Congratulations to...

Our ECRs in the press

Making your research media-friendly (from someone who does it for a living)

In First Person...Learning from The Conversation: pitching and writing for mainstream media

2020 ECR Showcase: Call for applications

Workshops

Preparing for Academic Promotion Interviews

Media Engagement 101: An introduction for researchers

Other MQ Development Opportunities

LabArchives Webinar Series at Macquarie University

Elsevier SciVal and Scopus Training Webinars

External Training Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

Prizes, Awards, and Competitions

ECR Notice Board

MQ Parents Group

Invite to join the Biological Sciences ECR Network

Your ECR Representatives
Congratulations to...

Our ECRs in the press

- Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah from the Department of Sociology for her contribution to the article 'The Great Palestinian Silence' in Meanjin.

- Dr Tom Baudinette from the Department of International Studies, Languages and Cultures for his comment in Metro Style about the Thai 'Boys Love' genre.

- Dr Rohan Best from the Department of Economics for his contribution to the article 'Carbon pricing works: the largest-ever study puts it beyond doubt' in The Conversation, and feature on SBS News, Renew Economy and in the Sydney Morning Herald regarding a study which found that carbon pricing is effective at reducing countries' carbon emissions.

- Dr Jasmine Fardouly from the Department of Psychology for her comment to the Herald Sun on the promotion of particular body types by brands.

- Dr Devika Kamath from the Department of Physics and Astronomy who was interviewed on ABC Radio National regarding the relationship between stars.

- Dr Tristan Kennedy from the Department of Indigenous Studies for his contribution to the article 'Racism is lazy and dangerous - Black Lives Matter is asking you to do your homework' in NITV Online.

- Dr Prashan Karunaratne from the Department of Actuarial Studies and Business Analytics for his contribution to the article “Specialisation needs to go hand-in-hand with growth”: Ten business lessons from economics’ in Smart Company.

- Dr Lizzy Lowe from the Department of Biological Sciences for her comment to Yahoo News identifying a spider disguised to look like a twig as an orb weaver.

- Dr Vanessa Pirotta from the Department of Biological Sciences for her interview with ABC Radio Sydney Drive about Greenland sharks, her interviews with ABC News Breakfast, ABC Radio Melbourne Mornings, ABC Sunshine Coast Breakfast and ABC Radio Sydney Breakfast about the factors that increase the risk of shark attacks, and her interview on ABC Radio Sydney Drive about sea monkeys. Vanessa was also featured in Cosmos regarding a citizen science project which has found a remarkable recovery in the humpback whale population. This story was originally published on The Lighthouse.

- Dr Claire Wright from the Department of Management for her interview with ABC Radio Melbourne Afternoons about the history of Melbourne’s wool industry.
Making your research media-friendly (from someone who does it for a living)

Getting your research into the media has obvious benefits. Not only does it amplify your work to a much wider audience – generating potential opportunities for collaboration and funding, and giving you a chance to influence debate – but it can also help your career progression, with the University's academic promotion process recognising media and communication activity as part of its Integration and Application criteria.

But unless you happen to be friends with a journalist (or you’re a member of the Murdoch family!), getting media outlets interested in your research requires some strategic thinking and a conscious shift away from your usual academic writing style.

With 30+ years’ experience as a journalist (including 15 years at Fairfax), Angie Kelly knows how to get an editor interested in a story. She is the founding Editor of The Lighthouse, which was launched by Group Marketing in 2018 to amplify Macquarie’s research expertise and has since become a highly respected source of research news and expert commentary in Australia, with its stories regularly sought after by major media outlets including the ABC and the Sydney Morning Herald.

Angie regularly works with ECRs to showcase their work to the world. Here she shares her advice for making your research ‘media friendly’.

A great headline gets you halfway there
Academic journals are awash with serious, jargon-heavy headlines. But to get a reader’s attention in general news media, you have to entice them with a highly relatable, fun (or perhaps even controversial) headline. You may be trained to faithfully summarise your findings in your titles, but now’s the time to be a bit more lighthearted or adventurous (don’t worry – you’ll be able to explain your findings in more detail once you’ve got your reader to click).

