

## **Episode 3 - Research identity - What's 'normal' in a PhD?**

### **Podcast: automated transcript**

Welcome along to today's podcast talking about developing your research and professional profile and how to build that name for yourself in your field. My name's Dr Debbie Smith, and I'm the Doctoral Academy for FBMH's academic lead for student experience. I'm here today with some guests and I'm going to let them introduce themselves in a moment. But today particularly we want to really talk about and start thinking about how to build your research and professional profile and how that should be thought about and initiated quite early on in that PGR journey, and we're going to talk today. We're going to hear some different experiences from PGRs currently on that journey and some with quite good, big research professional profiles and we'll hear a little bit more about that and also hear a bit more from the University side, as well in terms of what support there is available for PGR's here at the University of Manchester. We will start by letting our guests introduce themselves today.

My name's Erin Pallot and I'm going into my third year of my Immunology PhD and I currently run the Research Hive PGR Blog.

Hi, my name is Annet Nakkazi a Ugandan and I am currently a second year PhD student and working on cognitive decline in brain cancer survivors and I am also the founder of Rural Great Mind the Scholarships, that are offered to primary kids in rural primary schools in my region. That's so there you go.

Hi, my name is Sarah Ashworth and I'm part of the Research Development Team and within our team one of the things, we can help with is how to raise your research profile.

Brilliant, thank you very much. There are lots of things there that I want to follow up from you all there. But I think you will answer it actually, in our first question. If you don't mind, can I just launch in with our first nice open question really and I just

wondered if you could please tell me about your experiences of building your own research or professional profile or helping others.

Yes, I can. can start with sort of a tangent on when I decided it was important to build your own research profile and when I realised you can gain quite a lot from it. When I started my PhD I noticed even on the same floor as you a lot of people didn't know each other's names and I really didn't want to just be a nameless PhD student down the hall to people. I'm interested in science communication and public engagement, so, I started looking for opportunities straightaway on how to get involved in sort of making a name for myself and making sure I'm not just again a nameless student. The first thing I noticed in my emails was a blog run by PGRs recruiting writers, and I thought that's perfect. I need some good practice in writing and I've only got practice in writing lab reports for my undergraduate degree. So yes, I joined this blog as a writer. And the first thing I did was I wrote about my research topic, mucus. So, I wrote about that as a fun blog piece about evolution some fun facts, and then I just published that and I didn't think much more about it soon after, so yeah a bit of a tangent, but it definitely gets important. There was a conference held about mucus proteins. So that's sort of like my field. I didn't go personally as I was just a first year I didn't have any data yet but someone brought up my name and someone there at the conference sort of a big PI in the field said, I recognise that name. I read her article and I really liked it. And so, then it was like wow, so I wrote just for this little uni blog and suddenly people in my field already have heard of me and they know my name and so that's when I started, I took over leading the blog and now I really want to help other people get the opportunity to start putting their name out there and have their name attached to something that's important in their own field.

Okay, Erin please can you just tell me a little bit about that? Because you mentioned the Research Hive earlier and then you've just been talking about the blog is that the same thing?

Yes, so that's the blog I'm running as the Research Hive so I've taken over as the editor and we really want it to be open tool for all PGRs in FBMH or even the wider University

to have a go an open chance to have a go at writing and science communication as they can write about their own research or anything they are passionate about the PGR journey. So, it's completely open way to do that. There's no time pressure. There's no experience required. So, it's just something I want to make our PGRs aware of.

Where can they find out information about that if they are interested?

Yes, so I regularly send out emails with updates in the Doctoral Academy bulletin, but also our website is just Manchester Research Hive.wordpress.com. So, it's quite easy to find, we're also on Twitter at UoMHive so yeah, so we're all over the place. So, search emails that you definitely will have seen me emailing about it constantly.

Brilliant, thank you for that detail around your experience and I'm talking about mucus. That's always that's always fun to do. Thank you very much. Annet over to you. I think your experience is slightly different?

