

Full name Professor Victoria Goodwin
What subject did you study? Medical Studies
Year of Graduation 2011
Current Job Title Associate Professor of Ageing and Rehabilitation
Current Employer/Organisation Name University of Exeter



You can find out more about Vicki on her [University of Exeter staff profile](#).

Can you give us an overview of what you have done since you completed your research degree?

I am a physiotherapist and prior to my PhD worked in the NHS but there were no opportunities to return to so I went straight into a research post in what was the Peninsula Medical School at the University of Exeter. I've been there ever since. I've published quite a lot and been involved in securing around £20 million in research grant income. I've been involved in various College and University groups and I also sit on national research funding and fellowship panels. I was honoured to be made an MBE in 2017 for services to physiotherapy.

How did you become interested in the area that you work in?

My clinical and research speciality is ageing and older people.

How did you find opportunities in the area you work in and how did the recruitment process work?

An opportunity came up that lined well to my clinical role and the topic of my PhD so I was very lucky.

What does your current role involve?

I am mainly involved in research, be it related to NHS care or working with colleagues in engineering and maths to better understand how older people balance and move. I'm also involved in supporting National Institute of health Research funded PhD students from both Plymouth and Exeter Universities as well as supporting healthcare professionals looking to develop clinical academic careers. I'm currently Director of Research for the Research Assessment Framework (REF2021) for Allied Health Professions and Nursing which involves convincing a national panel that the research we are doing, the environment we work in, and the impact of our research are all world leading or internationally excellent.



What skills are involved in your work and how did your research degree help develop them?

Leadership, mentoring, negotiating and other transferable skills are all really important whatever role you have. They are developed through a combination of courses and experiential learning. Being organised and having good communication skills are also really important although I'm not sure you can learn those on a course. You also need to develop resilience. Failure is common, be it rejected papers or grant applications, and not something people find easy to accept. I'm pretty laid back and try and find something positive and an opportunity to improve something.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

The people. Working with patients and the public to ensure all the research I do is grounded in what is important to them. I'm also very chatty so being around people is important but challenging with working from home at the moment.

What are the challenges in your role?

Too much to do and not enough hours to do it all in.

What has surprised you about your role?

You are always learning something new.

Did you engage in any additional activities or roles (i.e. organising conference, entering PGR Showcase being a PGR rep etc.) during your research degree, and how did these help prepare you for your career?

I had a national role in a Professional Network for physiotherapists working with older people, first as Research Officer and then as Chair, and through that I had to organise a national conference, respond to media requests.

What skills and experiences have been most useful for your career?

Stubbornness

What advice would you give to a current PGR who wishes to pursue your career?



Develop resilience and be flexible. Taking a side step can be a useful tool to developing a forward step in the future. And take opportunities as they come up. Most of my career has been unplanned and has happened because something came up and I took a leap of faith.

What are your plans for the future?

To take some time off – it's been an extremely busy year.

Do you have any tips or advice for beginning a career or working in your industry/sector?