The UK Academic Job Market

Madelaine Chapman
Postdoc Careers Adviser
• Different types of higher education institutions

• Research funding

• Measures for teaching and research

• Planning an academic career
Questions

• What organisations might I work for?
• Where are they?
• What job titles are used?
• Where are jobs advertised?
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‘dreaming spires’

Fleeing hostile townsfolk

“Oxbridge”

Ancient, college-based, many traditions and own ways of doing things.
Scale of UK Higher Education

Current UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- England 131
- Scotland 19
- Wales 10
- Northern Ireland 5
- TOTAL 165
A Brief History of UK Universities

- “Oxbridge” Cambridge and Oxford – 12th / 13th Century
- 15th/16th Centuries
- ‘Redbrick’ or ‘civic’ - 19th Century/Early 20th Century
  - 20 founded in 1960s after Robbins Report
  - 66 post-1992 “new” universities, many former polytechnics
  - Open University – distance learning
Diversity of institutions

- HEIs - universities and higher education colleges
- Wide variety of institutions
- Two oldest UK universities: Cambridge, Oxford
- Large research intensive universities e.g. University of Manchester
- Small specialist institutions e.g. Institute of Cancer Research, Royal Agricultural College
- Open University – focussed on distance learning, based in Milton Keynes
- Research Institutes (life sciences) e.g. Sanger
Seeing double?

University of Bath
Bath Spa University

University of Oxford
Oxford Brookes University

University of Sheffield
Sheffield Hallam University

University of Nottingham
Nottingham Trent University

University of Southampton
Southampton Solent University

University of Manchester
Manchester Metropolitan University

Anglia Ruskin University
University of Cambridge
“Represents 24 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with business and the public sector.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Birmingham</th>
<th>University of Manchester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>Newcastle University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Cambridge</td>
<td>University of Nottingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiff University</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durham University</td>
<td>Queen Mary, University of London</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Edinburgh</td>
<td>Queen's University Belfast</td>
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<td>University of Exeter</td>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
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<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td>University of Southampton</td>
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<td>Imperial College London</td>
<td>University College London</td>
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<td>King's College London</td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
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<td>University of Leeds</td>
<td>University of York</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Liverpool</td>
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Russell Group

• Represents 15% of HEIs

BUT

• 68% of the UK’s very best (‘world leading’) research in Russell Group universities – REF 2014

• 75% (over £4.5 billion) of UK universities’ research grant and contract income 2014-15
What about the other 30% world leading research?

• Many of the other universities have excellent research but how to get a picture of what they do?

• Can look at results of and submissions to most recent REF online http://results.ref.ac.uk/

• Find out: Management structure, research strategy, support for early career research staff, staffing policy, physical infrastructure, key research areas
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What we know from Cambridge postdocs

• About 30% of the postdocs we work with go on to secure an independent/established career for their next step.

• 6 in last 8 years have secured a permanent academic position at Cambridge, just over half secure positions in the UK.

• Between 1 and 15 years’ postdoc prior to established position

• Mean 5.5 years/ Mode 4 years

• Expect 100+ applications for any academic position
What do we mean by ‘fellowship’?

- Competitively awarded research funding that is available to early career researchers, particularly in the sciences. This money covers salary and often research costs for a fixed period of time.

  E.g. Royal Society University Research Fellowships

- In Cambridge and Oxford can also find college fellowships (JRFs). Not covered in detail today but information at:

The benefits of a fellowship

- A chance to focus on your own research agenda
- Demonstrates you are competitive academically
- Shows you can secure funding – essential for lectureship positions

But:
- Success rates are low, typically 5-30%
- A fellowship is not necessary to secure a lectureship
- There are other ways to demonstrate independence / gain funding
The main schemes for physical scientists

The Royal Society
• University Research Fellowship
• Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship

Research Councils: EPSRC, NERC, STFC, MRC etc

Royal Academy of Engineering

Marie-Curie Fellowships (EU)

See list at:
http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdocsci/Academic/Funding/Phys.asp
Schemes for life scientists

• **The Royal Society**

Sir Henry Dale Fellowship (0-7 years' experience) This scheme replaces the University Research Fellowship for all biomedical applicants

• **The Medical Research Council (MRC)**
  
  • New Investigator Research Grant (3-10 years' experience)
  
  • Career Development Award (3-6 years' experience)
  
  • Senior Non-Clinical Fellowship (at least 6 years' experience)