Oh, yeah, I wasn't really a social media person, but when you get the idea of supporting maybe other people, you need help. So that's when I noticed that I need to build my audience. When I was in Japan. I did my bachelor's degree in Japan in 2020. Was it 2020 don't remember so I went to Uganda for an internship. And then I visited this school where well, I just noticed that the school was really poor condition. So as well, when I go back to Japan, I will talk about this with my academic advisor and see what we can do. So, we did a fundraising for that school, but then I noticed that I can't be doing a fundraising all the time. So, I decided to start a YouTube channel and I think so many people have known me through YouTube but apart from that, if I'm talking about academia I've mainly known people through LinkedIn and Twitter and personally emailing them or messaging them after reading their papers. So, once I know the field that I want to be in, I look at the people who are there and then I just messaged them. I approached them directly and you know, I've been lucky enough that the people that I do reach out to they respond to me, and maybe being filmed and featured on various websites when I was in Japan. I was featured at various websites when I was at Oxford. I did my masters at Oxford University Wolfson College. I was featured there the Department of Oncology. Where I was featured their videos of myself on YouTube. So

many people have gotten to know me from various sources. That's how my profile has been built, but maybe mainly by YouTube and maybe Tiktok definitely, I could have well, yeah, I also have some people who are following who are researchers on Tiktok were following me but, mainly Twitter and LinkedIn.

Okay. Thank you so much. So, Twitter and LinkedIn particularly, like you said are there for academic research aspects, but obviously you mentioned other things, they mentioned Tiktok, you mentioned YouTube and you talked about them in your professional kind of capacity as well. I wonder if you could just tell us a little bit more about them how I mean people like me might be thinking. Wow. How do you TikTok to do this, to build your profile.

Let's be honest, Tiktok is one of the most successful platforms. If you want to promote something, you know, as a person who needs an audience. You look through various platforms and see what works for you. For me Tik tok is the best apart from LinkedIn. I don't know why, but I am learning that, so many people find Tiktok easy to use, compared to other platforms. So, I noticed that if I need an audience, I need to create content that can easily go viral on Tiktok, then after I kind of shift my audience from Tiktok to YouTube. Because, when I started my YouTube Channel, I didn't have a lot of audience. I struggled to get 1,000 subscribers. I think it took me about two years because I remember I started in February 2020 and I got 1,000 subscribers. When I became active on Tiktok in 2022 of June, that's about two years, right? And right now, in a span of just one year. I have 5,000 subscribers, which is about 4,000 subscribers extra. So Tiktok has been so great to me. But, I think it depends on what you're promoting because if I'm talking about articles to read or other academic stuff, Tiktok is not the best for me. But other things promoting business, t-shirts these Tiktok is the best, but if I'm talking about academia scholarships opportunities and all those things, I go to LinkedIn or Twitter. But LinkedIn is the best for me regarding that. So, each platform has its own things for me.

Can you tell me a bit more, before we hear about what the University maybe can do to support us with that. Can you just tell us a little bit more than about how you use

LinkedIn and Twitter for that academic presence, that academic profile that you just kind of mention there?

On LinkedIn, I make videos. For example, how to write a good CV. Giving you my CV as one of the examples, because I basically read my CV, my personal statements out loud. So, I make them into a video and then I publish the videos on YouTube. So, what I do, I just copy the links from YouTube. I take them to LinkedIn. So, if people wanna see my CV, go to my tuition and watch. I get views, I gain, you gain, you get it and for Twitter as well. I just posted the links there, but I think they have a limit on Twitter there. So, what I do, I just get a picture of it, then I put the link in the text. That's how I kind of tried promote myself.

Brilliant. Thank you, before we move on. Can I just ask you said there, you gain, I gain. What do you gain, do you think professionally and academically from all of those kind of things you've mentioned, there around your research or your academic profile? Well apart from money.

Well, I do love money, but not so much. I'm not a money shark. So, on YouTube, when you get 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours you get monetized. So my channel was monetized in 2022 October. The money from YouTube is not that much, if you don't have a wide audience that views your content, but at least I'm glad that I'm getting known, because sometimes it's about making yourself seen. So even if I don't answer much from YouTube, I'm getting noticed and there are some, not gigs but opportunities that I've gotten because of my content, of because of what I do. I don't have such a big audience yet, but I'm glad that opportunities are now; you know coming in for example recently. I was approached by people from Room Past Media BAFTA, you know those guys, that I think they give out awards. They wanted to film. They wanted to do a film where, they wanted a Ugandan who could do it with a comedian, you know Romesh the comedian. I love Romesh. Oh, my goodness yeah, I didn't know him. So, when they told me hey Annet, we would like you to co-host this thing with Romesh, I was like what who is he? Is he my fan or something? Then I noticed that oh my goodness, I should be his fan. Ha ha ha. He's so famous on Tiktok. Hahahaah, you know, I've been featured by

other great people for example, as team ID. They also in media they are featuring a variety of all the feature great scientists around the world and the major reason why I started YouTube channel, is not to earn so much from it. But as long as I can get the amount that can run the committee projects that I'm running and currently we are getting that amount.

