

Training for Universities

Tailored facilitation and training for
Academic & Professional Services staff,
Early Career Researchers and PhD Students



Workshop outlines 2026- 2027

Includes blended learning solutions and
workshops delivered online.

Condensed, 90-minute sessions available.

Supporting Universities and their Staff:
Academic Career Coaching
Specialist and Key Skills Training



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Tailored Training Delivered by Specialist Trainers

Providing programmes specifically relevant to training needs of University Staff, Academics, Researchers and students within the context of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

What do your staff need – and who do they need to hear it from?

Finding training that really resonates with academic and research staff is harder than it looks.

Researchers are critical thinkers. They disengage quickly from generic content, from frameworks that don't fit their world or facilitators who don't understand the specific pressures of an academic career.

Training that works is grounded in that world and delivered by someone who has lived it.

For over 25 years I was a researcher and academic, beginning with a PhD in molecular genetics and progressing to Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Virology. (For more information, see page 30) I understand the competing demands on staff, the culture within universities and research institutes and the particular challenges facing anyone navigating an academic career in today's environment.

When I left academia I combined that insider knowledge with professional training in coaching, NLP and behavioural psychology - and Training for Universities was the result.

Workshops are available across a wide range of development needs: from leadership and supervision to prioritisation and focus, developing professional identity and networking, to time management and effective presentation skills.

Most training can be delivered in person or online as half-day workshops or as condensed 90-minute sessions. Bespoke design and blended learning solutions are also available. See page 4 for more on how condensed sessions work and whether they might suit your programme.

If you're looking for training your staff will actually engage with, I'd welcome the conversation.

The workshop listings begin on the following pages. The Leading from Expertise programme (page 6) may be a useful place to start for institutions looking to support researchers moving into leadership.

My newest addition: *Owning Your Place at the Table: from Imposter Syndrome to Strategic Leadership*, distils the most critical shift mid-career researchers need to make: from "performing competence" to deliberately occupying their role.

Do get in touch.



Dr Margaret Collins

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Workshops can be delivered as half day sessions in person or live, using Zoom software, supplemented by recorded material available for watching as/when required. Several sessions are available as condensed, 90-minute sessions.

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The above list gives an indication of workshops available.
Content can be tailored or created for custom workshops if required.

Bookings are subject to the terms and conditions listed on page 31 unless otherwise agreed.

Please do contact us if you have any questions or requests for specific training or team-building needs to be addressed: info@TrainingForUniversities.com.

Delivery Options, Costs and Carbon Footprints

During these last few years I have discovered:

- Training can be delivered effectively through online media such as Zoom.
- Most workshops can be a 3 hour session – shorter or longer times can be agreed. The exception is Presentation Skills which really works best if participants have the time to deliver a presentation and receive constructive feedback – that takes time.
- I have created a bank of supporting video content so workshops could be delivered entirely online or live workshops can be supported by blended content.

As we plan training delivery for 2026 through 2027 I would ask you to consider:

- What can be delivered remotely using Zoom?
- What workshops are better or need to be delivered in person?
- Consolidation: what in-person workshops can be delivered on consecutive days?
- Condensed – short and sharp sessions to allow more of your most busy staff to join,

Condensed Workshops Explained: You know your staff want development. Many of you also notice that the same people struggle to protect time to actually attend. The question worth sitting with is not whether training has value - you already know it does - but how to make it accessible enough that more people can benefit from it.

For a selection of workshops I now offer a focused 90-minute version alongside the standard half-day session.

The 90-minute format is not a cut-down version of the original.

It is a deliberately designed session built around the content with the highest immediate impact, the ideas and tools participants are most likely to apply straight away. Interactive elements and small group discussion are retained.

At the end of the session participants are free to leave or to stay on for continued discussion and questions. Those with pressing commitments can return to their work having genuinely gained something, those with more time can get personalised support.

A shorter workshop that reaches more of your staff consistently outperforms a longer one that most of them cannot attend.

If a condensed format would help you reach staff who currently opt out I am happy to discuss which workshops are available in this format and what works best for your programme.

The fee for a condensed session reflects the same level of design, expertise and preparation as the full workshop, the difference is in delivery time, not in the quality or depth of what participants take away.

Online delivery may be more convenient for many participants. It reduces the need for travel, saves time and expense, increases access to people remote from your campus.

Online delivery reduces costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence, allowing your budget to deliver more training and reduces the carbon footprint of your programme.

Consolidation by delivering face to face workshops in blocks, reduces the number of journeys needed. This has a real impact on my carbon consumption, your carbon footprint and saves you money.

Consolidation & online delivery reduce carbon footprint of training delivery.

Academic Career and Performance Coaching

Coaching offers a focused, confidential space for professional development — working with real situations, current pressures and longer-term goals. It is particularly effective at career transition points: preparing for promotion, stepping into leadership, navigating a significant change in role or direction.

My coaching approach combines professional training in cognitive behavioural coaching, NLP and neurobiology with over 25 years' experience as a researcher and senior academic. I understand the specific pressures of academic life and the particular challenges of career progression within universities and research institutes.

Coaching can be commissioned for individual staff or groups at any career stage - from experienced academics preparing for senior roles or promotions through Early Career Researchers building confidence and clarity. It is well suited to situations where one-to-one support would make a meaningful difference: grant applications, promotion preparation, leadership transitions or career development conversations.

Group coaching is also available and is particularly well suited to supporting female ECRs or researchers considering a move into research leadership or industry. Recent peer-reviewed research from Henley Business School found that women who participated in women-only group coaching were significantly more likely to receive a pay rise than those who did not (Filleti & Jones, 2025).

Coaching can be funded in various ways - through HR or organisational development budgets, QR funding or a researcher's own professional development allocation.

I am happy to discuss what would work best in your context.

Specialist tools including Behavioural Styles / DISC Analysis are available where these would add value.

Do get in touch to explore what might be most useful for your staff.

But don't just take my word for it:



It was a pleasure to meet you last week - I really enjoyed the session. I have been recommending you to my colleagues non-stop, describing you (if you don't mind) as exactly "the small gin and tonic" I needed! I think you get what I mean. I really did get a lot out of the session.

Professor C Henry



"I have to tell you that I don't sleep well the night of the session. I thought that tea, coffee and chocolate were to blame but it's simply that my head is buzzing.

Last night I just had to get out of bed and just make a to-do-list of the things that we'd discussed."

