



Building Bridges not Barriers: Helping to INTEGRATE the Biomedical Data Science Community

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Background

Previous work with X-Net identified that biomedical data scientists, and other interdisciplinary researchers, faced a number of barriers to their career progression.

INTEGRATE aims to **identify and evaluate good practices in biomedical data science career support and collaborative team science** to support institutions and funders to create a more inclusive research environment.

Objectives

- Strengthen Interdisciplinary career development and routes for progression
- Enable effective collaborative working and team science
- Facilitate mobility between disciplines and sectors.

Influencing collaborative capacity throughout the research lifecycle:

Evaluation of activities to promote interdisciplinary skills (Q1-2027)



Evaluating Hackathons

"it's intimidating talking to other researchers - nice to have a task to focus on and help break down the barriers"



ECR-led Online Interdisciplinary Careers workshop – 13-14th Oct

Enabling Team Code of Conducts (Further Focus groups Q4 2026)

72%

Survey respondents felt a Code of Conduct would be helpful

"I work a 13 hour day doing three different studies, but I am never mentioned on the paper"

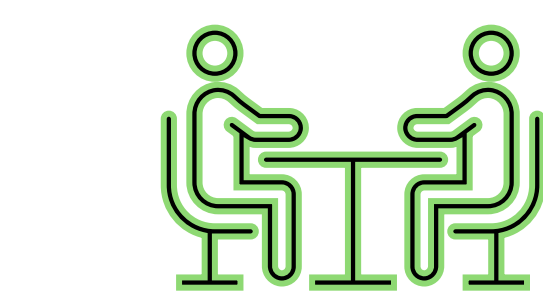
Lab research technical professional

"I think it could be a good idea to have authorship guidelines when you start your postdoc"

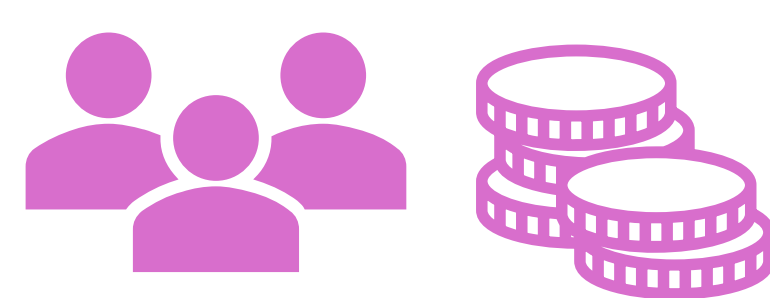
Post-doctoral researcher

"For me, good teamwork really depends on open communication and clear expectations from the start"

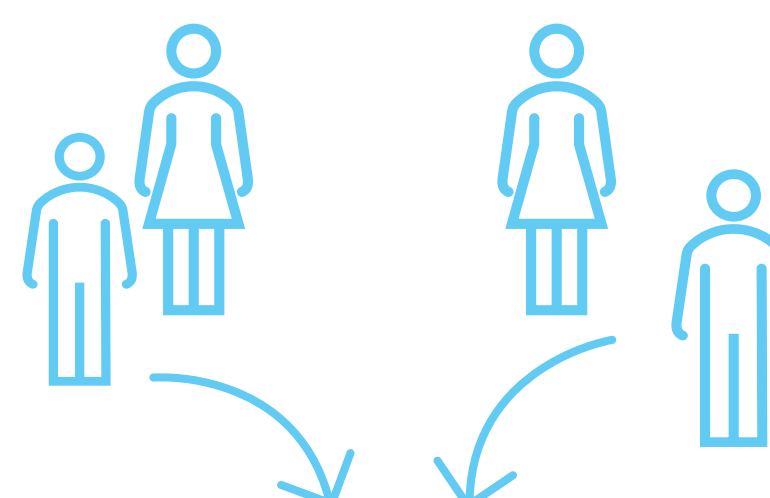
Post-doctoral researcher



Pre-collaboration
Network building



Initial team recruitment, proposal
design and applying for funding



Building research team



Conducting research



Reporting
outputs

Bytes and Bench Interdisciplinary Peer Mentoring (Launched Jan 2026)

Goal: Create a space where post-docs are able to have non-judgmental interdisciplinary conversations and expand their network.



