

**Much faith is being placed in narrative format CVs, like the Resume for Researchers, to bring about a shift in how we recognise and reward researchers, but is Cambridge, or indeed the wider academic sector, ready for the change?**

Rewards and incentives are one of the eight pillars of open research, and so the open research festival was an ideal opportunity to look at how narrative CVs might help to drive change in open research practice, and improvements to the wider research culture. Our session focused on the Resume for Researchers format (R4R), which was developed by the Royal Society and is being adopted by UKRI. The format provides space for researchers to write in detail about their contributions to the generation of knowledge, the development of others, the wider research community, and broader society. The hope is that selection panels will start to consider these broader contributions to research in their decisions, and that researchers in turn will be incentivised to contribute in ways that lead to an improved research culture.

The R4R was only formally launched in 2020, and so most of our workshop participants weren't familiar with it. Given the momentum behind narrative CVs at the moment, it was interesting to get a sense of how our research community is likely to react to these changes, and what kind of support we might need to provide them with to make narrative CVs a success.

The session participants could see that the R4R format offered applicants the chance to highlight non-traditional career paths, something which they felt might support a more diverse applicant pool. They were also positive about the way the format gave profile to activities like public engagement, and could see how this might encourage more people contribute in such ways.

There were also a number of concerns raised. The participants expressed some scepticism about whether the new format would really change recruitment practice, particularly noting that a lot of the content contained within a narrative CV would be contained within a cover letter in many recruitment scenarios. There was also a concern that the format might drive new inequalities, favouring those who were good at crafting convincing narratives and those whose funders and/or PIs provided them with the support and opportunity to engage in the wide range of activity showcased in the R4R.

It's clear that more work needs to be done to make this new format really work for the research community at Cambridge – and we hear these same concerns being voiced elsewhere in the sector. An academic in the audience called for the format to be 'tested' alongside a standard format, to iron out some of these concerns and encourage uptake. In 2022, the Research Culture team at Cambridge will be starting a project to do just that, to contributing a much needed evidence base on whether and how narrative CVs affect recruitment decisions and hence how they might contribute to culture change.