Brilliant, thank you so much. Obviously, I'm going to come back to both of you in a moment, to follow that up a little bit more but I just wondered obviously, we've heard there Sarah we've heard Twitter, we've heard YouTube, we've heard Tiktok, we've had blogs. We've had LinkedIn, there's a lot of different things out there. Ways that our current PGR could think about starting to build their own research and professional profiles. I just wonder from the side of the University. What's your experience of supporting PGRs with that journey and what is there available to support them here?

Thanks Debbie. There's all sorts. So, we run a workshop on social media and how to use social media in your research. So, if you want to come along to that, then you can find out more information and we use case studies like you're hearing today from Annet and Erin. It depends what you want to do really, because I find personally, there are certain different types of social media that I use, in different ways. So, I love LinkedIn it works really well for me, because you can repost content and you can comment on it and I really like doing that. Whereas Twitter. I haven't quite engaged quite the same way, but see some people do really well. So, I think it's finding the right social media for you and coming along to one of these sessions give you an idea of some of the different options. Also, what you can do is, I will quite often sit down with people and look at their LinkedIn profiles particularly. If you're getting to a point where you're wanting to build your network or you're thinking about applying for jobs, then actually LinkedIn could be really valuable, both for finding opportunities, but also researching about different career opportunities as well. I've got another question to post to all of you actually. We talked a little bit about your own experiences, but I just wonder what does a successful profile look like to you? Guess it's not really measurable as the kind of sort of measuring fame but within your own field, so I guess it really depends what you want to build a profile for. Some people and maybe very research-focused. So maybe you want to focus

on getting yourself out to conferences and being invited to speak at events and talks for me. Personally, I'm really interested in science communication. So, for me to have a successful profile is to have my name associated with things I can be really proud of and things that I want to be involved in. So, when people hear my name, maybe they know me for my blog or they know that I'm very involved in science communication projects like Pint of Science, as I'm going to be on the co-ordination team this year. Just having what's associated with your name. So, for me a successful profile would be people know me as a science communicator or someone who's really keen to be involved in those sorts of projects.

For our budding scientists listening who want to communicate their things. Can you just tell us a little bit more about Pint of Science?

Pint of Science is a charity organisation and they run events in pubs where scientists will deliver talks in pubs and then members of the public are invited to join to learn about different areas of science, in a casual setting. What PGR volunteers do is they look for speakers. They organise events. You get to host your own events, you find your own venue, design your own topics, and then you get to go to them and watch lots of members of the public get really excited about various topics. So last year, as I'm interested in mucus biology. I organised one about mucus and it was so great to see people who've never heard about it before other than the context, you know, maybe having a cold, and just getting really excited about the idea of just how gross and wonderful it is. Where can people find out more about Pint of Science? They definitely send around emails. They have a website Pint of Science, but they'll be a call out soon. So, look out for your emails. They'll be looking for volunteers.

Annet, what does a successful profile look like to you?

For me, as long as, I am known for a specific set of things. Even if it's one. I love it when I'm known for something. I would be sad if I'm not known for anything, I'm just there. So, I want to define myself with a specific set of skills, that specific people need from me and I would say that it's important for you to know your audience. So, when you ask something, you know, you'll get it from it. Some people define a successful profile with

numbers, for example, if you have a big following then you are successful. But honestly a big following without a response, if you ask something from them to me, it's kind of nothing. So I rather have a small following, but when I ask them, hey guys, let's reach this goal. Let's have this by the end of this month and then we reach that, for me that's like success.

Both of you have talked there about what that successful profile looks like and you both talked about wanting to be known for something. You know, that's your words there and obviously, Erin talked about being known for you know, your mucus work. How can people listening who maybe haven't quite worked out what that thing is that they want to be known for help to help themselves to work out what that is that they want to be known for?

