



# **PRBB INTERVALS PROGRAMME**

## **Report of activities in 2023**

## Quality, inclusivity and caring

### High quality and high satisfaction

After all the disruption of the pandemic, 2023 was the first year that we were able to hold the majority of courses in person. Satisfaction with the quality of the training received was excellent with the average score for overall course rating at an all-time high of 90% and the average trainer rating at 94%. Numbers of courses, attendees and registrations remained broadly the same as in previous years - a total of 44 events held, addressing 30 course topics. There were waiting lists for half of all events and the majority of the rest had take-up rates of over 80%.

### Welcoming the new new and the new old

New events to the programme were [Principles of data visualisation and visual aids](#) - led by Jaume Fatjó and Marina Álvarez and a [special visit to BioSpain](#), organised through *Intervals* by Reimund Fickert.

*I really enjoyed the course. Now I got tools that will help me to make better slides with beautiful visualizations*

Participant of "Principles of data visualization and visual aids"

*An enjoyable and highly instructive one for a transversal skill often forgotten*

Participant of "Interview and job application skills in science"

This year also saw the return of some old favourites that had been put on hold either because of the pandemic or because of administrative issues. [Stress management](#) returned in strength with three editions - two held in person in Spanish and one online in English. [Leading for success in science](#) our collaborative course with BIST and the CRG also returned to an in-person edition and [Interview and job application skills in science](#), and [How to write a postdoctoral research proposal](#) were held again.

*Ha sobrepasado las expectativas y lo he encontrado muy útil*

Participante curso "Gestión de estrés"

*I would never imagine I would learn so much in this course*

Participant of "Leading for success in science"

## **Inclusive offerings**

A comment sometimes heard from the PRBB community is that the *Intervals* programme is too heavily weighted to the needs of the research community - and that those staff members who are supporting the science endeavour in other ways - administration, management, technical and ancillary support - have fewer opportunities. In recent years we have tried to address this imbalance by broadening the scope of topics, by offering more courses in Spanish, and by tweaking course descriptions and target groups so that non-research personnel feel included. We have also - on request - co-organised specific courses for particular groups - such as a peer mentoring group for project managers.

With very few exceptions (scientific writing courses), *Intervals* courses are open to all PRBB staff, but as a publicly funded organisation dedicated to scientific research, the relevance to the overall scientific endeavour is acknowledged in all course titles. Some factors are beyond our control however, such as work commitments that can conflict with the timing of training events.

## **Cancelled courses**

Two planned courses were cancelled for lack of sufficient registrations: [\*Train the trainer\*](#) - a very highly rated course, this is harder to fill on an annual basis as it is one of the few *Intervals* courses that has a relatively small target group - those who have teaching or training responsibilities. We will continue to offer this course but most likely on a bi-annual basis.

[\*Dance your Science\*](#) - also attracted few attendees but this may have been partly due to the fact that a *Dance your Science* competition involving various teams in the PRBB, was being held at the same time. In these times of high pressure to produce papers and finish projects to deadlines imposed by funding constraints - the idea of dancing to express and explore creative approaches to science may be seen as low priority. In the *Intervals* programme we firmly believe that time invested in fostering creative and imaginative skills, and in spending time connecting with our bodies are absolute essentials to a healthy and productive life in science. We will review the feasibility of offering a similar course in future.

## **Attendance, cancelled places and fair distribution.**

Last minute cancellations and non-attendance at booked places remains an issue but has neither improved or deteriorated over the years. Clearly there will always be a small number of unavoidable cancellations but we endeavour to work with the community to promote the understanding that places on *Intervals* course are highly valued and that a responsible attitude to managing one's place is important. We are grateful to the community for continuing to support our programme by ceding unwanted places in time for us to find replacements.

We also continue to work with our partners in the PRBB Training Group to address why some PRBB Centres are not currently maximising their allocated take-up of places. This is in part because some Centres have their own training programmes which, while not competing on topics, nevertheless mean that time commitments for learning and development are under pressure. We will continue to work with colleagues to understand better the potential for complementary activities that enable as rich a portfolio of learning opportunities as possible for all staff in the community.

### **Looking ahead**

In 2024, in response to several requests for more availability of training opportunities in conflict management, negotiation and difficult communication issues, we are running new courses in negotiation and in mediation in 2024. Both courses will be led by local trainers, new to the *Intervals* programme, who have high level expertise in these areas.

