**How to write narrative CVs
for funding applications**

Welcome

12.32 Start Session
13.12 Q&A
13.30 Wrap up Session

Slides will be shared in the chat at the end of the session

Please post questions in the chat as we go along

How to write narrative CVs for funding applications

21 November 2024

Mary Muers (Medical Sciences Division)

Tanita Casci (Research Services)

Kanza Basit (Social Sciences Division)

Susan Black (Careers Service)

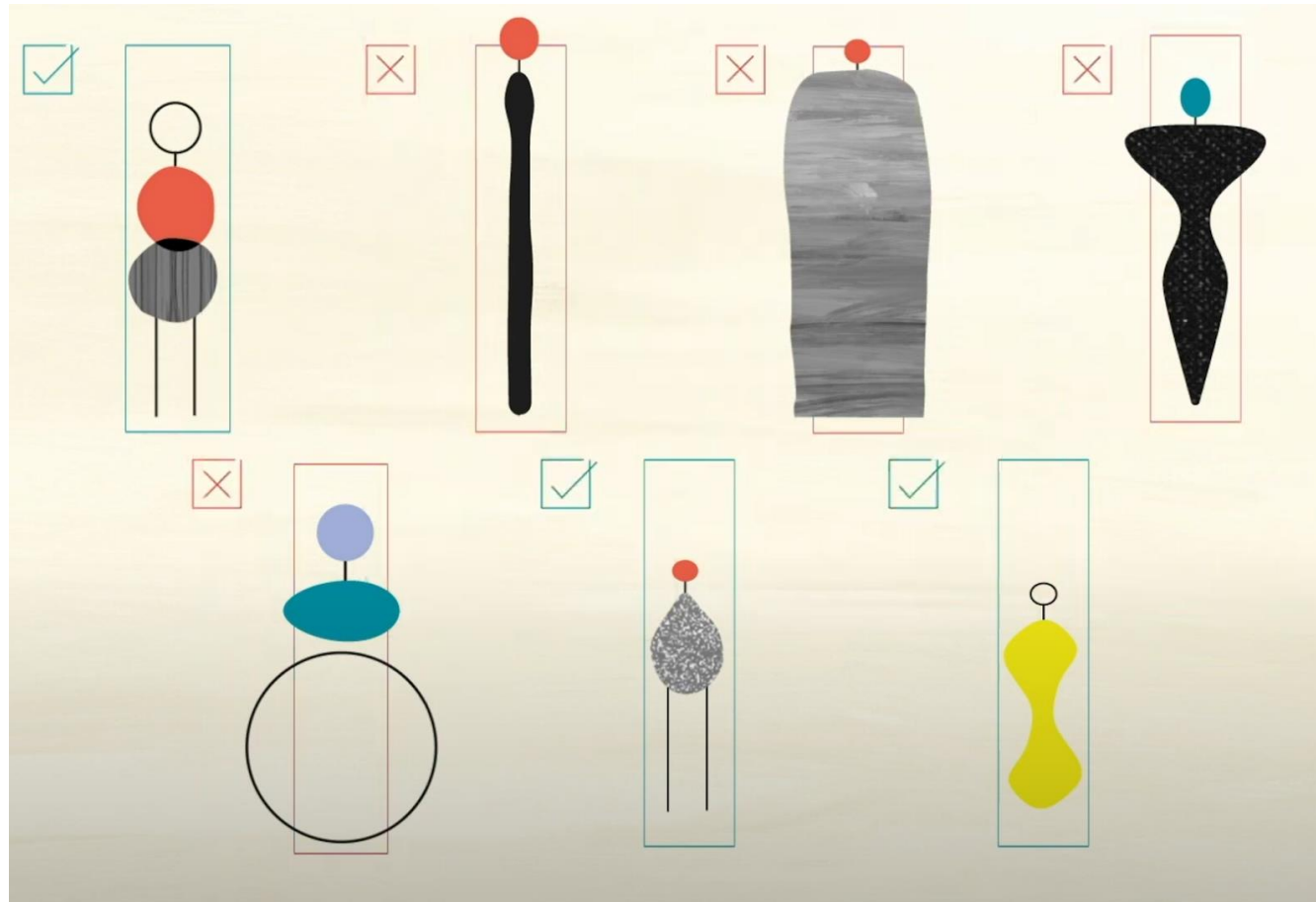Gavin Bird (School of Geography and the Environment)

