

Dr Clare Rathbone

What is your current position?

Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Oxford Brookes University

Could you say a bit about your career trajectory so far? How did you get to be where you are today?

I completed my BSc, Masters and PhD at the University of Leeds. I then moved south for an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Reading. This was followed by a teaching fellow position at Reading, after which I took up a lectureship in Cognitive Psychology at Oxford Brookes University.

When did you decide to be an academic? What was it that prompted this decision?

I decided to apply for PhD funding after really enjoying my third year project. My then project supervisor (who became my PhD supervisor, Chris Moulin) suggested I could follow up on my project with a PhD. I hadn't considered a career in academia until the end of the third year of my undergraduate degree, but (looking back) this job ticked all the right boxes for me: working on new ideas, a chance to be creative and problem solve, relatively high levels of flexibility and autonomy, and travel opportunities.

What have been the challenges so far in your career in academia?

A major challenge was finding permanent employment near my partner (who also works in research). This meant I was quite restricted, geographically, with job searching. Although I had a few stressful years on short-term contracts, it all paid off when I got my permanent post (in the right city!).

What advice would/do you give to other female academics?

Don't underestimate the importance of support from friends and mentors. I have a wonderful network of collaborators and mentors who I can turn to for advice and support. It was this network that kept me going when the job hunt looked bleak, when papers got rejected, or when I needed some feedback on grant applications. One of the most rewarding parts of my job is the opportunity to act as mentor to others. So, my advice is to learn from others and, in turn, be generous with your own time and encouragement.