



Down the Rabbit Hole: Navigating the Transition from Industry to Academia



Support for the production of this publication has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.



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2014

ISBN 978-1-74361-452-5 [PDF]
ISBN 978-1-74361-451-8 [PRINT]
ISBN 978-1-74361-453-2 [DOCX]

Contents

Foreword
Introduction
Perceptions of academia
Early transitional experiences
Mentoring
Relevance of industry skills in academia
Personal impacts
Advice and solutions
A staged approach to academia

- Teaching
- Research
- Service

A final word

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Thanks are also due to the participants of the research for their time and ideas.

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Foreword

This booklet is about the transition to academia for those who are working in other sectors. Our aim is to encourage professionals to make the move to teaching and research in universities in Australia so that they can contribute to the learning of the next generation. We have interviewed a range of people who have made the transition and we have distilled the trials and delights of the transition process. We offer a realistic description of the transition process as well as advice on how to successfully navigate the move.

This area has not been widely researched and so our contribution is one of the early investigations. We show that there are several institutional concerns with the transition to academia, such as inadequate formal on-boarding processes, that universities should improve. There are also opportunities for a staged move to academia with possibilities of guest lecturing, internships and collaboration on research writing and projects. Universities need to develop structured opportunities for individuals and organisations to connect with teaching and research, which could encourage greater movement between academia and the professions.

Individuals making the move to academia do so for a variety of reasons – such as for a better work/life balance, or because of an interest to give back to the next generation of learners. There are many ways that they can facilitate the process, particularly by finding a mentor and structuring their transition to academia. We give you lots of advice and tips in the following pages.

It might feel like falling “down a rabbit hole”, however this booklet is here to support and guide you through the transition. Settle in and enjoy the read!

Leigh Wood

On behalf of the team

Introduction

“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.”

Winston Churchill

Transitions from industry to academia represent a unique type of career change. For industry professionals, the decision to enter into or return to academia can represent an exciting and daunting life challenge. It is our belief that identifying the full range of positive and negative experiences marking the transitional experiences of practitioner-academics will better inform future cohorts on what to expect. Whilst we recount the negative or less-supportive aspects of a career in academia in order to prepare you for what you might encounter, we also provide a section on practical solutions, advice and strategies for overcoming these challenges.

With this in mind, the information contained within this booklet does not sugar-coat the qualitative realities of a career in academia. Neither should it be thought of as a propaganda piece compelling you to join our ranks.

In an important sense, this booklet isn't about the switch to academia at all. It is about life purpose. More specifically, whether the decision to commence or re-commence a career in academia is reflective of your personal goals, values and purpose. As Sir Ken Robison writes, finding a purpose in the work we do, be it academic, vocational or industrial, is an essential part of knowing who we are and becoming who we want to be¹. If we are able to identify a 'why', we can achieve almost any 'how'. Successfully navigating a major career change requires the construction of a personal narrative which bridges your old and new careers and represents a vital strategy for a successful transition², a point that will be explored in greater detail below.

When we think of the process of transition or transitioning, there is a tendency to think of these actions as following or moving along an unbroken line from beginning to end or, in this case, from one's old job to one's new position. For many industry professionals seeking a career change, their experiences of transition from industry to academia are far from smooth or unproblematic. For professionals who have recently transitioned to the academy, it is clear that the expectations and perceptions of academia they held prior to their move play a significant role in shaping their early experiences in the academy.

This is not to say that the challenges they encounter are somehow imagined. Rather than a linear model or trajectory for describing the transitional experiences of that class of people identified as 'pracademics'³, we present a more organic metaphor for understanding the complex and dynamic motivations for making the industry-to-academe transition, and vice versa.

¹ Robinson, K. & L. Aronica. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. Penguin Group. New York, New York.

² Clark, D. (2013). How to explain your career transition. HBR Blog Network. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at <http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/04/how-to-explain-your-career-tra/>

³ Volpe, M., & D. Chandler. (2001). Resolving and managing conflicts in academic communities: The emerging role of the "pracademic". *Negotiation Journal*, 17(3), 245-255.

According to Paul Posner, ‘pracademics’, or to use our term ‘practitioner-academics’ are best thought of as retaining the ability to switch across industry/academic boundaries in both directions. For Posner, these movements vary in duration of stay and are viewed as existing “along a continuum, ranging from temporary or short-term switching to more permanent conversions”⁴. From the outset, it is worth pointing out that the transition from industry to academia does not necessarily lead to the dissolution of ties between one’s new university career and one’s previous work in industry.

In fact, research suggests that the career change can be made more meaningful and effective when pre-existing professional and personal linkages are maintained and encouraged⁵. Similarly, we are not presenting a case for an ‘all-or-nothing’ transition from industry to academia – we acknowledge the importance and value of multi-directional movements between the two domains.

On the issue of occupational migration, Molho differentiated between ‘speculative migration’, namely the *hope* of finding a suitable employment opportunity, and ‘contracted migration’ which involves transition after having already secured such an opportunity at the workplace destination⁶. Practitioner-academics would seem to fall somewhere in the middle of this distinction. In building on these types of occupational migration, this guide presents a third alternative, which might be considered a ‘staged migration’. A staged-entry approach to academia gives the industry practitioner opportunities to test the waters before making the decision to take a leap of faith into academia.

Industry and academia are both undergoing major transformations in response to global economic integration, population growth, occupational mobility and technological advances. These factors necessitate the need and capacity to respond to such circumstantial changes in resourceful, flexible and resilient ways., As Michael D. Watkins, author of *Your Next Move: The Leader’s Guide to Successfully Navigating Major Career Transitions*) quipped in an interview, “Even if you’re not in transition, you’re likely having someone else’s transition inflicted on you”⁷.

Purpose of this guide

This guide has been designed to provide information and resources to industry practitioners considering a career in academia as well as those who have recently made the move. To assist in the decision-making process, we have structured the guide using a staged-entry approach to the industry-academia transition. In short, we provide information for understanding the variety of motivations for making this unique type of occupational transition and identify the short-, medium- and long-term social, emotional and professional needs of transitioned practitioner-academics. In addition to better inform your decision to move, the information in the booklet might also act as a companion or support document during the early stages of your university career.

⁴ Posner, P. L. (2009). The pracademic: An agenda for re-engaging practitioners and academics. *Public Budgeting and Finance*, p. 9.

⁵ Perkmann, M. & K. Walsh (2007). University–industry relationships and open innovation: Towards a research agenda, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 9(4), 259–280.

⁶ Molho, I. (1986). Theories of migration. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 33(4), 397.