Baki Kokaballi, an ECR in the Australian Institute of Health Innovation, came up with the intriguing headline Hey Siri, I’m so depressed for his Lighthouse story. His reward? More eyeballs on his research.

Use layman’s terms (or languish)
Of course, once you’ve enticed readers with your headline, it’s absolutely essential that you’re using simple, easy-to-understand language whenever you’re speaking to a general audience. In fact, it’s best to assume that your audience has no knowledge of your subject at all. Use relatable examples to demonstrate technical concepts (“…like the bubbles in a soda can…”) and follow any complex terminology with a simple translation in layman’s terms.

Far from ‘dumbing down’ your research – doing this enables your key findings to clearly make their way to the people who may benefit most from the real world impact of your work.

Always remember the ‘so what?’
When you live and breathe your research passion, it can be hard to remember that others might not be quite so interested in your research methodologies or extensive data sets. When writing for – or pitching to – general news media, you first need to ask yourself the ‘so what?’ question. Why
would readers or listeners care about this? What does it mean for their lives, their families, their health or their environment? This is what you should be focusing on and using layman’s terms to articulate.

**Picture power**
Like a great headline, if you have a beautiful, professional image to accompany your story, you’re much more likely to catch the reader’s eye. We use professional magazine-style photography for *Lighthouse* – shot in the field, where possible – to really help the research shine.

**Keep your eye on the media ‘hot topics’**
Being able to ‘hook’ your research on a topic that people are talking about will help make your story irresistible to an editor. Even it’s just the standfirst (the introductory summary of a news story), making your research relevant to current issues will increase your chances of publication.

The Communications team supports academic staff to showcase their research and expertise through a variety of external and internal media channels, including *The Lighthouse*. Read the team’s FAQs about working with the media. If you have a story to share, get in touch with the media or communications representative in your relevant Group Marketing Squad.

In First Person…Learning from *The Conversation*: pitching and writing for mainstream media

As evidenced by “*Our ECRs in the press*”, it is clear that ECRs understand the importance of engaging with mainstream media. However, taking that first step to reach out to an editor and say “hey, my research is interesting; maybe you want to publish it” can be a little daunting – at least that is what it feels like for me. So rather than take that first step, I decided to learn more about it from the experts.

Last month I attended a writing masterclass with deputy-editor Justin Bergman from *The Conversation*. The workshop “*Pitching and Writing*” is aimed at researchers who wish to get their writing published by mainstream media. Over two afternoon online Zoom sessions, I was joined with nine fellow researchers from various Australian universities to hear firsthand from an editor what an editor is looking for when trawling through the multitude of pitches they are sent on a daily basis (no really, Justin showed us a screenshot of his inbox – it was a lot). From this we learnt our first lesson: **spend time on the title**.

Over the two 2 hr sessions, they provided a lecture (pitching on day 1, writing on day 2) followed by a feedback session on our own writing, which reinforced the lecture content in a practical manner.

Prior to the masterclass, we were asked to prepare a 100-word pitch on a newsworthy article on our research. Using my medical genetics research background, I decided to pitch a “human story” article that would focus on the participants’ involvement in my research.

The feedback I received was that my pitch was “accessible” (yay!), but lacking in newsworthiness – as in the “why now” question wasn’t clear. To help me find a topical connection, Justin proposed a few questions such as “are there any new discoveries or gaps identified in the last 12 months?” or
“is there anything that has changed recently, like clinical trial participation numbers?” or “is there some sort of interesting fact that may interest readers?”

So, for homework, I spent the evening ruminating on these questions and scouring the literature and the interwebs for a potential newsworthy angle. The Conversation editors use Google Trends to identify topical subjects or items to target, but applying that backwards to an idea proved difficult (at least to my limited data searching abilities). Eventually I managed to find an angle through the academic literature: a recent literature review that found whilst most individuals recognise the importance of participation in medical research, only about 1/3 would consider participating. I now had my newsworthy hook.

