**The making of an ECR: What does it take to be an ECR today?**

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The current organisation of Higher Education in most Western Institutions has dramatically changed in recent decades. In the UK, institutions have re-organised themselves around quantifying and ranking success in research, and now teaching, through the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). These changes have been intensified by reduced governmental funding at a time when student numbers continue to increase (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009), additional accountability and ever-increasing administrative duties (Murray et al., 2008); placing increased pressure on academics and universities alike.

These changes, have led to many academics experiencing an intensified workload in an ever-changing sector, with increased demands on academics’ time, resource constraints, teaching loads and growing pressure on academics to bring in money to the university, be that through grants or refereed publications. These demands are reflected in the axiom “publish or perish” in light of the fiscal pressures universities face and managerial responses (Harman, 2005; Johnston et al., 2014; Winefield et al., 2002; McGrail, Rickard and Jones, 2006; Vannini, 2006). Additionally, as the ‘excellent’ journals receive an ever higher number of submissions, publishing in these journals becomes increasingly competitive. In a time when employment, probation or promotion can rest on publications in ‘excellent’ journals, many academics find they have little support from their institution. The extensive time and effort required to write, submit, and revise manuscripts for publication is often not reflected in their work load pattern for example (see Dickson-Swift et al., 2009).

Put on top of this the professional activities academics engage in – participating on editorial boards, referees for academic journals, research supervisors, consultancy work, and internal management roles such as course leader or professional body representative to name a few (Harman, 2005), it is no wonder researchers report academics are working increased hours in an attempt to manage their workload (Winter, Taylor and Sarros, 2000; Bristow et al., 2017).

Yet, despite the institutional expectation of academics to publish, it is widely acknowledged that there is little provision to facilitate newer faculty members in this process. Early Career Researchers (ECR) are increasingly exposed to more precarious working practices. This can vary from tough probation standards to short-term contracts, demanding teaching responsibilities to sparse access to research funding (Bristow et al., 2017). ECRs can find themselves under intense pressure from the beginning of their careers to publish and deliver REF returnable outputs (Laudel and Gläser, 2008), whilst balancing the demands of teaching and their personal lives (Dwyer et al., 2012). Amidst this backdrop we ask the question: what does it take to be an ECR today?

We invite papers that will explore but not limited to contrasting and conflicting demands on ECRs, ECR identity, mobility, work-life balance and support/barriers to development. Additionally, we would like to host ECR’s who often find their creative work stifled by the pressures to present work in particular ways, therefore contributions will be accepted from work not accepted by the usual academic output channels.

If you would like to be considered for this track, please submit a 500 word abstract (excluding references, one page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, no header, footers or track changes) together with your contact information to s.vohra@shu.ac.uk or lauren.Crabb@coventry.ac.uk. The deadline for submission of abstracts is January 31st 2019, and we will notify you of our decision by the end of February.