⁷ Watkins, M. D. (Oct, 2009). Navigating major career transition. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6wetukBw-E>

Funded by an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) Seed Grant in 2012, we have sought to investigate key challenges of industry professionals (practitioners) in their career transitions to academia. Currently there is a limited amount of research exploring the movement of practitioner-academics or the associated support and professional development initiatives provided to them. This is a worrying state of affairs, as the increasing demand for academics and academic capability is far exceeding supply⁸. In order to better understand the motivations for and experiences of transition, this booklet draws on empirical data from early- and longer term practitioner-academics who have transitioned from industry (i.e. commercial and public sector positions) to academic positions at Macquarie University, the University of Queensland and the University of Tasmania⁹.

We have illustrated this information with the actual experiences of participating practitioner-academics at the three universities based on interviews with them by our project team. These staff, who have all made a transition from industry to academia, spoke to us about the different stages of their journey. Building on these case studies, we offer suggestions for a staged- or piloted-entry approach to building a career in academia as well as insights into the role of the academic with respect to the key responsibilities of 'teaching', 'research' and 'service'. This guide also explores some of the surrounding factors which impact a successful transition to academia, including industry professionals' perceptions of academia; processes of socialisation; mentoring; and the likely personal impacts resulting from the move.

To begin your thinking about a possible move to the academy, we invite you to reflect on the following questions.

1. Does my current workplace reflect who I am and who I want to become?
2. What am I expecting to get from a career in academia?
3. What am I in a position to give to academia?
4. What does a potential transition mean for me personally in terms of acquiring and developing new attitudes, skills and competencies in order to be successful in academia?
5. What is my primary reason for considering a move to academia?
6. What are my secondary reasons for considering a move to academia?

In the following sections, we discuss some of the issues which you might wish to take into account when considering the move. These sections draw on interviews with practitioner-academics, who were asked about their experiences at varying stages of transition. Recurrent themes included:

- 1) perceptions of academia
- 2) early transitional experiences
- 3) mentoring
- 4) relevance of industry skills in academia
- 5) personal impacts.

⁸ Coates, H. (2012) Enabling the future academic workforce. *Higher Education Recruitment Conference*, Melbourne 20 April 2012. Available at: www.bigconferences.com/presentations/Prof_Hamish_Coates.pptx

⁹ A total of eleven face-to-face interviews were conducted across the three universities, with practitioner-academics from a diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds including engineering, law, business and education. These departments were chosen as they were considered to have the highest rate of practice-to-academy transitions.

The account of their personal experiences of transition is rounded off with an 'Advice and solutions' section from the interviewees themselves. Following this, we outline a series of potential actions and strategies for industry professionals considering this particular type of career change. Whilst we propose a staged-entry approach for facilitating this transition, there comes a point when one must decide whether or not to take a leap of faith and fully immerse oneself in the life and times of academia.

You may have heard some unsettling stories from friends and colleagues regarding the administrative, teaching and research workloads in academia. And to some extent, the sink-or-swim mentality in becoming an academic is quietly fostered within universities¹⁰. At the same time, however, a career in the university sector is considered to be one of the most intellectually challenging and rewarding experiences of a person's career. For those considering a move and experiencing some uncertainty about your ability to succeed, you might take some comfort from the popular saying ...

"Leap and the net will appear ..."

¹⁰ Parker, L., & Wilson, M. (2002). Becoming an academic head of department: Sink or swim? New Zealand: HERDSA.

Perceptions of academia

The choice or decision to enter into a new career is affected by our preconceptions and prejudices about the potential workplace. For many industry professionals, there is a widespread perception that academia offers a more relaxed workplace and greater flexibility leading to an improved work/life balance. Although true to some extent, a career in academia is by no means the easy alternative. An equally strong argument could be made that this very flexibility and independence is being eroded by the adoption of commercial business models and analytics-driven decision making to measure success and job output. On a related matter, one of our research participants observed,

“It's a very busy job. It's a really challenging, busy job with time constraints that I had not thought enough about, probably, before I made the change. So the teaching is exhausting and very time consuming if you want to do a good job.”

Highlighting an associated issue, Thornton reported that many of her study's participants coming from industry had “been indoctrinated to focus on product-driven outcomes and profits”¹¹. Thornton also observed that, “new instructors found it difficult to switch from productivity-driven industry models to the learning-centered values of the technical college.”

In terms of motivations to move to academia, the reasons cited by our participants were multiple and varied. They included:

- the prospect of attaining a PhD
- giving back to the university sector in the second half of their career
- supportive co-workers in industry roles who had previously worked in academia
- limited career opportunities in previous places of employment
- pressure to go full time
- the positive challenges of working at a university.

Other examples raised elsewhere include an unsupportive workplace, limited work/life balance, travel time, and a lack of leadership¹². Here it is worth pointing out that a PhD or substantial progression towards attaining one is increasingly becoming a condition of employment when becoming an academic. For some of our participants, the expectation and importance of completing a PhD was not properly explained to them. With the benefit of hindsight, the PhD requirement placed extra pressure on their ability to navigate their teaching workloads and may have influenced their decision to enter academia in the first place.

In support of previous studies which have suggested a primary motivation for making the move is the expectation of a more ‘relaxed’ workplace, Adam, a participant from engineering, explained, “*I thought it would lead to a more relaxing lifestyle where I would do a lot of teaching and dabble in some research topics that were of interest to me.*”. For Adam, the biggest concern in the lead-up to

¹¹ Thornton, A. B. (2010). Understanding the socialization experiences of new technical faculty: A transition from industry to the technical college. PhD Dissertation. University of New Orleans, ScholarWorks@UNO.

¹² Watkins, M. D. (Oct, 2009), Navigating major career transition. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6wetuKbW-E>

his eventual move was whether he would make a good teacher to students he was asked to teach. Reflecting the comments of participants in a previous study¹³, he went on to state, *“I was fairly confident that I could teach Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and 4th year students as that’s pretty much the level of people I would deal with in industry if I had to give any sort of training.”*

A common preconception among participants was related to the expectation that working at a university would provide opportunities for conducting their own research on topics that interested them. According to Sarah,

“I thought there’d be lots of opportunity for research. And that was a little bit disappointing to find out I had to generate my own and the ways of doing it, but I was unaware of that at the time.”