We live in challenging times and our ability to connect with each other in kind, caring and creative ways has never been more important. Our aspiration is that the *Intervals* programme continues to play its unique role in helping everyone in the PRBB community nurture and grow that ability as we move together into the future.

### **Thanks to**

The *Intervals* team would like to thank our participants and especially our trainers and collaborators during this 2023:

Marina Alvarez, Sergi Aranda, Arnau Busquets, Joaquim Calbó, Susanna Diez, Monica Ixchel Castillo Salgado, Natalia Dave, Malte Engel, Jaume Fatjó, Reimund Fickert, Fernando Gallego, Eva Katharina Herber, Kai Hüwelmeyer, Sam Illingworth, Ana Janic, Sašo Kočevár, Gavin Lucas, Romilde Manzoni, Alicia Marín Muniesa, Andrés Martín Asuero, Eric May, Valerie Matarese, Pau Millet, Alexandros Nikolaou, Gabriele Picarella, Roser Pinyol, Tobias Rodrigues, Iñaki Ruiz-Trillo, Verena Ruprecht, Marta Sallés, Lisa Saemisch, Louise Schubert, Ruben Ventura, Kate Whitfield and Roni Wright.

Elinor Thompson and Eroteida Jiménez  
The *Intervals* Programme, PRBB March 2024

## **Selected comments**

*Very relevant, smooth, and well-organized program.*

*I really appreciate the PRBB Intervals program, thank you so much for organizing it.*

*I would say that it is essential to have them at hand in an environment where I think soft skills are kind of lacking, and we need them for personal and professional daily challenges.*

*Excellent work, very high quality, and appealing options.*

*I have already done four Intervals courses to try to cover different aspects of being a scientist and they are all super useful.*

*I think it covers a wide range of very useful needed skills and from my experience with this course, they are effective and greatly performed.*

*Muy valiosos. Gracias por promover este tipo de cursos.*

*Nice program and organization! Congrats!*

**TABLE 1** Overview of the activity

Overview of activity	
Total number of courses	44
Online	15
In-person	28
Blended	1
Number of places	491
Number of people registered	447
Number of attendees	430
Number of attendees registering but not attending	17
Number of individuals	320
Number of individuals attending more than one course	81

**TABLE 2** Number of registrations, percentage of occupancy and number of attendees of each centre

	# Registrations*	% Take-up	# Attendees
<b>SELF SKILLS</b>			
<b>Personal mastery and emotional intelligence</b>			
Gestión de estrés (3 Ed. Spanish/English)	36	Waiting list/100%	36
Mindfulness (2 Ed.)	25	Waiting list	25
Peer mentoring	8	100%	8
Self-leadership for daily challenges in science	11	92%	10
Time management in science	12	Waiting list	12
Working in the world of science: manage self and resilience	11	92%	11
<b>Thinking creatively and critically</b>			
Rhyme your research: using poetry to communicate your science	10	67%	10
Sharpen your reasoning skills (2 Ed.)	23	100%/92%	23
The science of the unexpected: improvisation for scientists	9	90%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>145</b>		<b>142</b>
<b>TEAM SKILLS</b>			
Conversaciones difíciles	12	Waiting list	10
Cross-cultural working	7	47%	7
Effective team playing in science	8	80%	8
Leadership for success in science **	6	Waiting list	6
Leadership for junior women in science ***	12	Waiting list	10
Project management for scientists	16	Waiting list	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>SYSTEMS SKILLS</b>			
<b>Writing</b>			
Becoming a scientific writer (2 Ed.)	20	67% / Waiting list	18
Introduction to effective biomedical writing **** (4 Ed.)	58	Waiting list	56
How to write a fellowship proposal	10	83%	10
How to write a grant proposal for Horizon Europe	12	Waiting list	11
Introduction to scientific publishing and reading	10	67%	8
<b>Speaking</b>			
Behind the scenes - oral communication skills (6 Ed.)	20	80% / Waiting list	20
Communicating with confidence to the media and the public	8	Waiting list	8
Elevator pitch - the science of concise communication	10	83%	10
Principles of data visualization and visual aids	10	83%	10
Técnicas actorales para la comunicación científica	12	Waiting list	10
<b>Careers &amp; Systems leadership</b>			
Business opportunities in science and beyond	14	93%	14
Field trip to BioSpain	12	Waiting list	11
Interview and job application skills in science	9	75%	9
Project zero: become a change agent to decarbonise science	12	100%	12
Understanding career opportunities (2 Ed.)	24	Waiting list	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>241</b>		<b>231</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>447</b>		<b>430</b>

