BBSRC Fellowships Workshop

Wednesday 9 March

10.30-12.00

Programme

10.15 – Registration
10.30 – Introduction (Claire Westwood)
10.40 – BBSRC fellowships (James Donald)
11.10 – Q & A
11.20 – Awardee's experience - David Philips Fellowship (Marco Davare)
11.35 – Q & A
11.45 – General Q & A
12.00 – End

Research Coordination Office - Facilitators

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slms/vp-health/research-coordination

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Support from Facilitators for your application

We can help to…

- Review your track record – is it competitive?
- Advise on fit of research to funders' remits
- Provide grant-writing resources
- Review draft application
- Arrange mock interviews

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BBSRC Fellowships

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Overview

- What does BBSRC invest in
- BBSRC fellowships; why and what
- Good fellowship proposals
- Other opportunities

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What Does BBSRC Do?

Invests in world-class bioscience research in UK Universities & Institutes

Invests in **bioscience training & skills** for the next generation of bioscientists

Drives the widest possible social & economic impact from our bioscience

Promotes public dialogue on bioscience

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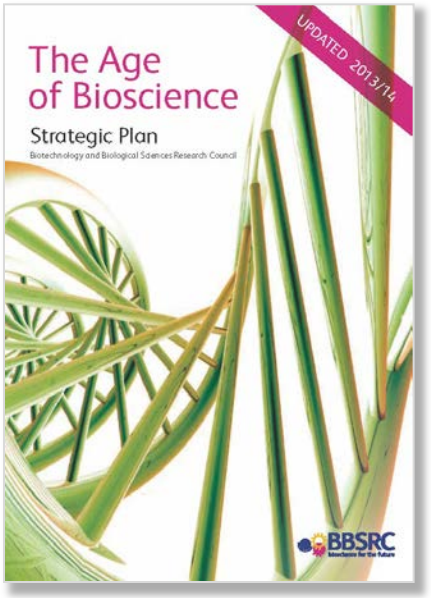
BBSRC Strategic Plan: The Age of Bioscience

World-class bioscience

Three major strategic science priorities

Three crucial enabling themes



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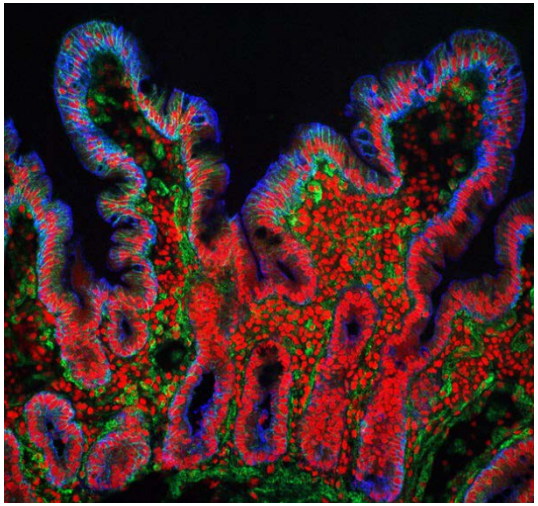
Three major strategic priorities

Agriculture and food security

Industrial biotechnology and bioenergy

Bioscience for health



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Agriculture & Food Security

- Bioscience for **sustainable** and **productive agriculture**, supplying not only sufficient, affordable, nutritious and safe food but also **non-food products and feedstocks**

  - Crop science
  - Animal health and livestock production
  - Soil science and agri-systems approaches
  - Healthy, safe and nutritious diets

1. Thinkstock 2012. 2.Thinkstock 2011 3.Thinkstock 2011 4.Thinkstock 2011 5. Getty Images 2011

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Industrial Biotechnology & Bioenergy

- Energy, industrial materials and biopharmaceuticals, **developed and produced using biological processes**, reducing dependency on fossil fuels

  - Renewable energy
  - Chemical feedstocks
  - Industrial raw materials and intermediates
  - High value chemicals
  - Biopharmaceuticals

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Bioscience for Health

- Driving advances in fundamental bioscience for better health across the lifecourse, reducing the need for medical and social intervention

  - The ageing process
  - Nutrition and effects of physical activity
  - Regenerative biology and tissue engineering
  - ‘One Health’

1 Thinkstock 2011. 2.Thinkstock 2011. 3.Thinkstock 2012. 4.Thinkstock 2012 5. Leuan Clay

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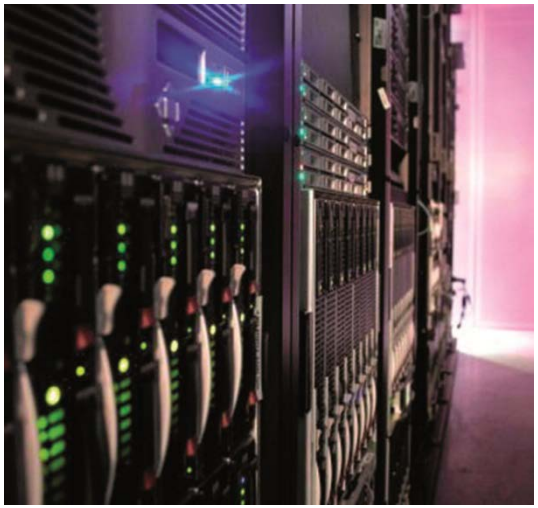
Three crucial enabling themes

Enabling innovation

Exploiting new ways of working



Partnerships

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Why Does BBSRC Invest In Fellowships?

Support outstanding scientists at **key transition points** in their research career

- Independent postdoctoral research
- Independent group
- Returning from a career break
- Developing a new business

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Why Does BBSRC Invest In Fellowships?

- Identify the **research leaders** of tomorrow and support existing ones to **establish themselves**

- **Build cohorts** of excellent researchers and support their training
  - Kick-off meeting
  - Fellow's Conference
  - Other activities

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BBSRC Fellowships

Full details available on the BBSRC Fellowships webpage: www.bbsrc.ac.uk/fellowships

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Future Leader Fellowship

Support for early career scientists with **high potential** to undertake independent research and gain leadership skills. Developing **future leadership skills** is key

- **Remit:** FLFs can be in **any area of BBSRC remit**
- **Number, duration & value:** it is expected that **around 12 will be awarded** (**3 year duration**), up to **£300k** can be requested
- **Eligibility:**
  - Researchers with **a maximum of 5 years of postdoctoral research experience** as of 30 November 2016
  - No restrictions on nationality
  - Supports flexible working
- Call **currently open** and will close **12 May 2016**

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David Phillips Fellowship

Aimed at **outstanding bioscientists** in the early stage of their research careers who wish to establish themselves as independent researchers

- **Remit:** DPFs can be in **any area of BBSRC remit**
- **Number, duration & value**: it is expected that around **5 will be awarded** (**5 year duration**), up to **£1M** can be requested
- **Eligibility:**
  - **Minimum** 3 years of active postdoctoral research
  - No restrictions on nationality
  - Supports flexible working
- Call currently **open** and will close **12 May 2016**

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Assessment Criteria

- Scientific **quality** of the proposed research
- Scientific **independence**
- How the Fellowship will be **used to advance your career**
  - **FLF**: Mandatory **Career Development Plan** to demonstrate thought given to **future career** and identified **training needs**
- **Choice of host** institution and evidence of **support & value for money**
- **Funding** acquired
- **Supervision** experience
- Number and quality of **publications**
  - Important for the **DPF**, less so for the FLF

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How Are Fellowship Proposals Assessed?

- Proposal submitted
  - Office checks
- External expert peer review
  - Focused on the proposed science
- Committee E meeting: Sift stage
  - Selects candidates to invite for interview (aim to invite ~3x more people to interview than awards), uses referee reports
- Committee E meeting: Interview stage

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How Are Fellowship Proposals Assessed?

Sift Stage

- 2 Committee E Introducing Members assigned to each proposal
- Ranked list of proposals indicating who should be invited
  - FLF: Focus on science
  - DPF: Individual and science

Interviews

- 10 minute presentation and questions. Slightly different focus of questions depending on scheme:
  - FLF: Future career development
  - DPF: Establishing your scientific niche and developing your group

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Good Fellowship Applications

- Are proposing a scientifically **excellent** and **realistic research project** that can be completed within the time available
- Demonstrate **independence**
  - and for the **DPF** an **upward career trajectory**
- Include evidence of **scientific leadership**
- Show consideration of **career development**
- Are aware of the "**bigger picture**"
- Show **support** from the host

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Good Fellowship Applications

Independence

- Not just carrying on a PI's project
- Evidence that you have or are developing different skills to those in your current group
- Bring complementary skills that are not present in your proposed host lab / institution
- Collaborations set up independently of PI
- Generation of preliminary data

Scientific leadership

- Invitations to talk
- Poster prizes and other awards
- Collaborations
- Media requests / appearances
- Involvement in large collaborative projects

Career development plan

- Helps by clearly showing where you want to be, how you will get there and what training is needed to achieve this
- Be upfront about weaknesses and state how the Fellowship will help you address them

Your project and the bigger picture

- Project must be achievable in time frame
- How will the project complement the field; avoid competing with potential competitors
- How will the project be used to generate data that allows you to establish a scientific identity > have a long term research vision
- Be aware of the potential wider and long-term impact of the research

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Raise Your Profile

Apply for small awards

- Travel grants, prizes, equipment etc.
- Undergraduate placement students

Network

- Attend conferences
- Talks at other institutions
- Use social media such as **Twitter, LinkedIn** and **blogging**

Researcher Co-Investigator status

- Postdoc who has made a **substantial, recognised contribution** to the **formulation and development** of a project and who will be **engaged in the ensuing research**
  - Research grants
  - FLexible Interchange Programme (FLIP)
  - International partnering schemes

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Why Is A Career Development Plan Important?

Survey of ~8500 postdocs in USA found that:

"postdocs who plan their experience with their advisors at the outset of their appointments fare substantially better than those who do not"

- Structured oversight and transferable skills training make a big difference: key to this are Career Development Plans

- Postdocs with a CDP:
  - Were much less likely (~40%) to be dissatisfied
  - Were much less likely (~30%) to have conflicts
  - Submitted ~14% more papers for publication (After controlling for field, institution, demographics)

Improving the Postdoctoral Experience: An Empirical Approach, G. Davis, 2006

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Common Reasons For Future Leader Fellowship Rejection

- Not demonstrating **leadership potential**
- **Insufficient** thought given to career development needs
- Lack of awareness regarding **potential competitors**
- **Independence not clear** - just more of what your PI is currently doing

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Common Reasons For David Phillips Fellowship Rejection

- Project **unrealistic** or the proposal is **poorly thought-through**
- **Independence not clear**
- **Insufficient** first author **papers**
- Papers are in **low impact** journals (accounting for field)

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Feedback For Successful FLF Applications

*"The Panel was pleased that the candidate was demonstrating **independence** in the project including forming **beneficial collaborations** with other labs to help them maximise successful output from the work"*

*"The candidate had already demonstrated **independence** and **leadership** through a number of prizes and talks"*

*"The Panel praised the fact that the candidate had a **clear vision** of their **career development**"*

*"The Panel was pleased to see that the candidate had **clear scientific goals**, including clear targets and questions that needed to be addressed as part of the project"*

*"The applicant demonstrated good **knowledge of the overall rational** of the proposed research and of why and how the science would have a **longer term scientific and social impact**"*

*"The applicant had **clear and realistic long-term career goals**"*

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Feedback For Successful DPF Applications

*"Aware of how their **work differed from others** in the field and spoke clearly about how they would establish their **independence and visibility**"*

*"The choice of **host institution was considered good** and the **financial contribution from the RO** was noted"*

*"Clearly an **independent** scientist with **leadership** potential"*

*"They had given thought **to risk management** and the development of the work if they encountered problems"*

*"The candidate had a **clear vision of their career development** and had a realistic approach to the **management and development of a research group**"*

*"They had a mature approach to **developing their research group** and articulated a clear plan for integrating themselves within the research environment at the RO while developing a **distinct research profile** of their own"*

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Feedback For Unsuccessful FLF Applications

*"The scientific aspects of the proposal were strong but the **leadership and career development components did not appear to have been given careful consideration**"*

*"The Panel felt that the candidate **struggled** to answer questions relating to their **plans for career development**"*

*"It was felt that the candidate **lacked vision** regarding **scientific leadership** and how their research fits into the **bigger long-term picture**"*

*"The candidate gave **insufficient consideration** to how the fellowship would **assist them in becoming an independent** researcher"*

*"The candidate did not appear to have given **sufficient thought to their future research and career plans**. It was unclear to the Panel where the science would take them and how they would ensure that **they derived maximum benefit** from the fellowship"*

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Feedback For Unsuccessful DPF Applications

*"Did not clearly demonstrate that they had considered the **career development and mentoring of members of their group**"*

*"How they would **develop and manage their research group** was somewhat vague"*

*"Did not convince the Panel that they had a **clear vision** already in place for career progression. They were also unable to demonstrate how they would **develop their independence** at the host institution*"

"*Publication strategy **lacked ambition** and they did not take into account the **mentoring and career plans of their staff***"

*"Did not sufficiently highlight the "**big question**" that they were hoping to address and which would **set them apart** as a leader in the field"*

*"Concern that the level of **staff support requested in the proposal was insufficient** to realise the potential of the research"*

*"Proposed project would **not generate enough work to support the staff requested** from the start of the fellowship"*

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Applying: Before You Start

- **Read** all the guidance
- Check the **remit** of your proposal!
- Contact **remit@bbsrc.ac.uk** for clarification on eligibility, and **postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk** for general Fellowship questions
- If in doubt: **Ask**!

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FLexible Interchange Programme

- Supports people movement between different environments leading to the exchange of knowledge / technology / skills
  - Duration: ~6 – 24 months
  - Award: ~£50 – 150 K
  - www.bbsrc.ac.uk/FLIP

International Partnering Awards

- Schemes to enable international collaboration
- www.bbsrc.ac.uk/internationalfunding

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Other Fellowships

Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowship

- To aid those on a **career break for** family, caring or health reason to **return to research**
- Normally **2 years part-time**; includes extensive training programme
- www.daphnejackson.org

Enterprise Fellowship

- To support **development of a new business**, building on previously funded BBSRC research
- Delivered by the Royal Society of Edinburgh
- www.bbsrc.ac.uk/fellowships

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Questions?

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View from a David Philips Fellow

Marco Davare

UCL Institute of Neurology

Criteria

1. You

2. Location

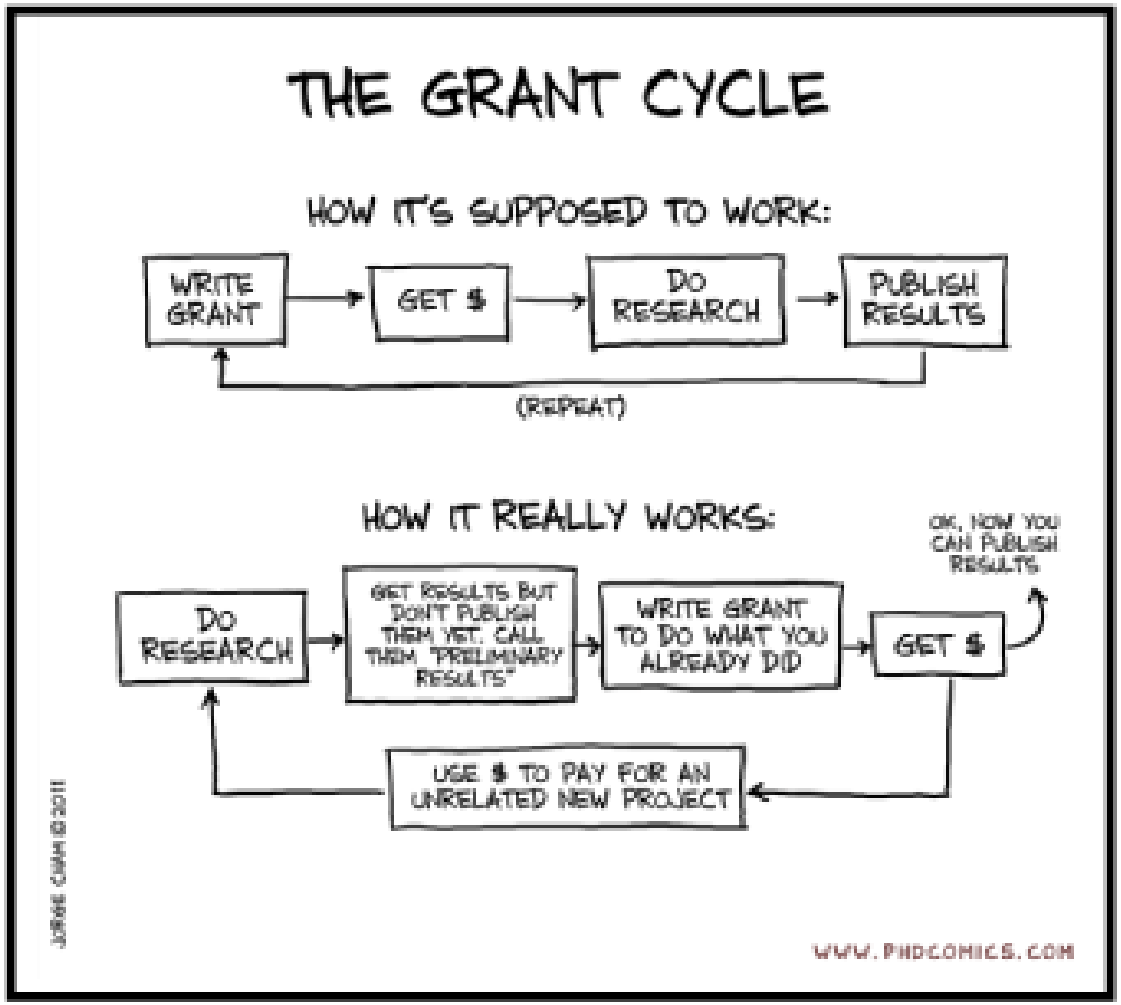
3. Project

Location

- UCL

- why is your lab a good place to carry out you research
- overseas collaborations to promote visibility, show you are/become a world leader in your field
- staying at the same location (ok if justification + already show independence, last authorship).
- translational aspect within UCL (business, clinical etc.)

Project



"Piled Higher and Deeper" by Jorge Cham
www.phdcomics.com

Project

- Must have expertise in all aspects. If learning a new technique, then pilot data is a must.
  The **feasibility** factor is crucial!

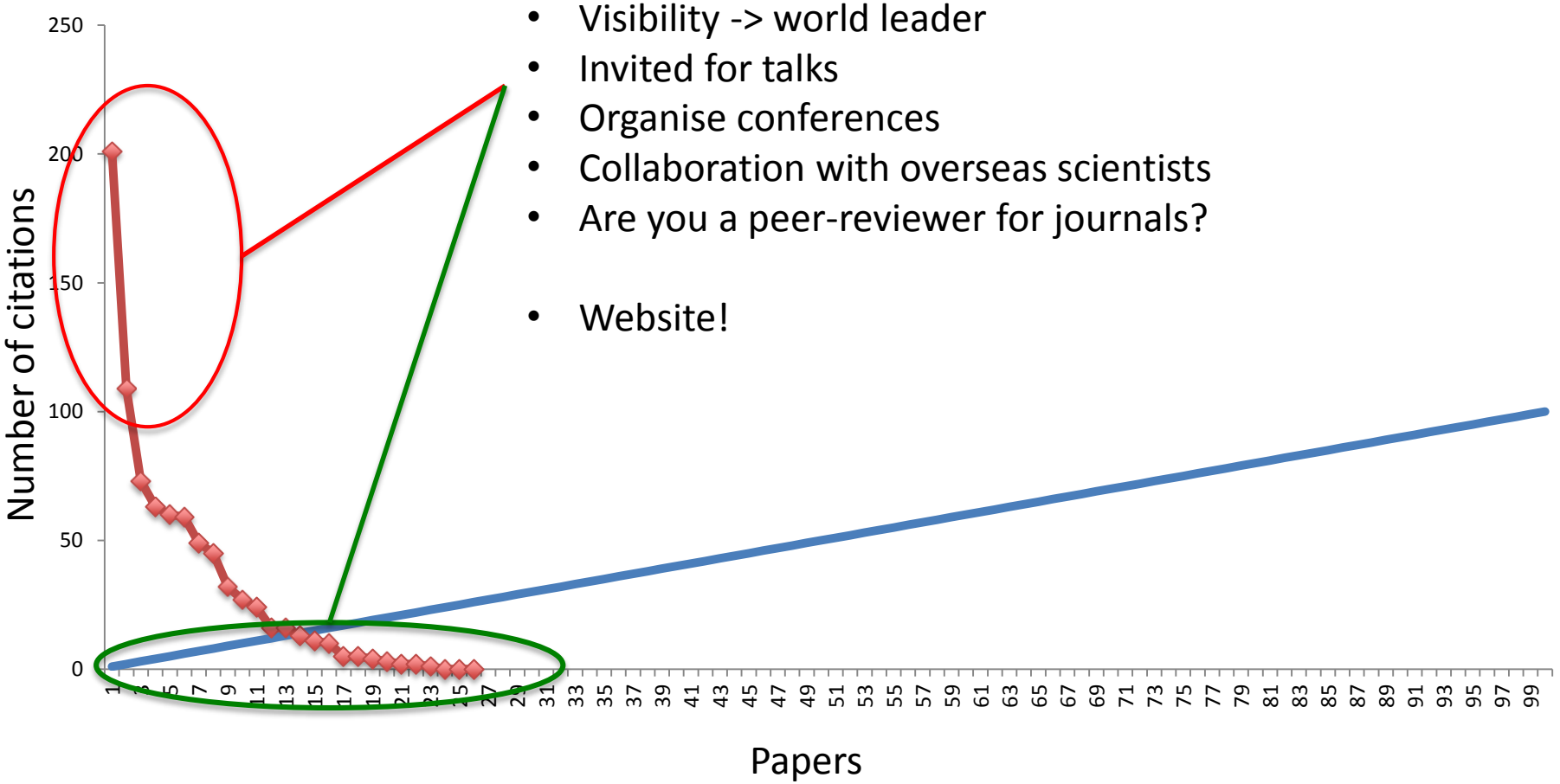
- Highly innovative, ground-breaking, pioneering, paving the way
  vs. ~~incremental~~

- Your idea should change the way people think of your field/mechanisms and help other beneficiaries to go forward.
- Involvement of industry

- Check strategic priorities of the BBSRC, explain how your idea fits in.

You

H-index

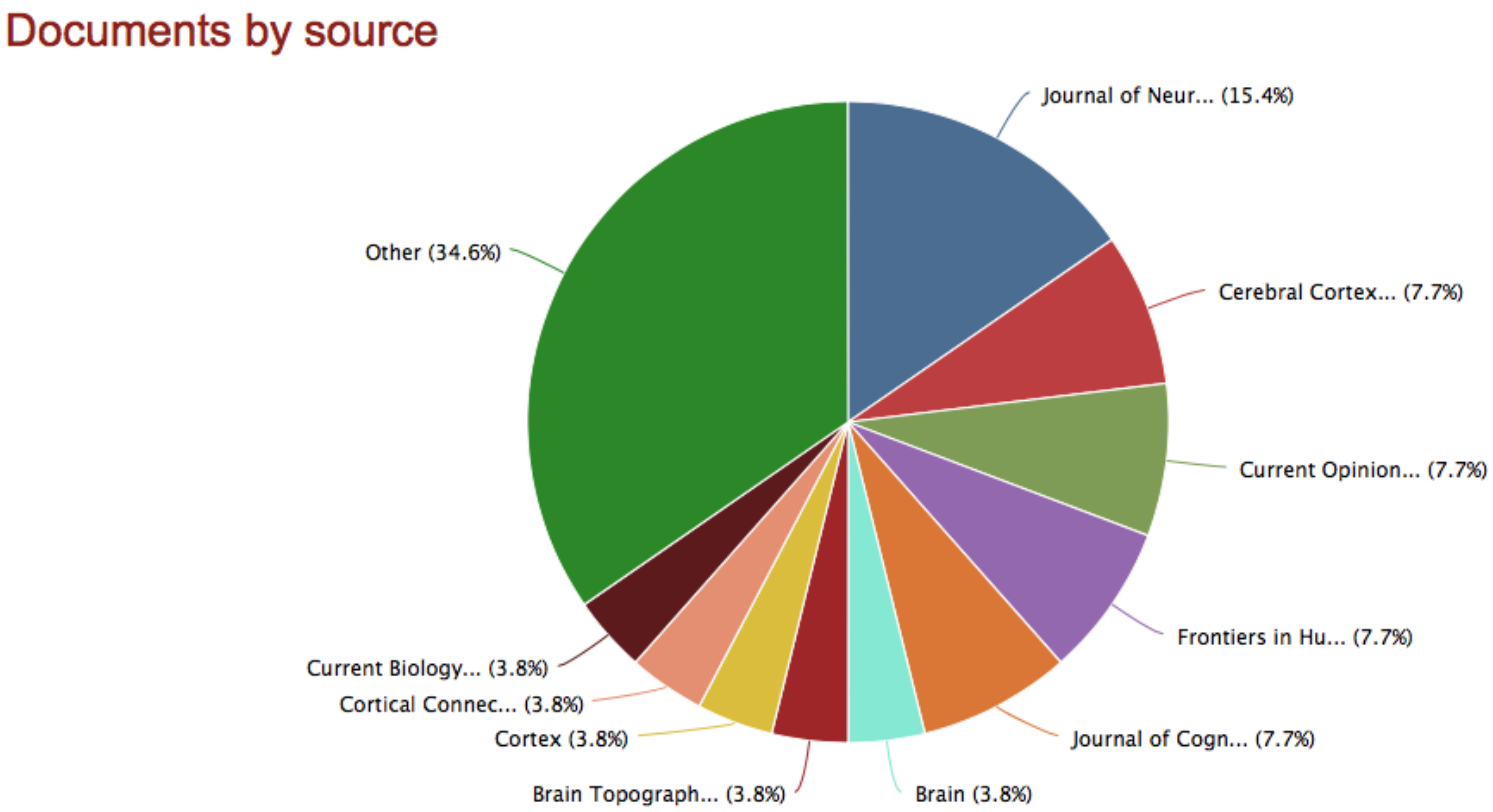


- Visibility -> world leader
- Invited for talks
- Organise conferences
- Collaboration with overseas scientists
- Are you a peer-reviewer for journals?

- Website!

From Scopus

Your publications (journal impact factor)



You in the lab

- Group size (MSc students, PhD co-supervisions,…)
- Are you independent?

The interview

- Very important, do not underestimate it.
- Make sure the audience understands the project (journalistic level)
- Why is your idea **good**, **important** and why are **you the best** to do it?
- Questions (short concise answers)