

# The TRANS-DOC Project

TRANS-DOC is a trans-Atlantic collaborative project between the Coimbra Group of Universities<sup>1</sup> and a group of North American partners with support from the Erasmus Mundus programme of the European Union<sup>2</sup>. TRANS-DOC stands for the TRANS-Atlantic aspect of the project as well as the TRANSferability aspects of DOctoral training. The TRANS-DOC project has grown from the earlier BALANCE Project funded by the European Union programme Erasmus Mundus Action 4 in 2006-2009<sup>3</sup>. The doctoral level was the area then identified by all participating university representatives as the most important field to explore further and in which to pursue closer co-operation.

Today more doctoral candidates than ever before are completing a PhD at universities throughout the world. In policy documents the European Union has called for many more to be trained to meet the future needs of knowledge economies. Yet at the same time doctoral candidates encounter increasing difficulties in securing employment as public and private funding flows less freely during periods of recession than in earlier, more affluent times. Added to this, the needs of knowledge economies also entail changes in the labour market for trained researchers. The “traditional” career path that leads from a doctorate to an academic position is no longer as open or attractive as it used to be, whereas alternative paths, such as entrepreneurial research, are less explored or promoted, often due to lack of experience among supervisors and faculty.

There is a growing consensus among policy makers and within the larger research community that the doctoral level will be the crucial strategic area in the future in which decision makers and research universities in the European Research Area and in North America must invest and perform well to ensure research excellence and promote research based innovation and entrepreneurship. There are several aspects to this renewed focus on the doctoral level, among which is the importance of creating mobility for young researchers to enable them to establish networks, but also to ensure dissemination and transferability of research and innovation. The ‘mushrooming’ of doctoral schools at research universities reflects a growing awareness of the importance of research training and the increased focus on development, innovation and entrepreneurship. This renewed and intensified focus on doctoral training has informed the main activities in the TRANS-DOC project:

1. A survey of the main trends in the organisation of doctoral training in Europe and North America, aiming to map the existing provision of doctoral training models and methods, identify existing exchange and mobility programmes, as well as the main research disciplines covered by graduate and doctoral schools. The summary report of the survey showed marked differences between doctoral education structures in Europe and North America, but it also confirmed that the institutional landscape of doctoral training in both continents has been subject to a wave of reforms seeking to support quality assurance, mobility and entrepreneurship<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.coimbra-group.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> The webpage of TRANS-DOC can be found at: <http://www.coimbra-group.eu/transdoc/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.coimbra-group.eu/balance/>

<sup>4</sup> The summary report can be downloaded at: <http://www.coimbra-group.eu/transdoc/uploads/TRANS-DOC%20Survey%20findings.pdf>

2. The development of train-the-trainers courses for administrative staff and faculty in positions of responsibility for doctoral training programmes. In particular, the intention has been to train trainers to undertake multidisciplinary skills courses, but the courses also have the further aim of raising awareness among faculty of the diverse career paths awaiting their doctorates in a constantly changing labour market. Train-the-trainers courses were held in 2012 at UC Davis (USA), University of Granada (ES) and York University (CA).
3. The development of a course template for doctoral candidates on general, transferable skills, to ensure that doctoral candidates are well prepared to apply interdisciplinary – and inter-sectoral - skills such as knowledge about funding opportunities, communication, interdisciplinary collaboration, team building, project management and entrepreneurial skills, etc., in a research and professional context typically characterised by international (e.g. trans-Atlantic) collaboration. The template is based on a transferable skills pilot course tested at the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York (SUNY), in July-August 2012 with an international group of doctoral candidates from partner universities. The initiative aims to provide a leading example of innovative ways of providing doctoral candidates with the knowledge and tools to enrich their research careers, employability and skills development, thus enabling them to respond to the needs of a society in constant change.

***Project Consortium:***

The Coimbra Group Office, Brussels (coordinator)  
Aarhus University (DK)  
University of Alberta (CA)  
University at Buffalo, SUNY (USA)  
University of California, Davis (USA)  
University of Granada (ES)  
University of Graz (AT)  
University of Leuven (BE)  
York University (CA).

# TRANS-DOC Template

## Transferable Skills Course for PhD Students

### Introduction

#### Overview

The TRANS-DOC course template, an integral part of the TRANS-DOC project funded by the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus Programme, is designed as a framework to support in-house delivery of transferable skills courses for PhD students from all disciplines and raise in-house awareness of the transferable training needs of future researchers. The course template is designed as a tool to be used by research universities and aims to provide a leading example of an innovative way of providing doctoral candidates with the knowledge and competence to enhance their employability prospects and develop the skills needed to respond to a society in constant change.

The TRANS-DOC course template is based on evaluations and assessments of earlier transferable skills courses: the LEADER course at Aarhus University in Denmark (2011)<sup>5</sup>, funded as an Intensive Programme by the Erasmus Programme of the European Commission, and the Coimbra Group summer course in Bergen (2007)<sup>6</sup>, supported by the University of Bergen Research Foundation (*Bergen Universitetsfond*). It also includes feedback from the pilot course at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (SUNY) from 23 July to 3 August 2012. Furthermore, the template also draws on experiences with transferable skills courses at individual universities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Before making the template available to the academic community in general, the course template has been tested and evaluated by North American and European PhD students and researchers during the above-mentioned pilot summer course hosted by the University at Buffalo. This two-week residential programme on transferable skills brought together 22 European and North American PhD students from a variety of disciplines as well as a number of speakers and instructors from Europe and North America.

