

Case Study 1: Succeeding in Industry Programme

As a part of our ongoing development of Postdoctoral researchers at ICR, we monitor areas where their needs are not fully met by gathering feedback from our Postdoc Association, postdoc alumni and through targeted surveys. In 2018 we conducted a survey to the dedicated LinkedIn Postdoc alumni group. Gathering information on their career destinations, we identified that many transition into industrial R&D; an area that we had previously supported on an ad-hoc basis. This reinforced feedback from our Postdoc population who parallelly highlighted the need to support the careers of those looking to transition into industrial R&D.

As such we have developed a training programme entitled 'Succeeding in Industry'. We liaised with our Postdocs in designing these workshops, asking for their input in content and pitch, as well as involving faculty with experience in the pharmaceutical sector to identify potential topics. As a result, we identified two key themes to kick off the programme with: finding out what it is like working in various industrial R&D settings and understanding how to go about finding a job in industry. The outcome were the following two courses:

- **Alumni and friends in Industry** – guest alumni and friends shared their experiences of transitioning from academia to Industry, talking about their career paths within big pharma, biotechs and Contract Research Organisations (CROs). The speakers focused on the differences in culture between the work environment in academia and that of industry, as well as on breaking myths and stereotypes about industrial R&D. Feedback from the ~40 attendees was very positive with many reporting improvements in knowledge for their future careers and personal networking skills.
- **Recruiters in Industry with CV & Interview skills** – where postdocs explored how to tailor their CV to an industrial R&D employer and how to pitch their expertise at interview. This was supported by a guest recruiter from GSK, giving their perspective of what recruiters in industry are looking for and sharing insights on how talent acquisition works in industrial R&D. Feedback was very positive for this session, with many commenting on how useful it was speaking to the recruiter and gaining some insights on how the recruitment process works in big pharma.

We will be growing the programme by having additional sessions with recruiters from various R&D settings as well as by expanding the topics to include skills needed to succeed in industry once a job is secured e.g. the drug discovery process in industry, and non-lab based careers in industrial R&D settings.

Case Study 2: The Scientific Officers Association & the SO Teamwork and Collaboration Award

In our 2014/15 HR Excellence in Research submission, we included a Case Study about our technical research staff called Scientific Officers, describing the formation of a Scientific Officers Association Committee (SOAC) in 2011 and some of its initiatives at 3yrs.

Now, 7yrs on, we are pleased that the committee and its initiatives have gone from strength to strength. We continue to offer a dedicated lunchtime training series, with condensed sessions aimed at those that run core facilities and that can't attend whole or half-day courses, but open to all. These courses have now seen >500 participants and consistently good feedback. Other initiatives such as the SOAC travel bursaries and the promotions mentoring scheme continue going strong, with over 26 people receiving a travel bursary to attend a conference or course since 2014 and 21 people having matched to a mentor to help them go through their promotion.

Of particular mention is the continuous growth around initiatives to recognise and value our Scientific Officers. The ICR's annual Technical Conference, which is driven by the SOAC and first ran in 2012, and now includes three key awards. In 2016, the '**SO Teamwork & Collaboration Award**' was introduced to recognise the role that technicians play in supporting Team Science. Team leaders were encouraged to nominate SOs who had made an important contribution to teamwork or collaboration efforts. Each year we have received no less than 6 nominations, and winners are awarded a prize during the conference. In addition, in 2017 the SOAC introduced a **best talk** and **best poster** awards for the Technical Conference, with winners being presented with an award. In all cases, individuals are being publicised via ICR-wide communications to ensure visibility and recognition of our outstanding technicians.

Finally, the group has created a Twitter account with the aim of increasing visibility and recognition of our SO group and its initiatives. Of mention is the recent Technician Commitment One-Year-In Signatory event in No18 at the Tower of London, where SOAC reps attended to receive the ICR's Technician Commitment award. Future plans include featuring individual SOA Committee members on Twitter to raise their profile both within and outside the ICR.