



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY
EST. 1891

The Plexus: designing and developing connective and inclusive impact-oriented networks for researchers in a post-92 university

Dr Liana Psarologaki

Associate Professor – Research and Impact Lead

Liana.Psarologaki@bucks.ac.uk



INSPIRED.
EMPOWERED.
EMPLOYED.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891

Our Research and Knowledge Exchange “WITH AUDACITY AND FOCUS!”



News

Research led by BNU's Professor Jermaine Ravalier finds that wellbeing of social care workforce is below UK average

The results of a 'Have Your Say' survey delivered to workers in the social care sector have now been released.



News

Professor Will Broughton goes “beyond the sirens” in his inaugural lecture at BNU

Professor of Paramedicine at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), Will Broughton, gave his inaugural lecture yesterday after becoming the UK's second 'Paramedic Chair' earlier this year.



News

Wellness Warriors on the Run secures £6.5k in funding from Sport England

Wellness Warriors on the Run, a sober running group which forms part of a drug and alcohol research programme at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), has successfully secured £6.5k in funding from...

1st

for resources, research
culture, community,
progression,
responsibilities and
support nationally*

*Postgraduate Research
Experience Survey 2024

3rd

for overall postgraduate
research student
satisfaction nationally*

*Postgraduate Research
Experience Survey 2024

44%

of research judged to be
of world-leading or
internationally excellent
quality*

*Research Excellence Framework
2021



The Problem of the Mid-Career Academic

The challenges for mid-career researchers: New EARC report published

31 August 2023

Mid-career researchers (MCRs) face significant challenges in developing their careers, and these are increasing as the pressures and expectations within modern higher education have mounted.

A new report provides evidence of these challenges, and makes eight recommendations for addressing them. Commissioned by Eastern Arc and undertaken by Women in Academia Support Network (WIASN), the report makes clear that the barriers faced by MCR are 'pervasive and entangled in their complexity', and an academics mid-career is a 'pinch point' at which academics face a 'competing number of additional roles, responsibilities and activities.'

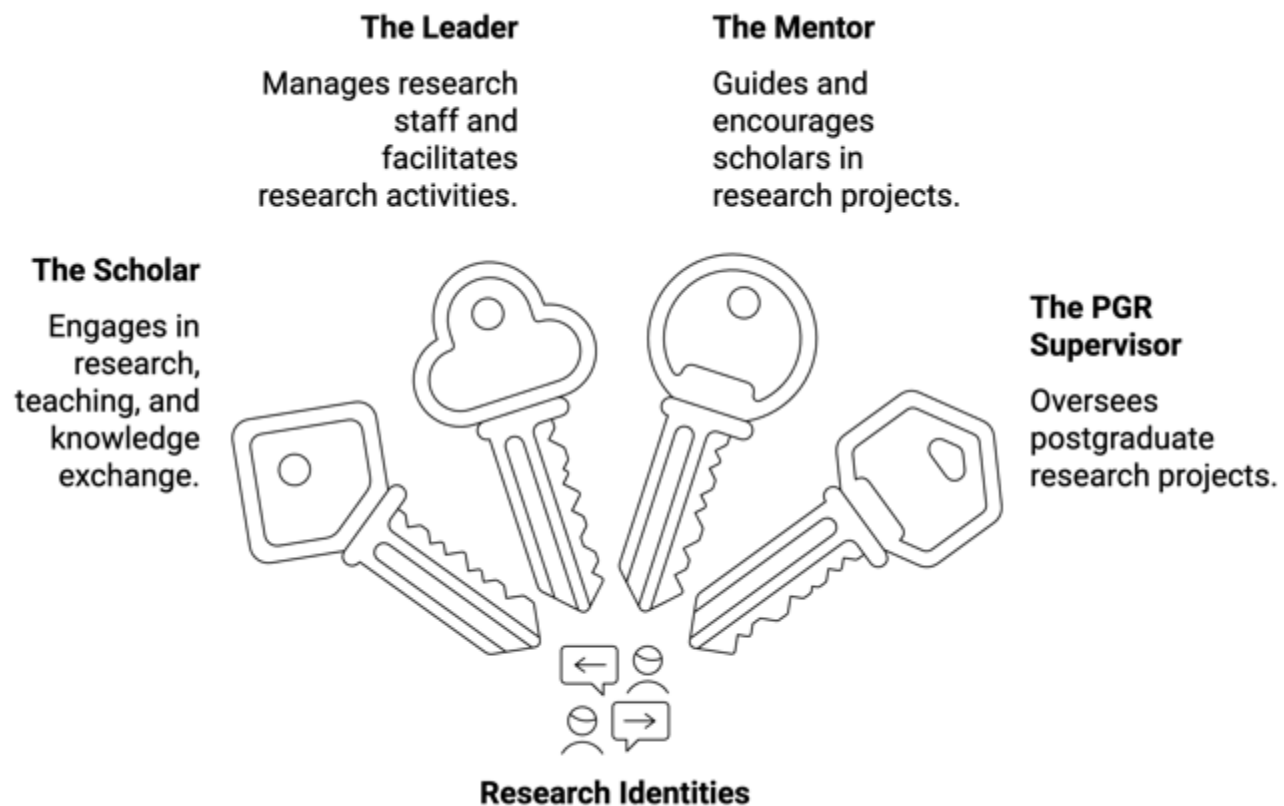
The report's authors, Dr Kelly Pickard-Smith, Dr Helen Ross, and Dr Amy Bonsall, analysed 254 responses to a survey open to academics at Eastern Arc universities and beyond. Narrative questions within the survey elicited a total of 2,147 written responses, and 13 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted.



