**Evidencing your leadership skills**

One challenge that many postdocs report is that they find it difficult to evidence examples of leadership. In order to do this more effectively think about situations where you have demonstrated leadership. For example:

* organizing a seminar series
* supporting other researchers in their work
* leading a sub-project of a wider project
* leading an outreach activity

are all examples of where postdoctoral researchers are likely to be taking leadership roles. Once you have identified the situations, we would recommend that you write a short paragraph capturing this experience (note that you can do this for lots of different skills and developing a portfolio of examples is an easy way to build a library of examples for future job and grant applications). A simple structure for capturing your experiences is the STAR model which is described below.

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| **Situation** | Do not generalize – pick a specific leadership situation from your experience. You can draw on situations from your work experience, PhD / postdoctoral work, and outside interests. |
| **Task** | What exactly was the task that you needed to achieve? Again, it is important to be specific in this and not talk about a generic situation. |
| **Action** | What specific action did **you** take in order to achieve the task. Think this through logically and think about how you can demonstrate your skills within the actions that you took. For example, you may be able to discuss your technical and leadership skills within a single example. |
| **Results** | What did you achieve? In here specifics can really enhance your answer. What was the impact of your leadership – what tangible outcomes were achieved, what did people say about your involvement, what subsequent activities resulted from this success? |

**Example: Leading a research outreach programme.**

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| **Situation** | Whilst working as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Aberdeen,  |
| **Task** | I led the department of engineering’s outreach activity as part of the Aberdeen TechFest (a weeklong science festival for local schools) which aimed to enhance engagement in STEM subjects by school pupils. |
| **Action** | In leading this activity, I undertook several activities including:* I attended several TechFest planning meetings to ensure that the University of Aberdeen’s contribution aligned with the overall theme of festival.
* I led the design of an exhibit and then worked with the engineering workshop to build the exhibit within a constrained budget.
* I developed a team of 10 postdoctoral and PhD researchers who would be able to staff the exhibit during event
* I worked with the University’s media team to ensure that the work would gain exposure in the local media.
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| **Results** | The end result was that over the course of the festival over 800 school children visited the department’s exhibit which at the end of festival was rated as the third most engaging of the 20 exhibits. This activity also developed the capability of the department to undertake more outreach activity and as a result the department contributed the following year to the Royal Society NE Scotland SET roadshow.  |

**Activity: Provide one example in the STAR format of when you have demonstrated leadership.**

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| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Results** |  |