



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
**University
of Auckland**

Researcher Skills and Career Planning for Academia and Beyond



July 2026



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Agenda



1. Career planning for academia
 - I. Career planning process
 - II. Goal setting
2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities
 - I. Skills needed to achieve your career goals
3. Transferable skills beyond academia





Poll question 1:

Do you have a current career plan?

1. Career planning for academia

What to be aware of:

- Limited number of permanent faculty positions
- Current funding environment
- Career pathways

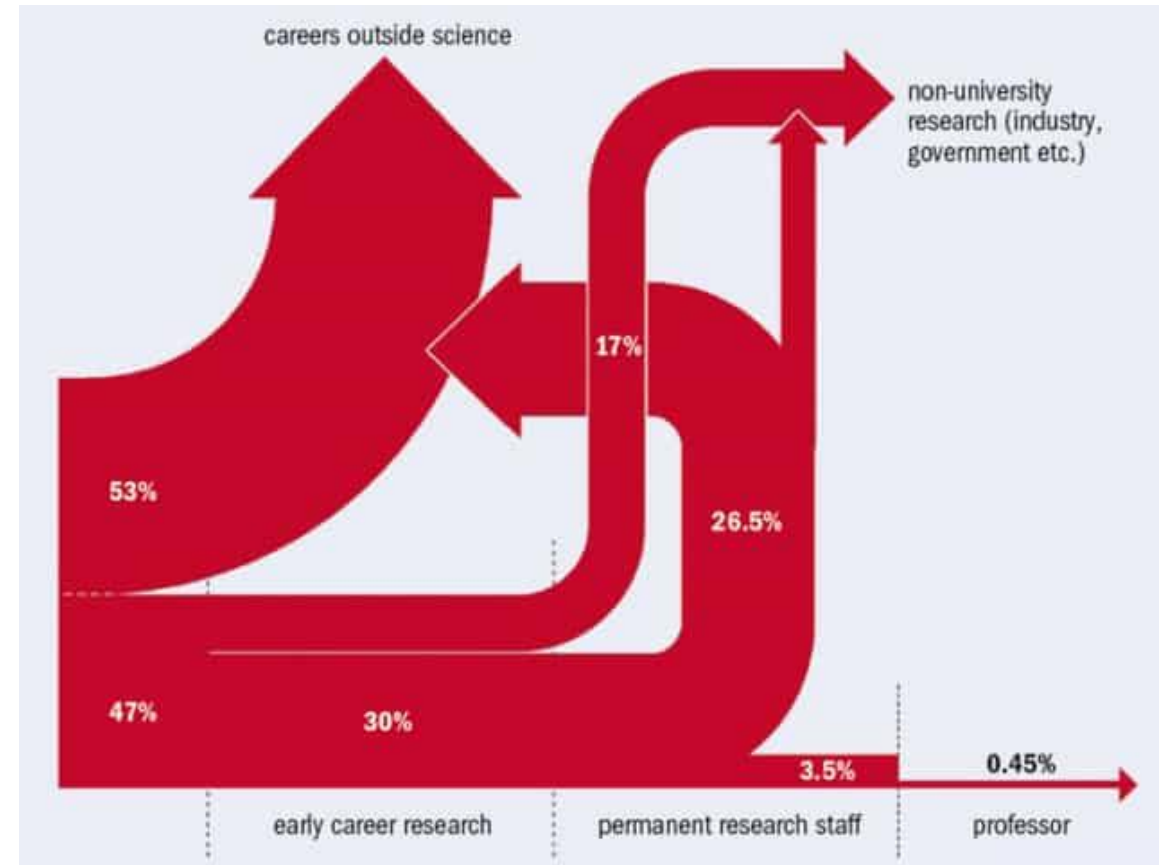


Diagram published in 2010 by the Royal Society as part of a report on the future of scientific careers in the UK.

1. Career planning for academia

What to ask yourself:

- Are you open to moving cities or countries?
- Which career track or pathway do you want?
 - 40/40/20?
 - Research focused
 - Teaching focused

