



Heads of University Biosciences, Royal Society of Biology

HUBS/HUCBMS Learning & Teaching Workshop Series 2021

Inspiring, developing, and supporting the future stars of Bioscience Education

24 February 2021 | Virtual Workshop

This event was held as an online workshop with over 25 participants from across the UK and was co-created and co-delivered by Dr Katharine Hubbard (Hull), Dr Sue Jones (York St. John) and Dr David Smith (Sheffield Hallam). The workshop was designed to be collaborative and interactive, providing practical advice and support for bioscience educators at all career stages to identify their short term and longer-term goals.

We were delighted to be joined by three colleagues who have considerable experience and expertise in Learning and Teaching. Professor Heather McQueen (University of Edinburgh) and Professor Ian Turner (University of Derby) delivered short interactive discussions on their career paths through Learning and Teaching. In addition Professor Stella Jones-Devitt (University of Staffordshire), who has also considerable experience with supporting education focussed academics and raising the profile of teaching and learning, later facilitated a session on developing effective mentorship.

We began the event with an ice breaker where all participants completed a prepopulated delegate list identifying what they want to get out of the workshop and define their own career plans. Katharine outlined the aims of the workshop - giving participants time to reflect on their careers to date. Identification of these aims was followed up with tools to evidence individual impact for; promotion, external applications to the HE Bioscience Teacher of the Year award, the different categories of Fellowship of Advance HE and the National Teaching Fellow Scheme.

To facilitate and support discussions break out rooms were used throughout the day to allow peer interaction with others at different stages of their careers and experiences. The first break out session of the day in groups of ~6 participants was used to discuss short and long term goals and plan a basic route map and / or to prioritise goals. We also asked all participants to use copies of their own institutional promotion criteria / UKPSF / the HEA fellowship tool to help identify what they

already have achieved and highlight roles and activities that could feed into achieving their personal goal and applications.

This goal setting was followed by case studies of successful education-focused careers and panel discussion with Heather and Ian. These interesting and thought-provoking discussions highlighted useful or important things that colleagues have done that helped them to progress and the need for networking and collaboration. These discussions were used to trigger thoughts about similar roles that participants have already done or might want to take on to help them gather evidence of impact going forwards.

After lunch, Katharine outlined useful and practical ways to both identify and then evidence impact using this simple but effective grid to record information and advocated regular scheduled sessions to review and record activities and outcomes:

An Evidence Collecting Framework			
	Evidence of Activity	Evidence of Excellence	Evidence of Impact
Student-facing activities	Quantitative Qualitative		
Institutional-facing activities			
External-facing activities			

Having identified examples of quantitative and qualitative evidence that could be used as evidence of excellence and impact, participants again interacted in small groups in breakout rooms to discuss and start writing / planning their own evidence and impact. In this session, participants recorded any current and ongoing evidence identified any gaps, alongside developing strategies to address these.

The afternoon keynote session, facilitated by Stella focused on imagining an ideal mentoring partnership and what that might look like to inform our next steps in creating our new national biosciences mentoring network. These rich discussions have informed our approach to organise mentoring pairings and create regular scheduled sessions that will allow people dedicated time and space to think about their applications, build their networks and discuss progress.

In the last session of the day, we asked participants to undertake quiet self-reflection and then discuss with a small group to confirm ideas and activities that were the immediate focus. We asked all participants to identify who they would like to be paired with as mentors / mentees and to shape the peer network for people who are at similar stages or have similar aspirations.

We are currently organising the mentoring network and minimum expectations for the frequency of meetings and goal setting. We have already organised the first follow up event for Friday 26 March, 12:00 - 13:00, for the first peer mentoring session.

The feedback on the workshop from participants has been excellent, with 100% of participants who responded agreeing that they would recommend the event. The friendly and supportive nature of the event, opportunities to network, valuable discussions in smaller groups and the useful resources provided were commended as particular highlights. One participant commented:

“It was really motivating and inspiring to hear the range of experiences of those who presented. It was certainly very thought-provoking and it has given me a renewed focus and momentum to set my career goals”

This first workshop has met our original aims of:

1. Helping attendees to identify career goals, and the means to gather evidence for applications.
2. Signposting individuals towards existing resources (e.g. RSB HE Teacher Career Progression Framework; Advance HE Fellowship Category Tool)
3. Establishing a mentoring network to support career development in a sustainable way.

We have shared all co-created resources to date and have provided all participants with a useful tool kit of ideas that they can apply to their own situation and career aspirations. Our future plans are to maintain an ongoing annual cycle of national mentoring events to create and sustain a nationwide network of Bioscience educators.