It's just important to try different things. Look out for opportunities that maybe don't involve too much time. So, you can give something a try and every time you get involved in something. It's something to develop a skill, something to put on your CV, so it's never not worth being involved in something. So maybe you're not sure what you want to go into yet. Maybe you don't know if you want to be more research driven or if you want to be, if you want to go into industry, so I'd say you just need to get involved and just give things a go and remember that there's other things to do. To take advantage of a PhD other than just produce data in your lab. I would think about taking some good time, understanding who you are and how your personality fits into what you want to do, because if you don't know what makes you happy or the things you value you'll start something and after some time you'll have to give up on it because it doesn't well, it's good try things. But I love focusing on something and take it on. When I started building my profile, LinkedIn sharing my content about writing CVs, personal statements and then sharing scholarship opportunities. I knew that yes, it's good. I'm getting known, but it's helping somebody else. After a few months, I get messages from students. Hey Annet. Thank you so much for sharing this. your personal statement was really useful, your essays for this scholarship were really helpful. So, I like that it keeps me going. So, understanding what makes you happy and having you know major reason why you're doing it would be the best thing you will never know. Sometimes you don't know the



end goal of it, or you don't know the main aims until you start doing something. You never get the excellent ideas before you start, but once you start ideas will keep on coming. It's good to be around people who give you more energy. So, I love it when people around me ask about what I do, because it shows that all these what you're doing. So, if they see what you do, it's likely that so many people are watching it, but they just don't talk about it.

But while we're still talking about what a successful profile looks like. I just like to hear from Sarah in terms of you know, from the University perspective and from your experience of working with many PGRs and academics across the University. What from your perspective does a successful profile look like? Is there anything to add to what we've just heard?

There I think is probably just building on what you've already heard there because it depends ultimately what success looks like for you and what you want your profile to do. As Annet was saying interaction is really important on social media. After all the clue is in the name. It's thinking through, how can I encourage people to interact?

Sometimes I hear from researchers who say well, I don't want to join that particular social media because it seems like it's all about bragging about things and saying, oh I'm so brilliant about this and so we reassess and say, okay. Well, yes, sometimes there's an element of that but, actually there's a lot that you can comment on. So perhaps where you don't have an idea for your perhaps for yourself from your own research, but there might be something going on in your fields that you could comment on and so you can build, start to build a profile, start to build a following that way and that can be quite successful. And then once you build your confidence using a certain social media platform, then that's when you can perhaps start to build some of your own content. And so, I think that's sort of you see that success come quite gradually. I think from a formal point of view. A lot of the assessments I might do on someone's social media is around LinkedIn when they're applying for jobs, you know, there's good practice things that you can do. There are ways in which you can make sure you've got keywords in your profiles, so that when people are using search algorithms, they can see all the key skills that you're looking for. I often talk with people on a one-to-one basis about how

they can do that most effectively. We also run sessions that you can go to, either through research and development or through the careers service or through the library. On how you can sort of optimise your social media profiles. So those three places that you mentioned there, the library, career service and research and development. Are they the main three places then any PGRs listening to this who would want some of those support or training that you've mentioned there should go to their websites or is there another way they can find out? Definitely the careers service can very much help with social media with regards to improving your career opportunities, the library have got a great suite of reading and social media support through their My Research Essentials program and Research and Development run both the social media session, but also sessions on how you can write for the Public. Also it's worth checking out what's going on with our public engagement at Manchester as well. Because they've got a lot of really interesting materials around, how best to communicate to diverse audiences.

I've got a personal question? I'd like to ask you all actually, here in particular what Sarah just said the word, the words confidence came up, a moment ago and you also kind of said about bragging and I just wondered from a from an academic, as an academic who's not very good on social media or advertising herself in any form of way because of that fear Of, sometimes, I wonder how we can appear confident but not going over into that like you said there, about that bragging and I just wondered if anyone had any advice for anyone listening in terms of that balance between the confidence that you're showing in these things and maybe not wanting to appear like you are bragging.

It's always hard to get into the habit of being proud of your achievements as no one wants to come across as a bragger and this is actually very relevant as the Research Hive Blog, we've just started a series about this. I'm sure there's going to be a better name eventually, but I'm calling it Shout Your Success For Now. What we want PGRs to do, is to write in about something they're involved in. Something that they're proud of. It could be a prize. It could be a conference they went to. A society they're involved in or maybe some work experience they've done. But the idea of that is to share things with other PGRs of what they could be getting involved in. So, I think when it comes to sort of

