# Webinar: Creating the New Academic Normal for Informatics Researchers:Participant worksheet

25 June 2020

Our goal in this webinar is to start a conversation together about how we can create the new academic normal, drawing across all of our collective experiences and capabilities.

Prior to the webinar, we invite you to read through this worksheet and start to think about your experiences of academic life during COVID. Feel free to make notes for yourself in advance of the webinar.

During the webinar, we will gather input from you in a live (anonymous) poll, to gain a quick overview of all our experiences. This will be followed by a short seed talk and then breakout groups where we can discuss the issues in more detail and start to think about what we want to take forward in our new academic normal.

The details of the activities and things to think about are provided below.

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## Activity 1: Reflecting on COVID experiences - live Menti Poll during Webinar

This activity is to help us identify lessons learnt and strengths we can draw on for creating a new academic normal. We will collect responses during the webinar via a live [menti poll](https://www.menti.com/rovtyot8wj).

Below are example questions to consider about your academic life during COVID and about what you have found out about the things that matter/don’t matter to you.

* **What do you miss about your pre-COVID academic life?**
* **What do you not miss about your pre-COVID academic life?**

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* **What do you actually like about this COVID time (if anything)?**
* What surprised you most?
* What new insights do you have?
* What did you do well in handling the COVID situation?

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**Thinking about your department, faculty or institution, what did they do well?** E.g., taking decisions, making changes, communicating with you, supporting you and other faculty members, promoting collegiality, recognising the impact of working from home on your work output etc?

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**Thinking about your academic peer community, what did they do well?** E.g., taking decisions, making changes, communicating with you, promoting collegiality and academic exchange, moving to alternative conference formats, etc?

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**Thinking across all of these - as input for activity 2:**

* What do these experiences/responses tell you about what is important, what values matter - to you , your faculty, your peer community?
* What are some of the things you thought were set in stone that now don’t seem so set in stone?
* What strengths/capabilities do these experiences and responses point to - for you, your faculty, your peer community?

## Activity 2: Thinking forward together - Break out Discussion Group 1

This activity will be in a breakout group, with a focus on what the new academic normal might be like

1. Quickly identify **volunteers** to be your group’s:
* Discussion facilitator, to make sure every voice is heard;
* Note taker, to capture the notes in some online form; and
* Timekeeper to keep the group on track.
1. **Roles in more detail:**

**Discussion Facilitator**, help each person in your group introduce themselves by sharing their name, where they’re joining from and a word/phrase that captures their COVID-impacted work/life experiences to date. Help ensure that all participants in the group have the opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Invite the group to discuss the questions and answers emerging from the worksheet.

**Note taker**, capture these ideas as best you can in some online form as people share. A summary is fine. We’ll be asking you to then copy and paste these notes into the Zoom chat window when we come back together (that we will pull together into a summary after the session and mail out to participants).

**Timekeepers**, maybe set a two-minute alarm on your phone to make sure everyone has a chance to share ideas.

1. **Discussion points**:

Reflecting on what values and strengths your experience(s) point to for:

* You as individuals
* Your institution (faculty/dept/group)
* Your peer community

What would/could the new academic life look like if everything was working out well?

What key qualities would you want your new academic normal to have?

Further discussion points from Matthijs Bal - what could our response be for radical transformation of academia: [Manifesto for the future of work and organizational psychology](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1359432X.2019.1602041)

* Why our research? Who are our benefactors? Individuals, society, organizations, corporates (Big Tech)?
* How can we ensure our own well-being in a post Covid-19 workplace?
* How do we maintain a community if we don’t meet each other anymore?
* What is our psychological contract with our students?

**Paint a picture together – pulling together whatever aspects you think are most important**

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## Activity 3: Moving Forward - Break out Discussion Group 2 [time permitting]

Where/how can we start to create this new academic normal?

What thing(s) would have the biggest impact? What actions and/or conversations and/or conditions are needed to make it happen?

You may choose to think about these issues in terms of:

* You, e.g., your teaching, your research, your peer engagements, your professional travel, your working conditions (time, location etc) and so on.
* Your faculty/group, e.g., what conversations need to happen within the faculty, who needs to be involved?
* Your peer community, e.g., around conferences etc

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What’s one commitment you can make to help create your new academic normal?

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## What else you can do…

Thank you for being part of this important conversation!

Feel free to appropriate this worksheet to stimulate similar conversations in your own institutions and groups!

You are also invited to email us your notes if you’d like them included (anonymously) with the notes we will collate from the webinar discussions. Send to <administration@informatics-europe.org>.