I then had to write the opening two paragraphs which was another challenge; despite having found my “interesting fact” hook, I still managed to drown it in unnecessary background information. Had this been a published article I would have lost my readers long before they read about my “interesting fact”. And yet, with a little bit of editor magic, Justin was able to transform my piece from wordy text to sharp catchy writing. It was eye-opening.

Attending this workshop has given me a better understanding of what is involved when pitching an article to editors of mainstream media: what to expect and what is expected of me. I got to experience working with an editor on my own writing in a low-stake/low-risk environment and as a result, now have a decent draft of a pitch that with a little more polish would be good enough to send out into the world.

Probably the most valuable lesson I learned from this workshop was that finding a newsworthy hook or angle is worth the time it takes, and with a bit of lateral thinking (and patience) is very doable. The other major takeaway lesson which was echoed by both Justin and several participants is to make use of your university’s media team.

A few more take-away points to I picked up during this workshop include:

1. Start with the end – the key result or takeaway message – and write it at the start of the pitch or article
2. Use interesting facts or statistics to draw in your audience
3. Examples are great at making abstract concepts more concrete and relatable to a general audience
4. Remember you are pitching an article idea not a completed article – don’t get hung up on a particular story line as the editor may suggest different angles that will better attract an audience
5. Write in the same manner and tone as if you were explaining your research to a non-academic friend in an email
6. Listicles are a thing. They are a popular thing. Consider pitching/writing a listicle

~Megan Brewer, PhD

I hope you have enjoyed reading about my experience. We’d love to hear more ECR voices and shared experiences. If you have any thoughts, advice, or experiences you would like to share with the network please send us an email and we will include it in the next newsletter.
2020 ECR Showcase: Call for applications

Applications due September 30

The ECR showcase is a new endeavour – developed by ECRs for ECRs - to exhibit the depth and breadth of early career research to the wider Macquarie University community. We are looking for applicants who can pitch their research and its potential impact – in just five minutes and with no more than four slides – to a broad audience including a judging panel made up of both academic and non-academic panellists. COVID-19 restrictions permitting, all the presentations will be live (and recorded for online publication) and interspersed with networking sessions.

This showcase offers ECRs a great opportunity to get their research known across the different faculties, to create new collaborations, and to network with senior academics. Three applicants from each faculty will be selected to present and these 12 selected speakers will receive training on communicating their research to a general audience before the presentation. There are also prizes for the best presenter in each faculty and overall best presenter.

Applications are now open for early career researchers with less than 5 years active research since their PhD. This time-period excludes any career interruption, such as childbirth, parental leave, carer’s responsibility, misadventure, or debilitating illness. As part of the application process, ECRs will need to provide a 100-word impact statement about their research aimed at a non-academic audience. The successful candidates will be notified via email and the presentations will be held in the Thursday 19th November (exact time TBC).

Please address all questions to ECR Showcase Committee by emailing ecrsupport@mq.edu.au and including “ECR showcase”.

Workshops

Media Engagement 101: An introduction for researchers
September 1, 2pm – 3:30pm

Have you ever thought about getting your research into the media but weren’t too sure how to do it? Where to get started? Who to ask for help? Or what it would entail?

To provide some insight into these questions, the ECR Network has put together a panel of media experts and academic researchers who have a range of experiences (from beginner novice to established veterans) with telling their research stories to various media outlets.

Moderated by Angie Kelly, editor of The Lighthouse, our panel will discuss their personal experiences in engaging with the media and will focus on providing an overview of

• how to engage,
• tips and tricks to be aware of to generate media interest and build media relationships,
• tips and tricks to be aware of when writing for the media / or when being interviewed, and
• how to utilise the support available through Macquarie’s media team

Please register through myRDC. If you cannot attend the live event, a recording of the panel session will be posted on the ECR website afterwards.
Other MQ Development Opportunities

Please see myRDC for a full list of upcoming workshops for research staff and students.

