

Alba Fernández-Sanlés, PhD

HEALTH RESEARCHER | BIOLOGIST IN POPULATION HEALTH SCIENCES

London, UK

CORE SKILLS

- **Research expertise:** 8+ years of experience across biomedical, epidemiological, and population health research, with strong knowledge of data infrastructures and research processes.
- **Project & programme delivery:** Strategic planning, coordination, and delivery of multi-institutional and international research projects.
- **Leadership & mentoring:** Experience in team development, academic supervision, and supporting early-career researchers.
- **Stakeholder & community engagement:** Public and patient involvement, inclusive community engagement, and partnership building across academia, policy, and nonprofit sectors.
- **Communication & influence:** Skilled in science communication, writing, and presenting complex findings to diverse audiences and senior stakeholders.
- **Research culture & EDI:** Commitment to inclusive academic cultures and gender equity, developing and evaluating initiatives aligned with Athena SWAN, first-generation researcher support, and multilingual participation in research.

EDUCATION

PhD in Biomedicine (Epigenomics in Cardiometabolic Health) | *University Pompeu Fabra (Spain)* | 2020
Funded by a competitive Spanish fellowship (BES-2014-069718). Award: highest honours (cum laude) for outstanding academic performance in the thesis and oral defence.

MSc in Genetics & MSc in AIDS Pathogenesis and Treatment | *Autonomous Univ. of Barcelona (Spain)* | 2013

BSc in Biology | *University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)* | 2011
Five-year degree, with a specialization in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology; First Class Honours.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Fellow for Athena SWAN Award | July 2025 – Present

Division of Psychiatry, University College London

- Lead the evaluation of the current Athena SWAN action plan (2022–2027) at the UCL Division of Psychiatry, assessing its implementation, and lead the development of the next action plan (2027).
- Liaise with staff, committees, and stakeholders to collect and analyse data, monitor progress, report outcomes, identify challenges and opportunities, and co-produce the new action plan.
- Organise workshops and strategic meetings to share learning and advance institutional priorities in EDI.

Research Fellow in Dementia and Hospitalisation | December 2024 – Present

Division of Psychiatry, University College London

- Lead analyst in research on dementia care & hospitalisation, designing study pipelines, analysing data, and reporting outputs.
- Directly engaged with a Patient Advisory Group to ensure research relevance.
- Co-supervised MSc student research projects, providing methodological and strategic guidance.

Research Fellow in Population Health Sciences | February 2023 – November 2024

MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing, University College London

- Lead analyst in cross-cohort research on long COVID, managing multi-institutional collaboration, analysing data, and reporting outputs.
- Directly engaged with a Patient Advisory Group and external stakeholders.
- Supervised student research projects, and facilitated strategic meetings to align objectives and share progress.

Senior Research Associate in Epidemiology | March 2020 – February 2023

MRC Integrative Epidemiology Unit, University of Bristol

- Postdoctoral researcher in multiple interdisciplinary research projects (selection bias in COVID-19 studies; proteins and multimorbidity; genetics and perinatal health).
- Supervised and mentored students and postdocs, and tutored short courses in epidemiology methods.
- Organised strategic meetings to align objectives and share progress.

Predoctoral Researcher in Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Epigenomics | October 2016 – January 2020

Hospital del Mar Medical Research Institute, IMIM (Barcelona, Spain)

- *Lead analyst in research projects on DNA methylation and cardiometabolic health.*
- *Supervised students providing methodological and academic guidance.*
- *Organised team meetings and activities to foster research discussions and collaboration, share progress, and continuously develop technical skills through knowledge exchange.*

Predoctoral Researcher in Molecular Virology | March 2015 – June 2016

University Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain)

- *Designed and implemented research pipelines for emerging virus and drug repurposing projects.*
- *Conducted experiments, maintained shared lab stocks, and managed procurement of viruses and drugs.*
- *Supervised peers in cell culture and molecular virology techniques, and tutored Microbiology practicals.*

Research Collaborator in Molecular Virology | January 2014 – February 2015

Institute of Parasitology and Biomedicine López-Neyra, CSIC-IPBLN (Granada, Spain)

- *Lead analyst in research projects on RNA viruses and aptamers.*
- *Conducted molecular virology experiments, and maintained shared resources to ensure lab operations.*
- *Supervised lab peers in cell culture and molecular virology techniques.*

SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP & RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

- **Selected participant in STEMM Leadership Global Initiative "Homeward Bound"** (March 2023 – Present): *Participated in a global initiative including formal leadership training and an expedition to Antarctica, aimed at driving collective change towards a sustainable, healthy and equitable future. Developed strategic plans for community engagement, science communication and fundraising. Designed collaborative projects fostering collective action and community engagement across the global network.*
- **Head of Outreach & Engagement of the Society of Spanish Researchers in the UK** (July 2023 – Nov 2024): *Served on the Executive Committee, contributing to governance and strategic direction. Directed science engagement programmes across the UK and Spain (e.g., "Science-me a story" and "En Foco"). Engaged public & private stakeholders to promote scientific literacy, visibility, and public engagement.*
- **Founder & Coordinator of nonprofit network VIEIRA** (January 2024 – August 2024): *Mobilised grassroots community engagement and policy action on an environmental threat. Spearheaded a case report of the environmental threat to promote research-driven solutions. Contributed to EU petition on regulating plastic pellet transport (approved in April 2024).*
- **Research Funding & Project Delivery:** *Supported funded research activities across BHF, MRC, and NIHR portfolios, contributing to proposal development, project delivery, and cross-team coordination.*

COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- Author of 35+ scientific publications in epidemiology and molecular biology.
- Speaker at 10+ international conferences and symposia.
- Frequent media contributor overseas, and panellist on international science and diaspora platforms.
- Developed and delivered inclusive science communication activities in the UK, Spain and virtually.
- Led activities for public engagement with children and minoritised communities, and for involvement of groups of people with lived experience.
- Engaged with policymakers and national representatives (including Spanish Queen) on research field insights.
- Contributed to knowledge exchange through meetings organisation, supervision, and mentoring.

TECHNICAL/DIGITAL TOOLS & LANGUAGE SKILLS

- **Project & programme administration:** Microsoft Office Suite, Google Docs/Sheets, Onedrive, Google Drive.
- **Collaborative hybrid working:** Microsoft Teams, Slack, Discord, Zoom, Google Meet.
- **Participatory engagement:** Mentimeter, Padlet, Kahoot, Slido, Quizziz, Eventbrite, social media.
- **Creative content & design:** Adobe Express, Canva, Wordpress, Github Pages.
- **Research data infrastructure & analysis:** R, STATA, REDCap, Bash, GitHub, Slurm, Docker.
- **Languages:** Spanish, Galician (native); English (proficient); French, Portuguese, Catalan (basic).