

Prosper: Cultivating a Community of Practice in Researcher Development

Presentation Transcript

0:02

Thanks for choosing to watch this short recording on how Prosper is cultivating a community of practice in researcher development, with a focus on postdoc career development.

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Before we start, let's do a quick recap on what Prosper is.

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It is an approach to career development designed for postdocs with the intention of supporting them to thrive across multiple career pathways, both within and beyond academia.

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The online Prosper portal is full of resources for postdocs, managers of researchers and institutions.

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These are all totally free to access and can be navigated independently.

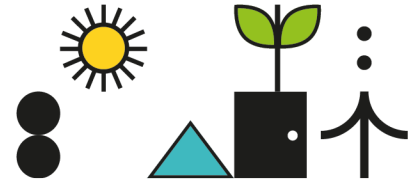
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The design and development of what you see on the portal was funded by Research England's Development fund, as was the testing, which happened through pilots at the University of Liverpool, Manchester and Lancaster University.

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Given its success, Prosper now has UKRI funding to support adoption of the model by institutions across the UK.





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We're currently working actively with over 30 institutions who are engaging with the various modes of Prosper delivery.

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So, what are we aiming to achieve via Prosper's roll out?

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We've tried to simplify the primary objectives here.

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Firstly, promotion.

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We aim to raise awareness of Prosper by facilitating promotion of Prosper's Portal to postdocs and managers of researchers through methods such as a Prosper Ambassador's programme, a comms toolkit which can be used by institutions to promote Prosper and live PI Network sessions open to all managers of researchers

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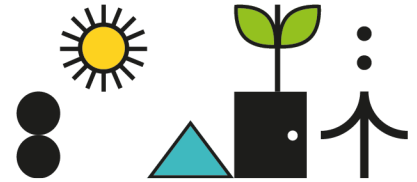
which aim to support them in their role as leaders.

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Secondly, development of a community of practice. Through initiatives such as an institutional focus group and annual practice sharing events,

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we aim to build a thriving community of practice for researcher developers to enhance career development for postdocs nationally, but also to learn from each other and continuously grow and innovate.

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Finally, creation and establishment of a reciprocation framework to maintain Prosper impact. While having an impact during the periods of UKRI funding is of course wonderful,

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a key aim for us is to use the funding to design, develop and test the framework which should enable Prosper to have continuous future impact on postdoc career development delivery.

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What do we mean by a reciprocation framework?

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In this context, a reciprocation framework is about creating a structured and sustainable approach to mutual exchanges that enhance relationships and provide benefits to all parties involved.

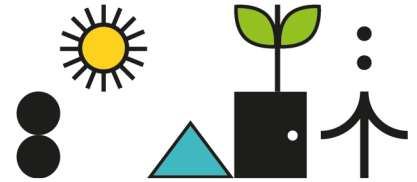
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In other words, the framework we create will involve an institution accessing support from the Prosper team, in return for offering something which will enhance Prosper impact for the whole sector.

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And this is where that community of practice comes into play.





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Everything in the framework will be shared for the benefit of all stakeholders.

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This is our initial outline of what the reciprocation framework could look like.

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This has been shaped with a focus group of eight institutions who are early engagers with Prosper.

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For the purposes of today, it has been much simplified in the interest of time.

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Let's walk through this together now.

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I should say, the dark grey boxes represent steps in a process, whereas the light grey boxes are options of what could be products,

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if you will, delivered via this framework.

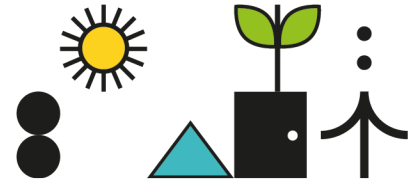
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Starting then from the left. An institution, most typically represented by a member of staff focused on postdoc development, would approach Prosper and ask for support.

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This could be for any mode of delivery, from promoting Prosper to postdocs or managers of researchers, to embedding Prosper's model, to complement existing career development provision or running a cohort.





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The Prosper team would review the request, conducting what we'll refer to as a needs assessment.

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From here, they will decide what they believe to be the best route forward to provide the help needed.

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This could be consultancy time with the Prosper team;

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making a connection with another institution who are looking to achieve similar objectives;

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running Train the Trainer sessions to upskill staff at the institution so they have the means to deliver Prosper independently;

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hosting a portal tour for postdocs at an institution to make them feel confident using the portal.