• **MANY OTHERS LISTED AT:**

• [http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdocsci/Academic/Funding/Life.asp](http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdocsci/Academic/Funding/Life.asp)
Search for your own funding using **Research Professional**:

http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/research/funding/researchprofessional.aspx
• “chemistry” AND “early career”

• Ramsay memorial fellowships for postdoctoral chemical research

chemical research in UK

Commonwealth citizens

preference to those studying at UCL

2 years

50% salary plus £1000 research expenses per year

expected deadline next Nov
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People – UK HE in numbers

Students
• 2.3 million students
• 20% are international students
• HEIs range from less than 4,500 to 40,000 students

Staff
• 133,000 full-time academic
• 65,000 part-time academic
• ~206,000 non-academic
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What current academics think existing postdocs need to demonstrate in order to secure their first established post.

- Research Excellence
  - Papers. How many?
  - Funding and collaborations
- Teaching
  - Understanding and enthusiasm
  - Small group/seminar teaching
  - Undergrad/Masters supervision
- What length of time is expected before obtaining position?
  45% said up to 5 years, 31% said 5-10 years (in physical sciences and engineering)
# The lived experience of a PI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek support and feedback</td>
<td>Engage with peers, senior colleagues, internal and external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in networking</td>
<td>Be sociable, be open, build relationships locally, nationally, internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive your own success</td>
<td>Be clear on what success means; be strategic about career; develop plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek out and set up collaborations</td>
<td>Diversify research lines, multiple projects internationally &amp; multidisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate research to others</td>
<td>Increase visibility via talks, conferences, social media, websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish!</td>
<td>Maximise your output through your research team or group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit people you want to work with</td>
<td>Build an effective research team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure the cost of success</td>
<td>Understand impact on time, family, friends and life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources of University Research Income

Source: Resources of Higher Education Institutions, HESA, 2013/14
Death by letters

HE Funding Bodies

- HEFCE - England
- HEFCW – Wales
- SFC – Scotland
- DELNI – Northern Ireland

Research Councils (RCUK)

- ESRC – social sciences
- AHSS – arts and humanities
- EPSRC – engineering and physical sciences
- BBSRC – life sciences
- NERC – natural environment
- MRC – medicine
- STFC – science facilities

Research infrastructure e.g. libraries

REF results impact on funding

Research Projects – bidding process
Studentships, fellowships, grants
Measuring Research

• Since 1988 the ‘excellence’ of research has been measured.

• Research Excellence Framework (REF) – happened in 2014

• Submission included: staff, research outputs, impact (case studies), doctoral degrees, environment

• Up to 4 outputs per staff member (2008 - 2013)

• Next REF – 2020 (probably)
### 9 - Physics

#### Overall profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>% of the submission meeting the standard for:</th>
<th>FTE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Bath</td>
<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Birmingham</td>
<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>44.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Cambridge</td>
<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>153.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Lancashire</td>
<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>20.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Durham</td>
<td>4* 3* 2* 1* U/C</td>
<td>74.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[PDF] UOA summary sheet
View submission data

- Research groups (RG)
- Staff members (REF1a/c)
- Research outputs (REF2)
- Impact template & case studies (REF3a/b)
- Environment template & data (REF4a/b/c, REF5)
Student Surveys, Stats and League Tables

- **National Student Survey**
  - Feedback from final year undergraduates

- **Unistats**
  - Review and compare official information about HEIs in UK
  - Run by HEFCE and UCAS
  - Includes results of national student survey

- **League tables …….**
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Keeping up to date

• Times Higher Education Supplement
• Guardian
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Pitfalls

• Postdoc trap
• Taking on too much lab responsibility to detriment of your output
• Not getting knowledgeable and involved in funding early enough
• Missing time windows for fellowships
• Not gaining teaching experience in subject areas that fit the type of department you want to lecture in
• Falling out with your supervisors and then having no references
• Do lots of little interesting projects that don’t connect in any way
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## Salary scale

![Salary Scale Table](http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/salary-scales)

[View Full Scale](http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/salary-scales)
Benefits and negotiation

- Common pension scheme(s) across UK HEIs
- Salary Scales are public
- You can negotiate when offered a job within academia
  - Salary
  - Research funding
  - Lab space
  - ….
Extensive information on academic careers at:

http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdocsci/Academic/Overview.asp

Appointments for postdocs:

Physical Sciences and Technology email pdocphys@careers.cam.ac.uk

Life Sciences email pdoclife@careers.cam.ac.uk