective performance across the necessary portfolios. This immersion into university practice takes time and commitment. It can be greatly assisted by connecting with other more experienced researchers, and through ongoing sharing of experiences with other early career academics. The investigation of Go8 researchers emphasises the importance of encouraging links with other early career researchers. Peer mentoring can alleviate a sense of isolation and loneliness.

- Overall, however, **time deprivation** is probably the most significant challenge that an early career researcher will face. Over time this sense of pressure will become more controlled, but in the first year or two, it can be particularly overwhelming. Three main strategies can assist with managing time pressures. First, identify what you need to achieve to further your career. This will assist in clarifying priorities. Second, cultivate people who can provide you with quick tips and assistance to fast track the learning process. Third, seek out developmental opportunities that can assist you to acquire the necessary skills. Early career researchers interviewed in the Go8 project noted that they were reluctant to seek opportunities to learn and develop their skills as they felt that time away from the bench would be disloyal to the research project and the research team. However, they also noted that this was a mistake which impaired their career progression. Each researcher should take the time to learn effective and efficient strategies which will assist with their work. A few hours away from the laboratory or research desk can be paid back very quickly with the implementation of improved processes. Topic 4 (Managing your research priorities) delves more deeply into the whole issue of priorities, time, and career management.

Mid-Career Researchers (MCRs)

Mid-Career Researchers can be defined as those who have established their track record, achieved grants, published papers, had successful postgraduate completions, and built a creditable profile. They commonly manage projects, teams, and areas of research activity. In some cases MCRs hold large administrative portfolios and work closely with their research leaders. They commonly supervise many staff and students and have a history of grants and publications. Many mid-career researchers are highly successful and ready to launch into a more substantial leadership role as a senior researcher. In some cases, however, they may feel a lack of recognition as Chief or Principal Investigators on grants, and may experience a tendency to be listed as second author, behind the research leader, on publications. (Having said this, it should be noted that there are different protocols for publishing, depending on the discipline and group within which a researcher is working; there will be more discussion of this in Module 3, Topic 4.1.) In the 2006 study of mid-career researchers, some respondents expressed a strong desire to create their 'own space in the sun'. On the other hand, they recognised the need to seek mentorship from their leaders while continuing to build their profile. The jump from emerging to established research leader was sometimes noted to be a particularly large challenge for this group, with several interviewees indicating that they expected to shift to another university to make that change. Obviously, our universities would prefer to retain their researchers instead of losing them to another institution. The Future Research Leaders Program can assist in preparing researchers for new and more complex challenges – and in ensuring existing opportunities are fully realised.

Overall, the biggest challenge facing mid-career researchers is the chance to take time away from the research agenda to reflect, plan, and renew the research focus and research skills. Researchers with management roles can find it difficult to secure time away from the research area. They may also feel that there is insufficient recognition for the role they play and find it hard to gain additional resourcing and support. These are not insurmountable problems, but they do point to a need to operate more strategically to overcome these obstacles. There are some major areas of focus mid-career researchers should develop to increase their profile, effectiveness, and achievements. These include:

- **Career management** (particularly with respect to gaining increased profile and recognition)
- **Project team leadership and management** (particularly with respect to planning, financial management, and performance management of the research team)
- Building and strengthening **collaborative research partnerships** with industry, colleagues, and national and international partners
- **Managing** and building up a credible profile within the university is another important skill to acquire. Opportunities to build cross-disciplinary collaborations, networks, and a knowledge of university processes all assist in building a stronger presence across the academic community. Many researchers find they reap many benefits from engaging more strongly with their colleagues and the formal channels within the university.

Research Leaders

"It's funny, because it has very little to do with real science ..."

"We need opportunities to get together with other colleagues with similar issues."

These comments from established research leaders reflect the complexity that faces those with high level profiles and track records. Research leaders are normally well established in their fields, with a strong and sustained research profile and a sound group of researchers and students who work in their research niche. They generally demonstrate a confidence in their ability to maintain their research reputation and in drawing additional research grants in to fund their activities. The level of funding for research leaders can greatly vary from 'an embarrassment of funds', to a continual need to generate 'sexy [research] on a shoestring'. Research leaders funded through fellowships and ongoing research grants are particularly challenged in

maintaining funding streams as well as research program and teams. Many rely on consultancies and research contracts as well as grants to generate their funding base. This clearly places additional pressures on their role, as relationship management and industry connections are pivotal to the research group's well-being.

Human resource management skills to work with students, junior colleagues, and across larger research groups also play a large part in most research leaders' activities. From the moment you commence supervision of an honours or postgraduate student, you will need to build a strong understanding of how to recruit, select, manage, and develop other people. Your university will have many expectations and policies about how you manage people. In particular, you will need to conform with some basic codes of conduct and follow the necessary policies and protocols. The process of postgraduate supervision is particularly important as you will be required to demonstrate an awareness of the university's policies, deadlines, and standards.

Research leaders have both leadership and management roles. Some of these include:

- *Research discipline leadership* at local, state, national, and international levels
- *Research management*, particularly in relation to human resource management, technology and systems management, business process redesign, commercialisation, financial, and reporting activities
- *Research leadership* focusing on vision setting, mentoring, relationship building and maintenance, innovation and entrepreneurial activities, culture building, and developing and sustaining a high performance culture
- *Personal/life planning* to enable hand over to new leaders, and to assume a statesperson-like role in retirement. Many research leaders also recognise a need to continue developing interpersonal skills, their own passion and self-belief, and their time management strategies.

Research Centre Leaders

Research leaders may also grow toward more formal roles as research centre leaders. These individuals carry great responsibility for the management of a facility, large budgets, multiple research programs, and relationship management across many different stakeholders. They may employ a team of administrative staff to support the research process and hold high level positions on university committees or within faculties. They normally have high profiles across the nation and may be drawn on regularly to comment on the research area. These leaders play a key role in promoting the research agenda and its development.

They also play a lead role in guiding the growth of the centre and its individuals. In addition to the skills that should be evident in all research leaders, they need to provide strategic leadership of the centre and demonstrate a capacity to build a high performing and very capable leadership team. Centre leaders require strong skills in management. They need to ensure their centre remains financially viable and that a steady income stream is generated. Promoting the centre's outcomes is critical, together with building a critical mass of research. Research centre employees are often employed through grant funding. As a result, they require additional support and assistance to ensure they are able to move to new employment opportunities or projects as their existing program of research concludes.

The Future Research Leaders Program modules

This induction module will later introduce you to another 8 modules that have been designed around the management/research strategy needs of researchers. The modules accommodate the needs of all levels of participants through the blended learning approach that enables you to choose your level of focus. You can take more time to explore new areas of expertise or simply review your existing practices and check your knowledge of current ideas. However, you may find that you have identified certain areas of development that are particularly critical right now. The modules on offer are introduced in this module in Topic 6: Progressing your research career. At this stage, however, think about the areas of development you might like to target in the coming year.

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Topic 4: Managing your research priorities

Ask any successful researcher how they have achieved their goals, and they will surely note the critical importance of effective work-role management. This is a complex process, entailing the effective management of short-term demands while keeping long-term goals in mind. This topic explores the four main elements of work-role management: management of time, priorities, career, and performance. It will outline the need to keep all four elements in clear focus and provide some useful suggestions for managing day-to-day operations, as well as your longer-term aspirations. The topic is a useful refresher for both new and experienced researchers. (Indeed, many experienced researchers recognise the value of reviewing their time management strategies even at later stages of their career.)

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic and considering your university context you should be able to:

- Identify your life and professional priorities
- Apply effective time management strategies
- Develop an effective career management strategy and
- Effectively participate in a performance management discussion.

Topic Content

Read the following notes.

