CALL FOR PARTNERS TO TRIAL RESEARCHER TRAINING AND NETWORKING

RESEARCHER WORKSHOP

90 minutes–1 day

EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

1-2 days

WORKPLACE VISIT

Up to 1 day

NETWORKING EVENT

Up to 2-4 hours

The **Developing Business-Aware Academics** project has developed a set of evidence-informed Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to shape the initiatives that we believe will inspire and equip doctoral and early-career researchers to engage beyond academia. These are broadly summarised as (a) developing a researcher's **understanding** of the context and modes of engagement, and (b) the **skills** they will require to be **able to** engage:

KNOWLEDGE-related ILOs:

Develop your **understanding** of:
- **what you have to offer** beyond academia (e.g. identification of your transferable knowledge and competencies)
- how to make the most of **existing opportunities** to develop your own **knowledge and skills** for engaging beyond academia (e.g. existing researcher training, resources and tools)
- how to access support with **personal resilience** via university services and external organisations
- industry, government and funder **priorities** and how they may differ from your own (or those of a university)
- **why an external organisation might want to collaborate** with researchers (including identifying skill/knowledge gaps)
- how non-academic workplace **cultures, modes of working, processes and language** may be different from academia
- the importance of **mutual value** in building collaborations beyond academia, and the potential wider benefits of engagement with industry beyond a specific interaction (e.g. access to data, facilities, user groups)
- types of external engagement **mechanisms** (e.g. consultancy, collaborative research, knowledge exchange etc), including how these are set up and managed
- how **commercialisation** of research differs from other types of external engagement
- how universities and other bodies (e.g. funders) support, reward and recognise **non-traditional research outputs and outcomes**
- types and sources of **funding** for engaging beyond academia

SKILLS-related ILOs:

Develop your **ability** to:

- **confidently engage** with people from non-academic organisations in a variety of settings (e.g. building confidence, overcoming anxiety, practising conversation)
- identify your **preferred modes of engagement** beyond academia (in alignment with your values and career aspirations)
- **align your skill development** with the needs of your target sector(s)
- build **effective networks** beyond your own discipline area and academic context (e.g. forums, events, communities of practice, professional networks)
- initiate **contact with external organisations**
- consider **potential impact beyond academia** as a core step in **designing research questions** and projects
- translate research expertise into **applied problem solving** (including addressing specific industry or policy challenges)
- **collaborate effectively** with people whose modes of working, priorities and values may be different from your own
- identify potential **mentors** (within or outside of academia)
- distinguish between **entrepreneurial and business-aware mindsets**
- recognise different types of **value** (e.g. economic, social, cultural) and identify **potential value creation** opportunities
- protect your **intellectual property** and respect that of others
- build a **public profile** that supports visibility of your expertise while protecting your personal integrity

We have used these ILOs to develop a range of initiatives that have now been piloted with over 200 researchers from a variety of disciplines and universities. Initial evaluation shows an increase in the average level of researcher confidence, competence and connections across all formats, and we are now seeking partners to trial the initiatives in their own contexts and build capacity across the sector. All trials will be fully evaluated, with data contributing to the project's work to understand optimal approaches to supporting doctoral and early-career researchers to engage beyond academia.

To inform Expressions of Interest, the four initiatives available for trial are summarised below. Further details of templates, resources and support will be shared with those selected to take forward a full proposal.

A. RESEARCHER WORKSHOP

The researcher workshop is designed to equip academic researchers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to connect with non-academic organisations and enhance the impact of their research. It can be run in a university setting and/or as part of an existing event that researchers are attending (e.g. an academic conference, doctoral induction or development programmes). Ideally, it will form the preparation for one of the DBAA immersive, experiential learning opportunities (B, C or D). Where this is not the case, the workshop should (where practical) include co-facilitation or other input from non-academic partners, and include additional time for informal networking.

