



Top Ten Tips for inter- and transdisciplinary academic careers **from SHAPE-ID partner, [Professor Catherine Lyall](#)**

1

Especially if you are an early stage researcher, recognise that drawing on and integrating two or more bodies of literature, methodologies and research cultures will be challenging – don't be too hard on yourself and don't be afraid of asking for help.

2

It is easy to feel isolated, unless based with like-minded individuals, so try to find people to share problems and lessons learned with – think about networking and community building within and beyond your institution.

3

Build core competencies to sustain inter- and transdisciplinary research careers. These include “metaskills” training (such as leadership, communication, negotiation, etc.) and general “academic life skills” – a good mentor can help with these.

4

If you are studying for a PhD, use your supervisors to help you set manageable boundaries and work with your supervisors to ensure clarity and continuity of communication between all parties about methodologies, format and the focus of your thesis

5

Labels seem to matter in academia so think carefully about your “academic identity”: how do you present yourself and your research to others? This may vary depending on your audience and can also evolve over time.

6

Spell out what is your unique contribution - it may not be obvious to someone from another discipline. Interdisciplinary projects may not provide new knowledge within a discipline but from the intersection of several disciplines.

7

You may need to be more strategic to secure career advancement in comparison with your mono-disciplinary peers: plan your portfolio of publications and conference presentations

8

Annotate your CV to explain your contributions to collaborative work

9

Talk to your institutional leaders and call them to account if the institutional rhetoric about valuing inter- and transdisciplinary is hindered by academic and administrative structures.

10

Contribute to your community - knowledge of the benefits of inter-and transdisciplinary research and their contribution to academic careers will grow when its practitioners participate in peer review, the development of new funding schemes and mentoring.

Further Resources

➔ SHAPE-ID toolkit: [Develop a career in inter-and transdisciplinary research](#)

About the Author

Prof Catherine Lyall is author of [Being an Interdisciplinary Academic. How Institutions Shape University Careers](#) and co-author of [Interdisciplinary Research Journeys. Practical Strategies for Capturing Creativity](#)