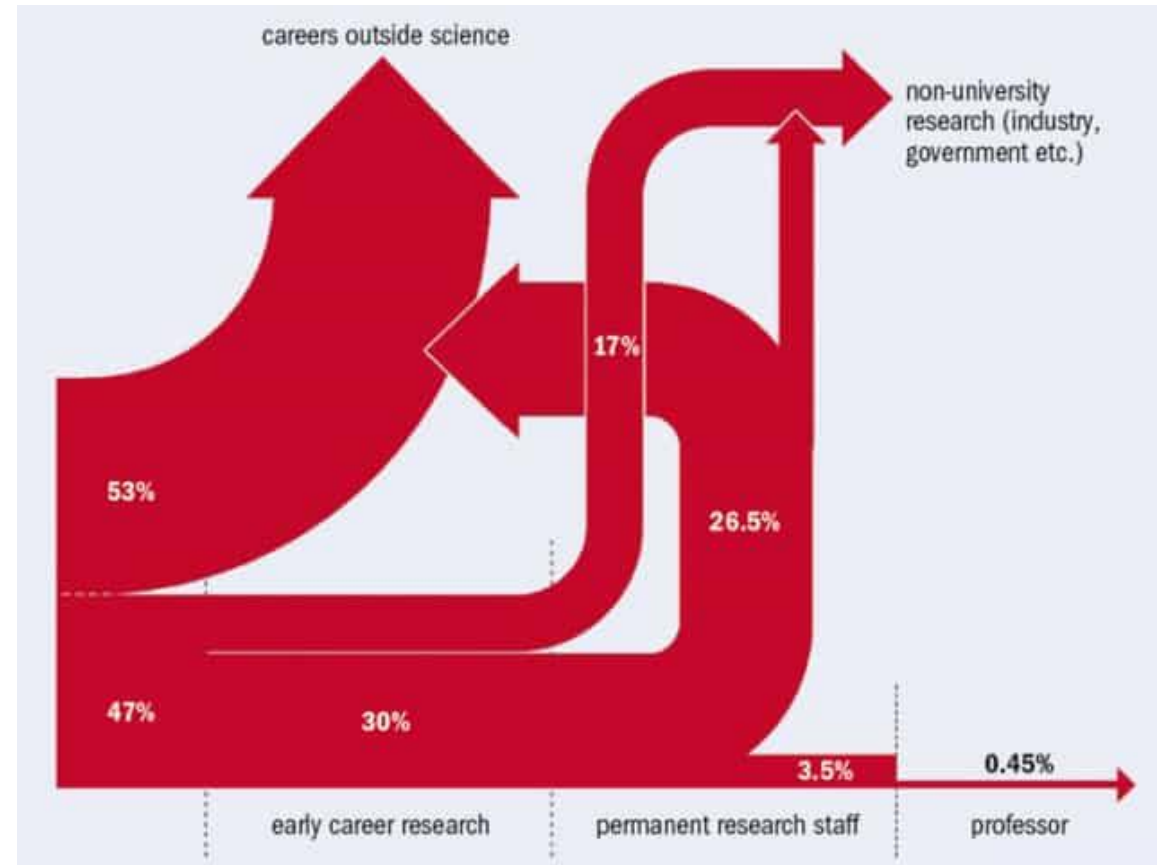
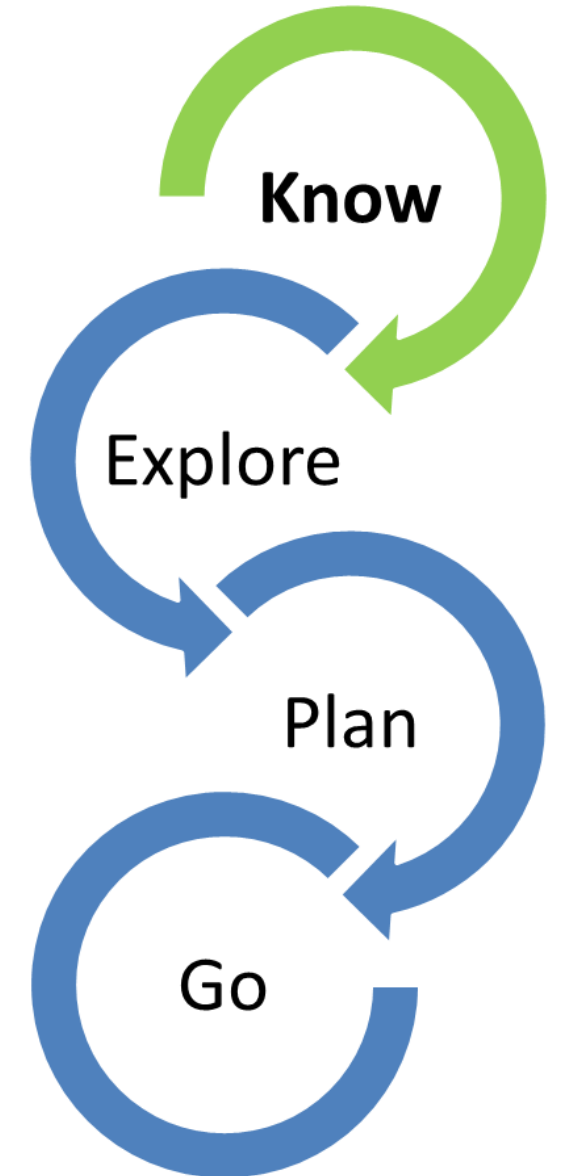