Along similar lines, Donald, a practitioner-academic in education, stated, *“I guess my expectations were, well, this will be a good opportunity to do more teaching on a long-term basis, to be able to research the areas that I’m interested in.”* Although describing this unmet expectation as being influenced by “rose-coloured glasses”, Donald repositioned this in a productive way. He suggested that the insights gained through his early difficulties were now something he could talk about with new academics at the university. In summing up his experience of transition, Donald made the insightful point that transitioning from industry to academia displayed similarities to *“a boundary crossing”*, adding *“... there’s no doubt about that – you’re crossing cultures when you move from [your previous place of employment] to university.”*

Hints & Tips

- It’s normal to experience apprehension and even anxiety regarding the prospect of starting a new job in a new sector.
- You might find it useful to speak to a colleague or recently transitioned industry practitioner who has worked or is working in the university sector and find out about the strategies they employed during transition.
- Any uncertainty you’re feeling can be mitigated by considering the staged-entry approach to academia, which will help you build personal and professional connections prior to and during your transition.

Expectations of academia were informed by societal perceptions of what a career in academia means. The dominant conception of academia among the colleagues, friends and family of participants in our study concerned university work being easier than industry. Peter explained, *“Now, I don’t think it’s necessarily true, I think it has to be case by case, but the general view was that I’ve got an easy street now being in academia.”*

Sarah, recounted an interesting conversation with her supervisor at her previous workplace,

¹³ Bandow, D., Minsky, B. D., & Voss, R. S. (2007). Reinventing the future: Investigating career transitions from industry to academia. *Journal of Human Resource Education* 1(1), 23-37.

“We will not employ anyone with a doctorate in this firm’. And our question was, ‘Why?’ And they said, ‘Well historically, I hate to say it, but it’s the losers that ended up staying in academia in law.”

Highlighting this general perception of academia as well as the view that an industry-to-academia career change will adversely affect one’s chances of re-employability within the industry sector, Peter commented,

“A lot of my friends think that I’m short-changing myself by going into academia, and when I’ve questioned my older friends that are in chair roles of public companies and asked them ‘Why?’, they basically said that it’s very difficult for me to pick up and run in a corporate governance world or in a commercial world after you’ve been an academic.”

Whilst this statement may be reflective of Peter’s experience, this scenario does not always apply. Choosing or not choosing to undergo a transition to academia does not necessarily mean that you are choosing industry or academia *ad infinitum*. Yes, there may be repercussions which cause you to reevaluate your professional identity and may affect your existing professional relationships, but the transition to academia, be it permanent or temporary, can be supported and enhanced by the preservation of previous linkages and contacts within industry.

Summary

- Practitioner-academic’s motivations to move from a career in industry to academia are varied and involve a multitude of personal, professional and lifestyle factors.
- A career in academia is not an easy alternative to the industry professions.
- The preconceptions and prejudices we have of a potential future workplace influence our experience of that workplace.
- While you will have some freedom to research and teach to your interests and strengths, current teaching and research priorities within the university will shape your teaching and research practice.

Early transitional experiences

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the early experiences of transitioned practitioner-academics. The central issues faced in the early stages of transition primarily concerned: 1) the competitiveness of the academic environment, 2) workload, 3) culture shock, 4) isolation, 5) disillusion, 6) navigating informal codes and 7) the learning curve associated with getting up to speed with administrative and technological systems.

In recounting her negative experience of the competitive university environment, Joan, an academic in law, stated,

“It’s a very competitive environment here ... It certainly isn’t visible from the outside coming in. It was something I wasn’t expecting ... it does create an environment that isn’t as collegiate as I would have experienced and liked ... and that’s something I think that’s missing a bit here. I feel this is quite a lonely job, on some levels.”

Speaking of the positive experiences encountered during the early period of transition, Sarah maintained,

“I like the flexibility from being external to the university in terms of teaching times. I like the fact that as a mother of three children that I might be able to teach during school hours or on a weekend.”

On the complex issue of institutional support for newly arrived practitioner-academics, the majority of interviewees highlighted a lack of assistance from their respective faculties and institutions. Oliver, an engineering practitioner, revealed that there was, *“No on-boarding process, no assistance to overcome the plethora of poorly designed and integrated systems, no explanation of what to do with students in an emergency.”*

Further to Oliver’s comments about system integration, Joan noted she had had to come to terms with several different administrative and learning management systems in the last 12 months, which were very time consuming. She added,

“... and yes, I do make very good use of the training that’s provided and I have only good things to say about the trainers, but it’s actually the systemic problem of having to get to grips with so many disconnected and clunky systems ... It’s not efficient. It’s not an efficient use of my time.”

A related and shared experience among participants from the three universities was the perception of a sink-or-swim attitude built into the academy, combined with a lack of adequate teaching preparation when first arriving at their respective universities. According to Joan,

“I was thrown in the deep end in my first session, convening and teaching a unit at quite short notice. I had about six weeks to prepare the course, but that was six weeks where I was learning everything, all the systems.”

She concluded that that experience was not a good one. For both Oliver and Joan, their early experiences draw on a similar language of emergency. For example, Oliver said, *“I felt like it was an emergency situation, and maybe it doesn’t happen to other people moving into the sector, but you do need to be trained how to do this.”*

Hints & Tips

- Locating or asking for an academic mentor can be one of the most valuable resources in the early stages of transition.
- Developing a thick skin can represent an important defense mechanism against what Watkins described as the ‘immunological reaction’ of an organisation to new bodies.
- Think small and think big. The pragmatic, everyday challenges of teaching, research and service are made easier by identifying the larger reasons for you being at the university. These can include contributing to the creation of new knowledge, inspiring the next generation of scholars or the benefits of an improved work/life balance.
- Administrative and professional staff at the faculty and human resources level are rich veins of knowledge and experience. Getting to know these staff members will improve the quality and ease of your transition that much sooner.
- If you’re finding it hard to swim at first, then tread water for a while. You won’t sink.

In the limited amount of industry to academe literature that does exist, positive and productive socialisation processes are identified as one of the more significant factors leading to the successful transition of the industry professional into the academic environment¹⁴.

Part and parcel of proper preparation is adequate on-boarding and professional development. For Donald, *“The induction program really only lasted about an hour [chuckle]. And then, you’re really left to work it out yourself.”* Foreshadowing the importance of mentoring and a supportive social network, he added,

“I was very lucky at the time to have a supportive head of school who was extraordinary ... I was very lucky to have good friends and colleagues in other universities as well. So I found my way through it.”

