

Call for Papers:

Early Career Experiences in the University



****New Deadline – April 29th****

Much has been written about the so-called “neoliberal” university, and how this has impacted students, student-teacher relationships, and general conceptions about the purposes and promises of a university education. As Berg and Seiber (2016) note, the term “crisis” is ubiquitous as a description of current experiences in the university, sometimes at the expense of other possibilities for what a university is or might become. For those working in the humanities, there seem to be additional constraints, in part arising from pressures to showcase how and in what sense one’s research is “useful” in the limited ways this is characterised in the current climate of higher education (e.g. Mahon, 2021; Brady, 2021).

As demonstrated by the recent waves of industrial action in contexts such as the UK, there have been growing concerns about early career academics in particular, given the “publish or perish” context of academia as well as wider anxieties around casualisation and job security. And yet, there has been a limited range of *philosophical* commentary on this situation - for and from those at intersections that make them doubly compromised, including early career colleagues working within the arts and humanities. What are some of the root causes or reasons behind this particular rendering of the university, and what is the role of the early career academic in this context? Do these alarmist diagnoses of the neoliberal university ring true for the early career academic? Are there also aspects of the university worth protecting and defending in light of this? Is this situation unique for early career scholars working in non-dominant fields (such as philosophy of education), and if so, how might it be understood? In short: how might these questions be addressed philosophically, in a way that speaks to the concrete situation of the early career academic in the university today?

Following on from a series of events that focused on supporting early career researchers working in non-empirical domains in education, this call for papers seeks to capture early career experiences in the university using philosophical or theoretically-informed approaches. Papers will be selected for a one-day conference on **Wednesday, 18th September, 2024** which aims to (a) showcase early career research in these domains and (b) foster a supportive environment in which research can be shared, discussed and worked on in a collective and collaborative setting.

The conference is free of charge with a sandwich lunch provided (thanks to the PESGB Development Committee). In addition, there will be grants of up to £150 to cover the cost of transport and accommodation, subject to availability. **If you wish to avail of the grant, please mention this in your email to the organiser along with a rough estimation of your costs.**

The conference will take place in the Institute of Education, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society, where the organiser is based. There may be a hybrid option for those unable to attend in person, if enough interest is registered. However, it is worth noting that in-person attendance is preferred wherever possible. **When submitting your work, please also say whether you would be able to attend in person.**

Please submit a 1000-word paper to alison.brady.14@ucl.ac.uk by **29th of April**. Successful authors will be notified by **early May**.

The Small Print

The conference will consist of short “work-in-progress” paper presentations followed by a written response from a designated mentor. These papers will be shared in advance of the session, with working groups established such as to provide tailored feedback to participants to enable them to prepare their papers for publication or conference presentations.

The conference itself will be open to those with papers selected as well as anyone interested in (supporting) early career scholarship. Papers may address topics specific to early career experiences, but we also welcome suitable papers from early career scholars that address concerns beyond this theme. Those selected must identify as early career, conventionally defined as someone who is in the late stages of their PhDs and/or has completed their PhDs within the last 10 years. However, it is also open to those who consider themselves early career because of particular institutional constraints or personal responsibilities that have delayed their work in some way. We particularly welcome those who come from backgrounds not typically represented in philosophy of education. If you are unsure of whether you qualify, please get in touch with the organiser.

Papers which focus on theoretically-grounded explorations will be prioritised, however other disciplinary approaches (including interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or empirical research) will *not* be discounted. We particularly welcome papers that are experimental in nature.

If you are interested in acting in a mentoring role, please also get in touch with the organiser. Interested mentors from backgrounds not typically represented in philosophy of education are particularly welcome.

For further inquiries, contact the organiser: Alison Brady (alison.brady.14@ucl.ac.uk)

References

Berg, M. and Seiber, B. K. (2016) *The slow professor: challenging the culture of speed in the academy*, University of Toronto Press: Canada.

Mahon, Á. (ed.) (2021) *The promise of the university: reclaiming humanity, humility, and hope*, Springer: Singapore.

Brady, A. (2021). “Early career anxieties in the university: the crisis of institutional bad faith”, in: Á. Mahon (ed.) *The promise of the university, reclaiming humanity, humility and hope*, Springer: Singapore.