POSTGRADUATE TRAINING SEMINAR

The Academic Portfolio

The following three pieces of advice will prove useful when preparing an academic portfolio, at any stage of your mathematical career:

1. Start early: estimate how much time you'll need and start one month before that

2. Double-check deadlines and instructions: make sure you've explicitly responded to the call

3. Do not submit if you are the only person who has read through your materials

Most applications will include two or more of the following components:

- Cover Letter (or) Abstract (or) Proposal Summary (or) Statement of Intent

- Curriculum Vitae

- Research Statement (or) Research Proposal [*Note: these are not necessarily equal!*]

- Teaching Statement (and/or) Teaching Record [*This may include course evaluations/data*]

- Letters of Reference (and/or) Supporting Statement from Host/Host Institution

Other items you may encounter: thesis abstract, essay on justification/reasons for applying to X, biosketch, proposed course offerings, publication list with summary/abstracts, transcripts, summary of Research Statement, ...

Things to keep in mind when preparing your documents:

- The collection of items as a whole should be **very polished**

- Use the spell-checker and ask professionals for help if you are uncertain about your grammar or style

- **Don't try to squeeze stuff in!** An uncluttered application conveys much more information

An obvious, but important statement: For all of the documents you create, make an editable LaTeX file which you can duplicate and adjust for different purposes.

Here are some suggestions for how to get started!

- YEAR 1

    - Begin with your CV: contact info, education, publications, awards, talks, teaching, outreach
    - Look for gaps: are there any obvious ways you can start "rounding out" your CV?
    - A good practice run: application essay to attend a conference

- YEAR 2

    - Add/update your CV (or create one) and look for secondary gaps:
        * What types of conferences are you attending: local, national, international?
        * Have you obtained any training you could add?
        * Any (academic) societies, committees or public engagement?
    - Start investigating funding in your research area (even just finding/reading grant calls can be helpful)
    - A second good practice run: QMUL internal scholarship essays
    - If you have some teaching experience, you can begin to draft your teaching statement.
    - Now is also a good time to ask people to observe you for feedback (students, module supervisors, PGR Director, me), since you can use this in your Teaching Statement

- YEAR 3 +

    - Update your CV and show it to several staff members for feedback (besides your advisor)
    - Prepare your Research Statement
        * Write a "master draft" in the summer before you plan to apply/leave
        * Check the call: does your RS need to be 2 pages? 5 pages? 10 pages with a summary?
        * Get feedback, both internally (SMS) and at the Host institution (if/whenever possible)
    - Rework/edit your Teaching Statement
        * Include any new teaching experience, courses, certifications, etc.
        * Hard data is appreciated: include concrete feedback/quotes, numbers
        * Keep this document **brief**
    - Draft a (generic) Cover Letter to adjust for postdoc applications and adjust accordingly
    - Decide on your Reference Letter Writers
        * Discuss your application plans: they may suggest some places/contacts
        * Give them plenty of lead time and as complete a list as possible
        * These are good people to ask for feedback on your application materials (but don't restrict to them!)

A second obvious, but very important statement: As with all beginnings, getting started can be challenging. However, the more proactive you are (both in your research, teaching, etc. and in developing your materials), the more feedback and direction you will find. Don't be daunted or discouraged!