Furthering the discussion on induction sessions, Peter recounted that there was little to no induction by the university, faculty and school. Whilst academic mentoring and institutional training is important at the teaching and research level, it is just as important at the everyday, pragmatic level. As Madeline explained, *“I’m thinking ‘I don’t even know how to turn the lights on or the projector on’. Nobody even came to show me how to do that ... So I found that amusing, and slightly stressful.”*

In an interview at the Harvard Business School, Michael D. Watkins suggested that the biggest reason why people fail or underperform in their new roles has to do with the culture and politics of

¹⁴ Blenkinsopp, J., & Stalker, B. (2004). Identity work in the transition from manager to management academic. *Management Decision*, 42, 418-429.

the organisation. Using a provocative analogy, Watkins compared the idea of an institutional culture with an immune system:

“Culture functions as an immune system of a kind, it’s there to keep foreign bodies out and preserve the integrity of the organism. But the problem is when you’re trying to bring people in from the outside, you can have an over-reactive immune system; and if the people coming in don’t understand the culture, don’t understand the politics, they’re really going to generate an immunological reaction that can really be terribly destructive, not just for them, but also for the organisation.”

Despair not. In the section on ‘Advice and solutions’, we offer some practical solutions for coming to terms with and better understanding the academic culture in which you find yourself.

Summary

- By all accounts, the first six months to a year in an academic position are the hardest.
- Commonly cited challenges include dealing with culture shock, isolation, workload, coming to terms with the faculty and institutional culture as well as technology and administrative systems.
- The university sector can be quite competitive.
- Entwined with the more formal aspects of becoming an academic (i.e. research and teaching) are the informal processes of socialisation and relationship building. These should not be overlooked and are a vital component of solidifying your move to academia.
- Generally speaking, incumbent university staff members are very supportive of new arrivals and will go out of their way to assist you. However, some may treat you with initial suspicion or indifference.

Mentoring

A number of university studies have identified mentoring as a key component to the successful industry-academia transition¹⁵. From the initial induction phase to longer term integration within the institutional community, mentoring can better prepare practitioner-academics for the rigours of:

- 1) teaching and classroom preparation
- 2) managing research expectations
- 3) grant applications and promotion requirements.

Accordingly, a mentor can help you to acquire greater job satisfaction, teaching competence, and research productivity¹⁶.

In order to overcome or at least mitigate these early support issues, the majority of participants in our study acknowledged the importance of mentors and mentoring. For Joan,

“The way I would do that is to ask a newly transitioned person to work with an experienced teacher in another unit, so that there’s some mentoring that goes on.”

She went on to recount that convening her first unit was the loneliest six months of her life due to the lack of support. Mentors can represent valuable resources not only for guiding practitioner-academics through the everyday administrative challenges encountered when starting their new position, but also for navigating the complex organisational structure and workplace politics in large organisations like universities. Accordingly, Donald related: *“I needed mentoring in how to start as a researcher, and I needed mentoring in managing the politics of the university.”* Adam, an engineering academic, outlined a mentoring plan which would see an allocated mentor initiate and oversee the development of a plan for the first three years plus.

Managing time constraints was another significant issue. Qualifying her previous comments, Joan noted, *“Well, there is support, but when you’re under the gun it’s difficult to find the time to take advantage of the support.”* Although several participants felt that institutional support was lacking, informal mentoring often occurs at the faculty and department levels. For Joan, the one-on-one mentoring available at the faculty and department levels was felt to be the most useful. She did, however, qualify these statements by adding *“... because everybody is under so much time pressure, you do hesitate to ask for advice and help from your colleagues, because everybody is very time poor.”*

¹⁵ Gardiner, M., M. Tiggemann, H. Kearns & K. Marshall. (2007). Show me the money! An empirical analysis of mentoring outcomes for women in academia, *Higher Education Research & Development*, (26)4, 425-442.

¹⁶ Thomsen, S. R., & Gustafson, R. L. (1997). Turning practitioners into professors: Exploring effective mentoring. *Journal & Mass Communication Educator*, 24-32.

Hints & Tips

- As mentors can be formally assigned or informally acquired, developing a relationship with a staff member or members that you can openly and honestly talk to is one of the best things you can do prior to and during your transition.
- In cases where a mentor is formally assigned and higher up the faculty pecking order (i.e. department head), you may feel that there are certain off-limits conversation topics. While these relationships are valuable in their own right, these mentoring arrangements can be supplemented by forming connections with other staff.
- There is nothing to say you cannot have more than one mentor.
- Joining a learning and teaching committee or ethics sub-committee can put you in touch with potential mentors.

For one participant, simply having the opportunity to sit down with other staff for morning tea was an important practice for developing social networks and feeling at home,

“Yes, as much as anything just having friendly, supportive colleagues to have a cup of tea with, morning tea with, and being there to ask when you do have questions was really helpful ...” (Joan)

For several research participants, mentoring in the early period following transition came down to one or two supportive individuals: *“I had a particular colleague who was very supportive and mentored me through a lot of that initial, ‘How do I do this? Where do I find that?’” (Joan)* A possible solution explored in a later section of this document was also proposed by Joan, who suggested that becoming part of a learning and teaching or ethics sub-committee is a great way to learn about the university structure and flow.

A mentor was assigned to one of our participants in an official capacity, but as their response demonstrates, this too can be problematic:

“There was a mentor allocated [to me] which was a good system I thought, but it’s a bit difficult when your mentor is your head of school because you want to talk about issues that you don’t actually want to bring to the attention of the head of school.”

From this response, it would seem that the allocation of a mentor needs to address and mitigate issues of confidentiality concerning delicate information and the possibility of adverse consequences to the mentee.

Summary

- There is a growing amount of research exploring the benefits of academic mentors and how to negotiate the mentor/mentee relationship.
- Having a mentor can greatly improve the quality of your early experiences within the university.
- Mentoring occurs at the course, unit, departmental and institutional levels.

- Mentoring can be formal or informal in nature.
- A mentor can help you manage and organise classroom preparation, research expectations, as well as grant and promotion applications.

Relevance of industry skills

Contrary to the view that industry professionals arrive in academia as academic ‘new-borns’ without the necessary competencies to succeed in teaching and research, we contend that the accumulative value of their previous experience and expertise will help them dodge, duck and redirect the many challenges that come their way. And rest assured, after an initial introductory phase, you too will reach a point where you won’t have to dodge bullets, or at least not as many.

We now move to the issue of industry skills and their perceived and actual relevance in and to academia. Based on participant data, we see a mixture of positive and negative attitudes towards the evaluation of industry skills in universities. Oliver’s experience was clearly not a positive one; he recounted, *“I was unrealistic in that I thought my experience would be considered useful.”* Along similar lines, Donald asserted, *“You won’t have your previous achievements recognised in the main.”* Injecting some levity to proceedings, Madeline noted,

“I could have come in with 12 years [experience] of painting frogs and they still will look at me the same way, they didn’t value or understand the value of having 12 years out there practising law, interpreting cases, going in front of a judge.”