Today's session

- Why narrative CVs are being adopted by many funders
- Overview of the narrative CV format
- How to write:
  - Where to start
  - Tips for each module
  - Example structure
- Team CVs
- Scheme differences and fellowships
- Resources
- Questions and discussion

Poll
- What is your current level of awareness of the narrative CV?
- How prepared do you feel to start writing your narrative CV?

Research quality is too often assessed based on narrowly set quantitative indicators

What we value in research

Publications

Awards & prizes

Leadership

Invited talks

Successful grants

What research actually involves

Management

Building collaborations

Panels & committees

Peer review

Mentorship & supervision

Integrity, openness, transparency

Team-working

Inclusivity

Participatory research

Societal impact

UKRI UK Research and Innovation

Narrative CV: diversifying what we value

The narrative CV provides a structured yet flexible format that prompts a description of contributions and achievements that reflect a broad range of skills and experience

Values diverse contributions & career paths

Improves diversity & inclusion

Rewards a broader set of activities

Encourages responsible use of metrics

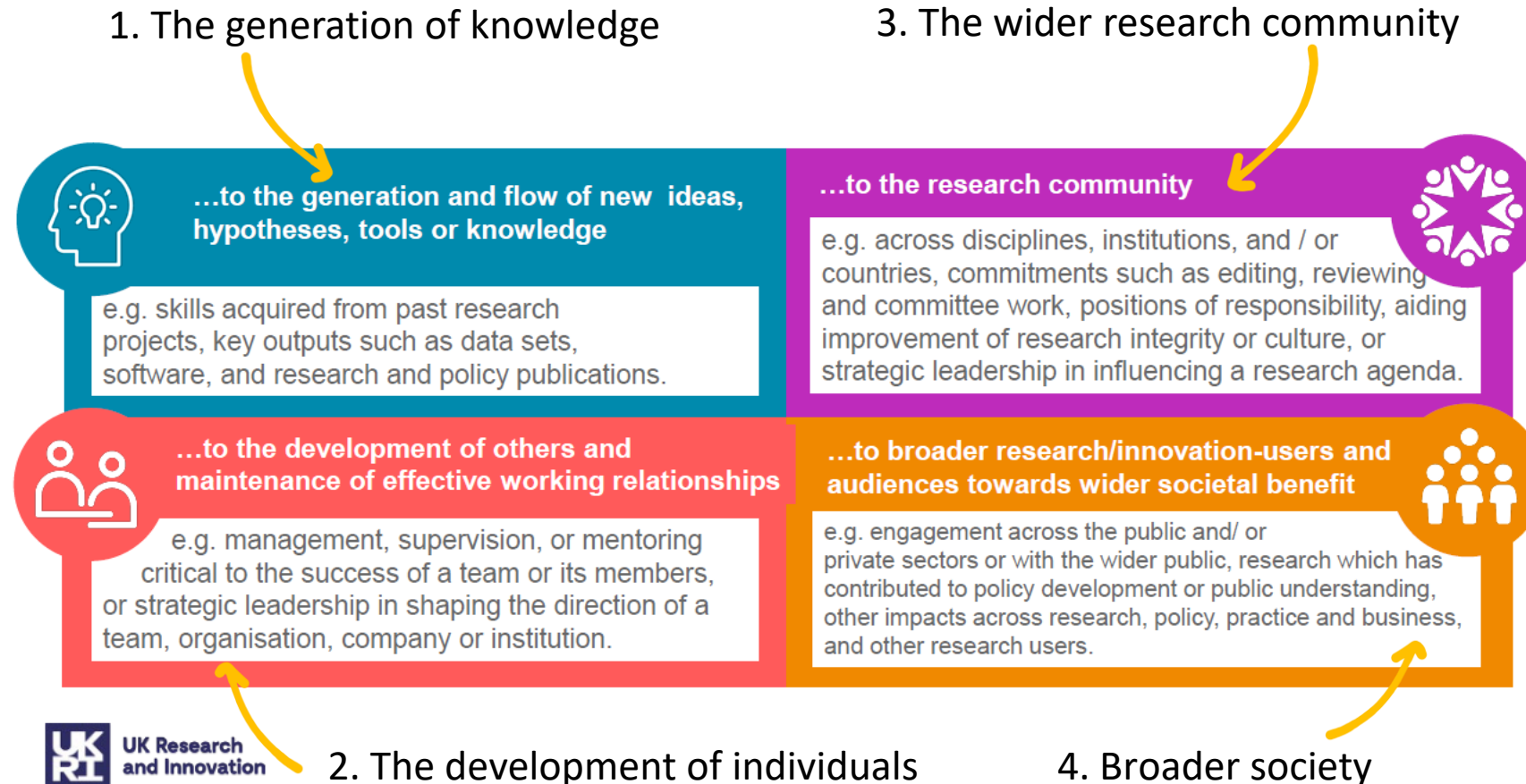It allows you to tell your story!

