

Autumn 2008

London Researcher

Vitae London Hub



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the London Researcher

Vitae's expanded agenda means the London Researcher now includes items for postgraduate researchers and research staff as well as those who support their development. We hope you will find something of interest amongst the news items and in this issue you will also find some information on events in other regional hubs.

We would be delighted to receive your contributions so please get in touch if you have topics you would like to write about or would like to hear more about.

*Fiona Denney London Hub Coordinator
londonhub@vitae.ac.uk*

Management Consultancy Insight Day

Tuesday, 18 November 2008, The Careers Group, University London, Room N336, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

The Vitae London Hub is delighted to announce an Insight into Management Consultancy Day to be organised in conjunction with The Careers Group, University of London.

This industry focused event has been designed to provide postgraduate researchers with the opportunity to learn more about this exciting field of work. The day will consist of workshops, presentations, interactive sessions and networking and will allow participants an opportunity to meet with leading management consultancies and experience at first hand what it would be like to work in this environment.

Who should attend: London Region Postgraduate Researchers

For registration forms and to make sure of a place please contact:
Kay Dorelli Vitae London Hub Manager E mail: londonhub@vitae.ac.uk

Please pass this information to interested postgraduate researchers and note that remaining places are limited

(attendance is free of charge but participants must be preregistered)

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Strategies for busy researchers

8 - 9 December 2008 – Venue: Bonhill House, London EC2A 4BX

Vitae is organising two all day interactive workshops on 8 and 9 December at Bonhill House, London. The first is for postgraduate researchers and research staff, the second day is for supervisors, principal investigators and senior research fellows.

They will be led by Hugh Kearns, from Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, who also co-wrote the popular Vitae booklet **'The balanced researcher'**.

Both will start with a 2.5 hour workshop based on the Balanced Researcher (which has been very popular in Australia). This would pick up the themes in the booklet but allow for interaction and engagement. It will explore the strategies that thousands of researchers have found useful in balancing the many demands on their time. Topics that will be covered include:

- how to be effective with your time
- specific strategies for coping with email overload picking the right things to work on dealing with distractions and interruptions
- how to say NO gracefully setting boundaries looking after me and more.

After lunch Hugh will run a separate session. For researchers called "the Seven Secrets of Highly Successful PhD Researchers". For Research Supervisors he will run one called "Creating the Seven Habits of Highly Successful PhD students".

Further details and booking form are available from <http://www.vitae.ac.uk>.



Places are limited so book now!

PRES 2008 final report

The PRES 2008 final report is now available to download from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/research/surveys/pres>.

The HEA plans to publish an extended executive summary that will include chapter five

New high level strategy group

to oversee implementation of Concordat

Professor Sir Ivor Crewe is to take on the chair of a new high level strategy group being set up to oversee the implementation of the recently launched Concordat to support the career development of researchers. The new group will be made up of Concordat signatories and key stakeholders. Its objective will be to promote the Concordat, monitor progress, and advise on actions where real change can be achieved.

Building the evidence base

Dr Tony Bromley, Coordinator of the Vitae Yorkshire and North East Hub writes:

"I have set up a JISCmail account called "Evaluating Impact". As the sector gets increasingly involved in evaluating researcher training and development activity I thought it would be useful to have an email network for the usual positive reasons; sharing of experience, exchange of ideas and views, updates, general exchange of information etc.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list please let me know."

Tony Bromley
t.p.bromley@adm.leeds.ac.uk

GRADBritain

The magazine by postgraduate researchers in the United Kingdom

Please encourage your PGRs to visit the website and enjoy their e-zine

The overall aim of GRADBritain is to foster a sense of camaraderie amongst the disparate and sometimes isolated PGRs across the land. Download the latest issue at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk>

Contributions from PGRs, postdocs and those with an interest in the development of early career researchers are welcomed. There is a payment of £50 to authors of articles that are used. Submissions and further information re author guidelines to gradbritain@vitae.ac.uk





Vitae Researcher Development Conference

Realising the potential of researchers

8-9 September 2008, Novotel London West

A rapidly changing global environment presents many opportunities and challenges for building a researcher skills base. The first Vitae Researcher Development Conference in September brought together over 400 participants to focus on the next five years of professional development support for researchers.

Five themes, likely to inform practice and developments in the coming years, emerged from the 2 day event:

- **engaging in the wider environment**

In a global and competitive area, universities will have an increasingly strategic role to play in the knowledge economy as custodians of knowledge for the public good. Institutions need to remain focussed on the changing external drivers and avoid introspection.

- **sustaining the development of researchers**

With potential changes in Roberts funding for the next government spending period, we need strategies for sustaining researcher development activity, including embedding activities within normal practice and demonstrating that researcher development is central to institutional missions.