4.1 Priority management

4.2 Time management

4.3 Career management

4.4 Managing your performance

4.5 Managing your research projects

At your University

If you are new to the university, you should request an early discussion with your supervisor to establish baseline expectations. Some of the areas you may find valuable to discuss include:

- Clarification of your university's (and research area's) research priorities and directions
- Discussion of the required performance outcomes you are expected to demonstrate
- Agreement on aspirational research goals to be achieved in the coming year
- Review of support and resources available to assist with your research (including start-up grants)
- Identification of skills or capabilities that require further development, and
- The cultural expectations and contributions you are expected to make.

This discussion will help to set the basis for subsequent meetings. It will also ensure you are well focused on the priorities and goals that are in line with your new work environment.

Optional activity: Personal reflection

This topic explores the importance of priorities, time, career, and performance management. Take a little time to reflect on the main learning points from the topic. Are there strategies you need to integrate into your work-role management? Write down your highest priorities for change and put them in a prominent place on your pinup board or desk. Review them every day and make sure they remain at the forefront of your consciousness. Remember that the more you enhance your self-management skills, the more effective you will become.

As a first step, take time to review your current distractors and build some time for planning (Topic 4.2) into your daily routine. To get into the habit, take a few minutes now to list your achievements over the past week and your priorities for the coming week. Put these in a prominent position near your computer screen and refresh your commitment each day as you plan your daily tasks. This topic encourages you to review your priorities and goals. It also assists you in reviewing your time wasters and areas where enhanced skills might be worth pursuing. After you have finished the module, go back to your Induction Interview Checklist and note down the areas you would like to discuss with your supervisor or mentor. To assist you in your reflection, the key areas are listed below:

- Clarification of your university's (and research centre's) research priorities and directions
- Discussion of the required performance outcomes you will be expected to demonstrate
- Agreement on aspirational research goals to be achieved in the coming year
- Review of support and resources available to assist with your research (including start-up grants)
- Identification of skills or capabilities that require further development

- The cultural expectations and contributions you will be expected to make.

You may also have other issues you would like to record at this stage.

Pursuing the topic further

There are few publications on research time management. However, you may find the following article of interest. It explores the time management practices of university staff and students. The authors note the importance of having a clear career strategy to assist in working effectively. Planning and prioritising were also important factors identified in their research.

Kearns, H. & Gardiner, M. (2007) Is it time well spent? The relationship between time management behaviours, perceived effectiveness and work-related morale and distress in a university context. *Higher Education Research and Development* 26 (2), 235–247.

Another interesting paper can be found below. These authors explored the ways in which people define their work roles based on the level of uncertainty and interdependency which operates. Research work is high on both these factors.

Griffin, M. A., Neal, A. & Parker, S. K. (2007) A new model of work role performance: positive behavior in uncertain and interdependent contexts. *Academy of Management Journal* 50 (2), 327–347.

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Topic 4.1 Priority management

There is never enough time to do all the things we wish to achieve. This is especially so for those in research roles, where the daily routines of conducting research and integrating other work elements can often come in conflict with the long-term priorities of building a research profile, seeking grants, and publishing. Time management is not simply a matter of scheduling the necessary time to get tasks done. It is also linked to the development of clear priorities and goals. This section therefore examines the need to have clear priorities which assist in guiding the work to be undertaken. It will also explore how you can focus on what is really important to ensure you achieve the optimal outcomes possible. Effective time management does not operate in a vacuum. It is framed by the priorities and goals that determine which activities and tasks should be undertaken or minimised. If we do not have a strong understanding of what is important it becomes very hard to determine which activities should be emphasised. And in that situation, it is likely that whatever comes onto the desk will be given the highest priority. That can result in you being regarded as a very good worker who always responds promptly, but it can be very detrimental to your overall career and personal needs, which require more careful management of the long-term goals as well as the short-term demands.

Optional activity

Before we explore your career aspirations, it is important to consider how you wish to work. Each of us has different needs that must be met. If you are a parent, you may have to balance your research and other professional work with child-rearing duties. Elderly parents, personal pastimes, or health needs may also be factors you must take into account. Your philosophy of life can strongly influence your goals and priorities. Do you wish to only work a certain number of hours a day? Are you focused on high performance and high productivity to build your profile? Are you keen to keep a balance between your professional work, personal life, health, and social activities? What is your life philosophy? What are the most important things you value? If you had freedom to work only on the things you wish to do, what would they be? What types of roles give you satisfaction and enjoyment? What are the key things you wish to achieve from your life? Jot down some thoughts on the Priority Management worksheet, which you can download from either of the links below. This worksheet contains the items listed on this webpage that invite your responses.

Priority Management Worksheet (MS Word file)
Priority Management Worksheet (same file in rtf format)

My life philosophy is: …………………………………………………..

As you set out your life philosophy you may have been struck by the disparity between your ideal view and the reality in which you currently reside. A major challenge for those in academic roles is to balance the competing demands of family, personal needs, and career ambitions and demands. The capacity to do so is, however, most critical to our long-term sustainability as researchers. This topic will offer you some perspectives on recognising and addressing your needs in a more sustainable manner to encourage long-term wellbeing as a researcher and an individual. The first step in managing your work role is to ask what do you want from your research career? Where do you hope to be in 2 or 5 years? Enter your thoughts on the worksheet:

In 2 years time I will be ……………………………………………………….

In 5 years time I will be ……………………………………………………….

These statements help to establish what is important to you. Using these two perspectives, it becomes possible to identify where your research and work focus should be. It could be that you need to focus on more rather than less things. This makes prioritising even more critical as you need to clarify what areas should be allocated time and what should be very critically re-evaluated. Professional reflection and review is an important strategy in both research and professional practice. It enables us to examine our various research activities from a more comprehensive view and to explore what needs to be done to move us

toward our next goals. As a researcher, you will have a range of priorities to manage at any one time. Table 4.1 depicts some possible priority areas. As you explore these, consider where your focus is currently directed. Is this a well-balanced focus? Will it achieve the goals you noted earlier?

Table 4.1: Research priorities and typical tasks

Priority areas	Typical activities	Priority focus
Ongoing research activities / project management	Research project tasks and management, e.g. • Emails • Research experiments • Record keeping / reporting • Financial management • Supervision of research staff • Data analysis • Discussions with colleagues • Archive management • Postgraduate supervision • Team meetings • Interacting with other university staff • Monitoring new trends and issues	**Operational / Short-term**
University allegiance	• Contributing to university activities • Identifying the research agenda and linking your research to those priorities	
Strategic research tasks	• Publications development • Grant writing • Meetings with research collaborators • Reading research publications • Reviewing achievements and goals • Maintaining curriculum vitae • Sustaining a mentorship relationship • Initiating new contacts	**Strategic / Career**
Career management	• Developing new research / professional skills • Attending conferences / research events • Interaction with the media • Developing and maintaining a web profile • Contributing to the discipline • Undertaking national roles / contributions	
Personal lifestyle management	• Parenting or elderly parent care • Relationship management • Health and wellbeing • Spiritual / emotional needs • Social connectedness • Hobbies / external interests	**Life**

This is only one element of your likely work activities. If you are a teaching research academic, you could construct a similar grid for your other work roles. The grid assists in identifying the activities that contribute to the long-term development of your research career. The operational activities are not less important, but need to be balanced with the strategic processes that maintain your effective positioning as a researcher committed to a sustainable research career.

In many cases, researchers get caught in focusing on the operational or short-term activities that must be undertaken. While these are most important, they are not the only focus you should maintain. It is essential that you integrate time for the long-term priorities as well as the regular management of your daily research operations. Your mentor can be of great assistance in helping to clarify what strategies might be of highest priority. An early career researcher might, for example, need to be very focused on getting new articles published in high impact journals, a monograph published, some book chapters, or a sound piece of creative work. A more senior researcher might be aiming to build stronger collaborations with industry or other researchers beyond the university or discipline.