Which funders?

- UK Research and Innovation
- Wellcome
- Royal Academy of Engineering
- NIHR
- Cancer Research UK
- British Heart Foundation
- Alzheimer's Research UK
- Leverhulme Trust
- Science Foundation Ireland
- Health Research Board, Ireland
- Academy of Medical Sciences
- Swiss National Science Foundation
- Wellcome Sanger Institute
- And more…!

https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-and-innovation-culture/joint-funders-group/

Narrative CV: key features

Researchers frame their contributions with respect to:

1. The generation of knowledge

3. The wider research community

...to the generation and flow of new ideas, hypotheses, tools or knowledge

e.g. skills acquired from past research projects, key outputs such as data sets, software, and research and policy publications.

...to the research community

e.g. across disciplines, institutions, and / or countries, commitments such as editing, reviewing and committee work, positions of responsibility, aiding improvement of research integrity or culture, or strategic leadership in influencing a research agenda.

...to the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

e.g. management, supervision, or mentoring critical to the success of a team or its members, or strategic leadership in shaping the direction of a team, organisation, company or institution.

...to broader research/innovation-users and audiences towards wider societal benefit

e.g. engagement across the public and/ or private sectors or with the wider public, research which has contributed to policy development or public understanding, other impacts across research, policy, practice and business, and other research users.

UK Research and Innovation

2. The development of individuals

4. Broader society

What does a narrative CV look like?

UK Research and Innovation

Section: Applicant and team capability to deliver

Question: Why are you the right individual or team to successfully deliver the proposed work?

Module 1 – How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge?

This module can be used to explain how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses and which key skills you have used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. It can be used to highlight how you have communicated on your ideas and research results, both written and verbally, the funding you have won and any awards that you have received. It can include a small selection of outputs, with a description of why they are of particular relevance and why they are considered in the context of knowledge generation. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications that you have generated. Where outputs have a DOI please only include this.

CRUK Narrative CV

The CRUK Narrative CV is a flexible template where you can highlight your achievements and contributions of particular relevance to your application. When providing examples please describe your specific contribution to each. Please refer to the scheme application guidelines for additional information on how to complete this form.

Lead/Joint Lead Applicant Name_____

Maximum of 2 pages for the first three questions. Examples below are non-exhaustive.

1. How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge?

Describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas, tools or techniques and your most important research outputs. Outputs may include for example: preprints, training delivered, contribution to consortia, community outreach, patents, open datasets, software, novel assays, reagents and publications. Describe what you have discovered/developed, your specific contribution to each, why it is important and what its impact and influence have been in your field.

Lead applicant research contributions

How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge?
Describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas, tools or techniques and your most important research outputs so far.

You may highlight skills you have used to develop and test ideas. Please also list up to 10 of your most significant research outputs and describe why they are relevant, what difference they made and your contribution to each (up to 50 words per output). Outputs can include: original publications, open data sets, software, commercial or interventional products or tools, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, and conference publications that you have generated.