The template provides an outline of what we believe to be the main elements of a residential course on transferable skills. It provides brief descriptions of course elements, suggestions concerning the selection of participants, evaluation methods and a generic daily schedule. In addition to the generic template, the daily schedule of the pilot course at the University at Buffalo is provided. It should be underlined that the pilot course at the University at Buffalo is one, i.e. the University's version of the generic template. The generic template provided here

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.au.dk/en/summeruniversity/courses/courses-phdstudents/leadersummercourseforphdstudents/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/groups/graddeans/bergen-summer-school-2007-report.pdf>

is an outline only and we encourage higher education institutions to structure and edit their own version in accordance with local needs, purposes and traditions.

## **Aims and outcomes of the course**

The present template is designed to promote experiential, residential learning geared towards participants from a variety of disciplines to transcend disciplinary boundaries and focus on the benefits and possibilities of cross-disciplinary cooperation. A residential course will allow participants to take time out from their research and focus on the transferability of their skills in a variety of target professions (academia, private and public sectors, industry and self-employment) as well as on the next steps in their career path.

The main aim of the transferable skills course is to raise awareness of personal and professional skills in a wider framework beyond any specific discipline. Specifically, it aims to make PhD students:

- Understand the social relevance of what they do
- Consider the possibilities open to them beyond their studies
- Increase their awareness of different career options
- Increase their capacity to re-invent themselves and be creative, using all their talents
- Think of what they can bring to a team
- Think outside the box
- Consider the meaning of leadership from a variety of different perspectives
- Familiarise themselves with job markets and cooperation areas and the diversity of these across the globe

More generally, the course aims at providing PhD students with experience that will enhance the following specific competences, as outlined in the Dublin Descriptors for the third cycle<sup>7</sup>:

- critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- ability to communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- ability to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

## **Course Structure**

### **Participants**

The course template is based on discipline diversity and recommends bringing together PhD students from all subject fields to benefit from the mix of disciplines, professional skills and personal experiences.

The choice of course participants should always depend on the structure of the transferable skills course and on the needs of the host university or organisation. The eligibility and selection criteria therefore depend on the nature and scope of the course. The 2012 SUNY

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<sup>7</sup> The Dublin Descriptors are generic descriptors for each cycle (BA, MA and PhD) based on learning outcomes and competences.

Buffalo summer course was geared towards advanced PhD students (students who are in their 3rd year or have completed candidacy) from a variety of academic disciplines. A fair mix of disciplines ensures group homogeneity and access to the content and participation on an equal footing.

Applicants for the SUNY Buffalo course were asked to provide a copy of their *curriculum vitae*, a motivation letter and a support letter from their PhD supervisor. It is recommended that applicants fill in an application form with their contact details. Entry visas could be an issue, depending on the country hosting the course and the nationality of selected participants. The selection of participants should be completed at least three months in advance and still within the range of a term.

It is recommended that the course starts with an 'ice breaker' session and team building activity to acquaint the participants with one another and to relax the group. The Bergen experience showed that participants benefited from the residential course. In its special setting: students, as well as instructors, were accommodated in the same residence to allow for informal discussions. The Bergen course took place at the Marine Biological Station at Espesgrend, internationally known for its mesocosm laboratory, in beautiful surroundings by the fjord and still easily accessible from the airport. Lunches and dinners were taken care of by a local catering firm while breakfasts were prepared by the student "kitchen teams". The organisers reported that all of this, together with the glacier excursion, the sauna and late night swims, contributed to the excellent rapport and enthusiasm among the participants. Having a residential course in such a special setting allows participants to step back from their research work and daily responsibilities and focus on aspects of their career on which they seldom have the time and opportunity to reflect.

An important aspect of the structuring of the course is the need to organise the PhD students throughout, mainly through group work. Lectures can provide students with different perspectives as well as opportunities to exchange their views with successful entrepreneurs and representatives from the private sector, governmental and non-governmental organisations, etc.<sup>8</sup> Active group dynamics, however, are extremely important elements of the course. Students should be made aware that they are not attending this course to *learn* about transferable skills, rather they should *reflect* on the skills they already possess, identify areas of improvement that are typically difficult to identify on one's own, *explore* how to enhance transferable skills and use them in a variety of contexts (academia, public and private sector) and therefore contribute in a meaningful way to collaboration outside their specific research area. The recommended formats are group discussions, group work and role play, whether in a large or small setting or ideally a mixture to provide everyone with enough opportunities to speak.

## Instructors

Instructors and speakers should come, to the extent possible, from different countries and be from a variety of areas such as academia, industry, NGOs to ensure a diversity of training delivery styles and focus. They should include self-employed individuals as they can present themselves as a case study and tell students about how they obtained their position and provide useful tips. A case in point was one of the sessions of the Buffalo course, a visit to

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<sup>8</sup> Examples of other lectures could be presentations of the role of media, fund-raising, or experience in coordinating major international research projects.

the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo. Students were given a tour of the Institute in small groups and a lecture by Prof. Campbell who provided them with an insight into the PhD and post-doc programmes at the Institute as well as cancer research careers and funding sources. Prof. Campbell specifically talked about the multi-disciplinarity of work carried out at the Institute by professionals from different backgrounds ranging from psychology to medicine. He also outlined his own career path and provided tips to young academics who might be interested in working at a research institute.