Make sure you have a very clear sense of priorities to support your long-term career. These should be compatible with your university and other groups with which you are affiliated. Thus, to manage your work role, the following principles are important:

• Be clear about your priorities and make sure they reflect your personal and professional goals
• Review your priorities regularly to ensure they remain relevant and realistic
• Use your mentor to assist with identifying your priorities
• According to the Pareto Principle, about 20% of your activities contribute 80% of your results. The rest

of the time is spent on largely unimportant activity. Keep focused on what is important and don't lose sight of it in managing the demands of urgent but potentially low-priority activities

- Keep your goals at the forefront. Try putting them on a whiteboard so that you see them every day. Keep a list of achievements to monitor your progress. Update your list and curriculum vitae whenever you have something new to add. This is highly motivational and ensures your goals are regularly reviewed.

Now is a good time to take stock. Take a minute and identify the priorities that you should be emphasising over the coming year. Record these on the worksheet as well. Your identified priorities may include elements that are currently not managed. We will look at how you can accomplish this balance in the next section.

Priority areas	My priorities for the coming year
Ongoing research activities / project management	
University allegiance	
Strategic research tasks	
Career management	
Personal lifestyle management	
Other priority areas	

Make sure you keep your worksheet with your Induction Interview Checklist, as it will be useful for the supervisor meeting and for your meeting with your mentor.

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4.2 Time management

"Arrive at the office and pick up the mail. Oh no, Jamie has put a note in my pigeonhole begging me to get the thesis feedback to her as soon as possible. She has been waiting two weeks now and I did promise I would get it done last week. But I really wanted to get into the data analysis today. Head up the corridor feeling overwhelmed only to discover my three honours students lined up at my office door. They are all having trouble with their research studies – mostly problems with the new report format they have to submit. Deal with that but it takes an hour to sort out the problem. Look around my office and wish I had time to tidy up – I can hardly find my desk. Manage to clear a small portion to put the new papers down.

"Open up the email – aarrgggh, 200 new messages – mostly junk and Viagra, but who has time for sex these days? Certainly not me when I am working till 1am each night trying to write my paper. Not that it makes much sense the next day when I review what I have done!

"Answer the emails and then it's lunch.

"Where did that morning go? And now I have two meetings this afternoon and there goes the day. Have to pick up the kids this afternoon and that will be it until 10 tonight. And I haven't even looked at the thesis or the data yet. How am I going to get everything done in time?"

Time management can be challenging but it needn't leave you feeling that you are out of control. This section will offer you some broad principles and strategies to gain the extra time you need to focus on your long-term priorities. Some of the suggestions you may already do. Others might be new ideas that are worth adopting. Before we progress to the tips and principles, you may wish to review where your time is lost. The next list identifies a number of typical time-wasters. Consider which are your challenges.

Research distractors

- Responding to crises
- Time spent training new team members
- Poor planning
- Poor communication between team members
- Too much work
- Time taken looking for things that haven't been filed
- Interruptions from people visiting
- Poor personal organisation
- Procrastination
- Tendency to say Yes to requests
- Meetings attendance
- Reports and paper work
- Socialising with colleagues
- Seeking perfection on tasks
- Incomplete tasks
- Limited capacity to delegate tasks
- Poor project management
- Insufficient resources
- Poor technological support
- Travel demands
- Telephone calls
- Email demands
- Lack of clarity as to work expectations
- Unclear goals and timelines
- Time delays in waiting for others' contributions
- Student demands
- Awaiting inputs from other colleagues
- Inefficient systems
- Poor quality inputs from others that must be reworked.

You may have identified quite a number of areas that are challenging your time management. It is important to think about why these are occurring and what can be done about them. In some cases, your research project management may require fine-tuning. In others, your own personal time management could be at fault. On the other hand, some of these time-wasters may be outside your control. The next section explores how you might improve your personal time management.

Academic time management principles

The following principles are simple and practical approaches to finding the time for your high priority activities. You will notice that they tend to focus on retrieving useful time to redirect your effort into more important strategic outcomes. This does not negate the importance of other everyday activities, but it does emphasise the need to balance all facets of your work. Research has to reflect both long and short-term goals. Here are some ways you can achieve that balance, and also leave time for other personal priorities.

- **Balance your priorities.** The earlier exercise in which you explored your priorities was an important prompt to clarify where you should allocate time. Your research work is a major priority which must be given sufficient time to be undertaken and completed. A major challenge for new teaching–research academics is the balancing of teaching and research. In many cases, research becomes the poor relation as the academic seeks to develop better educational outcomes for the students. If you are one of these academics, it is important to recognise that your outcomes will improve over time with practice. You should not be aiming for perfection in teaching at the expense of your research. Instead, you need to balance those demands. Consider allocating certain days of the week to research activities and other days to teaching-related activities. If you are a research-intensive academic, you might need to focus some blocks of time on strategic activities as opposed to the more operational matters that could otherwise consume you.

- **Take time to plan.** Don't let your tasks control you. Take 10 minutes at the start of each day to think about what needs to be done and identify the items that are the highest priority. Keep focused on those items. The other things can wait. At the end of each week, review the coming week and identify the new high priority outcomes you hope to achieve. Aim for at least one long-term priority as well as the more immediate demands. Integrate the tasks related to that long-term goal into your plans for the coming week. A useful reflection is to keep a list of what you have achieved each week. Identify the long-term, strategic goals that have been furthered. If you cannot find any advancement, consider how you will ensure those priorities are reflected in the coming week.

- **Keep on top of urgent tasks.** While it is important to do the strategic tasks, it is also important to make time for the little jobs. Monitor any likely urgent tasks and aim to have them completed in a timely fashion. Keep a list of tasks to be completed and make sure they are managed effectively. This list requires ongoing review to monitor tasks that have escalated in importance. This is particularly important when your activities impact on the work of others.

- **Structure your time to suit your working style.** When is your optimal time for productivity? If you are a very effective person in the morning, complete your more intensive work (such as writing that paper) when your mind is most focused. Schedule your less demanding or routine activities (such as meetings or administration) into less productive or disruptive time zones.

- **Take time to save time.** The time you take to set up systems or to learn how to do things properly will be well and truly recompensed by your subsequent efficiency. As part of this principle, identify the areas that you manage less effectively and seek help. Courses or advice from an expert can be an efficient mechanism to learn more effective strategies.

- **Practice makes perfect.** You will find that as you practise your skills (whether it be time management, research writing, grant seeking, supervising, or project management) you will become much more efficient. Persevere.

- **Avoid double-handling.** How many times do you handle the same task? Aim to complete the task the first time around. This means allowing a realistic amount of time to undertake an activity. Each time you have to return to a task, you will lose time refreshing yourself on what has been done.

- **Batch your work.** An economical time management strategy is to group like tasks together and to ensure you have sufficient time to work on high-intensity tasks in one go. Some useful tips include: look at your email twice a day, not as messages arrive. Emails can be a major distraction if you answer as a message is received.

- **Distinguish between important and urgent.** There are many activities you will undertake. For each task, make sure you can outline why you are doing it, and what consequences there will be if you don't. Clearly identify the tasks you MUST do, should do, would like to do, or don't need to do. The first two categories are the areas on which you should focus.

- **Clarify which tasks need to be high quality outcomes.** This may sound strange, but you need to be realistic about the level of effort you expend on each activity. High quality outputs are obviously important for strategic research publications, grants, and activities that are high profile or public. Other tasks may require much less care with the final presentation. Be clear about the use to which your contributions are put and don't waste time on non-productive activities. Set time limits on tasks according to how important they are.

- **Manage your calendar**. If you are travelling to a meeting, put in travel time either side of the meeting. Block in a lunch time. This allows you some quiet time to catch up, reflect, or interact with others. Where you have large tasks to be completed, block out sufficient time to work on those tasks. Similarly, it is useful to schedule routine tasks into your calendar to ensure you have sufficient time to manage your workflows.