- **RETHINK** what midcareer means. Reframe it as a time of expansion and not reduction
- **ATTAIN** the necessary skills to develop through clearer training, including 'procedural' skills and knowledge.
- **INCLUDE** MCRs more fully by removing contractual idiosyncrasies where rigid contracts become blockers for the under-represented and systematically marginalised.
- **LIVED EXPERIENCE** should be fully recognised and incorporated in HR systems, so that formal and informal mentorship/sponsorship programmes, networks and collaboratives to thrive, including rewarding of 'softer' skills such as mentoring, coaching and sponsorship.



Roles in Research Excellence to Self-identity With





The Plexus+

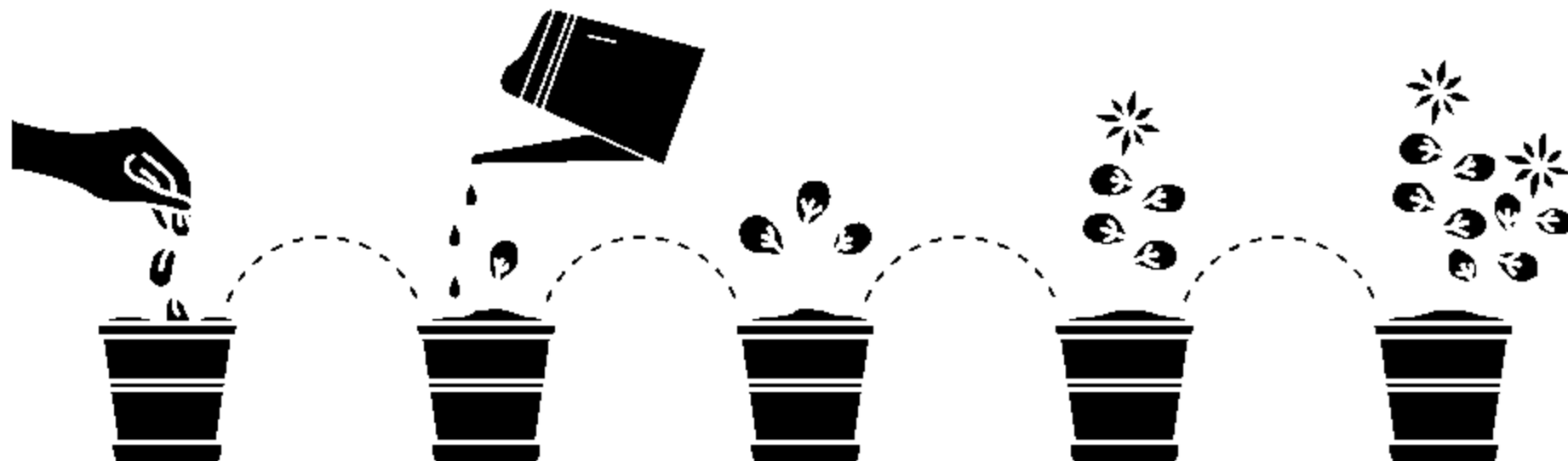
Enacting colleagues with significant research responsibility to maintain currency in research beyond their own discipline, prioritising impactful outcomes and academic progression.

