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**HR Research Manager**  
Career Planning for *you*

A TRADITION OF  
INDEPENDENT  
THINKING



**UCC**

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

# What I will cover today

- Career Planning for **You!**
- Managing Conflict and Difficult Conversations with your team

# Nature of Research Careers

- The evidence points to the uncertain nature of careers in research.
- It points to the reality that researchers need to continually adapt and upskill.
- This upskilling not only refers to research acumen but also other competencies such as project management, problem solving, data analytics etc.

# Planning **your** Career

- It's important that you see your career as something **you** plan.
  
- UCC will support certain aspects of your career development, such as learning new skills, acquiring relevant knowledge, etc.

# Career Management

- **Career management**, involves 'the analysis, planning and action that can be taken by an individual at any stage of their career – and ideally throughout it – to actively increase the chance of doing well' (Forsyth, 2002: 3).
- Even though we all seek successful careers we need to have a clear idea of what we mean by success and how to achieve it.
- We all wish to access career opportunities however simultaneously upskilling to meet potential priorities and challenges can be time consuming and difficult to manage.

# Career Planning

- **Career progression** is usually described in terms of what people are required to know and be able to do to perform a sequence of tasks at increasing levels of responsibility in pre-designated essential requirements.
- This tends to situate career management and career development together.

# Career Development Plan

- 1. Set goals** and create a plan to achieve them. People who are the most successful and satisfied in their careers have proactively determined what they want from work.
- 2. Develop a timeline**, including milestones.
- 3. Own your career path.**
- 4. Write it down.** Without a plan, you can feel rudderless and you have no benchmark against which you can measure your progress.

# GROW

- Goal
- Reality
- Options/Obstacles
- Way Forward



# Career development planning

- Establish aims and objectives (or goals) - what you want to achieve or where you want to go, in the short, medium or long-term in your career
- Assess current realities
- Identify needs for skills, knowledge or competence
- Select appropriate development activities to meet those perceived needs.

# Development Plan Checklist

- 1. Establish your purpose or direction
  - 2. Identify development needs
  - 3. Identify learning opportunities
  - 4. Formulate an action plan
  - 5. Undertake the development
  - 6. Record the outcomes
  - 7. Evaluate and review
- 
- <https://www.managers.org.uk/~//media/Files/Checklists/Personal-Development-Plan-Example-Guide.pdf>

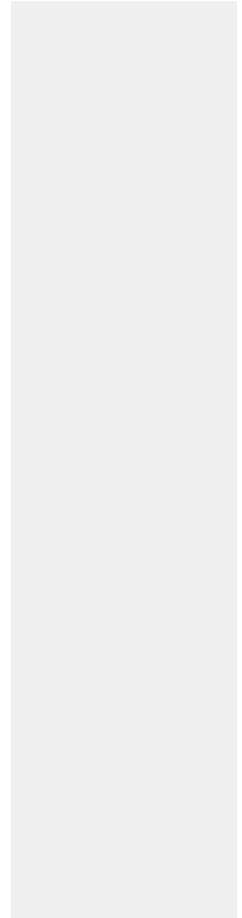
# Career Planning

## Consider your....



### **Knowledge and intellectual abilities:**

- Using subject knowledge in research
- Research methods: theoretical knowledge and practical application
- Using information seeking and information literacy and management skills in research
- Using languages and academic literacy and numeracy in research



# Career Planning

## Consider your....

### **Cognitive abilities**

- Using analysis and synthesis in research
- Using critical thinking and evaluation in research
- Using problem solving in research

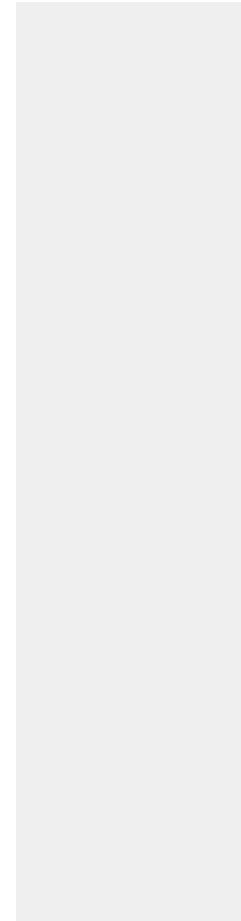
# Career Planning

## Consider your....



### **Creativity**

- Using an inquiring mind and intellectual insight to meet the challenges of research
- Using innovation in research
- Argument construction and intellectual risk in research