- **Manage your email**. Aim to keep your inbox empty! Yes, it can be challenging, but it isn't impossible. First, only scan your mail once. Immediately delete irrelevant messages. Respond to quick requests and then either file or discard the message. If the email entails a more intensive task, add it to your task list and give it a deadline by which it must be done. Delegate any emails that others should be doing and set a time by which it should be done. Monitor the lists to which you subscribe. Are they useful? If not, consider unsubscribing, or place messages from the list directly into a folder on their arrival so that you can browse later. Keep your archive folders simple. Email systems are readily searchable if you need to

retrieve a message later.

- **Manage your records.** How do you store your completed papers and documents? An effective filing system obviously saves substantial time when you need to find something again. Take time to sort your papers once per week. (Don't forget to allocate time to undertake the task.) It will save you substantial time looking for papers later. You may wish to manage your filing differently depending on the likely reuse of an item. High priority documents are those which might need to be retrieved or which are in process. These need to be filed for rapid retrieval. Manila folders can assist. Start a file as soon as you handle the document and file it in a drawer close to your working space. Archives of significance are documents which need to be held for possible future reference. These can be stored in a general repository for subsequent filing or try using a pigeonhole system which roughly groups papers into broad categories. The third record category is papers that you are not sure will be useful. There is little sense in managing these records until you are really sure they have value. Try placing them in a drawer or box and review them every 6 or 12 months. Most of them will be disposable at that point.

- **Break large jobs into small tasks**. Monitor the achievement of those smaller elements and reward yourself for reaching those milestones.

- **Look at how you work**. If you have focused intellectual tasks to complete, consider working out of the office. Many academics find it helpful to block 1 day per week to work at home or in a different space, such as the library. This discipline also ensures at least 1 day a week is focused on those strategic goals.

- **Batch your research**. If you are working with intensive teaching demands, batch your research into a concentrated zone when teaching is finished. Speak with your supervisor to absent yourself from the office for a week or two following the conclusion of teaching to write that paper, book chapter, grant, etc. Try to do the preparatory work in the little slots that you have available while teaching. For example, the latest literature could be collected in small time slots.

- **Monitor how other colleagues work**. When you are new to a university it can be hard to judge whether there is support to assist you with your work or whether you must do things yourself. Make sure you ask. You are being paid to do academic work. Don't run around doing photocopying and other administrative tasks if support is available. Make yourself known to the administrative team and treat them well. They will assist you as much as they can. Check with other colleagues as to how much administrative work they do. Don't be afraid to compare notes on the additional service or administrative loads other staff carry – inequities can occur and if you feel you are being overloaded, speak to your supervisor about this concern. In this discussion, ensure you have concrete examples of the research you need to pursue and how your overload is impacting on your achievement. Also ask your supervisor about the support you can reasonably expect from other staff in your area.

These practical tips and principles are not exhaustive, but they do offer useful pointers on how to keep workflows focused on strategic and operational processes.

While these are useful general time management principles, the time you corral for research also needs to be well used. Here are some brief tips on how to maximise your research time for best outcomes. As you talk with other researchers you may hear of other good ideas. They will all assist in building a methodology and system that work for you.

Paper publications

- Write a rough draft of your paper in one sitting, then refine it over the next weeks/months.
- Don't procrastinate: submit a paper for publication as soon as it looks reasonable. (If the paper isn't published you will have feedback that will assist with revisions. On the other hand, if it is never submitted, it was definitely a waste of time.)
- Never waste a paper! If a paper isn't accepted, rework it, based on the feedback and submit it to another journal.
- Make a file for correspondence on each paper so that you can review its progress easily.
- Don't wait for a response – start the next paper immediately. (One very prolific writer said to the module writer that he tries to ensure there are always five papers in the works! – an ambitious goal, but the principle is worth considering.)
- Keep a list of your publication ideas prominently displayed so that you are regularly reminded of what you want to achieve this year.
- When you think of a new idea for a paper, write it down.
- Monitor 'calls for contributions' in journals in which you would like to feature. Submit a proposal for any that appear compatible with your expertise. The deadlines are more likely to be met if they are set by someone else.
- Look at how you can collaborate with someone else or others on papers. Working with colleagues helps to keep the momentum as you have more of an obligation to finish. The collaboration also stimulates new ideas, builds a research base, and makes research more enjoyable.
- When your paper is accepted for publication, prepare the documentation necessary to show the refereed nature of your paper or its history of development. You will need to verify the background for audit purposes in the year following its publication, and it can be very time consuming looking for this evidence a long time after acceptance. Take 10 minutes now while you know where everything is!

Grant writing

- Prepare a brief project outline when you think of a new project possibility. This can be revised and enhanced as the idea gestates. Set up a folder to add ideas, clippings, and other thoughts as they emerge.
- Rework your idea when a grant round or sponsor becomes available. Alternatively, if you have an established sponsor, take the next step of meeting to discuss an idea before you flesh it out. Your sponsor may have some valuable additional ideas to weave through before you get too deeply into the

concept development.

- Draw together some likely collaborators and brainstorm ideas on the project.
- Create a personal production timeline to allow for critical review by colleagues.
- Delegate some of the information-finding, budget estimates, etc. to others in a team. Meet regularly to ensure the preparation is happening. (Meetings are cues for action for many people.)
- In the case of getting tasks done, the fewer the meetings, the less the action! Make short 30 minute meetings over a coffee – there will be little time lost but the progress will be steady.
- Prepare for grants by drafting papers that explore the need for the research, or the results of pilot studies. This helps to justify the proposal.
- Monitor the types of projects that have been successful in a grant round. The outlines can help you to see what is successful and may assist in reworking an unsuccessful grant.
- Don't wait on the results of the last grant proposal before submitting your next one. Get into the grant rhythm of working to the grant round cycle. This simply becomes another task to be completed in your academic year.
- Use 'prototype' applications to get small/local/start-up funding to help build your track record and prove proof-of-concept before applying for big funds.
- Publish your results and strategically follow-up potential collaborators for the bigger project. Make sure these are specific goals on your task list so that the weeks don't creep away before you act.
- Make a special time each week to review your grant-writing work. Don't allow it to be taken by other tasks.
- When you write a grant proposal, include a costing for project management support. There is increasing acceptance of the worth of people providing this support, and if successful the grant will operate more efficiently with that dedicated resource.

Get the research done!

- Delegate and manage activities rather than trying to do everything yourself.
- Aim to block out at least 1 day a week to solely focus on your research writing activities.
- Set challenging goals, visibly display them, and go for them.
- Review your progress every 3 months and change your time management strategies if you are not seeing good progress.

This topic has aimed to guide you toward more efficient use of your professional time. Experienced researchers often do many of these things automatically, but many of us ruefully acknowledge that we wish someone had told us these things much earlier on. As one academic noted during the pilot of this module: "I could have saved myself 6 years of wasted time". We hope you do!

Acknowledgements

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4.3 Career management

In the last section we considered how you can manage your time more effectively, with the intention of finding time to focus on your long-term priorities. This section explores career management a little more fully to clarify some of the issues you should consider. Career management needs to be an ongoing priority – from the very first week in a new role, you should be thinking about the next step! Most career strategies take several years to reach fruition. It is never too soon to start. This section therefore offers you a few pointers that can assist in planning ahead to make best use of opportunities as they arise. As you read this section, you will need to take into consideration your research context, your university, your goals, and your personal circumstances. These are clearly important factors to constantly monitor when planning your long-term strategy.

A research career requires careful management. At all times, you need to focus on building your track record and monitoring your research performance. You need to understand the criteria against which your performance will be measured, both within your university and across the sector as a whole. (A mentor can be very helpful in guiding you as to realistic standards. This will be discussed in Topic 5.) The 'old days' when academics had the ease to gradually evolve into effective researchers are definitely long gone. In their place we have university research benchmarks, national league tables, and performance management of outcomes.