Depending on the course to be delivered, instructors and speakers could be faculty with entrepreneurial and/or fund-raising experience, with recognised communication and media experience. They could be human resource persons in enterprises and/or cultural institutions and/or government agencies, and one could include guest speakers with a research background who made a career in industry and/or alumni with successful entrepreneurial achievements.

The various modules will typically be delivered through workshops or lectures. While the former should be delivered by trained facilitators who are experienced in working with graduate students (the focus here being on group dynamics), lectures can be delivered by speakers from industry and the public sector, the goal of lectures being to illustrate a case in point. Site visits to a major local employer, local NGOs, local institutions and/or government agencies would complement the course.

Instructors, in particular those who will be facilitating the workshops, should introduce themselves to the audience, explain their background and the reasons they are involved. They should also introduce the workshop they will deliver and highlight the expectations they have of participants (i.e. that they are involved and trust the process). They may also initiate an overview of student expectations and learning objectives.

## **Course Coordinator**

It was underlined in the Bergen Summer School evaluation as well as the LEADER course in Aarhus, and confirmed by the Buffalo experience, that it is paramount to have a course coordinator who will be present throughout the course, guide students and advise them and integrate the various presentations and guest lectures.

The course coordinator should have a solid background and experience in mentoring and graduate training. He/she will also ensure the well-being of PhD students and have a solid understanding of the challenges in the job market.

He/she will outline the aims of the course and make students aware of the multitude of professional opportunities in and outside academia. He/she will link the various sessions to ensure that the purpose of the course is always evident and will explain the links among the activities to the students at reflection sessions.

The course coordinator could be from the host university, and at courses which take place on university premises this would be an advantage. The need to have a 'local' coordinator is less important if the course takes place at a venue not directly linked to a specific university, as was the case at the Bergen Summer School where the course coordinator came from Edinburgh. The important issue is to have a knowledgeable person who is able to coordinate student activities as well as contributions from guest lecturers and is willing to coordinate the whole course.

The course coordinator may divide students into small teams (as mixed as possible in terms of academic and cultural backgrounds) who will work together throughout the course. In this way students can experience the challenges and benefits of working in a multidisciplinary and multicultural team. The composition of small teams can be changed frequently to ensure that students have the opportunity to work with a variety of colleagues.

Another important issue is the interaction with visiting experts, which will have to be considered carefully, not only in personal terms but more importantly in relation to the overall course plan which needs to “flow”, i.e. visiting experts should be introduced into the course structure based on briefings and careful selection. The course coordinator and the team of co-leaders who should be on site over the full period of the course need to integrate visiting experts in the overall planning of the course at an early stage and ensure that they are fully aware of the aims of the course.

The SUNY Buffalo course coordinator was supported by a graduate assistant who made an extremely valuable contribution to the success of the course not only in terms of support to the course coordinator, but also, and especially, in terms of providing students with support and assistance at all times.

## **Time-frame**

The feedback from the PhD students at the Aarhus LEADER course stressed one of the recommendations also made by the European students at the Bergen Summer School in 2007: the course cannot be structured as a simple addition of modules or blocks, but should ensure an overlap of different types of activities which mutually enrich each other and at the same time allow for revisiting or reinforcing certain aspects or topics in the course programme. This type of flexibility necessitates the careful planning mentioned above, especially when inviting experts to join the course for a short period only.

The present template proposes a ten-day course plan based on two 5-day segments with a weekend break in the middle. Following the feedback from the students who attended the course at the University at Buffalo, it is recommended that the course not exceed the proposed duration.

## **Course Contents**

In many ways the course could be seen as a development of career guidance courses or seminars at bachelor and master levels. However, for the young researchers there has to be the added dimension of the ability to function in pluri-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams and of awareness of the need to create their own environment, be that as an entrepreneur, as a fund-raiser, a project manager or a researcher. Furthermore, it should be noted that a distinctive nature of a course like this is the involvement of speakers from a variety of fields, people who can speak with knowledge and experience about knowledge transfer, research for the good of society and leadership by drawing on their own work.

Leadership and knowledge of different academic and job cultures are essential components of this template. The University at Buffalo course analysed what it means to be a leader and how leadership applies to different domains. The organisers brought together a variety of faculty members who discussed these issues from the perspective of different disciplines. This provided students with a glimpse of what leadership is from the perspective of management, science and technology, community work and international research teams.

They also had the opportunity to talk to former students of leadership programmes and see how they are meeting their challenges. Bringing in people with whom the students can identify has proved to be very effective.

Students also attended sessions conducted by career service staff who took them through every step of a job application, from identifying the right job to constructing their CV and cover letter. In addition to this, each student received personalised feedback on how to construct their own CV. In the specific case of the University at Buffalo course the Trans-Atlantic element opened their eyes to two big job markets/cooperation areas. It is therefore recommended that this be made explicit by looking at different systems, structures, academic job markets, etc., preferably even consider a global approach.

There should be an effort made to stipulate the goals of the course beyond the text description. It seems that PhD students who attended previous courses had a different idea of what to expect from the courses and it is therefore important to have detailed specifics set out in the course description.

## **Recommended Transferable Skills**

The selection of skills recommended in the course template is based on the practical experiences of past summer schools organised by Coimbra Group Universities as well as on the “Vitae Researcher Development Framework”.