- **building further evidence**

We acknowledged that the real impact of researcher development activity will only be seen in the longer term. The Concordat benchmarking process offers an opportunity for strategic and operational review of activities relating to research staff.

- **enhancing employability**

Employers of researchers expect both depth and breadth of experience; discussions focused on recognising postgraduate researchers as graduates with three or more years professional experience.

Further work is needed to explore career pathways for researchers in collaboration with non-HE employers.

- **empowering researchers**

Researcher-led activities were seen as having wide-ranging benefits: areas for further exploration include social enterprise, intrapreneurial skills development and the 'planned happenstance' approach to careers support.

A full conference report will be made available online in November to provide an overview of the keynote presentations, workshop and conference outcomes and next steps. Also available will be the full list of questions from participants and facilities to continue discussions online.

Until then, you can access presentations and post comments at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitaeconference2008>. On this page you can also download electronic versions of the reports and publications launched during the conference including:

- Enterprise at work: Exploring intrapreneurship in researcher development
- Rugby Team Impact Framework and the
- UKHERD Members'2008 Survey

Vitae staff at the Information desk and Ellen Pearce, Director Vitae



More photos available at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitaeconference2008>

The next Vitae Conference will be in Warwick on **8-9 September 2009**; we hope you will join us!



Update on the survey of doctoral graduates (Cohort study)

The Research Councils see a need for better information on the career paths followed by those who have completed research studies, to contribute to the evidence of outcomes from investments in research training and the impact of research graduates. A study of the career pathways of the graduates of higher degrees mainly by research will provide information about how these people are using their expertise and skills after graduation.

An analysis of options indicated the best route to gather initial statistics would be to enhance the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)'s survey of the destinations of leavers of higher education (DLHE) at its longitudinal stage, which is done roughly 3 ½ years after graduation. This enhancement will consist of a few additional questions for research graduates and seeking responses from all the research graduates who responded to the 2005 DLHE survey, shortly after their graduation. The data will become available next May and each university will have their own data returned by IFF Research (HESA's contractors) in the usual way.

In addition to HESA reports, the Research Councils will commission analysis to inform the higher education sector, policy development and graduates' decisions about their career options and this will be available in Autumn 2009. Also, following analysis of initial statistics, we plan to seek more detailed, qualitative information through career profiles from a subset of respondents. The Research Councils are also interested in maintaining contact with as many survey respondents as possible, to build information over a longer timescale.

To gain as comprehensive picture as possible from the L DLHE, the research councils are keen to reach (and gain responses from) as many of the graduates who responded to the early DLHE (in 2005) as possible, irrespective of funding source. IFF Research will be asking for contact details from institutions (in September) for the research graduates to be included in the survey. Although IFF Research will be responsible for conducting the survey, your university can provide a sound start for the study by providing address details for as many of the graduates as possible. Please look out for requests for contact information and do whatever you can to ensure your institution provides as

comprehensive contact details as possible. If you want to find out who your HESA contact is for the longitudinal DLHE, please contact HESA (email: liaison@hesa.ac.uk).

The European Charter and Code

Raising awareness and increasing implementation

In 2005, the European Commission adopted the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, "the Charter and Code". In the three years since its adoption, Member States have taken great efforts to endorse it and use it to its full potential.

Since their adoption, the Charter and Code have seen many concrete results. For instance, over 900 organisations across the EU have endorsed the Charter and Code and their principles. However, endorsement does not always lead to implementation. Therefore DG Research is taking measures to raise awareness and increase implementation of the Charter and Code.

To help raise awareness the Commission launched EURAXESS - Researchers in motion. Rebranding the various exercises relating to researchers and mobility under the EURAXESS name helps create more clarity of EC activities in this area and gives a more prominent position for the Charter and Code, which are now represented under the banner EURAXESS Rights.

To increase implementation of the Charter and Code, the EC has launched a Promoter's Network. This network will analyse awareness of the Charter and Code and its concrete application by the institutions which have endorsed it. The 50 person network will develop new communication tools to help better promote the Charter and Code.

The network will be officially inaugurated at its first meeting, in Brussels in October 2008.



British Library national training days

Please pass the information to any of your postgraduate researchers who may be interested

The British Library is offering training days to new post-graduates as follows:

- 28 October English - Medieval to 18th Century
- 4 November History - Medieval to 18th Century
- 25 November History - 19th to 21st century
- 9 December Modern foreign language
- 9 February 2009 Entrepreneurship

The days are free and are great networking opportunities to meet other researchers as well as learn about the Library's collections and service.