As researchers we are expected to perform creditably and to build a momentum that will take us to the next level of performance. When we seek promotion it is expected that we will already be demonstrating the standards of that higher level. Those of us on contracts also need to build and sustain a credible track record which assures the next employer that we are productive researchers. In this competitive and challenging context it is therefore most important that we put time and effort into planning our careers. The goal of career management is to optimise our outcomes for the effort we put into our work. There are many academics who now look back and realise they could have been far more effective in managing their careers – if only someone had told them. This section draws on their experiences to enable you to manage your career in a more strategic manner.

Topic 4 outlined the various levels of research work that can be undertaken as one moves from a novice researcher to a research leader or centre leader. This is one career track that you might see as desirable. There are many other paths you may take too. For some, the achievement of a teaching research academic role is highly desirable. For others, a consultancy or industry-linked career may prove more alluring.

In order to manage your career, it is obviously important to clearly identify what you want from your future work life. Consider the future that most attracts you. What are the typical expectations for that career track? Monitor the advertisements for positions and review the selection criteria for these roles. Would you be able to compete? It is important to review your strengths and to consider how you might leverage off those.

If you have areas that are less fully developed, identify them and consider how you might strengthen those skills and capabilities. If you are seeking a teaching research role, for example, you will need to have some higher education teaching experience and some research supervision can be most helpful. If you are looking for an industry-related role, some work with an industry partner will give you much greater credibility.

Although there are different career avenues that might be pursued, the principles of career management tend to be similar. The following points provide a succinct overview of the most important strategies for you to consider.

- *Establish and maintain your track record*. Any research career will demand that you have a credible track record. Your mentor (see Topic 5) will be very important in clarifying what expectations are reasonable for you at your stage of development. It can also be useful to look at some successful role models and to review how and what they achieved in their research career. For most researchers the typical goals will relate to publications, research grants, supervision, and possibly research collaboration. However, you may also see the need to identify some other goals related to teaching, leadership, or project management. You may also find that your university has established some expectations as a baseline. Try to set higher goals than those which are minimum performance levels if you wish to escalate your career. Once you have established the goals to which you aspire, keep these goals active in your planning, performance reviews, and ongoing activities. Monitor your progress and make sure you remain committed to these outcomes. At the end of each year you should be able to demonstrate high-level research outcomes, not just operational activities.

- *Seek and nurture mentors and sponsors*. Mentors are people who can offer you close support as you focus on your career. They are explored more fully in Topic 5 and will not be discussed in depth here. Suffice to say that they are incredibly important in helping to fast-track your career. Sponsors are also important, but play a less active role in guiding a career strategy on a regular basis. Sponsors are often

senior people who provide opportunities and avenues for development and profiling. They may open up channels for you to meet significant people, or perhaps assist with gaining funding for a project. They may share their resources with you, or provide testimonials to assist with a research proposal. In some cases your mentor will be a sponsor. However, you will find it helpful to cultivate a number of sponsors who link to your research area. You will need to identify who those people might be, and to make contact with them to introduce yourself and your research. When you are talking about your research, make sure you market the research in a way that is understandable and engaging. Think about your overview from that person's point of view: what will they wish to know? Why would it interest them? What is in it for them?

- **Build relationships.** Very few researchers operate in isolation. You will need to build a wide range of relationships and partnerships over the years. Seek out contacts when you are at conferences and other research forums. As you meet new people, make sure you manage the records of your new contacts. Make a note on their business card as to what you were discussing, and record their details into your email system. Send them an email by way of greeting after returning to your office. This is one of the more important activities you will undertake. Not all contacts will prove fruitful, but many will come to be highly supportive relationships over the coming years. This is how a lot of collaborative research commences.

- **Take advantage of work opportunities.** If you identify an opportunity that enriches your current experiential base, take full advantage of it – as long as it assists in fleshing out your track record in a useful manner. Service roles in the university can sometimes be very useful in promoting your skills, building your profile, and providing you with more insight into how universities work. Make sure you also take advantage of development opportunities that demonstrate your commitment to your research career. This module, for example, leads into further research management modules. Their completion is a strong affirmation of your desire to take on a more substantial research leadership role.

- **Seek new opportunities**. While some opportunities will arrive on your doorstep, others will need to be actively sought. If you have a clear sense of the direction you wish to take, you may see likely avenues for career development. A secondment to a different university or a leadership role working with a high profile person are two examples of the many ways in which new opportunities can be solicited. Carefully evaluate the likely benefits of a change of this nature and seek advice from those who are well versed in the field. While there may be some risks attached, don't forget that a breadth of experience can be very beneficial in preparing you for the next career jump.

- **Set goals and achieve them**. The most important method of managing your career is to set challenging goals and achieve them. Stretch your ambitions and aim for slightly more than you think you can reasonably manage. While you may not ever get there, your ambitious targets will keep you focused on the long-term priorities you have set. Aim for actualisation when you set goals. Compare "I will publish four articles this year" with "I submit a journal article every three months". The latter goal is more powerful as it affirms that this is your real practice, not a new year resolution. It increases the likelihood of building your goals into your daily and weekly routines. Similarly, more specific goals are more powerful. Identify the articles that you wish to publish. Break down the papers into manageable segments and assign a week to do each component. The more specific the goals, the more achievable.

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4.4 Managing your performance

To date we have explored priority management, time management, and career management. A fourth aspect of work-role management relates to performance management. This is often regarded as a 'dirty word' given its potential interpretation as suboptimal performance. In fact, performance management can be a researcher's good friend. Good performance management can offer many benefits. It can be an opportunity to:

- Review your contributions to the culture and community in which you work
- Monitor your alignment with university research priorities and directions
- Review your challenges and achievements over the last year
- Identify new aspirational research goals to be achieved in the coming year
- Review your career aspirations and explore how you might further their achievement
- Seek additional support and resources to assist with your research
- Review the alignment of your goals and activities with those of your university, research centre, or research team
- Clarify skills or capabilities that require further development
- Provide feedback on your current work experiences.

Each university encourages its staff to undertake regular performance reviews, and to make good use of these discussions. For a researcher, the chance to explore your career and current performance is particularly critical. The research context changes every year. This review can greatly assist in marrying your own research plans with those of your institution and positioning your focus within the wider higher education context. It also clarifies the performance expectations that exist for a person in your role. The regular (re)calibration of your goals with the institution's expectations is most essential.

The performance management discussion provides you with a chance to undertake personal reflection and planning, and also to seek feedback on areas that could be strengthened in the coming year. This is particularly valuable if you are focused on career advancement. Use the discussion to good effect to highlight your career goals and to explore other opportunities that might be harvested.

The most effective performance management discussion will occur if you are well prepared. Think about the 9 bullet points listed above and make sure you have fully considered these aspects well in advance. A written review of these areas, and a current curriculum vitae, can greatly assist your reviewer in also preparing for this process. Make this discussion work for you.