talking about your achievements, you want to do it in a way that's potentially showing other people, your peers what they could be doing. So that's the idea of the blog. That can be found on our blog as well. So, if I tell people I'm really proud I've got this writing opportunity, then other people know if they are interested in writing they can do it. So, I guess it's just about talking about your achievements in a way that's I suppose useful for other people, but it still really important to acknowledge your own achievements. And as long as you just don't keep going on about it, I think it's quite hard to come across as a major bragger and I don't think people should be too worried about that. It might be hard especially to a person who doesn't have advisers, because sometimes you know, life is just about you know, growth and learning. So sometimes you can say something and you think you are polite or humble, but another person is perceiving it, as rude because they're coming from different cultures. So, the best thing that I can say is be yourself and when I'm talking about something, I try to think about the other party because jealousy is, jealous is normal. I accepted it. It's no more and I think it's part of humanity. But, as long as you don't do it excessively. Life is so crazy, so dynamic, you might have it all now and tomorrow everything is gone. You don't even know how it happened, but everything is gone and honestly, if you don't celebrate yourself, who will? It's okay to go to sometimes celebrate as long as you don't celebrate every single day, because that's not realistic. But it's good for a bit your wins, you know. Brilliant, thank you so much. And I you know, I completely agree there. You know, I think across the board we aren't very good at celebrating like you said, the things that we are good at and celebrating the things we're proud of and celebrating those things that we achieve. And like hopefully from listening to this, people will get some tips and hints of how to be able to do that in some of the ways that you've been talking about there.

You mentioned there Annet having advisors and I think earlier you mentioned about supervisor and I just wondered how other people around us at University particularly, but around us more generally can help us or help PGRs with that building of their research or professional profile?

It's definitely important you have a supervisor whose supportive of what you want to do. So, my supervisor its well known. I love to go off, I call them my side quest. So, I'm

off doing a podcast today and I run my blog and I go off and do Pint of Science and as far as I'm aware, he's very supportive of that. My whole supervisory team are very aware that this is something that I'm passionate about. So, they're very supportive. It is a matter of fact that some people's supervisors are very data-driven and want people to stay in the lab. They want them to have sort of strict work hours, but you can speak to your advisor. And if you want to do other things it's very important to take control. This is your PhD, this is your time to develop the skills, you want to develop. To get involved in lots of things. As students we have the time and the opportunity to get involved in so much. So, you don't want to let the three or four years pass you by and you haven't had the time to get involved because you've just been so busy just doing whatever to please your supervisor. So, if you're not sure you're getting the right support in how you want to develop yourself professionally. You can speak to your advisor. You can speak to people in the Doctoral Academy as well. I do agree. I think it's good to be in proper communication in touch with your supervisor. If you two on the same plate things become a little bit and easier. So, I think that comes in with the taking the time to learn your supervisor. Well, sometimes just communicating is not enough but taking time just observing human being and understand who they are is really good, because sometimes you might ask. Hey I want to do this is good. They say yes, but if you look at the facial expressions or anything, you feel like mmmm. I don't think this person satisfied with my progress in the research. So, it's good to have some bit of emotional intelligence and try to find a balance of between what you do in the lab and what you enjoy doing. And definitely, if you want people to get involved in your work or how they can support to you from my understanding it's good to get them involved. Maybe by asking people to maybe, to give you some ideas on what you do and all of that. Oh actually, Erin, I'm planning to interview you. Looks like you have so much knowledge. So, I want to benefit from me. I published a video on YouTube they gain and then I get money. I benefit. Oh there we go. Maybe you can write for the blog as well in exchange. Yeah, we benefit from each other win-win.

There we go all about networking and talking about our gains, isn't it? Sarah anything you want to add to that in terms of you know, we've, you've talked about some of the

kind of departments and places within the University that can offer support and training and we've just started to talk there more individual about individual people the supervisors in particular. Is there anything you want to add to that for PGRs listening?

Yeah, definitely. So, I think it's worth having a look at the social media that you're perhaps interested in engaging with and seeing who's who, you know, really posting things that you're interested in and perhaps seeing if you can connect with them or follow them or you know, whatever the term is for that particular social media and have a look at good practice. So, see what they're doing, see how they engage with their audience and you know, when you've got a feel for what they're doing again, you could comment on it and you can start thinking about okay, how could I use some of those ideas in what I'm doing. So not necessarily copying but just sharing sharing good practice and you can have a look at what exists within your School, Faculty, Department because there are some great social media bloggers and posters and Twitterers or X'ers. I guess we have to call it now, but within the Faculty. So have a look and perhaps if you're not sure who they are, might be you could talk to your supervisors and advisors and perhaps say do you know anyone who's doing this sort of stuff within the Faculty. So that you can, my motto is you have to see it to be it. So, you know, if you can find people are doing stuff that you're interested in, that you want to mimic if you like. Then finding those people and the benefit of Manchester is it's a huge institution. So, there's probably somebody who can help you somewhere along the way. Plus, today we're here in the podcast suite which is part of Media Services. So, from a technical point of view, you can come and access support through Media Services and also, the Faculty has a great e-learning team as well. So, if you're not sure about how to use some of the equipment or you want to do something perhaps a little bit more ad hoc, then the e-learning team have got a great set of people in there who are always happy to help.