Pat Williams



"This programme is changing my life for the better. I am amazed at how powerful the exercises are. Margaret's guidance, care, patience and listening skills are scaffolding my development with precision, at the right pace. I cannot quite believe the progress I am making."

Dr Ruth Kitchen

Please contact us for further details: info@TrainingForUniversities.com

See also: <https://TrainingForUniversities.com> and <https://MargaretCollins.com>

Leading From Expertise: 1 to 1 or group development programme

A Leadership Development Programme for Researchers and Academic Professionals

This blended group coaching programme has a focus on improving personal leadership skills and confidence.

Who is this programme for?

This programme is designed for researchers, academics and professional services staff who are ready to develop as leaders or are finding themselves in leadership situations. It is particularly suited to mid-career researchers leading or preparing to lead teams or projects (that may include some postdocs or research fellows). Lecturers navigating the shift from independent expert to leader and professional services staff stepping into roles with greater responsibility are typical participants.

Why this programme?

Researchers are experts.

They have built their careers on deep knowledge, rigorous thinking and the ability to work independently. Leadership asks something different of them and the gap between being an expert and leading other experts is often wider than people expect.

Finding training that genuinely resonates with this group is harder than it looks.

Researchers disengage quickly from generic content or facilitators who don't understand the specific pressures of an academic career. Training that works is grounded in that world and delivered by someone who has lived it.

What the programme covers

Five modules, designed as a coherent arc from initial self-awareness to outward influence.

We create a structured environment where people think differently about themselves and their role. Participants say things like:

"I'm being seen"

"I'm holding my ground and making decisions"

"Others can see the difference"

"I start the day with things that are important instead of emails"

"I'm making more time for reflection and planning."

“ “ What a course!
I really enjoyed learning more about myself and others and how to prepare and plan to achieve a positive outcome.

The structure that facilitates this journey is:

Module 1: What Does Leadership Mean for Me?

We begin with you. What kind of leader do you want to be?

How do the skills you already have translate into leadership?

What is leadership in a research environment and is it different to management?

Module 2: What Holds You Back?

Imposter feelings, unconscious bias, the inner critic and limiting beliefs - the internal and external barriers that stop capable people stepping up.

Module 3: Making Time for What Matters

Prioritisation, time and energy management, protecting space for high-impact work.

Consistently the highest-rated module in both participant feedback and measured confidence gains. Practical tools you can use immediately.

Module 4: Who do I want to be? Developing identity within a professional network

Professional identity, personal values and networking with intention.

How do you want to be known? What do you want to stand for?

How do you build the relationships that support your work and your career?

Module 5: How Do I Communicate and Influence?

Communication styles, NLP, DISC behavioural styles, skills for leading and influencing people who are different from you. Structures for delegation and delivering feedback. Practical tools for managing up, across and within teams.

Leading from Expertise...

What participants experience

Participants in this programme have described:

- Taking back control of their time and protecting it for the work that genuinely matters
- Stepping into leadership roles with real confidence, including roles they had previously been talking themselves out of
- Recognising imposter feelings for what they are and no longer letting them make decisions on their behalf
- Using their own leadership style consciously, deliberately rather than defaulting to habit
- Communicating and influencing more effectively across different people and situations
- Building and using their professional network with intention and authenticity
- Feeling more confident in line management, calmer in meetings, less reliant on checking with their own manager

What participants say:

"I am more aware of who I am and less afraid to hold my ground. I learned to approach people differently, to create a safety network and to promote change by welcoming discussions."

"I can see the progress I've made in a short period of time. I'm being seen, no longer afraid to show up and have an opinion."

"Ironically, I almost did not attend the time management session as I perceived that I did not have enough time. It was this session that I gained the most value."

"The training was delivered from a scientific academic perspective, which made the content highly relatable. We rarely take the time to learn about these more 'soft' skills that are ultimately so important for creating supportive work environments."

"Some of the best training I have ever attended."

Delivery

Leading from Expertise is a multi-month programme, typically four to six months allowing time for reflection and integration between sessions. Coaching sessions consolidate growth.

It can be delivered as a blended programme combining on-demand video content with group coaching sessions or as a fully synchronous workshop series - the format is tailored to the commissioning organisation's needs and the time available to participants.

Group sizes of 12 to 20 work well but this is flexible. The programme can be delivered in-house for a single institution or possibly across institutions to create additional networking value.

Please do get in touch to discuss what would work best for your staff.



The biggest change for me is feeling more confident in line managing, feeling calmer when in large meetings with other managers.

I felt more empowered to make decisions for the people I line manage without having to check with my own manager.

I think has helped improve my relationships with those who report to me. I feel more in control of my support for them!

Owning Your Place at the Table: from Imposter Syndrome to Strategic Leadership



Many talented researchers reach mid-career doing excellent work and still feel like they're waiting for permission to fully occupy their role.

This workshop addresses that directly.

Participants explore why the behaviours that got them here - working hard, staying quiet, saying yes, letting the work speak for itself - stop working at this transitional stage of their careers.

We clarify what the transition to genuine research leadership actually looks like in practice.

Drawing on research into imposter feelings, unconscious bias and professional identity, the session moves from insight to action.

Participants leave with three tools they can use immediately: managing the Inner Critic, filtering requests strategically and narrating their work in ways that build visibility and impact.

This workshop is practical, research-informed and grounded in the realities of academic life.

For researchers who are ready to own what they're already doing.

During this workshop we will explore:

- Context — It's not just you
- The Servant to Sovereign transition
- Imposter patterns — our thinking shapes behaviour
- The energy cost of over-proving
- Leadership identity — Who you need to become
- Action — What changes now

Available as a 90-minute
condensed workshop

This workshop can be tailored to particular groups in your University such as PhD students, Women Researchers, New Academics...



"Thank you for a really excellent workshop last week. It was very thought provoking and integrated material from so many different areas. I gained so much insight. Thank you!"

Ruth



"I am happier being seen, showing up and accepting myself without trying to be someone else."

Time and Energy Management: Strategies for Getting Stuff Done!

A fully online, webinar version of this workshop is available

Everybody has just 24 hours in every day, yet some people seem to achieve much more than others with their allotted time.

In an academic environment, it is likely that there will never be enough time to do everything.

With many competing demands it's easy to feel constantly busy while making limited progress on the work that counts most.

Many people find themselves reacting to feelings of urgency rather than making deliberate choices about how they use their time and energy.

This practical session focuses on prioritisation, decision-making and managing energy alongside time. Participants will explore how to make better choices about what to focus on, how to balance short-term demands with long-term goals and how to protect time for meaningful work.