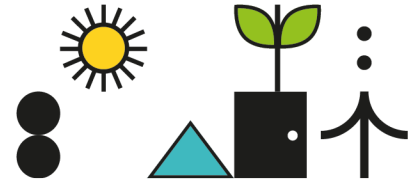
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Following the needs assessment,

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Prosper and the institution's team will agree a plan of action and then a reciprocation, i.e. what the institution will offer in return.





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This might look like delivering the session with accompanying resources to support another institution or postdocs, or a session as part of the PI Network series, for example.

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We know that some institutions have access to funding but limited resources or expertise in their own team, so another option might be to engage an external training provider using this funding to create resources on their behalf.

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The final outcomes you see on this slide include benefits for both the institutions and Prosper, and most importantly, a strengthened community of practice.

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Let's bring this to life a little with a hypothetical example.

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The fictional Liceria University decide to launch a cohort.

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Timelines are tight as they decide to do this midsummer and intend to deliver the programme to a recruited cohort of postdocs from October.

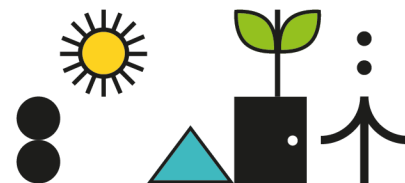
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What they have, is a group of supportive internal senior stakeholders offering full support to deliver a Prosper cohort.

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They also have an experienced facilitator, Jo, to deliver their programme.





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She plans to tailor the available Prosper resources to deliver in a way which fits their own institutional objectives.

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She's even developed a new session on dealing with failure, which she will include as part of her programme.

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What they have less of, is knowledge of cohort application processes.

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They also have dedicated resources to deliver the programme, but no administrative support has been secured.

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That means they have very little resource and little time to do this.

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They approach the Prosper team for help with their cohort recruitment.

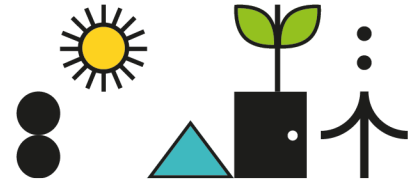
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What is decided, is that Prosper will provide tailored guidance on postdoc attraction, the assessment process and run an online Train the Trainer for all reviewers of applications based on their experience of recruiting three diverse cohorts.

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In return, Jo agrees to share Liceria's new model of dealing with failure, including a slide deck, facilitator notes and a recorded Train the Trainer session which can be used by any other institution.





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As a result of this reciprocation, Liceria will be equipped to run an efficient assessment process for their cohort and provide a case study which can be used to offer advice and inspiration to others in the sector.

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Institutional users will have a new session created by Jo which they can deliver to their postdocs.

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This is great for all, especially those who are delivering Prosper year over year as this will help them keep their content fresh.

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Finally, Liceria University will become fully fledged members of Prosper's Community of Practice for future collaboration opportunities and best practice sharing.

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As we said earlier, this framework is under development, and we want opinions from the sector to help us shape this further ahead of a launch in 2025.

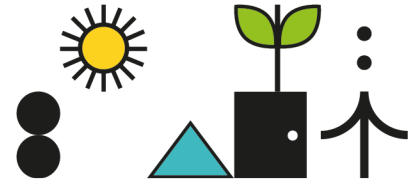
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How can you get involved then?

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You can offer your opinions on the framework by completing our Microsoft form for collaboration.





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This can be found alongside the presentation link in Vitae's online platform.

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You can meet up with us in person at Vitae's conference on the 23rd or 24th of September, or you can find us during this online conference in the online community and we'll welcome any questions there.

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You could register to attend Prosper's Practice Exchange event which will be held in Manchester on the 6th of February 2025.

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And finally, you can e-mail us to find out anymore on prosper.postdoc@liverpool.ac.uk.

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I should add that all of these links can be accessed in the accompanying information sheet, which can be found on Vitae's online multimedia platform alongside the presentation.

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Finally, thank you so much for your attention.

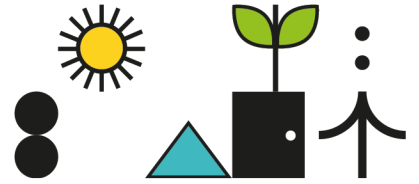
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Here's some additional ways to get in touch with us.

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And please do share this on social media and within your networks as well.





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We would love to get the word out as far as possible.

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Thank you and look forward to connecting with you all online.

