

Academic Communication *in (Astro)Physics*

Lecture 10: Persuasive Writing II
Job Applications & Grant Proposals

Today's lecture

Where to look for research jobs: postdocs/fellowships

A typical job application

CVs (academic and non-academic)

Publication lists

Cover letters

Research statements/proposals

Reference letters

After you get shortlisted: interview, job offer.

Where do you look for fellowships/postdocs?

Your first post of call: the AAS Job Register: jobregister.aas.org

The screenshot shows the AAS Job Register homepage. The top navigation bar includes links for AAS Home, AAS Job Register Home, Member Directory, and search functions. The main content area features a sidebar with links for Jobs (Current Job Ads, Query Job Ads, Archived Job Ads, Log In To Post Job Ad, Create Job Poster Account) and AAS Employment and Career Pages (How to Post a Job Ad, AAS Publication Policy, DEI Annotated Resource List for Hiring and Workplaces, Recommended Practices for Hiring, Tips for Successful Recruitment, AAS Career Resources, AAS Career Center, Internships & Summer Jobs, Job Register Editorial, AAS Copyright & Permissions). The main content area displays 'Current Job Ads' and 'Faculty Positions (visiting & non-tenure)' tables. A yellow box at the bottom left of the page states: 'If you have not logged in since Thursday June 29, 2017 you must reset your password to log in. All the accounts were imported from the prior version of the AAS Job Register. However, as a precaution all passwords were reset. This should only take a minute as long as you know the username or email address that you used.'

AAS Job Register
Find and post astronomy related jobs!

AAS Home | AAS Job Register Home | Member Directory

Jobs

- Current Job Ads
- Query Job Ads
- Archived Job Ads
- Log In To Post Job Ad
- Create Job Poster Account

Current Job Ads

- Faculty Positions (visiting & non-tenure) — Time limited position at a university or college. Includes teaching responsibility.
- Faculty Positions (tenure & tenure-track) — Permanent (or leading to a permanent) position at a university or college. Includes teaching responsibility.
- Pre-doctoral/Graduate Positions — Typically associated with a Fellowship or other source of funding to support those seeking a degree from an institution of higher education. May also include funding opportunities for exchange programs or other professional development.
- Post-doctoral Positions & Fellowships — Typically located at a university, college or government lab. Allows recipient to pursue independent research or research support for a specific science program defined by the employer. Is limited to a pre-determined period of time. Usually does not include teaching responsibilities.
- Science Engineering — Instrument design and development, software development, IT system support, and other project related responsibilities. Open-ended duration of employment.
- Science Management — Runs projects and programs at universities, government or private industry. Open-ended employment.
- Scientific/Technical Staff — Includes researchers at science centers, government labs, university, or private industry. May include both user support or project related work and time for individual research. Open-ended duration of employment. Usually does not include teaching. May or may not require PhD.
- Other — Any position that does not seem to fit.

AAS Employment and Career Pages

- How to Post a Job Ad
- AAS Publication Policy
- DEI Annotated Resource List for Hiring and Workplaces
- Recommended Practices for Hiring
- Tips for Successful Recruitment
- AAS Career Resources
- AAS Career Center
- Internships & Summer Jobs
- Job Register Editorial
- AAS Copyright & Permissions

Faculty Positions (visiting & non-tenure)

Title	Institution/Organization	Location	Posted	Deadline	Position Status
Temporary Assistant Professor (fixed term)	University of Cambridge	Cambridge, Cambridgeshire	2023/07/06	2023/08/03	Accepting Applicants

Faculty Positions (tenure & tenure-track)

Title	Institution/Organization	Location	Posted	Deadline	Position Status
New! The Plumian Professorship of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy	University of Cambridge	Cambridge , Cambridgeshire	2023/07/26	2023/10/15	Accepting Applicants
New! Tenure Track Assistant Professor on Galaxy Structure, Formation and Evolution [1.0 fte]	University of Groningen	Groningen, Groningen	2023/07/24	2023/09/15	Accepting Applicants
New! Tenure Track Assistant Professor on Planetary Atmosphere Sciences [1.0 fte]	University of Groningen	Groningen, Groningen	2023/07/24	2023/09/15	Accepting Applicants
New! Call for Interest: Faculty Position for Women Astrophysicists at USACH	Universidad de Santiago de Chile	Santiago, Región Metropolitana	2023/07/23	2023/08/20	On Hold
New! Lecturer / Senior Lecturer (6 positions)	University of Hertfordshire	Hatfield, Hertfordshire	2023/07/22	2023/08/19	Accepting Applicants
New! Faculty position at Universidad Andrés Bello (Chile)	Universidad Andres Bello	Santiago, Santiago RM	2023/07/21	2023/10/01	Accepting Applicants
New! W1 professorship with tenure track to W2 or W2 professorship in astrophysics	Bielefeld University	Bielefeld, Northrhine Westphalia	2023/07/17	2023/09/30	Accepting Applicants
New! Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy	Carleton College	Northfield, MN	2023/07/17	2023/09/15	Accepting Applicants

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Log in

Other places

If you are interested in a particular institution, it is worth checking their website.

Australian astronomy jobs listings: <https://astronomy.org.au/professional/jobs/australian-jobs/>

Australian Research Council (ARC) fellowships: <https://www.arc.gov.au/funding-research/funding-schemes/discovery-program>

Academic jobs online: <https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo>

Inspire (USA): <https://inspirehep.net/jobs?sort=mostrecent&size=25&page=1&status=open>

Euraxess: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/search>

EAS job list: <https://eas.unige.ch/jobs.jsp>

RAS Jobs emailing list: <https://ras.ac.uk/membership/RAS-job-list>

Hubble Fellowships (US): <https://www.stsci.edu/stsci-research/fellowships/nasa-hubble-fellowship-program>

RAS Fellowships (UK): <https://ras.ac.uk/>

Royal Society Funding (UK): <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/>

STFC Fellowships (UK): <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/stfc/fellowships/>

Participants Portal for EU funding schemes (e.g., Marie Curie Fellowships): https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation_en

Another useful link — Astronomy Jobs Rumour Mill:

ARC Fellowships

Discovery Program

Discovery funding recognises the importance of fundamental, 'blue sky' research to Australia. It supports the national innovation system to build 'new' knowledge and a knowledge-based economy through:

- developing new ideas/knowledge
- creating jobs
- economic growth, and
- enhanced quality of life in Australia.

The Discovery Program delivers benefit to Australia by building Australia's research capacity by supporting:

- excellent, internationally competitive research by individuals and teams
- research training and career opportunities for the best Australian and international researchers
- international collaboration, and
- research in priority areas.

The Discovery schemes are:

- [Discovery Projects](#)
- [Discovery Early Career Researcher Award](#)
- [Future Fellowships](#)
- [Australian Laureate Fellowships](#)
- [Discovery Indigenous](#).

DECRA (Discovery Early Research Award)

The *DECRA* scheme provides research support for early career researchers in teaching and research, and research-only positions. Its objectives are to:

- support excellent basic and applied research by early career researchers
- support national and international research collaboration
- enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas
- advance promising early career researchers and promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways
- enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments

Up to 200 three-year Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards, including up to \$50,000 per annum in project funds, may be awarded each year.