Enabling colleagues becoming research-active to position themselves in the current research landscape and supporting them develop diverse analysis and dissemination skills.

Impacting the research footprint of funded projects, building positive change in our research community, enhancing institutional visibility and facilitating strategy evolution.



Plexus+



Colleague

Lacking research activity

Skill Development

Acquire analysis & dissemination skills

Engagement

Contribute to respective fields

Empowerment

Navigate contemporary research

Research-Active

Positioned in research landscape



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891

Impactful Outcomes

Achieving positive
change through
research

Academic Citizenship

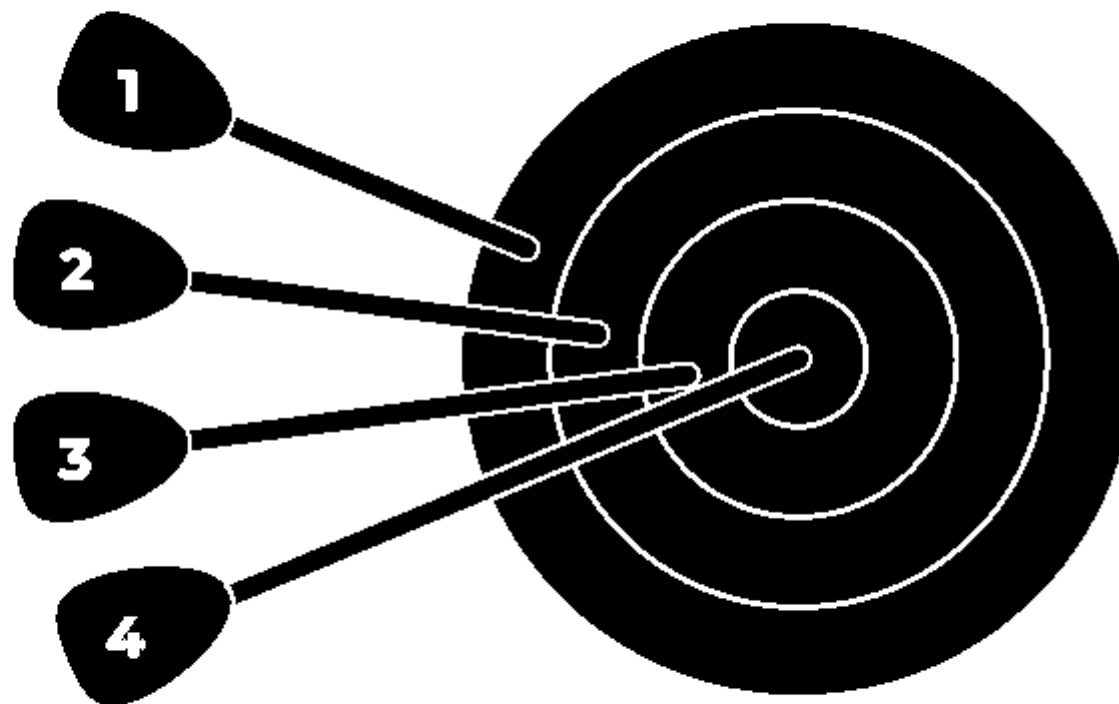
Progressing
ethically and
collaboratively

Broad Research Knowledge

Understanding
research beyond
discipline

Inclusive Culture

Core duty of
research
colleagues





Inclusive and empowering strategy

The expanded Plexus +:

- Acknowledges the 2nd career academic as a significant entity.
- Places additional focus on skills development relevant for achieving external research and knowledge exchange funding (UKRI, trusts, academies and societies and ERC).
- Actively involves and supports research leaders, professors, associate deans and REF UoA leads in enacting plans.
- Ensures colleagues can access different modes of support implementing bite-sized activity, virtual and in-person delivery, recording of seminars and events on different weekdays.





BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891

Accessible resources

FREE BOOKS FOR RESEARCHERS (Impact related)
I will add these to General/Files for easy access through the channel.
Happy reading "Impact-style" 📖
Impact Cultures... The Productive... The Research H...

Writing Impactful Blogs for Academic Research
Hello colleagues
If any of you are looking to start a blog-type research output please look at this resource by Taylor and Francis:
<https://author-services.taylorandfrancis.com/research-impact/how-to-write-an-academic-blog-post/>
And a guide by Oxford: <https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/10.1093/oxfrd/obz010>
Also, - today we are in zen writing mode in NZ 10 if anyone wants to come and grab a hot drink and a snack and say "hi" or experience focused time. Room booked until 17:00. Session staffed until 15:00.

