Odyssey Programme

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HR Business Manager Research
PI CARDEA Horizon Europe
A unique programme which was specially developed to enable final year PhD students to pursue rewarding careers beyond academia. Inclusive of all disciplines!

It is designed to enable PhD's to adapt, integrate and expand on their existing skills and competencies to prepare for the many diverse career choices ahead of them.

It highlights the significant differences and/or advantages to the many workplace cultures that exist beyond academia.

Builds their confidence and capacity to look beyond academia.
WHY
Academic Jobs?

88,440 PhD’s graduated in Europe 2021 (UK numbers not included) – Eurostat
52,250 PhDs in 2021 USA - Statista
1. PhDs didn’t know how to write a CV except an Academic CV.

2. They did not believe the odds of achieving an academic career applied to them individually.

3. They did not know what organisations beyond academia were looking for.

4. They did not value the skills they learned along the way during their PhD.

5. They did not know how to articulate their skills for employers beyond academia.
ACADEMIC DREAMS
PhD students around the world continue to aspire to careers in academe despite a global job crunch. Industry — a growing job sector for PhD scientists — rates a distant second.

Q: Which of the following sectors would you most like to work in (beyond a postdoc) when you complete your degree?

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Expectations
2019
Two-thirds of respondents — and 80% of those who currently work in North America or Europe — still see academia as their preferred career destination.
"Improve career pathways into wider sectors, so that researchers can maximise their impact on all forms of organisations throughout Ireland (and beyond), while also realising their own potential".

IRISH DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATIONS AND SCIENCE
"Training and career development of researchers insufficiently focusses on entrepreneurship or opportunities outside academia... "RECOGNISES that the number of academic positions is limited and that researchers are increasingly likely to find a job outside academia"
PhD students around the world continue to aspire to careers in academia despite a global job crunch. Industry — a growing job sector for PhD scientists — rates a distant second.

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“Incentivising PhD’s to pursue a career outside academia.”

That’s where ODYSSEY PROGRAMME comes in.
HOW
Academic Community Support UCC

Professor John O'Halloran
President of UCC

Professor John Cryan
Vice President Research and Innovation
MEET THE ODYSSEY TEAM

Our team is what really makes Odyssey tick.
July 2018

Pilot

Since then, 300 people have gone through the programme.

ALL DISCIPLINES. RESEARCHERS AND FINAL YEAR PHD'S
OVERVIEW

ODYSSEY PROGRAMME

Pre-Meeting

1. An opportunity for the participants to get to know the facilitator and vice versa and, most importantly, build trust.
2. Provides the participant with an overview of what to expect from the two days.
3. Enables participants to reflect on the length of their career in academia and their personal career needs and expectations by answering a series of leading questions.

Post Meeting and CV Clinic

1. A one-to-one post-meeting with each participant following the Odyssey Programme. This meeting combines an individual CV clinic plus a final plus a final questionnaire.
2. The purpose of the final questionnaire is to ascertain whether the participant has experienced the desired career mind shift that is encouraged in the programme. It also assists the participants in putting the programme lessons into practice.
DAY 1

Introductions

Guest Speaker

Skills and Success Measures

Organisational Cultures Beyond Academia

Why are you here?

Researcher Career Trajectory - Facts

Impact on your career ambition?
ODYSSEY

DAY 2

Where are we now?

Opportunities for Researchers Beyond Academia

Industry Talent Acquisition Managers

That’s the Job!

Interview Techniques

Guest Speakers

Personalised career action plan
ODYSSEY PEOPLE – FIRST 103

- 2% want to move to industry
- 53% PhD students
- 64% Female
- 68% Never successfully competed for a research grant
- 68% Encouraged to seek training by supervisor
- 70% Best in class in school all the way up!
YEARS IN ACADEMIA
before completing Odyssey Programme

6 participants = 21 years or more

37 participants = 11 to 20 years

60 participants = 10 years or less
AFTER ODYSSEY

Successful Roles Beyond Academia: 58%
Stayed in UCC: 24%
Completing PhD: 9%
Moved to other Universities: 8%
Looking for the "perfect" job: 1%
TOP TAKE AWAYS

- There is a disconnect between the career expectations of PhD’s within third level and the reality of the availability of academic positions globally.
- PhD’s need support to articulate their skills to a non-academic employer.
- Only PhD students in their final year should do a career intervention programme. Early PhD students tend not to be ready to seriously contemplate moving outside the traditional academic career.
- The participants already possess the competencies that are required for roles beyond academia. The challenge is they do not realise they already possess these competencies.
ANY programme must address and acknowledge the organizational cultural barriers facing participants who are considering moving to careers beyond academia.

A 2-day programme is sufficient

The participants do not need to “upskill” or “re-focus” their education and training any further.

Operating a career intervention programme (inclusive of before and after one-to-ones) is hugely time intensive. Dedicated resources are required to sustain career intervention programmes.

Training should include (precise) information on the availability of academic positions globally. This information should be easily available in one trusted data source.
WHEN I ATTENDED THE ODYSSEY PROGRAM, I LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE SKILLS THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR A JOB IN INDUSTRY. I ALSO REALIZED THAT MOST OF THE SKILLS THAT I ALREADY HAVE ARE TRANSFERABLE AND ARE OF GREAT INTEREST TO INDUSTRY.
“THE ODYSSEY PROGRAMME CAME INTO MY LIFE AT A POINT WHERE I WAS FEELING INCREASINGLY DISILLUSIONED WITH MY CAREER PROSPECTS IN ACADEMIA. THE PROGRAMME GAVE ME THE CREATIVE ENERGY, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, AND MOTIVATION TO WORK ON MY CV, CONSIDER WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME IN A CAREER, AND LOOK FOR SOMETHING REWARDING. THE PROGRAMME IS BOTH THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND SELF-AFFIRMING BECAUSE IT GIVES EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS A RARE SPACE TO DOWN TOOLS SO TO SPEAK, AND FOCUS ON OURSELVES, OUR NEEDS, AND AMBITIONS, AND HOW THESE CAN BE REDEPLOYED IN OTHER AREAS OF WORK.”

Participant
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19 Universities plus N. Ireland

- Pilot Year 1 = 6 Universities
- HEA Review
- Year 2 = 6 Universities
- Year 3 = 6 Universities
- Year 4 = 2 Universities, Reporting and Project Wind Down
- **Shadowing = 40 people** trained to implement the Odyssey Nation wide
THANK YOU