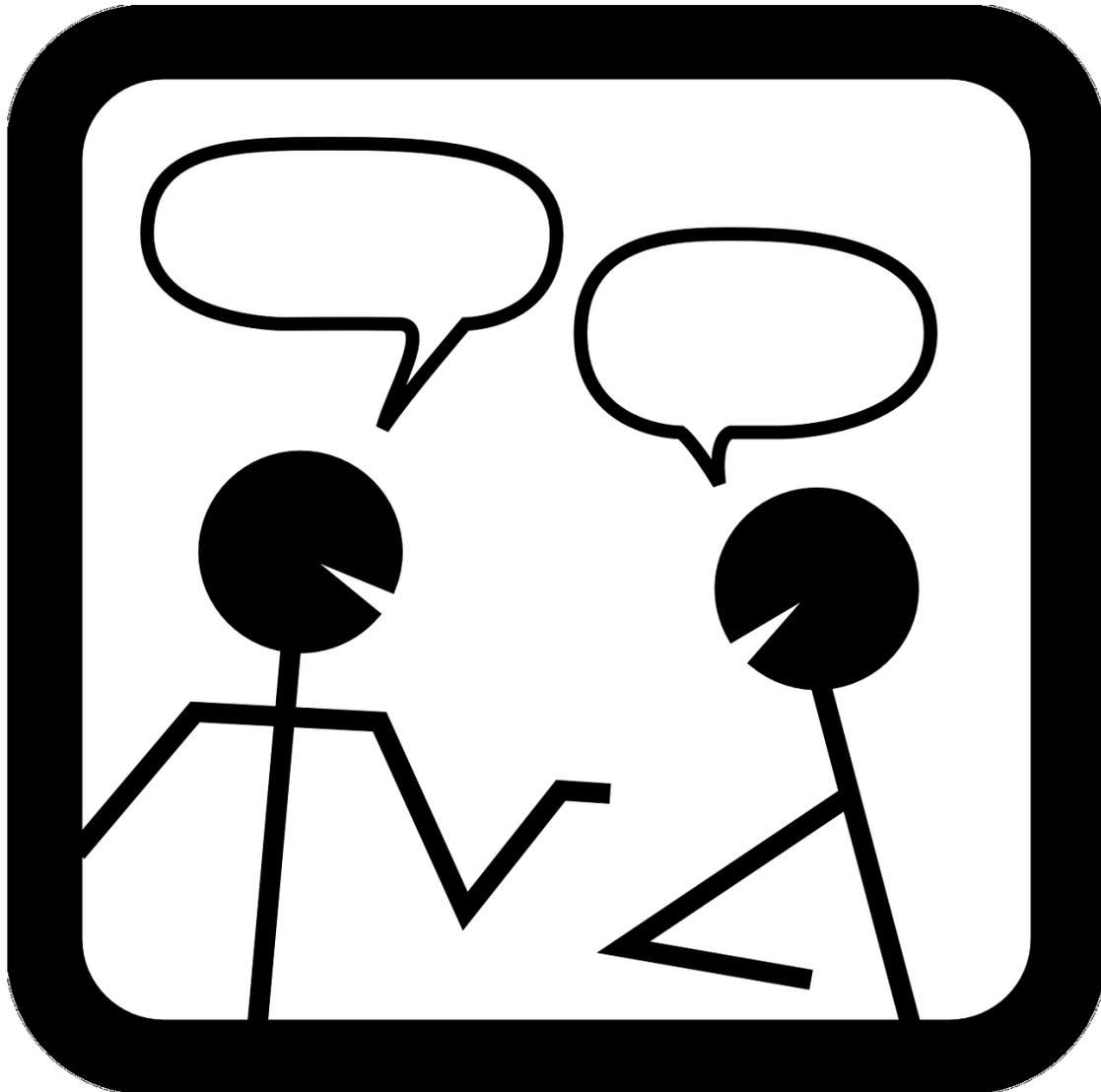


# Career Conversations with your PI



Online Resource

This document is intended to help you prepare for a career conversation with your Principal Investigator (PI) / Supervisor.

Structured meetings tend to be effective meetings so it's important that you think about what you want from the meeting.

*Are there specific goals that you want to achieve?*



It can be useful to plan a meeting agenda so that your PI can gain a sense of the topics to discuss and what you want the meeting to focus on.

## Preparation before the meeting: Key areas to think about



<i>What are the elements of your postdoc that you enjoy the most?</i>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
<i>What do you enjoy the least?</i>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Generate a list** for each, being as specific as possible. Then take a look at the lists:

- Are there any themes?
- Could these align with a particular career?
- What would that career be?



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## Research these roles:

<p>What are the job requirements? <i>(Make sure you know what these are, not just what you think they are – don't rely on hearsay!)</i></p>	
<p>What are the key skills required? <i>(Can you find any job descriptions to generate a list of skills from?)</i></p>	
<p>What would a typical day look like?</p>	
<p>Where is the role located?</p>	
<p>Think of your network <i>(Do you know anyone who is in that role? If you don't, do you have a contact who may be able to help? Take them for a coffee – ask them what they love/hate about their role.)</i></p>	
<p>What achievements or experience will you need in your CV to secure a job with your preferred employer/s?</p>	



You should be considering more than one career option, ideally you should have at least two options that you are interested in, so do the research into these roles too.



### Questions to think about:

- Have you thought about what you want to achieve during your time in this post at Edinburgh?
- Have you looked at the [IAD training brochure](#) to identify development opportunities?
- What are your career goals for the next year?
- Have you made a Personal Development Plan? (The Open University have a short video that explains the [Personal Development Planning](#) process and highlights how it can be used).
- Have you taken responsibility for career planning ([the Institute of Academic Development Careers Consultant can assist with career planning issues](#))
- Have you [assessed your skills](#) development and set further goals?
- How can your supervisor help? Have you used any of your 10 days professional development allowance?
- Have you engaged with any training and development opportunities?
- Have you begun to develop and expand your networks (within/outside academia)?
- If you wish to stay within academia, are you aware of any opportunities?
- Have you made contact with the [Edinburgh Research Office \(ERO\)](#) regarding suitable funding opportunities that you might be eligible to apply for?
- Have you kept your [CV up to date](#)?
- Based on your research and what you have achieved so far, where are the gaps in your CV?
- What [skills will you need to develop to improve](#) your employability at the end of your postdoc contract?
- Where will you find development opportunities?
- How will your current contract help you achieve your plans?
- Who would it be helpful to talk to?
- How will you use your 10 days to fill the gaps?
- How soon do you want to organise a follow up meeting with your PI (be realistic)?
- Have you any questions that you haven't been able to find the answer to?

### Questions to ask your PI:

- Is it possible to undertake any additional responsibilities within your role? (teaching / supervision)
- Could you shadow a colleague to learn more about another area or specific research techniques?
- Can they provide clarification on areas for development?
- Are they aware of any conferences / beneficial training opportunities?
- Are they able to assist with providing a Mentor (professional contacts)? The university also runs a Mentoring Scheme – Mentoring Connections ([Mentoring | The University of Edinburgh](#)).
- Are they aware of any networks / societies that would be beneficial to attend or join?
- Have they reviewed your CV?

Reflections / Notes



*This resource was written by Eleanor Hennige, the IAD's Research Staff Careers Consultant supporting fixed-term research staff at the University with their career planning and options. Eleanor runs our 1:1 career development consultations, she delivers our suite of career workshops and works with Schools/Research Staff Societies on career specific events and workshops.*

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