# Career Planning

## Consider your....

### **Personal effectiveness**

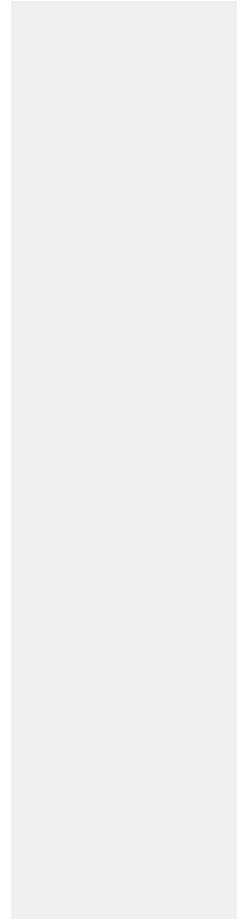
- The need for enthusiasm and perseverance as a researcher
- Integrity for good practice in research
- The importance of self-confidence in research
- Self-reflection

# Career Planning Develop....



## **Self-management**

- Preparation and prioritisation in research
- Commitment to research
- The importance of time management
- Responsiveness to change
- Managing work-life balance



# Career Planning Develop....



## Professional and career development

- Managing your career and continuing professional development (CPD)
- Taking advantage of opportunities available to researchers in UCC
- The value of networking (external and internal groups)
- Reputation and esteem

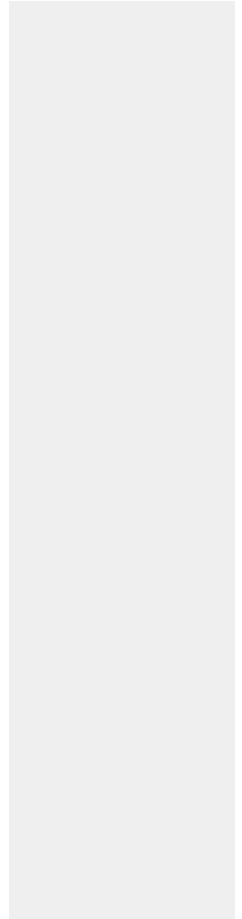


# Career Planning Develop....



## **Research governance and the organisation**

- Health and safety, legal requirements, IPR and copyright for researchers
- Ethics, principles and sustainability in the context of research
- The need for respect and confidentiality in research
- Criteria for attribution and co-authorship in research
- Appropriate practice in research

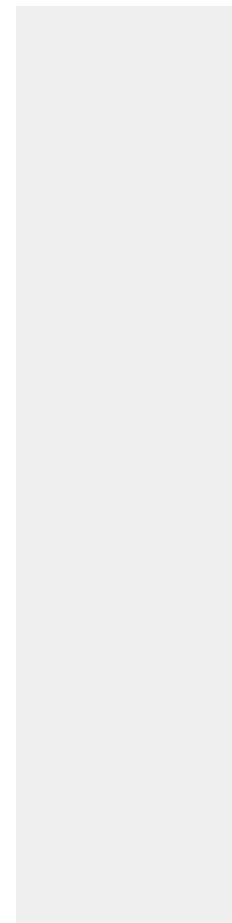


# Career Planning Understand



## Research management

- Research strategy
- Project planning and delivery for research
- Risk management in research
- Finance, funding and resources
- Income and funding generation, financial management and infrastructure and resources for research



# Career Planning Understand



## **Engagement, influence and impact**

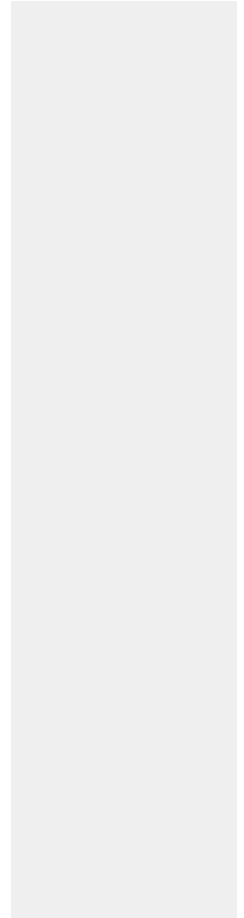
- Collegiality, mentoring, influence, leadership and collaboration in research
- Team working for success as a researcher
- Managing people to achieve research aims
- Supervision in research
- Equality and diversity in the research environment

# Career Planning Understand



## Communication and dissemination

- Communication methods and media for researchers
- Publish your research (of course 😊!)