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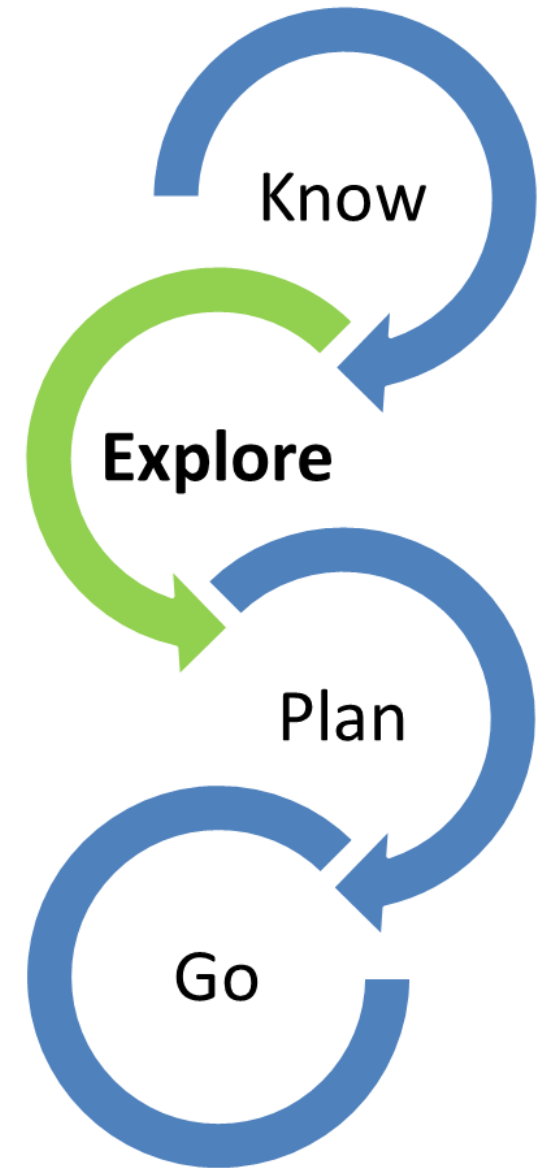
Career planning process

- Know yourself through self-awareness and self-reflection
- Is this career right for me?
 - Do you know what a junior versus a senior researcher does?
- What am I good at?
- What are my strengths?
- What am I passionate about?
- What motivates me?
- What do I value in my work?



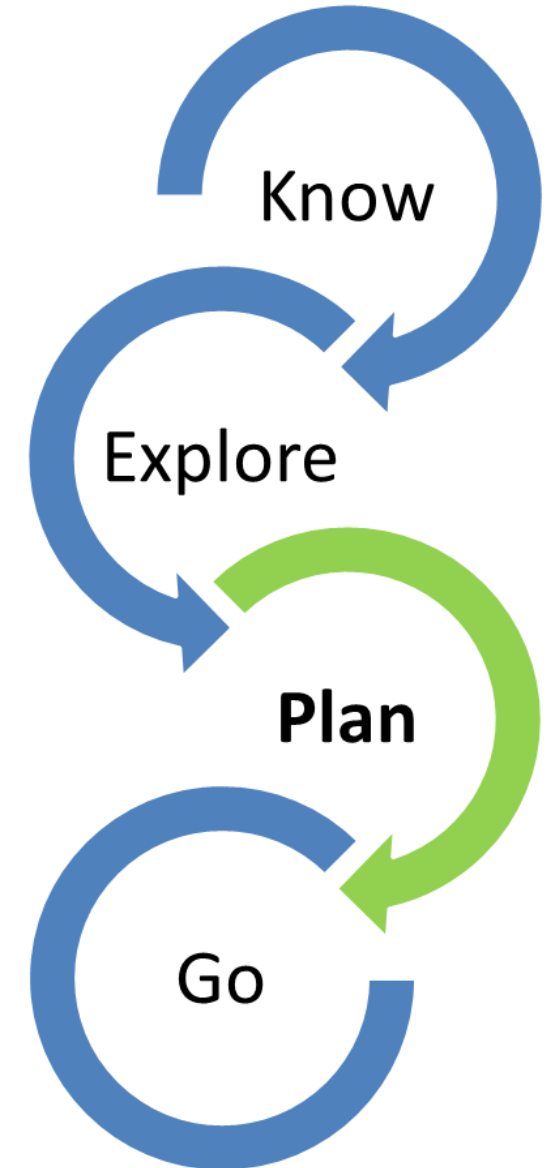
Career planning process

- Have you explored all your options?
- What is the current and near future job market like?
- What options are available that aligns with your values and strengths?
- Which of those options are you interested in?
- Are they a good fit with your needs?



