Maximising Potential.

Training, development and career planning for researchers
The ‘Think Ahead’ Programme aims to ensure that early career researchers within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health have a defined career trajectory and are provided with the current training and the skills required by employers. The programme has been designed in consultation with all stakeholders: employers, academics, early career researchers and members of the Faculty research office and is in line with the Researcher Development Framework.

www.shef.ac.uk/faculty/medicine-dentistry-health/training-for-researchers

Who Designs, Delivers, and Monitors ‘Think Ahead’?

The Training and Development Advisors (Dr Kay Guccione/Dr Lucy Lee) work closely with the Early Career Group, and have overall responsibility for the implementation and management of the ‘Think Ahead’ Programme. They are the first point of contact for early career researchers to gain information, support, contacts and advice on career training and opportunities for development.

The Early Career Group (ECG) is a team comprising academic representatives from each department of the Faculty, and representatives of the Medicine, Dentistry & Health Research Staff Association (see below), and is supported by the Training and Development Advisors. Each of the academic representatives works to liaise with executive staff and all academic members of their department. They aim to ensure the training and development needs of all early career researchers are taken into consideration, and that early career researchers are positively encouraged to think about their own career trajectory, and their skills development. The ECG is responsible for the design of an appropriate strategy to ensure the ‘Think Ahead’ programme fulfills its aims. It oversees development of the programme and monitors its impact using innovative research-led approaches. Please contact Dr Ilaria Bellantuono (i.bellantuono@sheffield.ac.uk) for more information.

The Medicine, Dentistry & Health Research Staff Association (MDHRSA) is a forum for all early career researchers within the Faculty including post-docs, research associates, and research assistants. The society aims to inform training and development activities by liaising with leaders in the Faculty and the ECG. They also works to promote the ‘Think Ahead’ programme to their co-researchers.

The society actively facilitates enhanced communication, collaboration and social interaction among early career researchers. They have representatives in each department of the Faculty and they are available for information http://www.shef.ac.uk/medicine/staff-info/postdoc/index.html Or email: med-pdcommittee@lists.shef.ac.uk

What is the ‘Think Ahead’ Programme?

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• **Recruit the best early career researchers.** If you have a new position and want to recruit highly ambitious and motivated people, they will be attracted to what the Faculty can do for their career. Get in touch with the training & development advisor and she will meet with the applicants at the time of the interview to explain the programme and answer any questions.

• **Develop your researchers to the highest standard increase their motivation and productivity.** Liaise with your departmental ECG representative and discuss with them what you think is needed to develop your team of researchers.

• **Facilitate networking with other institutions and industrial partners.** We are developing an Industrial Advisory Group with the aim of forging strong relationships with industrial employers. We will work with them to enhance the employability of our researchers in an industrial context. This is a great opportunity to initiate collaborations with industry through your early career researcher.

• **Grow your international reputation.** Through engaging with the development of your cohort of research staff, who will be the research leaders of tomorrow, world-wide.

• **Enhance grant application success.** We can provide a consultation service which will help you to detail the training and development opportunities for researchers in the Faculty on your grant applications.

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**What can the ‘Think Ahead’ programme do for the Faculty and its academic staff?**

We can help you take the next career step whatever direction you may want to take. We have the systems in place to support you, these include:

• **The Mentoring Programme.** If you are not sure what to do next, or how to do it, we can provide personal and professional support. You will be assigned a mentor outside your own department who will share experience and support you on a 1:1 basis. Please contact Dr Liz Williams (e.a.williams@sheffield.ac.uk) for more information.

• **Fellowship Coaching Scheme.** If you know that an academic career is for you, contact Dr Sheila Francis (s.francis@sheffield.ac.uk) and she will be able to advise you when is the right time to apply for Fellowship awards and what you need to have on your CV to give you the best chance of success. We will assign you a mentor to help you through the process from development of concepts, through the Fellowship application process. Panel mock-interviews are conducted for candidates successful in gaining an interview.

• **Network of Non-academic Professionals.** We maintain a database of over 100 professionals, who have worked as post-docs and then gone on to choose a non-academic career. They are available to advise you, and will coach researchers into successful employment in professions outside academia. If you are unsure about some of the options, or want to talk to a professional who has made a successful alternative choice please contact us.

• **The Annual Staff Review & Development Scheme (SRDS).** To facilitate discussion with your PI on what direction you want to take with your future career the ECG is developing tools and resources to be used in you annual appraisal meeting. Please make time to reflect on your career plans as part of the SRDS process.

• **Ensure you have all the skills you require for the future.** We have a full programme of skills training workshops and work-based development activities (e.g. teaching, supervising, outreach) focused on the skills we know will make you more competitive when you take your next career step. We have researched this fully, with your help – thank you, and we have tailored our training to your needs.

http://www.shef.ac.uk/faculty/medicine-dentistry-health/training-for-researchers/training

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### Workshops
- Managing Your Career
- Writing a Successful Grant Application
- Writing up your Research for Publication
- How to be an Effective Researcher
- Setting Assessment and Giving Feedback to Students
- Introduction to Lecturing
- Supervising and Small Group Teaching
- Getting the Best from Yourself and Others
- An Introduction to Commercial Skills for Life Scientists
- Presentation Skills
- Public Communication and Outreach Activities
- Marketing Yourself Effectively
- Research Ethics and Governance
- Research Funding for Early Career Researchers
- Statistics for Scientists
- Funding for the Social Sciences
- 1:1 Career Clinics and Statistics Surgeries

### Work-based development
- Sheffield Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE)
- MDHRSA committee training
- Teaching on MSc modules
- Delivering post-grad training through the Doctoral Development Programme
- Membership on Faculty Committees
- Buddy scheme
- BioScience YES national biotech competition
- Public outreach activities through researcher led science communications group ‘Science Brainwaves’

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Please contact Dr Kay Guccione or Dr Lucy Lee for any queries, for advice, for more information, and to register for any of the opportunities listed.

E: k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk  
E: l.lee@sheffield.ac.uk

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**Start of contract**
- Induction with training advisor
- Pairing with post-doc buddy
- Managing your career workshop

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**Identification of career trajectory & training needs**
- Discussion with PI during SRDS
- Mentoring
- Attending workshop and work-based activities

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**The next step**
- Fellowship coaching
- Network of non academic professional
- Career services 1:1 session
Think Ahead

The Early Career Group wants to ensure that every researcher realises their full career potential and they are a credit to themselves and to the Faculty.

We support all career paths equally
Contact details:

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E: k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Lucy Lee  
E: l.lee@sheffield.ac.uk

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