What are the sessions about?

Session 1 (Plenary)

Introduction: The Big Decisions
How the day will run, how to get the most out of the day, opportunities to interact with others during and outside the sessions, and all the practical logistics to get you through the day (including food arrangements and prizes!)

Session 2 (three alternatives)

The Employment Landscape for BMH Researchers
Brief introduction to the job market for researchers from the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, followed by the chance to hear from, and question, former PhDs in BMH disciplines, now in a range of academic and non-academic careers.

The Employment Landscape for Humanities Researchers
Brief introduction to the job market for researchers from the Faculty of Humanities, followed by the chance to hear from, and question, former PhDs in Humanities disciplines, now in a range of academic and non-academic careers.

The Employment Landscape for FSE Researchers
Brief introduction to the job market for researchers from the Faculty of Science and Engineering, followed by the chance to hear from, and question, former PhDs in FSE disciplines, now in a range of academic and non-academic careers.

Session 3 (three alternatives – choose which describes you best)

“I’m open to a change or want something different – where do I start?”
If you think it might be time for a complete change or a move away from academia (or, whisper it, you really don’t know what you want to do), come and hear from researchers who moved outside their academic comfort zone, and thrived.

“I still like my discipline or being at a university, but not sure about being an academic…”
If you still find your discipline or the academic environment appealing, but are having doubts about being an academic, there are lots of options. Hear from researchers who haven’t cut loose completely from their academic roots but have reinvented themselves and found new careers.

“A academic or bust! I’m looking for smart strategies for making it as an academic.”
You know it’s tough, you know the competition’s fierce – but someone’s going to make it as an academic, and it might be you. Be inspired by our panellists who are well on their way to academic success – or have made it. This is your chance to learn from their experience.

Session 4 (four alternatives)

Tales from the other side of the fence – leaving academia after your viva …
Sometimes, you just know that it’s time to move on. Once you’ve pushed back the frontiers of
human knowledge with your PhD, what else do you want to do with your life? Hear from researchers who decided a post-doc wasn’t for them, and spread their wings straight away.

Starting to climb the academic ladder – my post-doc story, so far ...
Straight after your PhD, sometimes you just fall into being a post-doc. Sometimes you have to fight for every opportunity to get the next research or teaching position. What’s it really like in these transitional roles, are they the right move for you and how do you make the most of them?

Preparing for academia: Building your teaching practice
Most academics pass on their knowledge through some form of teaching. Come and find out how the University of Manchester LEAP programme can support you developing your teaching practice and achieve Higher Education Academy recognition, whether you are a current PhD or early career researcher.

Post-doc transitions – jumping off the academic career ladder ...
Jumping off any ladder can be scary – or exhilarating, depending on the landing. This is your chance to hear from former early career researchers who decided to take that step after initially starting out on a traditional academic career path.

Session 5 (Plenary)

Earning a living – employers’ views and beyond
Few of us have independent means so earning a living is a given for most of us. In this session you can hear from employers about what they look for and how your PhD will be viewed, but we’ll also cover issues like freelancing/self-employment and the challenges of achieving equality and diversity in Universities, through Athena Swan and Race Charter Mark initiatives.

Session 6 (Plenary)

The Big “So What?” - and your (small!) “Next Steps”
It’s all very well listening to thought provoking discussions and stories, but how do you translate that into practical actions? Find out how to harness the power of those round about you to clarify your thoughts and support you into taking the next steps, wherever they should lead you. Dee-Ann Johnson will lead you in a practical interactive session, culminating in “Coaching and Cake” to end the day.