

Support for new academics: An holistic and relational approach to academic development

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“Get in behind”



A poem composed entirely from the words of participants in my early career academic project in New Zealand universities

Early career academic interests and time*

Interests lie...	NZ
Primarily in research	27%
In both, leaning towards research	40%
Equally in research and teaching	22%
In both, leaning towards teaching	8%
Primarily in teaching	4%

* $n=538$

Early career academic interests and time*

Interests lie...	NZ	Victoria
Primarily in research	27%	18%
In both, leaning towards research	40%	57%
Equally in research and teaching	22%	23%
In both, leaning towards teaching	8%	2%
Primarily in teaching	4%	0

Percentage time spent on...	NZ
Research	44%
Teaching	35%
Service & admin	21%

* $n=538$ NZ, $n=72$ Victoria

Early career academic interests and time*

Interests lie...	NZ	Victoria
Primarily in research	27%	18%
In both, leaning towards research	40%	57%
Equally in research and teaching	22%	23%
In both, leaning towards teaching	8%	2%
Primarily in teaching	4%	0

Percentage time spent on...	NZ	Victoria
Research	44%	38%
Teaching	35%	39%
Service & admin	21%	23%

* $n=538$ NZ, $n=72$ Victoria

Effectiveness of career/professional development

Victoria Early Career Academic Responses	(n=72)
I settled into my job at this university <i>quickly</i>	67%
I settled into my job at this university <i>easily</i>	54%
The right infrastructure exists in my university for me to make a career here	45%
My university offers adequate professional development opportunities	54%
The academic appraisal/review process at my university has been an effective aid to my career development	22%

What do early career academics say they need?

Item	Mean	
	Imp *	Eff**
<i>n</i> =72		
Senior colleagues interested in my progress and well being	1.22	2.09
Informal mentoring relationships or opportunities	1.35	2.11
Recognition of each individual's contribution to the uni	1.68	2.85
Opportunities to meet other new academics within the uni	2.06	2.84
Regular contact with colleagues in other disciplines	2.18	2.85

* 1=Very important to 4=Very unimportant

**1=Very effective to 4=Very ineffective

Developing Scholarly Habits: A relational, holistic approach

DSH provides opportunities for independent and collaborative learning about all aspects of the academic role, including teaching, research, leadership, academic citizenship, and engagement. The programme encourages individual reflective practice, and enables the creation of supportive communities of peers and mentors.

DSH Components

- Two 2-day retreats
- Monthly peer group meetings
- Monthly task-based group meetings
- Writing log (4 weeks)
- Mentoring
- Additional (optional) workshops
- Social events

Sample Monthly Tasks

Success Interview

Time-use Log

Preparing for Promotion (Draft application)

Peer Observation of Teaching (in threes or fours)

Enhancing our Support Networks (logging tool)

Service Opportunities Investigation

Leadership 1 – A conversation with the Dean

Leadership 2 – A letter to next year's participants

Sample additional workshops

Speed Reading

Contributing to Academic Journals

Preparing a Book Proposal

Developing a Social Media Presence

Media Training

The Importance of Feedback in Academic Life

DSH Outcomes*

Increased **confidence**

Research (53% to 78%)

Teaching (77% to 100%)

Increased **research output**

Average pre: 1.15

Average post: 1.86

Increased **peer feedback**

On writing (50% to 76%)

On teaching (61% to 92%)

* $n=39$

DSH Outcomes

Work-life Balance	% Agree BEFORE
I enjoy the challenges of my job	94%
I control the role of my work in my life	47%
I regularly find time for myself	47%
Family and friends comment on my high work hours	69%
I seldom find time to relax	59%

DSH Outcomes

Work-life Balance	% Agree BEFORE	% Agree AFTER
I enjoy the challenges of my job	94%	97%
I control the role of my work in my life	47%	66%
I regularly find time for myself	47%	66%
Family and friends comment on my high work hours	69%	62%
I seldom find time to relax	59%	48%

Satisfaction	% BEFORE
Well satisfied	16
Satisfied	44
Dissatisfied	13
Very dissatisfied	0
TOTAL	100%
Mean	2.25

Satisfaction	% BEFORE	% AFTER
Well satisfied	16	17
Satisfied	44	79
Dissatisfied	13	4
Very dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	100%	100%
Mean	2.25	1.86

If you could do it all over again, would you still embark on an academic career?

	% BEFORE	
Definitely	66	
Probably	22	
Maybe not	13	
Definitely not	0	
TOTAL	100%	
Mean	1.47	

Satisfaction	% BEFORE	% AFTER
Well satisfied	16	17
Satisfied	44	79
Dissatisfied	13	4
Very dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	100%	100%
Mean	2.25	1.86

If you could do it all over again, would you still embark on an academic career?

	% BEFORE	% AFTER
Definitely	66	79
Probably	22	21
Maybe not	13	0
Definitely not	0	0
TOTAL	100%	100%
Mean	1.47	1.21

DSH has been absolutely crucial to me feeling like the University values me. It has made the vital difference between high morale and low morale.



I appreciate academia in a new way. The programme has made me really evaluate what I am doing—as a life, a career—rather than just a job. It was also helpful and reassuring to hear that other early career academics are having similar challenges as me.

A poetic finale

References

Sutherland, K. A. (2017, forthcoming). *Early career academics in New Zealand: Challenges and prospects in comparative perspective*. Dordrecht: Springer. ISBN 978-3-319-61829-6
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