Typical (academic) job applications



Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Cover letter

List of publications

Research statement

Teaching statement (faculty jobs)

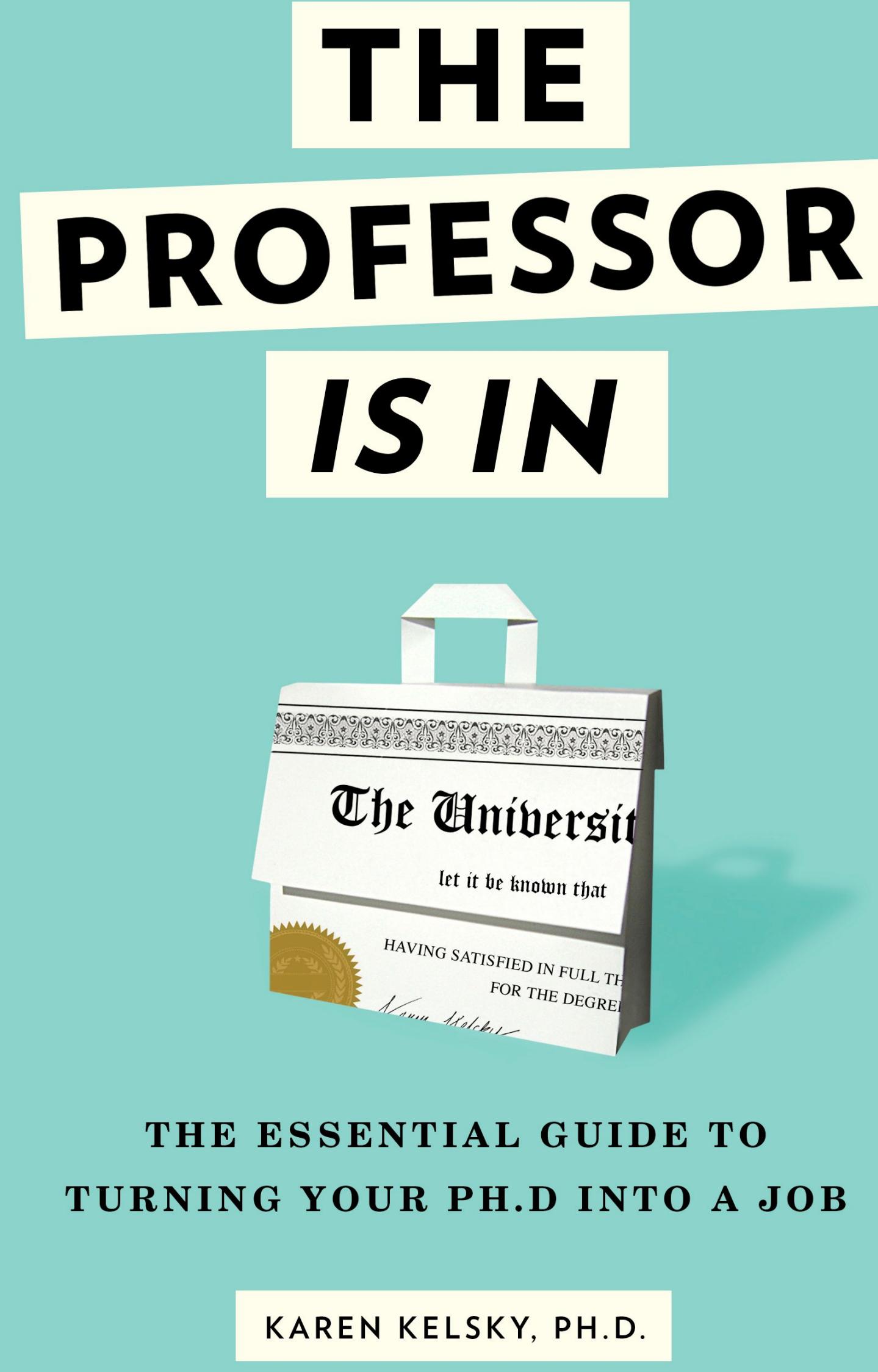
2-5 letters of reference

For some great advice on
applications: <https://theprofessorisin.com/>

Typical (academic) applications



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Applications

Vitae (CV)

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atement (faculty jobs)

of reference

First step: CV

Use a professional-looking font such as Times, Palatino or Arial in size 12 point.

Use underlining, **boldface**, *italics*, or another conservative font to make headings stand out more.

CVs are meant to be simple, professional factsheets on what about your background is relevant to the position.

A good CV is easy to read and communicates your suitability for the role clearly and concisely. It also highlights your key strengths.



CV: Key points

You should **update your CV regularly**, even when you are not applying for jobs.

Each CV you send out should be **customized** for the specific job. This is particularly important for industry CVs.

CVs should be well-formatted and grammatically **flawless**.

Academic CVs and industry CVs (or resumes) differ in both format and content. Industry CVs should only contain information relevant to the job. They can also be shorter than academic resumes (Astronomy CVs tend to be **2-3 pages**).

Look for examples online, especially of people whose career path you would like to emulate.

"And then I won the gold medal of the Society of Advanced Carpentry & Artificial Intelligence..."



Do not exaggerate your CV.

Academic CV: headings

Basic info: name, current position and contact info, citizenship. Extra information such as date of birth, marital status, and photo is country-dependent (not done in the US, but ok in Australia and EU).

Education section: degrees and dates (reverse chronological); nothing below degree level.

List **PhD thesis and advisor**.

List all **research jobs/experience** (only relevant work, i.e., no need to mention part-time bar work, etc.)

List all **awards/major grants**.

List **invited talks/colloquia and contributed talks**.

List **professional memberships**.

List of **other responsibilities** (refereeing, committee memberships, etc.)

List of **press releases/media appearances/outreach work**.

List all **skills** (computer programming, etc)

List all **languages** and level of fluency.

List **teaching experience** (if any).

*Not necessarily in this order; needs to be tailored to job.

