

Imperial College London



Plan to Succeed

A successful career begins at Imperial



POSTDOC AND FELLOWS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Tailored support and development for postdocs, fellows and clinicians

Congratulations!

The [Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre \(PFDC\)](#) would like to welcome you to Imperial College London and congratulate you on your new appointment. As a member of staff at a world-leading research institute, you have access to a broad range of support and development opportunities, including those provided by the PFDC.

Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre (PFDC)

At the PFDC we support you from the start to the finish of your postdoc journey at Imperial and help you to make the most of your time as a postdoc – to develop you both professionally and personally.

The PFDC provides a bespoke programme of development opportunities that focus on multiple pathways for success. This programme includes:

- [Workshops and courses](#)
- [Individual support](#)
- [Networks](#)
- [Development opportunities](#)
- [Online resources](#)

Imperial is dedicated to the support and development of all its research staff, as highlighted in its [Strategic Plan for 2015-2020](#). It is particularly committed to the development of its Early Career Researchers. This is evidenced by its commitment, since 2012, to the [HR Excellence in Research Award](#). The College is also a signatory of the '[Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#)'.

This booklet

This welcome booklet is designed to help you make the most of your time as a postdoc by providing you with information about the support and development opportunities available to you and by introducing you to the PFDC. Taking advantage of all the resources available to you will help maximise your chances of succeeding in your chosen career.

The [PFDC website](#) has been designed to ensure you have access to the support available to you and allows you to contribute to the postdoc community.

What to do when you first start at Imperial

Below are some suggestions of PFDC activities to attend and development resources to make use of when you first start at Imperial:

- Attend a **PFDC Welcome Induction**; you will receive an invitation from the PFDC via email when you first start.
- Meet your [departmental PFDC postdoc rep.](#)
- Set up your College [Professional Web Page](#).
- If this is your first postdoc, attend the three-day residential course '[Making the Most of Your Postdoc](#)', designed to equip you in the early stages of your career with the skills and resources needed to plan your career and achieve success as a postdoc.
- Become a [mock interview panellist](#) to experience the interview process.

There are also a variety of PFDC services and resources, which are highlighted in this booklet, which you can access at any stage during your time at Imperial.

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Being a postdoc is not a career!

Being a postdoc is not a career; it is a transition period to the next step on your career path, whether that is on an academic trajectory, or into a role outside of academia which utilises your unique skillset.

Plan to Succeed – 10 development days per year

You are a highly skilled individual, and personal and professional development will enable you to enhance your current skills and develop new skills in preparation for your next career move. To support you as a postdoc at Imperial, you have 10 development days per year written into your contract, which is currently unique to Imperial. The PFDC programme of support, which is outlined in this booklet, is one way of spending your 10 development days. However, they can be used for anything that is above and beyond your day job!

More information, including examples of what the days can be used for can be found on the [PFDC website](#). We have also developed a [template that you can download](#) that can help you start utilising your 10 days.

It is important to remember to use your 10 development days as they cannot be carried over to the next year. You will be asked to outline how you used your 10 days during your annual [Personal Review and Development Plan \(PRDP\)](#).

Postdoc research

PLAN TO SUCCEED

it's not a career!

Navigating your career

The PFDC will support you in whatever way you decide to [navigate your career](#). A Royal Society study conducted in 2010 showed that one in ten postdocs continue on an academic career path to become a Professor. That means that 90% of postdocs go on to do incredible things outside of academia!

For some ideas as to where Imperial postdocs go, take a look at the [PFDC Contacts Database](#).

Pathways for Postdocs

As a postdoc you are an expert in your field, with a skillset that is highly transferable and sought after in other sectors. But what do postdocs do if they don't become academics? What are your career options and how do you get that next job?

If you choose not to pursue an academic career, [Pathways for Postdocs](#) aims to help you understand and highlight your transferable skills so that you can learn how to evidence these skills to make you competitive in your next career move. This is achieved through skills development workshops, hearing from guest speakers who have made that transition from postdoc into another career, as well as a whole host of online resources.

More information about available resources and upcoming events can be found on the [PFDC website](#).

Support for fellowship applicants

Here at the PFDC, we have observed that holding an early career fellowship greatly enhances your chances of continuing on the academic career path, as it gives you an opportunity to develop your independent research vision and become a world leader in your field.

The PFDC can support you at every stage of your fellowship application, from initially trying to find out about what fellowships are, to identifying [fellowship opportunities](#) which may be relevant to you, to reviewing your application, to giving you a mock interview. We have developed this [PFDC webpage](#) which contains a whole host of useful resources regarding fellowships, including a list of frequently asked questions. The full range of support offered by the PFDC is outlined in the question *'What support does the PFDC offer to help me with my fellowship application?'*

Support offered by the PFDC

The PFDC is dedicated to supporting you as an early career researcher during your time at Imperial. We aim to do this through a tailored programme of courses, events, individual support, networks and online resources. The information below highlights the different types of support that we have in place to help you plan to succeed.