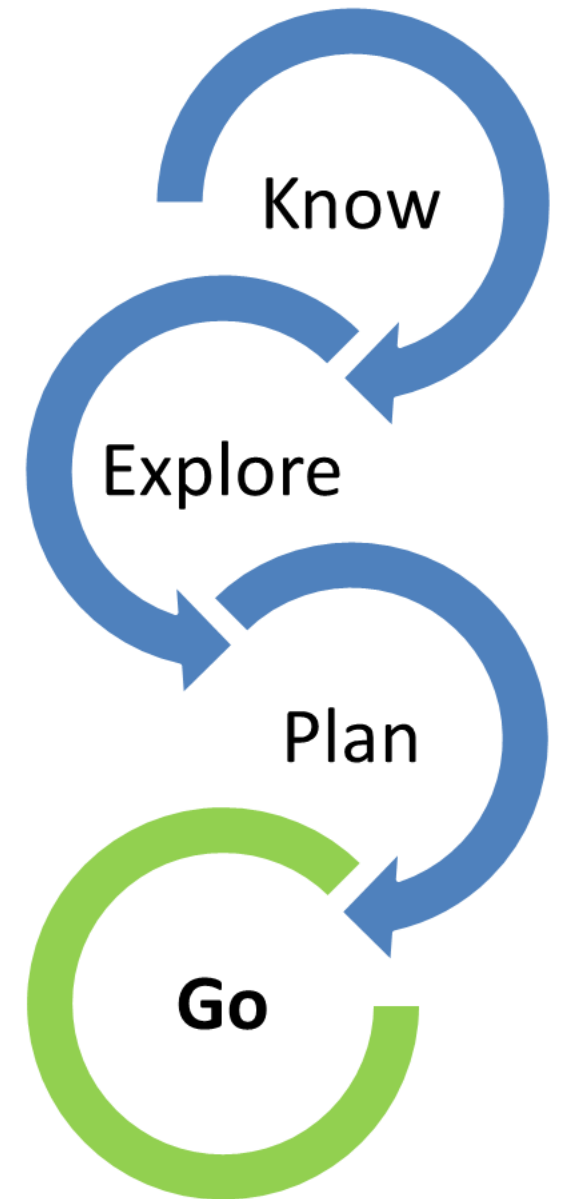
Career planning process

- Once you know the career you want, how do you get there?
- Create short and long term goals
- Break these down into smaller achievable steps
- Would a mentor/supervisor be helpful?



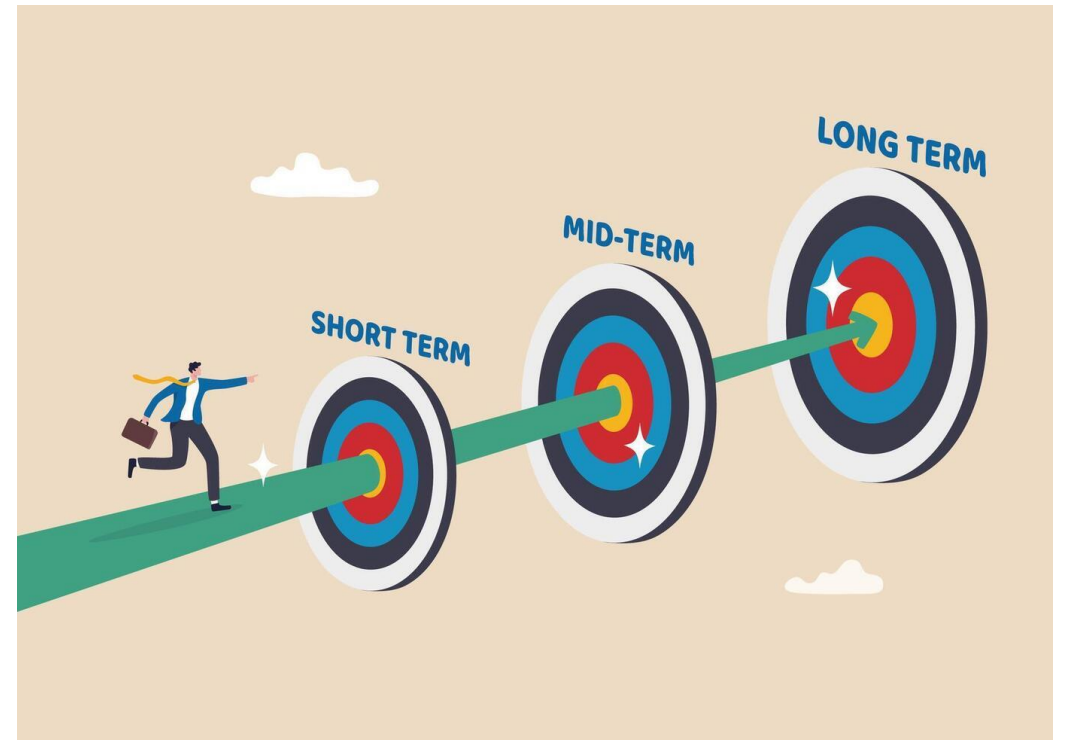
Career planning process

- Execute your plan
- Review and make changes and updates
- Let your mentor/supervisor know of your career plans
- Network, network, network!!!



