



# Pursuing an Academic Career Post-doctoral opportunities and what you need to succeed

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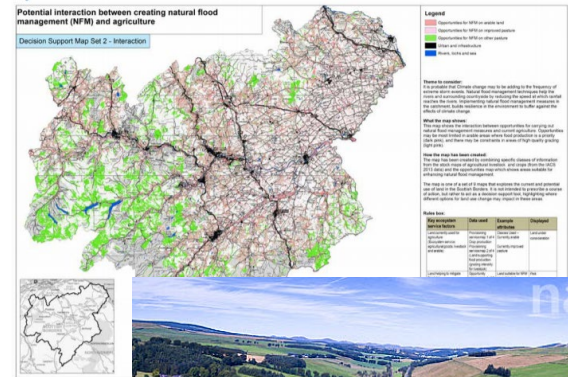
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# Career path (working backwards!)

- Senior Research Fellow
  - Independent Fellowship on scaling nature-based solutions
  - 'Knowledge exchange' Fellowship
- PhD
  - Influence of land use change on flooding: implications for natural flood management
- Early career
  - Decade working in international environment and development policy (land use change in tropics)





# Transition from PhD to the ‘world outside’!

- Fellowship application during the final stages of PhD
- Just went for it as head was ‘in the space’, but be careful of distraction...
- My Fellowship is part-time to balance with other things:
  - Teaching (covered by an extension to my contract)
  - Consulting closely linked to PhD research





# Skills I'm using from my PhD

- All of them!
- Formulating research questions and methods
- Attention to detail – qualitative / quantitative
- Computing and field skills
- Paper writing, editing, reviewing
- Proposal writing
- Independent working, time management and juggling





# Skills to bear in mind during PhD

- Many more softer skills that are worth thinking about:
  - Story telling: Getting the message across about why your work matters
  - Simplifying: Even if you're working mostly with academics in your field, simplifying things is key (e.g. in proposals that will be read by a range of academics)
  - Fitting work in the bigger picture (you may need to make compromises on the exact research focus until you have your own research group!)
  - Lateral thinking: Opportunities may arise by making connections. Different 'models' – e.g. I've used a part time knowledge exchange fellowship to develop a portfolio of 'academic' career activities
  - Proposals: get some practice with small grants, as there are more around for doctoral researchers





# Other tips....

- Try to think about what really drives you, including the kind of working environment you like to be in.
- Various shades of research career:
  - University
  - Research Institutes – government/non-government
  - Independent research institutes / think tanks
- Writing your research ‘bio’

