

Amsterdam Business Research Institute

How to Build an Academic Career

Course Manual

Academic year 2026 – 2027



Course title	How to build an academic career
Coordinator(s)	Dr. Mohammad Rezazade Mehrizi
Lecturer(s)	Dr. Mohammad Rezazade Mehrizi
Study period	September 2026 – July 2027
ECTS	2 ECTS
Tuition	€ 500 20% discount on early bird registration: €400
Target Groups	The course “How to build an academic career” is open to ABRI PhD candidates as well as PhD candidates from the VU and other Dutch and international universities engaged in research projects broadly related to business and management or organization studies.
Course goals	After the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to: • Structure and manage their PhD project in a timely way • Engage in academic networking • Understand the publication process and contribute to it • Prepare for the (academic) job market
Course content	This course is organized as a series of workshops designed to equip PhD candidates with the important knowledge and skills required to build an academic career. Each workshop targets various aspects that become relevant at a different phase of the PhD trajectory.
Course design	The course consists of 6 workshop sessions (3 hours each) distributed throughout 3 academic years (September – July). Each workshop will entail an interactive panel with experienced faculty members from different ABRI tracks. Before each workshop module, course participants will complete preparation assignments. Each module will be concluded by a brief reflection report. At the end, students submit their learning and development manifest which assembles the reflections of the sessions into a learning and development plan that will guide their upcoming years of finishing their PhD and transition to the subsequent professional phases. Course participants are not expected to complete all course modules within one year. In fact, it is highly recommended that PhD candidates can join the various workshop modules at different stages of their trajectory over the first 3 years of their PhD journey, i.e., when the offered content will be most relevant.

Study load	The estimated time participants spend on study activities is:		
	Attending workshop sessions	18 hours	
	Reading or other preparations	12 hours	
	Work on assignments	26 hours	
	Total	<u>56 hours</u>	(2 ECTS)

Assessment The course grade will be “pass” or “fail”. Course participants will be assessed based on:

- Workshop participation
- Completion of 6 preparation assignments
- Completion of 6 reflection reports
- Final professional learning and development manifest

Literature A list of articles and exercises will be announced via the course website on Canvas.

Course structure

Workshop	Recommended for	Date	Time	Room
1: How to setup and manage your PhD project	1 st year	9-10-2026	10:00-13:00	NU-4A51
2: How to make sense of academic literature: from classic to recent	1 st year	4-12-2026	10:00-13:00	NU-2B25
3: Finding your way in the academic community	2 nd year	5-02-2027	10:00-13:00	Novum 1 (NU-2A06)
4: Developing your academic outputs: framing, structuring, and targeting academic publications	2 nd year	9-04-2027	10:00-13:00	Forum 4 (HG-1D12)
5: Working and learning through the publication process: rejections, revisions, and reviewing	3 rd year	21-05-2027	10:00-13:00	Novum 1 (NU-2A06)
6: What’s next? Preparing for the (academic) job market	3 rd year	25-05-2027	10:00-13:00	Novum 1 (NU-2A06)

To prepare for each workshop (obligatory) – See Canvas module for up-to-date preparations

What to deliver after each workshop (obligatory, via Canvas)

A reflection report (max. 3 pages, Times New Roman 12, line-spacing 1.5), in which you discuss the following points (detail instructions will be available on Canvas Assignment:

1. Your main take-away(s) of the workshop
2. How you plan to apply and embed the learnings to your research project
3. A concrete application of the learned to your research project

Learning and development manifest

As you engage with the course, you are encouraged to journal by reflecting on what you have brought home from each workshop, how you tried to implement and further expand on your “reflections” after each workshop, and what else you discovered in your journey of building your skills for an academic career. At the end of course, you use this input to write your “learning and development” manifest: a 3-5 page reflective but also future-oriented plan on how you are up for developing yourself through the rest of your PhD journey and the years after. This should offer you the opportunity to continue your learning as an academic after the course and serve as a source of inspiration for your further development.