Curriculum Vitae

A/Prof Elisabete da Cunha

International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research
The University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009, Australia
E-mail: elisabete.dacunha@uwa.edu.au

Employment History

- 07/2023 – Present Associate Professor (Level D)
International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, The University of Western Australia
- 08/2019 – 07/2023 Senior Research Fellow (Level C)
International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, The University of Western Australia
- 05/2016 – 07/2019 Australian Research Council Future Fellow
Research School of Astronomy & Astrophysics, The Australian National University
- 11/2014 – 04/2016 Postdoctoral Researcher (Advisor: Prof Jeremy Mould)
Centre for Astrophysics & Supercomputing, Swinburne University of Technology
- 11/2010 – 10/2014 Postdoctoral Researcher (Advisors: Prof Hans-Walter Rix and Dr Fabian Walter)
Max-Planck Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
- 10/2008 – 10/2010 Postdoctoral Marie Curie Researcher (Advisor: Prof Vassilis Charmandaris)
Department of Physics, University of Crete, Greece
- 10/2005 – 10/2008 Marie Curie PhD Research Student (Advisor: Dr Stéphane Charlot)
Institut d’Astrophysique de Paris, France

Education

- 10/2005 – 10/2008 PhD at the Institut d’Astrophysique de Paris, Université Paris VI
Thesis: Modelling the UV-to-IR Spectral Energy Distributions of Galaxies
Supervisor: Dr. Stéphane Charlot
- 09/2001 – 07/2005 Honours degree in Physics/Applied Mathematics (Astronomy)
Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto, Portugal

Honours, Grants & Awards

- 2013 – present: Competitive telescope time: I have been awarded over AUD \$55 million worth of observing time in the world’s largest, most competitive telescopes (ALMA, ESO/VLT, and JWST); in the last five years alone I have won 42.6 hours of ALMA time and 15.4 hours of JWST time as Principal Investigator (worth more than AUD \$2 million combined).
- 2022: WA Portuguese Citizen of the Year (Professions), awarded by the Portuguese Community Council of Western Australia.
- 2020: Elected Fellow of the Astronomical Society of Australia.
- 2018: IAU symposium grant to organize the 2019 IAU Symposium 352 *Uncovering Early Galaxy Evolution in the ALMA and JWST era*, EUR 20,000.
- 2016: Australian Research Council Future Fellowship FT150100079: *Growing galaxies: a consistent view of star formation across cosmic time*, AUD \$682,352.

Invited Talks & Seminars (last 10 years)

- [Note: 5 cancelled invited talks at international conferences in 2019-2020 for health/personal reasons]
- [27] Nov 2022 – Invited review talk at the international conference *Linking the Galactic and Extragalactic*, Wollongong, NSW
- [26] Aug 2022 – Invited review talk at the International Astronomical Union General Assembly, *Symposium 373: Resolving the Rise and Fall of Star Formation in Galaxies* (online)
- [25] Jun 2021 – Invited talk, EAS symposium, *Symposium 2 : Exploring the high-redshift Universe with ALMA* (online)
- [24] May 2021 – Invited talk, STScI workshop on *Multi-object Spectroscopy for Statistical Measures of Galaxy Evolution* (online)
- [23] Apr 2018 – Invited participation, talk and discussion lead at Munich Institute for Astro- and Particle Physics (MIAPP) Workshop on *The Interstellar Medium of High-redshift Galaxies*, Munich, Germany
- [22] Nov 2017 – Invited seminar and department visit at the University of Texas, Austin, United States
- [21] Oct 2017 – Invited talk, discussion lead, and session chair at the Texas A&M Mitchell Institute Workshop *Plumbing Star Formation Rates in the Era of JWST*, College Station, Texas, United States
- [20] Sep 2017 – Invited talk at the *3rd Australia-China Workshop on Astrophysics (ACAMAR 3)*, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
- [19] Aug 2017 – Invited talk at the conference *Galaxy Evolution: from Black Holes to Environment*, Canberra, Australia
- [18] Mar 2017 – Invited talk at conference *Mock Perth: Challenges for Simulations in the Era of SKA and Large IFU Surveys*, Perth, Western Australia
- [17] Jan 2017 – Invited talk, discussion lead, and session chair at the workshop *The growth of Galaxies in the Early Universe III*, Sesto, Italy
- [16] Nov 2016 – Invited review talk at the 6th Subaru International Conference: *Panoramas of the Evolving Cosmos*, Hiroshima, Japan
- [15] Oct 2016 – Invited talk and discussion lead at the Lorentz Centre workshop *Physical Characteristics of Normal Galaxies at z > 2*, Leiden, The Netherlands
- [14] Oct 2016 – Departmental colloquium at RSAA/ANU, Canberra, Australia
- [13] Jul 2016 – Invited talk at the workshop *JWST@ROE*, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- [12] Jun 2016 – Invited talk at the conference *ASKAP 2016: The future of radio astronomy surveys*, Sydney, Australia
- [11] Nov 2015 – Invited colloquium at RSAA/ANU, Canberra, Australia
- [10] Aug 2015 – Invited review talk at the Focus Meeting 7: Stellar physics throughout the Universe, at the IAU General Assembly, Honolulu, USA
- [9] Jun 2015 – Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology Monthly Departmental Colloquium, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, VIC
- [8] Mar 2015 – Invited talk at the conference *Back at the Edge of the Universe: latest results from the deepest astronomical surveys*, Sintra, Portugal
- [7] Feb 2015 – Departmental colloquium at ICRAR/University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
- [6] Apr 2014 – Invited talk at the conference *The formation and growth of galaxies in the young Universe*, Obergugl, Austria
- [5] Mar 2014 – Invited talk at the conference *Gas and Stars in Galaxies: A multiwavelength 3D Perspective*, Garching, Germany
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- [1] September 2013 – Departmental colloquium at the University of Zagreb, Croatia

Conference Organization

- SOC member: European Astronomical Society Symposium 2021, *Special Session 23: The main sequence of star-forming galaxies*, 1 – 2 July, 2021, Online Conference
- SOC member: 31st edition of the Portuguese National Astronomy and Astrophysics Meeting (ENAXXX!), 8 – 10 September 2021, Online Conference
- SOC and LOC co-Chair of IAU Symposium 352 in *Uncovering early galaxy evolution in the ALMA and JWST era*, June 3 – 7, 2019, Viana do Castelo, Portugal

Professional Membership, Peer Review, & Service (last 10 years)

- 2021 – present: Member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts
- 2021 – present: elected member of the IAU Inter-Division Commission on Spectral Energy Distributions of Galaxies
- 2021: examiner of a PhD thesis (Swinburne University of Technology)
- 2019 – 2020: deputy chair of the AAT Time Allocation Committee
- 2018 – 2020: elected member of the Division J (Galaxies and Cosmology) Steering Committee of the International Astronomical Union
- 2017 – 2020: elected member of the Astronomical Society of Australia Council
- 2017 – 2020 : Member of the ALMA Time Allocation Committee
- 2016 – present: Reviewer for the NASA Post-doctoral Programme
- 2015 – 2020: Taipan survey manager (managed a team of about 80 collaborators)
- 2012 – 2016: Review panel member for the NASA ADAP grant programme
- 2009 – present: Reviewer for the journals A&A, MNRAS, ApJ, ApJ Letters, Science, and Nature (25+ articles)

Research Partnerships

I have a strong and well-established network of national and international collaborations through my membership in several high-profile research teams, such as WALLABY, ASPECS, ALESS, REBELS, CRISTAL, MAUVE and GECKOS. In the past I extensively collaborated with the Taipan, GAMA, Herschel-ATLAS, and 3D-HST teams. I am active in planning for the next big (sub-)millimetre international facility, AtLAST. I am an Associate Investigator and Senior Research Fellow of the ASTRO-3D ARC Centre for Excellence, and a member of the International Space Centre at the University of Western Australia. Over the last five years alone I have published papers in the top international journals with 91 co-authors from 27 countries across five continents.

