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How to use this booklet

This guide offers you a series of coaching questions to support the reflection process. These questions cover a diverse range of activities and possible professional development, some of which will be appropriate for some researchers and not for others. The questions in this guide are intended to broaden your thinking about types of activities and professional development that you are currently engaging with or may want to consider in the year ahead. Our intention is not that you respond to every single question: use them selectively as “prompts for reflection” by picking the questions that seem the most relevant to your current situation.

The questions are grouped using the following categories: Research, Research Impact, Teaching and Supervision, and Administration. For each subsection, consider what you have found rewarding/challenging and any progress made towards objectives you may have previously set for yourself.
RESEARCH

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

1. How have you generated research data and put research protocols in operation?
2. How have you reached the milestones in your research programme?
3. What techniques and methodologies have you developed?
4. What steps do you take to protect, store and share your data?

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

1. How regularly do you write up your research results?
2. What manuscripts do you have in preparation/ submitted/ accepted?
3. What other writing have you been involved in e.g. review articles or patents?
4. Have you considered asking senior colleagues if you can support them in reviewing papers/ grants? Would you consider being a peer reviewer and writing a review report?
5. What conferences have you attended this year, what and how did you present and what have you gained from them?
6. What conferences can you attend to broaden your research horizon and visibility and what would you present? How will you fund your attendance?

For further guidance, please see the Think Further resource: sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead/academic-writing
INCOME GENERATION & RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

1. What are the funding opportunities you have now?

2. How do you write/ contribute to writing research bids with your senior colleagues e.g. writing a grant as a co-PI? Are you contributing to research ideas and bid development within your research group or with collaborators?

3. How do you develop an understanding of the funding landscape in your discipline, the types of funding available and how are you keeping yourself informed? Do you discuss potential funding streams with your colleagues/ mentor/ line manager? Have you considered Fellowships?

4. Have you considered applying for a summer undergraduate research project award (e.g. Think Ahead SURE)?

5. Which travel awards would allow you to visit another research group?

6. How are you building your research independence?

7. Are you developing new research ideas which could build future research proposals and are you keeping track of these ideas and/or starting to write them into potential proposals?

8. What type of preliminary data would you need in a research proposal to fund your research idea?

9. What are the new techniques and methodologies you should be learning to take your current and future research forward? Who can help you with this?

10. Who will be your reference/ sponsor when you apply for a job and research fund?

11. Are you building relationships with colleagues to get support with reviewing your research proposal/ fellowship applications?

12. Could the involvement of patient and public groups enhance your research ideas?
For further guidance and useful links, please see the Think Further resource.

Conferences: sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead/conferences

Innovation and Creativity: sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead/innovation-and-creativity
OUTREACH, WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

1. How are you contributing to the impact agenda for your research project?

2. Would you consider: a) writing short articles about your research for learned societies magazine or other non-specialist publications; b) recording a short video/podcast describing your research?

3. What event could you prepare for the next local festival (e.g. Festival of the Mind?) How would you fund it?

4. Would you consider talking about your research in a pub? (search for: PubhD Sheffield, Pint of Science)

5. Are you supporting your department during school visits? What ideas could you develop for workshops and activities for school visits, UCAS days etc.?

6. Would you consider becoming a Brilliant Club tutor? sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/brilliant-sheffield

7. Would you consider writing a press release when you next publish a significant scientific paper?

8. Are you developing a network to become an invited speaker in departments outside the University?

For further guidance, please see the Think Further resource: sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead/research-engagement
ENGAGING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Other researchers:

1. Would you consider setting up a seminar series in your department or across disciplinary boundaries?

2. Would you consider organising a research network?

3. Who are the competing research groups related to your research?

4. Do you take the opportunity to talk to visitors during external guest departmental seminars?

5. What is your approach to collaborating effectively?

6. Are you pro-active in developing your research network by independently seeking new collaborators?

7. Are you seeking collaborators from diverse disciplines?

8. Who are the external partners you may want to consider collaborating with?

9. How do you build successful academic collaborations?

For more insights and links on collaboration, please see the Think Further resource: sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead/collaboration
**Industry:**

1. Do you attend industry-linked events or university-wide workshops/ events on innovations, enterprise and commercialisation?

2. Have you developed your knowledge and understanding about commercialisation, intellectual property, patenting etc.?

3. Do you network with industry representatives at internal and external workshops and conferences?

4. Have you considered the commercial potential of your research and explored ways to exploit this?

5. Have you researched potential industry collaborators working in your field or opportunities for research funding with an industry collaborator?