Interestingly, Oliver did soften his earlier statement, suggesting that if the university is in need of a particular skill or has a vacancy at a particular moment in time, industry experience can prove useful. In terms of research, he made an important point: *“It’s a very transactional relationship, however. In research terms, I have found that industry experience is not considered useful.”*

Whilst perhaps not recognised in terms of selection criteria, Joan observed that one of the relevant skills you learn in industry is *“how to use your intellectual time efficiency”*. Along similar lines, Donald explained, *“... legal skills and legal research skills that you’re using are obviously useful skills in this [university] job.”*

The ability to work efficiently is undoubtedly a valued and valuable attribute in all aspects of a university career. The transferability of inter-sector skills also works to challenge the assumption that practitioner-academics arrive at universities without the necessary set of skills, knowledge and capabilities to succeed in their new role. However, to recognise and to be recognised is a reciprocal two-way process. According to Madeline,

“Academics don’t value someone coming in with 12 years’ experience anywhere near as much as practitioners value academics ... So I ended up being not as valued as maybe I thought I should have been.”

Perhaps part of the disconnect between practitioner-academics and incumbent university staff has to do with the enduring perception among pracademics that they are coming from ‘the real world’ and will be valued based on their ‘real world’ experience’, and a legacy idea among incumbent university staff that practitioner-academics have not followed the ‘traditional’ or ‘expected’ career track in attaining their new position.

In support of the first assumption, Adam refers to his previous place of employment as ‘the real world’ where ‘real issues’ are solved. He explained,

“Engineering is about solving real world problems and industry is the crucible of real world engineering. Without the 25 years of ‘training’ I received in industry, I would have been ill-prepared to do the academic job I’m doing because I would not have the folklore, war stories and history ... that helps me focus students on the things that really matter from the things that are merely taught because they are prerequisites.”

Drawing on a similar lexicon, Joan commented, *“It’s true that the students are very interested in what goes on in the real world. They really engage with that.”* In terms of students’ responses to her previous industry experience, Joan said, *“... there’s a credibility that you bring to your teaching, if you’ve got a lot of experience in the field that they are aware of and are interested in. There’s a level of respect for that.”*

Hints & Tips

- Keep an open mind when it comes to the perceived relevance and recognition of your previous industry experience from the incumbent academy community.
- Share your industry experience with the students you teach. They will ask for it anyway.
- Getting to know incumbent staff is one way of overcoming any initial suspicion or envy arising from your non-traditional career progression.

In terms of student engagement, Sarah stated, *“I think students appreciate feeling that they are learning from someone who’s had a bit of practical experience ... a bit of authority about the ‘real world’.”* In recounting the positive and negative aspects of coming from the government sector, Joan explained that she still feels like she is *“sitting outside, looking back at the real world”*. However, she went on to reflect,

“But I think it’s a powerful position to be in, because you can critique from outside in a way that you could never do from inside, because of employment and particularly in the public sector, you do owe your allegiance to the government of the day.”

In highlighting the intellectual benefits of moving away from the public sector, Joan observed,

“... if you’re working in Canberra, what you say on public record is constrained, whereas here [at the university] I am no longer constrained by those limits and that is one of the great joys of the place.”

Along similar lines, Donald explained that he began to see the world anew from the vantage point of the university, which augmented his world view.

“Where it’s hindered me, [coming from a high school] is still seeing the world through the eyes of a teacher ... and the world is a very different place. I don’t think that for many teachers, the world reveals its complexity, because schools tend to function under fairly simple rules that are either obeyed or broken in the mind.”

Processes of socialisation in the university setting are also shaped by incumbent staff's perceptions of the relevance of industry experience. Responses from existing staff are however quite varied. Speaking generally about the response of university staff to his arrival, Oliver said, "*Some are welcoming, some are indifferent*". Similarly, Donald reported that, "*Some people have been very welcoming. I am aware some people have been a bit surprised, maybe unhappy I've progressed as quickly as I have.*"

Contrary to the above negative or neutral reactions to their arrival, Adam conveyed a more positive reaction from existing staff to his arrival: "*I think they were incredibly helpful and supportive ... and patient with my stupid questions about administrative details that get taken for granted*".

While the transitioning practitioner-academic may encounter some initial suspicion and indifference from incumbent university staff, we believe that, on the whole, academic and administrative personnel are very supportive and aware of the challenges facing new staff.

Summary

- Your industry experience is relevant to and within universities, but you may encounter some suspicion or indifference from incumbent staff.
- By all accounts, students will greatly appreciate your industry experience and 'war stories' in preparing them for careers outside the university sector.
- The industry skills you have acquired will better prepare you for some aspects of a career in academia.
- In contrast to some commercial and government careers where you are limited in your ability to critique existing practices, policy and systems of governance, there is a greater intellectual freedom within the university sector.
- A move to academia will enable you to look back on your previous profession and see it in a new light.

Personal impacts

An essential aspect of a successful transition into the academic environment is the ability to manage a host of personal and professional responsibilities and obligations. These include family responsibilities, time constraints and financial pressures. According to Adam, in the first three years of being an academic, *“I was working about 80-100 hours per week just trying to get my teaching, my research, and my outreach work going.”* In comparing the early stages to a gambling game, he made the analogy,

“When you make the transition, you need to place a lot of bets in these three areas with the hope that one in each area will take off ... That’s a lot of work.”

More recently, however, Adam had begun to develop a more sustainable work/life balance. Along similar lines, Joan commented,

“The work/life balance question was really interesting because, in fact, I think my work/life balance here is worse in that I seem to work weekends. I did work weekends at the [government organisation], but in very short, sharp bursts; whereas with this job, you could work every weekend and still not get the job done to a level that you would like.”

Peter suggested that the work/life balance was 80% work, 20% family, which resulted in a decline in his health and increased stress. These statements provide evidence which seems to contradict the embedded societal assumption that academic life is easier, more flexible and relaxed when compared with the industrial/commercial sector. Thank goodness, right?

Reporting on the positive personal impacts of a career in academia, Joan reflected, *“I don’t think the work/life balance is fantastic”*, adding that the *“upside is the freedom of movement; so not being accountable to be here between nine and five is very liberating”*. It would seem that the potential for greater workplace flexibility in terms of *where* and *when* you work is predicated on a willingness and availability to take up these perceived benefits. On this issue, Joan observed,

“That said, I am here for most days because I prefer to work in this environment, but I imagine for those who like to work at home, that’s great ... there’s an upside and a downside to the way that the workplace operates.”

Several participants discussed the personal impacts of a skewed work/life balance; financial pressures relating to the move to academia; learning a new skill set; as well as the pressures of teaching and research. In terms of research and teacher training, Joan stated, *“It’s been a very stressful two years, but I expected that to be the case because the skill set was so different.”*

Discussing the impact on her family, one participant responded,

“... if I want to be tenured, I have to work overnight, on weekends. And so what happens is I find that my patience and tolerance towards my children goes, and then I end up being a mean mum and I don’t like it at all.”