Teaching Experience

- 2022 – present: coordinator and lecturer of the ICRAR 12-week postgraduate unit on *Academic Communication in Astrophysics*.
- 2021: UWA Masters unit on *Galaxies* (9 lectures)
- 2017 and 2019: Co-convenor of the ANU graduate course *Diffuse Matter in the Universe* (ASTR4017, ASTR8007).

Media & Public Outreach (last 10 years)

- January 2023: Interviewed by CSIRO's Double Helix magazine for a feature on galaxies.
November 2022: Profiled and interviewed by *Revista Sabado*, a Portuguese weekly news print magazine.
September 2022: Profiled and interviewed by SBS Portuguese.
January 2020: Featured in the Portuguese TV Programme *A Hora dos Portugueses RTP*, which showcases the life and work of Portuguese people living abroad.

June 2019: Organized and participated in several outreach activities (TV appearance, public talks, stargazing) associated with IAU Symposium 352, Viana do Castelo, Portugal.

January 2019: Featured in a book and exhibition about Portuguese Women in Science, Ciencia Viva, Portugal

February 2018: Was one of two delegates chosen to represent the Astronomical Society of Australia at the Science Meets Parliament event in Canberra, where I met with the then Minister for Jobs and Innovation.

September 2017: Invited by the Northrop Grumman Foundation to be the expert astrophysicist at school and public screenings of the movie *JWST – Into the Unknown*, Canberra, ACT

August 2017: Invited public talk on *The evolution of galaxies across cosmic time* to the Canberra Astronomical Society (amateur astronomers), Canberra, ACT

October 2016: Invited participation in *Science in the Pub* event as a panel member, mini-lecture speaker, and guide at the StarFest public event at Siding Spring Observatory, Coonabarabran, NSW

May 2016: Stargazing at Mount Stromlo, Canberra, Australia

April 2016: Public lecture on *Mapping the Universe* at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

August 2015, 2016, 2017: remote interview with AstroCamp students in Portugal

Industry CVs/résumés: format

Chronological: education, work history, and accomplishments put in reverse chronological order. This is the easiest to read/safest choice if you are not sure which to use from the job ad. Effective if:

You have steady work history that directly relates to the job

You have continuously increased your level of responsibility

Functional: No dates are listed here. Focused on skill set rather than employment history. Effective if:

Your employer needs to know about your expertise in a specific field.

You are launching a new career and do not have a history in the field.

You are reentering the job market.

Your work history does not show an increase in levels of responsibility.

Combined: A mix of both. Lists functional skills and qualifications with brief explanations, then a reverse chronological list of previous employment, training, publications, etc. Effective if:

You are looking to change careers and want to highlight specific skills that would match your new role.

You lack experience in the field.

Industry CVs/résumés: format

Chronological: education, work history, and accomplishments put in reverse chronological order. This is the easiest to read/safest choice if you are not sure which to use from the job ad. Effective if:

You have steady work history that directly relates to the job

You have continuously increased your level of responsibility

most common in
scientific (industry) fields

Functional: No dates are used rather than employment history. Effective if:

Your employer needs to know about your expertise in a specific field.

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You are looking to change careers and want to highlight specific skills that would match your new role.

You lack experience in the field.

Some advice on industry CVs/résumés

See great talk from the **ASA ECR chapter**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHPTLPFdK9I>

Also good advice on the **UWA website** (<https://www.jobs.uwa.edu.au/applying/written/resume>)

Making it easy for the selection panel

It is said that employers on average spend only about two minutes reading an applicant's résumé. This means that your résumé must look good and attract the reader's attention, and all relevant details must be clear, easy to read and easy to find.

To make it easy for the selection panel, consider the following:

- ❖ Keep the résumé brief, preferably between two and four pages long.
- ❖ Give lots of relevant information but be brief and selective.
- ❖ Put the information in a logical order so that it is easy to find the relevant details.
- ❖ Be consistent in the way you present the information: in terms of headings, order of information, use of words, layout, etc.
- ❖ Use bullet point form rather than long paragraphs; items in point form are generally quicker and easier to read.
- ❖ Make the résumé look professional by effective use of spacing, bold, uppercase, font sizes, underlining.

Some advice on industry CVs/résumés

When it comes to an industry CV,
less is more.

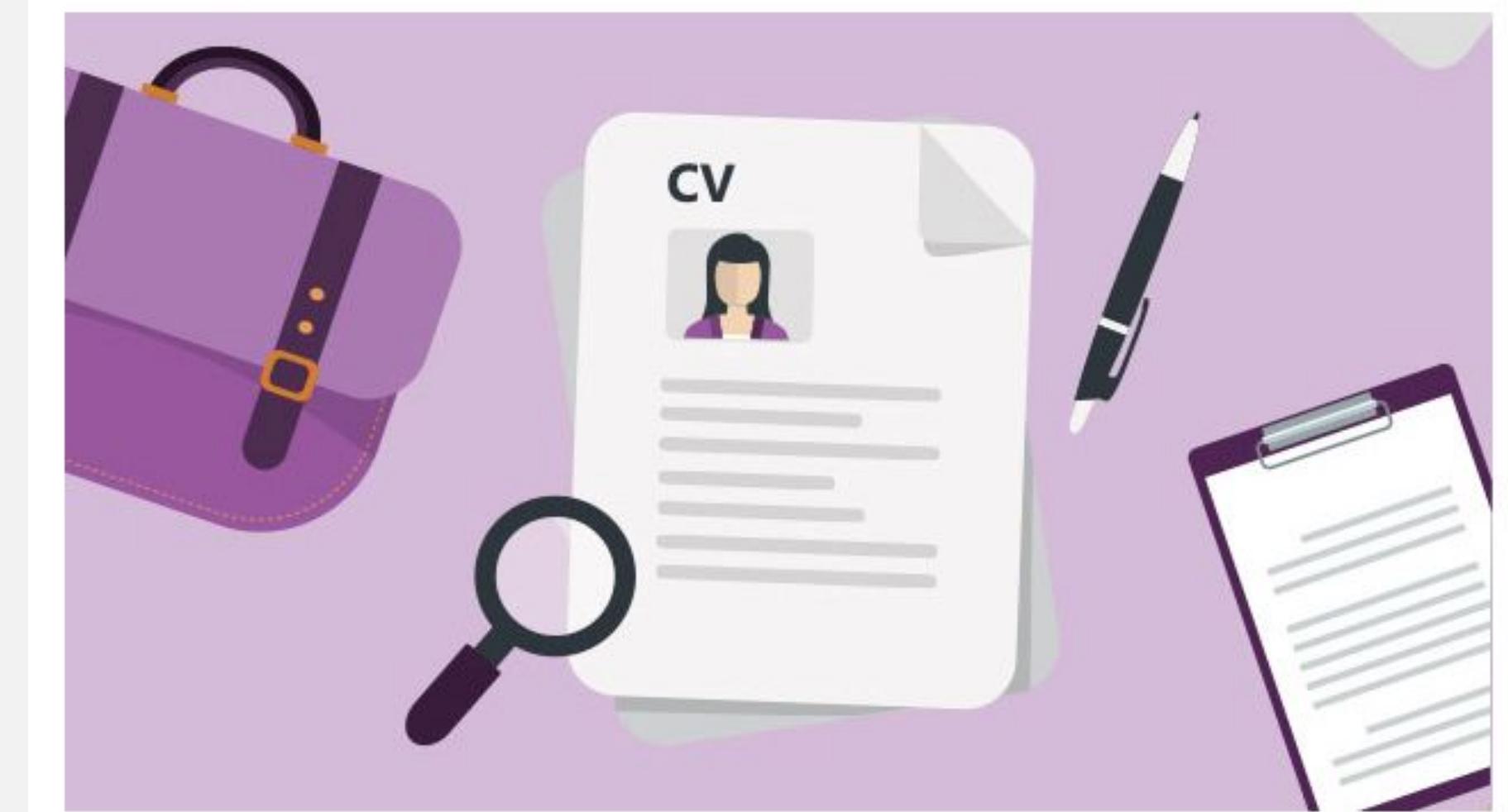
Focus on accomplishments. Within seconds of reading your CV, employers should be able to see that the return on investment for hiring you is higher than the salary you are asking for. If you've spent your entire career in academia, you can still add tangible outcomes to our CV, e.g., "Helped PI obtain over \$1,000,000 in grant funding by setting up strategic collaborations with a team of scientists to complete XYZ projects on time, resulting in grant renewal every year."