Five major domains of competences are identified:

- Self-awareness
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Knowledge transfer and Entrepreneurship
- Ethics and Social Responsibility

Each of the above-mentioned domains contains a series of modules which reflect the main areas of competences identified by the TRANS-DOC Steering Committee, taking into account time and resources typically available to programmes of this kind.

Please note that most of the individual ‘modules’ or building blocks ought to be carried out over two or more days to enable participants to include experience from other sessions when revisiting the module. Some of the modules require a hands-on approach and group work – these can be explored through workshops. Other issues may be introduced through lectures.

Below is a list of recommended modules per domain of competence. The list is not exhaustive and can be adapted according to the needs and wishes of individual universities.

### **Self-awareness**

This domain includes the intra-personal skills required to work effectively and to support continuing, professional development.

The course modules proposed within this domain of competence should enhance the participants’ awareness of their ways of working and learning and how this has implications for effective working, collaboration and communication with others. They will also help

participants to recognise when they are at their most effective, develop their own approach to managing time and consider strategies to manage their work-life balance.

The course modules proposed within this domain of competence are:

- **Self-awareness and personality (e.g. Myers-Briggs Test Indicator - MBTI)**
- **Learning styles**
- **Stress management**
- **Time-management and work-life balance**

### **Communication**

The course modules proposed within this domain of competence should inform participants about the best practices in presenting and help them increase confidence in developing structured presentations through specific sessions such as body language and rhetoric, audience analysis, etc. Participants also explore how to communicate research effectively with peers as well as with non-researchers (policy makers, experts and non-experts, the media, the public).

The modules can also address issues such as written communication and provide students with the opportunity to practice free writing techniques to help them overcome writer's block, explore how to efficiently manage and facilitate meetings, and how to encourage learning in others.

The course modules included within this domain of competence are:

- **Audience analysis**
- **Presentation skills**
- **Body language and rhetoric**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Scientific communication**
- **Communicating with non-researchers**
- **Communicating the research to others**
- **Facilitation and meeting management**
- **Written communication and specific genres**

## **Collaboration**

This domain refers to the collaboration skills required to work effectively with others beyond cultural and disciplinary boundaries.

The proposed course modules will give participants the opportunity to explore the benefits, practices and pitfalls of collaboration resulting in heightened awareness of what it means to be a successful collaborator. Participants will also consider what makes an effective team and think about their multiple roles within a team.

The course modules proposed here are:

- **Working multi-culturally (e.g. Barnga Game)**
- **Working effectively with others**
- **Working cross-disciplinary**
- **Working collaboratively in research**
- **People management**

## **Knowledge abilities, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship**

This domain of competence refers to the skills and the knowledge needed for the effective management of a research work and for the professional development *through entrepreneurship*. The course modules proposed within this large domain of competences will focus on issues such as information search, analytical abilities, critical thinking and problem solving.

Sessions about creativity, generation of ideas and mind mapping can also be proposed in order to explore with participants what creativity is and how they can all harness their own creativity. Such modules should provide participants with techniques and tools to develop their creativity in the future and participants should be given the opportunity to generate ideas using new tools.

The course modules proposed within this large domain of competences are:

- **Information search**
- **Analytical abilities**
- **Critical thinking and problem solving**
- **Creativity, generation of ideas and mind mapping**
- **Networking (professionally and personally)**
- **Project management**

- Risk management
- Building an international research team and securing funding
- Project planning, development and presentation
- Business planning
- Organisational leadership: different models and specific application of their leadership
- Career options

### **Ethics and social responsibility**

The course modules proposed within this domain are:

- Global citizenship
- Society and culture
- Legal requirements
- Respect and confidentiality

### **Reading Material**

For the University at Buffalo course students were provided with a reading list prior to their arrival, as well as daily reading assignments. They were also asked to reflect on the reading material in their daily in-progress evaluation forms (see relevant paragraph).

The reading material used at the University at Buffalo course consisted of chapters from *The Academic Job Search Handbook*<sup>9</sup> as well as additional resources from the web. It is suggested to include reading material on leadership and integrate facilitated discussions about the reading assignments throughout the course.

### **Learning Component**

The learning dimension is not restricted to the actual time spent in class with the instructors; it pervades the course through the links between the different sessions, the daily in-progress written evaluations, the reading assignments and the facilitated reflection sessions. Following a very last-minute cancellation from one of the speakers during the second week of the University at Buffalo pilot course, the course coordinator improvised a facilitated reflection session which turned out to be much appreciated by the students. Some of the speakers who would deliver a session the following days happened to sit through this improvised session

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<sup>9</sup> Miller Vick, J., and Furlong, J. (2008) *The Academic Job Search Handbook*, University of Pennsylvania Press

and found it extremely beneficial as they could understand where the group was and were therefore able to adapt the content of their session accordingly.

Following the University at Buffalo pilot course experience, it is recommended that facilitated reflection sessions be organised by the course coordinator either at the end of the first and second weeks or be included directly in the programme.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

The reflection and evaluation sessions are important elements of the pedagogical structure of the course. As mentioned above, it is recommended that these be scheduled at regular intervals throughout the course, either at the end of the first and second week, or incorporated in the programme, e.g. daily reflection sessions on the previous day's programme. This is particularly feasible when the same instructor runs sessions over several days. Besides these daily reflections, facilitated mid-course reviews can be organised once the modules related to a specific domain (i.e. communication or knowledge transfer) have been covered. The overall student evaluation of the course as a whole should of course be scheduled on the last day.