The workshop introduces realistic tools and frameworks to support better planning, clearer priorities and more effective use of time. The course will also allow participants to develop their own work-life balance and to reflect on how they choose to spend their time.

As a result of this half day workshop participants will have tools to

- Prioritise what they choose to do
- Gain practical approaches to prioritising competing demands
- Understand how to balance urgent tasks with important long-term work
- Learn how to manage energy, not just time
- Reflect on how they want to spend their time at work and beyond



I would like to thank you - for me, the time management 3 hours was probably the best 3 hours training I have ever spent. I came away with really practical solutions that enabled me to go back into the office with a clear plan for change. My day was energised by a sense of focus because rather than the day controlling me, I feel that I have a strategy that enables me to manage my day and get the job done.

For some reason the way you presented the session meant that I remembered the information and this information has kept coming to mind to keep me on task. I have shared what I have learned with lots of other people and I will be eating frogs at the start of every day until the supply runs out.

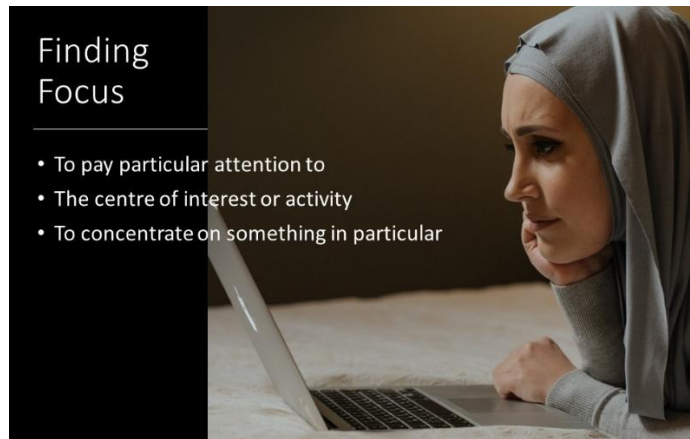
Mevalyn Cross



"This was one of the best and most useful workshops I have attended.

It offered insight into our attitudes and how this affects our use of time and some excellent practical strategies that are easy to implement e.g. re emails, diaries, dealing with requests. Margaret's presentation was just the right pace and structure. I found the handout extremely useful and have already found benefits in terms of using new strategies."

Finding Focus – the secret to getting the right stuff done



“ The most important thing for me was realising that difficulty focusing is a common problem and not unique to me. There are things that I can do to improve that don't require me to miraculously develop a new hyper-efficient personality!

Finding focus - something so simple and yet often elusive.

Many of your researchers and staff know exactly what they should be working on. The problem is actually doing it - deeply, sustainably - without being constantly pulled away.

Fragmented days, competing demands and the relentless pull of email and notifications make genuine concentration increasingly rare. Even people with well-organised diaries find that the important work keeps getting displaced. The issue isn't planning - it's attention.

This workshop gets to the heart of why focus is harder than it should be and gives participants a practical toolkit for doing something about it. Drawing on research into cognitive performance, chronobiology and behavioural psychology, it explores how attention actually works and how to work with it rather than against it.

Participants leave with strategies they can use immediately, yes, to protect time for deep work, reduce the cost of interruptions and build the kind of mental fitness that makes sustained, high-quality output possible.

In this workshop we explore:

- Why attention is the real currency of progress (not time)
- How to identify and manage the internal habits that sabotage focus
- Practical approaches to structuring work around energy and cognitive peaks
- How to create environments and boundaries that support deep work
- Ways to strengthen the ability to focus through deliberate practice.

“ The session was very helpful. I learned that it is important to plan and prioritize activities directly linked to key performance and career development indicators... I enjoyed the open and sincere conversations and the use of examples from her own career and experiences to illustrate theories and models.

“ So many sensible points peppered throughout the session:
- Take time to prepare to work (planning, scheduling, etc).
- You'll never get everything done, but the things you prioritise will get done.
- Thinking about monthly, quarterly, and annual goals...

“ Honestly, it was a fantastic workshop. One of the best, if not the best, I have attended in recent years. It was not too short or too long. The trainer was excellent. I feel like I got so much out of it.

How to Stop Procrastinating or The Secret to Getting Started

Do you feel paralysed, not starting tasks that you know you want and need to do?

Do you leave things to the last minute and stay up all night to get them done just in time?

This is not a time management workshop - dealing with procrastination, the habit of putting things off until the last minute, requires more than good time management.

Procrastination is rarely about poor time management. More often, it's about avoiding tasks that feel difficult, uncomfortable or overwhelming.

Many researchers recognise the gap between what they intend to do and what they actually do. Important work gets delayed, often replaced by more immediate or less challenging tasks - even when the long-term consequences are clear.

Procrastination often seems to defy logic and fly in the face of what we know we need and often deeply want to do – to start and then to complete – tasks that we know are needed for our professional career development.

This frustrating habit can seem so counter-productive as it makes even seemingly simple tasks feel unpleasant as we struggle to understand our own resistance in the face of an overwhelming need to get stuff done.

This workshop will allow participants the space to examine and to question their procrastination, to understand why we do it and most importantly to explore ways to stop putting things off and start getting things done.

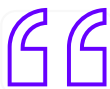
During this half day workshop we will explore:

- Why procrastination happens and how it shows up
- Personal triggers and patterns of avoidance
- Practical strategies to get started and maintain momentum
- Simple techniques to overcome barriers and build more effective working habits

This can be delivered as a half day workshop using Zoom.



This has been really helpful to me and was immediately and practically implementable. The leader was an excellent communicator with very practical ideas.



"The session was eye-opening! I was blown away by the insights it offered, and it got me thinking about my post-PhD future.



"This is a must if you feel overwhelmed, trying to do too much, and not getting much done. Also, if you are beginning your journey and want to avoid procrastination, this is great for figuring out what it is and what can/could trigger it.

Managing Pressure Positively

A fully online, webinar version of this workshop is available

Pressure is an inevitable part of academic and professional life.

Burnout doesn't have to be.

When demands are high and expectations keep growing, many people respond by working harder, pushing through and putting their own needs aside. This can work in the short term but over time it leads to exhaustion, reduced effectiveness and a loss of motivation or enjoyment in work.

This workshop takes a different approach.

Rather than focusing on time management (separate workshop) or simply "coping better", we help participants understand what is really happening when pressure builds and how to respond in a way that protects both performance and wellbeing.

