



## Demystifying academia with Prosper – April 2024

Resources and links for University of Liverpool

### Overview of pursuing a career in academia

Read the sections relevant to you of the Prosper page outlining careers in academia

<https://prosper.liverpool.ac.uk/postdoc-resources/explore/academia/>

### Range of UK higher education institutions and research organisations

Consider the differences between different higher education institutions (HEIs) within the UK, some are more research intensive, some are more teaching intensive. Which would best suit you?

Postdocs and researchers are also employed in sectors other than HEIs, for example you can see the current list of research organisations approved by UKRI here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukri-endorsement-employing-or-hosting-institutions-global-talent-visa/ukri-list-of-approved-research-organisations> and to explore other sectors take a look at the Prosper career clusters <https://prosper.liverpool.ac.uk/postdoc-resources/explore/career-clusters/> or have a look at some postdoc case studies for inspiration <https://prosper.liverpool.ac.uk/postdoc-resources/explore/former-postdoc-case-studies/> (including links to lots of other resources besides Prosper's own).

### Sources of funding and support – relevant to any UK HEI

- Typical funders of your research area; examples include UKRI <https://www.ukri.org/> , European Research Council <https://www.ukro.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/erc/> , Wellcome <https://wellcome.org/>
- Charities may also fund research so think broadly
- Some companies fund research too; for example Carlsberg were one of the funders of a seagrass project (along with WWF-UK) <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/research-highlights/sustainable-futures-energy-environment/seagrass/>
- Ask colleagues, your PI or line manager who they've been funded by (or find out on their institutional webpages)
- Find out if your institution has any workshops on grant writing or internal peer reviewing groups





- Find out if your institution hosts events with funders – they'll often come around to talk about particular schemes or funding calls

### Source of funding and support at the University of Liverpool

This list isn't exhaustive, we're just providing some pointers to get you started.

- Research Professional <https://www.researchprofessional.com> (and training on this <https://staff.liverpool.ac.uk/research/research-impact-strategy/research-systems-support/research-professional/> )
- Institutional funding pots; examples include Derby fellowships <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/humanities-and-social-sciences/research/training-and-support/postdoc-fellowship/derby-fellowships/#:~:text=The%20Faculty%20of%20Humanities%20and,against%20a%20high%2Dquality%20threshold> and University of Liverpool Research Fellowships <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/research/fellowships/>
- Research and Partnerships Development – Peer Review College <https://staff.liverpool.ac.uk/research/rpd/peer-review-college/> for a range of funding schemes
- Funding <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/staff-resources/funding/>

There may be seed funding (a small pot of money made available for small projects, for things like proof of concept, for example, or around a specific theme like knowledge exchange) available within your school or department, ask your line manager or peers to find out if anything like this is available.

### Academic hierarchy and titles

Role titles and hierarch in HEIs can be unclear and often varies between institutions (and countries). See <https://www.discoverphds.com/advice/doing/uk-academic-titles#:~:text=A%20'chair'%20is%20a%20position,of%20a%20typical%20Professor%20role>. and <https://academicpositions.com/career-advice/uk-academic-job-titles-explained#:~:text=Professors%20hold%20a%20%E2%80%9Cchair%E2%80%9D%20in,of%20high%20levels%20of%20achievement>. for more information.

### Check your assumptions about careers in academia

You may think you know what being an academic entails, are your assumptions based on fact? Check with a peer, mentor or line manager.

You may want to read something like the presentation here

[http://www.vandermeerlab.org/MvdM\\_SoYouWantToBeAnAcademic.pdf](http://www.vandermeerlab.org/MvdM_SoYouWantToBeAnAcademic.pdf) or see





some case studies of PIs <https://prosper.liverpool.ac.uk/manager-of-researchers-resources/boosting-postdoc-career-development/real-life-examples/> to get a feeling of what it's like.

Don't overlook academic adjacent roles <https://phd-careers.co.uk/2023/04/17/academic-adjacent-careers-what-are-they-and-how-do-i-find-them/> .

### Some final references you may find handy to read

- Some real experiences post-PhD researchers had learning to navigate grant funding McAlpine, L. 2020. Success? Learning to Navigate the Grant Funding Genre System. Journal of Research Administration, 51, 10-31. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1254040.pdf>
- Ten simple rules to becoming a PI, Tregoning, J. S. & McDermott, J. E. 2020. Ten Simple Rules to becoming a principal investigator. PLOS Computational Biology, 16, e1007448. <https://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1007448>
- Have a think about how you'd define success in academia and what career success looks like for you with the three following articles;
  - Sutherland, K. A. 2017. Constructions of success in academia: an early career perspective. Studies in Higher Education, 42, 743-759 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1254040.pdf>
  - Roostervane's blog on how to be successful <https://roostervane.com/how-to-be-successful/>,
  - and lastly, Walkowicz, L. M. 2018. Choose Your Own Adventure: Developing A Values-Oriented Framework for Your Career <https://arxiv.org/abs/1805.09963>

