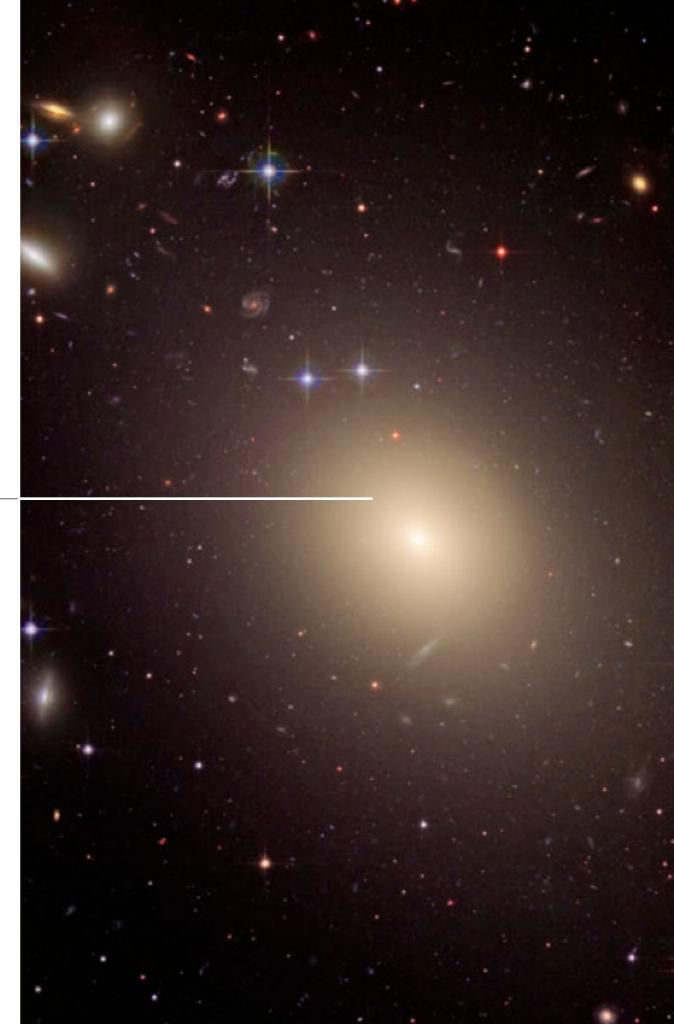
## Building a research career

Rita Tojeiro STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellow L'Oréal-UNESCO UK&I for Women in Science Fellow 2015 University of St Andrews









#### Disclaimer

- I am an Astronomer.
- I work in large astronomy collaborations.
- I am not an expert in getting funding (or building careers!)
- I am not special.
- I am not average.

What would I tell my young(er) self?

## Funding & me

- 2000-2004: MPhys in Astrophysics (University of Edinburgh)
   Applications: 2 summer placements (as a student), 1 PhD fellowship. 1 successful (33%).
- 2004-2008: PhD in Astrophysics (University of Edinburgh)

Applications: 10 jobs, 2 fellowships, 2 prizes. 5 successful (35%)

 2008-2013: Post-doctoral researcher/Fellow (University of Portsmouth)

Applications: 5 fellowships, 1 visiting scholar fellowship, 1 research grant. 2 successful (28%)

2014-now: Advanced research fellow (University of St

Andrews)

Applications: 1 fellowship, 2 research grants, 1 prize. 1 successful (25%) 3 summer placements (as a supervisor), 3 successful (100%)

## All success is unlikely





#### A biased view of what works

- **Support**: seek strong, critical and encouraging mentorship. This is your responsibility.
- Practice writing: start writing applications early in your career from summer placements to small grants, every little bit of practice
  helps.
- **Practice reading**: be on the other side (panels, SOCs, volunteer to read your friends' proposals, refereeing).
- Practice communicating your science to those who don't (yet)
  care. Public engagement is wonderful for this.
- Be aware of funding opportunities.
- Be aware of your funder's priorities.

# UK Astronomy key science priorities (from AAP report for the 2013 STFC Programmatic Review)

- Life in the Universe
- The formation of stars and planets in the MW and other galaxies
- Stellar evolution and stellar populations
- The formation and evolution of galaxies
- The dark ages and first light
- Precision cosmology
- Extreme astrophysics

## Focus on your science

- Take ownership of your research.
- Don't lose sight of the big picture **engage** with the community and the public.
- Get **feedback** on your science: collaborations, conferences, talks, chats over coffee, social media.
- Let your curiosity drive you.
- Be ambitious.

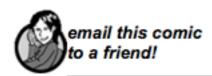
## Put yourself first

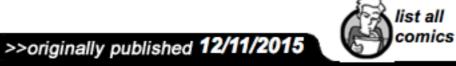
- Dealing with **rejection** is difficult try not to take it personally (but take feedback in board).
- Peer **assessment** (funding applications, peer review, feedback at conferences, etc) is a fundamental part of academic life get **comfortable** (warning, this is *hard*).
- Foster nurturing science relationships and ditch toxic ones.
- Insecurity and doubt are good things, but if it gets out of control, seek help (if anything gets out of control, seek help).
- The job has to work for you.

## Building a research career - beyond funding

- Collaborations and leadership positions: networking and exposure, experience in managing people, leadership of large science projects.
- Broad science focus: increases exposure, keeps things interesting, expanded skill set.
- Outreach and public engagement: communication skills, management experience, exposure to other fields and communities, often direct route to higher management.

Courage.







JORGE CHAM @ 2015







ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS:

MY TWO FRONT TEETH 7%

MY FIRST TWO DRAFTS 44%

MY TWO FIRST GRANTS 49%

Poll conducted on Twitter. 1000 respondents.

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