Industry employers value your **experience and results** over your publications or education history (don't include a publications list; perhaps summarise these under 'communication skills').

The most valuable thing you can add to your CV is **white space**.

Five things intelligent scientists should leave off their industry CVs

Published: 29 Aug 2017 | By Isaiah Hankel



A note on language in CVs

Use action verbs.

Action Verbs in a Resume

IMPROVE SOMETHING

Modified
Standardized
Converted
Replaced
Redesigned
Strengthened
Customized
Restructured
Refined
Updated
Influenced
Revamped

LED A PROJECT

Oversaw
Executed
Produced
Coordinated
Organized
Orchestrated
Controlled
Chaired
Planned
Headed
Programmed
Operated

CREATE SOMETHING

Engineered
Created
Instituted
Formalized
Formulated
Founded
Spearheaded
Devised
Introduced
Formed
Developed
Launched

MANAGE A TEAM

Recruited
Hired
Cultivated
Shaped
Guided
Aligned
Regulated
Inspired
Directed
Supervised
Mentored

RESEARCHED

Calculated
Surveyed
Investigated
Evaluated
Tracked
Audited
Tested
Analyzed
Mapped
Examined
Assembled
Measured

How to write **ACTION VERBS** for resume

- Focus on power verbs rather than adjectives.
- Base on the job description.
- Pick the most appropriate resume buzzwords.
- Avoid generic action verbs and passive voice.
- Try various action verbs.

CakeResume

A lot more resources online if you just google: "action verbs CV"

The Publication List

Sometimes this will be included in the CV, sometimes separate.

List in **reverse chronological order**.

List title, authors, and reference for each paper; highlight your name in long author lists.

Also provide **ADS links** to papers (helps employers), or even an ADS publication list on your CV. This is very important if you have a long (>10) publication list. You could include only the key papers and then point to an ADS for the complete list.

Can include conference proceedings.

Include “in press” and “submitted” papers.

Can include “in prep.”, but make sure it is very clear these are in prep. and be prepared to send these to potential employers if they ask for them. As a rule of thumb, **don’t include more than 2**.

The Cover Letter

This will be the **first impression** the employer/reader will have of you, so it is a critical part of your application package and it is worth spending time on.

Be **brief and to the point**. About 1-1.5 pages long. Professional formatting.

Needs to be **tailored to the position and person** (don't write "To whom it may concern"; also definitely don't assume a gender e.g., "Dear Sir"!)

Key paragraphs:

Opening paragraph describing the purpose of your letter, detailing the job reference, and a statement on why you are applying for this particular job (be specific here).

Paragraph(s) on your research (e.g., your PhD work) and key accomplishments so far.

Paragraph(s) on your goals and why you are ideal for the job/what you will bring to the institution. Make it clear how your research interests overlap with those of the institute.

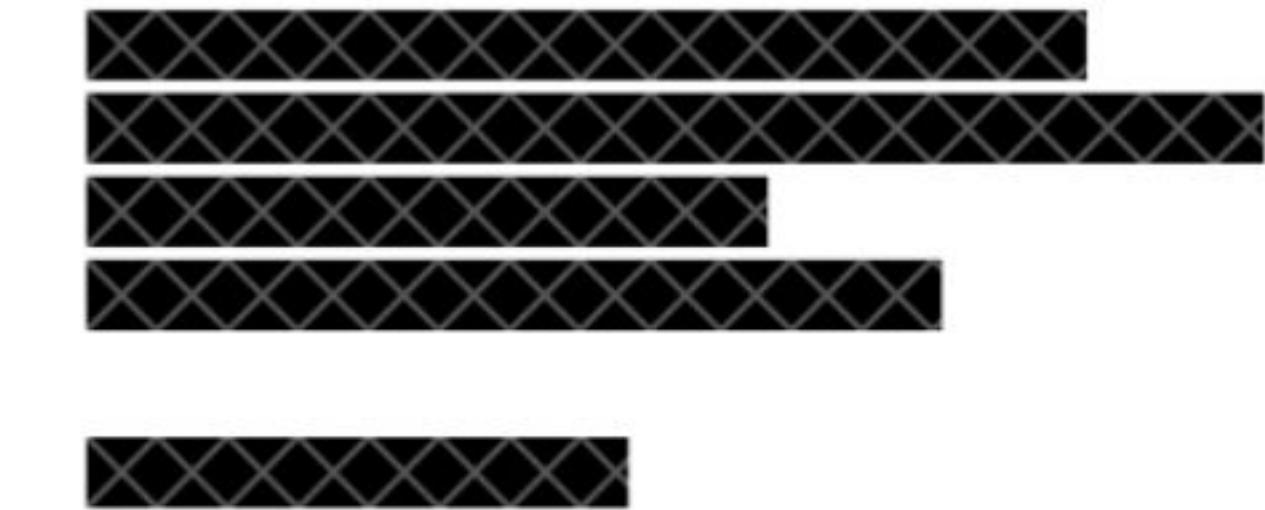
A concluding paragraph ending on a positive note.



Cover letter example

Example from a senior researcher (9 years out of PhD):

Formal letter format: use official institution letter head, include addresses, and date.



First paragraph: names specific position and why they are interested in it

Dear [REDACTED]

With this letter, I would like to apply for a [REDACTED] position at the International Centre of Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR). I am extremely interested in this position, which would give me the opportunity to help shaping the future of the Centre, as well as contribute my unique research skills and expertise to its astronomy group.