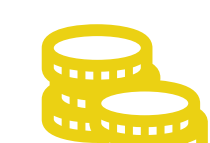
Mixed disciplinary
groups of 3



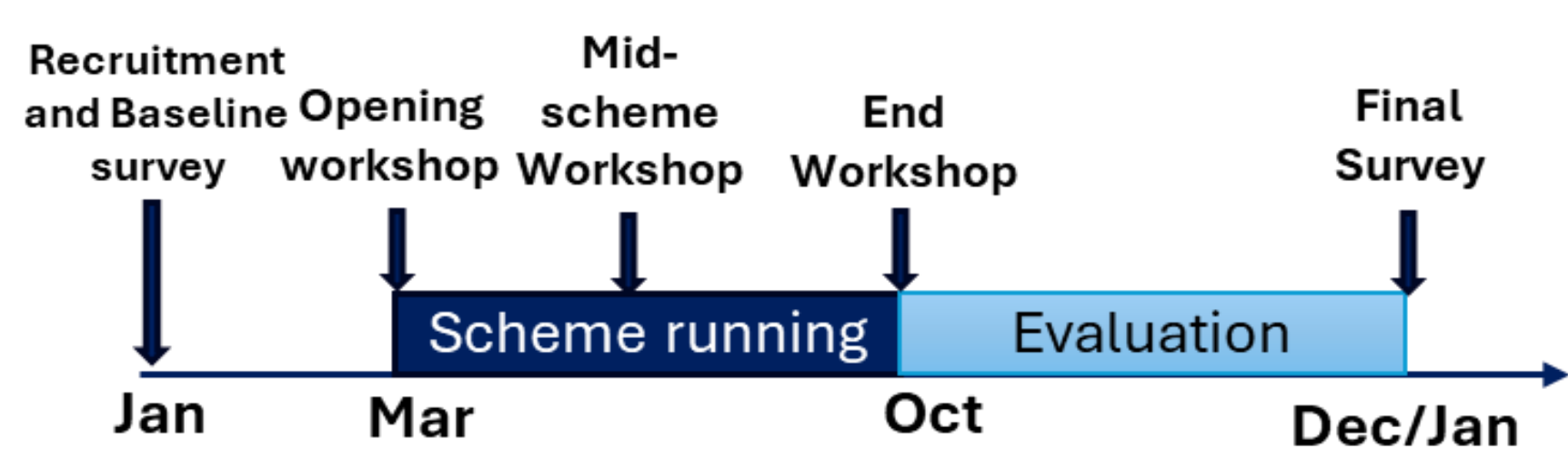
Fully online



Meet monthly
(5-6 times)



Low cost



High Demand

52 post-docs applied

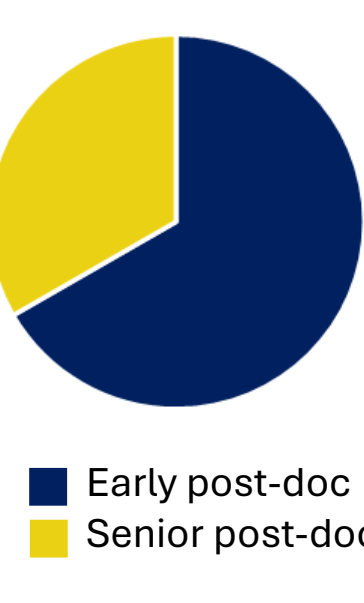
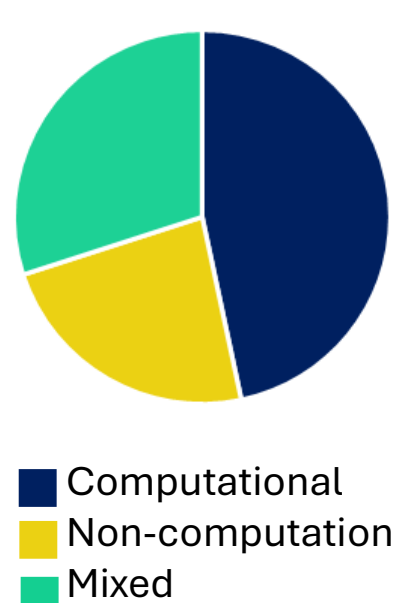
30 accepted