Short and long-term career goals

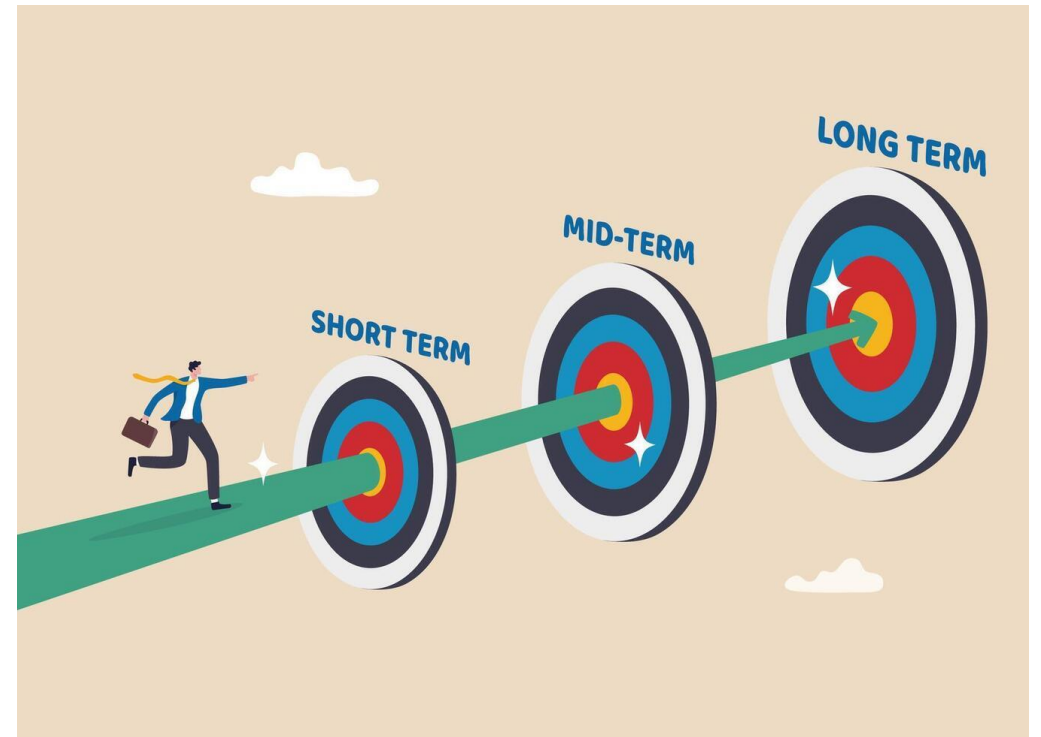
- Academic standards at your institution
 - Teaching/research/service
 - Supervision
 - Funding income
 - Publications/creative outputs
- Requirements for continuation/promotion
- Differences across disciplines



Examples of career goals

Goal: Successfully apply for funding

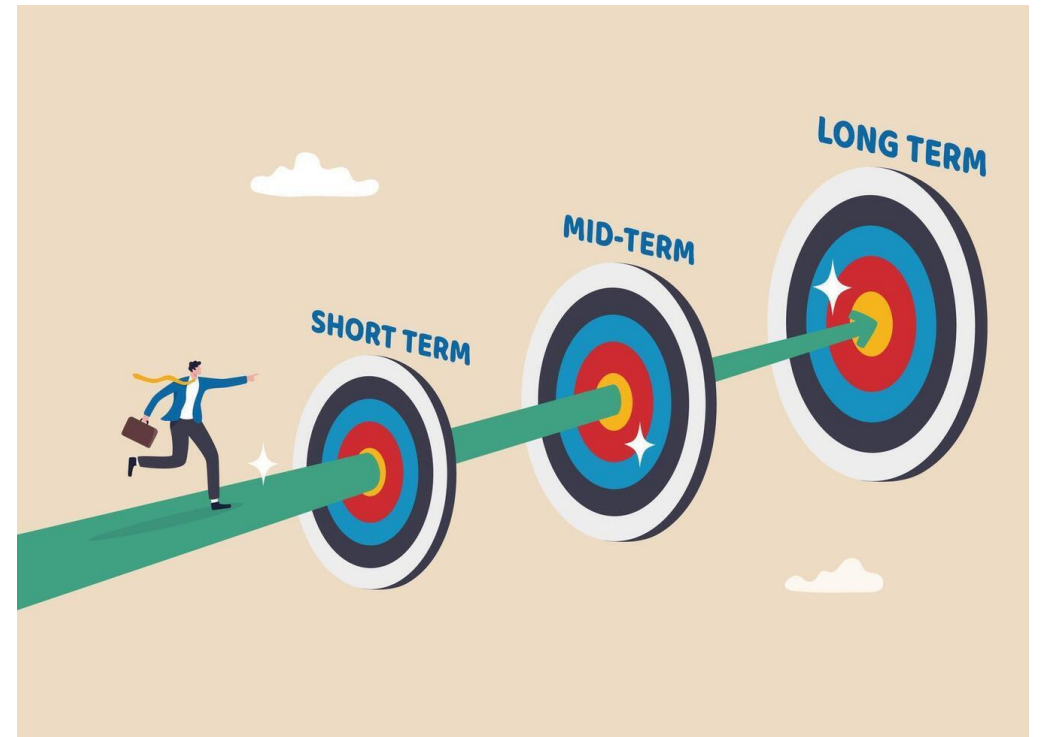
- Be aware of funding opportunities and their deadlines
- When does it make sense to apply?
- When are you eligible?
- When do you have time to focus on writing a grant?
- What support is available?
 - Exemplars
 - Grant writing support