To book a place on any of the training days or to find our more information please e mail highereducation@bl.uk

Experience of institutional QAA Audit of Research Degree Programmes and Best Practice issues

12-13 November 2008

UKCGE Residential workshop 2008

The workshop will focus on all aspects relating to the Institutional Audit of Research Degree Programmes. It is intended for Graduate Deans, Research Supervisors, Research Administrators and all involved in the management of PGR student programmes. For further details and bookings visit <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/events/eventsarea/residential09.htm>

2020 Vision: The changing UK doctorate

24 November 2008, The British Library, London
Organised by HEA, Vitae, UKCGE and QAA

Particularly relevant to those who hold PVC (Research) and Dean of Graduate Studies posts in universities. For further details and to book online, go to http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/24_Nov_2008_Vision_London

Research into the career trajectories of newly qualified researchers

For University of Sussex Graduates

Ensuring the attractiveness of research as a career option has recently been given more prominence in policy agendas in many parts of the world, including the US and the UK. However, currently there is a gap in the research knowledge about the career trajectories of doctoral graduands.

Dr Barbara Crossouard of the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER), Sussex School of Education, University of Sussex is conducting a pilot study of the career trajectories of newly qualified researchers (defined as those who have graduated with a doctorate from January 2006 onwards). The research is funded by the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE).

If you graduated with a doctorate from the *University of Sussex* from January 2006 onwards, or graduated with a doctorate from January 2006 onwards and now work at Sussex, you are invited to complete an online questionnaire which aims to explore the career trajectories of this group.

The URL for the questionnaire is <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/sussex/nqr>

It is estimated to take around 10-15 minutes to complete and will be available online between 15th October-14 November 2008. If you are still in contact with any of your doctoral peers who now work outside the university, you are invited to forward this message to them, so that they can also participate in the research. All results will be presented in an anonymised and aggregated way to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

Findings from the research will be disseminated to key groups within the University of Sussex, including the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), the Alumni Office and Career Development and Employment Centre (CDEC), as well as to wider audiences, including the SRHE.

Barbara Crossouard

Research Fellow, Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research



Hub News and events from around the Regions

Workshop programme for part-time researchers

Vitae Midlands Hub

After much debate about the experiences of part-time researchers and the barriers they face in accessing an academic career, the Vitae Midlands Hub concluded that action by individual institutions was insufficient. Furthermore, when part-timers accessed provision they are often alone amongst well supported full-timers with whom they struggle to connect. It was decided to redress this balance with something new, innovative, collaborative and 'just for part-timers'. Collaboration between the Hub's 19 institutions enabled the development of a flexible training framework to recognise the diversity of part-timers from a range of institutions. Such a programme, reaching a large number of part-timers would be impossible for one institution.

Findings suggest that many part-timers feel isolated and disconnected from the research community in which they operate. This lack of academic enculturation is a considerable barrier to completing their doctorates and entering an academic career; a point recognised by RCUK's Research Careers and Diversity Strategy. Along with important training on a wide range of issues, the project explicitly addresses this issue of belonging to a research community.

A series of workshops open to any part-timer from any Midlands Hub university was advertised widely in November 2007. In addition, an online group in Facebook allowed peer support beyond the workshops. The 6 one-day workshops had two broad aims, to:

Give time and space to share and discuss the nature of research and its quality assessment with peers and academics beyond their supervisors

Deliver succinct and tailored training in a range of key areas

This gave each workshop an innovative mix of academic enculturation and varying pastoral and process support sessions. They took place in various geographical locations (part-timers often study at distance too) on different days of the week. This variety of content, location and day gave the maximum opportunity to attend.

Four universities collaborated to develop the design, ethos and workshop learning materials. Nine universities provided venues, trainers, academics and successful former part-timers as contributors. The participants represented 15 of the 19 member institutions with a small number from outside the region. The overall approval rating, from all participants, was well over 80%.

The project also included research investigating their needs. Participants were given a pre-registration questionnaire and provided additional feedback and evaluation during the workshops. This will be followed with semi-structured interviews after the programme of workshops is complete. Key questions have been 'What do you need?' and 'How can we best deliver it?'. Therefore, the research and evaluation of the programme have both focussed on how Universities can more cost effectively integrate part-timers into the research environment and provide the development opportunities they need.

The project has shown that a large number of HEIs can successfully collaborate to the benefit of all and has now been nominated for a Times Higher Award.

The project team are in the process of writing a report to be published in time for the Roberts Policy Forum in January 2009.

The Midlands Hub has committed to running the programme in 2009. Institutions committed to co-hosting workshops include:

- University of Northampton and the Open University
- Coventry University and the University of Warwick
- University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University
- University of Leicester and De Montfort University
- University of Gloucester and Worcester University

If you would like further information about the 2009 workshop programme or would like host a Part-time Researcher Workshop please contact Kate Mahoney, Midlands hub Manager, midlandshub@vitae.ac.uk.



