

# Apprise Timeline of CM

CM had been a pharmaceutical representative, research assistant and teacher, prior to completing her PhD in 2005, aged 33. When her partner's job was relocated to the UK she moved here with their children. She obtained a fixed-term position as a senior researcher at a research-intensive university and joined the UK study 5 months into this 18 month contract. She was deliberating an academic career. She was a non-UK national and English was not her first language. What struck us about

CM's story was:

Relocation challenges and work-life balance (personal)

Understanding her institutional context and gaining independence (work experience)

Getting tenure/ permanence and networking challenges (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
Post PhD Year 3	Tension between spending time on necessary but disliked domestic activities and enjoyment of her job. Wanted to stay in UK as children were settled; was foremost a partner and parent.	Research was cross-disciplinary, combining technical knowledge with social science thinking. Disliked the term 'post-doc' as it signified something short-term. Found it hard to distance herself from work even when on holiday.	Began to forge a reputation in a new, upcoming field through conferences, publishing and applying for funding. Did not see herself as an academic because she did not have tenure. Plans uncertain as financial security of family were priority.
Post PhD Year 4	If partner's work in UK ended then family would move – her salary couldn't support them. Found it difficult living and working in a different culture and language. Family meant she is 'inflexible', if offered a post she could not move them to new location.	Obtained new two-year contract with possibility of an extension. Took more initiative for research activities and more responsibility for her group. Excited by working in her field, its new and cross-disciplinary nature, and gaining reputation in her area. Struggled to understand how the university, and academia in the UK, worked. Shortlisted for tenured position at another university.	Wanted long-term job security, perhaps a tenured academic position. Realised needed to be more proactive, take a lead. Isolated as no colleagues in her discipline, recognised didn't network enough. Sensed research staff seen as 'second rate' employees, with limited salary and promotion opportunities. Shortlisted post would be a great position, 'academic', and interesting.
Post PhD Year 5	Family had mixed feelings about whether to move or stay in UK. Considered speech therapy but could not find what she wanted. Personal and work management hard but would be different when children became 'more independent'.	Received job offer of lecturer post in an 'interdisciplinary institution' outside UK. Co-led a project (not as PI), published, presented, reviewed journal articles, organised a conference; co-authored because not confident with her English. Not teaching, discouraged by poor student feedback on her speech, and lack of time. Supervised Masters students who have research projects.	Position would be 'A good job and good place to be'; prospects in UK not good. Presenting elicited feedback; reviewing aided better writing; organising conference raised her profile. Interesting, learned new things, chance to publish with students as co-authors. Had flexibility as researcher over when to work; 'intensive' time now building her future.
Post PhD Year 6	Moved back home, 'complex decision', culture change a 'shock' needing time to adjust. Work-family time management still a huge task; partner less available owing to increased work commitments.	Newly created lectureship in university back home - teaching, administration, some research; enjoyed it. Obtained 3-year funding and hired researcher to continue research and collaboration with former UK colleagues. Worked full-time 6 days a week. Visited former UK colleagues, organised another UK-based conference; continued to publish. More confident about being independent, making decisions, what to work on.	Could chape role how she wanted; likely to become permanent post in four-five years. Reputation of funding source gave her sense of 'prestige'. Needed a network and to raise her visibility; permanence judged on papers and publishing, not teaching – advised herself to play the system. Regretted lack of role model to assist her academic development.
Post PhD Year 7	Long-term issue of time management and family-work balance would not 'get easier'; extended family and nanny helped with childcare. Missed the UK and her friends there but did the right thing in moving – felt more secure back home.	Job was more routine, easier. Undertook new courses ('challenging'); publishing, presenting, supervising research students, community work, two new research projects. Funded project now in 2nd year: obtained research assistant in UK, planned conference paper together.	Shaped focus of the field for herself, her research assistants and the university – followed her own interests. Isolated in current location, wanted to maintain contact with former UK colleagues. Hoped to contribute to national policy or planning in the long-term.
Post PhD Year 8	Children were older so she had slightly higher 'degrees of freedom'.	Continued to teach, conduct research, supervise students, publish, submit grant applications, attended conferences abroad. Involved with national research community and two local research consortia. Still collaborated with former UK colleagues.	Felt secure in her position.
What struck us	Relocation challenges Work-life balance.	Understanding her institutional context Gaining independence	Getting tenure/ permanence Networking challenges



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