Supporting early career academics:

Conversational guidelines for senior staff and new colleagues

SUPPORTING EARLY CAREER ACADEMICS:
CONVERSATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR STAFF
AND NEW COLLEAGUES

contents

This booklet is part of the suite of resources developed from the Ako Aotearoa-funded project *Success, productivity and satisfaction in academia: The experiences of early career academics in New Zealand*, led by Kathryn Sutherland, Victoria University of Wellington. For the full report and to download all resources go to: www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/early-career-academics

For information on, or questions about, the research project itself please email Kathryn.Sutherland@vuw.ac.nz.
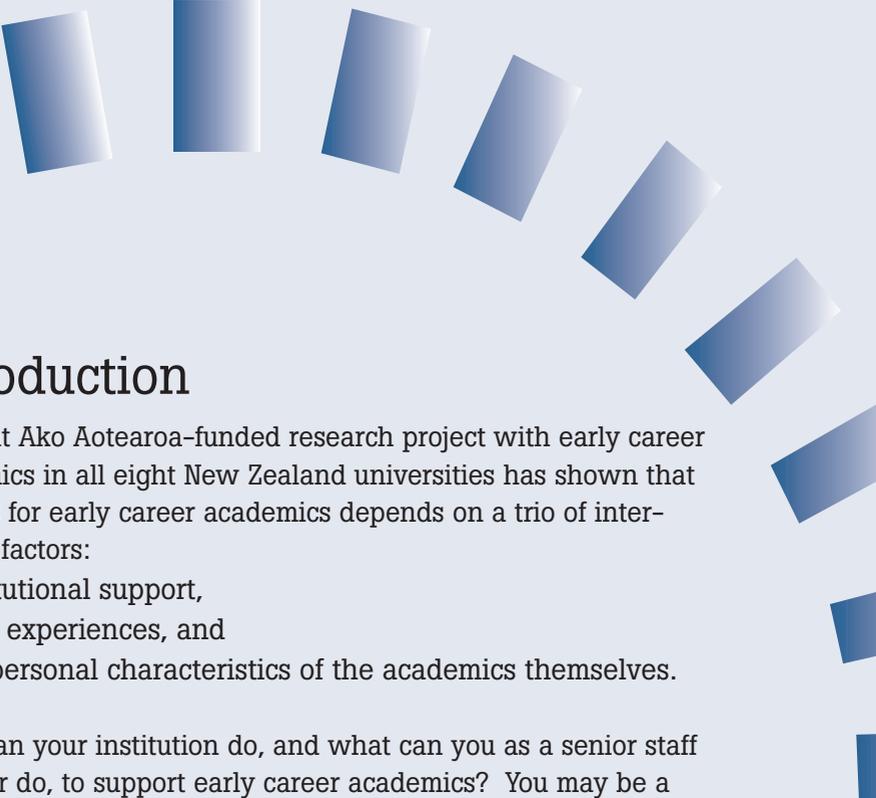
Introduction

A recent Ako Aotearoa–funded research project with early career academics in all eight New Zealand universities has shown that success for early career academics depends on a trio of inter-related factors:

- institutional support,
- prior experiences, and
- the personal characteristics of the academics themselves.

What can your institution do, and what can you as a senior staff member do, to support early career academics? You may be a Head of School, a Department Chair, a Programme Director, a Human Resources Manager, a mentor (formal or informal), a Dean or anyone else involved in supporting an early career academic. We hope that this resource will help guide you as you welcome, induct and provide on-going support for your new colleagues.

This guide is designed to be a useful accompaniment to, rather than replacement for, existing career development and planning or regular progress report processes that institutions may already have in place. Assuming that these processes have encouraged early career academics to identify their career goals and the areas they'll work on in the coming months and years, this guide probes a bit more deeply to work out exactly what training, support, and contacts will be most helpful for your new colleagues as they settle in to working at your institution.

How to use this guide

The first step is to **find out what your new colleagues bring to the institution from their prior experiences**, qualifications, contacts and studies. This guide poses questions that will help you, in conversation with your new colleagues, to identify their experiences and support needs around teaching, research, supervision, service and leadership.

The prior experiences listed on the pages following just scratch the surface of what a new academic might bring to their career, so do not feel limited by what is on the page. Probe to find out what else your new colleagues might have experienced that will help them to succeed in and enjoy their work at your institution.