# Development Plan

Your plan for your own development might include some or any of the following:

- **Opportunity awareness:** gain a wider knowledge of the academic/research sector to identify, create, investigate and seize areas for personal and professional development. Identify possible sources of information and support within your institution

# Development Plan

- **Decision making:** understand your personal priorities and constraints (internal and external), so that each developmental opportunity and career step can be made following an informed decision. You need to be able to match these to your core skills, knowledge, values and motives, etc.

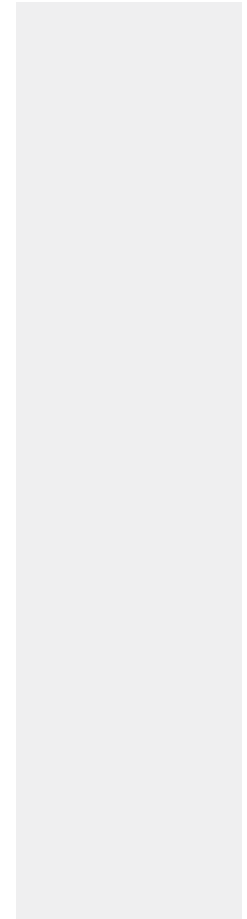
# Development Plan

- **Networking:** develop networks of contacts. You should be able to define, develop and maintain a support network for advice and information
- **Self presentation and promotion:** define and promote your own agenda. Promote your own strengths in a convincing way

# Development Plan

- **Goal setting and action planning:**

move your career forward in a structured way through planning and implementing an effective course of action, organising time effectively and preparing contingency plans. You should be able to monitor and evaluate progress against specific objectives.





# Exercise

Think about your career aspirations:

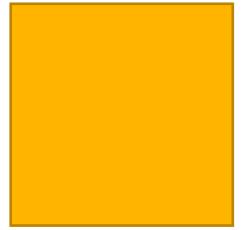
- a) Are your aspirations realistic?
- b) How important are the different features of your ideal career?
- c) What things could you compromise on and what do you feel more strongly about? (location, salary etc)
- d) How do these translate into aims that you can address in your career planning?
- e) What support or factors in your current job do you have control over in order to make these things happen?

# Exercise

What steps can you take in the short, medium and long-term to work towards achieving your ideal role, or aspects of your ideal role?

**We will be going on to the next part now...any questions on this section?**

# Origins of Conflict



## Obvious?

Excessive personal use of the Internet or email

Poor attendance and time-keeping

Bullying or harassment

Discriminatory behaviour

Unacceptable language

Theft

Drink/drug problems.

## Less obvious?

Taking credit for other people's work or ideas

Talking over people in meetings

Not inviting team members to team social events

Not covering for people when they are sick

Not taking messages for people

Using someone else's information without permission

Not including people in round-robin emails

Ignoring people or being discourteous

Poor personal hygiene.

# Handling conflict well

Think about your experiences of where a manager handled conflict effectively:

- What was his or her general approach?
- What specific things did he/she do that seemed particularly useful?

# Some Tips

As a leader or manager, you need to be able to deal with conflict when it occurs:

- Create a positive working environment
- Learn to spot the signs of conflict
- Deal with conflict as soon as it occurs
- Set some ground rules for discussing conflict
- Be fair and even-handed
- Exercise tact
- Make concrete plans
- Seek advice and guidance
- Develop your team's conflict management skills
- Evaluate your conflict-management skills

# Handling Difficult Conversations

Difficult conversations in the workplace can cover a wide range of topics, from:

- tackling problem behaviour (e.g. under-performance, bullying, persistent lateness);
- to breaking bad news (e.g. redundancy);
- to talking to a team member about potentially uncomfortable issues such as poor personal hygiene or irritating personal habits.

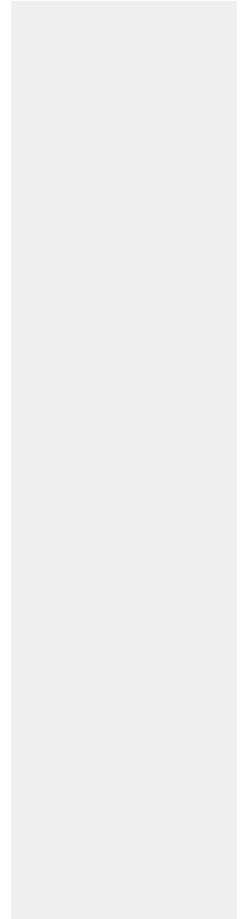
# Handling Difficult Conversations

- Timing is important. Don't take the other person by complete surprise.
- Choose a quiet, private place, where you won't be disturbed and others won't overhear the conversation.
- Focus on the issue, rather than the person, and stick to the facts. If you are addressing a behavioural issue, describe the impact the person's behaviour has had and who it affected. Use specific examples as evidence to back up what you are saying

# Handling Difficult Conversations



- Be careful not to let emotion cloud your judgement: 'good' and 'bad' are not quite the same as what you like or dislike, therefore it's important to become detached from your personal preferences.
- Use positive body language. Ensure your voice is calm and moderate, maintain eye contact and use open gestures. Be aware of the other person's body language too...