\* number of people registered at 24 hrs prior to workshop starts

\*\*\* In collaboration with MELIS-UPF

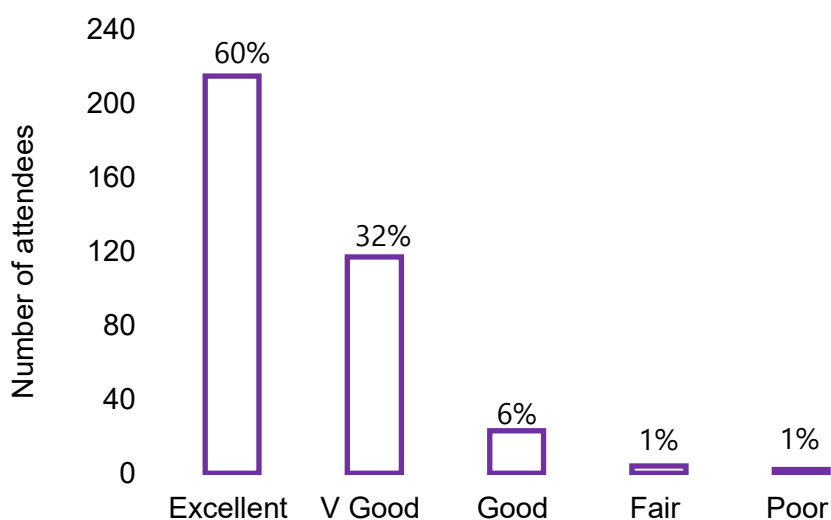
\*\* In collaboration with BIST and CRG

\*\*\*\* In collaboration with CÍKLICS programme

**TABLE 3** Summary data of attendees' ratings of each aspect of *Intervals'* courses

Reaction sheet questions	% of maximum possible score weighted				
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2008 - 2019
How would you rate this course overall?	90	87	87	86	85
How would you rate the relevance of this workshop to your professional development?	89	86	87	87	84
How well did the workshop meet your expectations?	86	83	83	83	83
What is your overall rating of the trainer(s)?	94	92	92	92	91
How would you rate the trainer's competence/experience in relation to the subject?	96	94	94	94	92
How would you rate the trainer's interpersonal and presentation skills?	94	92	91	93	90
How would you rate the relevance and usefulness of the training materials?	85	83	84	83	81
How would you rate the overall organisation of the workshop?	93	90	92	90	86

**FIGURE 1** Summary of scores for all courses – how would you rate the course overall?



**TABLE 4** Number and percentage of attendees by centre

Centres	% PRBB residents*	2023	2022	2021	2020
CRG	29	98 (22,8%)	109 (25,2%)	123 (25,8%)	110 (27,8%)
MELIS+IBE	22	119 (27,7%)	145 (33,5%)	167 (35,1%)	117 (29,5%)
Hospital del Mar Research Institute	27	57 (13,3%)	64 (14,8%)	80 (16,8%)	82 (20,7%)
ISGLOBAL	15	141 (32,8%)	92 (21,2%)	97 (20,4%)	73 (18,4%)
EMBL-Barcelona	5	11 (2,6%)	14 (3,2%)	5 (1,1%)	5 (1,3%)
Consorti PRBB	2	4 (0,9%)	9 (2,1%)	4 (0,8%)	3 (0,8%)
Other	--	--	--	--	6 (1,5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>430 (100%)</b>	433 (100%)	476 (100%)	396 (100%)

**TABLE 5** Number and percentage of attendees by post

Attendees' post	2023	2022	2021	2020
Predoc	158 (36,7%)	193 (45%)	239 (50%)	210 (53%)
Postdoc	105 (24,4%)	102 (24%)	114 (24%)	76 (19%)
Senior Invstgtr	22 (5,1%)	21 (5%)	27 (6%)	20 (5%)
Clinician	2 (0,5%)	6 (1%)	6 (1%)	10 (3%)
Tech & lab staff	66 (15,3%)	50 (12%)	47 (10%)	36 (9%)
Staff scientist	17 (4,0%)	11 (3%)	--	--
Admin & support	25 (5,8%)	16 (4%)	13 (3%)	9 (2%)
Management	23 (5,3%)	20 (5%)	18 (4%)	14 (4%)
Not classified	12 (2,8%)	14 (3%)	12 (3%)	21 (5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>430 (100%)</b>	433 (100%)	476 (100%)	396 (100%)