The evaluation of the programme is designed to take place at two different levels: through group discussions facilitated by the course coordinator and instructors, and as introspective activities, with students writing down their reflections day by day.

As regards the introspective part of the evaluation methodology, participants are invited to reflect on a number of elements related to the organisation of the courses, the pedagogy, the delivery of contents and the relevance of the assigned reading material. At the University at Buffalo pilot course students were asked to fill in two types of evaluation forms:

- An in-progress evaluation, to be completed on a daily basis while students are engaged with the programme during the two-week period. The rationale here being a consistent reflection to be submitted in the morning to the course coordinator or a staff person.
- A summative evaluation, which will constitute the basis of the end-of-course review on the last day of the programme. The summative evaluation was carried out in class with the students discussing in groups on the last day of the two-week course.

Students were provided with a set of open-ended questions for both evaluations. The evaluation forms used in Buffalo are found below.

The evaluation methodology used at the Buffalo course had a two-fold purpose: it was a learning tool for the students, as they needed to reflect on the programme in writing every day and simultaneously it represented a tool for programme development for the course coordinator and his/her team.

**In-progress evaluation**

The Transferable Skills Program for PhD Students at the University at Buffalo, 23 July – 3 August 2012.

Directions: We would like to invite you to reflect on the following questions daily at the end of each instructional day. Please provide careful comments on each day in the space provided or use additional space to write extensive comments.

Please write/make a link to previous responses, where relevant.

DATE:

SESSION/MODULE TITLE:

Content of lectures/workshops:

- Which content did you find most compelling and influential on your scholarly development?
- What additional themes or supplementary topics would you find most helpful?

Organization:

- Where did you find the organization conducive to imparting the content?
- Where did you find the organization less helpful to imparting the content?

Pedagogy:

- What main presentation strategies were employed?
- What aspects of presentation of the material did you find the most helpful to understanding the material?

Transferable Skills:

- What knowledge/skills do you think you will transfer into the future?
- Did you find that there were relevant skills that were overlooked/insufficiently addressed?

READINGS:

- What major issues did the reading material raise and how could you relate it to your growth as a professional?

Please submit your written daily comments to Justin De Senso.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Summative Evaluation: End of Programme, August 3rd, 2012 (to be completed in class)**

The Transferable Skills Program for PhD Students at the University at Buffalo, 23 July – 3 August 2012.

Content of lectures/workshops:

- Over the course of the two-week period, which content did you find most compelling and influential on your scholarly development?
- Over the course of the whole program, what additional themes/supplementary topics would you find most helpful to include in a program of this nature?

Organization:

- Overall, where did you find the organization conducive to imparting the content?
- Overall, where did you find the organization less helpful to imparting the content?

Pedagogy:

- Overall, what main presentation strategies that were employed were most helpful for you and other students to understand the content?
- Overall, what other aspects of presentation of the material did you find the most helpful to understanding the material?

Transferable Skills:

- Overall, what knowledge/skills do you think you will transfer into the future?
- Did you find that there were relevant skills that were overlooked/insufficiently addressed?
- What will be most useful to your scholarly development?
- Overall, did you find any components in the program that would not be suitable for a similar program for doctoral students?

Thank you for your cooperation.

## **Concluding remarks**

The pilot TRANS-DOC Summer Course on Transferable Skills at the University at Buffalo amply demonstrated the exceptional value to participants from diverse disciplines, both European and North American, of an integrated and interdisciplinary residential programme for PhD students focused on transferable skills in a global context. The general template included here, based on the pilot TRANS-DOC Course on Transferable Skills held at the University at Buffalo, offers distinct advantages over conventional, campus-based transferable skills programmes/workshops, which are typically discipline-based and focused on specific skills areas. The template encompasses a broad range of transferable skills that PhD students, whether European or North American, would find valuable in considering their future career options, be it in academia, industry, or elsewhere. Students in the pilot programme at the University at Buffalo greatly benefited not only from the cross-disciplinary perspectives of programme presenters but also from the intensive interaction with their fellow participants. Students came to recognize the value in prospective research teams of collaboration with colleagues from different disciplines and different countries. The TRANS-DOC pilot programme at the University at Buffalo confirms the desirability of making this programme model available more broadly to institutions seeking to provide integrated, interdisciplinary and globally-oriented transferable skills training to their doctoral candidates.

## Generic Template - Course Schedule

The modules should be organised in a way that allows for flexibility, e.g. as a result of morning plenary reflection meetings, but also to ensure that the self-awareness module interacts with e.g. project management and presentation skills modules, and the project management module should overlap the creativity and presentation skills modules. In the following outline the individual modules have been given colours.

- **Intra-personal skills**, e.g. Myers-Briggs test indicators, time management, stress management, work-life balance
- **Communication skills**, communicating research, communicating with non-researchers: policy makers, experts and non-experts, the media, the public, key rhetorical skills
- **Collaboration skills**, e. g. working collaboratively, working multi-culturally (e.g. Barnga game), people management
- **Networking, professionally and personally**
- **Knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship**, public and private: project management, fund-raising, project presentation, creativity, generation of ideas, mind mapping
- **Cultural/educational activities**
- **Review, Discussions and Student presentations**
- **Ethics and social responsibility**

	9-10.30 am	10.30–12 am	Lunch	1-3.30 pm	4-6 pm	Evening
Day 1	Welcome and Ice-breaker session					
Day 2						
Day 3						
Day 4						
Day 5						
Weekend						
Day 6						
Day 7						
Day 8						
Day 9						
Day 10						

It should be underlined that the table represents an example only and should be structured and edited to suit local needs and traditions. Apart from the final evaluation it is recommended to have daily reflection sessions, e.g. a half-hour morning session to assess progress and catch possible restructuring needs. The final evaluation should preferably be based on and/or followed by written evaluations.