21% Male
72% Female

Specialism

Career stage



Mid-point check-in:

2 of 10 groups are looking to
apply for pilot project funding
together



*"Sharing experiences from quite
different backgrounds is quite an
enriching experience"*

Find our scheme
resources here:



Survey: Mapping of Good Practices in Interdisciplinary Support & Team working (Report in preparation)

72 responses:

43% Male



51% Female



90% Current academics

What made data science researchers feel **valued, supported and integrated** within biomedicine by their teams, institutes, communities and funders:

*"opportunity to apply for grants
opportunity to organise events
opportunity to participate in community-building"*

What opportunities specifically from funders have been most helpful in your career development?

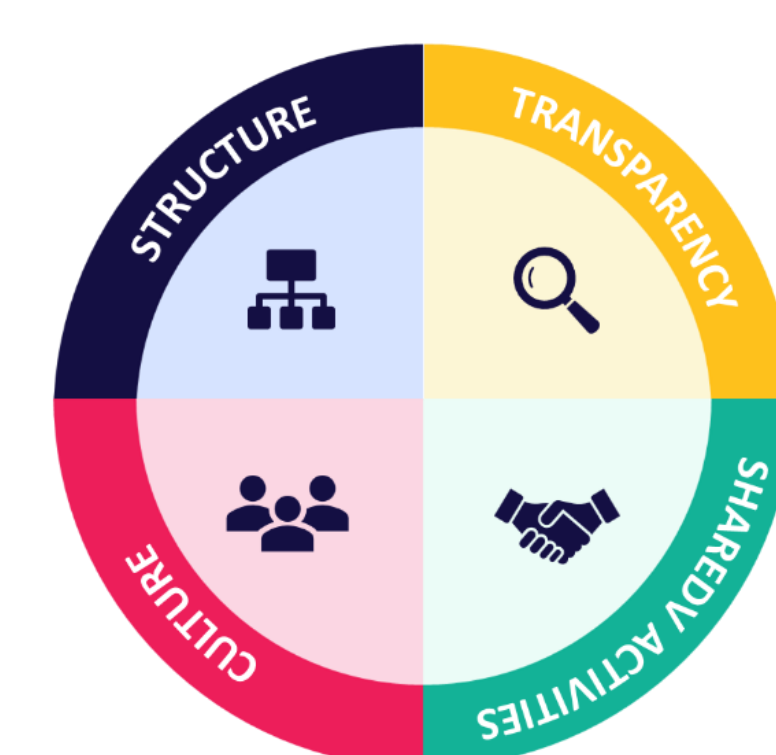
Panel Observation,
Roundtables,
Symposiums, Training

Structured Project &
Fellowship Funding
across career stages

Small Funds:
Travel, compute, open
science, professional
development, relocation

Widening of criteria for non-
PhD holders, RTPs, non-PIs

'Good' Teams Have:



80% Would like a better peer support network
with computational, mathematical and
AI colleagues

65% Faced funding or time barriers to
accessing training

60% Felt there were no achievable
routes to progression in academia

*"I have a lot of experience
(15 years approx.), but without
a PhD I'm not able to be
promoted from Research
Associate to Senior Research
Associate as a member of
University staff"*

Enabling Mobility/Agility Opportunities

Goal: Assess demand and feasibility of **cross-sector and interdisciplinary mobility fellowships** (including secondments, shadowing and consultancy models) with researchers, research institutions and industry.

Early career & technical research staff focus group (May 2026)



Need to articulate
secondment
value/benefits
to leaders



Fear of losing project
progression & credit
(authorship!)



Practical barriers e.g.
caring responsibilities,
geography



Fear of supervisor
reaction on career-
power imbalance

"I don't want to rock the proverbial boat"

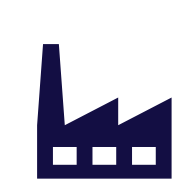
Ongoing work:



Researcher
Focus group



Higher Education
Focus group



Industry Focus
Group



If you're involved in enabling
these opportunities, we want
to hear from you at
integrate@imm.ox.ac.uk

Interested? Get in touch!

We want to make actionable recommendations that work across all institutions, and welcome your input on any of our work and resources, which are all freely available on our website.

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