If referencing original research publications, please give the citation in full, including the title of paper and all authors (unless more than 10, in which case you may use 'et al', ensuring that your position as author remains clear). Citations to preprints must state "Preprint", the repository name and the articles persistent identifier (e.g. DOI).
(1000 words max.)

How have you contributed to the development of others?
This may include, for example:
- mentoring and supervision of students and colleagues, or mentoring others in your field;
- examples of strategic leadership, how you shaped the direction of a team, organisation, company or institution; and
- your involvement in establishing collaborations.

(300 words max.)

- UKRI
- Royal Society
- CRUK
- Wellcome

Where should I start?

Check the funder instructions and template

Download the [Guide](#) developed with research support professionals in Oxford

Allow time: it will take a day or more to write your first narrative CV

Principles for writing a Narrative CV

Be selective: quality over quantity

Include evidence: describe outcomes (not just activities)

Think broadly: use examples from beyond academia

Your career context: what you did with the opportunities that were available to you

Early career?
- Don't worry!
- Assessors will look at the CV as a whole and consider career stage
- Try to have something in every section, but don't worry if you can't

Module 1: generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies or knowledge

Outputs	**Development of Methods Tools Resources**	**Generation of New ideas Hypotheses**	**Funding**	**Awards**
Publications Policy papers Data Sets Software Patents Products Artefacts Exhibitions Media	Publications GitHub Training Workshops	What are they How have they been shared or communicated	Think widely... Travel grants PE awards Seed funds Network funding Industry funding Fellowships Open calls	Prizes Medals Peer recognition: Invited talks Panelist Session chair

Module 1: generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies or knowledge

Outputs

Funding

Awards

Development of Methods Tools Resources

Generation of New ideas Hypotheses

Save space
- Use digital object identifiers (DOIs)

Remember to describe
- Your specific contributions to each output (e.g. CRediT)
- How your involvement in an output came about

Avoid
- Uninformative metrics e.g. productivity or journal-based metrics (e.g. impact factors), when describing the quality of your track record

Module 1: generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies or knowledge

Evidence, not lists

"Since 2015, I have published 6 first-author articles, mainly in high-impact journals."

vs

"My research has contributed to a revised understanding of [phenomenon / observation A] through an in-depth analysis of the effects of [B & C] on health outcomes. The work is reported in the pre-registered and openly accessible output [D; doi]"

Module 2: development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

1:1	Project or Line Management	Strategic Leadership	Network Building	Development Opportunities
Supervision Mentoring Coaching Beware GDPR	Activities that were critical to the success of a • Team • Team members	Shaping the direction of a • Team • Organisation • Company • Institution	Establishing or driving **collaborations networks** 'contribution to **team-working**'	Provision of **opportunities** • Training • Events • Rewards • Recruitment strategies
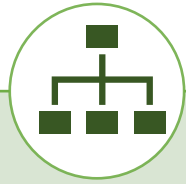
Module 2: development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
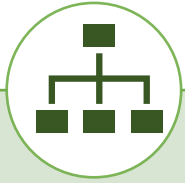
Supervision Mentoring	Project or Line Management	Strategic Leadership	Network Building	Development Opportunities

Formal Teaching

If it was focused on development of others and is relevant to your application

Early career?
- Even if you didn't have a leadership role, how did you contribute to the success of a team or the development of others?

Supervision or mentoring
- Go beyond a number, e.g. how did you help people to develop and what did they go on to achieve?