In relation to the financial impacts resulting from the transition to academia, Donald averred, *“I had to go backwards financially for a significant period ... So that placed pressure on my family”*, while

another participant noted, “I’m doing longer hours for a fraction of the pay”. According to Coates and Goedegebuure, “Industry professionals may be less likely to engage in academic work for money, and perhaps more to make a contribution to or supplement professional practice”¹⁷. What becomes clear is that the potential personal impacts of career transition are multifarious and changing. In some cases, this opens up opportunities for a greater work/life balance and flexibility, and in others leads to more hours spent working. Clearly, a career in academia is as much a lifestyle decision as it is a professional one.

So what can people do to mitigate the negative impact of transitions on themselves and their family?

Michael D. Watkins articulates several strategies for minimising the personal and familial stress of a transition¹⁸.

- 1) Time the move for the minimum amount of disruption.
- 2) Preserve the familiar.
- 3) Start making ‘forward connections’ to the new area and institution.
- 4) Maintain ‘backwards connection’ through Skype.
- 5) Build social support systems.
- 6) Do something as simple as having a tea or coffee with a university staff member.

Summary

- Although there is the potential for an improved work/life balance in academia, coming to terms with the various aspects of academic life is difficult, especially in the early phase of transition.
- There will be personal impacts on your health, family and existing professional relationships.
- Many practitioner-academics experience greater flexibility in terms of freedom of movement (i.e. home/office working arrangements)

¹⁷ Coates, H., & Goedegebuure, L. (2010), The real academic revolution: Why we need to reconceptualise Australia’s future academic workforce, and eight possible strategies for how to go about this. *Research Briefing*. L.H. Martin Institute, 20.

¹⁸ Watkins, M. D. (Oct, 2009). Navigating major career transition. Harvard Business Review. Accessed November 1, 2013 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6wetukbW-E>

Advice and solutions

In the following section, we provide a summary of the advice and solutions presented by our research participants, which will hopefully help you manage the challenges commonly encountered during the early stages of transition.

Based on their experiences, practitioner-academics were asked about ways in which the university might better support other industry practitioners thinking of, or having already made, the move to academia. On the issue of combating loneliness/isolation and facilitating a sense of collegiality, Joan reflected,

“I was thinking about what universities can do to create [collegiality], and the things that I've enjoyed most, which have only really developed in the last 12 months, are committee work. It's a way to tap into the knowledge base, your colleagues' knowledge base about the administrative aspects of the job, which are very hard to access”.

The process of co-authoring a journal article was also identified as a way of engaging with the academic research culture as well as forming professional and personal relationships with incumbent staff: *“I started talking about writing something together [with another academic] and all of a sudden, my world is brighter”.* Joan also suggested that a newly arrived practitioner-academic might benefit from joining a departmental or faculty-level learning and teaching committee. As she recounted, after doing so, *“many things fell into place that I hadn't heard of, or didn't know about”.*

Given the reduction in salary which can accompany the transition to academia, Sarah suggested that in the university's efforts to attract industry professionals, there needs to be a reason or incentive package to join the academic ranks quite apart from salary: *“I guess offering something else beyond salary that's going to be attractive to those sorts of people”.* The use of effective dissemination strategies for getting information out there vis-à-vis the realities of transition was also suggested as a way of informing industry professionals' decision to move. As one participant noted,

“I think the dissemination of information needs to be profiled and I think there's very little information out there on that whole aspect of transition from industry to academia, regardless of the university”.

Commenting on the resources deployed by industry in terms of graduate recruitment, another participant observed,

“I see a lot of money going in by industry bodies and also law firms in capturing people into their industry, but I don't see any marketing or resources into capturing a transition across to academia”.

Further to this observation, Sarah noted, *“The second part of that is, I think there needs to be an induction program with somebody that is interested in being part of the world of academics”.* These reflections highlight the need for a multi-modal and multi-directional approach to the recruitment and transitional support of industry professionals. Ideally, this would be incentive based, appealing to the self-interested *and* altruistic sensibilities of potential practitioner-academics.

A staged entry to academia

There is a sense in which a leap of faith is inevitable in deciding to enter academia. But at the same time, a move from industry to academia does not have to be final or happen all at once.

For some, transition *will* be defined by an all-or-nothing, hell-for-leather, leap-of-faith approach to career change. For others, partial or total transition into academia will require a feeling-out period, a staged entry so to speak. And for others still, the transition to academia will not be for them after all and may lead to a hurried exit from the university sector.

While not an exhaustive list, we have identified three key areas relating to the role of the academic. Furthermore, we outline some of the ways you might engage and participate in these prior to and during your transition to academia.

Teaching

Teaching is the lifeblood of universities. We seek to inspire and educate the next generation in our disciplines. While there is currently a strong emphasis on research output within universities, teaching puts you in direct contact with students and bestows upon you the honour and responsibility of guiding their learning and equipping them with the necessary competencies to navigate and succeed in today's competitive workplaces.

Guest lecture

Presenting a guest lecture or research seminar can be an initial strategy for exposing you to a captive student audience as well as enabling you to distil and communicate your ideas in a one hour lecture. To begin this process, contact an existing academic in a faculty, department or school in your area of expertise or interest.

Guest lecturing can be performed face-to-face and on campus or through distance/open education classes. This is a good way to build your confidence in the classroom and assess whether university teaching is for you. Students greatly value the insights and experiences of industry professionals in the classroom in preparing them for the realities of life outside the university setting.

Tutoring

Tutoring an undergraduate or postgraduate unit is an effective strategy for feeling your way into academia. Tutorial classes are the places where students clarify and develop their own ideas about lecture content in a collaborative learning environment. Universities are always on the lookout for tutors in a diverse range of disciplines.

Details on sessional tutoring positions can usually be found at the respective university's job opportunities webpage or by contacting the relevant faculty directly. Becoming a tutor will help you to develop classroom management strategies, expose you to new ideas, and develop your evaluative processes when it comes to student assessment. Tutoring can take up as little as two hours per week.

Lecture – module or subject

If you enjoyed your foray into guest lecturing and tutoring, time permitting, you might consider lecturing an undergraduate or postgraduate module or subject. Although a significant time commitment, this will expose you to the rigours of course design, classroom preparation, student correspondence and assessment. If time pressures won't allow for on-campus lecturing, becoming an online course facilitator through the Open Universities Australia (OUA) is another option¹⁹.

