

The RAD Fellows Development Programme

Instilling “F1 attitude” into dementia research

Race Against Dementia Fellows are provided with development opportunities, drawn from high performance commercial enterprises, including F1 teams, as a way of experimenting with and creating new ways of working in dementia research.

The goals are two-fold:

- 1) to fast-track the development of the RAD Fellows to become leaders in their fields
- 2) catalyzing a culture change in dementia research that will speed up progress.

The first cohort of RAD Fellows comprises three scientists appointed in October 2019 in collaboration with Alzheimer’s Research UK (ARUK: Dr Christy Hung, Dr Cara Croft and Dr Claire Durrant), who were joined by the RAD-Mayo Fellow (Dr Ellen Dicks) in April 2020.

In this time, these four scientists have participated in a number of developmental activities, which were adapted to the online environment in 2020, due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

The programme is being developed, based on Action Learning principles often used in motorsports. That is, Fellows are given the opportunity to develop and experiment with alternative working models, drawn from best practice in F1 and elsewhere, and adapted to their research environment. What they learn from their own application of these models will be shared across the group, to inform the next stage, for themselves and future cohorts.

From April 2021 RAD appointed the first two RAD-DARF Fellows (co-funded with Dementia Australia Research Foundation), Dr Adekunle Bademosi and Dr Andrew McKinnon. From Q4 2021, four additional Fellows will be appointed in collaboration with Alzheimer’s Research UK (from Q4 2021). The development programme for these newly appointed fellows is being designed, based on the feedback from the first cohort.

This paper brings together describes the experience of the first cohort of Fellows, and their suggestions of priorities for newly appointed Fellows (two with the Dementia Australia Research Foundation from April 2021 and four in collaboration with Alzheimer’s Research UK from Q4 2021).

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1. Visit to Red Bull Racing, September 30, 2019



The factory tour at Red Bull was the kick-off to the Fellowship Programme for the ARUK Fellows. It set a strong first impression of the programme, providing some eye-opening insight into teamwork and the pace of change that is possible with large teams, healthy budgets and the right minds working together.

In future factory tours, the Fellows have suggested that the experience would be enhanced by the opportunity to spend time with some team members, to hear about their roles and how they fit into the team to reach high performance.

2. Symposium at Clayton House, September 30, 2019

The tour of Red Bull was followed by a symposium at Clayton House, which also included senior dementia professors and representatives from Red Bull, McLaren and Dyson. Prof Mark Jenkins (Cranfield School of Management) facilitated a discussion about how lessons from Formula 1 can be applied to business and other activities.

The Fellows enjoyed the opportunity to meet Sir Jackie and Lady Stewart, as well as RAD’s advisors and others from F1. Hearing Sir Jackie set out his vision for the charity first hand was inspiring and the breakout discussions with senior scientists and F1/industry partners generated interesting ideas for areas for change and improvement in research and academia. Some of these ideas (e.g. how to foster collaboration and team performance) became the focus of later elements in the programme.

3. Visit to McLaren Technology Centre, October 10, 2019



The factory tour at McLaren was impressive and was joined by the then Secretary of State for Health. The Fellows were interested to compare the two environments and the opportunity to hear about how McLaren Applied, uses its work in applying F1 techniques beyond motorsports.

4. Visit to Campus Biotech- Geneva November 11, 2019



The Fellows were impressed with the state-of-the-art facilities and the cross-disciplinary collaborations which were evident during the visit. They enjoyed the opportunity to present their own work and to hear about the Campus Biotech scientist’s interests.

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5. Online ‘Lessons from F1’ workshop with Professor Mark Jenkins, May 14, 2020

This online workshop with Prof. Mark Jenkins extended the content that he had presented at Clayton House in the previous year. The Fellows found his evidence-based research to be an excellent way to provide insight in *how* F1 achieves high performance. This helped to progress the Fellows’ thinking about how these factors could be incorporated into their own research. In particular, the F1 performance pyramid (winning culture + constant learning + focus) provided a strong foundation for the group to think about how they could adopt new practices. The need for regular review cycles, to drive incremental improvements, particularly resonated and is the method that the members of the group is adopting for the design of their own development programme.

6. Hints Performance Coaching June- December, 2020



This individually tailored programme was delivered over a six-month period by Dan Sims from Hints, who also works with F1 drivers. The Fellows uniformly found that the highly personalised performance coaching was extremely helpful and something pretty much unheard of for academic scientists. A true innovation and a highlight of the programme.

Attention to the Fellows’ well-being, goal-setting and focus has resulted in meaningful and sustainable changes in their work habits and mindsets, increasing their productivity and performance.

7. Presentation training with Lee Bowman of Kingstree, August-October, 2020



Each of the Fellows found their work with Lee to be very interesting, especially to think about a presentation format, without Powerpoint and data, that is unusual in their profession. Embracing pauses, maintaining eye contact and rehearsing ahead of a major presentation was most helpful.

8. Online ‘Personal Leadership’ workshop with Nick Butcher of Ignition (including Duncan Bradley from MAT), September 8&11, 2020



This workshop was particularly useful in making the connections between leadership in Formula 1 and leadership in other contexts. The Situational Leadership Model was useful in considering what leadership behaviours to adopt in different circumstances – something that the Fellows are already able to use with the research colleagues. The discussion with Duncan Bradley, about teamwork and winning mentality at McLaren, was found to be highly insightful.