6. Have you considered how your research design could generate IP and who can help support you with this?

**Policy makers:**

1. How can your research affect national policy?

2. Do you attend policy-related events?

3. Would taking part in a POSTnote competition or policy internship support your development?
PROFILE & VISIBILITY

1. Where are you listed on the University’s webpage?
2. Do you have a personal webpage/blog describing your research interests and expertise?
3. Do you have a short video describing your research interests? Where could this be displayed? (e.g. email signature, website, Kaltura etc.)
4. How do you engage people with your research using social media?
1. How many students have you supervised/ mentored formally and informally? (e.g. UG, Masters students, summer projects, PhD students) Are you discussing with your PI your approach to the supervision of students?

2. Are you proposing possible projects for students in your research group?

3. What types of teaching opportunities do you have in your department and have you discussed these with your PI? Could you diversify the teaching portfolio that you have?

4. Could you negotiate preparing and giving a lecture on your PI’s UG/ Masters course?

5. How do you engage in discussion with your PI about their approach to teaching? Could you shadow some of their lectures, discuss how they are setting up exam papers and issues with marking?

6. Would you consider setting up a journal club or study support for UG/ Masters students?

7. What are the teaching opportunities outside your department/ University (e.g. becoming a tutor on Open University courses, teaching specific techniques at summer school)?

8. Do you have understanding and knowledge of curriculum development, marking or processes of external course evaluation? How could you develop such understanding? Are there opportunities for discussions/shadowing in your department?
9. Are you seeking to gain a formal teaching accreditation such as The Sheffield Teaching Assistant, Higher Education Academy, or other types of teaching qualification?

10. Do you keep a log of feedback provided to you by students?
Seminars

- Are you making suggestions of external speakers for departmental seminars?
- Do you (co-)organise a seminar series?

Committees

- Are you involved in a departmental/ Faculty committee (e.g. researcher association, Athena Swan)?
- Are you aware of the different committees in your department?
- Do you attend departmental meetings?

Research Management

- What do you know about research budgets and managing research funding? What do you need to know? Who can help you to develop a better awareness of financial and resource management of grants etc.?
SET for Success (the Roberts’ Report) Recommends a researcher spend **10 days per annum** on professional development activities

A Concordat to support the career development of researchers was launched by the government in 2011 in response to the Roberts’ Report. This has the support of Universities UK, and Research Councils UK. The University of Sheffield subscribes to uphold the Concordat principles. The Concordat sets out 7 guiding principles including the recognition of a researcher’s personal career development (Principle 4) and a researcher’s shared responsibility (with managers) to engage with their own development.

**Access the Concordat here:**
Where can I get further support?
Professional Development programmes available at the University of Sheffield

The **Think Ahead programme** is accessible to all researchers, offering comprehensive training and development opportunities to support your career progression.

**Researcher Portal**: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/)

**Book here**: [lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#TA](http://lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#TA)

**Think Further coaching prompts**: [sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead](http://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thinkahead)

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**Sheffield Teaching Assistant (LeTS)**

[www.shef.ac.uk/lets/cpd/sta](http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/cpd/sta)

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**Skills Seminars in the Doctoral Development Programme**

[ris.dept.shef.ac.uk/skills_seminars/](http://ris.dept.shef.ac.uk/skills_seminars/)

**DDP Portal**: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ddpportal/home](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ddpportal/home)

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**Staff Development Programme** - online resources and workshops coordinated by Human Resources

**Development Everywhere**: [www.shef.ac.uk/hr/sld/developmenteverywhere](http://www.shef.ac.uk/hr/sld/developmenteverywhere)

**The Sheffield LEADER**

[www.shef.ac.uk/hr/sld/sheffieldleader](http://www.shef.ac.uk/hr/sld/sheffieldleader)

**Workshop bookings**: [lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#](http://lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#)
Mentoring will supply you with professional guidance to help support you through stages of your research career and into your next position, whether in the academic environment or in one of hundreds of other career paths open to researchers.

Your mentor will be a member of academic staff outside your department. All of our mentors are trained and experienced in helping researchers to take control of their career through established mentoring and coaching techniques.

**Mentoring can help you:**

- Understand your options
- Find creative ways of dealing with a difficult person or situation
- Plan your career development
- Discuss Fellowships
- Balance your workload
- Improve your confidence
- Raise your profile as a researcher
- Make new contacts and networks

For more information go to: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/mentoring](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/mentoring)
Don’t forget to take a break now and then. Think Ahead offers regular opportunities to get away from your lab/desk at lunchtime and chat to other researchers while taking part in a relaxing activity. Book via LMS: [lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#TA](lms.shef.ac.uk/index.php#TA)

**RESEARCHER NETWORKS**

More info here: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/wellbeing/networks](www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/wellbeing/networks)

Visit the Researcher Wellbeing pages for even more resources: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/wellbeing](www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/wellbeing)
This guide was produced by the Think Ahead Researcher Professional Development Team