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Abstract:

Title: Identifying transferable skills to enhance Early Career Researchers employability

Doctoral candidates are facing a diverse employment landscape that shifted significantly in the last decades, with less than 30 % of doctoral graduates working in academia or in research and development related jobs. In addition to becoming more inter-sectoral, working environments are becoming increasingly inter-national and inter-disciplinary. This development can make the employment requirements often demanding and sometimes overwhelming for doctoral graduates. However, recent research shows that training in transferable skills (i.e. skills learned in one context that are useful in another) can significantly increase doctoral candidates' employability and promote diverse careers paths. Thus, doctoral candidates have to prepare already during their doctoral period and take sufficient training to successfully satisfy the qualification demands of today's labor markets. Nevertheless, with (too often) poor supervision and a lack of awareness and structure for transferable skills training in many doctoral programmes, many doctoral candidates struggle to identify the set of transferable skills relevant for their individual situation and, as a consequence, fail to acquire the necessary training and experience. Considering this context, the objective of this study is twofold: (1) identify transferable skills that are relevant for early career researchers to gather during their doctoral training programme, independently of the discipline, in order to increase their employability in multiple work sectors; (2) provide advice on how to gather these skills and, in cases where this is necessary, on how to document them.

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