Good practice takeaway for staff supporting research staff

20th November 2008, University of Birmingham

Vitae Midlands Hub

Speakers include

- Tristram Hooley (Vitae Senior Networks Manager)
- Justin Hutchince, (UK HERD taskforce)
- Andy Wilson (Loughborough University)

Workshop Session (am)

Action Learning Sets: Andy Wilson (Loughborough University) or Sharing Practice at a regional level: Tristram Hooley (Vitae Senior Networks Manager) and Jane Wellens (University of Leicester)

Workshop Session (pm)

Mentoring for Research Staff: John Kirwan (University of Oxford) or Sharing Practice at a regional level: Tristram Hooley (Vitae Senior Networks Manager) and Jane Wellens (University of Leicester)

For further information and if you would like to attend please email Kate Mahoney, Midlands Hub Manager midlandshub@vitae.ac.uk, with your name and any special dietary requirements

Good practice workshop Engaging Early Career Researchers

5th December 2008, Manchester Town Hall

Vitae North West Hub

This event is aimed at all academic and support staff involved with the development of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers. The purpose of this meeting is to share good practice on how to successfully engage the target groups with research and generic skills training. Some of the themes to be explored on the day include:

- Successful marketing tips for training courses
- Empowering researchers to take control of their careers
- Supporting research career pathways
- Effective evaluation and feedback
- State of the art in training delivery

There is no charge to attend this event and there will soon be a full programme and online registration on the NW Hub web pages (www.vitae.ac.uk/nwhub). For more information please contact Emma Gillaspay (nwhub@vitae.ac.uk).

Training provision for post-graduate researchers - sharing good practice

6th November 2008, University of Portsmouth

Vitae South East Hub

Speakers include

- Michael Davidson, University of Ulster
- Jon Turner, University of Edinburgh
- Lowry McComb, Durham University

For further information and if you would like to attend contact Ross on sehub@vitae.ac.uk stating your name, institution and any dietary requirements. Places are limited

Managing research degrees at the departmental/school/faculty/university level

16 December 2008, Canterbury Christ Church University

Vitae South East Hub

Who should attend: anyone involved with managing, administering or coordinating research degrees, research supervision or research training.

Speakers include:

- Ian Carter, University of Sussex
- Fiona Denney King's College London
- Jan Druker, Canterbury Christ Church University
- Adrian Holliday, Canterbury Christ Church University
- Andrew Lloyd, University of Brighton

For further information and if you would like to attend contact Ross on sehub@vitae.ac.uk stating your name, institution and any dietary requirements. (Parking is limited).



Diary Dates:

Upcoming conferences, events and training opportunities

See also <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/events>

What's on....

November 2008

- 1 Stamp out casual contracts Campaign, London (UCU)
- 4 National postgraduate training days - History (Medieval to 18 Century), London
- 6 Training provision for postgraduate researchers sharing good practice, Portsmouth, Vitae South East Hub
- 8-22 **National GRADschool**, Windermere
- 12-13 Experience of institutional QAA Audit of Research Degree Programmes and best practice issues, London, UKCGE Residential Workshop. Further information <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/events>
- 13-14 Making a successful research grant proposal
- 18 Management Consultancy Insight Day, London, Vitae LondonHub
- 20 Good practice takeaway for staff supporting research staff, Birmingham, Vitae Midlands Hub
- 18-22 **National GRADschool**, Ambleside
- 21-22 Young Researchers in Europe, Rennes, France
- 24 2020 Vision: The Changing UK Doctorate, London. Organised by HEA, Vitae, UKCGE and QAA. Further details <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>
- 25 National Postgraduate Training Days - History (19-21Century)
- 26 Getting a PhD in the UK, one day course for international students ([Further information from eva.nj@missendenabbey.ltd.uk](mailto:eva.nj@missendenabbey.ltd.uk))

December 2008

- 4 East of England Hub Regional Poster competition, Cambridge
- 5 Postgraduate Marketing: Successful marketing in a crowded, competitive and complex marketplace, London
- 5 GP workshop engaging early career researchers, Vitae NW Hub, Manchester
- 9 National Postgraduate Training Days - modern foreign languages, London
- 10 The new Concordat to support the career development of researchers: a requirement of research funding. Vitae Yorkshire and NE Hub ([Further information contact Suzi.lbbotson on yorksandnehub@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:Suzi.lbbotson@yorksandnehub@vitae.ac.uk))
- 16 Managing research degrees at the departmental/school/faculty/university level Canterbury Christ Church University, Vitae South East Hub

Do you want to join the Vitae London Hub network mailing list?

Would you like to contribute an article for *London Hub London Researcher*?

Email Kay Dorelli at londonhub@vitae.ac.uk