- Developing a Competitive ARC Linkage Project Application, **Aug 17**
- Developing your Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence for the DECRA Scheme, **Sep 23**
- Developing your DECRA Project Description, **Sep 30**
- Building your DECRA Budget, **Oct 7**
- Writing the Statement by the Administering Organisation for the DECRA Scheme, **Oct 13**

**LabArchives Webinar Series at Macquarie University**

*Throughout August and September*

LabArchives provides an electronic notebook facility that works on multiple platforms and devices, allowing researchers to store any type of data and streamline their research workflows. LabArchives offers unlimited storage, automated backup and data protection and under the university’s LabArchives site licence, it is free of charge for all Macquarie users.

Researchers may register for the webinars of their choice on the training [Eventbrite page](#).

Any questions about the webinars may be directed to [swc@mq.edu.au](mailto:swc@mq.edu.au).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Webinar Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aug 19, 1:00-2:30pm | Introduction to LabArchives  
covers the basics for new users                  |
| Aug 26, 1:00-2:00pm | LabArchives Integrations: Streamlining Your Workflows  
LabArchives integrations including those with third party tools as well as Folder Monitor |
| Aug 26, 2:30-3:30pm | Introduction to Widget Creation                                                             |
| Sep 2, 1:00-2:30pm | LabArchives Power Users  
covers more advanced features including any of the integrations, user management, notebook templates |
| Sep 9, 1:00-2:30pm | LabArchives for Lab Heads and Research Team Leaders  
focuses on user management and notebook templates |

**Elsevier SciVal and Scopus Training Webinars**

*May through to August, Mondays 12-1pm*

As part of MQ Library’s Elsevier subscription, Senior Customer Consultant Steven Riddell is offering fortnightly SciVal and Scopus training webinars on Mondays, 12 – 1pm.

These sessions are available for all staff including (but not limited to) research office and academics.
Upcoming SciVal Webinars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Webinar Title</th>
<th>Webinar Registration Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Say my name, say my name - SciVal author profiles</td>
<td><a href="https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eSgaKCVBRkqVA_9I_8oTsg">https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eSgaKCVBRkqVA_9I_8oTsg</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upcoming Scopus Webinars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Webinar Title</th>
<th>Webinar Link &amp; Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 3</td>
<td>This is an artform - advanced searching operators</td>
<td><a href="https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rTNKkZsWRe2ohMbrwcnQq">https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rTNKkZsWRe2ohMbrwcnQq</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 17</td>
<td>This artform is harder that I thought - basic advanced searching</td>
<td><a href="https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_V8umT1VSSQmhP1ciEZ1Zng">https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_V8umT1VSSQmhP1ciEZ1Zng</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Savings savings, where is my Scopus bank account (lists and MyScopus)</td>
<td><a href="https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_F2R6JN3Ty6MiCiaW_mgRQ">https://elsevier.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_F2R6JN3Ty6MiCiaW_mgRQ</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

External Training Opportunities

The ECR Network has compiled a list of training opportunities offered by external groups. Please note that some of these external events may have a registration fee and it is up to each ECR to decide if the event is worth their time and money. If you know of any other external training opportunities that you want to share with your fellow ECR’s, please forward the details to the ECR Network and we will include the information in the next newsletter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science in Public’s Media and communication masterclass</td>
<td>Aug 5 – 6</td>
<td>$880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-half-day course that covers television (with practice interviews); radio (with practice interviews); handling tricky questions and staying out of trouble; print and online media; developing your communication plan; social media and becoming an ‘expert’

Funding Opportunities

A reminder that all funding applications should be submitted through PURE, well ahead of the funding body deadline, to leave time for approvals by HoD, ADR, and Research Services. Check with your Faculty Research Office to find out about timelines for submission.