Foundations in learning and teaching

These days, all universities offer professional development and certification in learning, teaching and assessment practice. In most universities, introductory sessions in learning and teaching are a prerequisite for teaching at the university and are usually undertaken in the first two years of employment. If you are interested in better understanding the theory and practice of teaching and learning in context of higher education, contact the relevant university's learning and teaching centre to enquire about their modules.

Sessions on the foundations of learning and teaching are normally run throughout the year, and require 2-5 days of your time. Although induction sessions are usually only available to employed staff, exceptions can be made. Alternatively, you might consider enrolling in a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education. This qualification will develop your ideas concerning current issues, theory and practice within Australian and international universities.

At the University of Queensland, for example, there is a Go8 Future Research Leaders Program, which involves a series of workshops that help those individuals appointed to an academic position manage a research project, in areas such as finance, risk, compliance, intellectual property and team management²⁰.

Find a mentor

As discussed earlier, in the early stages of transition finding an academic mentor can help you come to terms with and navigate the range of complex administrative, technological, disciplinary and institutional codes, culture and responsibilities. Usually mentors are approached informally, but formal mentors may also be assigned. In developing a reciprocal mentor/mentee relationship, openness, honesty and trust are key ingredients.

Macquarie University in conjunction with the Australian Learning and Teaching Council have developed what they are calling the Spectrum Approach to mentoring. This initiative is, "goal orientated, and encompasses mentoring relationships that may be ongoing and sustained over an extensive period of time across to those that are short-term and aligned with a particular task or focus."²¹

Research

As an academic, you will be required to balance the dual demands of teaching and research. While teaching is the 'daily bread' of the academic (and will take up a lot of your time), to be successful in

¹⁹ Available through OUA Careers at <http://www.open.edu.au/careers/>

²⁰ Available at <https://staffdevelopment.hr.uq.edu.au/program/GO8FRL>

²¹ For more information on how to select a focus for mentoring, searching and contacting a prospective mentor, go to https://staff.mq.edu.au/teaching/teaching_development/mentoring/

your academic position, you will also be required to have a strong focus on research output. Developing your publication record will go a long way to ensuring your success in the university and will directly influence your chances of career progression and promotion. But fear not, there are a number of ways to prepare oneself for the rigours of research.

Enrol in a PhD

Although not a prerequisite for conducting research at a university, there is little doubt that enrolling in and completing your PhD will improve your research potential and influence your academic credibility among colleagues. However, a PhD is a major undertaking and should not be entered into lightly. This being said, having a PhD or making substantial progression towards a PhD is increasingly becoming a condition or requirement of employment in universities. While the prospect of attaining a PhD may be one of your primary motivations for becoming an academic, enrolling in a doctorate is a significant commitment and will affect almost every aspect of your professional and personal life.

The most important things to consider when enrolling in a PhD are the research topic and supervisory panel. Choose a research topic that inspires you, or at the very least, interests you. It should be one that you can see yourself still being interested in three, four or five years down the track. The second issue to consider is your primary supervisor and supervisory panel. You're going to spend a lot of time with these people, so work out in advance, with the aid of a several preliminary meetings, if your personalities and research interests are likely to match.

Co-write a research paper with academic staff (theory/practice)

Co-writing a research paper with academic staff prior to and during your transition can be a productive strategy for establishing important social and professional connections with incumbent university staff. It also provides you with the opportunity to develop your ideas and present your practical insights. Co-authoring a journal article can also inspire and help you to articulate a potential PhD thesis topic.

Develop a research grant proposal

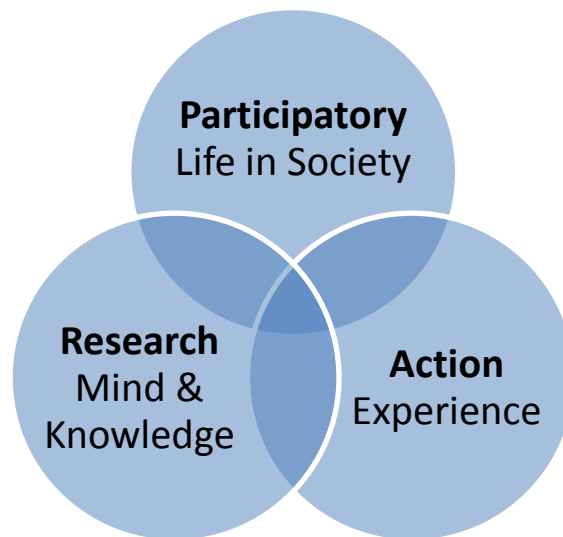
Applying for a research grant, whether it is university- or government-funded, can expose you to the administrative, academic and political processes of grant applications. Most Australian universities acknowledge the value of generating industry and community partnerships, and your experience of industry is likely to go a long way to informing these initiatives.

Participate in a research project

Participating as a 'subject' or 'participant' in a research project is an easy way of familiarising yourself with the data collection process. This may involve a 30-45 minute face-to-face interview with a researcher who may ask you a series of interview questions in a semi-structured, open-ended format. At the beginning of the interview, they will be obliged to provide information on the research project and gain consent for your responses to be used in an anonymous and de-identified way. Project participation can help to establish important university-industry ties, while exposing you to the type of research being conducted in universities.

A more involved form of research participation is to become a participatory action researcher. In a nutshell, action research seeks to explain the world by attempting to influence and change it, both

reflectively and in collaboration (see. diagram below). According to Reason and Bradbury, participatory action research is a process in which, “communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers.”²² This is not an uncommon practice in education, and will help you gain research experience and think more broadly about an academic career.



Service

In our lifetimes, hopefully we will do more for others than we will do for ourselves. For industry professionals considering a move to academia, one of the main reasons might be a desire to give back to their university for the opportunities they have received or to better prepare graduates for their post-university lives. As Kevin Jackson, Professor of Accountancy and former Manager of Ernst & Young, noted, “Academia is not a refuge for those who want to get out of corporate America ... It’s more of a calling.”²³

We have a realistic view, however, that of the motivations to move to academia, service may not be top of the list. And that’s OK. A career change to academia can be voluntary or out of necessity. What we are suggesting is that focusing on what you have to offer to the higher education sector will greatly assist and augment your transition. Part and parcel of serving and being successful in academia is explaining to people the reasons for your move and how your cumulative experience can add value to their lives and the workplace.

Join a committee

Whether it is a learning and teaching and committee or ethics sub-committee, joining a committee can help you meet other faculty staff, learn about the organisational structure of the university, and gain a sense of contribution to your new workplace.

²² Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001). Introduction: Inquiry and participation in search of world worthy of human aspiration. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice* (pp. 1–14). London: Sage.