Brilliant. Thank you so much. I must say from a personal aspect. I said earlier. I don't engage at all, but I do have a personal Twitter / X accounts and I did exactly what you did, you know, I didn't really know what I should be tweeting, I want or putting out there. I knew what I wanted was just for academic / professional purposes, but I did exactly that. I followed some people that I knew were particularly big in my area of

psychology and I knew that they were kind of networking in the right ways and sending their messages out there from their research. I did that for a while. And as you said, then as I built my confidence up. I then put some kind of posts up of my own and tweets of my own and you know, like some of you had said earlier, some of the benefits that you get from that are actually huge. The amount of I think someone said earlier the amount of opportunities. I've seen come up, you know, like the events happening that I hadn't heard about if I hadn't have been on that social media platform. Also, then people seeing your newly published papers and things like that. So yeah, thank you for that advice. Following on from that really I just wondered, we've talked a little bit, Erin you talked about it earlier, but we've said about you know for PGRs to be engaging in things may be outside of their direct research or direct research teams, even activities, training things like that and I just wondered what things you had if you haven't already mentioned them being engaged in and what you kind of learnt from them.

As I've mentioned I do really enjoy my side quests. I've been involved. I've tried out quite a lot of things. So there's lots of different things to try. So, I've been a Graduate Teaching Assistant. So that's great as it's a teaching opportunity, you get some teaching skills, and that's especially great if you don't have too much time to spare or you're quite strict on your time to spare and you do get paid for that as well. I've joined the Brilliant Club. I've joined a new course called Join The Dots and I'll be mentoring undergraduate students as they come in this year. So mentoring is another great skill for the CV. So for me when I take up these opportunities, I just think of, what will I enjoy doing? What's fulfilling for me? And what will I get out of it? How would I summarise this on my CV? As ultimately that's what I'm using my PhD to think about what career I want and what are they going to find attractive, but also making sure it's things I enjoy doing. So, I love all my mentoring and teaching there's other things. So, organising a society that you could do events planning. You can get involved in some of the Pint of Science, again events planning, speaking to speakers, hosting an event. There's just so many things you could give have a go at and maybe you'll just find you really enjoy teaching or organising things. So, I definitely think, it's just worth just looking out for opportunities and giving them a try. But for me every time I engage in one of these opportunities, I

learn something new or I develop a skill. So, there's absolutely nothing. I've done where I'd say, it wasn't worth my time.

Brilliant. Thank you, because that's a really important point, isn't it? Because we've been talking about really the external facing profile of all of us or of PGRs at the moment and I think what you just identified there is more that internal facing growth isn't it and profile than you know, I say to all my PGRs and myself, as well as an academic. I maintain and keep up my CV throughout. You can't leave it because actually like you said you might engage in something like today doing a podcast, you learn a different skill or learn something about yourself. And unless you write that down in your CV with that evidence. It's very hard to remember that isn't it? So, I think that's really really important. Because as you say the PGR journey is about building yourself as a researcher as a potential academic or someone who's going to work out in industry or wherever it's about building that so keeping that note as well for you personally, but also for your CV, for future posters is really important. Annet, anything from you to add to that about activities and things that you've engaged in?

I applied to be a teaching assistant. I haven't heard from them yet. But when I was in Uganda, oh, yeah, if I do get it I'll be so happy because when I was in Uganda, I was a lecturer. So, after my master's degree, I went back to Uganda for one year and I was lecturing at Medical School. So, I really loved how various students see things and there's so many things that I learnt. The things that I did or say to my teachers when I was an undergrad and after being a lecturer I was like, oh, yeah this is how it feels like. So I wish I'd never asked for my scores from my teacher every after week because sometimes it's so so hard to mark all the students at once and submit their scores. But the most important thing that I learned from there, was that students see things differently and you will always get surprised by specific students who don't show you who they are in the class. So, I will love that. So, if I get this TA assistant to a teaching assistant thing, I think that would be really cool to know more about students. I want to be in academia. So, it will be really important for me to know more about students in this environment because my lecturing experience was in Uganda. That's really different from here. I will be really happy to do that. But what I can say regarding this is try to get

involved in things that contribute that contribute to your future career path because honestly, there are so many things that you can do, but if you don't want to be in academia things that about research might not be the best thing, but if you want to go and maybe media doing community science communication might be the best thing for you and you can't have time for every single thing. So, I think it would be good for you to try to decide what you want to do and then try to do things that can add knowledge or skills for your future career.

