

CAPOD Funding Report

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Event /Course Title	British Association for Irish Studies PGR/ECR Academic job workshop
Date of event	26 January 2019

1. Brief description of Event (50-100 words):

This was a workshop designed to help PhD students and ECR researchers take a new approach to their job application materials and learn how to 'pitch' their research on an Irish Studies sub-topic to a wider audience (either an academic job or another position outside academia). This included one-on-one feedback on CVs and mock interviews, as well as small group sessions on job application materials (including cover letters and fellowship proposals).

2. What were the benefits of attending and what did you gain from the experience in terms of transferable skills and knowledge.

The main benefit of attending was personalised feedback on both my CV and my interview skills – these one-on-one conversations and feedback sessions helped me to reframe how I explain my PhD research and the skills it has helped me to develop, so that these can be pitched to either an academic audience not in the sub-field of Irish Studies, or to a non-academic job that may be less concerned with the specific outputs of this research but instead are concerned with the skills I can bring to a job. This was very helpful as I plan to start applying for post-PhD jobs in the next few months, and will be something I keep in mind as I start that process.

3. What actions will you be taking as a result of attending or by making new networking contacts.

I will be reformatting my CV in order to make it appealing to non-Irish Studies specialty jobs, as well as making it more accessible to non-academic jobs. I will also be changing how I approach talking about my research in interviews, as attending this workshop helped me to formulate answers that discuss my dissertation while also making that information and the skills I have developed over the course of my PhD accessible and transferable to other types of employment.

This workshop also allowed me to meet and network with members of the British Association for Irish Studies who study non-international relations/politics sub-topics, which not only provided me a new type of feedback on my application materials, but provided new connections which may be useful in future work.

4. Can you share any additional resources produced in connection with the event (e.g. feedback from participants, training resources, website links, and additional materials).

The materials from the workshop were not made publically available online.

5. Tips/experience learned from the event

The biggest takeaway for me from this workshop was to think about the 'big picture' of my PhD when pitching my experience to post-PhD employment. This included starting with the most relevant part of the research to the specific opportunity (so, for example, for a non-academic job, starting with things like methodology when asked about my PhD, since those techniques are applicable to other jobs in a more concrete way than the specifics of my project; similarly, for a general job in a politics department, explaining my research as looking at 'deeply divided societies through the case study of Northern Ireland' rather than explaining it as 'a PhD about Northern Ireland'). Learning how to reframe my PhD – and practicing this reframing out loud to an expert – has given me new confidence in looking for post-PhD jobs, as suddenly it seems as though there are many more opportunities open to me than I previously saw.

6. Any additional comments or information regarding the event

Despite being organised as an Irish Studies sub-field event, I think many of the techniques for reframing and pitching the work of a PhD would be applicable to individuals studying other regions of the world or even working in other fields entirely.