²³ Myers, R. (2006). Teaching for the love of It: The joy of being an educator – Eight career changers tell their stories. *Journal of Accountancy*, 201(6), 31.

Participate in student mentoring or an internship arrangement

Participating in an academic community can start before your move to academia. Hosting a student in your business or company can establish connections between industry and the university sector. For example, the T.C. Beirne School of Law at the University of Queensland has established a Pro Bono Centre and Law Mentors initiative which seeks to connect practising lawyers with law students as well as a Practitioner-in-Residence Program²⁴.

Community engagement

The most influential companies and individuals are those who have defined a strong 'why'. Although 'how' and 'what' questions are important, if you can reflect on and articulate a larger purpose then the quality of your time in academia, as in any occupation, will be greatly enhanced. For example, the Partnership and Community Engagement (PACE) initiative at Macquarie University provides mutual learning opportunities which allow industry partners to engage with their future workforce and the wider Macquarie University community.

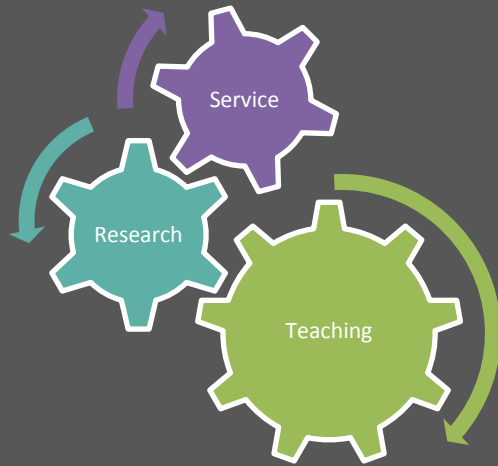
Not only does this initiative enhance the future employability of graduates, but it also helps partner companies and industries to achieve their own organisational goals. The PACE initiative includes students from across the four Macquarie faculties. For information on how to become a PACE partner, you can contact the relevant Faculty Participation Manager or for more information on the PACE principles and criteria, go to

http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/professional_and_community_engagement/partnering_with_pace/partnership_criteria/

²⁴ For more information on these programs, go to <http://www.law.uq.edu.au/uq-pro-bono-centre>; <http://www.law.uq.edu.au/practitioner-in-residence>

Hints & Tips

- Teaching, research and service are interlocking dimensions of a career in academia. Time spent developing one will ultimately develop and improve the others.
- Change can be a dangerous game, but anything worthwhile always is.



A final word

The transition from industry to academia is an important life decision and one that will not only affect you but your family, friends and existing professional networks as well. Constructing a narrative trajectory between your old and new self which connects underlying themes between your professional experiences is a way of connecting the dots between your past, present and future. This advice helps to unpick the unhelpful linear view of career change, instead repositioning career change along a continuum of personal and professional development, rather than a severing of who you were, who you are and who you're becoming.

The transition of industry professionals to academia begins long before the final decision to move is made. At the university level, the facilitation of positive and productive industry-to-academia transitions requires a multi-dimensional and multi-directional approach, beginning with positive undergraduate and post-graduate degree experiences and internship opportunities, effective communication and marketing strategies by universities, cooperative partnership schemes involving both universities and industry bodies, and incentivising practitioners' return.

With similarities to the linear progression of the 'tenure track', the movement of industry professionals is commonly conceived as an autonomous process, based on personal circumstances, attributable to factors outside the control of universities. This does not have to be the case. Clearly, transition is a two-way street between industry professionals and universities. By establishing closer cooperation and collaboration between universities and industry partners at the undergraduate level up, promoted by alumni associations and university industry liaisons (and informed by better marketing initiatives), it is likely that we will see an increase in the numbers of professionals deciding to make the move to or back to academia.

In order to gauge the level of support you are likely to receive, some possible questions to broach with your potential PhD, supervisor, faculty staff or department head include:

1. How can I best connect with and adapt to the academic culture?
2. Who are the right people to connect with at this stage in my transition and how might they support my transition?
3. Are my current expectations of a career in academia realistic (e.g. promotion, research and teaching)?

Based on participant responses explored in previous sections, universities would be well-advised to: 1) improve their on-boarding plans, including formal mentoring and less teaching in the first semester of arrival, 2) offer market loading to attract good industry candidates, 3) make available new staff grants for research, 4) reduce teaching load in the early stages of transition, especially for those undertaking a PhD, and 5) provide opportunities and encourage recently transitioned staff to serve on faculty and university committees.

The transition from industry to academia is not an easy one. It is, however, a highly rewarding one if approached in the right way. But be advised, there is a good chance you will experience a reduction in salary and work the equivalent or more hours when moving to the university sector. On this basis, the question becomes, do you feel that the other benefits of academia offset these eventualities?

Migration, be it transnational or trans-industrial, engages capacities of adaptability, resourcefulness, flexibility and resilience. Ironically, these capacities are formed and strengthened in conditions of adversity and hardship. There is no escaping it. So, in effect, your decision to move to academia will activate or switch on these capacities only once the decision has been made. A career transition will affect all facets of your life, from your family and friends to your psychological and physical health. It is our hope that in reading this guide, your decision to enter academic will be better informed and you will be better prepared for the early stages of transition.

And remember ...

“All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.”

Benedict Spinoza

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This guide has been produced with thanks to an Office of Learning and Teaching grant SD12-2534. It is in the same style as the booklets produced for the Learning Excellence and Development (LEAD) program at Macquarie University. The program brings together as a team a multi-disciplinary group of university staff working on projects to enhance student learning.

The guides are available online at

http://staff.mq.edu.au/teaching/teaching_development/business_and_economics_teaching_resources/

Other publications in the LEAD series include:

How to run a LEAD project – Learning through innovation

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How to give quality feedback – Learning through dialogue

How to collaborate with peer observation – Learning from each other

How to teach with inclusive practice – Learning through diversity

Research enhanced learning and teaching – Learning through scholarship

How to align assessment – Learning through a program approach

How to embed discipline-specific discourse – Learning through communication

How to apply active learning techniques – Learning through meaning

Do you want to:

- change to a new career in academia?
- know more about what to expect in making the move?
- learn about how best to begin this transition?
- optimise your current industry skill set and make the transition more meaningful and effective?

Then consider a transition from industry to academia!

Career change is rarely smooth or unproblematic. It affects all aspects of an individual's life, from their work habits to their professional networks, to their health and family. In this guide, we present an open and honest account of the triumphs and challenges of transitioning to a career in academia and how this particular brand of career change can be made through a staged-entry approach from industry to the university sector.

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