Drawing on research from psychology and neuroscience, the session explores:

- The difference between pressure and stress — and why both matter
- How chronic stress leads to burnout, and how to spot early warning signs
- Why your interpretation of pressure affects your performance and resilience
- How to identify what is within your control, influence or acceptance

Participants will learn a number of practical, evidence-based strategies to manage pressure more effectively in the moment, including how to:

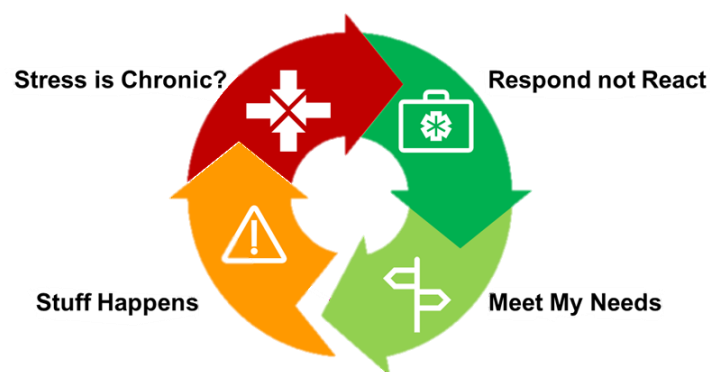
- Regulate their response when stress levels rise
- Refocus attention and reduce overwhelm
- Make clearer, more intentional choices under pressure
- Build sustainable habits that support resilience over time

Available as a 90-minute condensed workshop

The workshop is interactive and reflective, enabling participants to apply the ideas directly to their own work and challenges.

Participants will leave with:

- A clear understanding of how pressure and stress affect performance
- Insight into their own stress patterns and early warning signs
- Practical tools they can use immediately
- A simple, personalised strategy for managing pressure more effectively



"I went on the Managing Pressure Positively workshop on Friday and I just wanted to let you know that it was the best course I have ever been on. The person running it was fantastic!"

Presentation Skills/Presenting Your Research at Conference

Surveys consistently show that public speaking is one of the most feared professional activities. Yet, throughout your career, you will be expected to present your work clearly and confidently — whether in meetings, seminars or research conferences.

This practical and engaging workshop focuses on how to design and deliver presentations that work. Rather than relying on "tips and tricks", we explore a simple question-led framework that helps you think clearly about your purpose, your audience and the impact you create.

Participants will develop their skills by exploring five key questions:

1. What makes a presentation work?
2. What am I really trying to do with this presentation?
3. How do I keep people with me from start to finish?
4. What if things don't go to plan?
5. What happens next — and how do I stay in control?

Through discussion, structured activities and practical examples, we will explore how to plan and structure content, maintain audience attention and handle questions with confidence.

In a full day workshop, participants are invited to deliver a short presentation and receive supportive coaching and feedback.

As a result of this workshop participants will:

- Understand how words, voice and body language combine to create impact
- Use a clear framework to plan and structure presentations
- Be confident in identifying purpose, audience and key message
- Apply practical strategies to maintain attention and engagement
- Feel more prepared to handle questions and discussion
- Have strategies to manage presentation nerves and perform under pressure

This workshop is suitable for those preparing to present at national or international conferences, multidisciplinary meetings or internal strategy sessions. The emphasis and examples are adapted to the audience.



"Margaret was extremely motivating and ran a very enjoyable and informative session.

I can truthfully say that I have never attended a better course, either here or in the many years I have worked in the commercial sector!"

JC-H



"A very, very good course. While I have done many presentations already I had much to learn.

Margaret taught in a holistic way that was both interesting and relevant. Thank you for a great day."

Sally

Confident Speaking at Meetings

A fully online, webinar version of this workshop is available



We all attend meetings.

Whether it's the weekly department/research group debriefing, the departmental Management Group, the Health and Safety Advisory Committee, whatever, we all have some meetings scheduled in our diary.

As time is such an important and valuable resource, a fundamental question is "Why are we there"? If we attend meetings at all it is essential that we make them work for us!

This workshop aims to identify the key components of "confident speaking at meetings" and to provide both a structure and tools for planning and delivery.

At the end of this workshop the participants will:

- be clear about their purpose in attending a meeting
- know essential questions to answer when planning for a meeting
- understand the different contributions of words, voice and body language as strategies to build rapport
- know how to plan and deliver the content of your contribution
- have tools that can be used to develop confidence and manage anxiety.

This can be delivered a half day workshop using Zoom.



I attended Confident Speaking At Meetings yesterday, which I honestly found to be one of the best courses I have attended here at the University. It was excellent - very useful indeed. Thank you so much. I feel anyone, no matter how junior or senior would benefit from the course - and I wish I'd done it years ago!

Sarah



"Didn't think it would be relevant, but it was really good. I now feel more confident about presentations and job interviews too!!"

Communication Skills and DISC Behavioural Styles

Effective communication is consistently cited as the most sought-after professional skill yet most of us were never explicitly taught how to do it well.

Technical expertise gets you to the table.

Communication skills determine what happens when you get there.

Misunderstandings, unspoken assumptions and differences in communication styles can lead to frustration, inefficiency and conflict within teams.

Drawing on several different models, we explore how people filter the same information differently, how language patterns reveal what someone needs from a conversation and how to build trust by adapting your communication style.



This practical workshop explores how communication really works. Participants will gain insight into their own communication preferences and learn how to build stronger, more effective working relationships.

During this workshop participants will:

- Understand how communication is filtered, interpreted and often misunderstood
- Develop greater awareness of their own communication style
- Explore how different behavioural styles influence communication
- Learn to adapt their communication to work more effectively with others
- Use language more intentionally to improve clarity and impact

The DISC element of this workshop works most powerfully when participants have completed an online DISC behavioural profile in advance – with additional costs.

Do get in touch to discuss what would work best for your organisation.

An Introvert's Guide to Influence and Impact

Between 30% and 50% of people will identify with introverted characteristics and they are among your most capable, rigorous and thoughtful workers.

And many introverts are not getting the recognition, opportunities or influence their work deserves - not because their work isn't good enough but because the environments we work in (meetings, seminars, networking, visible leadership) are designed around extroverted norms.

Competence alone is rarely enough. Visibility matters too.

This workshop is for researchers and professional services staff who identify with introverted characteristics and want to learn how to communicate with confidence and impact, on their own terms, from their own strengths, without pretending to be someone they are not.

Participants will leave with a clear understanding of what the research says about introverted strengths in academic and professional environments.

They will understand why visibility matters and how to achieve it authentically.