Addressed to someone (if you don't know who the letter is for, address to the committee/panel)

Cover letter example

A paragraph on research interests/current role



As you know, I am currently a [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. My research is in the area of [REDACTED], and my main interest is [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. The multi-wavelength approach is at the foundation of my research activity, and the skills that I developed allow me not only to independently carry out imaging and spectroscopic observations and data reduction from the ultraviolet to the radio regime, but also to interpret the results and compare them with theoretical models.

Lists main accomplishments/career/ —→
skills so far

I have been leading or playing key roles in several legacy programs with ground- and space-based facilities (e.g., [REDACTED]) aimed at characterizing the properties of the interstellar medium in galaxies. These leadership roles have allowed me to make unique contributions to the field of extragalactic astronomy. Thus, after 9 years from my Ph.D., I am a recognized expert on the study of [REDACTED], as demonstrated by the invitations to present my work at international forums and institutes, and by the large number of citations (more than 3500) to my work. So far I have published 110 refereed papers, 21 of which as first author, demonstrating that I am able to define my own research objectives and to pursue their achievement both independently and as part of a large team.

Note: just coming out of your PhD it is perfectly ok to say that you are “now at the point of conducting independent research, which you believe puts you on the path to becoming a research leader”, or something along those lines (rather than “I am a research leader”).

Cover letter example

Next, move on to paragraphs about what you can bring to the institute.

In the last few years, I demonstrated my potential for acquiring external funding. Most notably, I have been recently awarded an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant and, in 2010, I was offered a highly competitive [REDACTED] Fellowship for the second highest-ranked proposal in the Physics category. Moreover, throughout my career, I won competitive time at telescopes and space observatories (including one legacy program).

Note: this becomes key as you apply for second postdocs/fellowships. But if you can demonstrate any ability to attract external funding (e.g., being part of telescope/supercomputing proposals or gaining travel grants), put those in. (But again, this isn't necessarily expected straight out of PhD).

Cover letter example

Then, paragraphs on research/professional goals in the position. These will be tailored to your career level.

As a [REDACTED] at ICRAR, my two main goals will be (1) to pursue a cutting-edge research program in extragalactic astronomy that will help the Centre and University of Western Australia keeping a high international standing in the years to come; (2) to promote high levels of graduate student engagement in research.

First, my future research activity will be mostly driven by the scientific exploitation of world-class Australian facilities such as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. In the short term, my research work will be mainly focused on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I am heavily involved in this project as the working group coordinator on the topic of [REDACTED] (one of the main scientific goals of [REDACTED]). I am also contributing to the development of the data reduction, database software and quality control, and I am one of the key members responsible for the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. In the long term, my ultimate goal will be to maximize the scientific exploitation of [REDACTED] survey data on the way towards the full SKA.

Second, I believe that my communication skills and experience in supervision of higher education students will allow me to strengthen ICRAR's graduate program. The opportunity to become even more involved in teaching and student supervision is for me an exciting and stimulating challenge. Indeed, I plan to always have research projects suitable for honour, master and Ph.D. degrees, as I value immensely the possibility to introduce students to fundamental research in physics and astronomy.

Cover letter example

Summary statement. Ends on a positive note.

In summary, I believe that my overall experience, research background, skills and network of collaborations place me in an excellent position to play a major role in all the activities carried out at the University of Western Australia.

I am looking forward to hearing back from you.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Note: don't forget to sign the letter properly!

Industry cover letters

The key things you need to get across are:

1. **A strong interest in the role and the organization**

Employers want to hire candidates who are genuinely interested in their job, not just any job. Do your research and explain why the organization appeals to you.

2. **How you meet the selection criteria**

Focus on the skills and attributes the employer has mentioned in the job advertisement. In your responses to selection criteria, offer short examples of how you have developed or used your skills for a positive outcome.

3. **Excellent written communication skills**

A cover letter should be written using professional language and structured paragraphs. Proofread your letter for spelling and grammatical errors.



Multiple Data Analysts (APS5)

Australian Bureau of Statistics ★ 4.3 · 209 reviews

Perth · CBD, Inner & Western Suburbs

Government & Defence · Government - Federal

\$75,200 to \$84,468 plus 15.4% super · Full time

/

Duties

Your responsibilities, depending on the role, may include:

- analysing data for input into statistical compilation and data validation, including using alternative data sources
- communicating findings, using judgement and real-world insights
- compiling and publishing statistical products, with a strong focus on continuous improvement
- applying statistical frameworks, classifications, standards and concepts that underpin the statistics
- working with internal and external clients to develop fit for purpose specifications of data solutions requirements
- critical thinking and reasoning; anticipating and analysing issues and developing logical conclusions

We are seeking people who have:

- strong conceptual, analytical, and creative skills
- previous work experience in a data or statistical role
- experience working in and contributing to a high performing team
- good oral and written communication skills, and can present and engage with clients/ stakeholders



Desirable (but not essential) are:

- experience supervising staff, and supporting staff development
- academic qualifications in statistics, data science, mathematics, economics or other fields with a strong quantitative component

Put these into your cover letter and CV!

The research statement

Will be asked for both postdoc applications and fellowship proposals.

Two parts: **1) summary of your research achievements to date and 2) proposal of future studies.**

This is your potential employer's indicator of your job readiness. Critical, particularly if you haven't published much yet.

Typically 3 pages (but check what the job ad/fellowship call says).

Some advice:

Should be accessible to someone outside your field (depending on the job).

Figures are key (**one good figure is worth a thousand words**)

Should be **tailored** for each job. Emphasize aspects of your work that fit the job you're applying for. Mention specific people/projects at the institute. This is particularly important for postdocs, where often your supervisor will have a specific project in mind.

Remember to follow formatting rules.

Example of highlighting research achievements

My interest in astrophysics is mainly on aspects that play a role. This includes [REDACTED] **and all the physical** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] physics. I have been able to contribute significantly in all these fields throughout my career. During my PhD I was able to make a major contribution to the understanding of galaxies. My thesis represented not one but two major breakthroughs in [REDACTED]. My work overhauled the two key processes at the centre of how galaxies are made:

[REDACTED] These calculations represented the first real advances in these areas in over a decade, putting the models on a surer footing and expanding the ways in which they can be constrained by observations. This novel and high impact work was awarded two major international prizes:

Example of highlighting research achievements

In the █ years since being awarded my Ph.D., I made unique contributions to the field of █, and I am a widely recognised expert on the study of the █, as demonstrated by the large number of citations to my work, and by the invitations to present my work at international forums and institutes. Moreover, I have a unique extensive experience in working with data spanning █, having played major roles in large surveys using █.

My major scientific achievements are:

- Key leadership role in the planning, scientific exploitation and ultimately the success of the █. Since 2008, I have been a key leader of the █.

