Academic Successes

This tip-sheet offers some hints and tips on academic successes and how to measure these.

1. What are academic success measures?

Academic success measures are used by funding agencies, academic institutions, and other parties to help them decide whether to award funding, offer an academic position or award a promotion to someone.

Historically, measures of academic success have been research outputs such as publications, and winning research funding. Although easy to quantify, such measures are increasingly thought of as narrow and potentially biased.

Funders of research are exploring ways to broaden such metrics as one way to improve research culture, creating a more inclusive and diverse research environment. There is a global initiative called DORA that supports such aims across funding agencies, academic institutions, and other parties.

This tip sheet focusses on **academic success measures** that are being increasingly recognised by UKRI, who fund a significant proportion of UK research. Some UKRI funding agencies now request a Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI), also known as a narrative CV, which asks applicants to highlight the success measures outlined in this document.

The four themes used by UKRI are:

- *Self:* Contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge.
- *Others:* The development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships.
- *Research and Innovation (R&I):* Contributions to the wider research and innovation community.
- *Society and Beyond R&I:* Contributions to broader research or innovation-users and audiences, and towards wider societal benefit.

2. Outputs for academic successes

You will be asked to document your academic successes in different formats such as on a cover letter or on a narrative CV.

Think about your academic successes within the 4 themes. Then identify your contribution, the outputs, and the impact, as in the example below.

Contribution
- Carried out experiments and collated data.
- Supervised 2 PhD students that helped to generate data for a publication.

Output
- A publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Impact
- Paper was highly cited.
- Findings resulted in a new collaboration.
- Invited to give a talk at a conference.

To help with recording your academic successes, here are some example outputs within each of the themes.

Self

- Publishing research findings in peer-reviewed journals, policy documents, university press releases, blogs, professional body publications, LinkedIn etc.
- Presenting research at a range of conferences and events.
- Creating a new research tool, methodology or piece of software.
- Setting up a spin-out company from research or patenting the work.
- Securing research funding.

Others

- Being a Postdoc and Fellows Champion.
- Supervising students that successfully completed their theses.
- Writing a grant in collaboration with one or more people.

Research and Innovation (R&I)

- Representation on equality, diversity, and inclusion panels/networks e.g., the Black Postdoctoral Network.
- Establishing a postdoc research week for postdocs to highlight their research to potential industry partners.
- Editing, reviewing, and refereeing grants and/or publications.

- Adapting the recruitment process to improve the recruitment of research staff from underrepresented groups.

Society and Beyond (R&I)

- A collaboration with industry, policy makers, patient groups etc.
- Participation in outreach projects or public engagement work.
- Engagement with the media or press where you educate and/or publicise your research and share your knowledge.
- Creation of a service or product that is patentable.

3. Finding the time

Use your 10 development days per year, which are written into your contract, to build on your academic successes. Try new things and push yourself outside your comfort zone.

Keep a record of activities in the 10 days development record which you can then use during the Annual Review Conversation (ARC) with your manager.

What you choose to do in your 10 development days is personal and complex.

Here are some tips to help you choose:

- Look at the four themes. Do you have any obvious skills and knowledge gaps?
- Create a research vision to help you identify your skills and knowledge gaps.
- Develop a career plan, acknowledging that this is subject to change.
- Talk to more senior academics for guidance on activities and initiatives that will be valued and recognised in your field.

- Talk to people outside academic research to understand what sills are valued in other sectors.
- Think about what you enjoy doing as well as what you think you 'should' do. Consider your values and what drives you when choosing activities.
- Think about activities and initiatives that will provide you with skills that are sector proof e.g., developing effective working relationships is a skill useful within and beyond academia.

4. Other sources of inspiration for building academic success

- Look at The Academic's Success Guide which has a toolkit and resources for probation, promotion, and progress. It provides advice from many academics at Imperial.
- Look at the Fast Track Impact blog which helps you think about the impact of your work.
- Look for academic role models; read the profiles of Imperial academics, look at professional association websites for profiles, listen to TED talks from accomplished academics and look at academic profiles on LinkedIn.

5. You are unique!

Remember that every academic has a unique career pathway. There is no single template for success.

Even though publications and acquiring funding are likely to be important success measures in the short term, try to create a research niche. What is different about you? What makes you stand out?

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