They will have practical tools for contributing confidently in meetings and conversations — and for sustaining themselves in a workplace that doesn't always make that easy.

During the session we will explore the origins of the introvert-extrovert dimension in order to understand the potential strengths they provide, the misunderstandings that arise and potential conflicts that can be avoided.

Participants in this half day workshop will:

- understand why their natural working style is a genuine professional strength - not a deficit to be managed
- know what the research says about introverted strengths
- have a clear strategy for being visible and influential on their own terms
- be ready to prepare for and contribute to meetings, working with their strengths
- have practical tools to manage their energy and sustain themselves in a demanding workplace



Imposter Syndrome Essentials

A significant proportion of your researchers, academics and professional services staff are experiencing imposter syndrome feelings right now.

They may be holding back in meetings, over-preparing for things they can already do, attributing their success to luck rather than ability or quietly avoiding opportunities they're more than ready for.

The cost to individuals is real.

The cost to your organisation is invisible but significant.

If not addressed Imposter Syndrome feelings can cause people – men and women - to experience significant stress, anxiety and fear. It can drive people to burn-out or inhibit them from achieving their full potential, prevent them from making valuable contributions and deprive an organisation from seeing the very best that their staff can give.

Most people wouldn't put their hand up in a staff survey and admit to this. But get them into a room together and within minutes they're nodding, laughing with recognition and saying "I thought it was just me.". This workshop creates the conditions where people discover - often with considerable relief - that they are not alone, that these feelings are exceptionally common among high achievers and that there are practical things they can do about them.

Participants will leave able to:

- Recognise their own imposter feelings and understand where they come from
- Understand how unconscious bias and background contribute to self-doubt
- Identify how their personal definitions of success, failure and competence may be working against them
- Manage their inner critic and use it as a source of insight rather than judgement
- Apply practical strategies to show up with more confidence and less self-doubt

Who is it for?

Researchers, academics and professional services staff at any career stage. It can be tailored for specific groups including PhD students, early career researchers or women in research and leadership. It works equally well delivered online or in person.

This workshop can be organised for and tailored to particular groups in your university such as PhD students, Women Researchers or Academics.

“Just wanted to let you know that this course was absolutely fantastic. Dr Collins is a superb course leader and it was without doubt the best course I've ever been on. Thanks again”
Julia

“Very interesting course and probably, long term life-changing!
~~It's quite a long day for the amount of self-reflection.~~ I take this back! One of the reasons I took this course was because I struggle with positive reflection. The fact that I was uncomfortable was because you gently forced me out of my comfort zone!

“Margaret was both a benign presence and a razor-sharp mind. We could build up small ideas into the bigger picture. Not needing to carry everything forward we could build our own model from the bricks she offered us. (Make it compulsory!)”
Clare



Assertiveness Skills or How to Say “No” Positively

Your time is limited. Everybody seems to want a bigger slice of your energy and attention - but these resources are already fully spent.

Saying yes to an additional request can feel like the only professional option. Yes to the extra committee. Yes to the last-minute request. Yes to the colleague who assumes you're available. Yes, again, to work that isn't yours to carry.

The cost is rarely visible until it becomes impossible to ignore. It almost certainly requires you to say no to something or someone else and often you – your time – your priorities are the loser in that scenario.

The skill of saying no positively is essential if you want to manage your time and energy well. We need to be clear on why we might want to say “No” and how to do so effectively and respectfully while maintaining good relationships.

Or perhaps you're all too familiar with the request "Can you just...?" and that's before you try to maintain friendships, a family or any sort of social life!

Assertiveness is not aggression. It is not selfishness. It is the ability to communicate your position clearly and respectfully while remaining genuinely open to the other person. It requires self-awareness, preparation and practice - and it can be learned.

Through group discussion, guided exercises and self-reflection we will explore ways to communicate in a range of potentially challenging situations at home or at work and participants will develop skills including how to say no positively and to communicate their intentions, clearly and confidently.

Participants are asked to reflect on specific situations they have experienced so that they can discuss real and relevant examples during the workshop session.

In this half day course participants will

- Understand the real differences between assertive, passive and aggressive behaviour — and why the lines are less obvious than they appear
- Identify the specific situations where they find assertiveness most difficult and why
- Develop practical frameworks for evaluating requests before responding and for responding clearly when they do
- Learn and practise scripts for saying no positively, making assertive requests and resetting boundaries that have drifted over time
- Understand what gets in the way when they know what to say but can't quite say it
- Leave with a personal action plan and tools they can use immediately.

This half day workshop can easily be modified to suit specific groups of staff as required.



Strategies to Increase Your Influence



This workshop is aimed at staff who are in or are considering a future move into a role which requires them to work with other people, possibly involving more leadership or managerial responsibilities possibly including line management.

For most people, career development and advancement is likely to involve greater or lesser degrees of leadership or management responsibility. Some of us actively seek these roles.

Others don't explicitly seek leadership or management, these responsibilities appear "as part of the package" as we become more experienced and grow into roles where collaboration, mentorship and leading others is a natural part of progression.

Being able to communicate effectively, to develop a professional network and to influence others ethically, are essential skills to develop on that journey.

During this programme today we will consider the importance of your communication, reflecting on your personal styles and how that can be used to best effect.

In this short session we will explore:

- Building trust and rapport with colleagues
- Different models of communication or influencing
- Exploring your strategic network and how to leverage your influence

Developing Professional Researcher Networks

Available as a 90-minute condensed workshop



Developing Professional Networks

This workshop supports professionals - Academics, Researchers, PhD students and Professional Services staff - to develop a confident, strategic and practical approach to networking.

Networking is widely recognised as essential for career development, collaboration and visibility. However, many early and mid-career researchers feel uncertain about how to approach it. Questions often include not only "How do I do this?" but also "Why does this matter for me?" and "How do I do this in a way that feels authentic?"

This interactive workshop moves beyond theory to focus on what effective networking looks like in practice. Participants will explore their current networks, identify gaps and opportunities, and develop a more intentional approach aligned with their career goals.

We will focus on:

- understanding how networks influence access to career opportunities
- identifying who it would be useful to connect with and why
- approaching networking as a process of contribution rather than self-promotion
- developing clear, confident ways to talk about your work
- managing the discomfort or anxiety that can arise in networking situations

The session is highly interactive, using structured discussions and small group exercises to help participants translate insight into action.