Examples of career goals

Goal: Get teaching and service experience

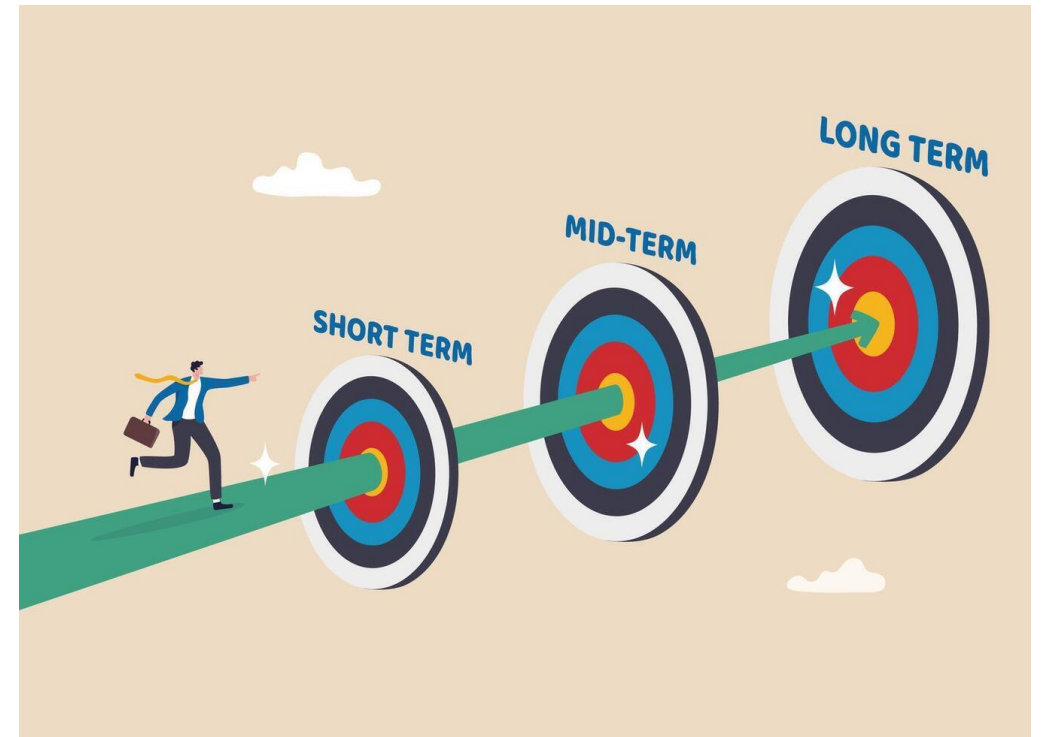
- Why networking is so important!
 - Find out what teaching opportunities are available in your school or department
 - Let the right people know you're interested (head of school?)



Examples of career goals

Goal: Make my academic CV stand out

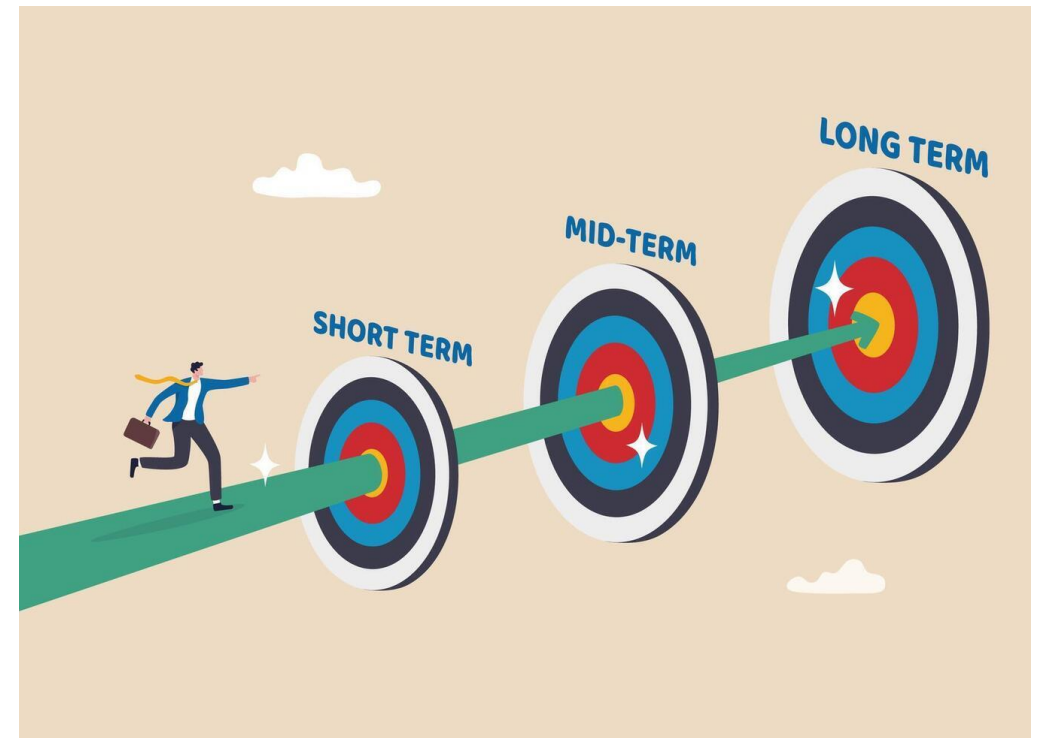
- Explore awards, medals, prizes you can apply for, and when
- Seek out co-supervision/supervision or mentoring opportunities
- Join a professional body or society in your discipline
- Look for opportunities to talk about your research to different communities and public spaces
- Peer review or editorial work for journals
- International research visit or network