Workshop 1: How to setup and manage your PhD project

Although the PhD trajectory centers around your research project, most of the PhD students are likely to encounter other responsibilities, such as teaching, supervising theses, visiting conferences and/or organizing conference symposia, attending departmental meetings, and so on. All these activities need to be managed in such a way that the PhD research will stay on track. But how can you manage this? It is best if you setup effective working framework, routines, and expectation alignment early on during your PhD. In particular, this workshop focuses on how to manage your time and project in a structured manner, the research proposal, and how to manage the student-supervisor relationship.

Workshop 2: How to make sense of academic literature: from classic to recent

PhD journey requires you to constantly swim in the academic ocean, surf it, dive into some parts that you feel you can harvest some intellectual treasures, and constantly navigate the waves of debates, conversations, and intellectual hypes. This can be overwhelming, especially when you need to balance the breadth and depth, keep your foot strong in core, classic literature and theories while constantly keep up with the new research and ideas. This workshop focuses on key challenges that you as PhDs may encounter in making sense and navigating the literature, how to hone your skills of critically reviewing and critically synthesizing literature strands, identify the (active) conversations, and situate them to the classic traditions.

Workshop 3: Finding your way in the academic community

In this workshop, the focus is on your academic audience: to which community are you connected? Establishing a good academic network allows you to be aware of what other researchers in the same area are working on. At the same time, a good network allows you to promote your own research and inform others about it. The more people you know and the more interested they are in your work, the greater the likelihood that they engage with your research. Moreover, developing a network offers opportunities for collaboration and support. But how do you establish such a network? In this workshop, you will learn how to build and grow an academic network. The discussion focuses on conferences, being able to pitch your research, how to keep a conversation going or how to politely let yourself off the hook, and social media presence.

Workshop 4: Developing your academic outputs: framing, structuring, and targeting academic publications

Academic life is about producing knowledge outputs, in different forms and genre, especially “academic”. This way, you start your conversation with academic communities, establish your ideas, and gain credibility. Drafting your paper, framing it, structuring the content, and orienting it towards some relevant audience is a subtle process, requires both explicit rules and tacit knowledge of what and how (not) to say. In this workshop, we work with your ambitions, questions, and challenges in developing your academic outputs and you discover practices that are essential to expand your skills in developing your outputs, particularly around academic writing.

Workshop 5: Working and learning through the publication process: rejections, revisions, and reviewing

Publishing your research allows you to communicate your findings to a broader audience. Your research can only have an impact on society if people know about it. However, publishing your research is not that easy and you will benefit from knowing the ins and outs of the publication process well in time.

In this workshop, the focus is on the complete publication process starting from a finished paper, friendly review, submission to a journal, potential outcomes, and ways to move forward until the paper is published.

Workshop 6: What’s next? Preparing for the (academic) job market

With your eyes on the target of finishing your PhD project, you must decide what your next step will be. Would you like to stay in academia, or would you like to explore your options outside of academia? It is time to look at the future and prepare as best as possible for your next career stage.

In this workshop, the focus is on exploring career options and how to prepare for each of the options. Insights into how an academic career might look like but also options for a professional career are discussed.

Transition from the previous version of the course

If you have already started the course in the past with a different format and have not yet completed it, you can still join this new version and do the remaining workshops based on the following rules:

- Workshops 1 (How to set up and manage your PhD project), and 3 (Finding your way in the academic community), and 6 (What’s next? Preparing for the (academic) job market) are the same as the workshops 1 and 2 and 4. If you have passed them in the past, you do not do them again.
- Workshop 2 is new and you need to attend.
- Workshops 4 and 5 are basically the extended version of what we used to do as workshop 3. If you have already been in Workshop 3 in the past, you can come to one of these two workshops in the new setup that you think is mostly useful for you.
- General rule: you can always explain if you had similar training elsewhere to be exempted from the specific workshops.