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Develop a clear understanding of how networking supports their career development
- Be able to assess their current network and identify strategic gaps or opportunities
- Improve their ability to communicate their work clearly and confidently in professional conversations and to approach networking in a way that feels authentic
- Have tools to manage anxiety and build confidence in networking situations



"I had a great experience at the Developing Professional Researcher Networks workshop. Margaret leads by example, combining practical exercises with short recaps of most relevant advice and tips. She believes and enjoys what she does, making the session pleasant and very useful."

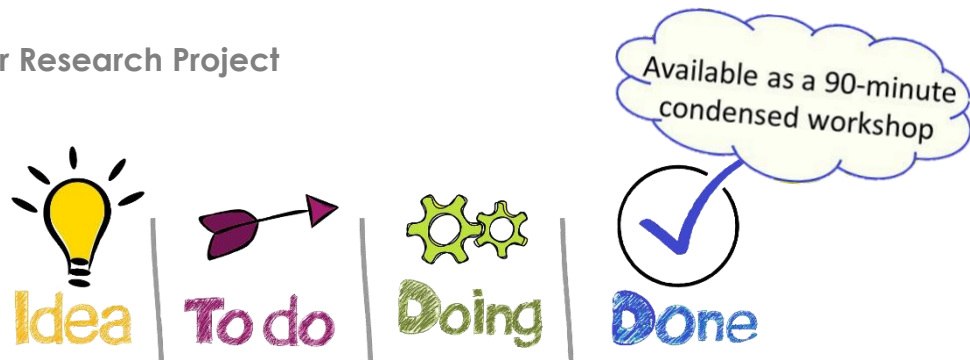
Dr B Domenech



"Dr Collins was an amazing facilitator, turning a room of 20+ (mostly) first year candidates, who did not know one another, into a fledgling research support community in just 3 hours. The presentation was accessible to everyone and her background as a successful academic herself means that everything was pertinent and delivered in a meaningful way - practical advice that we were able to implement."

Hazel

Managing Your Research Project



Managing a research project is rarely straightforward. Researchers are often expected to deliver results across multiple priorities, working with collaborators, while navigating uncertainty in the science itself — often without formal authority over people or resources. This short, highly focused workshop introduces a practical way to think about managing research projects in this environment.

Rather than covering formal project management structures, the session focuses on the key decisions and conversations that keep projects on track.

Using a simple framework built around five critical questions, participants will explore:

- What am I really trying to deliver?
- Who do I need to influence?
- Where is this project most vulnerable?
- What actually needs to happen next?
- How do I stay in control under pressure?

Through targeted discussion and practical examples, participants will:

- Identify the most common challenges affecting their own projects
- Explore how to manage competing stakeholder expectations
- Recognise where scope, time and priorities are under pressure
- Develop clearer approaches to prioritisation and decision-making
- Build confidence in managing projects where they do not have full control

This session is designed for researchers who are short on time but want practical insight they can apply immediately to improve how they manage their work.

A fully online, webinar version of this workshop is available

“This turned out to be about finding the most helpful strategies for managing me, managing the project, and managing other stakeholders. Not only was the content invaluable, precisely tailored, interesting, and very relevant but also Margaret’s presentation style was engaging, warm, and compelling. A first-rate workshop that I would have no hesitation recommending anyone undertaking PhD Research, especially at the start of their PhD, to attend.”

Philip J James

Developing Teamwork and Leadership Awareness



As researchers progress their careers, they are increasingly expected to contribute not only as technical experts but also as effective team members, and later as managers and leaders.

These responsibilities often emerge before formal training is provided, leaving many researchers unsure how to lead, influence or contribute effectively within a team.

This interactive workshop supports participants to build awareness of what effective teams and leaders look like in practice.

Through reflection, discussion and practical activities, participants will explore their own leadership approach, how teams function and how to contribute more effectively in collaborative environments.

Drawing on models of leadership, team dynamics and motivation, the session provides a foundation for stepping into leadership with greater confidence and clarity.

During this workshop participants will:

- Understand the characteristics of effective teams and how they function
- Explore the roles and responsibilities of research leaders and managers
- Reflect on their own leadership values, strengths and development areas
- Develop awareness of how leadership shows up in day-to-day behaviours
- Identify practical ways to contribute more effectively within their teams

This session is suitable for researchers at all stages who are beginning to take on leadership responsibilities or who want to develop their effectiveness within teams.

Supervising Research Students

This workshop is designed to support new or less experienced supervisors in developing a clear, practical approach to supervising Masters and PhD students.

Many supervisors begin their role with strong research experience but little formal preparation for guiding a student through a longer research project.

This session focuses on the realities of supervision - what is expected, how to structure the work and how to support students effectively from the start.



Participants will explore how to move a student from a dependent learner to an independent researcher, while maintaining progress, motivation and academic standards.

During the workshop we will explore:

- What a PhD or Masters student is expected to achieve and what that means in practice
- The roles and responsibilities of both supervisor and student
- How to structure supervision, run effective supervisory meetings and maintain momentum
- How to support student development while encouraging independence
- How to recognise and respond to early signs of difficulty

Participants will leave with:

- A clear understanding of what good supervision looks like
- Practical tools for structuring meetings and monitoring progress
- A framework for supporting both research output and student development
- Greater confidence in managing common supervisory challenges

A programme of ongoing Supervisor mentoring is available for participants in this workshop.

Supervision & Mentoring Masterclass

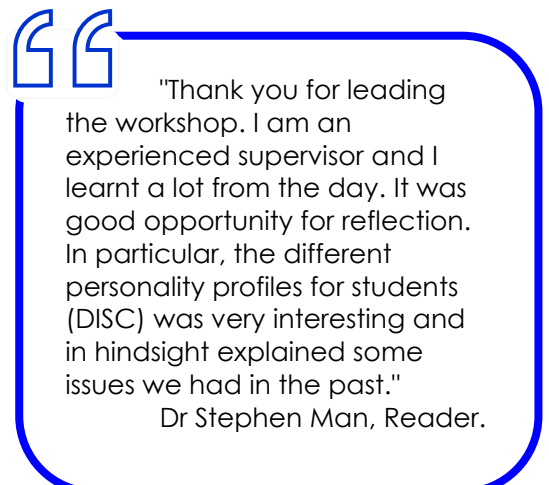
In addition to formal supervision, an emerging role for Supervisors and Principal Investigators is that of nurturing the wider career development of PhD students and Early Career Researchers. This activity, though not new, is assuming a greater prominence in the skill portfolio to be demonstrated by research supervisors and PIs.