The next step is to **provide suggestions for potential support services and professional development opportunities** that might enable your new colleagues to transition smoothly into their academic roles at your institution. Most institutions will have an induction process and checklist/procedure that covers off issues such as email, online services and phone access; parking services; equipment and resource availability; office hours; kitchen and toilet locations; after hours and emergency procedures; safety and security, *etc*. However, there is a vast array of other academic policies and procedures that new academics need to know about in their first few months, and it is not always easy to filter which are most important, and at which times. One of your key roles as a senior staff member supporting new colleagues is to help them avoid "information overload" and work out what to prioritise, when.

The **Professional Development and Support Planner** at the end of this guide is to help your new colleagues to map out when they could seek particular support and training. Blank versions of this planner are available for you to fill in. You can download them free as an A4 PDF from the Ako Aotearoa website (see url below), or you can purchase A3 versions in print via www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/shop.

This whole process of identifying prior experiences, and subsequent support and training needs, should sit alongside a personal process in which your new colleagues ponder their goals, values and aspirations in academia. To this end, we have designed this guide as an accompaniment to the "Surviving and Succeeding as an Early Career Academic" booklet, which focuses on the personal characteristics that help early career academics to succeed in and enjoy their work. You can find copies of that resource here: http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/early-career-academics

Teaching

What prior experience, if any, do your new colleagues have in teaching?

– Lecturing to big classes
– Teaching small groups
– Coordinating a course
– Team teaching
– Designing a course from scratch
– Designing assessment
– Moderating a marking meeting
– Teaching by distance
– Teaching with new technologies
– Teaching students from other cultures or backgrounds
– Other
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SUPPORT NEEDED

What kinds of teaching will your new colleague be expected to do, and in which particular areas might they need to develop experience or seek support?

Teaching Policies and Procedures

Your institution will likely have a vast array of policies and processes relating to various aspects of the teaching role, some of which we have listed below. Your new colleague will not need to know all of them straight away, and may not need to know some of them at all – can you help them to filter what is important and when?

a. Course design and delivery policy
b. Course outline or syllabus expectations and timing
c. Assessment handbook/policy
d. Plagiarism/Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct
e. Examination policy/procedures
f. Online Learning Management System access, policies, processes and relationship with other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter
g. Class representatives policy and processes
h. Student evaluation processes and timing – who does what, when?
i. Ordering textbooks and/or putting together course readers
j. Appointing and supporting tutors
k. Grading and marking policies and expectations
l. Academic grievance policy
m. Meeting the needs of students with impairments policy
n. Other

When does your new colleague need to know about this?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
f. _____
g. _____
h. _____
i. _____
j. _____
k. _____
l. _____
m. _____
n. _____

Teaching support, training and professional development opportunities

– Orientation to teaching at your institution
– Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education
– Workshops on teaching, marking, assessment, course design, *etc.*
– Peer observation of teaching
– AV Services and lecture theatre equipment training
– Online learning management system training
– Working with student representatives
– Mentoring
– Other
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Do you know the managers and/or any of the staff of the units who offer this professional development, and can you direct your new colleague to their webpages on the university's website?

○ Centre for Teaching & Learning or Centre for Academic Development

○ Multimedia Unit/AV Services

○ IT Services

○ Students' Association

○ Other

Research

What prior experience, if any, do your new colleagues have in research?

- Sole-authored peer-reviewed publications in international outlets
- Multi-authored publications
- Principal investigator of a large, externally-funded research project
- Member of an externally-funded project team
- Received internal grant funding
- Applied for external or internal funding of any sort, whether successful or not
- Attended or presented at an international conference
- Written an ethics application
- Written a book proposal
- Worked on an international collaborative research team
- Other
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SUPPORT NEEDED

What are the research norms and expectations in your department or institution (around sole-authored or collaborative work, for example) and in which areas might your new colleagues need to develop their research experience?

Research Policies and Procedures

Your institution will likely have a vast array of policies and processes relating to research expectations, some of which we have listed below. Your new colleague will not need to know all of them straight away, and may not need to know some of them at all – can you help them to filter what is important and when?

a. Conference and research leave funding and processes
b. New researcher grant opportunities and timing
c. Other internal (institutional and/ or faculty) research grant funding availability, processes and timeframes
d. External (national and international) research grant funding expectations, opportunities and timeframes
e. Human ethics
f. Animal ethics
g. Online grants management system/s
h. PBRF expectations, processes and timing
i. Research expertise database or media guide
j. Qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, software licences and policies
k. Travel and expenses policy
l. Other

When does your new colleague need to know about this?

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j. _____

k. _____

l. _____

Research support, training and professional development opportunities

– Grant writing workshops
– Workshops on scholarly writing, reviewing, editing, revising, *etc.*
– Writing retreats
– Software/database training
– Leadership training
– Mentoring
– Other
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Do you know the managers and/or any of the staff of the units who offer this professional development, and can you direct your new colleague to their webpages on the university's website?

