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**What does an academic do?**

Some of the activities you may be expected to contribute to during an academic career are illustrated below.

**Research**

As a PhD student you will be familiar with the range of activities that come under the research heading. As an academic member of staff research activities can include:

* coming up with ideas for original research
* identifying suitable funding bodies and preparing proposals to apply for funding
* conducting research (reading, collection and interpretation of data, gathering of information from relevant sources etc.)
* disseminating research findings through publishing
* speaking at conferences
* supervising postgraduate research students
* managing resources (research budget and possibly research staff)
* preparation for the [Research Excellence Framework](http://www.ref.ac.uk/) (REF)
* public engagement activities.

**Teaching**

You may already have had some experience of teaching or tutoring. As an academic member of staff teaching responsibilities can include:

* design of courses and development of curricula
* preparing notes and material for lectures
* delivering lectures to undergraduates and postgraduates
* preparing for and facilitating discussion at small group tutorials
* marking / assessing students work
* taking part in Exam boards to review student achievement
* supervising Honours or Masters students’ dissertation research.

**Administration**

Some examples of the types of administrative roles academic staff may undertake include personal tutor, admissions tutor, course organiser, or open-day co-ordinator / school liaisons officer.

Academics are also often members of several committees both within their Department or School (e.g. staff-student liaison, health & safety), their College (e.g. library, equality and diversity, undergraduate studies) and/or across the university (e.g. quality, scholarships and student funding, recruitment and admissions strategy).

Administrative tasks associated with these roles include:

* writing the course handbook
* designing exam questions and answers (and getting these validated through the relevant committees)
* preparing a schedule of talks for visiting prospective students
* writing references for students seeking employment or further study
* screening applications for admission to postgraduate courses
* reading papers relevant to your committee membership and submitting your comments for discussion at meetings.

The lists above give a simple overview of some of the different activities that make up an academic job. Speak to academic staff in your network to find out more.