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4.5 Managing your research projects

Each researcher in a project team carries some part of the responsibility for effective project management. However, each person will assume different roles, depending on their expertise, seniority, and capabilities. Table 4.5 explores the different responsibility areas that an individual might assume in a research project. Take a minute to think about where you might take a lead role and think also about how confident you feel in undertaking that role at present. Although you may have little direct leadership responsibilities at this stage in your career, you have an important contributory role as a team member and you should understand how others ensure project success. For more information on research project management, please review Topic 4: Basic research project management principles in Module 1: Research Strategy and Planning

Table 4.5: Research project roles and responsibilities

Role/responsibility	Is this part of your role? If not, who is responsible?	Do you have the necessary skills to successfully perform this role?
• Design of the project, including review of past research, clarification of research goals, identification of priorities and anticipated outcomes, and estimated costings for the project		
• Review of research integrity principles and incorporation into planning, research design, implementation, and training		
• Development of the research project plan, including budget design, development of project objectives and strategies, and identification of staffing requirements		
• Management of the project budget and expenditure		
• Management of compliance with funding body and university requirements		
• Guidance and leadership of team members		
• Coordination of communication with stakeholders		
• Allocation of workloads and responsibilities		
• Establishment and maintenance of record-keeping systems		
• Monitoring of progress and quality of outcomes		
• Ensuring the project reaches required milestones and outcomes		
• Publishing of the project outcomes		

Many of these project roles span a number of individuals in the project team. Each individual needs to be conversant with who is taking responsibility for the execution of these elements and also for ensuring their work is positively contributing to the successful completion of the research project. While the project leader plays a significant role in guiding the timing and execution of the various processes, he/she is also highly reliant on the commitment and reliability of all team members. As noted earlier, the strong interdependency of research projects means that every person's contribution has an impact on the overall outcomes and the work of others.

This brief overview highlights the need to be aware of who has responsibility for different aspects of the project. You may be a researcher who works on your own. In that case, each of these areas is an important element of your work, as you will be responsible for making sure the project is successfully planned, implemented, evaluated, and published. If you are working with other researchers, it is important to know who does what and to clarify the details of your specific role. It is also most important to recognise your areas of strength and weakness in this area – which aspects are you able to effectively execute? Are there areas in which you feel somewhat unsure? This will be picked up in the final topic of this module, Topic 6: Progressing your research career.

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Topic 5: Mentorship

Researchers need mentors as they develop their research track record and explore different opportunities and strategies. This topic is of extreme importance to all researchers – no matter how senior. If you are an early career researcher, you need to cultivate at least one, and possibly more, mentors who can guide your research, your career, and your ongoing growth. As you move into more senior roles your mentors may be selected to offer insights into leadership and political strategies that can assist your research team or centre. As a researcher you will also mentor others: postgraduate students through to colleagues. This topic, while written from the perspective of the researcher as mentee, also offers considerable guidance on how to be an effective mentor. You will find it useful to consider the content from both angles: how can you benefit from a mentor and how can you contribute as a mentor?

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic you should be able to:

- Describe the role a mentor might play in your current career context
- Identify suitable mentors to support your identified needs
- Initiate and cultivate a successful mentoring relationship with a mentor
- Support other researchers as a mentor.

Topic content

Read the following notes.

5.1 What is mentorship?

5.2 Why is mentorship important for researchers?

5.3 Types of research mentors

5.4 The successful mentor

5.5 The successful mentee

5.6 Identifying suitable mentors

5.7 Initiating a mentoring relationship

5.8 Sustaining the relationship

Optional activity: Self-reflection

This is a good time to reflect on your own mentorship strategy. If you are an early career researcher or new to your university, you are strongly encouraged to identify a mentor and to commence the process of building your supportive network. Take the time to think about who you might seek out and plan your strategy. You may, in fact, identify several different types of mentors who could assist. This will be one of your most important outcomes from this module.

If you are a senior researcher, reflect on your current and previous mentoring relationships. How well do they reflect the principles outlined in this topic? Are there strategies that you might apply to new relationships? Are there new mentors you should be seeking out? Leadership mentors, perhaps? You may wish to consider using the previous Induction Interview Checklist for future discussions. Perhaps you might also see benefit in guiding other researchers into thinking more carefully about how they might nurture sustainable mentoring relationships.

Pursuing the topic further

If you wish to explore the features of successful mentorship in more detail, the following article is recommended. It is particularly interesting in its reporting of feedback from those engaged in successful research mentoring relationships.

Lee, A., Dennis, C. and Campbell, P. (2007) Nature's guide for mentors. *Nature* 447, June, 791–797.

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5.1 What is mentorship?

A mentor is someone who can assist you in reflecting, planning, and managing your career and research activities. Mentors are often more experienced senior colleagues who share their knowledge and expertise with you to assist with your decision-making. Their knowledge of you and your background, combined with an informed assessment of the environment in which you are operating, enables the provision of sound advice and guidance. Mentors can also be peers who are negotiating similar challenges and research contexts. By sharing their own insights and learning, peer mentors offer an important mirror and emotional support during times of change and growth.

This topic will explore the development of a mentoring relationship from the stance of a self-initiated relationship. You may also be in the fortunate position of being at a university where mentoring relationships are being formally assisted by your institution. If that is the case, details of those activities will be listed here. If it is not the case, don't be too concerned. This topic will ensure you can initiate, sustain, and manage a great mentoring relationship and also be a terrific mentor for others.

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5.2 Why is mentorship important for researchers?

The Go8 interviews of researchers mentioned in subtopic 3.1 consistently identified mentors as being the most valuable form of support during a research career. Those with good mentors noted the value of mentorship in fast-tracking their careers. The mentor was often attributed with assisting with goal-setting, reviewing research progress, establishing and consolidating effective research networks, identifying suitable publishing and research opportunities, and assisting with the many challenges which can emerge during research projects. Many of these interviewees noted the sustained nature of their research mentoring relationship – across decades, from an initial strong sponsorship of the new researcher to a strong collaborative partnership over time. They also noted the value of having different mentors for different purposes.

Mentorship brings many benefits to both parties. For the mentee, the relationship can assist in:

- Developing and refining professional skills and knowledge
- Building professional and collaborative networks
- Enhancing your insights into the professional communities in which you hope to operate
- Exploring potential career options and strategies
- Reviewing your personal and professional capabilities with a view to ongoing growth and development.

For the mentor, the relationship can enable:

- The development of new research partnerships and collaborations
- An opportunity to reflect on accumulated knowledge and insights
- Satisfaction from guiding and supporting an emerging researcher/academic
- Ongoing development of their own professional knowledge and skills through mutual discussion and enquiry
- Garnering new insights and perspectives from those entering the discipline and research area, and (possibly)
- Providing an opportunity for joint publishing/projects as time progresses.

Of particular note is the recognition that research mentorship can be a lifelong partnership – with the role of the mentor and the nature of the relationship changing over time.

The first step in the mentorship process is to consider what type of mentor is needed and who might be suitable.

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5.3 Types of research mentors

There are many different types of mentors depending on the discussion focus you wish to emphasise. Some relationships will emphasise the broader context of working in a research intensive university, while others will more specifically target your research work and goals. Some possible emphases are listed below. It should be noted that these are not mutually exclusive – an individual may fulfil several different forms of mentorship, depending on his/her background.

Orientation mentors

These mentors are particularly valuable during the first few months of working in a new institution. A person filling this role would often be someone who has a good knowledge of the institution and the way in which research and the broader institutional context operate. They can introduce you to key people and agencies in the institution and guide you as to the culture and politics that may exist. The orientation mentor is also very useful in outlining the broad research processes which should be integrated into your work tasks and research activities. Orientation mentors need to be selected based on their knowledge of the local community and the university operations. They need not be senior staff but do need to be familiar with the broad functions of your university, faculty, and research community.

Contextual mentors

In some situations there is a need to learn about the political and social context in which your work operates, particularly where resources are tight. Sensitivity to the strategic and operational processes can greatly assist in facilitating and mobilising your research and ensuring you obtain the right support and sponsorship. Contextual mentors offer practical insight into how the research context operates, protocols for research practice, and guidance on those who have knowledge, influence, or power in the research setting. They can also offer useful insights into how you might best manage your research relationships with important members of your research community, and possibly how to manage research teams and projects. These mentors are normally found within your local work setting.

Career mentors

Mentors play a very important role in guiding effective career management. A successful research career requires considerable planning and consideration of long-term strategies to identify and benefit from opportunities that arise. Normally a career mentor will be more senior, with a research record that parallels the type of career you are seeking to build. His or her past experience will assist in guiding your steps and strategies. Their review of your research track record to identify gaps and vulnerabilities can be particularly valuable. While career mentors may be found in your local community, they may also be located elsewhere.