Seek career support

Check what career support resources your institution has available, e.g:

- Career Development and Employability Services (CDES at UoA)
- Professional Development programmes
- Mentoring
- Workplace insights internships
- Funding opportunity support





Poll question 2:

Do you know which skills and capabilities you need to develop to achieve your career goals?

2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

Besides teaching which skills do you need to be a research active academic?

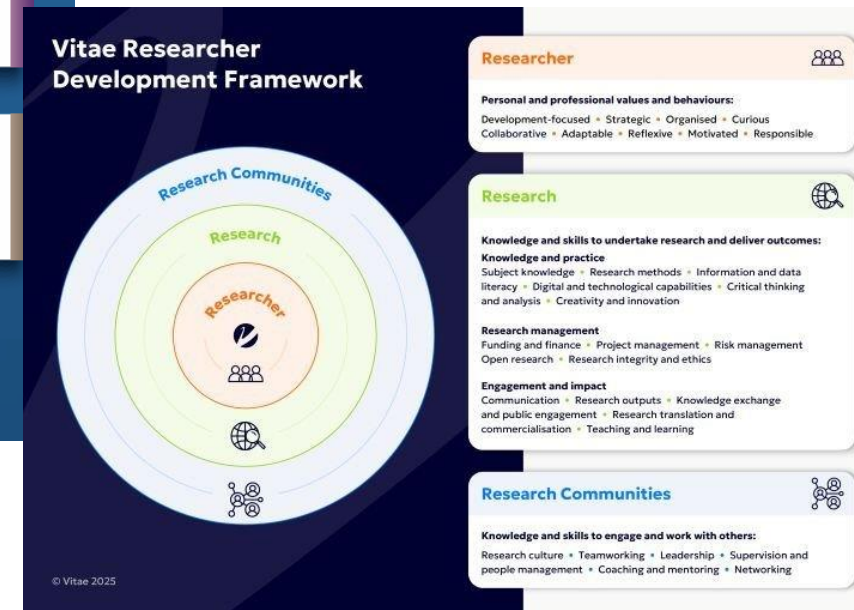
- You should be aware of all the skills and capabilities needed for research in your discipline
- You need to have an idea of your current level of skill and which you need to develop further

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland website. It includes the university logo, a search bar with the text 'Rapunga | Search', and links for 'Staff intranet', a user profile icon 'JM', and several menu items: 'Ngā akoranga Study', 'Rangahau Research', 'Te ao ki konei On campus', 'Mō mātou About us', 'Ngā kaupapa me ngā hui News and events', and 'Takoha Giving'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Rangahau | Research / Research resources / Induction, skills and development / Development opportunities for researchers'. The main heading of the page is 'Development opportunities for researchers'. The sub-heading is 'Workshops, online learning and other resources, by capability area.' Below this is a section 'On this page:' with a list of links: 'Good research practice', 'Ethics and biological safety', 'Research data management', 'Research security', 'Research proposal development', 'Research impact and engagement', 'Research project management', 'Digital research skills and AI', 'Publishing, communication and profiles', 'Supervision and mentoring', 'Commercialisation and intellectual property (IP)', and 'Contact'. To the right is a 'Related links' section with links: 'Research impact and engagement', 'Research project support', 'Publishing, communication and profiles', 'Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship', and 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing training and competency'. At the bottom of the page, there is a note: 'To find upcoming training and development events, explore the [development](#)'.

2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

A researcher capability framework can help you self-assess your skills and capabilities

Each capability usually has various progression levels from foundation to advanced or exemplar

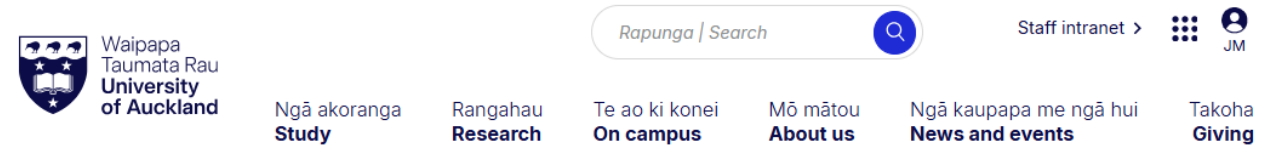


2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

Skills required to apply for funding

Proposal development

- Coming up with ideas
- Evaluating and applying methodologies to project ideas
- Collaborating with others
- Grant writing
 - 'Selling' your idea and yourself
 - Understanding funder's goals
- Budget development
- Finding and evaluating funding opportunities