○ Research Office

○ Faculty of Graduate Research

○ Human Resources

○ IT Services

○ Library

○ Other

Supervision

What experience do your new colleagues have SUPERVISING research/thesis students? At what levels and with whom?

– Honours-level research paper supervision
– Master's thesis supervision
– PhD supervision as principal supervisor
– PhD supervision as co- or secondary supervisor
– Supervision of a team of students working on the same research project
– Summer scholarship or project supervision
– Other
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SUPPORT NEEDED

What are the supervision norms and expectations in your department or institution and in which areas might your new colleagues need to develop their supervision experience?

Supervision Policies and Procedures

Your institution will have various policies and processes around supervision, some of which we have listed below. Your new colleague will not need to know all of them straight away, and may not need to know some of them at all – can you help them to filter what is important and when?

a. PhD policy
b. Master's by thesis policy
c. Supervision training expectations
d. Six monthly/yearly progress reports
e. Oral exam expectations and processes
f. Thesis submission and examination procedures
g. Selecting and appointing examiners
h. Scholarship opportunities for students
i. Joint authorship policy
j. Relationships with students policy
k. Staff and Student Conduct Statutes
l. Thesis availability and intellectual property policy
m. Proofreading and editorial advice policy
n. Other

When does your new colleague need to know about this?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

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Supervision support, training and professional development opportunities

– Mandatory training for supervisors
– Other supervision workshops
– Training for postgraduate coordinators
– Training to be an oral examiner
– Thesis marking workshops
– Other
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Do you know the managers and/or any of the staff of the units who offer this professional development, and can you direct your new colleague to their webpages on the university's website?

O Research Office
O Centre for Academic Development
O Faculty of Graduate Research
O Writing Centre
O Other

Service and Leadership

What service and leadership experience do your new colleagues have and at what levels?

– Department and/or university committee membership
– Working party experience
– Editorial board membership
– Reviewing experience (books, journal articles, conferences, *etc.*)
– Conference and/or event organisation
– Interview or award panels
– Management of staff and/or budgets
– Experience with professional bodies/directorships of boards or companies
– A different career prior to joining academia
– Local or national government experience
– Community leadership
– Experience responding to or working with the media
– Working knowledge of the New Zealand education sector (primary, secondary and tertiary) – familiarity with NCEA, for example
– Policy or volunteer work for a national body, charity, health board, non-governmental organisation, religious or interest group

– Other:_____

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SUPPORT NEEDED

What does your institution expect of new academics in terms of service and leadership, and in which areas might your new colleague need to volunteer and/or seek support and training?

OPPORTUNITIES

In which areas might your new colleague's experience be useful to others?

Service and Leadership Policies and Procedures

Which policies and procedures at your institution are most going to affect your new colleague's ability to serve and lead his or her colleagues, department, university, discipline or community?

a. Staff/Student Conduct Policy
b. Conflicts of interest statutes or policies
c. Policies around the use of social media on campus
d. Department/Faculty/University meeting schedules and expected attendance
e. Committee service expectations
f. Promotion scales and timeframes
g. Career development and performance review processes
h. Responding to media requests
i. Entitlement to undertake private work/off-campus activities
j. Safe campus policy
k. Environmental policy
l. Purchasing, procurement and expenditure policies
m. Gift and koha policy
n. Equity and Diversity policies
o. Other

When does your new colleague need to know about this?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

h. _____

i. _____

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o. _____

Service support, training and professional development opportunities

– Powhiri and/or other formal welcome to the institution
– Induction/Orientation Day
– Management or leadership training
– Budget and finance systems training
– Language acquisition or cultural awareness training
– Treaty training
– Equity/Disability training
– Media training
– Other
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Do you know the managers and/or any of the staff of the units who offer this professional development, and can you directyour new colleague to their webpages on the university's website?

○ Marae
○ Continuing Education/Lifelong Learning Centre/Professional and Executive Development Centre
○ Language Learning Centre
○ Disability Support Services
○ Professional association/union
○ Other

Professional Development and Support Planner – Example

Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Teaching		Orientation Lecture theatre training	PGCert begins	Mentoring programme	Peer Observation			Marking and moderation workshop				Course design workshop
Research			Grant management system training	Mentoring programme	New Researcher Grant app due	Conference leave funding app due			How to write a lot workshop		Writing retreat	Draft PBRF portfolio
Supervision					Supervision Training					Supervision training follow up		
Service & Leadership			Sign up for conference organising committee					Submit a book review	Observe promotion round		Offer to be a conference paper reviewer	
General/ Other		Powhiri	Cultural awareness training				Begin Te Reo classes					