## Pilot course - University at Buffalo, August 2012

### Daily Schedule

Transferable Skills Program for PhD Students at the University at Buffalo  
23 July – 3 August 2012



The program is supported through the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus Program (for further information, please go to [www.coimbra-group.eu/transdoc/](http://www.coimbra-group.eu/transdoc/)). The organizers also wish to acknowledge the Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy, Law School.

**Please note that you are responsible for *daily* readings and writing assignments**

### SCHEDULE

#### **WEEK 1: Communication, Inter- and Intra- personal Skills, Collaboration and Productivity in a Diversified World**

#### **Monday, July 23rd**

**9:00-10:00** Orientation to the Summer School

**Place:** 509 O'Brian Hall, UB North Campus (The Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy, Law School)

Janina Brutt-Griffler, Professor and Associate Dean, GSE, University at Buffalo

John Wood, Senior Associate Vice Provost for International Education

Office of International Education, University at Buffalo: <http://www.law.buffalo.edu/baldycenter/>

**10:30-12:00 Transferable Competences: What are they and why do PhD students need these competences today?**

Professor Marilyn Rose, Brock University, Canada

12:00-1:30 Lunch Break, 509 O'Brian Hall, The Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy, Law School.

**1:30-3:00 Session: Navigating a Diversified World: Strategies for Inclusivity and Productivity**

Professor Marilyn Rose

As our world becomes increasingly globalized, schools and workplaces are becoming more diverse. Intercultural awareness and sensitivity are a must, as is openness to intergenerational work teams and the inclusion of persons with disabilities as well as issues of sexual orientation and gender. Diversity requires inclusivity—and inclusivity means ensuring that the skills and talents of all will contribute to the good of the whole. This workshop focuses on dealing with diversity in ways that enhance understanding—and maximize the potential contributions of all with whom we find ourselves working.

*Transferable skill:* Inclusionary tactics for diversified work environments

**3:00-4:00** Campus Tour, UB's North Campus

**4:00-5:00** Meeting with the Immigration Office: J-1 visa orientation

**Place:** UB's North Campus

## **Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00-9:30** Introductions and Expectations

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

*Lecturers:* Dr Mark Bell, Director, International Learning Center, University of California, Davis; Louisa Lawes, Assistant Director, Institute for Academic Development, University of Edinburgh

**9:30-9:45** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**9:45-12:00** Session: **Working Effectively with Others using MBTI**

This interactive session will help participants develop an understanding of their preferences and ways of working using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. The session will also explore how "type" has implications for effective working, collaboration and communication with others.

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

**1:00-2:00** Session: **Learning Styles**

Participants will be given an alternative perspective on their working and learning preferences through the administration of a short questionnaire and discussions. Participants will then be asked to consider how their MBTI type and Learning style might impact on how they work with others who are the same as them, or different.

**2:00-3:00** Session: **Challenging Assumptions**

Participants will complete a short activity designed to get them to challenge assumptions they have of "normal" working practices. This will be followed by a discussion on how assumptions can impact collaboration, team working and individual creativity.

**3:00-3:15** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**4:15-End** Session: **Facilitation Skills and Managing Meetings**

This final session will take some of the learning and explore how it can be used in practice to manage meetings, facilitate groups, and encourage learning in others.

*Transferrable Skills:*

- Intrapersonal skills, teamwork and communication skills.
- Understanding of self and others' preferences and working styles.
- Skills for managing groups, teams and meetings

## Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>

### 9:00-10:15 Session: **Introducing Creativity**

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

This session will explore with participants what creativity is and how we can all harness our own creativity. The session will then move on to introduce two simple creative techniques (Reverse Engineering and SCAMPER). Participants will be given the opportunity to generate ideas using these techniques.

**10:15-10:30** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

### 10:30-12:00 Session: **Project Management Skills: Building a Log Frame**

Managing projects is a core skill for researchers. These simple techniques will give participants the opportunity to develop a project plan (and will be the basis for how they create their project plan for Collaboration Challenge on days 4 and 5).

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

### 1:00-2:45 Session: **Getting Creative with Creativity**

Three more creativity tools will be introduced; Random Associations, The Disney Method and Endless Possibilities. Again, participants will be given the opportunity to put one of these techniques into practice through a short activity. To stretch participants they will be encouraged to work with the creative technique that seems most difficult or uncomfortable for them based on their newfound understanding of their preferences. The session will finish with techniques and tools to help participants develop their creativity in the future.

**2:45-3:00** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

### 3:00-End Session: **Challenging Assumptions**

Effective collaboration is a skill. It involves effective communication, listening, creativity, tolerance and respect. This session will introduce an activity that will run over the next two days. Collaboration Challenge will give participants the opportunity to explore the benefits, practices and pitfalls of collaboration resulting in heightened awareness of what it means to be a successful research collaborator. The bulk of this session will focus on what makes successful collaboration, before exploring how to communicate research effectively to non-specialists. Overnight, participants will be asked to write a 150-word statement about their PhD to share with members of their group the next day.