Brilliant, thank you. Sarah, anything to add to that at all?

Goodness. Where do I start? So, I often think of a PhD a bit like a research apprenticeship that terminology isn't widely used but if you think about an apprenticeship, it's very much a period of training. So, I think it's really about reminding yourself that is the period of training. So, try all the different things that you can do and what you can try. Goodness at Manchester it's like it's like being a child in a sweet shop, you know. You can pick a mix, you know, perhaps you like the liquorice and or perhaps you prefer the mints. Now, there's so many different things that you can do. Erin and Annet have explained some of the things they did. When I was a PhD student. I'm a biologist by backgrounds. So, when I was a PhD student, I did the Biotech Young Enterprise Scheme, which I really enjoyed. It's still going now 20 odd years on. That gave me an insight into how you could organise a biotech business. So how you could spin up a company in the different commercial aspects of a business. I did a PhD with not with the intention of staying in academia. So that was perfect for me. I also did quite a lot of professional development stuff, around I went to a residential grad school. So, I did three days of intensive careers stuff, which I absolutely loved. I appreciate it's not for everybody. But really enjoyed that. I also organised our departmental research seminars. So, I did that for a full year. It was sort of was that was the job of the second year PhD students, but I was the only second year PhD student. So therefore, I had to do it on my own. But it was great and actually those, some of those things were that were the instrumental in getting my first job after my PhD, because one of the things I needed to show was that I've done event organising and having organised a seminar series and I advertised it and booked rooms and done all the logistics of it was really



critical and I think at Manchester your spoilt for choice about opportunities, but as I think as Annet was just saying you can't do everything. So, it is about sort of picking and choosing those elements which are good for you. And if you struggle to do that, you can come and talk to us either in the Doctoral College or in Research and Development and we can help you, un pick some of those options.

There is like you say so much available isn't there? Sometimes it is that challenge of picking the right ones for you. I think we've spoken lots about communication haven't we in different ways, you know all of the social media platforms. We've talked about all of the experience's Pint of Science, writing for the blog, all involve communication in some ways isn't it. Some of those are us putting ourselves more out there like, you know speaking some of them writing. I just wonder if you have any advice for PGRs any of you, because they are very different aren't they, in communication and some people may feel more suited to one or the other?

Yeah, so I think you don't really know what suits you best until you've had a go. So, like I've said so obviously I'm more focused on the science communication side. I like writing for my blog, like getting involved in events. But again, I mentioned earlier for some people this can look like just making sure you always submit things to conferences, getting experience speaking. So, like in the University, we do loads of seminar series and I'm a representative for my division. So, we run a series inviting PGRs to speak, it can be quite a challenge to get people to speak. So, I think if you're thinking about staying in research, you just need to have a go. No one likes public speaking. I hate public speaking. I get so scared, but you can only get better with practice. So, it really is just putting yourself out there to have a go at opportunities. You might find a niche or something you're really good at. You might find out you're really good at presenting and seminars. I get told that I come across really confident and I'm stood there shaking. It's just practice. So, whenever there's a seminar series and they need a speaker. Sometimes I'll just go. Yeah, I'll sign myself up for it, before I can scare myself out of it. The advice is just have a go see what you're good at. What you actually enjoy. So that's also the main thing is, what you'll actually find fulfilling and what will help develop you into the career that you want to have. For me I think we're just different people. I am

flexible in thinking, but I'm not so flexible in changing things or when I do this, you know, some people are like, oh and I try so many things I wanna try this, I wanna try this, but, when I read about it, I don't like, I don't like it. I like it. I like it. So, I kind of I'm programmed in a way that I learn about myself, where I want to be, what it requires. Then I write a few things, that I think I need and then when opportunities come I'm going to go I need this. I need this, I need this. Well because I don't have so much experience it's hard to know what you might not need or need in the future. But I'm so, I think I'm rigid, that rigid that it's so hard for or me to change the bit to be flexible all try these tried. I'm not a person who loves trying so many things. It's good for me to just go for what I really want or what I think is good for me, but you know yourselves better and I think that's why I mentioned, it's good take time to know yourself. Honestly, whether you try to do so many things or few things. It doesn't really matter just you know, as long as things make you happy and you don't have to be under pressure to do so many things because you can die anytime. And if you're not a celebrity, you're going to be forgotten in five days honest. Let's be honest. So, take it slow and enjoy it. Enjoy the journey. There's no need to get stressed for no reason.