This workshop will allow space to explore the roles, skills and functions of the supervisor in researcher career development. This will include reflection on models which describe supervisor function and the skills required for further coaching or mentoring of research staff to develop both within and beyond their current roles.

Topics of interest may include:

1. Preparing students for careers post-PhD...
2. The Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
3. The Researcher Concordat
4. Theoretical frameworks/models for supervision
5. Using a coaching or mentoring approach
6. Reflecting on our supervisory issues
7. Understanding diverse communication styles...

This allows exploration of supervisory judgment, when to step back and when to intervene. We discuss where does experienced supervision go wrong and how do we prevent it.



Coaching and Mentoring Skills for Researchers or Managers

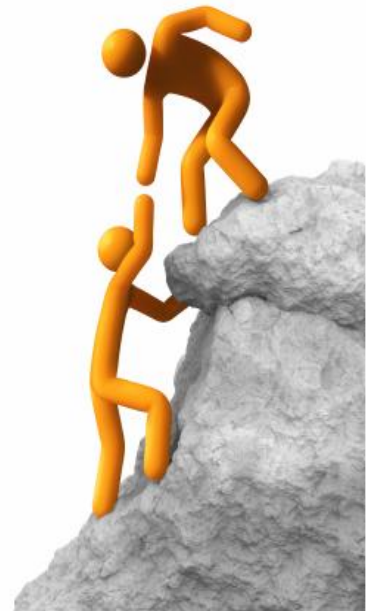
Are you involved in coaching or mentoring in your work?

Maybe you are a researcher and find yourself supporting more junior colleagues or PhD students.

Many people find themselves with this role – officially or more often, unofficially – and sometimes feel unprepared as if they are “making it up” as they go along.

Being involved with the professional development of a colleague can be one of the more satisfying aspects of a research career and also provide you with valuable skills and insights to apply to your own career development.

Coaching provides practical tools enabling you to get the best out of people - starting with yourself. As the benefits of coaching skills for both researchers and managers is rapidly becoming clear it becomes more important to learn and develop these skills.



This expectation is in alignment with many aspects of personal career development, the Research Council's Joint Skills Statement and the Researcher Concordat – and many people find it is part of their job description as they take on positions of greater responsibility within their organisation

Coaching skills are valuable in a range of situations including:

- One to one discussions and developing research skills
- Giving constructive feedback
- Managing your manager
- Clarifying career development
- Being able to coach yourself

During this half day session participants will

- Be clear about the different roles of mentor and coach
- Have verbal and non-verbal skills to build rapport
- Understand the power of questions to elicit learning
- Know how to use the GROW model to structure a coaching session

Creative Thinking and Problem Solving



The key to success in research is, first of all, being able to ask the right question. Being able to interpret the data, to see new patterns, to make links between the not-so-obvious associations are skills that are developed to provide new and creative answers to your research challenges.

During this workshop we will develop your ability to ask questions, to think outside the box, to see things differently and generate a wider range of possibilities.

We will use a range of techniques including group discussion, group activities and targeted exercises to develop your creative thinking and problem solving skills.

Do come ready to work on your own research ideas, problems or challenges and be prepared to develop some surprising possibilities.

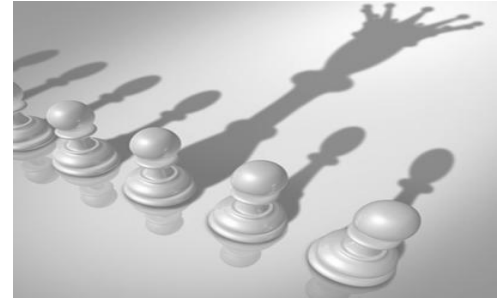
As a result of this half day workshop participants will

- Know the first step to solving a problem is to ask the right question
- Be able to use a range of techniques for stimulating creative processes
- Understand how learning styles and behaviour influence creative activity
- Have techniques to generate ideas and select solutions
- Access resources for creative thinking, problem solving and decision making

Aspiring to Research Leadership

For many researchers, leadership is not a distant career step - it is already beginning.

Whether you actively aspire to lead a research group or are unsure if that path is right for you, the reality is that leadership and management responsibilities often emerge long before a formal title. Mentoring others, shaping projects and influencing direction are already part of the role for many postdocs and early career researchers.



This focused session is designed to help you step back and think more clearly about what research leadership actually involves and whether it is a path you want to pursue.

This session concentrates on the key shifts that define the transition from researcher to research leader and the practical behaviours you can begin developing now

During this session we will explore:

- What research leadership really involves in practice
- The key shifts from doing research to leading research
- The identity challenge: what changes as you move towards leadership
- The difference between leadership and management in a research context
- How to recognise and build leadership experience before you have the title
- Small, practical actions you can take now to develop your leadership profile

Available as a 90-minute condensed workshop

This session is interactive and reflective, offering space to think about your own career direction as well as opportunities to learn from the experiences of others.

Participants will leave with:

- Greater clarity about whether research leadership is right for them
- A clearer understanding of the skills and behaviours involved
- Practical ideas to begin developing leadership capability in their current role
- A stronger sense of how to build evidence of leadership for future opportunities

The shorter format is ideal for researchers with limited time who want a high-value introduction to research leadership and a clear starting point for their development.

Researcher Career Development – putting the puzzle together

There comes a point for many of us where "the next step" in our career development or professional trajectory doesn't feel natural or obvious. We often underestimate how common this feeling is. While there are no guarantees, there are many practical things we can do in order to build a bridge and a secure foundation before we take a leap into that bright new future inside or particularly if we are considering moving outside of the academic research environment.

In this workshop aimed at science-based researchers we will explore our abilities in terms of our specific and transferrable skills and how to describe or present ourselves in a way that is potentially more attractive to a diverse range of potential employers.

During the session we will explore elements of:

- Who am I – personally and professionally?
- Exploring career paths taken by researchers post-PhD
- Analysing our strengths using different tools and perspectives
- Presenting our professional selves well.

Beyond Academia: Exploring Career Options for Early Career Researchers

Workshop Overview

This engaging and practical 3-hour workshop is designed to support early-career researchers who are considering what comes next...

Whether by choice or necessity, many researchers, STEM PhDs and postdocs are seeking meaningful, fulfilling alternatives to the academic path. This workshop helps them recognise their transferable skills, explore a wider range of career options and build the confidence to take their next steps, inside or outside academia.

Who Is It For?

This workshop is tailored for researchers, postdocs or PhD students, particularly in STEM disciplines but also beyond, who are questioning their future in academia, feel uncertain about their options or want to proactively explore additional career paths.