Internal and External funding opportunities are listed on the Fellowships and Grant Opportunities page. Current opportunities include:

- ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (MQ EOI date August 19, MQ submission date October 21)
- ARC Future Fellowships (MQ EOI date August 19, MQ submission date November 4)
- NHMRC Clinical Trials and Cohorts Studies Grants (MQ submission date October 28)
- NHMRC Partnership Projects (MQ submission date November 14)
- MQ Fellowship for Indigenous Researchers
- MQ Co-funding Scheme
• MQ Enterprise Partnerships Scheme
• MQ DVCR Discretionary Fund

The Research Professional Database is available for Macquarie researchers to search for fellowships, grants and prizes by discipline area.

Prizes, Awards, and Competitions

• Australian Cognitive Neuroscience Society Young Investigator Award, Aug 7
• The Paul Bourke Awards for Early Career Research in social science, Aug 31
• The Council for the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) Future Leaders Writing Prize, Sep 1
• Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Early Career Researcher Award, Sep 4
• The Council for the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) Prize for Distinctive Work in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Sep 7
• The Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs Awards, Sep 7

For a full list of external prizes please visit: https://staff.mq.edu.au/research/resources-and-support/prizes,-awards-and-fellowships

ECR Notice Board
Keen to reach out to other ECRs across campus? Want to find someone to collaborate with? Explain R to you? Explore Sydney’s best walking tracks? Or just looking to connect with others? The ECR Notice Board is the place to go. Just send us a brief message (no more than 50 words) with your MQ email and, if appropriate, we’ll include it here in the newsletter.

MQ Parents Group
In light of COVID 19, the MQ Parents Group for parents of small children and expecting parents has created an online presence on Facebook. This private group is for MQ staff members (continuing, fixed term, and casual) to share tips and the realities of working in an academic institution with small children. The informal network aims to bring members together to communicate the experiences of real parents to the University. From navigating parental or carers leave to explaining career interruptions on grant or promotion applications, this group aspires to provide a cross-faculty interpersonal network to get help with the practical issues related to parenting in an academic institution (as well as all the other daily crises of sleep, food, and finding emergency babysitting for that conference or event!). If you’d like to join up, please contact rachel.yuen@mq.edu.au or vanessa.tan@mq.edu.au, or simply look up our virtual group on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/325905798421630/?ref=share

Invite to join the Biological Sciences ECR Network
Here at the biological sciences ECR committee we’re working on creating a better network among biology (and broader) ECRs, because we’re facing some pretty tough challenges in the academic job market for the next few years, and frankly we need all the support we can get!
As a way to communicate and share information within our ECR network, we’ve created a slack group and we’d love you to join. You can add yourself here: 
https://join.slack.com/t/biologyecrs/shared_invite/zt-etytuwqp-y5sMUREm_nBte66u5kUE8A

Looking forward to getting to know you all a better and meeting those of you I don’t know soon.
~Dr Lizzy Lowe (Chair of the ECR committee for Biological Sciences)

Your ECR Representatives
Do you know the ECR representatives in your Faculty and Department?
The following ECRs meet every two months as part of the ECR Network Advisory Group, led by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Integrity and Development), Professor Lesley Hughes, to discuss issues and identify solutions to the challenges specific to ECRs:

Faculty of Arts
- Dr Tom Baudinette
- Dr Katrina Hutchison
- Dr Sarah Powell

Macquarie Business School
- Dr Laramie Tolentino
- Dr Han Li
- Dr Rohan Best

Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Human Sciences
- Dr Elizabeth Austin
- Dr Jean (Jinhyun) Cho
- Dr Marina Junquiera Santiago

Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Dr Amy Cain
- Dr Matthew Fernandez (covering for Dr Michael Swain)

Research and Research Training Committee Representatives:
- Dr Milena Gandy (Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Human Sciences)
- Dr Mauricio Marrone (Faculty of Business & Economics)

If you would like something raised with the ECR Network Advisory Group, please contact your Faculty representative.

Let us know what else you’d like to see in this newsletter.
Email ecrsupport@mq.edu.au with your suggestions and feedback.

Don’t want to receive these emails? Please unsubscribe here

https://staff.mq.edu.au/research/resources-and-support/early-career-research-network