



# CAUTHE 2021 PhD/ECR Workshop Report

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**Date:** 5 February 2021

**Location:** Online

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## 1. COMMITTEE

### Facilitators

- Dr Edmund Goh
- Dr Ina Reichenberger
- Mahdis Madani
- Dr Michael Hughes

### Other CAUTHE Executive representative(s)

- Prof Karen Smith
- Prof Erica Wilson
- Dr Isabella Ye

## 2. OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Background and description

The 2021 PhD/ECR workshop (and conference) was held entirely online due to COVID19 related restrictions on travel and gatherings.

The overall conference theme '*Transformations in Uncertain Times*' was present throughout the workshop program. The workshop included a panel session, a small group mentoring session and a final session on e-mindfulness facilitated by Peter Bliss.

The panel session topic '*How to get the most out of your PhD*' focused on providing diverse perspectives on academic key areas. The panel included three senior and three early career academics paired across one of three respective areas: research, teaching and service. Each panel member had received formal recognition of their expertise in the respective area they discussed as part of the panel session:

- Research Experts: Prof Sara Dolnicar, Dr Jun Wen
- Teaching Experts: Prof Karen Smith, Dr Sean Lee
- Service Experts: Prof Erica Wilson, Dr Isabella Ye

The small group mentoring session followed the traditional format and included senior academics as mentors for groups of three to four PhDs / ECRs, grouped by research topic and career stage. This provided mentees an opportunity to learn more about academic affairs and career advice from their mentors.

The final session (e-mindfulness) was designed to learn about practical mindfulness techniques to use at work or at home and learn to relax in a stressful academic environment.

### 2.2 Program

See Appendix 1.

### 3. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Role	Type	No. (%)
PhD participants		52 (79%)
ECR participants		16 (21%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68 (100%)</b>
Mentors	Professor	22 (61%)
	Assoc Prof	8 (22%)
	Research Fellow	0
	Senior Lecturer	6 (17%)
	Lecturer	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>
CAUTHE Fellows involved		15
CAUTHE Fellows absent		2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>

### 4. FORMAL EVALUATION FEEDBACK

PhD and ECR participants were invited to complete an online survey with questions relating to the quality of the online workshop experience as well as the panel discussion, mentoring and mindfulness components of the workshop. The survey was completed by 24 participants (35% response) including 19 PhD and 5 ECR respondents. The quality of workshop components and quality of online experience were rated on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). Mean ratings for each component are listed in descending order in Tables 1 and 2. Table 2 indicates frequency response for the most useful aspects of the workshop nominated by participants.

The workshop received a very positive overall rating (Table 1). The mentoring received the highest rating consistent with previous years (and despite being online rather than face to face). The networking opportunities component received the lowest mean rating, possibly due to the nature of online workshops and associated limited opportunities for social interaction.

**Table 1:** Participant mean ratings of the 2021 PHD/ECR workshop and its components  
1=very poor and 5 = excellent (n=24)

Workshop component	Mean rating
Mentoring session	4.4
<b>Overall workshop experience</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Panel discussion session	4.2
Relevance of program	4.1
Discussion/feedback opportunities	4.1
Mindfulness session	4.0
Networking opportunities	3.5

**Table 2:** Participant mean ratings of the quality of the workshop online experience  
1=very poor and 5 = excellent (n=24)

Online component	Mean rating
Ease of access	4.3
Online video & audio quality	4.2
Online interaction quality	3.6

The quality of online experience received a generally positive rating (Table 2). However, the online quality of interaction was rated relatively less positively. As with networking opportunities, the online experience possibly limits the quality of social interactions.

## 5. KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since its inception, the mentoring session with senior academics is consistently rated as the 'best' component of the PhD/ECR workshop. The online version returned a similar result, however it is recommended to integrate an RSVP system for online mentoring sessions in the future. Some participants (often in different time zones) did not log into their mentoring sessions.

It should be noted that a core PhD/ECR workshop aim is to provide networking opportunities for participants. However, this aspect was rated lower than in previous years when the workshop was face-to-face. This relatively lower rating was complemented by participants' suggestions for future improvements including running the workshop in face-to-face format, more interaction and more opportunities for networking with other participants (see Appendix 2). If workshops are conducted online into the future, the limited opportunities for socializing and networking aspects may need to be addressed.

It is also important to note that most respondents felt that the online interaction quality was relatively average. This could be due to the limited time of 60 mins to cover six presenters, and also as it was the first online session of the CAUTHE 2021 Conference on the new OnAir platform. Therefore, most delegates did not know how to use the chat function to ask questions. In future virtual CAUTHE conferences, the panel session should be increased to 90 mins and delegates should be encouraged to send in their questions before the event so that the Chair can better facilitate the discussion questions.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2021 PhD/ECR Workshop Committee thanks all CAUTHE Fellows and Executive members for sharing their expertise with participants. Thank you to Penny Jose and the Forum Group team for their support throughout.

### Report prepared by:

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**Position:** 2021 Workshop Committee

**Date:** 28 June 2021

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## Appendix 1: Program

### 2021 PHD SCHOLAR AND EARLY CAREER WORKSHOP

The CAUTHE Executive is delighted to announce that the annual Bill Faulkner PhD Scholar and Early Career Researcher workshop will be held immediately prior to the online CAUTHE 2021 conference 13:00 – 16:00 (AEST) Friday 5 February 2021.

#### Background

The workshop provides PhD scholars and ECRs (completed a PhD within the past five years and have a teaching or research position) the opportunity to develop relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise through their PhD journey and into the early stages of their career thereafter. The workshop is a great opportunity for up-coming researchers to network with fellow scholars and internationally recognised academics. Senior academics provide their own experience and insightful advice into strategic thinking and approaches for developing a successful long-term academic career. [Read more about Bill Faulkner and past workshops.](#)

#### Program

The program will include

- 13:00-14:00 – Panel Session
- 14:00-15:00 – Mentoring Session
- 15:00-16:00 – Social Activity – e-mindfulness

Workshop program details, including speakers and sessions, will be progressively released on the conference website. The program will be innovative, engaging and useful for all PhD scholars and ECRs – no matter what stage you are at. A highlight of the workshop will be the opportunity to personally discuss your research with eminent academics from Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

#### Registration

You will be able to register attendance at the workshop later this year. Once you have registered, you will be asked to provide some basic information including your CV and stage of your PhD/post-PhD prior to the workshop to assist with mentor matching and help make the day run smoothly.

#### Cost

The cost will be included in the conference registration fee. See [CAUTHE 2021 conference.](#)

#### Contact

For enquiries please contact the CAUTHE PhD Student representative Mahdis Madani [mahdis.madani@postgrad.otago.ac.nz](mailto:mahdis.madani@postgrad.otago.ac.nz)

For more information see [The CAUTHE 2021 Conference](#)

## Appendix 2: Delegate feedback

### Participant nominations of the most useful workshop components (n=24)

Most useful component	No. (%)
Mentoring session	14 (58%)
Panel session	5 (21%)
Mindfulness session	1 (4%)
Response unclear	4 (16%)

### Participant suggestions for future workshop improvements

- Face to face workshops
- More opportunities for networking with other participants
- More interactive panel (Q&A)
- Smaller/longer mentoring sessions
- Mentors with directly relevant research interests
- Less self-promotion on the panel
- Less conflicting information (e.g. relevance of research for career, contrary mentoring opinions)

### Other

	Yes	No	Unsure
Workshop attendance next year	(64%)	(13%)	(14%)
Recommend workshop to others	(77%)	(9%)	(14%)
Alumni network participation	(58%)	(5%)	(27%)