Discipline mentors

Research within most disciplines evolves into new fields of research and inquiry. A discipline mentor is someone who has a wide breadth of knowledge of the discipline and the lines of research which are being undertaken internationally. These mentors are expert in their field. Their networks will be wide-ranging and often link to other international scholars who are contributing to the ongoing research. Look out for someone who is widely published and cited, highly regarded, and continuing to publish in your discipline. These people are particularly valuable in guiding a new research interest or in identifying potential areas of collaboration.

Research mentors

These mentors are particularly valuable during the first few months of working in a new institution. A person filling this role would often be someone who has a good knowledge of the institution and the way in which research and the broader institutional context operate. They can introduce you to key people and agencies in the institution and guide you as to the culture and politics that may exist.

Research mentors are particularly important in providing a critical review of emergent research ideas, proposals, and publications. In this capacity they can offer five benefits:

- *Supportive* – recognising and acknowledging your strengths
- *Constructive* – identifying areas requiring work and how they might be improved
- *Insightful* – exploring potential areas of related interest which might be included or strengthened
- *Informative* – providing insights into the competitive process and how it operates
- *Realistic* – advising if the grant or publication is not yet ready.

They also fill an important role in assisting with the dealing of criticism – a very confronting experience for anyone.

Leadership mentors

As you move into more senior roles you will need a different form of mentor: someone who can provide an insight into the ways of leading research teams, guiding more junior colleagues, and creating an effective vision and strategy for your project, team, or centre. A leadership mentor will normally draw on similar role experiences to encourage your reflection and skill development in guiding and supporting others. They can be particularly helpful in exploring the complex issues which arise when managing tight resources, talented people, and demanding deadlines.

Co-mentors

Peers who are keen to share their experiences and reflect on their progress with colleagues in a similar position can also provide mentorship. Their support can include the exchange of information, learning, insights, research practice, network knowledge, support, energy, enthusiasm, social interaction, and reflections. These mentors fill a very different role – uncertainties, vulnerabilities, and future aspirations are but some of the areas that can be explored in a nonthreatening forum of this nature. It is particularly important to build a friendship network in your research community, and to identify people who would be pleased to act as co-mentors.

You will both gain strong affirmation and encouragement from each other. These relationships will be less formally managed and may operate through an occasional lunch or coffee break. It is important, though, to make time for these important discussions.

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5.4 The successful mentor

Successful mentors contribute in many ways. While they have a wealth of experience on which to draw, it is important that they also recognise that the path of the mentee will not replicate their own path. Instead, the mentor offers a means of weighing options and judging the most desirable course of action. There are many characteristics which a mentor may demonstrate. In their very readable overview of *Nature* nominees for a mentoring award, Lee, Dennis, and Campbell (2007) list a number of personal characteristics found in successful mentors. These include enthusiasm, sensitivity, appreciating individual differences, respect, unselfishness, and fostering many researchers. Strategies noted in the same article include ensuring good communication, operating an open-door policy to ensure ready availability, generating optimism and inspiration, encouraging self-direction while also offering direction, applying effective questioning and listening skills, and celebrating each success. The authors also note the importance of building communities – of researchers and social groups. This overview is most useful in highlighting the need for generosity, positive and passionate advocacy of research, and realistic consideration of the research environment.

So how might a research mentor act? The following reflect some of the responses that can ensure a very powerful relationship.

- Be honest, courteous, and respectful of the mentee's own qualities and talents
- Respect the knowledge and intellectual property shared by the mentee
- Recognise the mentee's skills, expertise, and individual issues
- Listen, communicate, and share ideas without prejudice
- Share experience and knowledge openly and generously
- Share new ideas, expertise, models of good practice, and lessons learnt
- Provide high level guidance on potential areas of innovation and strategy – matched closely to the individual's capabilities and current stage of development
- Question and probe to provide opportunities for the mentee to reflect, explore, and question rather than simply giving advice and instructing on how things might/should be done
- Assist the mentee in identifying, reviewing, and weighing options
- Provide honest, constructive, and relevant feedback with due recognition of the individual's context and background
- Provide strategic advice on the mentee's development, career aspirations, and strategies
- Make time for meetings
- Review any paperwork/documents prior to scheduled meetings
- Allow sufficient time for the meeting
- Facilitate networking opportunities and sponsor the mentee's entry into those networks
- Promote the mentee's interests in professional networks and communities
- Push the mentee to the next level. Offer a broader view of the process: what are the goal posts to be achieved? Help to set challenging goals
- Learn from the mentee when appropriate.

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5.5 The successful mentee

The mentee also has a very important responsibility in this relationship. The time a mentor spends in discussions and in furthering the mentee's interests needs to be repaid through commensurate effort on the part of the mentee. Some important characteristics of successful mentees include:

- Keen to learn, explore ideas, and seek guidance/feedback
- Willingness to explore areas of vulnerability and reflect on learning to date
- Responsibility for identifying, reviewing, and weighing options
- Desire to experiment, trial new processes and procedures, and to be adventurous
- Willingness to move into new areas of development if identified as desirable
- Willingness to give and receive honest feedback and to act on that advice, or duly reflect on it
- Strong commitment to self development and career goals, particularly in reviewing advice provided
- Honest, courteous, and respectful of the mentor's knowledge, skills, and reputation
- Willingness to communicate needs and expectations
- Willingness to listen, communicate, and share ideas without prejudice.

To benefit from a mentoring relationship, mentees can greatly assist by:

- Researching the mentor's strengths, knowledge, and potential contributions
- Clarifying the role to be played by the mentor and mentee
- Prioritising building a successful track record using the advice provided
- Recognising and acknowledging the mentor's contribution
- Taking the initiative in arranging meetings and other opportunities
- Attending meetings promptly
- Coming prepared for meetings
- Using the mentor's time effectively
- Always preparing materials and revisions and forwarding to the mentor ahead of time
- Identifying questions to be asked ahead of time
- Taking feedback graciously and build from it
- Capitalising on networking opportunities and the new professional networks/relationships which have been facilitated
- Taking responsibility for making contacts, maintaining contacts, and meeting commitments
- Considering how the mentor may gain from the contribution and relationship and seeking opportunities to enable those outcomes.

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5.6 Identifying suitable mentors

The process of identifying suitable mentors will differ for each individual, depending on the type of mentor being sought. The following tips on sourcing a suitable mentor are offered here as potential methods of finding good mentors. Word of mouth and reputation are particularly valuable, as they attest to the personal characteristics of the mentor.

- Ask your supervisor, head of school, or head of research centre to suggest some names
- Conduct a literature search on your discipline area and identify some leading researchers publishing in your area of interest. Review their profiles and contact them to explore your research topic
- When attending a conference, review the paper abstracts and identify people who are working in your own area. Attend their presentation and make yourself known to them. Be prepared to ask intelligent questions
- Canvass the opinions of your colleagues as to who might be a good mentor
- Introduce yourself to leading researchers in your university and consider whether any might be suitable mentors
- Seek the assistance of your research office and other agencies that are in contact with successful researchers
- Monitor your university publications to identify people of interest
- Attend networking functions and other research activities to identify potential mentors
- Visit a potential mentor's own university if you are travelling to a research event.

Once you have identified a potential mentor, conduct some due diligence on them. Factors to explore include their track record, reputation, current activities and projects, and suitability with your desired mentorship focus. Consider whether your personalities are compatible. Make contact with them to see if they would consider being a potential mentor. This is best conducted as a personal contact – either in person or by phone. Following this initial contact you should email your current CV and a short review of your research interests, achievements, and goals. Your mentor may also forward a CV back to you for background information.