*Transferable Skills:* Idea generation (entrepreneurship), project management, Communication skills. Breaking complex ideas into simple parts, communicating with non-specialists.

## Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>

### 9:00-10:15 Session: **Collaboration Challenge Activity**

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

For the first part of the day, participants will be asked to work in their groups to begin to scope out their new research project.

**10:15-10:30** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**10:30-12:00** Session: **Presentation Skills**

This session covers best practice in presenting and increases participant's confidence in developing structured presentations. Considering topics of audience engagement, top tips for success and a discussion on the pros and cons of technology, the supportive environment will offer positive and constructive feedback to help participants gain confidence and develop their skills, preparing them for presentations on Day 5.

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

**1:00-2:30** Session: **Inter- and Intra-Cultural Communication**

**2:30-2:45** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**2:45-End** Session: **Written Communication**

This session will consider how to pull together essential communication for written communication for projects (Mark). In addition participants will get the opportunity to practice free writing techniques (Louisa) to help them overcome writers block.

*Transferrable Skills:* Presentation skills, collaborative working, teamwork, project management, cultural awareness, written communication.

## **Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00-10:15** Session: **Networking**

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

Networking is essential for research inspiration and career progression, but is hated by many researchers. This short workshop will encourage participants to network confidently and with purpose.

**10:15-10:30** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**10:30-12:00** Session: **Collaboration Challenge Presentations | Groups 1 – 4**

The first 4 groups will present their new research proposals to the panel of judges.

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

**1:00-2:00** **Skills Session**

This session will depend on how much time we have left—possibilities include Negotiation Skills more Networking or Business Presentation Skills.

**2:00-2:15** Break for Coffee and Refreshments

**2:15-End** Session: **Collaboration Challenge Presentations | Groups 4 – 7 & Funding Awards**

This session will consider how to pull together essential communication for written communication for projects. In addition participants will get the opportunity to practice free writing techniques to help them overcome writers block.

*Transferrable Skills:* Collaboration, networking and entrepreneurship.

## WEEKEND: Experiencing Buffalo

### **Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>: Exploring Buffalo's Industrial and Architectural History**

**9:15-9:30** Board private shuttle

**Location:** Our shuttle will depart sharply at 9:30 am outside Greiner Hall

**10:00-11:15 Guided Tour of Grain Elevators**, Buffalo Mayor's Office Urban Planner Chris Hawley

Buffalo's grain elevators—monolithic structures standing on the Buffalo River's edge waiting for lake and canal freighters that no longer come—are monuments to Buffalo's former role as the nation's largest inland port. Today, all except a few of these enormous buildings are abandoned and no longer serve the trade for which they were designed. At one time in Buffalo's history, the grain elevators dominated its waterfront skyline and signified its industrial importance as the largest handler of grain in the world. Our guided visit to these structures will give students an intimate look within and around these monuments to Buffalo's industrial past.

**11:30-12:30 Guided Tour of Grand Central Terminal**, Buffalo Mayor's Office Urban Planner Chris Hawley

Buffalo Central Terminal was the terminal railroad station for the New York Central Railroad, the rail company that wed Buffalo to an industrial destiny. The 17-story Art Deco style station designed by architects Fellheimer & Wagner was a symbol of the wealth the city generated as one of the nation's busiest rail centers. After closing in 1979 and deteriorating after years of abandonment, it is in derelict condition, but is now being repurposed by the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, a nonprofit preservation group. Our guided tour of the terminal will historicize the terminal's defunct yet central importance in Buffalo's development.

**12:30-1:45** Depart Grand Central Terminal and break for lunch on Hertel Avenue

**1:45-2:00** Shuttle departs sharply at 2:00 for **Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. Martin House**

**2:30-3:30 Guided Tour of Darwin D. Martin House**, Martin House Staff. The Darwin D. Martin House Complex was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built between 1903 and 1905 for one of the executives of the Larkin Co., a mail order company that once existed in Buffalo. It is considered to be one of the most important projects from Wright's Prairie School era, and ranks along with The Guggenheim in New York City and Fallingwater in Pennsylvania among his greatest works. Our tour of the Martin House will give students an opportunity to experience one of the most prized structures not only of Buffalo's but America's architectural history.

**3:30-3:45** Return to Campus

## **Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup>: Experiencing a World Wonder: A Day at Niagara Falls**

**9:15-9:30** Board private shuttle

**Location:** Our shuttle will depart sharply at 9:30 am outside Greiner Hall.

**10:00-10:15** Arrive at **Niagara Falls, USA**

The living result of the most recent ice age, Niagara Falls is located on the Niagara River and drains Lake Erie in Lake Ontario. There are three distinct falls that collectively form the highest flow rate of any waterfall in the world. Straddling the international border, the falls are about 17 miles northwest of Buffalo. Students will experience the falls via the Maid of the Mist, a boat tour that will take us to the foot of the falls and offer the most spectacular view of all. The towns of Niagara Falls on both the American and Canadian side have walking paths, shops, guided tours, and dining options that help compliment the richness of this natural wonder.

**10:15-12:00 Maid of the Mist & Overview of the Falls**

This short yet exhilarating boat ride in the Niagara River is arguably the best way to experience falls.

**12:00-1:30** Lunch at *Top of the Falls Restaurant*.

**1:30-3:30** Free time. Students are encouraged to explore the park area on their own. Students may cross to Canada but need proper documentation in order to do so.