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Development opportunities for researchers

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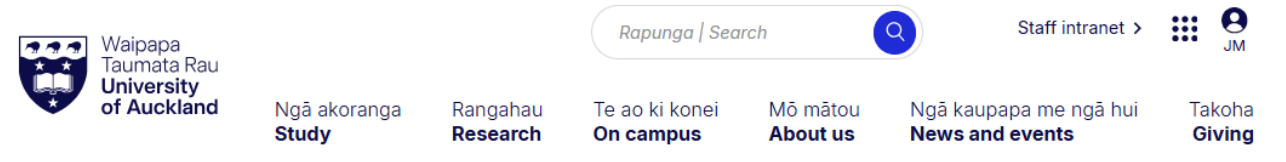
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2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

Skills required to apply for funding continued

Research impact and engagement

- Building relationships with collaborators, partners, and communities
- Engaging with external and internal stakeholders e.g government, policy makers, industry, university engagement managers
- Responsiveness and engagement with Māori and Pacifica peoples
- Engaging with 'end users' of your research to understand the challenges they are facing



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2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

Skills required to apply for funding continued

Ethics

- Depending on your discipline and the funder, you may need ethics approval before submitting your grant

Data management

- Depending on your discipline and the funder, you may need a data management plan as part of your grant application



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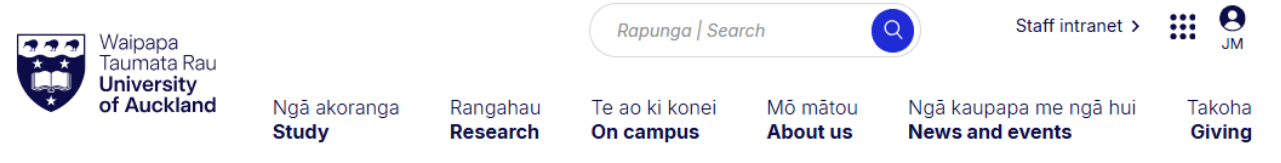
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2. Researcher Skills and Capabilities

Skills required later in career

- Recruiting students, staff, and research assistants
- Supervising thesis students
- Research project management
 - Budget management
 - Risk assessments
 - Data management



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Poll question 3:

What are your current career aspirations?

3. Transferable skills beyond academia

Even with the best career plan in place you may not get the position you're after at your institution of choice.

Good news, many academic and research skills are transferable to outside of academia!

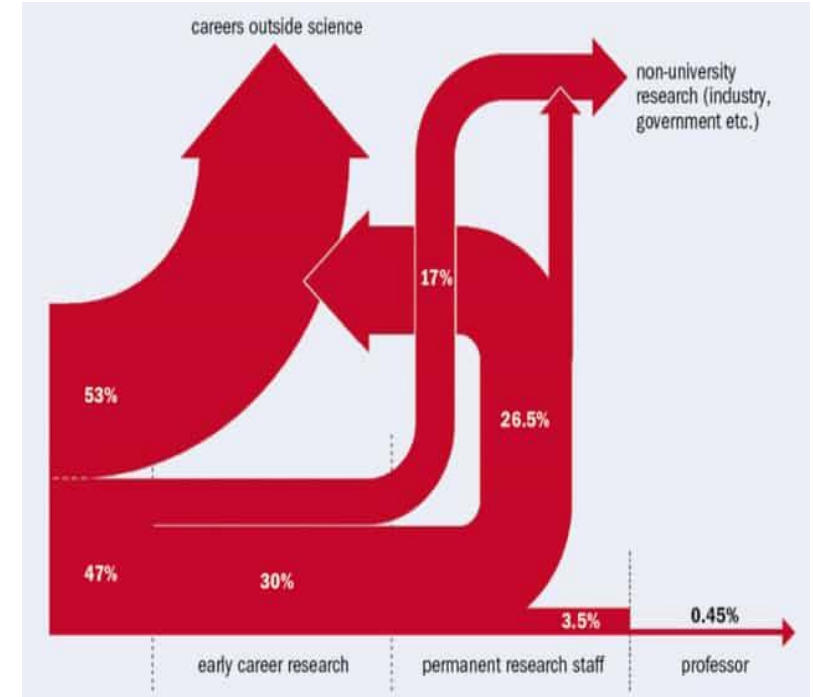


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3. Transferable skills beyond academia

Which of these skills and capabilities do you have?

- Critical thinking
- Fact checking
- Problem solving
- Written and spoken communication
- Finding and summarising information
- Creating graphs, illustrations, reports
- Analysing data
- Resilience
- Brainstorming ideas
- Prioritising tasks
- Project management
- Mentoring
- Explaining complex ideas to various audiences
- Navigating workplace politics



Recap

For a career in academia:

- Be aware of the **academic standards and requirements** in your discipline and institution
- Which **skills and capabilities** will help you get these?
- Create a **career plan** to help you take actionable steps





Thank you for listening, any questions?



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