

Dr Georgina Maja Falster—*Shadow Resume*

Academia is a field that deals out a lot of failures for every success. Those successes are highly visible, but the failures are generally invisible.

So here I am publishing a resume of the academic positions and grants I applied for but did not get, prizes I was unsuccessfully nominated for, and rejected papers—with the point being to encourage up-and-coming researchers to keep trying in the face of disappointment.

For comparison, my actual CV is here: https://georgyfalster.github.io/files/CV_FALSTER.pdf

Personal information

Relevant knowledge I don't have: Navier-Stokes equations

Research tools I don't use: Fortran, NCL, Julia, C++

Career ethos

What I wanted was to be a park ranger, field ecologist, ski instructor, or violinist. Failing that, any job outdoors. And yet here I am in academia, scraping my way up through a sea of people far cleverer than me.

Professional non-appointments

Note for context that my average job interview tends to include phrases like “I’m not the smartest cornflake in the box”, “I’m not very well qualified for this role”, and “this interview isn’t going well, is it”.

**denotes permanent/ongoing role (as opposed to fixed-term or tenure-track)*

- *2024 **University of Oxford**, Department of Earth Sciences (Associate Professorship in Climate Science). *Progressed to second stage but no interview, positive feedback but a pleasingly honest message from the committee that other applicants were just....better.*
- *2024 **South Australian Department of Environment and Water**, Geography Department (Principal Climate Scientist). *Wildly un-qualified for this, somehow got an interview anyway.*
- *2024 [REDACTED] [Australian university, name redacted to respect the person who ultimately took the role], School of Science (Lectureship in Physical Geography). *Offered permanent role but had to turn it down for personal reasons. Sometimes life gets in the way of job security.*
- *2024 **University College London**, Department of Earth Sciences (Lectureship in Earth Sciences). *I was flown to London to interview (one of nine), positive & helpful feedback. Despite not getting the job, I got great vibes from the whole experience.*
- *2024 **University of Oxford**, School of Geography and the Environment (Associate Professorship in Physical Geography). *I was flown to Oxford to interview (one of four), great experience in the department. This was somewhere I felt I could have really thrived, although in hindsight it possibly was not the place for a scruffy Australian with an education about as far from Oxbridge as you can get. Possibly I should have realised this when the most kindred spirits I encountered at the university were Alex (ex-army facilities manager) and Richard & Gary (college porters).*
- *2023 **Australian National University**, Fenner School of Environment and Society (Senior Lecturer in Climate Science). *I felt wildly underqualified for this and psyched myself into a particularly terrible interview (I was so confident I wouldn't get the job that I apparently came across as unenthusiastic).*
- *2023 **Australian National University**, Research School of Earth Sciences (Lecturer in Climate Science). *Competing against all other non-tenured early- to middle-career researchers in my then-current department, did not get interview.*

- 2023 **The University of Adelaide**, School of Physics, Chemistry and Earth Sciences (Lecturer in Palaeoclimate/Geochemistry). *Online interview, probably the job I've been the most qualified for (and with the most relevant expertise), slightly bizarre feedback that I 'didn't seem all that interested in the role'.*
- *2023 **University College London**, Department of Geography (Lecturer in Environmental Change). *Online interview (10:30pm my local time!), great vibes, positive feedback.*
- 2023 **University of Hawai'i**, Department of Earth Sciences (Assistant Professor in Paleoclimatology). *References requested but never heard anything further, learned the job was filled because it went to a (much smarter and better qualified) friend.*
- *2023 **University of Nottingham**, School of Geography (Assistant Professor in Physical Geography). *Online interview, positive feedback.*
- 2023 **University of Nottingham**, School of Geography (Assistant Professor in Physical Geography). *Offered the role but turned it down as I wasn't in a financial position to move from Australia to the UK for a three-year position (full disclosure: I thought this was a permanent role when I applied! Turns out that was a separate ad; see above)*

Rejected publications

In the interests of not offending my colleagues, I'm here only listing failed papers on which I was the lead author and can therefore take most of the blame. Also, I am early enough in my career that this particular list still has a lot of room to grow!

- 2023 **Falster, G.**, B. Konecky, S. Coats, S. Stevenson. Forced changes in the Pacific Walker Circulation over the past millennium. *Desk reject from Science. Joke was on the editor in this case; Michael White at Nature waved it through, it was ultimately published, and now has both a healthy citation rate and an Altmetric score >800.*

Honours and awards I did not receive

I will note there that the list of grants/awards I didn't apply for because I thought I was underqualified and/or undeserving isextremely long. And continues to grow. Not included here for the sake of brevity.

Competitive Research Funding

- 2024 Australian Research Council Discovery Project, co-author, did not progress past EOI stage

Awards, prizes, and scholarships

- 2025 Past Global Changes (PAGES) Open Science Meeting travel award. *Only I could flunk an application to an organisation I've been an active member of for nine years—including holding major leadership roles. Failing at this meant I missed the triennial conference, including two talks, a workshop, a session I was convening, and a lot of face-to-face meetings.*
- 2024 Australian Meteorological and Oceanography Society 'Meyers Medal' awarded biennially to an early-career researcher in the fields of atmosphere, ocean, or climate science. *I suppose the win here is that I was nominated at all. Apparently I came an extremely close second, but my contributions were more global than Australia-focussed (which was what the medal wanted). Which just goes to show that in academia there's no way to win. Anyway, I now try to make my partner introduce me as a 'medal-losing scientist'.*
- 2024 Australian Academy of Science Theo Murphy Participation Support grant. *Travel award. Recipients of this award selected using a random number generator from all eligible applications, so it wasn't exactly a failure on my part. Still, didn't get it.*

2024

L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Young Talents Fellowship *Shortlisted but didn't make the final cut of four.*