**TABLE 6** Percentage women/men 2023

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>Attendees to Intervals</b>	<b>71,4%</b>	<b>25,8%</b>	<b>0,5%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>
<b>PRBB residents</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Per position:				
Attendees to <i>Intervals</i>				
<b>Researchers</b>	71,4%	25,2%	0,6%	2,8%
Predocs + Masters	72,3%	23,1%	1,2%	3,5%
Postdocs	72,4%	27,6%	0,0%	0,0%
Senior researchers	52,4%	38,1%	0,0%	9,5%
Clinicians	50,0%	50,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Staff scientists	82,4%	11,8%	0,0%	5,9%
<b>Technicians</b>	67,2%	31,3%	0,0%	1,6%
<b>Manag, Admin &amp; Support staff</b>	77,1%	22,9%	0,0%	0,0%
PRBB residents				
<b>Researchers</b>				
Predocs	55%	45%	--	--
Postdocs	58%	43%	--	--
Senior researchers	41%	59%	--	--
<b>Technicians</b>	68%	32%	--	--
<b>Admin</b>	72%	28%	--	--

**TABLE 7** Attendees per gender and course

	Women	Men	Non-binary	Prefer not to say
<b>SELF SKILLS</b>				
<b>Personal mastery and emotional intelligence</b>				
Gestión de estrés/Stress management (3 Ed.)	19	17	0	0
Mindfulness - Introducción (1 Ed Spanish / 1 Ed English)	21	3	0	1
Peer mentoring	8	2	0	0
Self-leadership for daily challenges in science	6	2	0	0
Time management	5	6	0	1
Working in the word of science: self-management and resilience	11	0	0	0
<b>Thinking creatively and critically</b>				
Rhyme your research: using poetry to communicate your science	6	4	0	0
Sharpen your reasoning skills (2 Ed.)	17	5	0	1
The science of the unexpected: improvisation for scientists	3	3	0	1
<b>TOTAL (number)</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL (percentage)</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS - Building relationships</b>				
Conversaciones difíciles	10	0	0	0
Cross-cultural working	5	1	0	1
Effective team playing in science	5	3	0	0
Leading for success in science	2	3	0	1
Leadership for junior women in science	10	0	0	0
Project management for scientists	11	5	0	0
<b>TOTAL (number)</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL (percentage)</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>SYSTEMS SKILLS</b>				
<b>Writing</b>				
Becoming a scientific writer (2 Ed.)	13	5	0	0
How to write a postdoctoral research proposal	9	1	0	0
How to write a grant proposal for Horizon Europe	7	4	0	0
Introduction effective biomedical writing (4 Ed.)	42	12	1	1
Introduction to scientific publishing & How to read a paper	5	3	0	0
<b>Speaking</b>				
Behind the scenes - oral communication skills (6 Ed.)	14	6	0	0
Communicating with confidence to the media and the public	5	3	0	0
Elevator pitch - the science of concise communication	6	4	0	0
Principles of scientific data visualization & visual aids	7	1	0	2
Técnicas actorales para la comunicación científica	6	4	0	0
<b>Careers &amp; Systems leadership</b>				
Business opportunities in science and beyond	9	5	0	0
Fieldtrip to BioSpain	8	2	0	1
Interview and job application skills in science	8	1	0	0
Project zero: become a change agent to decarbonise science	8	3	1	0
Understanding career opportunities (2 Ed.)	21	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL (number)</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL (percentage)</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

**TABLE 8** Percentage women/men over the years

	2023		2022		2021	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Intervals' attendees</b>	71	26	71	27	72	26
<b>PRBB residents*</b>	61	39	60	40	60	40

\* From 2022 PRBB demographic data

**TABLE 9** Source of trainers

Source of trainers	2023	2022	2021	2020
PRBB Institutions - Senior staff	12	9	11	10
External (Spain)	15	14	13	11
External (Europe)	8	6	6	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>