Thank you. I think that's a brilliant brilliant point because this journey for every single PGR is very very different isn't it? And like you said there, we are all different people and actually what works for one person doesn't work for another person and there is no kind of normal panned out PGR journey is there? It is about like both of you have said, either like Erin said, trying all these different things and finding out all or like you said Annet finding that one thing and sticking to that one thing that you like.

You know, everybody does have different ways of communicating and I think it's assessing what type of social media you want to use or how you want to communicate and choosing, you know, the most appropriate way to do it because quite often, you know, some of the things like Twitter where they limit the characters you can use it's got to be short and snappy. You want to use images or you want to use a video so that you're going to grab people's attention. So I'll look after social media outside of work, as well and work with quite a lot of retirees who just like to write about 500 words and post it on Facebook and I'm like we might just need to edit that a little bit to make it

work for that particular social media. So, it's understanding what the norms are of the social media that you're using and if you're struggling at all, then there's loads of resources that we've got online both through the libraries My Research Essentials and through Research and Development, that talk to you about how you can find different voices and also, how you go about different writing styles and different approaches to writing, if it's more formal about writing academic papers or posters or giving presentations again, got loads of resources around that as well. So, if you want to feel like there are a set of rules that you can follow or set of guidelines, perhaps, rather than rules and then there's stuff out there that you can use to help again, build your confidence before you find your own natural way of doing it.

Brilliant, thank you all very much. I'm going to do a little summary now of what I think we've kind of covered today and then if it's okay, I'll come to each of you to give one final piece of advice to PGRs listening to this in terms of building their research or professional profile. So, we've talked quite a lot today about different ways that either people in this room or people, other PGRs that we know of have built their research or their professional profile. We've talked about Twitter. We've talked about YouTube, we've talked about Tiktok. We talked about blogs, in particular the Research Hive. We've talked about LinkedIn, we've talked about Pint of Science. We've talked about getting involved with things like teaching positions, so that you can communicate and speak to people earlier on in their academic career. We've talked quite a bit about science communication and writing and then we've talked also about kind of that more visual or audio communication, as well through some of those platforms that we I just mentioned then. We've talked also about different audiences that come with those different kind of different platforms. We also talked about some of the benefits that PGRs may get from this and we've talked particularly about networking, knowing about opportunities. We've talked about money. We've talked about finding out more around you in terms of your discipline and career paths as well. We also talked a bit about how PGR's can think about what they want to be known as and what they can kind of what they what content they put on those outward facing platforms. We talked a little bit about the role of the supervisor, having advisors around you. We've talked and we've

heard particularly from Sarah about the role of the University in terms of supporting and training PGR's along this journey of building that research profile. We talked a little bit about confidence and bragging kind of that kind of balance of how we can feel confident but not feel maybe like we are bragging about ourselves and we particularly talked about how we do need to be proud of our achievements and show those things. And I think the thing I wanted to end my summary on was that it was very clear hearing from all of you, the passion that you all had for your topics for your interest and I think you know that was really clear to me that that was key to this kind of building that profile. Key in getting that message out there. And you know, I really hope that PGRs who listen to this have that and can find that passion and that really then build on that in terms of getting that message out building themselves and getting their name out there as well. So that's what I think we talked about today and I've just summarized it there.

If I could just come along to each being you could just give one final piece of advice thinking about PGRs listening to this who are thinking, right Okay, I've heard this, this sounds amazing. I do need to get onto this. I need to build a successful research or professional profile. What's your one piece of advice?

The main piece of advice is to generally just be proactive. Everything I've been involved in so far, so the blog, Pint of Science, Join the Dots, Brilliant Club, every single one of those opportunities has been open to all PGRs, they've not been specific to me. It can be hard to look through all of our emails every day. We get hundreds a day but everything I've done so far that isn't just lab work has been open to everyone. So you do need to be proactive in looking out for these opportunities.

I would say try to show yourself out because if you don't nobody is going to do that and sometimes you might think oh, maybe somebody else will share my profile. Nobody's going to do that. So, you'll have to do it yourself. And even if you're doing something promoting something you'll have to work for some good time for you to get known for other people to start promoting you. So do something that bring happiness to you, keep doing it and learn your audience.

I guess my final piece of advice is you don't have to do this alone. So, you've got lots of support around you, your supervisory team, the doctoral College, researcher and development, public engagement, the library, there's lots of people with lots of really good help and advice out there. So, if you're interested, but you're not too sure where to start just ask somebody and will point you in the right direction.

Brilliant, thank you all very very much.