Module 3: wider research and innovation community

Activities where you have contributed to the wider academic community within your organization and beyond: Across disciplines, institutions and/or countries

Influencing a **research or innovation agenda**

Activities that have contributed to the improvement of **research integrity or cultures**, including **equality, diversity and inclusion** practices

Organisation of **community events**, such as conferences or workshops

Committee work within your organisation and beyond

Editing and **reviewing**

Contributions to **professional bodies**

Contributions to **open research**, active sharing of knowledge and skills, community resources

Positions of **responsibility**

Module 4: broader research/innovation-users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

Actions to ensure that research reaches, influences, and involves **relevant audiences**

Knowledge exchange
Policy engagement
Partnerships with business industry, healthcare,
Public engagement
Patient and public involvement (PPI)
Participatory research
Responsible research and innovation

Where activities have led to societal benefit

Economy, society, culture, public policy, or services, health, environment, or quality of life
How has your work influenced the private, public or third sector organisations.
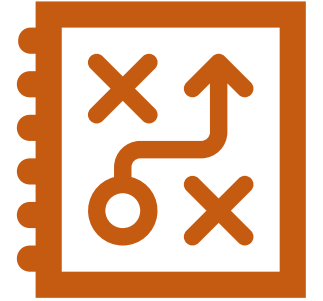
Who benefitted?
• Describe the beneficiaries, scale and depth

Check funder differences
• This module may not be included; you could put examples elsewhere e.g. in 1 or 3

Optional section: Additions

- Describe factors that provide context
  - e.g. Career breaks, impact of the pandemic, part-time working

- Check funder guidance

- May be seen by reviewers
  - Focus on how the issue has affected your career, and how you handled any challenges

Personal details
- May be asked for in other sections of the application
- Check the funder guidance

Personal statement
- Only for some funding schemes

Example structure

Module X – Contributions to….

Summary sentence: The main message that you want a reviewer to notice

Strongest examples 1, 2, 3 etc. What you did and why it is important, with evidence. In paragraphs or bullet points.

- …

- …

Brief mention of additional contributions that are relevant

Worried about language?
- Focus on stating what you have done and why
- The examples are more important than the choice of words

Poll
Which module do think will be the most challenging to complete?

Writing a Narrative CV: step by step

1. Create a long list of activities you could include in each module **OR**
Work on one module at a time

↓

2. Highlight the strongest and most relevant, referring to the funding call

↓

3. Identify the significance and evidence for highlighted activities

↓

4. Move examples between modules if needed

↓

5. Draft a summary sentence to open each module: what do you want a reviewer to remember?

↓

6. Draft the text for each module (see previous slide)

ORCiD
Connecting research and researchers

Use your ORCiD profile to provide factual detail that isn't in the NCV

e.g Career History

Team CVs

A single narrative CV for a team, e.g. used by UKRI

- Download the [guide](#) to suggested steps for team leads

- Skills and experience needed – **collectively** – by the team to undertake the project, i.e. a 'showcase'

- Structure by theme rather than person-by-person

- Roles within the team: show how the individuals contribute
    - e.g. Successful leadership of complex or collaborative projects by the Project Lead(s)
    - e.g. Strong examples of supporting career development by Training Lead
    - e.g. Contributions of team members at earlier career stages

Focus on what is needed for the specific project
The best examples may not be the default 'top' achievements from the standard academic CVs

Experience of supporting Fellowship applicants

Competitiveness – consider the weighting attached to the Capability to Deliver

Watch for changes in word count

Make sure applicants share drafts of material in good time (Funding Service)

Applicant career stage will be recognised by reviewers, but try to add something rather than leave gaps wherever possible

Influence and contributions beyond academia – outreach and engagement with schools, the public, etc.

What have you done or what will you do with the funders' (public/charity) money? Be as outward-looking as possible

Scheme-specific differences to look out for

- Length limit variations – check carefully

- Metrics, e.g. may allow citations but not altmetrics

- Asking for 'future' as well 'past' e.g. Science and Technologies Facilities Council fellowship
  - "Have identified opportunities to access career development support…" (Module 2)
  - "Describe how you would communicate and disseminate your research outcomes …" (Module 3 and Module 4)

- E.g. NERC Pushing The Frontiers (Jan. 2023)
  - *"The panel commented that this was slightly backward looking in that it pointed to past successes rather than how the team would deliver these elements in the future"*