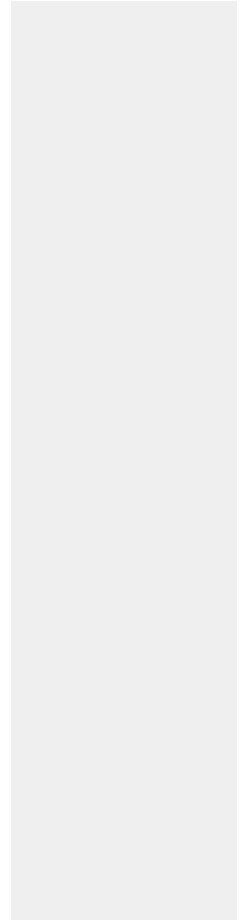
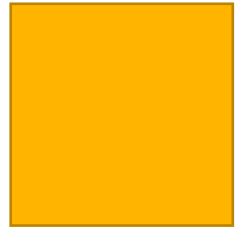


# Handling Difficult Conversations

- Acknowledge the other person's point of view.
- What you have said may come as a surprise to them, so ensure that you allow them sufficient time to take on board your points and allow them the right of reply.
- If appropriate, tell them that you can follow up this discussion at a later date, when they have had more time to consider the subject you have approached them about.

# Handling Difficult Conversations

- Work together to develop a mutually acceptable solution
- Offer additional support. Ensure that the other person knows you are willing to give them further guidance

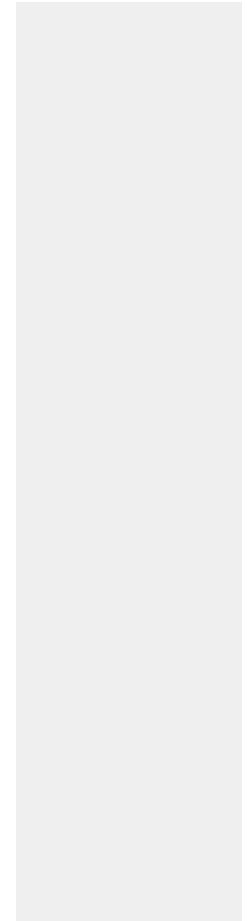


# Useful Openers

- Would this be a good time to talk?
- I have something I'd like to discuss with you - do you have a few minutes to spare now?
- I need your help with something. Can we talk about it now?
- I've been meaning to speak to you -when would be a good time for you?
- I have some feedback I'd like to share with you, if that's OK?
- I'm afraid I have some bad news to share with you.

# Handling reactions

- It is important to be aware that different people will respond to difficult conversations in different ways. Some may be tearful; some may become angry; and some may become defensive, trying to divert the blame elsewhere. You can't control this. What you can control, however, is the situation.

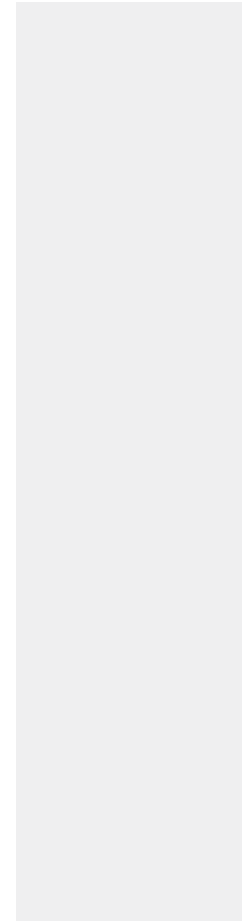


# Handling reactions

- Staying calm. If someone is raising their voice, resist the temptation to mirror this behaviour. Pay particular attention to your voice and body language: when you are stressed, it is common to rush what you are saying, raise the tone or volume of your voice and avoid eye contact. It is important to find the right balance between empathising and remaining comfortable and self-assured.
- Remaining professional and in control: refrain from becoming emotional yourself.

