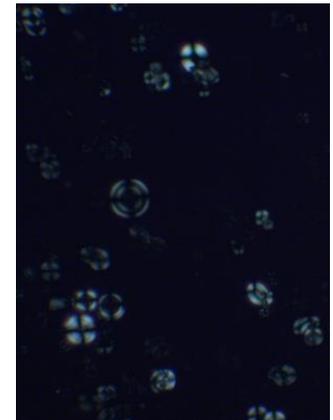


# My Career in Academia – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

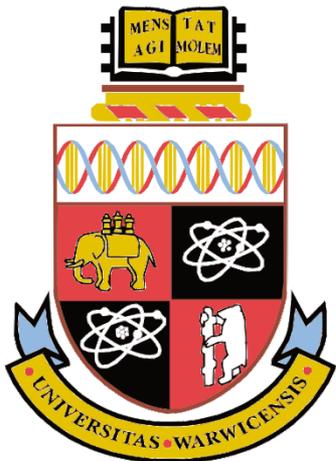
Dr Alan Goddard



# BSc (1999-2002)

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- BSc (Hons) First Class Biological Sciences with Molecular Genetics.
  - Society for General Microbiology Summer Studentship
  - Apply for everything you can, get all the experience you can.



# PhD (2002-2006)

- Lab work / lab work / lab work
  - Enjoy the highs and ride out the lows
  - Persistence is key

- Publications

- Comments / comments / comments
- “Publish or perish”

- Supervisor

- “Don’t be [redacted] and if you are [redacted] don’t make me look [redacted]”
- Take on board good advice!

- Viva

- Prepare!! (And pick good examiners!)
- Enjoy it

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# Postdoc number 1 (2006-2009)

- Characterisation of denitrification in *Paracoccus denitrificans*
  - Keep your CV up to date!
- Interview = job
- Papers
  - Rejection (thanks PNAS!)
  - Still waiting on at least one (submitted August 2016!)
  - Collaboration vs specialisation
  - Learn all the skills you can
- Job “security”
  - My “1 year” rule
- Grants (or lack of)
- Supervision of others
  - Learn from other people!



# Postdoc number 2 (2009-2012)

- Single molecule investigation of GPCR dimerisation
  - Never take a job where you already know how to do all of it
- Interview = job (vs one of my close friends)
- Papers
  - Some high impact ones (REF!)
  - Still waiting on at least one (tbc ~2016!)
- Job “security”
- “Doing your bosses’ job for them”
- Supervision of others
  - Time



# Applying for fellowships / lectureships (2011-2012)

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- **4 failed fellowship applications**
  - Learn how to write grants and what people are looking for!
- **11 failed lectureship applications**
  - 1 interview – genuinely wouldn't have taken it!
  - Learn from each one (the questions are nearly always the same!)
  - You won't get every job
- **Applied to Lincoln**

# Lincoln application process (2012)

- Standard personal details and professional bodies
- Supporting statements (these are key for shortlisting)
  - “Please outline your **subject area of specialism** detailing which Lecturer post you are applying for”
  - “Please provide a list of your **research publications to date**, including any that are currently in preparation or under review. Provide full bibliographic data on published outputs, and where available the impact factor of the journal and the number of citations to the paper”
  - “Please provide details of any **income** that you have generated in the last 5 years, including grants and consultancy, from sources outside your institution.”
  - “Describe what steps you have taken to develop and maintain a national or international **external profile** in your research area. Please provide details of memberships, committees etc.”
  - “Describe your strategy for delivering engaging but challenging undergraduate **teaching** that achieves high levels of student satisfaction.
  - “Describe any contribution you have made to **curriculum development**. Please provide **specific examples**.”
  - “Describe how you have contributed to **collaborative links** with external organisations, including: other Universities, companies, public sector and professional bodies, including international partners.

# Lincoln application process (2012)

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- Cover letter and CV
  - Address every single point they are looking for in the job description
- Presentation
  - “Describe how you would develop your teaching and research profile **at Lincoln**”
  - Don’t go over time
  - Address the topic
  - Don’t be surprised if there are very few / loads of people there
  - See as many examples as you can
- Interview
  - I can’t remember the question but they were pretty standard ones!

# Lincoln application process (2012)

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- Thought it went pretty well
- Liked the place and the people
  - Remember you actually have to work there!!
- Application in April
- Interview in May
- Heard nothing in June
  - Email and ask!
- Got the job in July
- Negotiate!! (Although you may not be in a position to do so)

# Applying for fellowships / lectureships

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- My advice:
  - Keep your CV up to date!
  - It's very difficult to give too much information in your answers.
  - Know the job you are applying for.
  - Know the University you are applying to.
  - Speak to anyone and everyone you can about it.
  - Spend time on your application – you only get one go.
  - It is incredibly competitive.
  - Learn from rejections (ask for feedback and to see anything written in the interview)

# Lincoln (2012-present)



- What do you do when you start?
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Admin
- The balance depends on your role and institution.

# Lincoln (2012-present)

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- Develop your independent research profile
- Write grants and papers
  - Have them **rejected** / **accepted**
- Supervise PGRs students / PDRAs
- Prepare and deliver teaching materials
  - Get feedback on your teaching
  - Get a teaching qualification
- Take on at least 1 admin role
  - Choose something you like!!
  
- This *can* all be good....

# Lincoln (2012-present)

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- Had a lot of grants rejected
- Had some funded!
  - Got a PDRA for 6 months.
  - Collaborative / industrial involvement
  - Go to meetings and network
- Had some papers published (and some not)
- Had an excellent MSc student (who then left to do a PhD)
- Acquired a lot of admin roles
- Learned an awful lot about teaching!

# Lincoln (2012-present)

## ■ Diversity but busy!

◀ ▶ 9 - 15 May 2016

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	9	10	11
08			
09	Mark Microbial Biochem	Office hour	Emma Bei Francesca Chantell F
10			Rachael
11		PGR symposium list	Kerry Dresser
12		Breast cancer grant	
13	Look at papers for pm	Rachael Transfer	
14			Life Sciences School Meeting JBL3C01, Joseph Banks Labs Emma Foster
15	Driton and Enrico		Omololu and Jonathan
16		BGY1008M exam Sports	BIO9016M JBL3C01 PGR Semi JBL3C01 (J Sarah L)



Time	Meeting
9am	MEETING
10am	DEPARTMENT MEETING
11am	STUDENT MEETING
12pm	COMMITTEE MEETING
1pm	GRANT MEETING
2pm	ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING
3pm	REVIEW MEETING
4pm	MEETING TO DISCUSS FUTURE MEETINGS
5pm	MEETING RE: ANNUAL MEETING
6pm	MEETING TO ASSESS THE VALUE OF MEETINGS



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# Lincoln (2012-present)

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- A number of school roles:
  - PGR mentor / deputy PGR lead
  - Deputy chair PGR progress panel and member of CRDB
  - Programme leader PGR skills
  - Deputy programme leader BSc Biochemistry
  - Member of GMSC
  - Member of exam committee
- Teach ~200 contact hours per year
- Lead 5 modules
- Marking

# Aston (2016-the future)

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- Don't be afraid to move (or at least think about it)
- Get every bit of experience you can early on, find out what works for you and what doesn't
- Don't move to a worse job!
  
- Shortlisted, interviewed
- Offered the job within 15 mins of interviews finishing
  
- Moving
  
- Exciting new challenges ahead

# Acknowledgements

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- Any questions??

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