**3:30-3:45** Private shuttle leaves for campus at 3:45 sharp.

### **WEEK 2: Science, Knowledge Transfer and Innovation and Transferable Competencies**

## **Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup>**

### **Visit to Roswell Park Cancer Institute**

Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, NY is ranked nationally in 1 adult specialty.

*Depart: 9:00 am* (UB Greiner Hall, Meet at Roswell at 10:00 am)

Students will be given a tour of the Institute in small groups; a lecture by Prof. Moray Campbell will provide students with an insight into the PhD and Post-doc programs at RPCI, cancer research careers and funding sources.

*Presenter:* Professor Moray Campbell, Roswell Park Cancer Institute

### **4:15 Global Competence as a Transferable Skill**

Prof. Stephen C. Dunnett,

Professor & Vice Provost for International Education, University at Buffalo

**Place:** Martin Room, 567 Capen Hall

## **Tuesday, July 31<sup>st</sup>: Knowledge Transfer and Entrepreneurship**

### **9:00-10:00 The Role of Technology Transfer in a University Setting**

UB's STOR, a case study

*Presenter:* Professor Robert Genco, Distinguished Professor and Director of UB's Office of Science, Technology Transfer, and Economic Development,

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

[http://www.smbs.buffalo.edu/microb/Faculty\\_and\\_Research/Faculty\\_Profiles/Robert\\_Genco.php](http://www.smbs.buffalo.edu/microb/Faculty_and_Research/Faculty_Profiles/Robert_Genco.php)

### **10:00-11:00 The Entrepreneurial Spirit**

*Presenter:* Tom Ulbrich, Executive Director of UB's Entrepreneurship Center, School of Management

[http://www.buffalo.edu/news/fast-execute.cgi/article\\_page.html?article=93460009](http://www.buffalo.edu/news/fast-execute.cgi/article_page.html?article=93460009)

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

*Discussion*

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

### **1:00 – 3:00 The Entrepreneurial Spirit In Action (cont)**

*Presenter:* Rocco Termini, Senior Entrepreneur

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

Rocco Termini of Signature Development is among the movers and shakers heading up the revitalization of downtown Buffalo. His ambitious projects started a few years ago with Ellicott Lofts, a residential and office development on the edges of downtown where few investors dared venture. The success of this project soon led him to develop the Oak School Lofts, Ellicott Commons, Is Lofts, Webb Lofts, AM&A's Lofts, and most recently a \$43 million restoration of the landmark Hotel at the Lafayette. In short, Mr. Termini's success as a real estate developer continues to put the city of Buffalo on the path to restoring its urban presence.

### **3:30 – 5:00 Elements of a Successful Job Search and Research Presentation,**

Career Services Office, UB

*Presenter:* Robert Orrange, Associate Director

<http://www.ub-careers.buffalo.edu/>

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

## **Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>: Research Processes and Products**

### **9:00-10:30 Research Proposal: its elements and evaluation criteria**

*Presenter:* Prof. Paschalis Alexandridis, Distinguished Professor and Acting Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education (<http://www.cbe.buffalo.edu/alexandridis>);

Dr. Paschalis Alexandridis received UB's Award in Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring for his outstanding and sustained support and development of graduate students through their mentoring activities.

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

**10:30-12:00 Building an International Research Team and Securing Funding**

*Presenter:* Prof. Johnny Laursen, Head of the Graduate School, Arts

Aarhus University, Denmark

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

**1:00-3:00 Strengths Quest**

*Presenters:* Robert Orrange, Associate Director; Robert

**Place:** Career Services Office, UB

**3:30 – End Elements of a successful interviewing in a context**

Workshops

**Place:** Career Services Office, UB

**Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>: Understanding Successful School Leadership – Practice and Preparation**

**9:00-10:00 Research on Successful School Leadership, Practice and Preparation**

*Presenter:* Stephen Jacobson, Ph.D., Professor, University at Buffalo

Q&A Session

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

**10:00-10:15** Break

**10:15-11:00 Responding to needs in the Field – UB's Programs for Preparing School Leaders – LIFTS Preparation Program, Ed.D, and Ph.D. in Educational Administration**

*Presenters:* Thomas Ramming, Ed.D., Clinical Assistant Professor and Dr. Stephen Jacobson

Q&A Session

**11:00-12:00 Applying Preparation to Practice**

*Presenters:* Scott Martzloff, Ed.D, Superintendent Williamsville CSD and David O'Rourke, Ph.D., District Superintendent Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES

Q&A Session

**12:00-1:00** Break for Lunch

**1:00- 4:00 Branding/LinkedIn**, Career Services Office, UB (includes students taking professional photos)

*Presenters:* Robert Orrange, Associate Director; UB  
Edward Brodka, Group Learning Director

**Place: Computer Lab.** Students will work in a computer lab; they are also asked to wear professional attire as they will have their photo taken by a professional photographer. This photo will be used to build students' LinkedIn profile and professional brand for their online presence and elsewhere.

**4:00-4:30 Preparation for Friday**

## **Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**9:00-1:00 Final Steps: Research Presentations and Critique**

*Presenter:* Robert Orrange, Associate Director, Career Services Office, UB

<http://www.ub-careers.buffalo.edu/>

**Place:** C134 Greiner Hall, Ellicott Complex, North Campus

**1:00-2:00** Break for Lunch

**2:00-4:00 Evaluation of the Summer Program**

**Conclusion**

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