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5.7 Initiating a mentoring relationship

Once a mentor has agreed to participate, it will be necessary to initiate the relationship. The first meeting is normally an opportunity to clarify expectations and agree on how the relationship might operate. Some useful questions to assist in the discussion include:

- What do we want to achieve from this relationship?
- What time frame are we considering?
- How will the mentoring process work?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the connection? How should this be managed?
- Where shall we meet?
- How often?
- What are the expectations in relation to preparation?
- What are our understandings with respect to confidentiality, respect, honesty, and trust?

Following this first meeting, you will need to maintain the relationship.

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5.8 Sustaining the relationship

Not all mentoring relationships succeed and not all will be enduring partnerships. There are many factors which can impact on the durability. In some cases, the personalities may be ill-suited. In others, the need is short term rather than a long-term focus. Some researchers find that they may outgrow their mentor or their experience alters their research base and shifts the focus. While there are many cogent reasons for non-continuation, there are also factors that impede a potentially successful partnership. Some important principles in sustaining the relationship include:

- Treat the mentorship as a priority. Do not cancel meetings – you need to maintain the momentum and connection
- If you have concerns or issues, share them with your mentor/mentee in an honest but sensitive fashion. Hidden issues will fester and poison the relationship
- Always be prepared. This is a high priority to ensure your discussions are fruitful and productive
- Try to create a relationship where both parties benefit
- Recognise that the relationship will change over time as the mentee learns and grows
- Look for additional learning opportunities. The mentee might, for example, shadow the mentor for a day
- Aim for a learning process which is reflective and open to new experiences. This is important for both parties
- Always set the date for the next meeting before you part – and put it in your diary.

This outline of mentorship is a brief review of research mentorship. It is a very important means of working your way into a university setting. Don't ignore its power!

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Topic 6: Progressing your research career

This brief topic reviews the project management skills you need to effectively work as a researcher. It introduces further modules provided through the Future Research Leaders Program. These all focus on different elements of the project management process and have been designed specifically for university researchers. The topic describes these modules and offers some guidance on which may be suitable. The flexible learning approach means that you can tailor the program to suit your needs. All modules comprise online learning materials which must be completed (typically, approximately 4 hours work) before a complementary and concluding workshop in your university.

Learning outcomes

After completing this topic you should be able to:

- Describe the areas of research management in which you should be proficient to meet your current work requirements
- Identify future research roles where you need to build new skills and capabilities
- Identify the ongoing development options available to you.

Topic content

Read the following notes.

6.1 An outline of the Future Research Leaders Program modules

6.2 How module participation can help you

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Beginning the modules

At this stage it is over to you. If you would like to participate in another module, simply go back to the Modules in the Future Research Leaders Program page, click on the module of your choice and you will be taken to that site.

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6.1 An outline of the Future Research Leaders Program modules

Project management operates in a cyclical pattern, from the original start-up and conceptualisation of the project through to the finalisation and closeout of the project. The Future Research Leaders Program offers learning modules similar to this induction module to assist researchers in building more comprehensive skills relating to project development, implementation, and completion. The following areas of research management are particularly critical to the successful enactment of a research project. These have been developed in the modules and are described below. As you read the descriptions, consider if these are worthwhile areas of skill consolidation for you in the next year.

Module 1: Research Strategy and Planning

Our universities are strongly encouraging research which demonstrates excellence and recognises and complements the larger strategic context. Many research projects are closely linked to industry, collaborative research communities, and/or within a larger program of research. Effective research must be carefully planned to achieve the best outcomes for the researcher/s, the university, and the furthering of knowledge. This first module explores the initial stage of research project management: designing and costing the project as well as operating within the broader research and political context. This module is suited to any researcher who is developing a new grant proposal or project area.

Module 2: Commencement and Collaboration – Putting Ideas Into Practice

There are many issues to address once funding for a research project has been obtained. The researcher must coordinate the development of the research concept and team, implement good project management processes, including effective management of any risks, and also encourage strong intellectual and emotional engagement with the project. This module explores the first year of a research project to ensure successful start-up and consolidation. The module is extremely valuable for all grant recipients.

Module 3: Governance and Compliance – Protecting Yourself, Your Research, and Your University

The researcher is bound by significant governance expectations, responsible research practices, and the need to comply with statutes and regulations. This module examines the context in which research operates and the resultant requirements for research practice. The need to operate within a university framework of governance and responsible research practice and statutory and regulatory requirements is also explored. This is 'must know' information for all researchers.

Module 4: Intellectual Property and Commercialisation

The intellectual capital within the research project needs to be carefully preserved and managed. This module provides an overview of how intellectual property is defined and managed in a university context. Research projects must operate within the funding and resource constraints agreed at start-up. The researcher must therefore carefully manage resources to ensure they support the full research life cycle. This module explores some useful principles and practices for managing the financial processes, assets, and risks attached to research. It emphasises the importance of monitoring the progressive expenditure and management of the project to achieve the agreed outcomes. This is a very useful module for research leaders and team leaders.

Module 6: Grant and Contract Administration

Research grants and contracts are legally binding agreements between the provider and the researcher. This module explores the nature of research grants and contracts. It examines the principles of effective grant management and explores the responsibilities of the researcher with respect to the execution and reporting of project outcomes. It is essential for any researcher with responsibility for grant execution.

Module 7: Managing and Leading People in a Research Context

Research projects require some particular approaches to managing people. This module builds on Module 2, where the initial employment of the research team was explored. We will explore the researcher's own personal management skills, the ongoing management of the research team and allied contributors, and particular management issues that may arise. We will focus on management within the distinctive research context of constrained periods of employment and tight timelines. If you have responsibility for managing students, research teams, a research centre, or a program of research, this is most important. It will make a real difference to how your group operates.

Module 8: Project Closeout

The successful completion of a research project requires a number of closure processes relating to

research, people, finance, knowledge, assets, and media management. This module explores these processes, promoting effective closing out of the project lifecycle. This topic is largely ignored by many people – with some disastrous results. The module offers valuable insights into how to finish a project in an exemplary manner – and move toward new projects from the old. This too, is useful for anyone with responsibility for grant expenditure.

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6.2 How module participation can help you

It was mentioned earlier in this module that a risk for many researchers is that they do not feel they can take the time to participate in development activities. However, researchers subsequently note that this reasoning is a false economy: their work practices remain inefficient and less effective as a consequence. You are strongly encouraged to select one or two modules to undertake this year as part of your development goals. Hopefully they will prove so useful that you will return for more!

There are many persuasive reasons for taking the time to participate in the Future Research Leaders Program. Some of these are listed below.

- Obviously, the modules in themselves offer you considerable guidance on better research project management practice. They have been designed with the guidance of many senior researchers and research agencies from leading universities, the ARC, NHMRC, and other professional bodies.
- The modules reflect a higher standard of research practice. As a researcher, you are strongly encouraged to reflect those principles. Further, the modules provide you with ready guidance on your own university's principles and policies. You don't have to go looking – they are all there for you.
- A major benefit of the program is its encouragement of researcher interaction. The workshops are designed to enhance the written materials and to provide you with an opportunity to interact with your peers. It is amazing how much is learned from colleagues in settings like these – and the chance for ongoing collaboration often emerges from discussion of what you each research.
- A third benefit relates to the time for reflection. Many of us rush from one job to the next without a chance to take a step back and reflect on our practices, progress, and directions. This program offers you that opportunity.
- The learning you gain from each module has been designed to be immediately useful. This is particularly important as it means you can become more effective as soon as you finish.
- This program is singular – we could not find another like it in the world! Don't miss out on accessing leading-edge research training. The program has been designed to assist you in being a better researcher.
- Finally, the recognition from your participation will be something that you can note in discussions with your supervisors and in asking for more leadership roles.

Don't miss this invaluable opportunity – it will make a difference to how you work.

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