



Australasian Wound & Tissue Repair Society

So, you would like a career in academia... ...tips on how to find, and apply for a fellowship

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Last issue we gave you all some tips on how to apply for a fellowship, this issue we're following it up with some tips on how to make your track record competitive. Whether it is for a fellowship application or applying for a position, as fantastic as an accomplishment that gaining your doctorate is you need to remember that everyone else that is applying is also going to have their doctorate as well. So how can you make your track record stand out from all the others??



Publications! Publish as much as you can during your PhD. You may be thinking that you're only a doctoral student, how can I do this? The number of publications that you can achieve out of your PhD will depend on your project, some people can get over 5 and others 1 or 2, some can publish along the way and others all at end. Either way try to get as many out of your PhD as you can! Good goal would be to aim for one publication a year.

Your first year could be a review article on the topic while your last couple of years should be results papers. Talk to your supervisor and plan your publications well ahead of your experiments. This can help you focus your research questions and experimental data. Having published papers before you finish your PhD will also help in your thesis examination passing more smoothly. While we would all love to publish in Nature and Science, sometimes having a lower impact publication is still better than not having any at all. It is your responsibility to take an active approach towards publishing, don't wait for your final year and follow the advice of your mentors.

Awards and grants, and again you're thinking that you're only a PhD student. From personal experience the best (and sometimes quite easy) ones you can get while you're a student or ECR are conference travel awards. Many societies (including AWTRS!) have conference travel awards that are only available for students and ECR's. Not only will getting a conference travel award look great on your track record, but your supervisor will also appreciate it as the money they



would save on sending you to a conference can be spend on more reagents for you to use in the lab! Attending a conference, will also give you an opportunity to win the best poster awards or best ECR oral presentation awards. In addition to different societies, try to find other awards that you could apply for as a PhD student or ECR. These could be institutional or state based and may vary between states however if you ask around more experienced staff or students you will find out that there are young investigator awards, science excellence awards, science in community awards available and specific to young investigators. Winning research grants as a PhD student is not common, but if you have a PhD recently awarded, there are foundations and societies that help ECRs establish their career

by offering ECR research grants of smaller value. Again these are often hospital or university based and sometimes linked to societies that specifically fund research in your research topic of interest. For more ambitions and successful ECR's NHMRC does have Project grants with extra points awarded to first time CIA young investigators. Our advice is: apply, apply, and apply!!

Experience, and by experience we mean experience in other labs. Having undertaken experiments in another lab, whether it's a national or international lab will boost your track record. A good way to visit an international lab is to link it with an international conference. Is there a lab overseas that uses a technique or animal model that is relevant to your project that you would like to learn? Demonstrating to potential employers or fellowship reviewers that you have collaborations nationally or internationally where you have undertaken some work and then published it, shows real research outcomes and may put you ahead of other candidates. Did you also know that the AWTRS travel award can also be used to go towards a lab visit (all the more reason to apply!)

Teaching and mentoring. While you're doing your doctorate is there an opportunity to help with tutoring or lab demonstrations? Are there honours or visiting students in your lab? Examples of teaching and mentoring can include lab demonstrations but also mentoring and training of less junior students in your lab or lab of your collaborators. These are important to ensure that you can provide evidence of contributing back to the education of others. For recently awarded PhD's, you can improve your record by making affiliations with the schools and providing guest lectures on the topic of expertise and co-supervising students with other senior researchers. This will not only improve your chances of attracting students, building your team but will also help in increasing your publication outcome.



Patents. Is your research industry linked/funded? Do your discoveries have applications for translational research and human clinical trials? Are there possibilities of patenting your research? These are the conversations worth having with your supervisor. Being one of the patent inventors could help demonstrate to reviewers your involvement with industry and translation of research.

Industry. Funding from government sources is getting increasingly competitive. One way to improve your track record is to try and align your research with the industry partner/s. This can range from having placements in industry and establishing collaborative projects, to industry funding and development of therapies, however this is highly project specific.

Community involvement/End user involvement. One way to boost your track profile is to demonstrate active involvement in the community. This can range from being a member of the Australian Society for Medical Research and promoting events during the national medical research week (science in the school, public outreach event promoting science education) to involvement with a patient/end user groups that may have programs helping patients with burn injuries for example. Community involvement can also include involvement in ECR Network groups or Science and Media organisations. Our advice is to demonstrate the contribution back to the community - get involved, and enjoy science!!