

As part of the RD905 Researcher Professional Development Elective class, I studied the following courses: 1) Enterprise, Creativity and Entrepreneurship, 2) Getting to Grips with Fellowships, 3) Independent development of my knowledge base, 4) Creating Research Data Management Plan, 5) Obtaining departmental travel funds and 6) Communicating with confidence: Nerves, resilience and pro-resilience for your PhD, your life and your career. The Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) course helped me to structure and organise my RDMP. With the help of my supervisor I attached the RDMP in the corresponding Spider section. Furthermore, I decided to attend and explore these courses mainly because I wanted to learn effective networking approaches for growing relationship database, enhance my creativity and most importantly to understand my industry and academic career option after completing a PhD.

After having completed the module "Engaging Beyond Academia: Industry, Networking and Opportunity", I gained valuable awareness regarding a variety of soft skills, for example engaging externally, intellectual property and commercialisation but also personal branding. More specifically this module gave me an interesting idea and motivated me to pursue enhancing my personal branding by creating and adding a permanent barcode that hot links to my personal website. So that anyone with a smartphone could instantly scan this on my resume and guide him to my website. I believe this was a modern method of achieving good personal branding and I have received interesting compliments. This certainly made me feel proud of being able to showcase my profile and the great variety of projects I have been involved with, in such an out-of-the-box methodology.

Furthermore, I acquired insight regarding networking, the process of applying for an internship and influencing people. But also familiarity in design, engage and management of conference assignment. A reason why I choose this course at the time was because I was attending and participating as a student volunteer in organising the ICMI 2017 conference that was happening in Glasgow. I wanted to have some knowledge before volunteering in order to be efficient and effective with the tasks that would be assigned to me. A major aspect of this was good negotiation in order to coordinate with the other volunteers which slots and responsibilities should each person be assigned while enabling the volunteers to attend the talks and seminars of their interest. This required good communication and organisation with people that had different backgrounds and cultures. We decided to draw a large schedule to assign duties to each volunteer. Looking back I have thought of additional techniques that could have been used to manage the organisation and synchronisation of the volunteers timetable more efficiently. For example had the lead volunteer provided in advance clearer and pre-determined role descriptions along with the participation questionnaires on how each position would affect the participation in certain talks and seminars than this would have reduced the overlapping issues significantly. In conclusion, I was not expecting the student volunteer role to be so challenging and it made me recognise the hard work that goes into attending a conference of such size as a student volunteer.

In addition, I studied the module Enterprise, Creativity and Entrepreneurship in order to understand how to best organise my finance and people and to identify my own aspirations and short-term life goals. Furthermore, this course helped me understand some of the different entrepreneurial paths I can follow in my career, but also a variety of entrepreneurial management skills, for example promoting an idea to a difficult audience, good communication skills, technology assessment and the ability to commercialise an idea. At the end of the course we were encouraged to participate in a practical session where we were separated into groups of four people and were given some ideas and we had to think and structure business plans on how to effectively commercialise an idea. Through this process I realised the difficulties that unfold in such an endeavour for example the conflict of interests between universities and other research institutes, local and industrial organisations.

On the 23rd of April 2019 I attended a preCHI SICSA event which was hosted in the University of Dundee and on the 18th of June 2019 I attended the SICSA 2019 PhD Conference held in Stirling, and I went through the process of applying for departmental funds to cover my travel expenses. In these events although there were topics relevant to information retrieval which strongly relate to my research there were other thematic units such as computer and human interaction

as well as natural language processing which although are not my main concentration domain these frequently overlap. So I took the initiative to participate in the previously mentioned events in order to gain more knowledge and understanding regarding research progress in these fields and to expand my knowledge base. I also had the pleasure to go over some poster presentations and understand some of the qualitative techniques and quantitative tools used to process and visualise data, for example I noticed that the *matplotlib.pyplot* library was used frequently to present plots and graphs among many researchers, so I started using this library as well to plot some of my own plots. The resulted graphs impressed me and were eye-catching and looked more impressive than the ones produced using the Excel Libre tool.

Furthermore, I was also interested in studying the Getting to Grips with Fellowships module because I wanted to understand the duties and importance of such a career path in the future or perhaps following a career in the industry would be more appealing to me. This module helped me identify some of the different types of fellowship schemes available. This course also focused on the methodology of writing a proposal for Fellowship positions. While not what I was expecting, it was helpful, because now I am better prepared if I need to write a business idea proposal in the future, since there are commonalities when writing an essay for research or business. During this teaching process we were given the task to write our own proposal in the class room by applying the 5-step thinking procedure (EDIPT). During the writing process of my proposal, I applied the EDIPT by defining the topic, then expanding on the idea which I wanted to promote, then wrote my prototype and finally tested the proposal by seeking feedback from other peers. Testing is a common research practice, which means seeking for feedback regularly and have discussions on the research of interest. This intrigued me to ask for feedback from friends that are involved in research as well as having dialogues with my supervisors team during our weekly meetings.

The module also helped me identify some of the differences between a PostDoc and a Fellowship position. In conclusion, the information and essay proposals we had to study and write and my discussion with the teacher of the 'Getting to Grips with Fellowships' course helped me determine that an academic career is not the most suitable option for me after my PhD and that the industry would be a better fit for my skills and mentality. Furthermore, this course helped me understand that in general a scientist's career pathways in academia are relatively limited compared to the industry. A researcher in academia often progresses in two directions, either towards professorship/tenure or as a staff scientist. My outlook towards the industry is that with my technical background and my coding skills in several programming languages and a demonstrated portfolio of projects my career opportunities are broader in the ICT industry.