Templates (including slides, facilitator notes and handouts) will be available for distinct blocks of activities within workshops, but there will also be opportunities during the full proposal stage to develop bespoke approaches that meet the needs of specific researcher groups. Any departure from the DBAA templates and activity blocks will need to align with our evidence-informed Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

Indicative workshop content blocks:

1. Crafting compelling narratives to communicate complex ideas with clarity
2. Efficient and effective networking
3. Critically assessing research to identify opportunities for non-academic collaboration
4. Applying academic knowledge and skills to real-world challenges
5. How much can I say? Understanding Intellectual Property (IP) for networking
6. Formalising relationships: Understanding modes of working with non-academic organisations
7. Learning from researcher collaboration experiences
8. Introducing online platforms: Discover and offer opportunities for collaboration
9. Taking the next step: Practical suggestions for action

B. EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

Summary: This immersive, experiential initiative provides an introduction to face-to-face industry networking at a conference exhibition with the support of an experienced facilitator. An exhibition stand provides a base from which researchers can meet industry employees aligned with their research area. The initiative aims to develop participants' networking skills, build confidence, and create new connections, in a supportive environment through practical, experiential learning.

- Immerses participants in a real-world industry environment
- Opportunity to gain practical experience communicating research with non-academic organisations
- Low pressure networking as conference delegates approach the researcher's base in the exhibition

Format: Researchers join a departmental or university exhibition stand at conferences that have non-academic attendees and exhibitors. The initiative can be experienced as a group or individually. If as a group, the facilitator will gather participants together on the stand at the start of the event and go through the networking checklist and ensure that participants are prepared to speak about their research and - if necessary - that of the department/university they are representing.

Duration: The experience may run from one day to several days depending on the length of the conference.

Delivery: An experienced facilitator joins the conference stand and supports research participants. Conferences may be internal to a university, regional or national.

Preparation: We highly recommend that research participants attend a DBAA workshop in advance of the visit. This enables organisers to share practical information about the exhibition, field any questions and support participants to tailor their research messaging for the conference attendees. The pre-workshop is also an opportunity for researchers to get to know each other before the exhibition, and is likely to boost confidence and increase turn-out for the event.

C. WORKPLACE VISIT

Summary: This immersive, experiential initiative develops researchers' understanding of industry through a visit to a non-academic workplace aligned with their research area. Designed to bridge and demystify cultures for researchers and industry employees alike, the visit is a mutually beneficial opportunity to create connections, spark ideas and lay the foundations for meaningful professional relationships in a supportive environment.

For non-academic host organisations, the initiative offers an opportunity to gain insights into the latest research innovations and methods, showcase facilities and infrastructure, and explore talent and skills pipelines.

The event seeks to:

- Collaboratively explore different priorities, cultures and approaches to innovation
- Build researcher relationships, skills, and confidence
- Contribute to industry-academia knowledge exchange

Format: The visit may comprise a tour of the facilities, presentations introducing university and industry cultures, icebreakers, one-to-one networking activities and facilitated round table discussions exploring innovation, challenges or topical themes. Each visit should be tailored according to context.

Duration: The visit would typically take one day, starting late morning and finishing mid-afternoon to allow for travel time. The duration can be extended, and the content tailored, according to context and location.

Delivery: The workshop requires an industry contact at the workplace to support the tour and convene the industry employees. An experienced facilitator should lead the activities. The initiative requires a space in which presentations can be delivered and in which collaborative group activities and informal networking can take place.

Preparation: We highly recommend that research participants attend the DBAA workshop in advance of the visit. This enables organisers to share practical information about the day and field any questions, and to support participants to tailor their research messaging for the specific organisation and people they will meet. It is also an opportunity for researchers to get to know each other before the visit, which is likely to boost confidence and increase turn-out on the day.

D. NETWORKING EVENT

Summary: This tailored networking event is an immersive, experiential initiative for academic researchers and industry representatives to explore new perspectives and pathways to collaboration. In an informal and collaborative environment, the event offers researchers the opportunity to:

- Explore new approaches to innovation and problem-solving
- Understand industry priorities and goals
- Build relationships, skills, and confidence
- Contribute to industry-academia knowledge exchange

Format: The initiative may include inspirational speakers talking about their personal journeys, panel sessions, lightning talks, facilitated networking activities, roundtable discussions, research-industry matchmaking activities, and informal networking.

The initiative may be a stand-alone event or embedded as part of existing conferences, events or workshops.

Duration: Two hours to one day

Delivery: An experienced facilitator leads the event and supports participants. The initiative requires a space in which presentations can be delivered and in which collaborative group activities and informal networking can take place.

Preparation: We highly recommend that research participants attend a DBAA workshop in advance of the visit. This enables organisers to share practical information about the day, field any questions and support participants to tailor their research messaging for the non-academic attendees at the event. It is also an opportunity for researchers to get to know each other before the event, which is likely to increase confidence and turn-out on the day.