Why This Workshop Matters

In a changing academic landscape, permanent positions are increasingly rare and competition is fierce. Many researchers feel anxious about their futures and the prospect of leaving academia can feel daunting. They are often unsure how to translate their expertise or unaware of the wide range of careers open to them.

This workshop normalises those concerns and provides practical tools to navigate a possible career transition with clarity and purpose.

What Participants Will Gain

- A clearer understanding of the current academic and non-academic job landscape
- Insight into the full breadth of their transferable skills
- Confidence in their professional value beyond academia
- Tools to identify potential career paths aligned with their values and interests
- A personalised action plan using the 'small experiments' approach to career development

Do contact me directly if you'd like to know more!

Secrets of Successful CVs and Interview Skills for Scientists

Moving on to a new job can be a stressful time.

While you're still working hard at your current "day job" you also have any eye on the future.

You will probably be scanning for new job advertisements, preparing applications, writing and rewriting your CV and even hoping for a number of job interviews.

For most people, the only CV they ever see is their own which might leave you wondering...



What things are important to include – or leave out?

Is presentation important or is content king?

Does it matter how you organise things as long as all the information is there and you have the skills to do the job?!

This workshop will cover some of the most important aspects of this process including how to:

- prepare a great CV
- write your covering letter
- present yourself effectively on paper
- prepare for a job interview
- develop your understanding of communication and body language skills
- present yourself effectively in interviews.

This can be delivered a half day workshop using Zoom.

Planning Your PhD

In several years from now you hope to get a PhD.

Why are you doing this?

What are you expected to achieve?

Exactly how will it happen?

This workshop will explore the motivation for and mechanics of studying for a PhD.

Participants in this workshop will learn the value of taking responsibility for the process of gaining a PhD degree. They will explore different learning styles and models of adult learning. They will also be clear about the requirements of the university and the responsibilities of both students and their supervisor(s).

As a result of this workshop participants will -

- Understand the requirements of the University during their 3 year study
- Know the responsibilities of a PhD student
- Be clear on what they can expect from their PhD supervisor(s)
- Be familiar with different learning styles
- Have a clear timetable to meet their commitments to the organisation

"Very well presented and thought provoking.
A must for all new PhD students!!"

"I liked the way Margaret presented her topic.
† was very impressive and interesting.
Thank you for such valuable time and content."

Preparing For The PhD Viva

Most people only ever get one chance at a PhD viva...

In the absence of previous experience rumours abound and many students are poorly prepared for one of the most important and potentially exciting episodes in their careers.

This half day workshop will cover some of the most important aspects of this process including:

- understanding the purpose and structure of the viva
- how to prepare yourself in advance of the interview
- presenting yourself effectively during the viva
- preparing for questions

This can be delivered a half day workshop using Zoom.

About Dr Margaret Collins



My research career was driven by asking "How does that work?".

I began with a PhD in molecular genetics and through positions at the University of Surrey, the Institute for Animal Health and the Royal Veterinary College, I reached Senior Lecturer level in Veterinary Virology.

With formal teaching and supervisory responsibilities, it didn't take long for me to begin to ask that question about teaching students.

Why were some techniques more effective than others?

What if students had different learning styles?

Similarly when it came to career progression and promotion, why did some researchers flourish and others struggled, why did career progression come easily to some and feel impossibly opaque to others.

What I discovered was a body of knowledge that transformed how I understood people, performance and potential. I went on to develop expertise in cognitive behavioural coaching, Neuro Linguistic Programming, neurobiology and behavioural psychology, eventually becoming a Master Practitioner of NLP and a certified coach through the CoachU programme. I am also a One of Many™ Certified Coach and Trainer and a Member of the Association for Coaching.

When I established Training for Universities in 2003 my intention was simple: to create the training I wished I had been able to access during my own career. Training that was grounded in genuine insider knowledge of academic and research life and built on a rigorous, evidence-based understanding of how people learn, change and grow.

I left academia in 2008 to create a more flexible work-life balance that allowed me to care for my disabled sister and develop a wider portfolio of coaching and training workshops.

More than twenty years on my intention hasn't changed. Every workshop I design and deliver draws on both strands of my background: the academic and the psychological. I understand the culture of universities and research institutes from the inside. I understand the particular pressures on researchers, the identity challenges of moving into leadership and the systemic barriers that can make career progression harder than it needs to be. And I have the professional toolkit to do something genuinely useful about all of it.

I work with universities and research institutes across the UK delivering workshops, facilitated programmes and individual and group coaching. I also work with individual academics and researchers through my coaching practice at MargaretCollins.com/coaching.

To see how I might support your staff, please do get in touch - I'd welcome the conversation.

Graduate of CoachU Coach Training Programme
Master Practitioner of NLP
One of Many™ Certified Coach and Trainer
Member of Association for Coaching

Typical Terms and Conditions

These are typical Terms and Conditions of engagement. The details may be modified following discussion with individuals representing the organisation commissioning the training as appropriate.

The following terms and conditions apply to events being facilitated or delivered by Dr Margaret Collins or any other trainers acting on behalf of Training for Universities.

Workshop name: To be agreed.

Fees: To be agreed.

Services to be Provided: Design of content and delivery of workshops by an appropriate trainer/facilitator with relevant skills and experience. Handouts as pdf files, and/or PowerPoint presentations will be provided as appropriate in advance of or after the workshop. Access to recorded video content may be provided if appropriate.

The content of all materials provided remain the property of Dr Margaret Collins/Training for Universities and can only be used by people who participated in the workshops for their own personal use. They cannot be reproduced, copied or shared without written permission.

Postponement/Cancellation: Cancellation or postponement must be confirmed in writing.

If, for any reason, the University/Institute/Organisation is unable to fill the places at an event, the event may be cancelled or postponed, as appropriate.

If the workshop is cancelled, the University/Institute/Organisation will be liable to pay 50% of the agreed fee.

Cancellation with between 14 and 7 days notice of the scheduled date will normally incur payment of 75% of agreed fee.

Cancellation within a week of planned delivery will incur the full fee to be paid.

At any stage, travel or accommodation expenses already incurred in relation to the postponed workshop will be payable by the University/Institute/Organisation.

I shall not be in breach of this agreement, nor liable for any failure or delay in performance of any obligations under this agreement arising from or attributable to acts, events, omissions or accidents beyond my reasonable control.

Signed on behalf of Training for Universities: Date

Print Name: Dr Margaret Collins.

Signed on behalf of (organisation) :..... Date

Print Name: