

External Evaluation of the Early Career Researcher Network Pilot

Report submitted by

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with

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Objectives

The British Academy has a long-standing commitment to enhancing the capacity of the UK's research in SHAPE and has recently experimented with a new initiative to help 'create a thriving ecosystem of humanities and social sciences early career researchers, an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background'. The Academy has initiated an Early Career Researcher Network (ECRN) for humanities and social sciences that will help to enhance careers of ECRs (whether funded by the Academy or not) through engagement opportunities, skills development and wider experiences. With its funding partner the Wolfson Foundation, the Academy has taken a staged approach to rolling out UK-wide development of the ECRN by first conducting a pilot phase, beginning in April 2021, with the sequential launch of three regional 'hubs'. This evaluation of the pilot has investigated the extent to which the ECRN has achieved its objectives. The aim is to help inform the Academy as it: tests underlying assumptions; learns and acts on lessons learned; and deliberates on decisions as to continuing and expanding the Network across the UK.

Approach and Methods

The evaluation took a multi-method approach and included multiple perspectives (ECRs, hubs/consortia, funders) to investigate an agreed framework of core questions. Document analysis provided a baseline of information; an online survey enabled aggregation and quantification of responses from 523 ECR Network members of the Network; fifteen semi-structured interviews elicited reflections from individuals with 'big picture' perspectives stemming from involvement with the Network at the Academy or hub level; and three ECR focus groups enabled deeper discussion of emergent issues.

Summary of key points

- 1. There is clear demand. A large and diverse membership has already been achieved.**
- 2. The Network has so far been an undoubted success with ECRs. The Network seems to be meeting the expectations of ECRs but should encourage more active ECR participation in driving the Network.**
- 3. There is good engagement with diverse offerings, although the BA recognise that they need to work on those who register for the Network but do not engage.**
- 4. The BA are doing well on diversity and inclusivity, but recognise that they need to work on involving ECRs outside of universities.**
- 5. With regard to delivery, the decision to go for regional support has been sensible and generally successful, but has involved some tensions (delivery 'partners' v. delivery 'agents'). In whatever form the roll-out takes, it will be necessary to make roles and relationships with the BA clearer – and based on a shared understanding that the ECRs must really be in charge.**
- 6. The pilot has demonstrated that the BA ECR Network is valuable in today's context.**

Evaluators' conclusions and suggestions

- 1. There is clear demand. A large and diverse membership has already been achieved.**

The ECR Network launched by the British Academy, with support from the Wolfson Foundation, is addressing an important need in the arts, humanities and social sciences landscape. There has been a very clear demonstration of demand for the Network, across a wide range of employment (or unemployment) statuses. With the Network launched as recently as the spring of 2021, the greatly larger than expected number of ECRs registered

and affiliated to just three regional hubs, one of which is brand new, is a key indication of the success of the Network at this early stage.

2. The Network has so far been an undoubted success with ECRs. The Network seems to be meeting the expectations of ECRs but should encourage more active ECR participation in driving the Network.

As a compelling indication that the Network is perceived as beneficial in today's context, the Network is seen as an initiative which should continue, in some form, in the future. Success to date is also indicated by the ECRs surveyed, who valued the Network overall and who have engaged with and benefited from its activities.

ECR-led initiatives have started; these along with mechanisms such as specific ThinkIN groups should be expanded in order to ensure that the Network meets a range of ECR needs in the future. The Academy should continue to be open to suggestions from ECRs as to how this can be achieved.

3. There is good engagement with diverse offerings, although the BA recognise that they need to work on those who register for the Network but do not engage.

A great variety of (primarily online) events have already been offered, spanning a range of skills and topics. A number of these have been led by ECRs, who applied to and received support from the Academy. Some ECRs have, however, registered for membership but not yet engaged. While not surprising in a group famously short on time, it is recognised that extra effort may be needed to engage in some way a greater proportion of registrants.

4. The BA are doing well on diversity and inclusivity, but recognise that they need to work on involving ECRs outside of universities.

Challenges to the 'reach' of the Network include not only expansion to pan-UK access and maintenance of a commendable attention to diversity and inclusion, but also tactics to attract ECRs who are independent and/or working in non-university contexts. Efforts to meet the last challenge, such as the Academy facilitating linkages with organisations and institutions in other sectors, would also help alert ECRs to contacts and alternatives to the increasingly precarious HEI research career ladder. Later in the Network's lifetime, the Academy may wish to consider developing an international dimension.

5. With regard to delivery, the decision to go for regional support has been sensible and generally successful, but has involved some tensions (e.g. delivery 'partners' v. delivery 'agents'). In whatever form the roll-out takes, it will be necessary to make roles and relationships with the BA clearer – and based on a shared understanding that the ECRs must really be in charge.

The Academy's approach of experimenting by means of a pilot has been commendable. The energy, commitment and helpfulness put into the Network by Academy staff has been noteworthy, especially in the midst of a deliberately 'open' pilot experiment. Hubs have also put in significant effort. As hoped, the pilot has afforded multiple opportunities for learning, particularly given the differences between the initial three regional hubs and the way they are organised.

The deliberately open stance of the Academy regarding the form of hubs/consortia has led to some confusion as to who does what, though as long as there are clear communications and open access to events, it is unlikely to matter to ECRs who is 'hosting'.

Evolution in the definition of roles (and workloads) is indeed to be expected following a pilot. Still to be resolved is an understandable 'dynamic tension' between those who seek greater roles for hubs and some hub-related and others who see the defining character of the Network as its national scope, and therefore a key strategic role for the British Academy. It is significant that ECR respondents in the survey related strongly to the British Academy, with over two-thirds saying that it is important to them that through the Network they feel

connected to the British Academy at a national level. At its core, the Network is indeed a national initiative and adds value accordingly.

6. The pilot has demonstrated that the BA ECR Network is valuable in today's context.

The overall message is clear: the pilot has demonstrated that the ECRN adds value to the experiences of UK ECRs in SHAPE. The ECRN can be seen to be addressing (or beginning to address) each of eight strategic objectives of the British Academy. Suitably tailored, these strategic objectives could form the basis for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning in the future.

Continuing and expanding the Network in some form is a natural next step that is widely expected to follow the pilot. This evaluation has shown that lessons have already been learned from the 'experiment' to date and suggestions have emerged on the shapes that roll-out or scaling-up could take. Any plans for expansion will need to fit with both strategic objectives and feasibility (i.e. what the Academy can provide and what others might deliver). Scaling-up will benefit from a deepened understanding to date as to: what has worked; what benefits have accrued/could accrue to ECRs; what current issues are faced by ECRs; how the Network aligns with strategic objectives; and ways in which the Network might evolve in the future. Ongoing and expanded input from ECRs in the future will ensure that the Network evolves so that it remains vital and fit for purpose.

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REVIEWERS' CONCLUSIONS

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1. **There is clear demand. A large and diverse membership has already been achieved.**
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Conclusions and suggestions

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The overall message is clear: the pilot has demonstrated that the ECRN adds value to the experiences of UK ECRs in SHAPE. The ECRN can be seen to be addressing (or beginning to address) each of eight strategic objectives of the British Academy. Suitably tailored, these strategic objectives could form the basis for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning in the future.

Continuing and expanding the Network in some form is a natural next step that is widely expected to follow the pilot. This evaluation has shown that lessons have already been learned from the 'experiment' to date and suggestions have emerged on the shapes that roll-out or scaling-up could take. Any plans for expansion will need to fit with both strategic objectives and feasibility (i.e. what the Academy can provide and what others might deliver). Scaling-up will benefit from a deepened understanding to date as to: what has worked; what benefits have accrued/could accrue to ECRs; what current issues are faced by ECRs; how the Network aligns with strategic objectives; and ways in which the Network might evolve in the future. Ongoing and expanded input from ECRs in the future will ensure that the Network evolves so that it remains vital and fit for purpose.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction to the British Academy Early Career Researcher Network Pilot

The British Academy has a long-standing commitment to enhancing the capacity of the UK's research in humanities and social sciences. The Academy has recently experimented with a new initiative along these lines, in pursuit of its vision 'to create a thriving ecosystem of humanities and social sciences early career researchers, an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background'.

Toward this end, the Academy has initiated an Early Career Researcher Network (ECRN) for humanities and social sciences that will help to enhance careers of ECRs (whether funded by the Academy or not) through engagement opportunities, skills development and wider experiences. Thus, the ECRN's central aims are stated as:

- *To support individual ECRs by providing opportunities that they do not currently have access to*
- *To contribute to equality of opportunity for ECRs through encouraging diversity and inclusivity*
- *To develop the networks to nurture and facilitate greater engagement between and across ECRs and wider research community, regionally and nationally*
- *To draw on the Academy's unique ability to convene and nurture intersectoral collaboration to create unique opportunities for ECRs*
- *To develop and strengthen ECRs relationship and communication channels with the Academy (and through the Academy with other partners), helping to underpin the Academy's strategic aims (e.g. speaking up the disciplines; investing in the very best researchers; informing and enriching debate around society's greatest questions; and ensuring sustained international engagement and collaboration).*

The Academy, with its funding partner the Wolfson Foundation, has taken a staged approach to rolling out UK-wide development of the ECRN by first conducting a pilot phase of two years, with the launch of three 'hubs' taking place over the past year. Beginning in April 2021, this pilot phase has incorporated: a Midlands consortium led by the University of Birmingham; followed by a south west consortium, led by the GW4 Alliance; and most recently (beginning in April 2022) a consortium in Scotland, led by the universities of Stirling and Glasgow. Demand has been greater than expected, with more than 1,800 ECRs joining the deliberately inclusive Network to date. The Academy intends to use this pilot in: testing its underlying assumptions; learning and acting on lessons learned; and indeed in informing decisions as to continuing and expanding the Network across the UK in the future.

Evaluation Objectives

In order for the Academy to benefit from its experimental pilot, this evaluation has investigated the extent to which the ECRN has achieved its objectives. In so doing, this evaluation gathered relevant evidence and insights contributing to these stated aims of the Academy:

- *To understand the needs and expectations of ECRs (e.g. providing/testing a range of engagement opportunities)*
- *To create a broad and diverse membership (e.g. across disciplines and society, with due attention to communication and activities)*
- *To provide the evidence for growing the scheme nationally (e.g., embedding monitoring, evaluation and learning feedback loops)*
- *To create a scalable model (e.g., combining national reach with responsiveness to needs)*

- *To leverage support from other funders (e.g., to enable engagement with funders, sustainable income sources and non-financial support).*

APPROACH AND METHODS

Approach

Contributing to the stated evaluation objectives, this evaluation has utilised multiple methods and secured multiple perspectives (ECRs, hubs/consortia, funders) to investigate key questions and ensure a sound analysis.

Document analysis provided a baseline of information; questionnaires made it possible to aggregate and quantify responses across-the-board from a number of ECR individuals and identify patterns or interesting differences; semi-structured interviews elicited insights and reflections; and focus groups enabled deeper discussion across ECRN members. These methods were all oriented toward the early, pilot stage of the ECRN, seeking 'stage appropriate' progress indicators and comments accordingly. Overall, input has deepened understanding as to: what has or has not worked; what benefits have or have not accrued to ECRs and/or institutions; how the Network aligns with funder's strategic aims; and ways in which the model might evolve in the future.

Framework of Core Questions

A Framework of Core Questions (Annex A) ensured comprehensive coverage across key points of the evaluation and acted as a common 'spine' for integration across types of findings. This was refined through discussion with Academy staff.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted of materials made available by the Academy, including databases of members, diversity statistics and other relevant documents.

Survey of ECRN members

An online survey (Annex E) was designed to address questions in the Framework of Core Questions and was distributed (via SmartSurvey) to capture experiences and insights from members of the ECRN. Designed to be straightforward to complete, the brief surveys consisted of Lickert and pre-coded questions, with one free text opportunity to provide recommendations for the future. Academy staff sent an introductory, encouraging message prior to the survey invitation sent out by Meagher who followed up the original invitation with two reminders; Academy staff also sent out reminders.

The response rate was 30%, with 523 individuals responding to the survey. In these times, for a group of people widely acknowledged to be struggling with workloads and time constraints, this was a strong response. Respondents came from all three hubs/consortia: nearly half (49.8%) from the Midlands consortium; just over a quarter (27.3%) from the Southwest consortium and just under a quarter (22.9%) from the Scotland consortium. This reflects the overall membership of the Network, with 47% of the non-BA funded members affiliated to the Midlands Hub, 27% to the South West Hub and 26% to the Scotland Hub.

Over half (55.4%) saw their primary research area as Social Sciences (%), with over a quarter (28.3%) claiming Humanities. Some chose Arts (7.3%), and some chose 'Other' (9%).

Only 18.6%, less than a fifth, of the respondents had or had recently held a British Academy fellowship. Thus (consistent with the Academy's aims for wide inclusivity of the Network) well over three quarters (81.4%) of the respondents are not/have not recently been funded by the Academy. This corresponds to the fact that 87% of the members of the Network are not funded by the British Academy.

Figure 1: With which Hub are you affiliated?

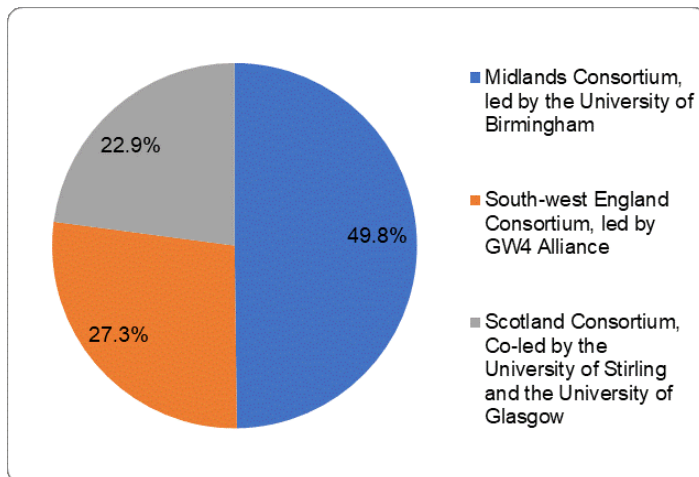


Figure 2: What do you view as your primary research area?

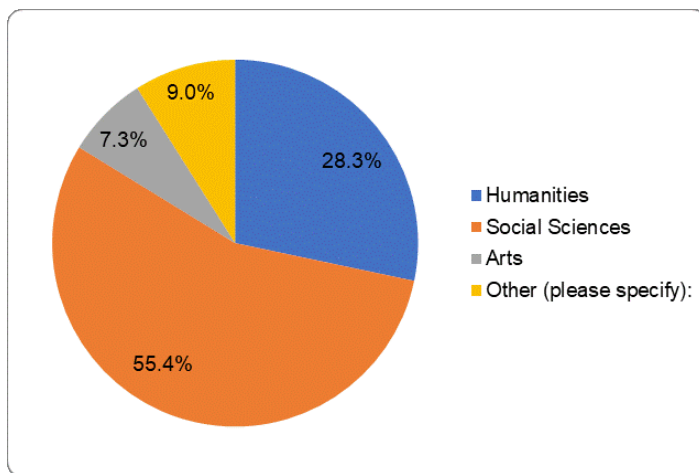
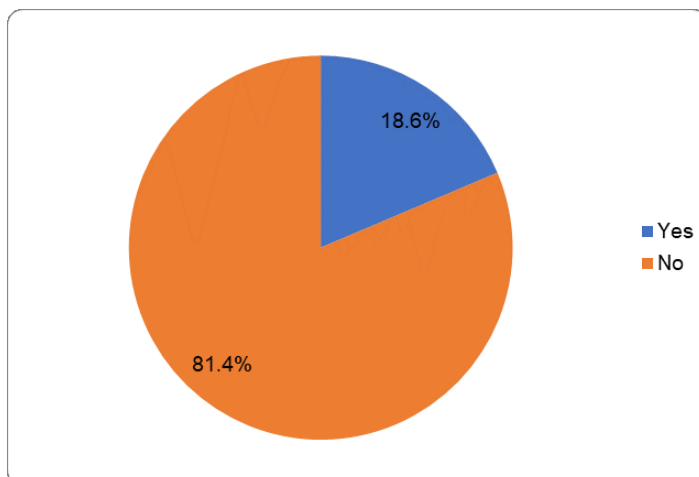


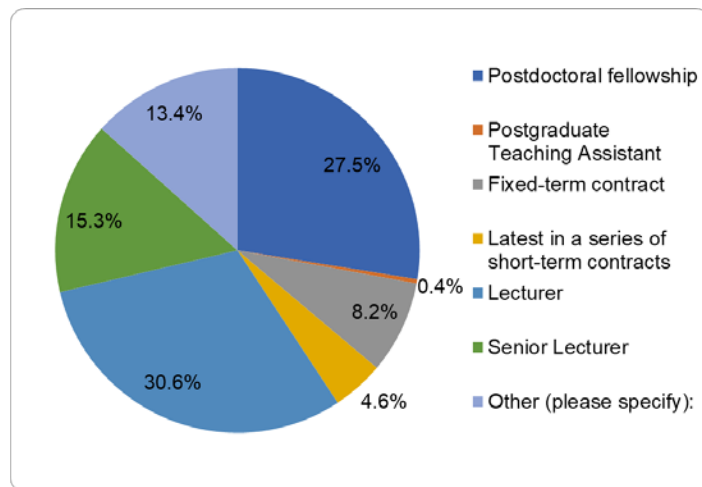
Figure 3: Do you currently have or have you recently had a fellowship funded by the British Academy?



A range of employment statuses were cited by respondents. The largest percentage were Lecturers (30.6%), followed closely by Postdoctoral fellowships (27.5%). Other non-permanent statuses added up to 13.2% (fixed-term contracts at 8.2%; latest in a series of short-term contracts – 4.6%; postgraduate teaching assistant – 0.4%). At the other end of the spectrum of status choices offered, 15.3% were Senior Lecturers. 'Other' was selected by 70 respondents (13.4%) and tellingly demonstrated a wide range. Many were in

postdoctoral positions but did not choose to select ‘postdoctoral *fellowship*’. Some were Research Fellows on permanent or open-ended contracts. Some were already quite ‘senior’ in academia, with statuses including: lecturer on fixed term contract, assistant professor, associate professor, reader, associate head of department and ‘principal academic’. On the other hand, about a tenth of these ‘Other’ respondents described themselves as unemployed (e.g. ‘unemployed – all fixed term contracts completed’) and/or noted they were seeking a position of some sort (e.g. ‘just finished PhD and about to begin temping (non-academic) while I apply for jobs’). Several described themselves as self-employed (e.g. ‘part-time and run own business part-time’) or ‘Independent’ (e.g. ‘Independent researcher (unemployed historian)’ or ‘freelance with short-term contracts and occasional writing commissions’). Just a couple noted employment in sectors other than higher education. Interestingly, ten respondents were either full or part time providers of ‘professional services’ to researchers.

Figure 4: Which best describes your current employment status?



Respondents were primarily female, with over two-thirds (67.3%). Just under a third (31.4%) were male, with 0.4% transgender/non-binary. This reflects the overall membership of the Network: 66% female, 31% male, 0.4% non-binary.

Throughout this report, the word ‘respondent’ refers to an individual answering a survey and percentages given relate to the number of responses to a particular question.

Semi-structured Interviews

Fifteen semi-structured interviews gathered deeper reflection from individuals with ‘big picture’ perspectives. For the most part, such individuals included senior figures in hubs/consortia, involved Fellows and staff of the British Academy; most interviewees could each consider the Network from multiple angles due to long experience with academia and ECRs. Their input fed into overall analysis, particularly regarding strategic objectives of the Network, delivery models and recommendations for the future. The semi-structured interview template (Annex B) was based on the Framework of Core Questions.

Focus groups

To encourage discussion and ‘digging deep’ into key questions, three online focus groups were held (on different days, at different times) with ECRs who had volunteered to participate in their surveys. All eighty ECRs who volunteered were invited and twenty-one participated, offering reflections on key questions including: points of commendation regarding the Network; contextual gaps the Network could address; online platform/communications, expanding reach to ECRs working outside of academia; ensuring that Network offerings help ECRs in ‘precarious’ positions; priorities as to how they want to feel connected; relative roles/importance of geography in relation to different aims; and

advice to the Academy for the Network's future. The focus group guide and analysis of input from participating ECRs are attached as Annexes C and D.

Structure of Report

This report derives from integrative analysis triangulating across the methods described above. The principal commentary on findings addresses the main sub-headings in the Framework of Core Questions. The evaluators then provide their conclusions and suggestions for consideration by the Academy.

FINDINGS

ECR membership – scale, breadth and diversity

ECR membership is carefully monitored in the interests of EDI. Statistics compiled in August 2022, when membership of the Network stood at 1705, showed that 224 of those registered were funded by the BA, 692 were affiliated with the Midlands Hub, 398 with the South West Hub and 391 with the Scotland Hub. Members came from a broad range of HEIs (42% from Russell Group universities); less than 2% were independent researchers or researchers working outside of academia. Members were at a variety of career stages: almost 4% had more than ten years' experience since their PhDs but still identified as ECRs. Members specialised in a range of 29 subject areas, with almost 11% having close links with Business and Management and over 8% specialising in Psychology. Main subjects of ECRN members are listed in Annex G. Over 82% of members were on full-time contracts, with over half on academic contracts that involved both teaching and research. Over 70% of Network members identified as White and just over 12% identified as Asian or Asian British, with the rest of the ethnic groups spread fairly evenly. A substantial proportion of Network members identified as female (over 65%) and double the number of female ECRs were employed on part-time contracts compared to ECRs who identified as male.

ECRN membership – engagement

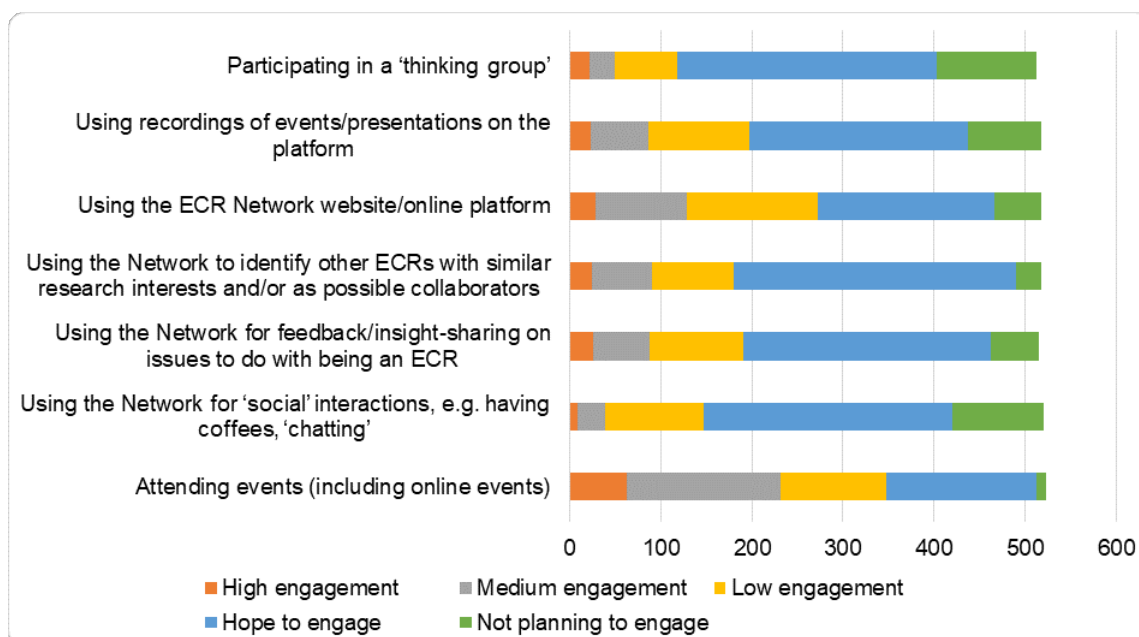
Respondents described their modes of participation in the Network by noting what levels of engagement they ascribed to each of seven 'elements' of Network activity. A few highlights follow. By far, the two activities most cited as High or Medium engagement were:

- Attending events (including online events), with 131 responses and
- Using the ECRN website/online platform, with 128 responses.

The next most often cited as High or Medium engagement were: Using the Network to identify other ECRs with similar research interests and/or as possible collaborators (90) and Using the Network for feedback/insight-sharing on issues to do with being an ECR (88). Interestingly, these two activities were among the top three most often cited as aspirations ('hope to engage'), cited by 310 and 272, respectively.

While the two least cited as High or Medium engagement were Using the Network for 'social' interactions, e.g. having coffees, chatting' with 39 such responses, and Participating in a ThinkIN group with 49 such responses; there are significant aspirations even for those, with 273 hoping to engage in Using the Network for 'social' interactions and 285 hoping to engage in Participating in a Think-IN group. Only a fifth or so, 100 and 110 respectively, are *not* planning to engage in these. Figures are even lower for those *not* planning to engage in the remaining activities: Using recordings of events/presentations on the platform – 80; Using the Network for feedback/insight-sharing on issues to do with being an ECR – 53; Using the ECR Network website/online platform – 51; Using the Network to identify other ECRs with similar research interests and/or as possible collaborators – 28; and Attending events (including online events) -11. The minimal figures for 'not planning to engage' underscore the importance of considering both the 'Low engagement' and 'Hope to engage' categories, particularly for a young Network.

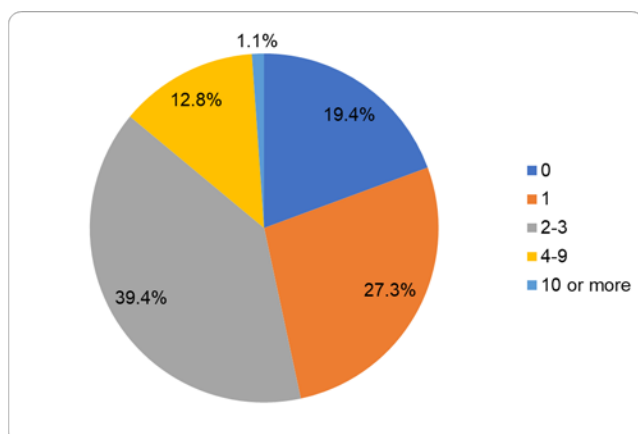
Figure 5: With which if any of the following have you been engaged? To what extent?



These levels of engagement by respondents roughly reflect overall Academy statistics with engagement by 987 ECRs or 58% of the Network: 711 ECRs have attended one or more session or event (42% of the Network); 675 ECRs have registered for the online platform (276 of these have not attended any sessions or events).

The largest proportion of respondents who ticked online events have attended 2-3 events (39.4%); followed by over a quarter (27.3%) who have attended one. Just 12.8% have attended between 4 and 9 events, with 1.1% or 5 individuals so keen as to have attended 10 or more. (In addition, 19.4% ticked none, despite the phrasing of the question.)

Figure 6: If you ticked 'attending events including online events' above, how many have you attended?

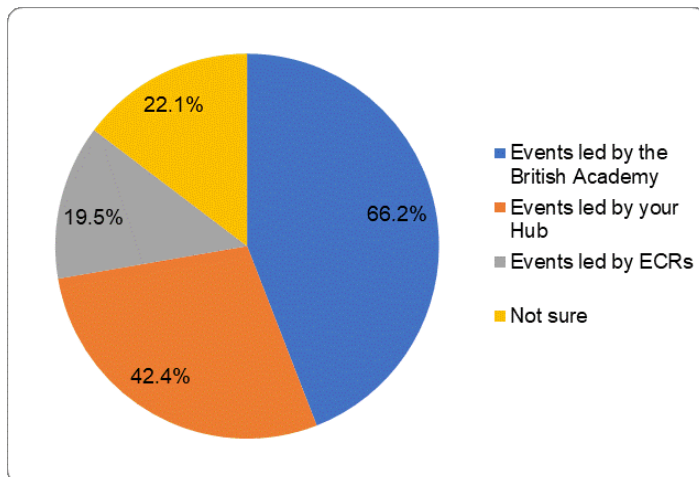


Three quarters (75.3%) of the respondents replied by ticking all that applied to the question, 'if you had ticked events (including online events) by whom were they led?'. Two-thirds (66.2%) have attended events led by the British Academy, less than half (42.4%) have attended events led by their hub; a fifth (19.5%) have attended events led by ECRs; and slightly more than a fifth (22.1%) were not sure.

Just a few (24 or 4.8%) of the respondents have themselves led or co-led an event. Interestingly, double the number responded to the subsequent question 'if you have led or co-led an event, why did you do so (please tick all that apply)'; this perhaps suggests that

the 'extra' respondents were considering what might motivate them to do so in the future. Of those responding to the question, the highest percentage (47.2% each) chose: 'Strong desire to learn more about the topic' and 'Wish to find other ECRs in the Network with similar interests or concerns'. Just over a third (35.8% each) chose: 'Opportunity for leadership' and 'Developing your skill set', followed closely (at 32.1%) by 'Promoting your work'. A fifth (20.8%) selected 'Gap in the offerings available at your institution'.

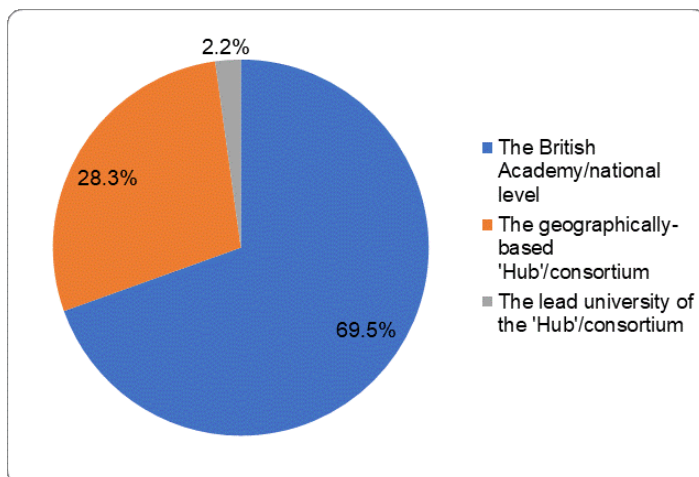
Figure 7: If you ticked 'attending events (including online events)' above, by whom were they led?



ECR membership – benefits and expectations of ECRs

Respondents relate strongly to the British Academy. In response to the statement posed 'For myself, it is most important to me that, through the BA ECR Network, I feel connected to': over two-thirds (69.5%) selected the British Academy/national level; with over a quarter (28.3%) selecting the geographically-based 'hub'/consortium; and a very small 2.2% selecting the lead university of the 'hub'/consortium.

Figure 8: For myself, it is most important to me that, through the BA ECR Network, I feel connected to:



Despite the Network's 'infancy', nearly half (44.7%) do Agree or even Strongly Agree that their expectations have been or are being met. Perhaps to be expected for a pilot initiative, including a hub that has only just begun to operate, many ECR respondents (41.2%) are Neutral as to whether their personal expectations of the Network have been/are being met. Only 11.5% Disagree and just 2.5% Strongly Disagree.

ECRs' expectations of the Network were explored more deeply, along with their sense of how those are beginning to be met; with the question worded to fit with the 'youth' of the Network. Respondents indicated which if any from a list of possible expectations or benefits

of the recently-established Network they are beginning to experience (or have experienced) and to what degree. Over half Strongly Agreed or Agreed with all but three expectations. The 'top three', cited by 60% or more, were: Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality (60%); Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community (60.6%); and Feeling connected to the British Academy (64.5%).

Figure 9: I feel that my personal expectations of the Network have been/are being met.

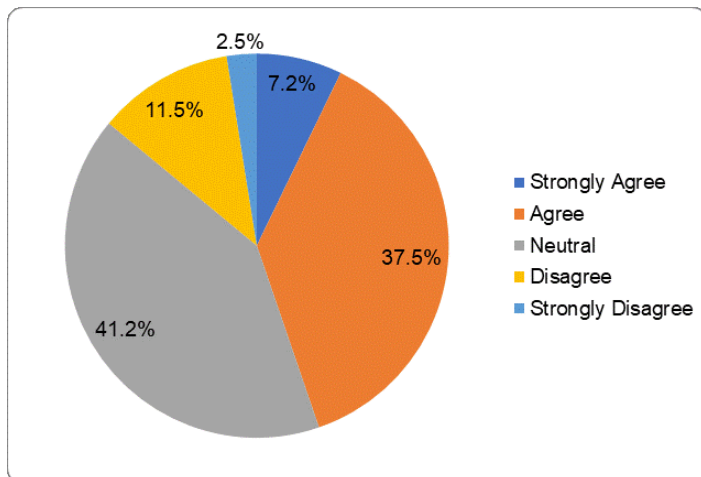
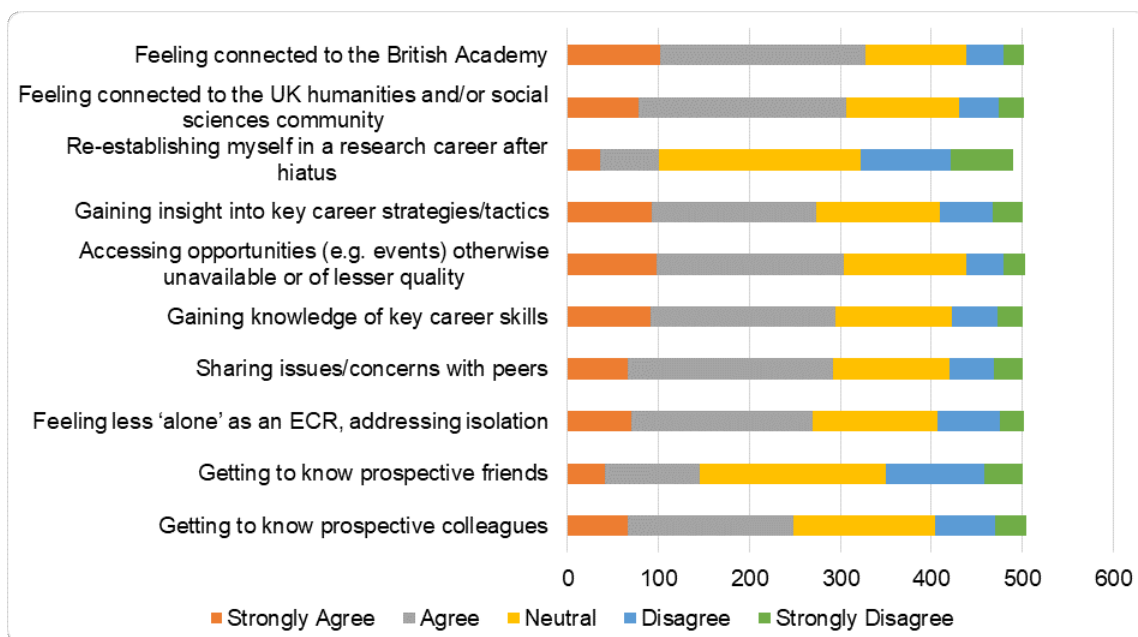
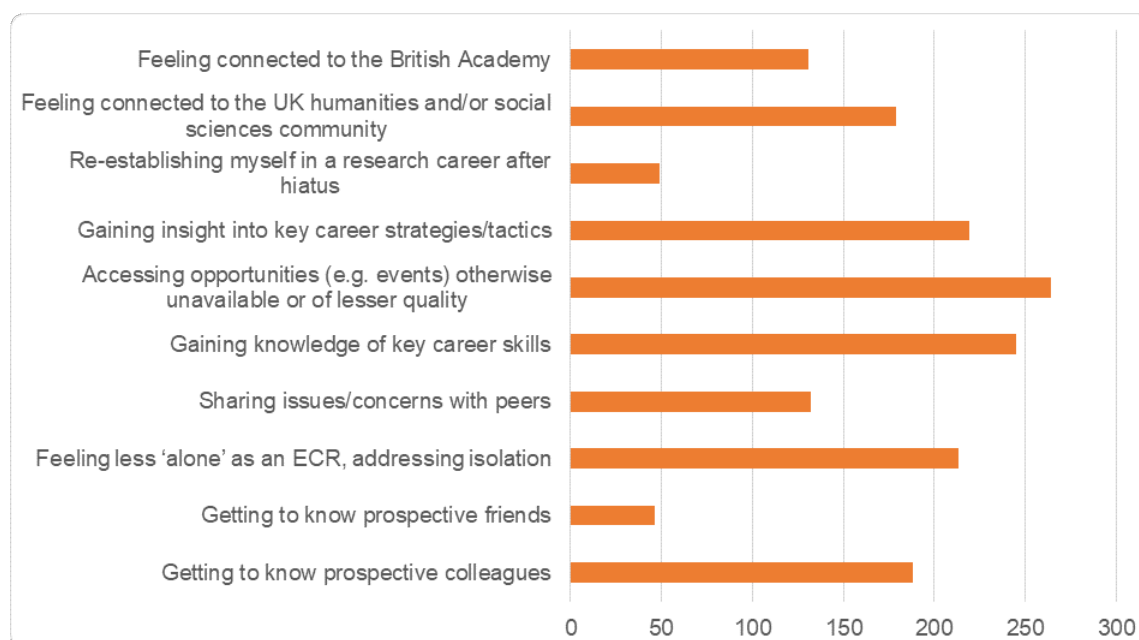


Figure 10: Please indicate which if any of the following possible expectations or benefits of the recently-established Network you are beginning to experience (or have experienced), and to what degree.



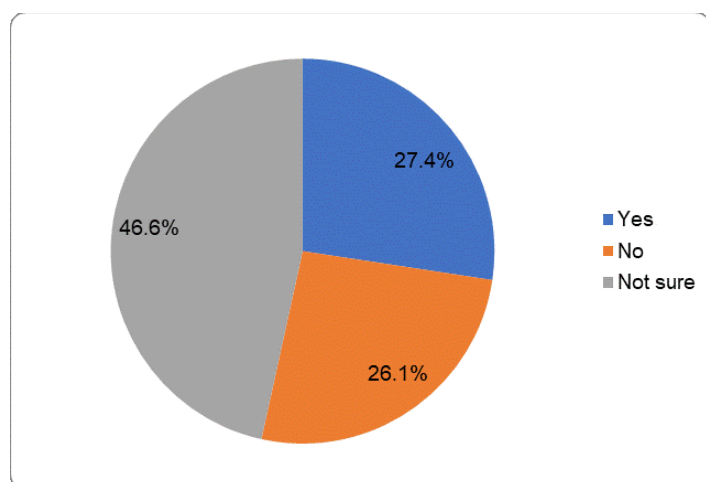
Respondents were asked to step back and consider what they would prioritise as ways to encourage new members to join the Network. They responded to the question, 'If the British Academy were to 'market' the ECR Network more widely (e.g. beyond the initial three hubs), please tick what in your view are the top THREE expectations that would encourage ECRs to join and that the Network should prioritise'. Top-ranked were: Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality (52.5%) and Gaining knowledge of career skills (48.7%). Closely following were: Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics (43.5%) and Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation (42.3%). Over a third chose: Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community (35.6%) and Getting to know prospective colleagues (37.4%).

Figure 11: If the British Academy were to 'market' the BA ECR Network more widely (e.g. beyond the initial three hubs), please tick what in your view are the top THREE expectations that would encourage ECRs to join and that the Network should prioritise.



When asked if they thought some prospective ECR Network members perceive barriers to membership of the Network, respondents were split at about a quarter each between saying yes (27.4%) or no (26.1%). Nearly half (46.6%) were not sure.

Figure 12: Do you have the sense that some prospective BA ECR Network members perceive barriers to membership of the Network?



When a list of possible barriers was provided, with respondents able to tick all they thought applied; by far the most frequently selected was: 'Lack of time due to professional commitments', chosen by well over half (58.1%) of the respondents. Second to that was 'Perception that the Network is only for those receiving British Academy funding or holding British Academy fellowships' (44.4%). Over a third selected 'Lack of perceived benefits to membership' (37.9%); and over a quarter selected 'Lack of time due to caring commitments' (28.3%) and 'Geographical constraints' (27.3%).

Table 1: If you said yes above (see Fig 12), which if any of the following do you think might act as barriers to membership? (please tick any that apply):

Answer Choice		Response Percent
1	Perception that the Network is only for those receiving British Academy funding or holding British Academy fellowships	44.4%
2	Lack of clear 'marketing' by the Hub	21.2%
3	Lack of perceived benefits to membership	37.9%
4	Lack of time due to professional commitments	58.1%
5	Lack of time due to caring commitments	28.3%
6	Perception that membership involves an overwhelming number of activities	16.2%
7	Perception that the Network would not welcome ECRs in the Arts	6.1%
8	Geographical constraints	27.3%
9	Other (please specify):	27.3%

Those few writing in answers as 'Other' brought up some issues that might act as barriers to prospective members. Institution-based or region-based 'holds' on membership appeared several times. This included apparent dominance by one institution or region (e.g. *'It seems that this network is only active for the lead university, not for others in the group'*), a sense of being left out due to non-affiliation (e.g. *'There is no current hub that covers my institution, so I have felt as though a lot of events are not relevant to me'*) and an apparent desire for membership to be UK-wide (e.g. *'It is not clear that all of the academic institutions in the UK can access the network, particularly those associated with institutions that lay outside of the 'hub regions' and 'Annoying that the Network is regionally specific. Why can't the BA allow ECRs to attend events no matter the locality?'*). Other issues had to do with eligibility, including career stage and in particular type of employment (e.g. *'Very focused on academic careers, despite many ECRs working beyond universities'* and *'Perception that the Network is only for ECRs with formal institutional affiliations'*). Pointing toward a need for pro-active clarity in marketing, one commented: *'I think anyone who knows about it knows they're welcome, but how many do know, especially outside of universities?'*. One respondent accepted lack of clarity as to what Network membership would mean: *'I was not entirely sure what to expect when I signed up, but I'm glad I did'*.

Delivery

Background

Members of the Network have been encouraged from the point of registration to suggest the skills and training they need and would value. As the result of regular consultation, including the establishment of an ECR ThinkIN Group with members drawn from the Network and Fellows of the Academy, and feedback, a varied programme of activities has been developed and delivered. A wide range of training opportunities have been provided, either online or in-person, several of them initiated or led by ECRs themselves. Members also have access to materials on a community online platform.

In the interests of diversity and inclusivity, it was decided to test a regional approach to supporting the Network. A 'hub' is an administrative arrangement made with a university or universities to provide effective support for the Academy and members of the Network at a

regional level. Each hub has a contact person to provide a level of local support to members of the Network in arranging events and activities; an annual payment is made by the Academy as a contribution to the costs involved.

After BA-funded researchers had been invited to join the Network, it was launched in stages across three different regions of the UK. The Midlands Hub, led by the University of Birmingham and a consortium of twelve other institutions across the Midlands, was launched in September 2021. The South West Hub, led by the GW4 Alliance and a consortium of five other institutions across the south west, was launched in December 2021. Finally, the Scotland Hub, led by the Universities of Stirling and Glasgow and a consortium of the rest of the Scottish HEIs, was launched in April 2022. In all, 42 institutions – of different types – have been involved, across the three hubs, in the activities of the Network during its first year.

Exploration of ECR experience with delivery

Based on their experience, ECRN members in focus groups were asked to identify things that the Academy already does with the Network that they would commend or encourage more of; clusters of their responses are captured here (and in Annex D).

- Many laudatory comments were devoted to events generally as a high point of the Network's provision.
- In addition, many praised specific aspects of content offered in various forms, for example policy talks, funding tips, bespoke training, career advice.
- Several noted regular communications and notifications of opportunities; some mentioned actions such as introductions to funders or senior academics.
- 'Simply' providing a network was itself seen as something worthy of praise; many comments referred to the British Academy helping ECRs to network among themselves.
- The tone of the Network was praised, with people appreciating an emphasis on diversity and inclusion (including welcoming babies to events, and recognition of 'unfashionable' subjects).
- The emphasis on ECRs' needs and facilitating ECR leadership was much appreciated.
- Finally, efforts of 'hardworking and sincere' staff were commended, and more generally the 'motivation and encouragement from everyone at the British Academy'.

When asked, ECRN members in focus groups also provided a number of operational suggestions in considering three aspects of delivery that emerged from the survey: improving the online platform and communications; expanding reach/welcome to ECRs working outside of academia; and ensuring that Network offerings help ECRs in 'precarious' positions'. These are captured in Annex D.

Exploration of ECR views on locus of delivery

As captured in Annex D, ECR focus groups offered input on what aims could be best delivered by whom, where.

- Only a third of the entries were placed in Locality or Region. Across focus groups and breakouts, the majority felt that two-thirds of their aims could be addressed most effectively at a national level or by any level (they did not care who hosted what). These aims included:
 - Getting to know prospective friends
 - Sharing issues/concerns with peers
 - Gaining knowledge of key career skills
 - Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality
 - Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics
 - Re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus

- Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community
- Feeling connected to the British Academy
- The only exceptions were that 'Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation' was seen as best addressed by either Locality or Region; and 'Getting to know prospective colleagues' was split evenly between a) Region and b) BA/National or by any level (they did not care who hosted what).
- In discussion, some echoed points raised in ECR survey responses, regarding frustration at being kept out of events, activities or leadership roles due to geography or institutional (non) affiliation.
- When ECRN members in focus groups voted for their own top three priority ways to meet people, or feel connected or affiliated, Connectivity with the UK humanities and social sciences community was ranked most highly by two of the three focus groups; Research problem/issue was ranked second by all three groups.

Interviewee perspectives on delivery through the hub model

As intended, this approach to the pilot, based on various hubs with a regional approach, offered opportunities for learning. Interviewees were asked for comments on the hubs and their consortia, for example how they would characterise particular features, dynamics or sustainability, and if there were any points that were either disappointing or favourably impressive.

A key feature that emerged was that of encouraging ECRs to take ownership. A hub-related interviewee commented, for example:

We try to be as bottom-up as we can be. In all our communications and (meetings), the emphasis is that this is the ECRs' hub. It is their Network and they have agency in what do with the Network. Our job is to support them, not tell them what to do. It has taken a while for some ECRs to get used to that.

As an important practical dimension, hub-related interviewees noted an expectation of implementation speed from the British Academy, and more generally emphasised the amount of effort, time and staff resource required, ideally with a dedicated post rather than busy staff adding this to their workloads, for example:

It is very clear this is not sustainable without support from someone on the ground doing it. A dedicated post can strengthen relationships even more and communication.

Similarly, another hub-related interviewee suggested that the British Academy 'warn' any future hubs about the workload, upfront. A dedicated (full or part-time) person was seen as necessary for hubs, in part to smooth the way for participation by multiple partners through coordination and clear communication.

If the Network is rolled out or changed, there will need to be very clear and direct information from the British Academy on what their expectations are and how funds could be used. ... (They) might say (to future hubs) 'we expect you might hire a person to do the things'. It does take a lot of time to implement and set up and run. ... It is too big a thing to fit onto an already busy role, ... Even with lots of partners, it is not practical to do it piecemeal; you need someone to focus on coordination and do events, making sure there are lots of regular communications; (so) people feel engaged and participate, having regular catchups and doing things.

When asked if they had been either impressed or disappointed in any way by the hubs' delivery, governance, financial or operational models, interviewees offered a variety of comments. Many of these were necessarily interwoven with the pilot phase of the Network being trialled.

Overview interviewees stressed the importance of including a wide span of universities, for instance expecting to watch the brand-new Scottish consortium with interest, as it is led by two different kinds of universities and includes all the Scottish universities. One hub-related interviewee from another hub emphasised that they are 'trying very hard to reach out to

universities not usually reached out to'; at the same time, they are thinking about moving activities to other host locations, 'but getting other places to volunteer to take the initiative has not always been very easy'. Another hub-related interviewee recognised contextual challenges.

Current workloads are so high, the thought of taking something more on, without time being paid for.... Particularly post-Covid with timing making huge uncertainties for ECRs regarding delivery of teaching and funding instability – the Network's timing is particularly challenging.

On the other hand, another hub-related interviewee has hopes that avoidance of replication in effort would incentivise collaboration in busy times.

Some partners already offered resources to share or replicate. There is a real willingness to share what they have; this Network is giving us a mechanism to try out how cross-institutional collaboration can work for ECRs.... We are trying to work a bit smart without creating too much extra work for partners, while giving ECRs benefits.

Interviewee perceptions of the role of the British Academy

Interviewees were also asked if they had been either impressed or disappointed in any way by the role of the British Academy in piloting the ECRN – this often led into discussions of the inter-relationship of hub and Academy roles. The Academy team was praised for their efforts in bringing the Network into reality; the advisory board role appears to have been commendably functional. 'I am very impressed by how genuine their seeking for advice is and how responsive the British Academy has been to discussions of the advisory board.' The Network is seen to have 'a lot of convening power because it is the British Academy, so it has a cachet'.

One hub-related interviewee voiced a positive change in attitude toward the British Academy as a result of the Network, which they hoped would percolate into ECRs now and in their future careers.

I would say I was a bit surprised that the British Academy decided to do this ... This seemed like a noble venture and I'd have to revise my picture of what the British Academy does, how is it run, what are its goals. For an ECR, that sense of what the British Academy is and why it is doing it and why it is important for the individual, - that is not there yet; it doesn't have to be yet, but as a secondary outcome, ECRs should feel the British Academy belongs to them. ... The Academy needs to think about being more transparent and open with ECRs – in a way that could transform how the British Academy interacts with its disciplines from then on. If ECRs see it as affecting the way they think about their discipline and advocacy for their discipline, there will be thirty to forty years of different, less distant relationships with the British Academy.

The openness of the British Academy was appreciated. One hub-related interviewee said, for example:

The British Academy were quite open to proposals of how (our hub) would work best; they were certainly not prescriptive. That was really positive and in communications they recognise differences between the hubs and seem quite content to have each hub work in the way best for them.

There are clearly 'dynamic tensions' between the hubs and the British Academy in this piloting of a new initiative. On the one hand, the British Academy was deliberately open so that stringent clarity was avoided – yet on the other hand, that left hub leaders at times uncertain. A hub-related interviewee's reflection captured the perhaps inevitable tension between the commendably open, exploratory nature of a pilot and a natural desire for guidance.

I am (impressed that) the British Academy are being open that it is a pilot, and open to post-evaluation recommendations, and very open about working with hubs. I definitely don't feel they are imposing a very strict structure or plan on hubs. It might be more the other way, it is so open and broad and not specified, maybe they could come more the other way. Maybe post-pilot they will give more guidance. In a way as a hub, it is nice to have the freedom but we are trying to fit in what the British Academy is doing. ... Maybe in a second phase, if they keep

regional models, they might want to provide guidance, not necessarily requirements, but guidance on what has worked well, what would benefit the operation of hubs; that would be helpful and speed things along. But it is nice to have freedom to do what fits with your area. But there will be commonalities in what ECRs want, that are likely to be of interest to ECRs wherever they are as well as in a region. So (it is) about the balance between region specifically and national/British Academy and how (things are) provided and how much guidance the British Academy provides.

An overview interviewee emphasised:

We didn't want to impose any particular model on how the hubs would be. Through the recruitment process, the Network ended up with three quite different models for a hub.

This attitude extends through the offer of an additional £40K per region to scale up support, with an overview interviewee saying, *'They each tell us what they need – staffing or ... a programme of activities or seed grants As a pilot, we allow different flowers to bloom'*.

With a contrasting tone, a hub-related interviewee brought up what they saw as a difference between being a delivery agent and a delivery partner *'working in equal partnership'* with *'a coordinating role and a role in supporting and enabling delivery'*; they observed that they

... have been impressed by their (British Academy's) energy and commitment; they are really wanting to make this work' (yet) we need much more simplicity in terms of event support; it doesn't need to be as complicated as it is. In my view the reason it is complicated is that the British Academy is trying to control everything, which I get as it is their brand, but if the British Academy want to control everything, we would be an agent, not what I expected.

Yet, because it is a British Academy initiative, there is a view that indeed it is and should be led by the Academy. As an overview interviewee said:

One thing coming out of the evaluation will be reflection on how the hubs work and lessons to learn for later rollout and what kind of organisation we should be thinking about. ... We want to avoid them being separate silos; we want them to be part of the network. So there are issues of governance we need to address. This is a British Academy network, not the hub in a leading role; they are the delivery partners. We need to work on the constitution and structure there should be in the future for these hubs. ... There is a concern we all share about the hubs' relationship with the Academy; we don't want hubs to develop in isolation from one another; we want to have clear input from the Academy.

Related concerns on delivery expressed by overview interviewees included: disappointment over a hub that *'tries to control everything, which goes against the ethos of what the Network is trying to achieve'*, for instance asking for funds to develop a hub version of something already being done by the Academy or insisting that ECRs not go directly to the Academy with ideas. Related to this was the risk articulated by an overview interviewee in setting up pilot efforts based around regions: *'Each gets engrained in different ways of working. We need to avoid the danger of doing things differently by region'*. As one example of this sort of concern, *'each region has an advisory board, which is not connected to the British Academy ECR Network advisory board or the others'*. Regarding regional hubs as they have arisen during the pilot, they mused *'We created infrastructure not thought through at the start but it has led to setting up walls which was not meant – so I am not sure this is the model to go on with'*.

Another overview interviewee comment emphasised the importance of creating a more level playing field through a national initiative, differentiating it from university efforts:

Universities can't (help) their ECRs to be part of a national network ... they need something greater than the sum of the parts, not just each university doing what it can for its ECRs. That would bake into the system the inconsistencies we know exist between universities.

An overview interviewee noted a *'tension between hubs seeing themselves as part of a local network and a UK-wide network with the British Academy at (the centre). For some activities we sign off as hub activities, but other things like policy events or finding out about funding schemes, we run separately – a mixed portfolio'*. An issue raised by some regarded a

desire for ongoing development of clarity as to who does what (and the degree if any to which that matters). A hub-related interviewee said, for example:

I think this has very much been a pilot activity in that the role of the hub was not well defined in the original call and the expectations of the amount of activity we would deliver as a hub have been very high. So (there is) a continual dialogue on what we can and can't deliver. ...Pinning down some of work flows (is an issue) as well. When is an event hub-driven, British Academy-owned and driven or driven by one institution/locally. It is not clear if an ECR approaches the British Academy directly is it hub or British Academy or locally driven. Getting that into place takes time, still in draft ... It has been very much an exploration.

Similarly, acknowledging the challenge, another hub-related interviewee views it quite pragmatically.

The coexistence of a number of strands was quite tricky to get our heads around: hub activities, ECR-led activities and British Academy-led activities. That split of how it is run, operated and promoted to keep distinct identities takes a bit of thought. I don't know that it matters from the ECR perspective, as long as they can access things. That required a little bit of thinking to get our heads around how it would work.

Yet another hub-related interviewee commended 'the British Academy in terms of communications and the team being very supportive', while noting that there had been a lack of clarity as to what was wanted from a hub at the start. Even so, this interviewee concluded,

We understand that this is a pilot and things evolve, so that is why these things crop up.

Despite such issues, hubs have given rise to successes. As one hub-related interviewee described:

I am impressed with the way the hub has managed to pull together universities in the region, how it has done its part in promoting the Network so huge numbers of ECRs signed up, and with the quality of some of the events.

Practicalities

Regarding the pragmatics of delivery, some hub-related interviewees worry that there are a great many events and that these are communicated in a confusing way. A practical communication issue noted by some interviewees was the need to improve the emails and the online platform. Some think it is important to differentiate between events driven by particular hubs, events driven by the UK and ECR-led events. Others are not so sure that differentiation matters, particularly if all events were to be open to all ECR members. (This question of openness also relates to an issue raised by some ECRs, when they have felt 'disenfranchised' by a particular hub due to distance or change in institution.)

Expectations for the overall Network and indicators of early success

Interviewee expectations for the overall ECRN initiative

From their 'big picture' perspective, interviewees responded in thoughtful, reflective ways when asked what they saw as principal expectations or hoped-for benefits regarding the ECRN. Overview interviewees reflected on the original motivations for the establishment of the Network; these included both a desire to reach out widely and substantively to help ECRs and at the same time to strengthen the research domains promoted by the Academy. Reflecting on the critical issues ECRs face, an overview interviewee observed 'there is a gap there that funders working together need to fill'. As another overview interviewee put it:

There was an important shift in the Academy's thinking on its place in the world: to be a defender of our subject areas. And therefore to address the difficult stage of our ECRs, and to promote and identify as many people as possible in that age stage to do something important to spread knowledge of the Academy and what it does in different types of institutions.

Certainly, the underpinning hope for the Network is that it will help ECRs at a particularly challenging time in their careers, when the higher education context makes those careers

more precarious than in the past. 'There is a deep concern that this is the most beleaguered group, finding it difficult to break into the next phase (of their careers)'. Aligned with this, an expectation for the Network was to increase the breadth of reach, provision of support and community-building to ECRs beyond the Academy's funded ECRs, and beyond the Golden Triangle or Russell Group universities. As an overview interviewee put it:

We wanted to create an environment where ECRs can develop personal and professional skills, and be at the heart and the driving force in what they'd like to achieve, feel empowered, safe, valued ... and listened to. And (the Network is) an opportunity where we can help change the academic landscape which is not very diverse and provide opportunities for different universities, a space where a healthy community of ECRs can thrive.

There is a hope that ECRs will articulate what they want or need from the Network and gradually take on more leadership roles, although the Academy would still need to support and be involved with the Network. Another overview interviewee described the distinctiveness of the role of the Network in this way, emphasising hopes for ECR-led efforts:

For people in universities that are very research-active, there are things like support, workshops, a lot of activity you have access to. There are other institutions that do not have these things in place, maybe due to not having funding or to economies of scale. The Network can and I think does bridge this gap. Through events, it can put people in touch with people they wouldn't have been in touch with otherwise. I particularly like the events put together by ECRs themselves... that wouldn't feature in any institution – since they are ECR driven and therefore cater to the interests of this very diverse group.

Naturally, hopes for the current generation of ECRs are linked to hopes for SHAPE fields in the future. A hub-related interviewee mused on this interconnection, in this way:

I think there is potentially an invaluable opportunity to provide a sense of solidarity among ECRs in the arts and humanities that is sorely needed, and has been absent ... (in the past there was) nothing on this kind of scale that had a major institution like the British Academy directing and funding it. That is new and important. ... The crisis of the humanities side of things seems to have ratcheted up in the last few years. It must feel pretty daunting for anyone coming new into the field. ... It's clear just how precarious a lot of ECR positions are and how that also affects them. ... Will this generation of ECRs be more resilient, better prepared, more successful, help to change the environment, be able to be the advocates for change in institutions, disciplines, culture and politics that they need to be if our field is going to thrive?

The scope of such expectations, and the pilot nature of the Network so far, has given rise on occasion to interviewee comments on 'lack of clarity' as to achievement aims, which seem to some to have been 'fluid'. There is, however, recognition that the Network has been in a pilot phase, which can/should lead to more clarity. One hub-related interviewee who raised the concern about lack of clarity nonetheless observed:

I am very enthusiastic about the Network and think there is a lot it can deliver so that it can genuinely add value; we need to think what makes it distinctive and adds value.

Early indications of progress toward Network benefits

Having articulated often far-reaching goals for the Network, interviewees were asked if they had seen any early-stage indicators that the young Network is leading toward such benefits. In reply, interviewees underscored the youth of the Network, with hubs beginning in 2021 and one not yet formally launched. Nonetheless, they cited stage-appropriate early indicators that the Network is moving toward desired benefits. The most 'tangible' indicator is the extraordinary number of ECRs who have registered (over 1,800 by October 2022), which far exceeded initial expectations of around 500. This is seen as an extremely robust indicator of demand for the Network and its intended benefits. Beyond signing up for membership, interviewees noted a large number of ECRs 'joining events and engaging'. As one overview interviewee put it,

The numbers far exceeded our expectations; the speed at which it has taken off has been quite remarkable ... (That is) a sign there was a need for this and we are beginning to meet that

need. It has been clear also in events how great the interest was. ... We have already seen signs of people building links across their region and nationally, that they wouldn't have been able to do without this. A lot are cross-disciplinary and recognising common problems in other disciplines and institutions.

Other indicators were seen in the willingness of academics and institutions to support work the Network. As an overview interviewee put it, *'My strong impression is that it is working because people are willing to make it work'*. Another noted, *'The fact that there are quite a few events organised by ECRs themselves is really quite encouraging'*.

Hub-related interviewees cited anecdotal, yet telling, examples of the Network reaching and generating enthusiasm among ECRs, for example saying of a key hub-organised event:

If I were an ECR attendee, I think I would have come away with a quite positive, possibly quite buoyant sense that I am not alone in what I am facing and (this is) not just paying lip service to the idea of creating a forum; it provides direction and opportunities for us. The atmosphere in room by the end of day was very positive.

Commenting on ECR enthusiasm during a launch event, another hub-related interviewee observed, *'Anecdotal comments from ECRs included the fact that it changed their mind about talking to other ECRs, reduced their sense of isolation, and increased their confidence on how far they were on their career trajectory.'*

Another hub-related interviewee described an experience, and ECR evaluation returns, which gave them a positive view of how the Network was affecting ECRs.

If I'm really honest, I had maybe not first-hand seen the benefits until (a recent two-day event) ... ECRs were really fulsome in their gratitude in their feedback forms ... It was lovely to hear them say they would continue the relationships, read each other's work, stay in touch. You could really see it was the network that achieved that and had tangible outcomes for the ECRs.

A different hub-related interviewee cited a ripple effect as a positive indicator. *'There are a group of people at the core using funding and the Network to develop their own networks; that is starting'*.

And another hub-related interviewee captured ECR participants' response to activities offered around how people could collaborate, including in interdisciplinary ways: *'I was really surprised at the sessions by the spread of career stages and by the positivity in responses. ... They were keen to engage and gave positive feedback that it was really useful to connect with people randomly and talk about their research.'*

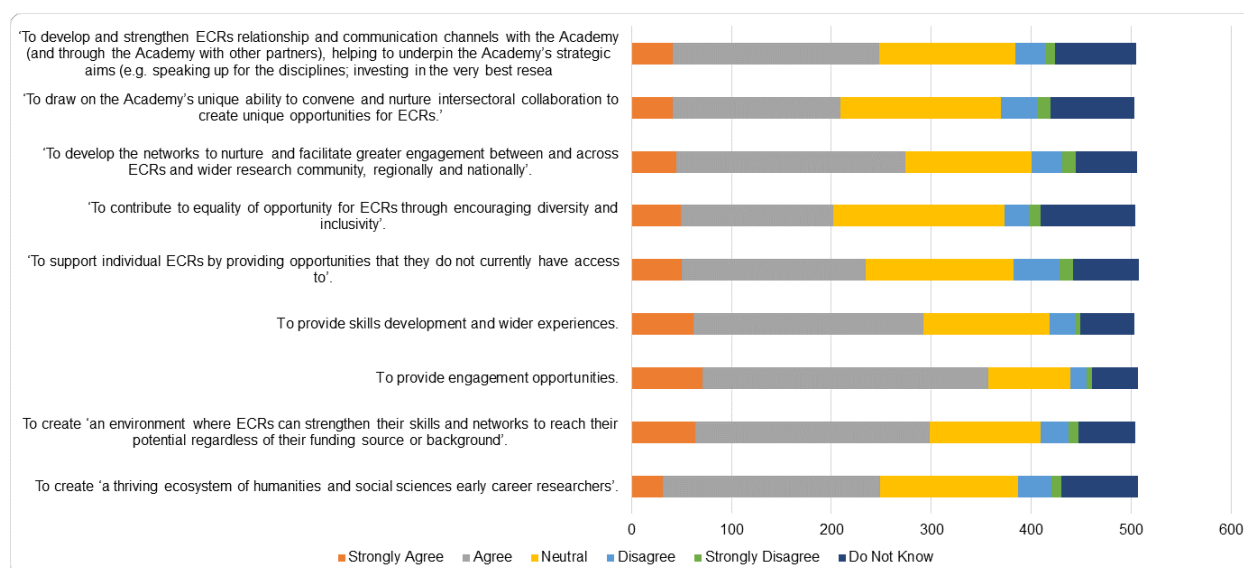
Fit with funders' strategic objectives for the Network

Informants were asked to reflect on the 'fit' of the Network with the strategic objectives sought in its establishment; their responses often included reflection on progress to date.

Addressing strategic objectives (ECR views)

ECR respondents stepped back to consider the big picture and replied to the question 'From your own experience and observations of colleagues, to what extent does the young ECR Network (which began in the spring of 2021) appear to be addressing (beginning to address) its overall objectives?'. For each of a list of objectives provided, over two hundred respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was being addressed by the Network. A full 70.2% agreed or strongly agreed that the Network is addressing (beginning to address) the objective 'to provide engagement opportunities'. Over half saw this happening with three other objectives: 'To create 'an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background' (58.7%); 'To provide skills development and wider experiences' (57.5%); and 'To develop the networks to nurture and facilitate greater engagement between and across ECRs and wider research community, regionally and nationally' (54%).

Figure 13: From your own experience and observations of colleagues, to what extent does the young BA ECR Network (which began in the spring of 2021) appear to be addressing (beginning to address) its overall objectives?



Fit with Strategic Objectives (Interviewees' views)

Both overview and hub-related interviewees offered reflections on the 'fit' of the ECRN when they were given a comparable set of stated strategic objectives. A few comments are highlighted here, arranged by objectives – although inevitably there is overlap, as comments could refer to more than one objective.

'To create 'a thriving ecosystem of humanities and social sciences early career researchers'

Interviewees saw this as a reasonable, broad-scale objective. An overview interviewee reflected on the need for the Network given the particular nature of the ecosystem today:

One thing we found really helpful with particular urgency for Arts, Humanities and Social sciences - these people are not working in laboratories or teams, and can often find themselves in very lonely position, and the pandemic made it worse. For lots of reasons, providing different fora for scholars to interact is very important. And there is a sense that the higher education ecosystem has been permanently changed by the pandemic – far more academics are working from home, and not meeting colleagues, including some ECRs.

The word 'thriving' is inherently aspirational, but progress is seen, as described by an overview interviewee:

It is clearly going in the right direction; it couldn't have done much more than it has done, however there is a long way to go; it will very much depend on the transition to ECR-run.

Hub-related interviewees emphasised that this is still early to be talking about an 'ecosystem', commenting for example

I think we have a fair way to go, it is embryonic still, but it is starting to be.

To meet that strategic objective, you would want them to act independently of what is provided, as a next step.

'To create 'an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background'

Overview interviewees used words like 'absolutely', 'clearly', 'definitely' in responding to this strategic objective of supporting ECRs across different backgrounds. For example,

Yes, I definitely think that. The (Network provides) types of support and seminars and courses you get in some institutions but not others, so (it is about) having a 'place' where all are welcome and these events take place.

A hub-related interviewee who reflected on benefits already beginning to be felt from the Network addressed this point.

To be there as ECRs from a smaller institution was really valuable, ... to have a body where they can be active and engaged and equal partners, they can benefit in a way that wouldn't be possible otherwise.

Another hub-related interviewee observed: 'One of the really strong features of the Network is its inclusion; they do not have to be affiliated with an HEI to join'. The message of broad inclusivity appears to be working. A different hub-related interviewee noted that 'the way we and the British Academy have marketed it, there is the impression that the Network is not just for British Academy-funded people; we have not had a lot of queries about if someone is eligible'.

'To provide engagement opportunities.'

'To provide skills development and wider experiences.'

'To support individual ECRs by providing opportunities that they do not currently have access to'.

'Engagement opportunities', 'provision of skills development and wider experiences', and 'supporting individual ECRs by providing opportunities that they do not currently have access to' are kindred strategic objectives, that can overlap or reinforce each other. For example, an overview interviewee commented:

It is the recognition that not all postdocs come from the same level of support, but they have a lot to give each other. A lot is not us telling them but them supporting each other in the experience of being a postdoc, particularly in these challenging times.

There is clearly an array of varied offerings provided by the Network (nationally and through hubs) that are intended to reach diverse ECRs. An overview interviewee observed,

There is a varied demographic of ECRs coming to all events, a range of training opportunities led by consultants, hubs, Fellows, bringing them together at different stages, in subjects and with a variety of types of training - in person, online, all day, shorter events, workshops ... and also the online community platform.

When ECRs sign up to the Network, they are asked what skills and training they want to see; and the ThinkIN groups also provide input. So, for example, ECRs have indicated that outside the Network they are often not getting key soft skills.

'Wider experiences' are softer skills, like interview or presentation skills or writing cvs or negotiating a pay rise or contract, or dealing with burnout, or presenting work to wider audiences.

Interviewees are well aware of the differences across institutions that the Network seeks to address with its strategic objectives. Furthermore, providing opportunities to researchers working in non-academic contexts is seen as providing support they cannot get from universities in the normal course of things. An overview interviewee reflected on the fit of the Network to these aims.

We were aware the kind of support offered varies from institution to institution, particularly outside of academia, in galleries, museums, thinktanks and so on, (so that it) could be very difficult to move into the academic world if someone wanted to, so it is necessary to level out access to support mechanisms. It is clear the hubs have been bringing together support available in institutions but making that available across a region, bringing economies of scale and time ... importantly through cooperation, so the better-resourced can support the less well-resourced. Particularly in (some institutions) there are large numbers almost exclusively in teaching but who wanted to get into research, but the institutions did not really have resources to ease that transition.

Several hub-related interviewees spoke in practical terms about these objectives.

That was one of the prime things we thought about when drafting our application. It should be added value, that most people would find hard to access via their home institutions. ... We want to make sure there is a point of difference between what the hub provides and what they get at institutions. For a lot of institutions, it is about scale; for many institutions there are few ECRs in these disciplines, so things won't be oriented to them, and also there is the opportunity to do networking.

I do believe that is what the Network is doing. Some of the sessions provided we wouldn't have been providing, and (certainly) would not have provided them dedicated to SHAPE disciplines.

There is more work we need to do, to understand what they do and don't have access to. We have done a lot of work to see what ECRs want but that is not quite the same. Those not affiliated with HEIs may need this more.

'To contribute to equality of opportunity for ECRs through encouraging diversity and inclusivity'.

Overview and hub-related interviewees see this as an objective of continuing importance. The sense is that the Network is addressing this effectively at this stage, although, as always, more could be done (in the sector, as well as the Network). To ensure access and a diverse population, the Academy makes use of input from a Network EDI ThinkIN group, as well as the Academy's EDI group – for example in using non-discriminatory language and diverse ways of promoting things, ensuring diverse panel members, using varied venues, and welcoming children to events (or paying for childcare). An issue raised more than once is the absence of a 'baseline' as to figures of various sorts regarding the UK's ECR population generally. Overview interviewee comments include:

In terms of setting it up to try to be diverse, they have done very well.

This has always been a standing issue on the agenda, we are always monitoring the numbers. We had wanted to compare intake demography with a baseline. We do have a relatively diverse membership across EDI criteria and other things like type of contract, teaching only role, research and teaching role and things important to career trajectories in academia.

Hub-related interviewees observed that, from their perspective:

We are trying quite hard. There are always things we can do better, but we are listening and taking equality and diversity quite seriously.

The group is more diverse and inclusive than staff in general in HE institutions.

There is diversity in the ECR population, in terms of characteristics you can see, and consideration is given to everybody's needs, so it is an inclusive environment but reaching out to ECRs who have not yet joined is key. Travel bursaries are great, and the ease with which people can sign up, and zoom help inclusivity.

'To develop the networks to nurture and facilitate greater engagement between and across ECRs and wider research community, regionally and nationally'.

Interviewees generally saw the Network as a natural fit with this objective, along with sub-networks to which it might give rise.

It does fit with that objective, getting that ECR interaction right- it is too early to judge that; you would want in a few years to have evidence that ECRs are talking to each other. Second issue, it is really important that academics contribute their knowledge and expertise to the Network.

In addition to the principal activities of the Network, a variety of efforts are being undertaken at the national and hub levels to address this objective, for instance bringing Fellows of the Academy and other academics together with ECRs, research cafes with mid-career researchers, and working with different organisations. Overcoming boundaries is clearly a related objective, as one overview interviewee described:

Interdisciplinarity is probably part of this and also breaking geographical barriers. Our desire has always been to give opportunities to people to socialise in their region, since if they were going to meet up with someone, they probably would do that more if it were only a short trip.

But also nationally, starting virtually. If you interpret this objectives as across disciplines and within and across geographies, I think that is happening.

Hub-related interviewees place particular emphasis on engagement among ECRs – and noted that it is still early days for the Network, in terms of addressing this.

That one is maybe a bit harder. We will focus on links of ECRs in the region. At launch and so on we may have British Academy partners to make wider links. ... Our main focus will be on links between ECRs. Links between partners and ECRs and the British Academy and ECRs would be nice via the Network but not top of the list to achieve.

I think so; it is starting to, you can see in terms of connecting through sessions we've done that we got a good spread of researchers, that probably would not have connected before then.

'To draw on the Academy's unique ability to convene and nurture intersectoral collaboration to create unique opportunities for ECRs.'

Some interviewees viewed this objective as referring to nurturing interdisciplinarity including collaborations across SHAPE; this is often seen to be an aspect of the Network and its activities. However, some interviewees explored 'inter'-sectoral in the sense of interactions between universities and non-academic sectors. This interpretation appears primarily to be more of an aspiration than a reality for the Network, at this time.

I don't think so far there have been movements toward this. The Network is still focussed on managing how it will roll out and seeing what desires ECRs have; the focus has not been this; it is probably behind on this one.

Certainly the Academy is operating across social sciences and the humanities, and within the Academy it is clear the kind of work people do cannot be pigeonholed, so (the Network) wanted to build on that. There is also looking beyond HE. With all the concern about impact and relevance of research, people are concerned with how to get research out into the public sphere, the policy sector and the Academy's involvement in policy areas is an important way in which we can perhaps contribute to those skills in all researchers.

There is an appreciation that ECRs have grown up within a changed context for HE and will need in the future to operate within it. This ties in with the Network being open to researchers beyond university walls.

The wave of the funding model of research over the past twenty to twenty-five years has meant questions of impact have opened up and created conversations from universities across to other arenas. That is now so important and has become the culture most young academics know about. ... (There is an) argument for ECRs to have the capacity to develop their skills further and transform the way the entire sector operates, for the good of the whole sector. ... An important area in arts is to recognise the importance of non-HE institutions for architecture, art, etc. – in galleries, specialist research institutes, libraries.

Hub-related interviewees offered praise for this objective as an aspiration.

I definitely agree the Academy is in a unique position to do that ... but it is probably something the Academy is working on rather than us in the hubs.

It has huge potential in the breadth of the constituency invited to join and lots of good training they are offering would mean other people could come from a broad range of sectors.

Personally I have not seen much yet; (collaboration between sectors) feels ambitious to me, but a great ambition to have.

Hoping that the national Network will foster involvement of sectors beyond academia, particularly given the mismatch between numbers of ECRs hoping to stay in academia and the number of academic positions available, a hub-related interviewee warned of the paradox inherent in providing (solely) what ECRs ask for, if they only ask for help with academic careers.

I don't know if this strategic objective is fully met yet; it could be an option; it is possible. A lot of conversations that come through us and other hubs and what ECRs are asking for is academia-focussed. I think that is a trap that people fall into quite easily - ECRs ask for things

that are all geared toward an academic path. One reason I was keen to get involved was to see how they exposed researchers to other sectors.

'To develop and strengthen ECRs relationship and communication channels with the Academy (and through the Academy with other partners), helping to underpin the Academy's strategic aims (e.g. speaking up for the disciplines; investing in the very best researchers; informing and enriching debate around society's greatest questions; and ensuring sustained international engagement and collaboration).'

The sense of this 'compound' strategic objective was seen as positive. As one overview interviewee said: *You have to have a good vision; it is a worthy one. ... Those are big ambitions but the right ones.*

Another overview interviewee observed:

My view is a bit simpler, which is: the British Academy is playing a role in supporting the disciplines but can't do it sheerly from self-interest. The British Academy needs to be seen to be giving back to the academy, and the ECR Network is one way.

Enriching debates with ECR perspectives was highlighted by overview interviewees.

Through various committees and directorates, the Academy is involved in all these strategic issues, and wants to develop a bigger conversation around that to draw ECRs into those debates, that have perhaps been monopolised by senior academics, - to get ECR perspectives, as a way of them developing their skills and ensuring more diverse discussions.

The essence is really to provide ECRs opportunities to feed into the British Academy about things they see in the sector and ECRs can (also) go directly to hub partners with issues or challenges.

Hub-related interviewees offered varied views on this aspect of the objective, sometimes suggesting that it is early days for achieving it, yet citing real learning by the British Academy regarding ECR concerns.

That is very ambitious! I think that communication has been one of the biggest challenges of the Network so far. That said, there have been plenty of opportunities for ECRs to hammer home what they feel are the biggest issues they are facing. Undoubtedly, the Network has helped to strengthen that connection between ECRs and the British Academy. The British Academy is now absolutely aware that precarity is the number one issue ECRs are facing. ... That has been a big breakthrough.

Several interviewees noted that the international engagement and collaboration component of this strategic objective has not yet arisen. A thoughtful hub-related interviewee placed this component in a developmental process.

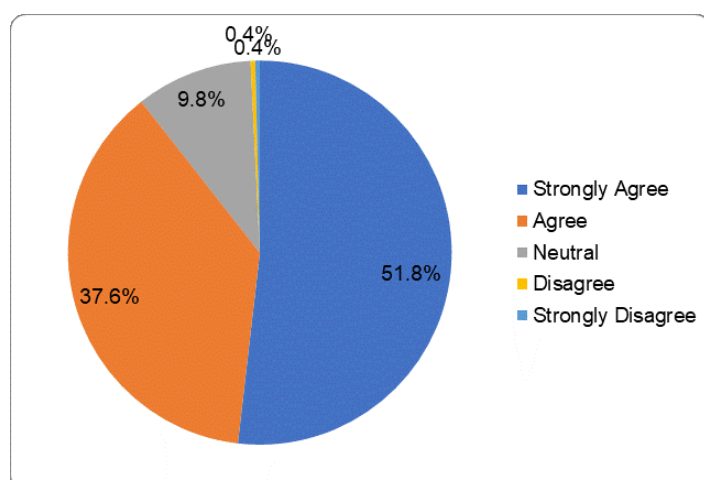
There has been a clear emphasis on advocacy, developing collaborations are there, (but) the international side is not there yet; it needs to be there, probably a stage two thing. In its fullest form the Network should aim to fill that objective in its entirety.

INFORMANTS' INSIGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE ECRN

Continuation of the Network

In response to a key question, nearly all (89.4%) of the ECR respondents believed that the Network should be continued in the future; indeed over half (51.8%) Strongly Agree with this. Only 0.8% (just four individuals) disagreed.

Figure 14: The BA ECR Network should be continued.



The list of subjects in Annex G shows that ECRs in all SHAPE areas are keen to join the network. Strongly enthusiastic views of the network come from across every SHAPE area; for example, the vast majority of arts, humanities and social science respondents wish to see the network continued.

When asked, all interviewees believed the ECRN should continue in some form. Words like 'absolutely', 'definitely' or 'certainly' were often used, and individuals often offered reasons for their affirmation.

It is clear they have been successful in what they are trying to do. So long as ECRs agree we have been successful, it should continue. (Overview interviewee)

It has had substantial success in the current circumstances, a credit to all involved. (Overview interviewee)

I certainly do (think the Network should be continued) on the basis of the number of members, what it has done, who has been engaged – it has exceeded expectations in level of activity. On that basis, it would be a waste not to do more, make it bigger and see what can be done with it - sustaining and integrating over next year will be crucial. In some ways having more hubs and members will make it easier to do stuff with a bigger pool to call on and a core group(that) is representative and national. (Overview interviewee)

There are many individuals who are getting something out of it and want to contribute to it. That is a critical thing if there will be ECRs taking it forward, so it becomes increasingly run by ECRs, so it is looking promising. ... Right now, it is filling a gap; as long as it continues to do so, great. (Overview interviewee)

This group are individuals who are often quite isolated and often don't have access to small amounts of funding. ... so there is a huge role to play. (Hub-related interviewee)

It is a really good initiative; I hope it continues. ... From the British Academy's point of view, it is a really good thing for them to be involved with. It is really positive, it sends good signals out about what the British Academy is interested in; a bit of democracy in allowing ECRs to take their own decisions on careers and activities is very positive and reflects well on the British Academy. Other funders tend to give out small grants, but one of the things ECRs really need is networking opportunities. (Hub-related interviewee)

We are just at the tip of what we could be doing. There is a lot we could instigate as a network across the UK, the hub and with the British Academy. The fact the British Academy has been so engaged about exploring opportunities has been extremely positive. We would not have set something like this up without the British Academy instigating it. (Hub-related interviewee)

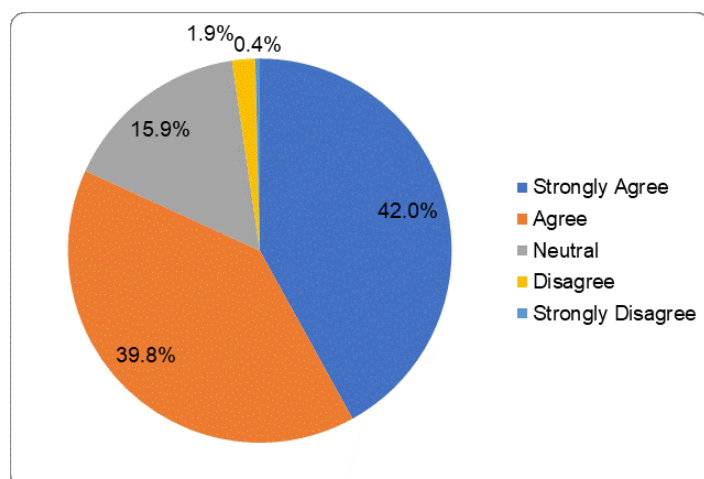
Some interviewees also noted the need to keep checking on the utility of the Network (and its hubs) as it evolves and some posed caveats, covered in the discussion of reflections below, for the Academy to consider in the future.

Rolling out the Network

ECR views

ECRs were asked their views on the statement, 'While the ECR Network has so far been in a 'pilot' phase consisting of three hubs, in the future the ECR Network should be 'rolled out' further, across a broader geographical range beyond the initial three hubs'. Well over three-quarters (81.8%) of ECR respondents agreed, with 42.0% Strongly agreeing.

Figure 15: While the BA ECR Network has so far been in a 'pilot' phase consisting of three hubs, in the future the BA ECR Network should be 'rolled out' further, across a broader geographical range beyond the initial three hubs.



Interviewees' reflections on rolling out

The potential for rolling out or scaling up of the Network was probed through interviews. Although interviewees were asked, almost no one had any suggestion for a good example of a pilot initiative being rolled out nationally, although several had experience of research that had grown from seed money into a programme. It was noted generally that some international development initiatives begin with seed funding and develop through stages into country-wide activity; this may be the closest counterpart. Interviewees were asked, 'while the ECR Network has so far been in a 'pilot' phase consisting of an initial three hubs, do you think that in the future the ECR Network should be 'rolled out' further, across a broader range of geographical substructures? Do you see adding 'hubs' as the best way to do this?

Overview interviewees tackled this question in a variety of ways, often citing advantages to the national British Academy role, as well as what could potentially be provided by some form of geographical sub-structuring. So, for example, one overview interviewee thought rolling out by adding hubs made sense, but also articulated the unique value that the national initiative brings, through the connectivity and gravitas of the Academy.

If they feel the hub model is working, rolling out region by region, hub by hub, is a safer way to go. ... I assume the British Academy can bring in academic experience that any individual hub could struggle to get, and can put on central events both remotely and open physically to all hubs. People in less-connected regions need connections with people in other regions with more funding – that is a role of the British Academy. The whole point is to actually connect ECRs to where research money is going and where job opportunities are, where people are very experienced with grant applications, etc. in some regions they are not as connected as others -- it is the British Academy's ability to offer that link to the heart of the research world that is very important.

Decisions on hubs or geographical organisation are yet to come, and will take careful thought, as an overview interviewee noted.

We should follow the general model we've got, but there we are thinking about not simply adding more hubs, region by region. There are managerial problems to go from three to eight or whatever, problems of coordination would be greater. Do we need to think in terms of larger groupings (that may not be called hubs)? There are geographical questions about what the regions should be. ... We will need to consult with existing groupings and also more widely.

Some felt a need to move ahead quickly on scaling up.

It should be rolled out, now it is advantaging people in just some geographical areas. I think there is an urgency to rollout. We have shown there is a demand, have shown what works and what needs tweaking.

Indeed, a rapid ramping up to 'delivery partners' across the country, was floated as a possibility. Rather than the Academy identifying geographical hubs slowly over time, there could be:

a 'big bang', with the Academy inviting institutions to a briefing and making applications (with two university partners each), with each month a different start, staggering their launches, so that within a year the Network would be UK-wide.

One approach to this would be to develop an explicitly strategic portfolio of national offerings, with different delivery partners responsible for offerings in particular categories (e.g. Improving cvs) that would be accessible nationally, as well as any more local activities they chose to present.

An overview interviewee mused about the possibility of using embedded regional substructures to deliver some of what ECRs want (when they want something local) and wondered if that could be done '*without creating a regional governance structure*' – noting for example that there should be no reason multiple institutions should have to '*navigate their relationship with the British Academy*' through only one designated institution or organisation at a hub.

Hub-related interviewees also had varied views regarding rollout. Regional hubs of some sort seemed feasible for future rollout to some, particularly when proximity could make a difference, although even then the role of the national initiative was often highlighted, for example in facilitating cross-hub activities.

Yes it should be rolled out. The choice of hubs was sensible – a central urban, mixed urban rural and Scotland. It would feel like a tremendous lost opportunity if they didn't follow through on it. ... So the regional structure now makes sense, so the hub model is still the way forward. That said, it needs to be thought through on how hubs work with the centre and with each other and split or share resources for particular activities that deserve more than regional focus.

I think we need to move fairly quickly to a point where it is national. We will have to rethink the point of the hubs. What becomes the purpose of any regional grouping? – I think it is around the physical thing of getting people together. ... I think in the fullness of time, hubs will play less of a role in policy and strategic direction, but act as more of a mechanism for regional events due to proximity. To be discussed.

Maybe in phase two, it could definitely be important that there be a way of linking hubs or linking people in the hubs. ... with guidance on what the British Academy expects, or what process we might go through to work out what cross-hub things might be. We have not asked ECRs that yet. It would have to be done on a consultative basis; we could say 'we are now well established, and want to establish links across hubs, what would you ECRs want to get from that?'

An explicitly national rollout would be seen to have value.

Nationally would be a good approach, particularly given movement and the way ECRs have to move around for career reasons, the current conformation of geographies don't logically make sense. ... that would open up access.

I think adding hubs is not the way to do this. Now is the point, if there are resources, to roll out to the rest of the country rather than keep adding hubs. There was a good narrative to the

choice of hubs as pilot but if they start picking out regions, it will get more political. Just roll it out nationally.... The British Academy need to continue a stronger role. They need to properly resource it, have a real team in place and take charge in a serious way. The role of hubs needs to be very clear and more limited. Now the British Academy should take it on and run with it in a more fulsome way.

Subject to funding, I do think it should be rolled out nationally. ...We need to further refine and really be clear about what this network is delivering over and above what HEIs can deliver and complement (what is done) elsewhere; ... So really being clear about what this will do that is different, and tie to resources for the British Academy and hubs.

ECRs' 'recommendations' for the future

ECR respondents were offered the opportunity to provide a recommendation to the Academy regarding the future of the Network. (This was the only free text question posed.) Just over half (56%) chose to provide their 'top recommendation to the British Academy for the future of the BA ECR Network rolled out as a national initiative with geographical sub-structures'. A view of their responses can be seen in the following word cloud, with word sizes linked to frequency of use. 'Events' and 'opportunities' appeared most often.

Figure 16: Word cloud of free text responses. Common words 'ECR', BA, and 'network' were removed for clearer visibility of other entries.



ECR respondents' recommendations can also be viewed as falling into thematic clusters. While clustering can of course take different forms, the following set provides insight into key themes, described here briefly in sequence from the nine theme most often cited (Logistics including geographic, by over 17%) through four cited by 10% to just over 12% (In-person events, Specificity of offer; Communication, Diversity and access), and three cited by 8 or 9% (Employment issues; Specificity by discipline or subject, Logistics of training/events), to the one least cited, by 2% (Mentorships). Sample quotations for each are provided in Annex F to convey a deeper sense of respondents' views.

Logistics, including geographic

Many respondent comments had to do with perceived limitations due to geography. For example, many pointed out that they don't necessarily live or carry out research in the same location as their 'home' institution, or may not even be aligned with an institution, so they may be excluded from hubs. Most suggestions had to do with connecting beyond geography or hubs; a few respondents sought additional local activities not always at their hub's centre.

In-person events

While the utility and accessibility of remote offerings was acknowledged (and sometimes encouraged to expand), quite a few respondents voiced a desire for in-person events in addition, hoping in particular that informal gatherings could lead to future collaborations.

Specificity – what the network offers, training, marketing

While some respondents did indeed voice the need for additional offerings in ‘skills’, many encouraged more tailoring by the Academy to ensure that Network members could find opportunities that are aligned specifically with their interests – and that complement what they could access elsewhere. At the same time, other suggestions were to simplify the Network’s array of offerings. Both routes have implications for marketing. There is a clear steer toward an emphasis on quality consistent with expectations of the Academy.

Communication

Multiple respondents raised concerns about communications, including the online platform. A sense emerged that at least some ECRs feel bombarded by emails, making it hard to track what is relevant for them. Navigating and accessing the new online platform also posed challenges, including a need to register (beyond joining as a member) and/or to find identifying numbers when returning to the platform. These ‘teething’ problems are surmountable.

Diversity and access (including non-university researchers)

Some respondents wrote forcefully about ensuring diversity. Suggestions had to do with not only conventional dimensions of diversity but also working contexts. There was a strong sense that the Network should reach out to and include ECRs (broadly defined) beyond academia; not surprisingly, this often tied in with wider comments about employment issues.

Employment issues in the sector

Many respondents offering recommendations reflected on broad issues of employment in the sector, in particular as context for and sometimes barriers to engagement with the ECRN (or networks generally). Issues included precarious, unreliable employment in academia (thus tying into the recommendations for inclusion of ECRs not employed at an HE institution), excessive burdens on time diminishing ability to take up training, and often frequent moves (tying into the recommendations relating to geographic logistics).

Specificity, by discipline or subject

Respondents showed a strong interest in ‘specific’ benefits to do with connecting with others in their research areas or disciplines – which can contrast with geographical organisation. There is a sense that building collaborations or communities of practice in this way can lead to work that transcends hubs and even sometimes disciplines themselves.

Logistics - training/events

Some respondents offered suggestions around advertisement and timing of events, particularly encouraging access to events at times other than the working day – perhaps of special importance to those working outside academia.

Mentorships

Several respondents encouraged mentoring as a component that would be helpful for ECRs at different stages.

ECRN members in **focus groups** also sent ‘messages’ to the BA about the future of the Network (Annex D). Key points included the following recommendations.

- Improve communications, streamlining and also revamping the online community platform;
- Recognise other types of institutions such as IROs, improving inclusivity of ECRs outside of academia and showing that there are futures outside of academia where ECRs can be valuable;
- Help ECRs to increase the impact of their work, for example connecting them with policymakers;

- Link with other ECR networks, such as existing disciplinary networks;
- Increase visibility of areas covered by Network members, offering chances to share work easily or to invite people into projects;
- Recognise differences in experience, diversity;
- Avoid being London-centric, mixing face to face with online options yet at the same time inviting Network members to the BA, either for events or informal visits.

Interviewees' reflections on the future

The future of the Network was explored at some length with interviewees. In particular, at the end of interviews, they were asked:

The overall goal is to be as helpful to ECRs as possible, in a way that complements other researcher development offers in the UK landscape. As planning evolves, what would be your top recommendation to the British Academy for the future of the ECRN?

Focus on ECRs

A belief shared firmly by overview and hub-related interviewees was that '*it is all about the ECRs*'. Some suggestions reiterated this core tenet of the Network.

To never lose sight of why we started this Network – that the ECRs are the heart of it, so this is an environment for them to thrive and grow. We shouldn't change the ethos of what we are doing – not be target-led or very inflexible, but (aim) to be a sectoral leader and bridge the gap between those who have and don't in a reasonable way. (overview interviewee)

The (Network should) be focused on needs of ECRs, and (making sure that) as it grows, what they need out of it, broadly as a population, isn't secondary to operational needs or funders' needs. That principle needs to be kept at the very heart. (overview interviewee)

What we need to do is make sure that more of the existing members and potentially increased membership are actually engaged, come to events and put up their hands to run more. The more we can do to stimulate activity, the closer to (the Network's) aims – to be ECR-led and developed, with our help in resourcing and (convening). (overview interviewee)

It would be about demonstrating that the British Academy was committed to thinking about listening to and supporting the ECR experience wherever an ECR is based in the country. (hub-related interviewee)

One overview interviewee went so far as to tie together the importance they ascribed to ECR leadership with a suggested gradual development of a particular ECR-run structure for the national Network.

Once it gets to the next stage of development – when the Network has begun to be embedded, and operating as a national scheme for a while, ECRs themselves could begin to control it more themselves. At this stage, it is organised partly by the Academy and by universities, drawing on good will of research assistance people at universities (although their time is stretched too). Once you get ECRs to organise these things, and if you can be sure universities are providing levels of resource needed ... the Network could have its own committees, structures, appointments – an option as career (development) positions for ECRs interested in taking on a more organisational role. My strong view is this Network should become something handed over to ECRs, while requiring executive officers and people to run it. ... Make sure universities provide the very small amounts they'd need to be a paid up member of system. ... it may be in two to four years, with natural evolution of the system, that universities pay a subscription to the Network so their people can be part of a system with sustainable funding base.

Differentiating a national ECR network from learned societies based on disciplines, an overview interviewee underscored its power to increase ECRs' capacity for interdisciplinary working.

Given the importance of interdisciplinarity, a national ECR network is fundamentally interdisciplinary across and between arts, humanities and social sciences. If you can create a

new generation of people much more confident to have those conversations among their peers within and beyond their universities, you are creating a much healthier academic system and (can) break down those academic silos that have been around for so long.

National roles for the British Academy – and ECRs

Useful leadership roles for the British Academy were suggested, such as managing inter-region collaborations, ensuring universal access to offerings and collection of data.

Maybe refine what goes on in those regions and then British Academy (could be) starting to think how we might collaborate across regions, (for example on subject section or thematic like particular types of career development). So there could be the best of both worlds: a manageable regional network and the British Academy using its convening power at a national level to encourage cross-regional collaborations. (hub-related interviewee)

Keeping it in hubs could be quite interesting, facilitated by the British Academy. ... If hubs grow and evolve differently, what does that mean for our researchers and what they have access to. That is something for the British Academy to manage, so there is an umbrella of support, everyone having equitable access to what the full network is offering ... One thing they have done well, which I would like them to keep – all that energy for data and stats and plans to share it, is very useful for us. (hub-related interviewee)

A central issue that arose through interviews will require deliberation and strategic thinking by the British Academy for the future: what is the best relationship between national and any sub-national elements of the Network? Overview interviewees tended to emphasise the unique role of a national network, with implications for the roles of others.

We have been perhaps concerned that some of hubs have seen this as ‘their’ activity, but we want them to see (themselves) as part of a bigger picture. The kinds of systems of governance they have set up have sometimes been a bit top-heavy within their own institutions (or organisation). ... We are already beginning to think about the next stage, whether (the Network) needs to modify what it is doing. For example, is ‘hub’ the wrong term, maybe call it a ‘co-ordinating centre’ or maybe call it a ‘delivery partner’.

A different overview interviewee reflected on the challenge ahead, in drawing insights for the Network’s management from three hubs set up in very different ways. Nonetheless, the interviewee identified basic tenets to consistently underlie the Network in the future:

Other universities being able to talk to us as well as the hub lead. ... We don’t want undermining of hubs but we want to be sure members can come to us. And be sure their ECRs feel (they have) access to the Network.

While hub-related interviewees often sought more clarity on their relationship with the Academy in order to guide their own implementation, overview interviewees often voiced a somewhat different take. They tended to view hubs as an element being tested by the pilot, which thus could be changed or eliminated.

I think this (a pilot) was right and an easy way to take step by step expansion and tweak the process, such as how to manage eligibility. What do we do now, for instance what about institutions near but not part of hubs, how do we go to a national model. ... A concern (is) if we stick with architecture of hubs, we could end up with a permanent structure based on what was logical for pilots. If we started from scratch, what would the optimal national structure be?

Need for planning

Some overview interviewee suggestions had to do with planning, in order to make the most of learning from the pilot phase and move forward.

Focus on what is not already out there. There is no shortage of websites and things ECRs can look at, to improve publications or write grant applications, and yet ECRs regularly talk about feeling disconnected, unsure, wanting advice and guidance to the next stage of their career – identifying what is not out there is key. ... A lot of ECRs are in institutions where all they hear is ‘success looks like this and if you don’t you are failing’, and there are only a few positions – it is toxic. With a network, you can talk with different people, and can talk enthusiastically about how your PhD skills will never not be valuable, they can just be used in different ways.

You need to move to a national system, retain regional efforts practically, and provide career opportunities for ECRs for their cvs. ... Don't rush to measure by numbers turning up but try to shift as early as possible to a different funding model in which universities subscribe and pay a small amount of money to allow it to function. Have a clear idea of where you see the Network in four to five years.

To what extent can we learn from the lessons of others ... and can we plan ahead as much as possible. ... To continue to stay a year ahead in the planning process. We were probably too absorbed in the pilot phase and what was happening in real time to keep thinking about the future on all fronts. The task was very ambitious and was managed well; it was probably impossible to foresee everything.

Similarly, some hub-related interviewees also offered suggestions that had to do with planning and refining, following the pilot phase.

My top recommendation is around clarifying the answer to the question: what does the British Academy do that others don't - and everything flows from that. ... I would expect you to have aims and under that an action plan with focused set of activities or actions under the aims and who is doing what, clarity. Maybe really go back to those aims, working with hubs and perhaps also targeting big employers of ECRs. ... I love the energy of the British Academy team and their willingness to try things, which is rare. But I always find structure helpful.

Work out what they mean by 'ECRs' and why. What do they mean by 'early', 'career' and 'researchers'.

The British Academy providing more clarity and better timelines for the hubs so we can be better at organising ourselves and disseminating information. ... I am very positive about it all. I really can see a whole lot of scope and space for quite innovative development opportunities, but it will take time. ... Tapping into resources and expertise already in HEIs, reaching out into the community of R&D and professional services, saying what would you recommend and what support can you provide.

Some suggestions from hub-related interviewees reinforced or expanded upon what is currently happening with the Network.

It is already positive. ... Provide an early guarantee of what resources are available, and discussions on priorities for use of those resources. While it is great to have total freedom, once in phase two, it would be nice to consolidate learning and agree what to do. Cross-hub links would be part of that. - Confirmation of funding as early as possible; what funding can be used for; how to do cross-hub initiatives and what the remit would be for that. Clarity of expectations would be key.

Refine what goes on in regions and then British Academy starting to think how we might collaborate across regions So there could be the best of both worlds, manageable regional network and the British Academy using its convening power at a national level to encourage cross-regional collaborations.

Think hard about if they need a national programme of events ... think hard about what are the best things to put on in-person ... there really needs to be a really serious think about the use of the platform; it has great potential and I don't know that it is meeting its potential thus far ... put more effort and thought and possibly resource into a platform. ... Peer to peer activity and more involvement from Fellows of the British Academy.

Learning and evaluation

Interviewees were well aware that this has been a pilot stage of an ambitious initiative and thus represents an opportunity for learning. As one example, sharing across regions not only of offerings but also 'lessons learned' was raised, with a hub-related interviewee commenting '*maybe there is not enough sharing of experience between hubs*'. As another example, an overview interviewee spoke with feeling about the need for sensitive evaluation that takes into account the time pressures on ECRs.

There lies a problem; these things (events) need to exist but you also need to recognise the pressures of time people, particularly ECR people, are under; they may feel a need but not have a great deal of time or energy. (There is) a slight paradox, something urgently necessary

but compromised by the very pressures it is designed to combat. ... An organisation of this kind needs to be aware that its success should not be measured by numbers turning up for any event. It is complicated, it needs to exist so ECRs feel some kind of support, but should not expect mass numbers, Be realistic about that.

Annex A Framework of Core Questions

I. Overarching Objectives
IA. From the ECR perspective, overall, to what extent does the ECR Network appear to meet its objectives?
IB. From the Hub perspective, overall, to what extent does the ECR Network appear to meet its objectives?
IC. From the Funders' perspective, overall, to what extent does the ECR Network appear to meet its objectives?
II. ECR perspectives
IIA. What is the scale, breadth and diversity of ECR membership of the Network?
IIB. What are a) the potential reach and b) potential barriers to ECR membership?
IIC. To what extent have the Network activities engaged members?
IID. What, if any, benefits have been provided to members by participating in the Network?
IIE. To what extent/in what way have the ECRs' expectations of the Network been met?
III. Hub perspectives
IIIA. What benefits have accrued to universities participating in the Network (either anticipated or unanticipated)?
IIIB. What features or dynamics have characterised the role of the Hubs?
IIIC. What expectations existed (and were met, or not) and what experiences stand out in terms of leading a consortium?
IIID. What has been particularly effective in the a) governance b) financial and c) operational models led by Hubs? What has not been effective? What would characterise sustainability for these models?
IV. Funders' perspectives
IVA. To what extent are expectations of the Wolfson Foundation and of the British Academy being met during this pilot phase?
IVB. In what way(s) does the Network fit into each funder's overall strategic aims?
IVC. How does this Network sit alongside similar researcher development offers in the UK landscape? How might its position within this context evolve?
IVD. How are the operational and governance models viewed, in terms of their effectiveness and sustainability?
IVE. What would be the benefits and the risks of different models for structuring the network in the future?
V. Lessons learned and Suggestions for the Future
VA. What are the key 'lessons learned' that could be passed along from the pilot phase to any future Hubs?
VB. What suggestions would informants offer to the Academy and the Wolfson Foundation as they consider the future of the ECR Network? (e.g., Should it be continued? Rolled-out across the UK? Operate according to a different model? Be improved in some way?)

Annex B Semi-structured Interview Template

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TEMPLATE, 'BIG PICTURE' INTERVIEWEES

Introduction

Interviews with individuals who possess a 'big picture perspective' constitute an important strand of the evaluation of the Early Career Researcher Network supported by the British Academy and the Wolfson Foundation. (This is in addition to a survey of ECR Network members and document analysis.) Such a perspective is particularly valuable at this stage, when the Network has been piloted and the scale and nature of its future are under consideration.

Interviews consist of questions seeking insights: on the Network pilot itself, on progress toward strategic capacity-building goals for the UK and/or on the challenges and opportunities involved in 'rolling out' an initiative from pilot to national scale. Lessons learned and recommendations to the funders will also be sought.

Responses will be kept confidential but integrated analysis of insights from across interviews will form a significant part of the evaluation, which in turn will inform deliberations about the future of the ECRN.

Note: Interview inputs are being captured as part of the analysis to improve the British Academy's understanding of its ECRN. All responses will be anonymised by the external evaluator, when reporting to the British Academy. Personal data will be securely deleted at the conclusion of the engagement. Full details of the British Academy data protection stance, to which the evaluator adheres, can be found at <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/about/privacy-and-cookies/>

Background

In what way(s) have you been involved with the ECR Network?

Would you characterise your perspective as primarily: Hub leadership; university leadership; funder; programmatic leadership or other?

Expectations/Benefits/Objectives

What do you see as the principal expectations or hopes for benefits regarding the ECR Network?

Even though the Network is still 'young' (established in the spring of 2021), have you seen any early-stage indicators that the Network is leading toward such benefits? (Have either anticipated or unanticipated benefits begun to accrue to ECRs? To universities? To Hubs per se?)

What do you think of the 'fit' of the ECR Network to strategic objectives, in particular those of the funders?

'To create 'a thriving ecosystem of humanities and social sciences early career researchers'

'To create 'an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background'.

'To provide engagement opportunities.'

'To provide skills development and wider experiences.'

'To support individual ECRs by providing opportunities that they do not currently have access to'.

'To contribute to equality of opportunity for ECRs through encouraging diversity and inclusivity'.

'To develop the networks to nurture and facilitate greater engagement between and across ECRs and wider research community, regionally and nationally'.

'To draw on the Academy's unique ability to convene and nurture intersectoral collaboration to create unique opportunities for ECRs.'

'To develop and strengthen ECRs relationship and communication channels with the Academy (and through the Academy with other partners), helping to underpin the Academy's strategic aims (e.g. speaking up for the disciplines; investing in the very best researchers; informing and enriching debate around society's greatest questions; and ensuring sustained international engagement and collaboration).'

Hubs/Models

How would you characterise the Hubs and their consortia, in terms of particular features, dynamics and/or sustainability?

Have you been either impressed or disappointed in any way by the Hubs' delivery, governance, financial or operational models?

Have you been either impressed or disappointed in any way by the role of the British Academy in piloting the ECR Network?

In your experience, are you aware of good examples or models of an ambitious initiative's pilot phase being scaled up or rolled out to a national level? If you think about potential benefits and risks of rolling out, what 'lessons learned' would you pass along to the Network funders?

Looking to the Future

Do you think that the ECR Network should be continued, in some form?

If so, while the ECR Network has so far been in a 'pilot' phase consisting of an initial three hubs, do you think that in the future the ECR Network should be 'rolled out' further, across a broader range of geographical substructures? Do you see adding 'hubs' as the best way to do this?

The overall goal is to be as helpful to ECRs as possible, in a way that complements other researcher development offers in the UK landscape. As planning evolves, what would be your top recommendation to the British Academy for the future of the ECR Network?

Annex C Focus Group Guide

BA ECR Network Focus Groups

Introduction & Objectives

Commendations and Opportunities

What does the Academy already do with the Network that would you commend/encourage more of?

What is missing from current provision/opportunities elsewhere (at universities, employer organisations, professional/learned societies) that the British Academy ECR Network could be uniquely or particularly suited to offer?

Carousel: Solve the problem!

In bullet points, provide advice to the British Academy for the following issues that emerged from the survey.

- Improving Online platform/communications
- Expanding reach/welcome to ECRs working outside of academia
- Ensuring that Network offerings help ECRs in 'precarious' positions

Feeling Connected

How do you want to meet people/ How do you want to feel 'connected' or affiliated? (Discipline? Research problem/issue? Geographical region? Locality? National/UK? UK humanities or social sciences community? British Academy? Career stage? Other?)

Is geography important?

Balancing act: what is best done by locality, by region, by the British Academy/nationally, or by more than one/it doesn't matter?

- Getting to know prospective colleagues
- Getting to know prospective friends
- Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation
- Sharing issues/concerns with peers
- Gaining knowledge of key career skills
- Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality
- Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics
- Re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus
- Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community
- Feeling connected to the British Academy

Highlighted messages for the future of the Network

Looking to the future of the Network, what key issues or messages need to be noted?

Annex D BA ECR Network evaluation: Focus Group Input

BA ECR Network Focus Groups

Introduction & Objectives

Three online focus groups of ECR Network members were held in October to dig more deeply into key issues emerging from the survey. Twenty-one ECRs participated in total (10, 5 and 6 participants). While not numerous, the participants reflected carefully and their thoughtful input has been captured for a set of exercises posing key questions.

Commendations and Opportunities

[What does the Academy already do with the Network that would you commend/encourage more of?](#)

ECRN member focus groups were asked to identify things that the Academy already does with the Network that they would commend or encourage more of; clusters of their responses are captured here. Many laudatory comments were devoted to events generally as a high point of the Network's provision. In addition, many praised specific aspects of content offered in various forms, for example policy talks, funding tips, bespoke training, career advice. Several noted regular communications and notifications of opportunities; some mentioned actions such as introductions to funders or senior academics. 'Simply' providing a network was itself seen as something worthy of praise; many comments referred to the British Academy helping ECRs to network among themselves. The tone of the Network was praised, with people appreciating an emphasis on diversity and inclusion (including welcoming babies to events, and recognition of 'unfashionable' subjects). The emphasis on ECRs' needs and facilitating ECR leadership was much appreciated. Finally, efforts of 'hardworking and sincere' staff were commended, and more generally the 'motivation and encouragement from everyone at the British Academy'.

[What is missing from current provision/opportunities elsewhere \(at universities, employer organisations, professional/learned societies\) that the British Academy ECR Network could be uniquely or particularly suited to offer?](#)

ECRN member participants highlighted several gaps in the broad context within which they operate, that the ECRN could potentially address. Some comments related to a hope for more training, perhaps even accredited, including help with key skills such as grant applications, writing or networking itself. Career advice was also mentioned, perhaps a 'clinic' for career issues. Those with heavy teaching responsibilities may need help with research dimensions of their careers. Some help that targets disciplines and/or interdisciplinary needs could be welcome. Positive possibilities such as seed funding, an ECR journal and ECR conferences were mentioned. Information on opportunities, such as calls for grant applications, would be seen as useful and could tie in with the networking function of the ECRN, if teams need to be built to respond to such calls. The unusual ability of the ECRN to help with inter-institutional networking was noted. At the same time, the ECRN was encouraged to expand to include more institutions, with one comment being that *'the geographical focus is restrictive – this needs to be thought about in greater depth'*. Incorporation of stakeholders and independent researchers was also encouraged, noting for instance that many IROs offer far less provision than universities. The BA was encouraged to forge links with learned societies and other ECR networks. A general plea was that there exist in the sector *'a more nuanced understanding of the challenges/obstacles that different groups face - single parents, carers, working class academics, people of colour, etc. etc.'* System-wide issues for ECRs were recognised, with some hoping that the BA could help with advocacy.

Carousel: Solve the problem!

In bullet points, provide advice to the British Academy for the following issues that emerged from the survey.

- Improving Online platform/communications

ECRN member participants encouraged savvier use of social media, based on figuring out what ECRs actually use (e.g. perhaps a BAECR twitter group). An advantage of social media is that it might reach researchers outside of academia. Integration of the online platform with other existing (social) networks or other platforms could be helpful.

Some feel there are too many platforms in their lives already and would prefer (*concise*) email communications

A frustration to be 'cured' is that of registering and logging on to the platform; one suggestion would be to use an ID number always ready to hand, such as an Orcid ID.

Making calendar events downloadable (and making them easy to book) would be helpful– as would more lead time in notices for events (that include clear information on dates), particularly given the heavy time constraints on ECRs. Materials for workshops/events could be stored on the platform, encouraging its use.

The platform 'needs to be user-friendly and easy to navigate'. Making an app for the platform could be helpful. A filter that quickly identifies areas of each researcher would improve visibility; making the platform easily searchable by location/discipline and so on, with contacts, could help groups of ECRs collaborate, e.g. in coordinating events.

There are opportunities for improvement of the online platform, which to some seems '*administrative, rather than inviting*', with perhaps too much use of black and white. Use of categories of information, posts etc could be considered to improve ease of access.

Some suggestions have to do with expanding the contextualisation of the platform's context, to include current events in the sector (such as strikes) or to provide a coordinated locus for news about things happening in other ECR networks, for example in different disciplines.

- Expanding reach/welcome to ECRs working outside of academia

ECRN member participants offered a number of suggestions for expanding the Network's reach to those outside of academia. Being sure that those without an institutional affiliation and/or stable employment do not feel excluded is an overall suggestion, along with improving access to resources (such as libraries), or offering evening/recorded events, perhaps help with publishing fees. Some sort of affiliation for non-academic ECRs was suggested, perhaps a public profile on a BA-administered online community platform. One suggestion to ensure inclusion was to register people with the network before they complete their PhDs, in case they subsequently leave academia.

Operationally-oriented suggestions for reaching beyond academia are to: improve '*links with other sectors that do research, for people who want to move between*'; build links with government/policy writers; try to increase ECR/BA presence at industry conferences and vice versa; offer knowledge sharing with related organisations to spread information and link ECRs with industry; partner with other institutions to organise events, networks, awareness, opportunities. Reaching out to a variety of contexts was suggested, such as museums, archives, FE, schools, and IRO networks. There could be opportunities to involve or even showcase ECRs located outside of academia, e.g. to sponsor a blogpost series featuring ECRs working outside of academia; to run events linking people in and out of academia or to hold outreach events so that people can present about their new industry/non-academic work. A variation on this would be '*welcoming ex-academics as people who can recruit for their own institutions, giving them a platform to communicate about what they do*'.

Suggestions for the Academy in developing plans included: reflecting on different ways to do research and the contexts for it and deciding what the network actually has to offer people who cannot or do not want to be in academia. Underlying this is the fact that '*there needs not*

to be an expectation that academia is the gold-standard that everyone is aiming for'. A challenge to the Academy would be to 'put in some leg-work (e.g. snowball sampling people with Phds not working in academia, to set up a broader network (i.e.. recognise that there is no easy analog to the academy that would shortcut creating a network of people outside it)'. Finally, the Academy was encouraged to 'provide guidance and information about the possibilities for transitioning out of and into academia with a research backgrounds', providing 'information on the differences between working in and out of academia, without privileging one'.

- Ensuring that Network offerings help ECRs in 'precarious' positions

Some suggestions were for the Academy to ensure a pipeline of understanding about precarity, for example, forming a subcommittee to work specifically on precarity, providing feedback to the Academy or having a 'precarity representative' speak at BA board meetings.

Other suggestions were to provide even modest support, such as the potential for small research grants or stop-gap funding. It should be made explicitly clear that people on part-time contracts could apply for opportunities that are offered. Some hoped that the BA would take on some advocacy position regarding short-term contracts/improvement of opportunities or perhaps 'get more buy-in from industry to take on researchers and contribute to grants'. Another role might be in acting as an objective voice gathering and communicating information as to how different universities treat people on precarious contracts. Additional, practical suggestions included: advice on improving cvs and how to apply for posts; mock interviews; a job/project vacancy board; free training and events; mentorships; and connecting individuals on precarious contracts.

Feeling Connected

How do you want to meet people/ How do you want to feel 'connected' or affiliated? (Discipline? Research problem/issue? Geographical region? Locality? National/UK? UK humanities or social sciences community? British Academy? Career stage? Other?)

Highlights

Each participant could vote for their three top priority ways to meet people, or feel connected or affiliated.

Connectivity with the UK humanities and social sciences community was ranked most highly by two of the three groups. Research problem/issue was ranked second in all three groups.

For Focus Group 1, the highest ranking ways to meet people or feel connected were by Discipline and by Research problem/issue, followed by Career stage.

For Focus Group 2, the highest ranking mode of connectivity was the UK humanities or social sciences community, followed by Research problem/issue.

For Focus Group 3, the highest ranking mode of connectivity was the UK humanities or social sciences community, followed very closely by Research problem/issue and Locality.

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3
Discipline	8	3	2
Research problem/issue	6	3	4
Geographical region			2
Locality	1		4
National/UK	1	2	
UK humanities or social sciences community	3	4	5
British Academy	3	1	1
Career stage	5	1	
Other		1	

Is geography important?

Balancing act: what is best done by locality, by region, by the British Academy/nationally, or by more than one/it doesn't matter which?

Highlights

Overall, responses to this exercise indicated a lower interest in Locality or Region compared to national/BA scale efforts – and/or a lack of preference as to 'host'. This might reflect a broader cultural shift to more remote working and a willingness to connect unrestrained by the confines of geography. The exception may lie in a social dimension such as combatting isolation, which may well benefit from local or regional efforts in particular.

Only a third of the entries (26 of 77) were placed in Locality or Region. Two-thirds were placed in either British Academy/National or By more than one/it doesn't matter which.

Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation was clearly seen as best addressed either locally or by region (each with half the placements).

Half the placements for Getting to know prospective colleagues were by region (4), with the other half either BA/National (1) or By more than one/it doesn't matter which (3). No other entry was placed by as much as half in Locality or Region cumulatively.

Thus, more than half of the placements for all the eight remaining entries were in either BA/National or By more than one/it doesn't matter which. (Getting to know prospective friends and re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus were each placed three times under Locality.)

Not surprisingly, the preponderance of Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community and Feeling connected to the British Academy were placed under British Academy/National (6 and 5 respectively, out of 8). British Academy/National also received the majority of placements for Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality (4 of 7).

The preponderance of three entries, at 5 each, – Getting to know prospective friends, Gaining knowledge of key career skills, and Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics - were placed under By more than one/it doesn't matter which.

	Locality	Region	BA/NAT	>1/Not matter	Total
Getting to know prospective colleagues		4	1	3	8
Getting to know prospective friends	3			5	8
Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation	4	4			8
Sharing issues/concerns with peers	1	2	2	3	8
Gaining knowledge of key career skills			3	5	8
Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality	1	1	4	1	7
Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics			2	5	7
Re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus	3		2	2	7
Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community	1	1	6		8
Feeling connected to the British Academy		1	5	2	8
TOTAL	13	13	25	26	

Highlighted messages for the future of the Network

Looking to the future of the Network, what key issues or messages need to be noted?

At the end of the focus group, ECRN member participants were invited to send any key messages they wished to the Academy as it considers the Network in the future. Several clusters of comments emerged.

- Improve communications, streamlining and also revamping the online platform
- Recognise other types of institutions such as IROs; improve inclusivity of ECRs outside of academia, e.g. with events having different emphases and showing movement in either direction is possible, show that there are futures and possibilities outside of academia; 'show the world how valuable ECRs can be outside academia, not only the other way round' (e.g. with public profiles on BA-managed online community platform)
- Help ECRs to increase the impact of their work, connect them with policymakers, train them in writing for policy, provide opportunities for contacts at events, show how ECRs or BA members in general have changed policy in the past
- Link with other ECR networks, such as existing disciplinary networks
- Increase visibility of areas covered by Network members, offer chances to share work easily or to invite people into projects
- Recognise differences in experience, diversity, challenges of parenthood/returning from maternity leave
- Avoid being London-centric, get to know regions, mix face to face with online options. At the same time invite Network members to the BA to feel they belong, either for events or informal visits.

Annex E British Academy Early Career Researcher Network Survey

1. INTRODUCTION

This survey is a key part of an external evaluation of the British Academy Early Career Researcher Network, which the British Academy in partnership with the Wolfson Foundation is piloting for two years as a network for early career researchers in the humanities and social sciences. We are conducting this study to assist the British Academy in reviewing the British Academy ECR Network pilot phase. Evidence from this survey, along with other methods, will contribute to informing and shaping the future of the Network and securing further funding.

The aim of this survey is to capture British Academy ECR Network members' experiences with and insights into the British Academy ECR Network. It is designed so that completion should be straightforward and take less than 10 minutes. All questions are multiple-choice, with the exception of one question that provides an opportunity to offer a recommendation in free text. While your responses will be kept anonymous, they will be important to the British Academy in deliberations about the scheme.

Following a few questions on your background, this survey will ask you about:

Your involvement with the BA ECR Network

Your sense of any barriers to participation that other ECRs might perceive

Your expectations of the BA ECR Network and the extent to which you yourself have benefited

Your overall sense of the extent to which the BA ECR Network is addressing its aims

Your suggestions to the British Academy for the future of the ECR Network and its possible roll-out beyond the initial three 'hubs'.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the external evaluator

Laura.Meagher@btinternet.com

Thank you very much for your help.

The data from this survey are being captured as part of analysis to improve the British Academy's understanding of its ECR Network. All responses will be anonymised by the external evaluator, when reporting to the British Academy. Personal data will be securely deleted at the conclusion of the engagement. Full details of the British Academy data protection stance, to which the evaluator adheres, can be found at <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/about/privacy-and-cookies/>

2. BACKGROUND

Although your answers will be kept confidential, it will help us in overall analyses to know this background information.

1. With which Hub are you affiliated?

- Midlands Consortium, led by the University of Birmingham
- South-west England Consortium, led by GW4 Alliance
- Scotland Consortium, Co-led by the University of Stirling and the University of Glasgow

2. What do you view as your primary research area?

- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Arts
- Other (please specify):

3. Do you currently have or have you recently had a fellowship funded by the British Academy?

Yes

No

4. Which best describes your current employment status?

Postdoctoral fellowship

Postgraduate Teaching Assistant

Fixed-term contract

Latest in a series of short-term contracts

Lecturer

Senior Lecturer

Other (please specify):

5. Do you identify yourself as:

Male

Female

Transgender/Non-Binary

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify):

3. PARTICIPATION IN THE NETWORK

6. With which if any of the following have you been engaged? To what extent?

	High engagement	Medium engagement	Low engagement	Hope to engage	Not planning to engage
Attending events (including online events)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the Network for 'social' interactions, e.g. having coffees, 'chatting'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the Network for feedback/insight-sharing on issues to do with being an ECR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the Network to identify other ECRs with similar research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	High engagement	Medium engagement	Low engagement	Hope to engage	Not planning to engage
interests and/or as possible collaborators					
Using the ECR Network website/online platform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using recordings of events/presentations on the platform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a 'thinking group'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If you ticked 'attending events (including online events)' above, by whom were they led?

- Events led by the British Academy
- Events led by your Hub
- Events led by ECRs
- Not sure

8. If you ticked 'attending events including online events)' above, how many have you attended?

- 0
- 1
- 2-3
- 4-9
- 10 or more

9. Have you led (or co-led) an event?

- Yes
- No

10. If you have led or co-led an event, why did you do so? (please tick all that apply)

- Strong desire to learn more about the topic/issue
- Gap in the offerings available at your institution
- Opportunity for leadership experience
- Developing your skill set
- Promoting your work

Wish to find other ECRs in the Network with similar interests or concerns

Other (please specify):

4. PERCEPTIONS OF THE NETWORK

11. Do you have the sense that some prospective BA ECR Network members perceive barriers to membership of the Network?

Yes

No

Not sure

12. If you said yes above, which if any of the following do you think might act as barriers to membership? (please tick any that apply):

Perception that the Network is only for those receiving British Academy funding or holding British Academy fellowships

Lack of clear 'marketing' by the Hub

Lack of perceived benefits to membership

Lack of time due to professional commitments

Lack of time due to caring commitments

Perception that membership involves an overwhelming number of activities

Perception that the Network would not welcome ECRs in the Arts

Geographical constraints

Other (please specify):

13. For myself, it is most important to me that, through the BA ECR Network, I feel connected to:

The British Academy/national level

The geographically-based 'Hub'/consortium

The lead university of the 'Hub'/consortium

5. ECR EXPECTATIONS OF THE BA ECR NETWORK

14. Please indicate which if any of the following possible expectations or benefits of the recently-established Network you are beginning to experience (or have experienced), and to what degree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Getting to know prospective colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting to know prospective friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing issues/concerns with peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining knowledge of key career skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling connected to the British Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. I feel that my personal expectations of the Network have been/are being met.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. If the British Academy were to 'market' the BA ECR Network more widely (e.g. beyond the initial three hubs), please tick what in your view are the top THREE expectations that would encourage ECRs to join and that the Network should prioritise.

- Getting to know prospective colleagues
- Getting to know prospective friends
- Feeling less 'alone' as an ECR, addressing isolation
- Sharing issues/concerns with peers
- Gaining knowledge of key career skills
- Accessing opportunities (e.g. events) otherwise unavailable or of lesser quality
- Gaining insight into key career strategies/tactics
- Re-establishing myself in a research career after hiatus
- Feeling connected to the UK humanities and/or social sciences community
- Feeling connected to the British Academy

6. INSIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE/RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BRITISH ACADEMY

17. From your own experience and observations of colleagues, to what extent does the young BA ECR Network (which began in the spring of 2021) appear to be addressing (beginning to address) its overall objectives?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
To create 'a thriving ecosystem of humanities and social sciences early career researchers'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To create 'an environment where ECRs can strengthen their skills and networks to reach their potential regardless of their funding source or background'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To provide engagement opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To provide skills development and wider experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'To support individual ECRs by providing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
opportunities that they do not currently have access to’.						
‘To contribute to equality of opportunity for ECRs through encouraging diversity and inclusivity’.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
‘To develop the networks to nurture and facilitate greater engagement between and across ECRs and wider research community, regionally and nationally’.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
‘To draw on the Academy’s unique ability to convene and nurture intersectoral collaboration to create unique opportunities for ECRs.’	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
‘To develop and strengthen ECRs relationship and communication channels with the Academy (and through the Academy with other partners), helping to underpin the Academy’s strategic aims (e.g. speaking up for the disciplines; investing in the very best researchers; informing and enriching debate around society’s greatest questions; and ensuring sustained international engagement and collaboration).’	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. The BA ECR Network should be continued.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Strongly Disagree

19. While the BA ECR Network has so far been in a 'pilot' phase consisting of three hubs, in the future the BA ECR Network should be 'rolled out' further, across a broader geographical range beyond the initial three hubs.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

20. The overall goal is to be as helpful to ECRs in the UK as possible. If you were to offer in one phrase or short sentence your top recommendation to the British Academy for the future of the BA ECR Network rolled out as a national initiative with geographical sub-structures, what would it be?

21. If you would like to participate remotely in a BA ECR Network focus group as part of this evaluation (with input kept anonymous), please indicate your willingness with your name and email address.

7. CONCLUSION

22. Thank you very much for responding to this survey. Your input will strengthen the analysis and the insights it can provide to the funders.

If you wish to add a comment, you may do so here.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me as the external evaluator.
Laura.Meagher@btinternet.com

Annex F ECR Respondents' recommendations for the future

ECR respondents were offered the opportunity to provide a recommendation to the Academy regarding the future of the Network. (This was the only free text question posed.) Just over half (56%) chose to provide their 'top recommendation to the British Academy for the future of the BA ECR Network rolled out as a national initiative with geographical sub-structures'. Their recommendations can be viewed as falling into thematic clusters. While clustering can of course take different forms, the following set provides insight into key themes, described here briefly in sequence from the nine theme most often cited (Logistics including geographic, by over 17%) through four cited by 10% to just over 12% (In-person events, Specificity of offer; Communication, Diversity and access), and three cited by 8 or 9% (Employment issues; Specificity by discipline or subject, Logistics of training/events), to the one least cited, by 2% (Mentorships). Sample quotations for each are provided here to convey a deeper sense of respondents' views.

Logistics, including geographic

Many respondent comments had to do with perceived limitations due to geography. For example, many pointed out that they don't necessarily live or carry out research in the same location as their 'home' institution, or may not even be aligned with an institution, so they may be excluded from hubs. Most suggestions had to do with connecting beyond geography or hubs; a few respondents sought additional local activities not always at their hub's centre.

Let ECRs join hubs and go to events across the board even if they are outside their institutional hub's locality. ... Many researchers I know, work remotely and in the post COVID environment geographical flexibility is important. Moreover, research areas and topics are not hub specific, so the opportunities to connect feel stifled by the in-person events being hub specific.

Not to have geographical sub-structures.

You can have just one National-level BA ECR network; the regional hubs do not really play a significant role in this online/hybrid academic environment

Should have more clusters based on domain/ area perspective rather than having geographical space. I can resonate well with my domain and can reach out to explore more possibilities and maybe later the cross-disciplinary paths can be taken by a much larger group. Just giving control to one hub, is not fulfilling the whole intent of this initiative.

Allow for attendance to events beyond your geographical substructure

More regional/ local events rather than limit to three broad regions/ hubs

In-person events

While the utility and accessibility of remote offerings was acknowledged (and sometimes encouraged to expand), quite a few respondents voiced a desire for in-person events in addition, hoping in particular that informal gatherings could lead to future collaborations.

Encourage more informal, in-person networking- I think that is key to helping ECRs feel less alone.

To ensure that the network has physical manifestations and does not just exist online, e.g. with 'live' social and professional events, alongside the accessibility provided by an online platform.

It's laborious, but it would benefit from a personalised introduction followed by a virtual and/or in-person gathering. Post-doctoral life is confusing, precarious, extremely busy and poorly paid. The temptation is to compartmentalise all incoming propositions, however well intended, to minimise inessential engagement. More organic growth and stronger engagement will follow a more informal introduction.

Make the effort to organise 1 in-person event maybe led by the regional hubs with an offer of training, funding opportunities and networking. The relationships that are established during in-person events create opportunities for further collaboration, tend to last longer and do not have to be managed by the network afterwards.

Specificity – what the network offers, training, marketing

While some respondents did indeed voice the need for additional offerings in 'skills', many encouraged more tailoring by the Academy to ensure that Network members could find opportunities that are aligned specifically with their interests – and that complement what they could access elsewhere. At the same time, other suggestions were to simplify the Network's array of offerings. Both routes have implications for marketing. There is a clear steer toward an emphasis on quality consistent with expectations of the Academy.

A lot of the activities are targeted at a broader level than is useful - for example events that deal with methodologies relevant to humanities but not always to social science. It would be better to market specific activities for relevant areas

Gatherings/events aimed at a smaller collection of disciplines—I find it hard to understand whether events are aimed at someone like me. Given a range of similar networking/training/etc. opportunities offered through other professional associations, I need to know why BA ECR Network events will be uniquely helpful.

There is a lot of overlap with other ECR schemes, existing university and sectoral initiatives. The network should very specifically focus on what the issues are for researchers in arts, humanities and social sciences rather than generic things like mental health awareness or project management outsourced to companies with no understanding of the specificities of our research area (or research institutions).

More key skills events such as media training, museum engagement, perhaps linking us up with museums/media/other institutions.

The events are all too general. Perhaps more targeted events, where you can meet others who work on similar topics to your own, would be better.

Less but more tailored and content-rich activities, communicated more effectively.

Quality training programmes and workshops that are specifically focusing on ECRs and not otherwise available to ECRs

ECRs have many commitments, and engaging further with a new network can be burdensome. I think because of this, the BA ECR Network needs to be focused and unique, to attract participants by offering opportunities that are not widely available elsewhere.

Simplify your offer but make that really high quality

I would say the most important thing is to market the network more because currently I'm not entirely sure what the network does or how it achieves this.

Communication

Multiple respondents raised concerns about communications, including the online platform. A sense emerged that at least some ECRs feel bombarded by emails, making it hard to track what is relevant for them. Navigating and accessing the new online platform also posed challenges, including a need to register (beyond joining as a member) and/or to find identifying numbers when returning to the platform.

To streamline communications as currently the frequency and number of these are overwhelming, and it is hard to see the wood for the trees.

Streamline administration of emails, make it more user friendly online

Address technical issues with the portal

Consider that ECRs are generally both resource and time poor - so keep engagement simple

Diversity and access (including non-university researchers)

Some respondents wrote forcefully about ensuring diversity. Suggestions had to do with not only conventional dimensions of diversity but also working contexts. There was a strong sense that the Network should reach out to and include ECRs (broadly defined) beyond

academia; not surprisingly, this often tied in with wider comments about employment issues (captured here under another theme).

Should address a key issue in society and social science research around inclusivity of BME academics and the concern with decolonising the academy.

The BA should clearly articulate (and explicitly follow through on) that the BA ECR Network is for all ECRs, which includes people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, neurodiverse people, people with caring responsibilities, people entering academia at a different stage in life, people embarking on their second or third career, as well as people with the protected characteristics according to Equalities Legislation.

Please give underrepresented groups who are marginalised in ECR cohorts, and academia more generally, such as disabled people, particular attention going forward.

To allow more voices to be included and considered in the research environment.

Have a wider definition of what an ECR is

Make them more accessible to independent ECRs working outside HE.

Stronger emphasis on people working outside academia, esp. those who still want to research but not in a university setting.

To be as inclusive as possible, providing ECRs without formal institutional affiliation with access to a range of opportunities often only provided by universities themselves.

Get the message out across all available channels so that you make your presence felt among those who have had to leave academia but are eagerly hoping for an opening to return. They may not be accessing uni emails, but they may spot a link on twitter, for example.

Recognise the value of engaging with individuals beyond the academy as research collaborators.

Employment issues in the sector

Many respondents offering recommendations reflected on broad issues of employment in the sector, in particular as context for and sometimes barriers to engagement with the ECRN (or networks generally). Issues included precarious, unreliable employment in academia (thus tying into the recommendations for inclusion of ECRs not employed at an HE institution), excessive burdens on time diminishing ability to take up training, and often frequent moves (tying into the recommendations relating to geographic logistics).

Awareness that many ECRs are juggling multiple jobs across different institutions, often involving moving home/life at short notice to take up fixed-term contracts - making engagement with the network as accessible, user-friendly and non-time consuming as possible to accommodate those in the most precarious positions (and reassuring them that the British Academy is actively working to address the root causes underlying Higher Education's reliance on fixed-term positions and poor employment practices)

The network lacks thought leadership on the ECR experience/academic careers more broadly so it just reproduces the stuff that doctoral training centres offered at the PhD level, albeit well and with generosity and frequency, basically giving ECRs useful tools to navigate a dying industry many will be locked out of. To really make a difference it needs to be more ambitious.

To be frank, my participation in the BA ECR network has been limited ... In large part, this is because my employment responsibilities have precluded the ability to participate. I've staggered from fixed term contract to fixed term contract, leaving me with little or no time to engage in 'value-added activities' such as the network. (This) reflects the reality of being a recent PhD graduate, doing whatever I can to stay afloat.

My main problem is lack of time to engage because of non-research duties in my current post. Could anything be done to encourage institutions (i.e. universities) to create more time for their early-career research staff to engage effectively with the opportunities that the BA ECR Network offers?

Think about the timing of online events and how much time you are expecting ECRs to give to the the network - I am so busy in my third short term contract position at the same institution in 18 months that I haven't had the time or mental energy to commit to events even though I would like to

The Network should become a platform and a community that puts pressure on Universities to fairly treat ECR and provide more permanent employment opportunities.

Specificity, by discipline or subject

Respondents showed a strong interest in 'specific' benefits to do with connecting with others in their research areas or disciplines – which can contrast with geographical organisation. There is a sense that building collaborations or communities of practice in this way can lead to work that transcends hubs and even sometimes disciplines themselves.

Provide clearly focused opportunities to engage, so participants can a) justify taking time out to attend and b) build connections through interactive sessions on defined thematic/skills/interest areas.

Should have more clusters based on domain/ area perspective rather than having geographical space. I can resonate well with my domain and can reach out to explore more possibilities and maybe later the cross-disciplinary paths can be taken by a much larger group. Just giving control to one hub, is not fulfilling the whole intent of this initiative.

It would be great if the Network offered a mix of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary activities.

Rethink ways in which ECRs can find people to collaborate with - e.g. consider themed events for humanities only, social sciences only or specific fields

Provide a disciplinary sub structure as well, so groups of ECR with matching focus can meet up and discuss issues specific to their field.

Really focus on linking researchers who are working around the same topics to create communities of practice.

Link researchers by more specific sub disciplines in person. ... I would appreciate project development brainstorming sessions, hackathons, or collaborator speed dating events that have clear goals and expectations and would produce a beneficial result, as opposed to a vague networking session.

I would like to see more generative sessions where participants could speak to 'themes' or 'challenges'

I would like more focus on enabling exchange of ideas around specific research topics - aiming to foster meaningful collaboration around shared interests/complementary areas of expertise. I don't just want to 'be a researcher' and 'have a successful career' I want to collaborate with others to help solve the most pressing problems of our time. We are in a potentially existential ecological crisis and our society is under stress from many different angles - being a researcher is a unique opportunity to help address the crises we're facing and I'd like the BA network's events to enable me to build a network that would enable doing that more effectively.

Logistics - training/events

Some respondents offered suggestions around advertisement and timing of events, particularly encouraging access to events at times other than the working day – perhaps of special importance to those working outside academia.

Variation in times of (online) meetings - currently working full time outside academia as I cannot get an academic job ... I cannot attend most events, which is a real shame.

To unify events so there is a clear, reliable calendar of upcoming events.

To advertise online and in person events with more notice.

Mentorships

Several respondents encouraged mentoring as a component that would be helpful for ECRs at different stages.

Providing mentorship opportunities and creating vertical solidarity between ECRs and BA fellows.

Provide ECRs with mentors or opportunities to meet mentors and support writing retreats or events that promote both work and social aspects

More mentoring opportunities for less vocal, visible and older ECRs who are coming to academia later in life as a second or later career.

Annex G. Main subjects of ECRN members

What is your subject area?	Count	User No			
Row Labels	BA Funded	Midlands	Scotland	South West	Grand Total
Business and Management	3.48%	12.69%	9.77%	13.12%	10.91%
Psychology	7.39%	9.87%	7.71%	6.93%	8.37%
Education	2.61%	7.48%	7.97%	11.39%	7.85%
History	12.17%	5.36%	5.40%	7.92%	6.87%
Sociology	5.65%	5.36%	6.17%	8.42%	6.29%
Culture and Media Studies	2.17%	6.06%	7.46%	4.70%	5.54%
English Studies	4.78%	5.64%	5.14%	5.94%	5.48%
Health and Social Care	0.87%	4.94%	7.97%	6.19%	5.37%
Political Studies	6.09%	6.49%	4.37%	2.48%	5.02%
Law	3.91%	7.19%	4.11%	2.48%	4.97%
Geography	7.39%	3.81%	4.88%	2.48%	4.21%
Music and Performance	3.91%	3.39%	2.57%	3.71%	3.35%
Languages	3.91%	2.68%	1.80%	2.97%	2.71%
Economics	3.48%	2.68%	1.54%	1.98%	2.37%
Social Policy	1.30%	1.83%	4.37%	1.98%	2.37%
Criminology	0.87%	2.68%	2.83%	2.23%	2.37%
Anthropology	6.52%	0.85%	2.57%	1.98%	2.25%
Architecture	0.00%	2.12%	2.31%	2.72%	2.02%
Archaeology	5.22%	0.85%	1.80%	1.73%	1.85%
Linguistics and Celtic Studies	3.04%	2.26%	1.29%	0.50%	1.73%
Theology and Religious Studies	3.48%	0.42%	2.31%	1.24%	1.44%
Philosophy	3.48%	1.13%	1.03%	1.24%	1.44%
History of Art	1.30%	1.97%	0.77%	0.99%	1.39%
Environmental Studies	1.30%	0.71%	1.29%	1.98%	1.21%
Classical Antiquity	2.61%	0.42%	0.77%	1.24%	0.98%
Africa, Asia and the Middle East	2.61%	0.99%	0.77%	0.25%	0.98%
Medieval Studies	0.00%	0.14%	0.51%	0.74%	0.35%
Demography	0.43%	0.00%	0.26%	0.25%	0.17%
Social Statistics	0.00%	0.00%	0.26%	0.25%	0.12%
Grand Total			100.00%		