Resources @ Oxford

- University of Oxford [Narrative CV webpage](#)
  - Writing guide
  - Recorded webinar
  - Q&A, and more
- Research facilitators in your department or division
- Your peers
- Colleagues on funder review panels
- Careers Service [appointments](#)
- [Impact Support e-Learning Course](#)
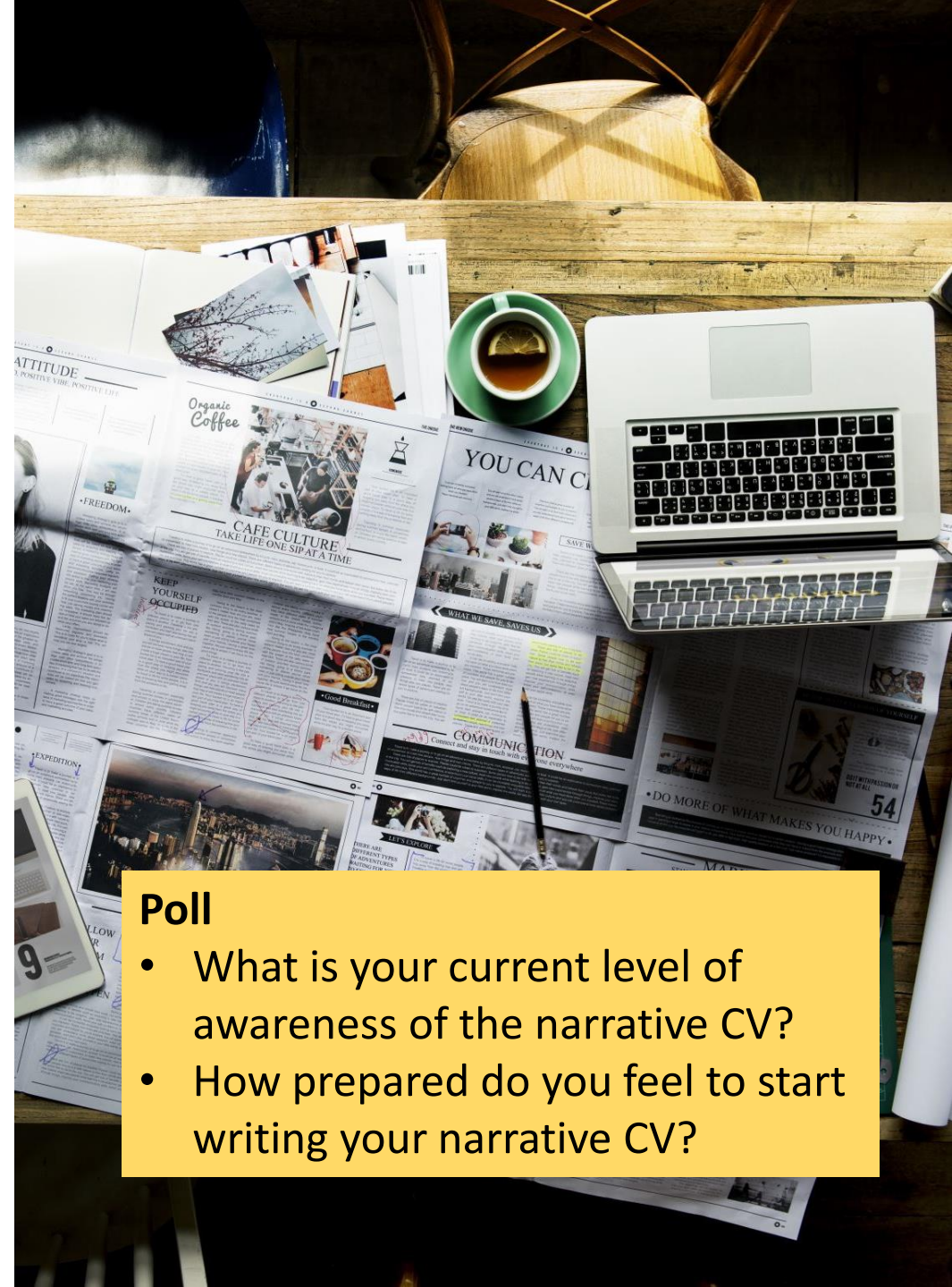
Poll
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Resources

