

Apprise Timeline of JENNIFER

Jennifer worked as a professional in North America and obtained a Master's degree before migrating to the UK in order to complete a second Master's qualification. She joined the UK study while finalising her doctorate; she graduated that year when age 32. She envisaged a career in academia, as long as she could make a meaningful contribution to society. At the study's outset she was working in two part-time research posts at the same research institute as her partner. The following year they both secured academic positions at another University and relocated. Jennifer worked long hours to meet her research and teaching commitments; her work-life balance was transformed by the birth of her first child. By the study's end her probationary appointment had become permanent and she was confident about her identity as an academic. What struck us about Jennifer's story was:

Quality of life, relationships, co-location and parenting (personal)

Publishing and tension between research and teaching (work experience)

Departmental/institutional politics and academic identity (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
Post-PhD Year 1	Partner working at the same research centre in a similar field. He was a major source of personal and career support. Quality of life impacted by 3 hour daily commute.	Worked in two part time research posts; challenging to meet expectations of two positions. Volunteered for community-based work in areas related to her research.	Concerned about professional status assumptions based on her youth and gender. Uncertain whether to remain in academia. Concerned about whether academia would allow her to make an impact on society.
Post-PhD Year 2	She and her partner secured posts at another University and relocated together. Quality of life improved by reducing commute to a 30 minute walk.	Worked in full time lecturing post; permanent subject to probationary periods. Increased sense of professional agency after PhD graduation. Passing probation depended on achieving academic publications. Under pressure to publish in high quality journals; difficult in her sub-discipline, which had no high-ranked journals. Worked long hours to meet the expectations of teaching; often spent weekends on teaching-related tasks. Challenged by integrating into a new institution. Concerned about departmental politicking and feelings of isolation.	With a PhD was overqualified to return her previous work, so academic career the only real option. Concerned to build academic credibility and develop a supportive cohort of colleagues. Struggled to achieve this due to disciplinary and methodological isolation.
Post-PhD Year 3	Pregnant and looking forward to giving birth to first child.	Ongoing pressure to publish in highly ranked journals. Teaching commitments expanded; research days often taken over by the teaching tasks; teaching very rewarding and being a good teacher increased her general confidence as an academic. Increased confidence so others treated her differently; negative gender dynamics lessened.	People manipulate the publishing 'game' so became more blasé about her publishing. Forsaw that parenthood would increase the likelihood of staying in academe; saw university life as more flexible and stable than other options.
Post-PhD Year 4	Arrival of the baby meant less energy and time for academic work. Suffered sleep deprivation and health issues.	Adopted more effective work patterns to fit with childcare commitments; controlled perfectionism and focused on completing tasks. Publishing success in highly ranked journals. Experienced her first rejection of a conference abstract and learnt from that.	Confident that academic career trajectory strong. Gained focus regarding what kind of academic she wanted to be. Nurtured wide professional networks to counteract negative departmental politics.
Post-PhD Year 5	Permanent employment status enabled her to feel more secure about UK residency. Sleep deprived due to parenting a small child.	Passed her probationary period, gained permanent employment and promoted to Senior Lecturer. Developed a new area of research interest unrelated to her doctoral work. Joined pan-university committee, which raised her profile within the institution.	Developing a new research area an important step to maturing as an academic. Reconceptualised departmental politicking as a fundamental part of university life. This allowed her to accept her own role in contributing to stressful situations.
Post PhD Year 6	Work-life balance focused on efficiency during her contracted hours with limited evening and weekend work. Renovating a house and parenting a toddler – both rewarding yet tiring.	Found an academic career mentor and joined a women's leadership development programme. Progress with research slowed by significant teaching commitments.	Concluded that she did not want to aim to join the top leadership of a university, e.g. as Dean or VC.
What struck us	Quality of life Relationships, co-location and parenting.	Publishing Tension between research and teaching.	Departmental/institutional politics Academic identity.