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9. Online workshop on ‘Personal Style and Leadership’ with Penny Moyle, November- December, 2020



This workshop was an opportunity both to understand the theory of personality differences and how this can be used to build an awareness of personal leadership style and strengths, as well as how that impacts on team dynamics. The session was based on the Myers-Briggs framework, an assessment widely used in Formula 1 teams and elsewhere. At an individual level, the Fellows reported the benefit of considering their personal strengths and limitations, making them more mindful about what to look out for in order to have more productive relationships with colleagues and outside work. The group found the workshop enjoyable and an excellent way to get to know each other at a deeper level. This was particularly useful given the forced remote working of 2020 – helping them build cohesion, opportunities for collaboration and a sense of RAD team spirit. The Fellows could see the opportunity to do similar work with their own lab teams; something that could be provided in the future. They also expressed an interest in ensuring that new Fellows are incorporated into this way of thinking about the team, as it grows.

10. Online ‘Team Skills’ workshop with Ignition and Peter Hodgkinson (Mercedes), February 16/17, 2020



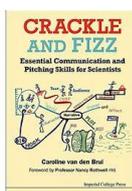
This was the first workshop to involve the new Australian Fellows (Kunle and Andrew), and was a useful opportunity to think about teamwork to include them and to articulate team values (innovation, speed, respect, passion and collaboration). Again, the presence of an F1 guest was highly valued, as were the real-life examples of teamwork methods and processes from F1.

11. Impactful Influencing with Gareth English of Customer Psychology, May-June 2021.



This series of online workshops built on the Myers-Briggs leadership style work that the Fellows engaged with earlier in the year. This arose from their request to have input on influence and negotiation. The programme was based on similar work delivered for aerodynamics managers in one of the F1 teams. The use of a professional actor to practice difficult conversations was found to be particularly impactful.

12. Crackle and Fizz: Communication skills for scientists, with Caroline van den Brul, June 2021



As a former BBC science producer, Caroline’s two-part workshop focused on how to help the Fellows authentically to convey their work to a non-scientific audience. The session culminated in them giving impressive five -minute talks that could be adapted for public presentations.

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13. Dementia Research Meets Motorsport Innovation Accelerator, July 6, 2021



This competitive workshop was hosted online by Cranfield University and involved the RAD Fellows working in mixed teams with other early career researchers and people from motorsports to develop an idea quickly, with a new team, and to pitch for funding. Feedback from the Fellows and other participants is that the experience developed skills that they can immediately apply back at work, as well as developing enthusiasm and skills for applying for real grants to develop their research ideas.

14. Connection with mentors

At the outset, it had been anticipated that connecting each of the Fellows with an F1 mentor would be the backbone of the development programme.

Duncan Bradley (now ex-McLaren) is continuing work with Christy Hung as well as contributing to discussions with all Fellows. Ian Rhodes (ex-CEO of McLaren Applied) has agreed to work with Andrew McKinnon and Prof. Mark Kendall will be working with Kunle Bademosi. Following the Dementia Research Meets Motorsports event, Cara Croft is connecting with the participants from McLaren to identify ways to make a stronger connection there.

The connection with Dyson and Claire Durrant has been most successful. Conversations with Sir James himself as well as the Dyson engineers have been energizing and motivating. The “can- do” attitude, “permission to fail” style of leadership and willingness to think outside the box /challenge norms is incredibly refreshing and something that could be helpfully applied to scientific research.

Quotes from the RAD Fellows

Ellen: “Emphasizing our personal development and well-being as a foundation to increase our performance is something that is not very common in academia. So, the developmental programme really sets RAD apart from any other fellowship I’ve heard of.”

Christy (Mark Jenkins): “Mark is an incredibly enthusiastic and engaging speaker. I really liked how he incorporated real examples and stories throughout his presentation to demonstrate what makes a successful F1 team.”

Claire Durrant (Hinsta): “I think I can’t think of any other programme that offers the opportunity to undergo coaching like this- and it is a huge advantage of the RAD scheme.”

Ellen (Kingstree): “The presentation training with Lee Bowman of Kingstree taught me that a presentation should be just like a conversation, driven by the listener. Thanks to this training I am now better at conveying my research and the public health crisis of the dementia pandemic.”

Cara (MBTI Personal style): “My favourite part of this workshop was the way we were able to connect everyone’s personal styles and get the RAD team style and learn how we fit together.”

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Looking forward

Based on the experience to date, plans are being developed for the enlarged team of RAD Fellows (soon to be 10).

- New Fellows are to begin with Personal Style and Leadership with Dr Penny Moyle as part of their induction, so that this can become a basis for integrating the newer and more established Fellows as a team.
- An ‘away day’ to be held for all RAD Fellows, ideally in September/October, to combine their annual scientific review (with Profs Siddharthan Chandran and Philip Scheltens) with teambuilding of the enlarged RAD Fellowship team.
- Prof. Mark Jenkins will work with Dr Penny Moyle to create a programme around F1 principles and bringing in guest speakers from different F1 teams.
- A presentation and communication skills programme will be put together for all new Fellows, with additional support for all Fellows being offered ahead of presentations that will be given on behalf of RAD.
- Each Fellow will be given the opportunity to have some team development with their local lab/research teams.
- Further F1 factory visits to be organized when COVID restrictions allow.

Dr Penny Moyle, CEO, RAD.

July 2021