WELCOME TO THE PLEXUS
This is the main channel of direct communication related to all things research - ask anything, all questions are important.
We will be using this Teams channel to share useful information and reminders to complement the content on The Plexus webpage on BEn. Stay tuned!

ISRF Early Career Fellowship Competition
The Independent Social Research Foundation wishes to support independent-minded researchers to explore and present original research ideas which take new approaches, and suggest new solutions, to real-world social problems.
Scholars from within Europe (incl. UK) are eligible to apply. Candidates should be **within 10 years of PhD award** at the time of application. Career breaks may be taken into account. Applicants will normally hold a full-time or part-time salaried position - which may be permanent or fixed-term - at an institution of Higher Education and Research. However, independent scholars or individuals not currently in an academic role may also apply.
The awards are intended as providing full relief from all teaching duties and all associated academic administration for a period of **up to one year, and must commence no later than end of January 2026**.
The amount of an award depends on the nature of the work proposed and individual circumstances - the ISRF expects applications for see more



At BNU we are building momentum in research. We are refining our research focus and growing scholarly culture. The BNU inclusive researchers' development network **Plexus+** is here to help us connect, develop and succeed in research.

Join The Plexus+, a network designed to help you:

- Understand the academic research landscape
- Build a sustainable research profile
- Contribute to interdisciplinary projects
- Find mentorship and/or become a mentor
- Connect and collaborate with others and benefit from peer support.
- Translate your research into impactful outputs.

The Plexus+ is designed in line with the new 2025 Vitae Research Development Framework <https://vitae.ac.uk/vitae-researcher-development-framework/>

The Plexus+ 2025-26 LAUNCH

04 Weeks 05 Days 17 Hours

Join online on MS Teams!

HOW TO CONNECT:

Sign up and be added to The Plexus Teams channel, for direct communication, sharing of ideas and information, and peer support.



A Useful Research Links

- UKROO Ethics for social media data collection
- Ethics Guidance for capturing visual data on social media
- Join British Academy ECRN
- All known scores for REF2021 impact case studies (blog)
- Funding Hacks for Researchers (and more) - Funding Institutional

Research development resources

Key Resources

- Research Design Canvas
- Academic Toolkits (tools)
- Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- Fast Track Impact FREE resources

RESEARCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

BNU offers access to two researchers' development and support platforms:
<https://www.epigeum.com/>
<https://vitae.ac.uk/>

Each platform gives you access to accessible guidance, training, and support in developing different aspects of your research profile and trajectory including research skills, understanding about publishing and more.

Please reach out to our senior research administrator James Shelton at james.shelton@bnu.ac.uk to set up a profile/gen access.

TAYLOR AND FRANCIS GUIDE ON MAKING IMPACTFUL BLOGS

YOU SAID WE DID

Coming up:

- RESEARCH SHORTS: Pre-recorded and live bite-sized informational sessions on research basics.
- GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS: Focused CPD on practical methods for supporting researchers
- ENGAGE AND EMPOWER: Focused mentorship.

Research Funding Glossaries

- <https://www.rhr.ac.uk/support-and-services/industry/inght/glossary-guide>
- <https://www.sciencematters.org.uk/n-cubs/glossary-term/>
- <https://researchstarts.pressbooks.com/research-terms/>
- <https://www.ukri.ac.uk/about/funding-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/useful-resources/key-terms-glossary/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-glossary-a-z>
- <https://www.reading.ac.uk/research-services/post-award-support/glossary-of-terms>

Clinicians Becoming Academic - new interdisciplinary research project goes live
Clinicians Becoming Academic (CBA) research and development projects are very proud to share with colleagues the exciting research project that examines, evaluates and integrates the experiences of the lived experiences of nursing practitioners re-starting



BNU joins forces with University of Hertfordshire and University of West London for early career researcher matchmaking event

Find out more about the important occasion here.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891

Collaborative Success Stories



BNU joins forces with University of Hertfordshire and University of West London for early career researcher matchmaking event

Published by Liana Psarologaki on 23 June 2025 17:09 1 min read

"In our gradually shrinking world, everyone is in need of all the others". - Giorgos Seferis.