- Other universities: e.g. University of [Glasgow](#) and University of [Cambridge](#)

- [Resources from ARRC](#) A one-page handout; FAQs and [KCL 'Careers in your Ears' podcast, series 10 episode 6, Narrative CVs demystified.](#)

- [YouTube](#) University of Cambridge Careers Service support for the creation of NCVs, designed for ECRs

- [All about the SNSF CV format](#) SNSF CV website with guidance, FAQs and more, for international comparison

- [Podcast – How to create a Narrative CV - DEMENTIA RESEARCHER (nihr.ac.uk)](#) A podcast with four experts discussing Narrative CVs, why they're being introduced, and how to build one

- [PEPCV – Shifting what and who is visible and valued in research and innovation (mariecuriealumni.eu)](#) An NCV peer-sharing platform

- Information on responsible [use of metrics from Maastricht University](#)

Resources – Rationale, Commentary and Advice

- [Introducing R4RI: a better way for you to evidence your contributions – UKRI](#) UKRI Research & Innovation Guidance

- [Research culture: Résumé for Researchers | Royal Society](#) provides the rationale for why the society is championing the new CV format

- [Blog post from LSE](#) – NCVs 'are changing how we think about researcher assessment'

- [Narrative CVs – a good idea? | ERC (europa.eu)](#) Interesting interview with Prof Anja Leist who had applied for an ERC grant using an NCV and talks about the benefits for someone with an interdisciplinary background in being able to explain her research trajectory. (July 2023)

- [Lessons learned and shared from narrative CV training — Catalyst Editorial (catalyst-editorial.co.uk)](#) Article describing how Sheffield University approached the rollout of NCVs

- [Making Narrative CVs work for your researchers – The Auditorium](#) Article from the University of Glasgow about using NCV as a structure for career development conversations

Strengthen your narrative CV

- Update your ORCiD profile

- **Professional development:** Research staff are entitled to 10 days for professional development per year

- Look at the [Planning your Professional Development](#) webpage

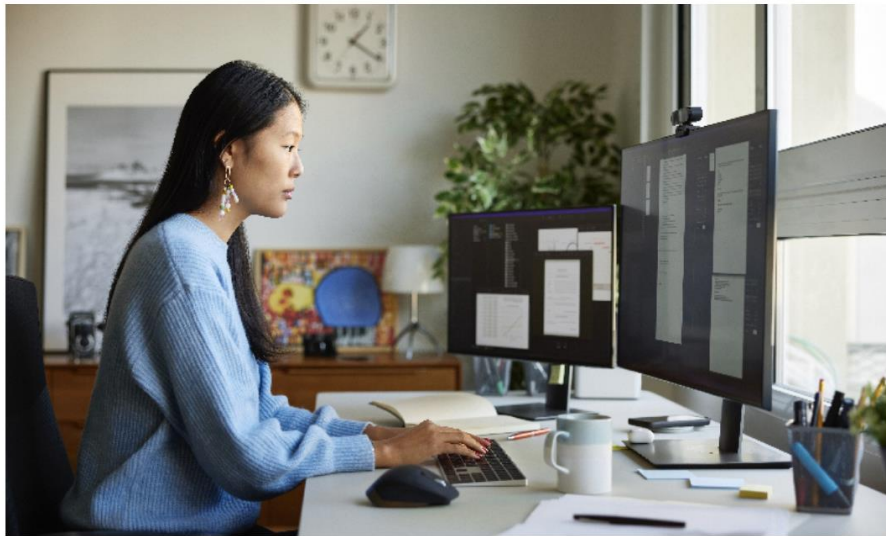https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub/researchers-trailmap

Questions and feedback

By Fiona McIntyre, 08 Jun 23 10:49

Narrative CVs: hard work but worth it

- **Feedback on the session, resources or webpage?** Use this [link](#) to provide suggestions.

- Research support professionals – are you interested in delivering training?

- Contact us:
  - Mary Muers mary.muers@medsci.ox.ac.uk
  - Tanita Casci tanita.casci@admin.ox.ac.uk
  - Careers service susan.black@careers.ox.ac.uk