Workshops and courses

As a postdoc at Imperial you also have access to the large programme of pop-up workshops and training courses provided by the PFDC. These sessions are free of charge and are held all year round.

Pop-up workshops

Pop-up workshops are brief, informal and interactive sessions designed to deliver bite-sized, timely, targeted information on a range of themes that will be helpful for your personal and professional development. They range from skills and goals development sessions to guest speakers from across the College and relevant external initiatives – i.e. industry and funders. The workshops are up to two hours and are open to all postdocs from across the College.

You can find details on upcoming pop-ups in the [PFDC newsletter](#), via the PFDC email lists, your departmental [PFDC reps](#) and twitter [@ImperialPFDC](#).

Courses

The PFDC offers a wide range of courses grouped under the themes: Postdoc Essentials, Communication and Presentation Skills, Leadership and Management, Succeeding Now, Planning for Success and Next Steps. The courses provided are free of charge to all Imperial postdocs, including residential courses lasting two to three days.

With the extensive range of professional skills and career development courses provided by the PFDC, there will be a course that meets your specific needs, helping you to make the most of your current post and successfully plan your next steps.

You can find more information about our programme in the [course directory](#) and on the [PFDC website](#).

Individual support

The PFDC provides individual support to postdocs at Imperial, ranging from guidance with interviews to conversations about development opportunities.

One-to-one support

The PFDC offers one-to-one appointments with postdocs at Imperial. These are informal conversations about any issues relating to your life as an early career researcher at Imperial. You may want to use these sessions to discuss your CV, job searching, fellowship applications, lectureship positions, moving out of academia, issues related to working in your lab / team, development opportunities available to you, networking opportunities, or anything else you want to discuss.

To book an appointment please complete a [one-to-one request form](#) and [email the PFDC support team](#).

Mock interviews

Preparing for an interview is vital if you want to succeed in securing a new position, and having a mock interview can be an important component of your preparation. The PFDC offer mock interviews to postdocs at Imperial, whether you are interviewing for a position within or outside the College.

To book a mock interview please complete a [mock interview request form](#) and [email the PFDC support team](#).

Become a mock interview panellist

To experience being on an interview panel and have the opportunity to see what it's like to be on 'the other side of the table', why not volunteer to be a panel member for our mock interviews? If you would like to be added to the list, please [email the PFDC support team](#). Further information about what is entailed can be found [here](#).

Networks

One way to become involved with the postdocs, fellows and clinician's community at Imperial is through the networks available to you as a staff member. Examples of some of these networks are shown below, but a full list can be found on the [PFDC website](#).

Postdoc Reps Network

The PFDC works closely with departments to ensure that the voices of postdocs and fellows are well-represented at the departmental level. One pivotal way we do this is by having postdoc representatives (reps) in each department. The reps are key to ensuring that the PFDC stays well-informed about the needs and issues facing postdocs in departments at Imperial. They form a crucial bridge between the PFDC and the postdocs. The reps can influence the nature of what the PFDC offers by being involved in planning and decision-making processes via the termly Reps Network Meetings, and by also taking part in voluntary focus groups to discuss a range of topics and provide opinions and feedback.

You can find out who your departmental PFDC rep is and arrange to meet via the [PFDC website](#).

Postdoc and Fellows Champions: The PFDC works closely with departments to ensure that the voices of postdocs and fellows are well-represented at the departmental level. Postdoc and Fellows Champions, who are academics within your departments, are integral to this effort, receiving feedback from postdocs and fellows and presenting their views at department and faculty level to help ensure their needs are appropriately met.

You can find out who your departmental postdoc and fellows champion is via the [PFDC website](#).

Postdoc and Fellows Enterprise Network

The Postdoc and Fellows Enterprise Network aims to support early career researchers, whether you are a researcher ready to explore the commercial potential of your ideas, discoveries, technologies, and inventions, or whether you are just starting out and want to learn more about what falls under the Enterprise umbrella and develop entrepreneurial skills. The Network is run by a Committee of early career researchers with support from PFDC and [Enterprise](#).

For more information about this network, please see the [Postdoc and Fellows Enterprise Network webpage](#).

PFDC Parents Network

This network aims to connect postdocs, fellows and clinicians whether at the start of their parenting journey or those getting to grips with a teenager at home. The Network will provide events and links to useful information to support you as a parent or parent-to-be here at Imperial.

If you would like to become part of this network or find out more, please see the [PFDC Parents Network webpage](#).

Development opportunities

The College offers a variety of development opportunities that you can get involved in. Some key ones are highlighted below:

Assistant Supervisor

The College has a process to formally recognise the valuable contribution that postdocs make towards the student supervisor partnership. Subject to completion of mandatory training requirements, postdocs can be recognised as Assistant Supervisors. An Assistant Supervisor will play a major role in the day-to-day support of all students at the College who are carrying out research. Please see this [page](#) for further details.