Earlier this month, BNU joined the University of Hertfordshire and the University of West London to co-organise a multidisciplinary research matchmaking event for Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

Hosted at the University of Hertfordshire's Hatfield campus, the event featured a vibrant project poster exhibition, lively networking sessions over fresh waffles and Pimm's, and an energising research "speed-dating" activity designed to spark collaboration and cross-institutional engagement.

BNU's researchers made a strong impression, delivering compelling project pitches and engaging in stimulating peer exchange discussions that showcased their creativity, ambition, and dissemination skills. Their contributions were warmly recognised by our co-organisers, including the Director of Research Culture and Environment at the University of Hertfordshire, who expressed enthusiasm about building on this initial success in future joint initiatives.

Sincere thanks to all BNU colleagues who contributed to the event's success. We encourage all staff to look out for upcoming opportunities to engage in collaborative research events. They are excellent opportunities for exploring research beyond BNU and building meaningful academic networks.

This event was made possible under the umbrella of the BNU Inclusive Researchers' Support Network - [The Plexus](#).

To join The Plexus please email liana.psarologaki@bnu.ac.uk



Liana Psarologaki
Research and Impact
Lead



Like



Views

15

Key dates

Published
23 June 2025

Expires
23 June 2025 18:07



The Plexus Success Story - 1st Collaborative Sandpit Awards

Published by Liana Psarologaki on 29 April 2025 16:52 2 min read

The Plexus Success Story - 1st Collaborative Sandpit Awards

"Every intellectual revolution which has ever stirred humanity into greatness has been a passionate protest against inert ideas" -

— Alfred North Whitehead
'The Aims of Education', The Aims of Education and Other Essays (1929), 14.



Thursday 27 March was an unassumingly tedious day until about 9:30am when twenty exceptionally charismatic and incredibly erudite colleagues walked in N2.10 in our High Wycombe campus.

They were driven by individual curiosity, openness and determination to embark on slightly unknown grounds paved by the collective effort to produce knowledge out of new collaborations that transcends barriers of disciplines.

In the previous months they signed up to the 1st collaborative sandpit event as part of The Plexus inclusive E-MCR researcher's network at BNU and excitedly prepared to pitch ideas, exchange insight, and come together to create impact through research.

Colleagues at all scholarly career stages from PhD students to Associate Professors from diverse backgrounds spanning from nursing practice to performance art spent the day prompted, challenged and guided by the sandpit organisers, Anca Paraschiv and Dr Liana Psarologaki, joined by external funding and impact expert consultant Dr Stephen Kemp.

They crafted interdisciplinary and collaborative proposals on the day in line with UKRI priorities and expectations and pitched them to the organising panel towards achieving seed funding to complete impact-led research activities in the current academic year.

The panel are happy to report that six projects achieved small scale internal awards of the accumulative amount of £4.5K that are already allocated with project activities currently being developed and delivered as planned.

From field trips to observe culturally loaded events to document vernacular food cultures to developing storytelling resources and innovative products for interview participants, the collaborative sandpit facilitated an inclusive opportunity for transformative research, insightful knowledge exchange and positive dialogue.

Congratulations to all and each team!



Liana Psarologaki
Research and Impact
Lead



Like



Views

98

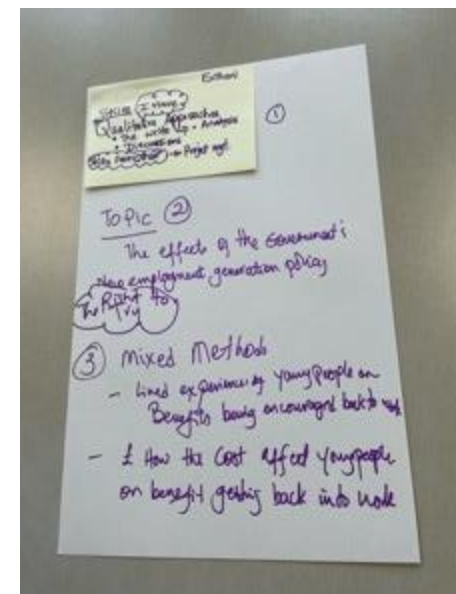
Key dates

Published
29 April 2025

To be reviewed
31 October 2025



Reflections on Inclusive Research Culture...





Scan to get in touch



BucksNewUni



@BucksNewUni



BucksNewUni



BucksNewUni



BucksNewUniversity