

CAREER BUILDING

Conferences, Publications, Portfolio

Ondřej Pilný & Emilie Pine

Conferences

- Attend conferences
- Conferences in Irish literature/studies:
- Large conferences to network: IASIL, ACIS, EFACIS, Canadian Association for Irish Studies, ...
- Smaller, more focused conferences related to your work
- Postgraduate conferences (EFACIS PhD seminar in Leuven, Prague graduate conferences, etc.)
- In all of these, do not be shy to approach senior scholars with expertise in your area for advice

Conferences

- Paper abstracts must be concise
- Paper presentations should be engaging: do not read the entire paper, make contact with your audience, make sure that complex matters are explained clearly.
- Use slides (and multimedia where relevant) but judiciously. Citations on slides should be brief.
- Always have a plan B in case technology malfunctions.
- Never go over time with your paper! (Rehearse the presentation prior to coming to the conference and time it.)

Networking

- Visibility of you and your work is important but remember the golden rule of networking: it is not about publicising yourself. Find people whose work interests you and tell them why you admire their work (peers, as well as senior scholars). This will form the basis for any potential future collaboration...

Publishing

- Purpose of publishing:
 - Getting your work 'out there'
 - Engaging in scholarly debate
 - Identifying yourself as research-active for the job and funding markets
- Build on every conference paper you do to make it work harder (e.g., blog post, social media conference reports, approach an editor)

- Most important factor – producing your best work
 - Resist the temptation to try to publish under-cooked work
- Look at where you want to get to:
 - What is the major venue in your chosen field (Irish studies, literary, film, theatre, queer studies, etc.)
 - Look at publishing profiles of successful early career scholars

Venue

- What kinds of output have the greatest impact?
 - Peer-reviewed journals
 - Consider impact factor and discipline leading journals; check the national assessment criteria in your country (many systems will prioritise journals listed in the Scopus and/or ERIH databases, or Web of Science). Always aim high.
 - Monographs
 - Essay collections
- Publisher
 - There are tiers of academic publishers – tier one examples: CUP, OUP, Palgrave, Columbia, Indiana
 - Lists – try to publish in a relevant subject list/series
 - Again: always aim high

Essay collections

- Essay collections – important to a discipline/field but can be less prestigious (i.e. receive lower assessment)
 - High visibility: make sure you make a pdf of the proof of your essay even more visible via google scholar, academia.edu or Open Science repositories
- If you organise a conference, do not publish a conference proceedings: commission extra pieces, position the collection as a stand-alone volume; choose your publisher carefully

How to actually get in journals and collections?

- Make sure your work is visible so that you get asked to contribute (conferences, academia.edu, link in email signature, offer to send pdfs, have a ready-to-go elevator pitch for your work)
- Look for CFPs for journal issues (if it's just past the deadline, go for it anyway!)
- Send enquiry emails to editors to ask if they're interested in your work, to find out about future special issues, and to see what the publication lead-in time is
- Temptation is to send material to a journal in the same areas (author, period) which they have already published – but actually a 'fresh' approach may be welcome
- While you should always choose to work on what you're passionate about, also consider how you can identify your niche area so that you become the go-to person: what is no one else doing that you can do?

Practicalities

- Submitting an article:
 - Make sure it's in journal house style
 - Stick to the requested word count
 - Watch for typos and spelling mistakes
 - Erase any references to it being a conference paper or a thesis chapter
 - Make sure footnotes are complete and up to date
 - Article should have a clear and focused argument: it's obvious but you need a clear thesis statement!
 - Don't try to 'chase too many hares': the argument must be lucid, no unnecessary digressions
 - Process: 1) your article will be screened for suitability 2) it will be sent for peer review (up to 6 months) 3) you may be asked to revise and resubmit (this is normal!)

Practicalities

- Monograph / essay collection proposal:
 - Look at publisher's website (this is obvious but do it early)
 - Download proposal form and identify key areas
 - Work on your elevator pitch, title & subtitle: grab attention, identify cutting edge (also: title & subtitle should be easily searchable)
 - Chapter by chapter overview
 - Context and Market sections are important; list books on the same subject (if any) and state how/where yours is different
 - Demonstrate why your work is relevant for this publisher

Further about career building

- Don't publish only on the subject of your thesis but also in related areas (e.g. not only about the novels of John Banville, but also about other authors, (post)modernist novel, historical fiction, etc.)
- Write to journals for review copies of books in your research area and publish reviews
- Try to gain as much teaching experience as possible; if you can't teach independently at your university, co-teach with your supervisor, or teach at summer schools and similar courses

- Have an **academic CV** ready and update it regularly
- The exact shape of the CV must be adjusted based on where you are submitting it (grant application, job application...)
- Generally, the following items should not be missing from a CV:
 - Education
 - Research stays
 - Publications
 - Conference presentations
 - Conferences organised
 - Employment history
 - Teaching experience
 - Grants awarded and grant project participation
 - Professional memberships
 - Community engagement
 - Languages spoken
 - Other relevant skills
 - References