GW4's Top 10 Tips for Research Collaboration

With the help of researchers from across the GW4 Alliance of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, and Exeter universities, we have pulled together a guide to research collaboration which you can find on our [website](#).

For a taste of what's in the full guide, here are our top 10 tips condensed from our findings:

1. **To start a collaboration, be curious and make yourself 'findable'.** Attend conferences outside of your normal research interests. Be visible in the virtual world and at local seminars and workshops. Use your existing contacts to network, soundboard and establish connections into other fields.
2. **Look for collaborators who can bring something different but complementary** to the table compared with your own strengths and interests. The best collaborator might be someone you already know but be ready to cast the net wider too.
3. **Establish a shared language**, find common ground, integrate methodologies. This will help with communication within your collaboration and in putting grant proposals to funders.
4. **Share responsibility** for planning and organising events, and ensure you define roles clearly.
5. **Respect and include** all members of your collaboration. Learn about the features of high performing teams, e.g. "psychological safety", and understand how best to handle conflict.
6. **Make a communication plan** that works for everyone – frequency, channel, duration – and stick to it to keep up momentum.
7. **Decide at the outset how and in what order names will appear on publications**. This may seem trivial at the start but is often a crunch point at the end of a research project.
8. **Identify risks.** Develop mitigation and contingency plans.
9. **Focus on process** as much as output. Try to see all aspects of the collaboration as a learning opportunity even (especially!) if outcomes are not as hoped.
10. **Understand that good collaborations never really end**; be ready for the next direction or project.

For more on collaborating in research, read our full [GW4 Guide to Collaboration](#).