Faculty of Engineering: Dame Julia Higgins Postdoc Collaborative Fund

The Faculty of Engineering Research Committee, together with the PFDC, is committed to promoting opportunities to aid postdocs. In 2017 the Dame Julia Higgins Postdoc Collaborative Research Fund was introduced to give Engineering postdocs the opportunity to apply for and be awarded their own research funding, develop and deliver a collaborative research project, and become independent from the research of their PI. A total of £19,500 is made available each year. For more information, including the expected timelines, please see this [PFDC page](#).

Support for fellows and clinicians

A bespoke programme of support, including comprehensive induction and cohort building events, is in place for independent research fellows and clinicians actively pursuing academic careers at Imperial. More information can be found on the [PFDC website](#).

LinkedIn Learning

As a member of staff, you can access and use [LinkedIn Learning](#) free of charge. LinkedIn Learning is a highly personalised learning experience designed to help you achieve your goals through high-quality instructional videos on a wide range of topics from software packages to leadership skills.

More information on how to access LinkedIn Learning can be found on this [College webpage](#).

PFDC online resources

The PFDC offers a wide range of online resources that you can access via the [PFDC website](#). Highlights include:

Tip sheets

The PFDC have developed a wide range of tip sheets on topics from personal and professional development to job searches and fellowship applications. A full list can be found on the [PFDC website](#).

Publications

The PFDC has released a series of publications, a list of which can be found on the [PFDC website](#). The book, entitled '*What every Postdoc needs to know*', is intended to be a guide to developing, advancing and furthering yourself and your career, and is co-authored by the head of the centre, Dr Liz Elvidge.

Online modules

The PFDC has been developing a range of online module that complement the training that we provided. Topics covered so far include: What's your research vision; Career Goals - Plan to succeed; LinkedIn - Top tips for a successful profile .

Frequently asked questions

On this [PFDC page](#), you will find answers to commonly asked questions. It can be a great place to start if you are unsure of anything related to PFDC services, in particular details about the courses. If your question has not been answered, please [email the PFDC support team](#), who will be happy to help.

Resources at Imperial

As an early career researcher at Imperial, you are part of approximately 35% of the staff population, the largest of all staff groups. You are therefore able to access the wide range of support that is available to all staff members at the College. More information about these opportunities can be found on the [PFDC website](#). The services below may be of particular interest to you:

- [Organisational and Staff Development](#)
- [Careers Service](#)
- [Centre for Academic English](#)
- [Educational Development Unit](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Services](#)

Plan to succeed

The [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) states under the professional and career development principle that researchers must:

- *Take ownership of their career, identifying opportunities to work towards career goals, including engaging in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.*
- *Maintain an up-to-date professional career development plan and build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their experience, that can be used to support job applications.*

The PFDC has developed a range of [tip sheets](#) and [pop ups](#) to help you achieve these points. Resources we would particularly like to highlight are:

Goal setting

Goal setting is an essential tool for time management, personal and professional progression. During this pop up, you will reflect and acknowledge your experience to date and set individual career goals which will allow you to succeed in your career. This pop-up will ask you to plan how you will use your 10 development days, using this [template](#) as a guide.

Information about upcoming dates for this pop-up can be found in the [PFDC Newsletter](#).

If you are not able to attend this pop-up then this [Career Goals online module](#) covers the key areas for you to consider when planning your career.

Skills analysis

During the skills analysis pop up, you will work in groups to identify the skills employers most commonly ask for. You will discuss what evidence you have that demonstrates that you have these skills and how you can develop them further. Individually, you will carry out a skills analysis to identify any potential gaps, and consider how you can build and develop your skills, to help you get the job you've always wanted! You will complete a [skills portfolio](#) which will enable you to keep track of the evidence you have acquired during your career.

Information about upcoming dates for this pop-up can be found in the [PFDC Newsletter](#).

Using your 10 development days

Now that you know about all the resources that are available to you, how will you use your 10 days to navigate your career and fill any gaps you may have identified? The PFDC [Plan to succeed – 10 Development Days](#) tip sheet and [webpage](#) may give you ideas on how you can utilise your 10 days throughout the year, while the table below or this [PFDC template](#) will give you a place to record how you utilise them.

How will you use your 10 development days this year?

Be proactive in your development and identify what you need and research a solution.

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| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Good luck with your career at Imperial!

Please remember to get in touch with the PFDC for support and development opportunities.

To hear more about the services offered by the PFDC or to speak to a member of the team, email pfdc-support@imperial.ac.uk, visit www.imperial.ac.uk/pfdc, read the [PFDC Monthly Newsletter](#), or follow us on Twitter [@ImperialPFDC](https://twitter.com/ImperialPFDC).

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Tailored support and development for postdocs, fellows and clinicians