Discussion Paper	**06**

Title: **Employable scholars: their transition as professional educators**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Comprehend the potential for using professional development of this nature with doctoral researchers
- Reflect on and discuss the impact professional development as an educator can have on doctoral researchers future employability in academia

Session Outline

Previously, doctoral study was perceived as a necessary apprenticeship for subsequent academic careers, with the expectation that PhD researchers would be able to learn all they needed about this future employment from their supervisors (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010). However, the last decade has seen a significant shift from the elite few achieving this highest-level qualification to the massification of global doctoral opportunities, implying an attendant divergence of employment opportunities for graduates (Kehm et al, 2018). Commensurate with this, early career opportunities in academia have become scarcer, more demanding in expectations and often precarious in nature (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016). Regardless of this changing context a significant proportion of doctoral candidates - 51% according to Advance-HE's 2018 PRES - continue to visualize themselves as career academics (Beaton, 2017; Chadha, 2013; Edwards et al, 2011).

The primary focus of PhD researchers was however deemed to be just that, opportunities to engage in L&T were seen as adjunct to doctoral studies, and mirrored by the separation of respective institutional portfolios: consequently those tasked with guiding PhD researchers in these, perceived as distinct, areas of practice seldom sought out opportunities for collaboration (Marsh & Hattie, 2002; Kinchin et al, 2009).

To gain insight into current UK recruitment expectations for early career academics the authors conducted a snapshot review of lecturer and teaching fellow posts advertised on the recruiting site jobs.ac.uk. The posts, ranged from research-intensive institutions to teaching focused ones, all used language clearly indicating that they were targeted at

applicants who were recent doctoral candidates: 95% of advertisements expected applicants to have a proven track -record of HE teaching.

This presentation will illustrate, through a longitudinal case study based in a large UK university, how a collaboration between educational developers and the Doctoral College focusing on developing professional capabilities and experience as HE educators during doctoral study, prepares and enhances the employment potential of those committed to transitioning to a career in academia. Key themes explored include how an Advance HE accredited course can support doctoral researchers to develop not only their skills as educators but also their academic identity, voice and resilience thus positioning them with the potential and cultural capital to survive as more rounded early career academics.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Overview and background to activities and research findings from Ulster University (20 minutes)
- Group discussion of the key themes and the benefits of this type of provision within and beyond doctoral study. Use will be made of recent depictions of the profile of modern educators (Wilson, R n.d.) to stimulate discussion of how we as educational developers can support doctoral researchers to develop their capacity and preparedness for this role (20 minutes).
- Summing up (5 minutes)

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