# Handling reactions

- Considering the possible reasons why the employee is responding in a particular way; this will help you to respond appropriately and direct their actions positively.
- Sometimes it helps to feed back what you think they are feeling, as this shows you are listening and taking their feelings seriously. To do this, you could say, for example, 'You seem angry/upset/disappointed/shocked/surprised'. This will also help them to open up to you, paving the way for a more meaningful and constructive discussion.



# Handling reactions

- If the other person is very angry, give them time to vent their feelings - listen without responding until they have completely finished. This will help you work together towards the best solution once the other person has had time to calm down.

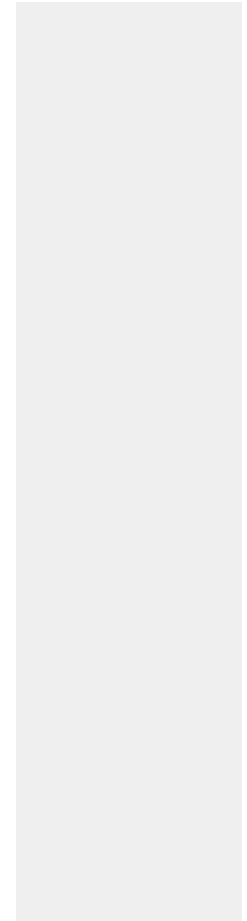
# Handling reactions

- **Crying:** say 'I can see that this is upsetting. I'll give you a moment to compose yourself before we continue.'
- **Being angry:** say 'I understand that this situation is frustrating. Please take a few minutes to calm down. We'll work together to find the best solution.'
- **Blaming others:** say 'I realise that there may be other people involved but this conversation is just about you and me; I will have the same conversation with the others. If you are genuinely concerned about someone else's behaviour then please come and talk to me later and we can discuss it then.'
- **Saying nothing:** say 'Is what I've said clear? Do you have any questions?'



# Difficult conversations & Listening

- Being able to have difficult conversations is a key communication skill for managers, which, with time and practice, will become easier. While it can be tempting to avoid difficult conversations, when handled properly, they have the potential to be constructive discussions which can help improve team performance.

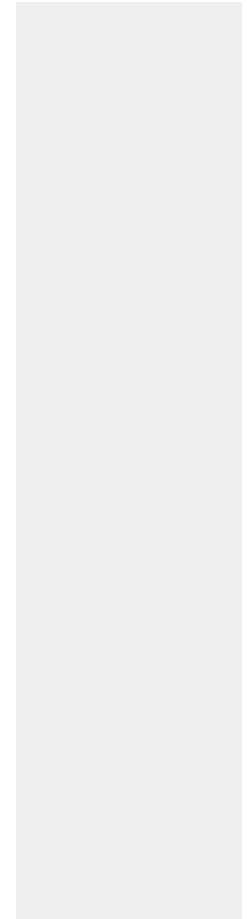


# Test understanding

A simple way of demonstrating this component in conversations is to rephrase or restate what has been said back to the speaker. Some useful ways of doing this are:

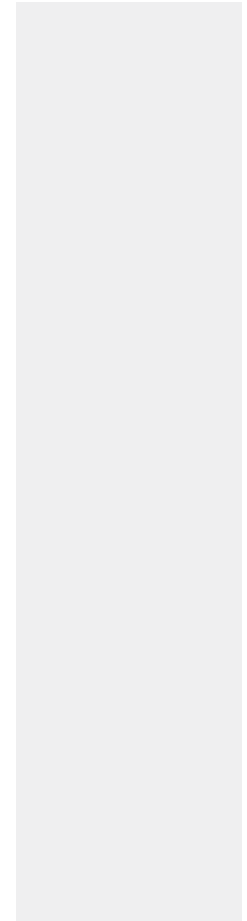
- 'Can I just clarify? You're saying that ...'
- 'My understanding is that ..'
- 'Let me make sure I've got this right; you're saying ...'

Don't simply repeat what the person had said. Instead, rephrase the highlights or key points, but take care not to distort the meaning.



# Summarising

- Summarising the conversation is a critical skill for active listening. It clarifies and reinforces the message for both listener and speaker.
- It also gives the speaker the chance to correct the listener if they summarise inaccurately.



# Summarising

- Alternatively, it is sometimes preferable to save the summarising to the very end of the conversation and then go over your notes to review what has been said and agreed. A good way of beginning to summarise may be:
- 'So let's recap on what has been said and agreed.'
- 'OK, let me note down the key points we've discussed.'

# Go Raibh Maith Agaibh