Example of opening statement

Recent high-resolution studies of the inter-stellar medium (ISM) and star formation in galaxies have revolutionized our view of how stars form (e.g. Leroy et al. 2008). These discoveries have called into question one of the most fundamental assumptions made in galaxy formation models: that stars form from the whole gas content of the ISM [REDACTED]. It is now clear that the real picture is not this simple: stars form only from the coldest component of the ISM, i.e. the molecular gas (e.g. Bigiel et al. 2010). This implies that fuelling star formation is not only about providing newly cooled gas, but taking this gas to a still colder, molecular phase. As part of my thesis work, I revisited the treatment of star formation in galaxy formation models based using a more realistic scenario [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. This work constitutes the first major improvement to the treatment of star formation since the original calculations in Cole et al. (1994). My new modelling allowed, for the first time, a statistical assessment of the relation between [REDACTED] and other galaxy properties, such as stellar mass and luminosity, allowing a physical explanation of observed local and high-redshift relations [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] see Fig. 1). However, there are open questions that I aim to address with this fellowship that I discuss below.

**Broad, but the author's own contributions are highlighted.
Also notice the language used.
A figure is used to highlight the point made.**

Formatting/content

ARE SUPERNOVAE RESPONSIBLE FOR QUENCHING STAR FORMATION?

How is the star formation history of galaxies affected by supernovae feedback? Is this feedback powerful enough as to drive the global star formation rate decline of the universe? Supernova feedback represents a long standing problem in galaxy formation model. Currently, toy models are used to treat supernova feedback, which are parametrized to reproduce the faint-end of the luminosity function (Cole et al. 2000; Guo et al. 2010). These toy models do not take into account key physical conditions, such as the density of the ISM of galaxies or how much energy is being released by supernovae. This is a fundamental issue in galaxy formation models, given the importance of supernova feedback in determining the star formation history of galaxies.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF LUMINOUS INFRARED GALAXIES?

How common are luminous Infrared galaxies at high-redshift? Are they representative of the entire high-redshift galaxy population? Are they Milky-Way progenitors? Galaxy formation models have shown to be very successful in explaining statistically, the properties of galaxies, suggesting that the physics included on them is roughly correct (e.g. Baugh et al. 2006). However, the properties of specific populations of galaxies, such as massive galaxies, are more challenging in hierarchical cosmologies.

Note the use of italics and headings to draw attention to the key points.

Formatting/content

stellar components. As these new observations promise to trigger a step-change in our understanding of how galaxies [REDACTED], my primary goal will be to maximise their scientific exploitation by addressing the following key open issues in astronomy.

- The role of [REDACTED] in galaxy evolution
[REDACTED] has provided clear and definite evidence that [REDACTED]. However, our current theoretical framework for galaxy formation suggests that there is a second key parameter [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Taking advantage of the [REDACTED], it will be finally possible to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In particular, in a short-time scale of 1-2 years, it will be possible to
quantify, for the first time, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This project fits perfectly with the current research priorities of ICRAR, and the combination of
my expertise with that already present at UWA *will make ICRAR the leading Australian centre for*
studies of [REDACTED] *Finally, this work will identify the key sci-*
entific priorities for the next Australian-led [REDACTED] *that will be carried out with the* [REDACTED]
placing ICRAR in an ideal position to exploit this future facility.

Great example of pointing
to timeliness of research.

Shows the author has really
thought about where their
research will fit in the
institute.

Another example of highlighting the institute

A major step, however, is to connect [REDACTED] in a more physical way. For this I have started a collaboration with [REDACTED] (Oxford), [REDACTED] (UCL) whose expertise is in modelling the ISM of galaxies. I led the development of a novel hybrid approach which aims to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. This will allow us to study theoretically, for the first time, the relation between [REDACTED] and other galaxy properties, in a realistic universe. The expertise in star formation in high-redshift galaxies at [REDACTED] will reinforce these studies, given these experts comprehensive view of what observations tell us about the [REDACTED]

Here the author is showing that they have done their homework and know where their research will fit into the institute.

Another example of highlighting the institute

Note: for fellowship proposals you need to demonstrate the suitability of your proposed research institute.

III. Research Environment. The [REDACTED] will be based at the University of Western Australia at the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR). ICRAR has recently been established with an allocation of A\$30 million to pursue an aggressive programme of research into galaxy formation and evolution in addition to its computational and instrumentation programmes. The University of Western Australia (UWA) node of ICRAR currently has over 30 staff and students based in an modern purpose-designed building. The majority of these astronomers are engaged in aspects of galaxy formation (theoretical and observational) providing a strong intellectual environment to support this project. ICRAR also hosts experts in advanced databases technologies who can provide technical support for the data-intensive aspects of my projects. The current computational facilities at UWA will allow the full completion of this project within the timescale of the DECRA. In addition to the facilities, the local expertise on [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] will complement my own expertise, [REDACTED]. Recently, UWA was awarded a maximum 5 rating in the Australian ERA research assessment exercise, reflecting the dynamic work being conducted in Australias youngest astronomy group. In addition, WA is the host State for both ASKAP and the US-India-Australia Murchison Widefield Array (MWA); UWA is a key partner in both of these facilities. Furthermore, as the scientifically outstanding candidate site, WA is co-hosting, along with South Africa, the international SKA collaboration. With this successful bid, the University is confident that its astronomy and astrophysics research will continue to attract investment and grow stronger well into the future.

DOs and DON'Ts of proposal writing

DO

DOs and DON'Ts of proposal writing

Include the confrontation of theory and observations.

Highlight the things you led — make sure you clearly emphasize your contribution in teams. “I led...”, “I was a key part of...”, rather than “I was involved in...”

Focus on how you will tackle the problem you have presented, not just the problem itself

Use **headings/formatting** to help the reader navigate the information

Emphasize the **importance/timeliness** of your proposed research.

Sell both yourself and the science (it is not a paper). (“X is the most interesting project, and I am the best person to do it because...”)

Include a project timeline — you need to **convince the panel of the feasibility** of your work.

Include figures. Take time over these.

Pay attention to any formatting rules.

Be selective about how you show the information. For example, if you don't have many invited talks, replace this with something else.

Bare in mind who your panel are (just as for telescope/supercomputing proposals).

DON'T

DOs and DON'Ts of proposal writing

Be too low key (about yourself/your research)

Write it last minute — think weeks (or months), not days. You should produce several drafts.

Over-sell the problem ("...This work will solve galaxy formation...")

Ignore the assessment criteria, e.g., for ARC fellowships the relative importance of each assessment criteria is given (for investigator capability, project innovation and quality, feasibility, benefit)

reference letters

choose your referees wisely: usually for ECRs they want to see a letter from your PhD supervisor and/or current supervisor; if they decline to write you a letter, provide some explanation in the cover letter. Famous people/big names are great, but if they don't know you well enough they might write a letter that is too generic — choose someone who knows you well and who you know thinks highly of you
ask for a letter politely, and indicate why you are asking them and what you would like them to highlight; send your application materials
give the referees plenty of time — don't ask a few days before the deadline! At least a few weeks
make sure you include all the job ad details and instructions on how to send their letter: email address or link, deadline
If applying for multiple jobs, keep a google doc with all the jobs and deadlines available for your referees
if someone tells you they can't write a letter for you, move on — find someone who will
if someone asks you to write the letter for them, maybe consider asking someone else

job application process/timeline
job interviews
what to do when you get a job offer

Interview questions

Tell us about yourself / your research

Why did you apply for this job?

Describe your research in two minutes

Where do you see yourself/your research in 5 years? 10 years?

How will this job help you achieve your long term career
goals?

How do you see yourself fitting in at this institute?

How do you feel about living here?

Tell us about a time you overcame a difficult situation

How would your collaborators describe you?

How do you see yourself contributing to this research group?

What do you expect from your boss? Your colleagues? Your
collaborators?

A professional failure? What did you learn about yourself?

What would you do differently and why?

A professional success? What do you think allowed you to
succeed? What did you learn about yourself?

Do you have any questions for us?

Interview Strategy - The mind map

Why do you think makes you a good fit for this institute?

Or

What are some achievements you are most proud of?

Place the question at the middle, and build outwards, first to achievements, and then the skills that they required.

The skills can often be inferred, but can also be explicitly mentioned.

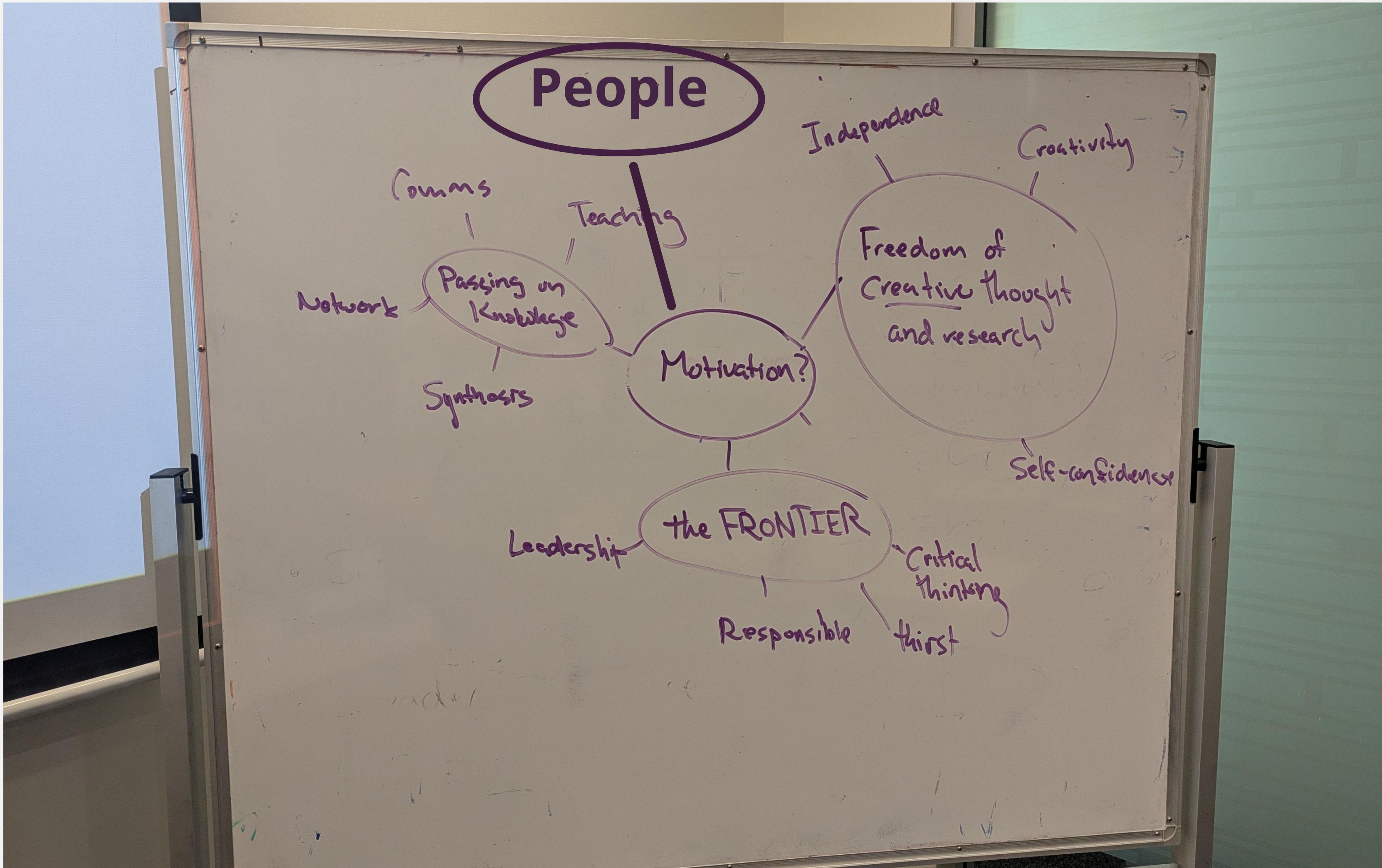


Interview Strategy - The mind map

What motivates you to pursue a career as an academic?

Place the question at the middle, and build outwards, first to achievements, and then the skills that they required.

The skills can often be inferred, but can also be explicitly mentioned.



Interview Strategy - For the panel

Questions can be framed to reveal positive traits about yourself, but also critically assess the role. These are the most strategic questions to ask. Some examples:

- A. What resources are available for me to communicate my research outcomes? For example, at national and international conferences?**

Note the **framing**. This question identifies ambition and a desire to create impact by spreading new knowledge.

2a) Does this role offer competitive opportunities for advancement (industry)?

2b) Does this role offer opportunities to apply for competitive funds to support additional travel (academic)?

Similar to (1), both highlight **ambition, competitiveness**, and a desire to **develop your professional profile**.

Interview Strategy - For the panel

Questions can be framed to reveal positive traits about yourself, but also critically assess the role. These are the most strategic questions to ask. Some examples:

3) Part of this position is focused on meeting the demands of a large collaboration, how much time can I expect to have to pursue projects and lead publications that build my reputation as an independent leader?

This question implies that while you are happy to support collaborations, you are also seeking to establish yourself as a leader within it. This is what teams look for. Everyone on a team can be a leader, even if not in title. Meanwhile, it presents the panel with a critically blunt question. The answer may help you decide if **they** are a good fit for **you**.

4) What weekly activities does your department offer for getting exposure to new ideas and networking? Seminars, Colloquia, Journal Clubs, Plot of the Week, Group Meetings with visitors, etc?

Establishes that you seek to know more than what is defined by your research area, and may look to connect your research to larger or adjacent contexts. Using “weekly” establishes your expectations. In general, codes for being a good contributor to the culture of a department.

Interview Strategy - For the panel

Questions can be framed to reveal positive traits about yourself, but also critically assess the role. These are the most strategic questions to ask. Some examples:

5) What opportunities are there to obtain competitive time on major facilities?

Then some questions that ask what life will be like:

6) What can you tell me about the city and surrounding area?

7) Is there a strong sense of community amongst the postdoc cohort?

And finally, if they have not said already:

8) When can I expect your decision?

Particularly good if you already have offers, decisions pending or have more interviews. I suggest not playing cards here until you've been made an offer. But if you have offers from two or more places, salary negotiation is sometimes possible.