

Welcome

Yes it's summer (allegedly) - the time when we are all going to spend time clearing our email boxes, reading all those back issues of the THES and of course, planning for the academic year to come... and perhaps grabbing some leave too!

September will be with us all too soon and the Vitae conference, to be held on 8-9 at Warwick, is a great time to meet up with colleagues old and new and to pick up on new initiatives—don't forget to book your place!(See page 4)

The SWW Hub is planning a range of activities for Autumn 2009-Spring 2010. We'll keep you informed via our usual email bulletins, and from September will be twittering as well on [VitaeSWWHub](#) - if it's good enough for Stephen Fry...

Anne Goodman, Vitae SWW Hub Manager
swwhub@vitae.ac.uk

Images of Research

'Fascinating exhibition brings research to life'



'Useful exhibition, the University should do more to explain what it does'

'A great way of getting the public (and researchers themselves) to think about research in a different way'

These were some of the comments left by visitors to **Images of Research**, an exhibition of photographs depicting University of Bath research, which took place at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Bath on Wednesday 15 July,
(cont on page 2)

'Collapse of a dry stone retaining wall', by Chris Mundell

In this edition

- Page 1 & 2
Regional News
- Page 3
National Update
- Page 5
PGR Issues
- Page 6
Research Staff Issues
- Page 6
Other News
- Page 7
News from the Research Councils
- Page 8
Events for You
- Page 8
Events for Postgraduate Researchers and Research Staff
- Page 10
Diary Dates



(cont'd)

The event had two main aims: to engage the public in academic research, particularly the breadth of research taking place at the University of Bath, and to provide an opportunity for researchers to communicate often complex research to non-specialists

This was the first time the University had hosted such an event and it was a great success. Researchers and staff spent the day mingling with members of the public, explaining and discussing their research. The Mayor of Bath, Councillor Colin Barrett, also paid a visit and spent over an hour in conversation with the exhibitors, learning about their research.

Professor Jane Millar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), who judged and awarded the prizes, said: 'This very successful event was an innovative way to highlight some of the wide range of research at the University, giving an opportunity to look at academic research in a different way. The photographs were beautiful and interesting and I also particularly enjoyed talking to the researchers, who described their research with eloquence, enthusiasm and clarity.'

Anne Goodman, Hub Manager was also on the judging panel.

Prizes were given for:

Best photograph (pictured on page 1 - 'Collapse of a dry stone retaining wall', by Chris Mundell, Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering)
Best abstract, Public vote, and Exhibitors' vote.

Photographs of the event and a gallery of the photographs and abstracts are available online at www.bath.ac.uk/research/pgskills/courses/photocomp09report



Effective Researcher for Research Staff

The SWW Hub ran a regional pilot at the end of April with 36 research staff from 13 HEIs across the region attending the two day residential course held in Cardiff.

If you would like to see the materials for this course go to www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1402/Vitae-programmes.html or if you would like to discuss running such a course in your HEIs please get in touch.

THES Leadership Awards

Congratulations to the following universities in the region who triumphed at the THES Leadership Awards:

Outstanding Library Team
Bournemouth University
Outstanding Human Resources Initiative
Bristol University
Outstanding ICT initiative
Cardiff University

The shortlist for the THES Awards 2009 will be announced on September 17.

Tom Loeffler Retires



Dr Tom Loeffler retired from his post as Assistant Registrar, Postgraduate Support at Bristol University at the end of July. Tom was a member of the SWW Hub Steering Group from 2006. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking him for his input, insight and advice over the years. We wish him a long and happy retirement.



National Update

Two new ground-breaking Vitae Publications

What do researchers do? First Destinations of doctoral graduates by subject

For the first time, first destinations of doctoral graduates are presented by subject as well as by broad discipline. The study demonstrates that doctoral graduates continue to be highly employable across the economy in a wide range of occupations within and outside the higher education sector. They fulfil very diverse roles using either their specialist or high level generic skills, or both.

In total 14500 people gained doctorates in the UK in 2007, including nearly 8000 UK-domiciled. The education sector was the most popular destination for all five disciplines (absorbing half but this varies by subject, from 28% for psychology to 79% of those in modern languages.). A third of doctoral graduates went into research as their first destination. Again, this varies by subject from 7% for theology doctoral graduates to over 70% for some biological subjects.

What do researchers do? Career profiles of doctoral graduates

A collection of 40 career profile which provide insights into the paths that doctoral graduates take beyond their first destination. The stories show that the doctoral experience has a significant influence on employability and career decisions of doctoral graduates. They demonstrate the ability to create and seize opportunities, moving between employment sectors and occupations using the confidence, skills and expertise they developed during their doctorate.

Both publications are aimed at doctoral researchers, careers advisors and supervisors as well as at employers and highlight the postgraduate labour market and what doctoral graduates bring. To download your personal copies, visit www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd and for hard copies contact swwhub@vitae.ac.uk.

Career stories portal

To coincide with the 'What do researchers do?' publications and a pilot project of 'Vitae career stories on film' in partnership with icould (www.icould.com), Vitae has also launched the first phase of a new career stories portal on the Vitae website. The portal will be a repository for individuals' stories and career stories projects, provide researchers with an insight into

potential careers inside and outside of academia and be a useful resource for those staff working with researchers. In addition we hope the portal will encourage institutions to collect career stories and help demonstrate the impact of a doctorate on a researcher's career.

The current format paves the way for a more comprehensive career stories database which will be finalised later in the year. The final phase of the portal will contain a searchable database of researcher career stories with the facility to upload stories and details of career stories projects. It will also include materials and guidance to help the collection of career stories, and a community of practice for those building banks of career stories.

For more information, visit www.vitae.ac.uk/careerstories.

Researcher careers and recession online discussion space

Join the discussion at www.vitae.ac.uk/careersandrecession

Vitae has set up an online discussion space on researcher careers and recession. We have dedicated this space on the website to post various articles (commissioned specifically for this space) on the topic of the recession and its potential impact on researcher careers. Throughout one week (w/c 13 July) articles were posted on a daily basis. Articles include:

- 'Research and recession' by Fiona Christie, Careers coordinator for postgraduate researchers, University of Salford'
- 'Challenges and perspectives' for early career researchers during the current economic climate' by Professor Sarah O'Hara, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Professor Bob Webb, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Nottingham 'Impact of the recession on research and research careers' by Aaron Porter, Vice-President (Higher Education), National Union of Students'
- 'Universities, researchers and the recession' by Dr Tristram Hooley
- 'Careers and recession – from the perspective of a head of postgraduate career development' by Elizabeth Wilkinson, Head of Postgraduate Career Development, University of Manchester
- 'How do recruiters make shortlisting decisions?' by Shiona Llewellyn.



The Vitae researcher development conference 2009

The UK's largest event for people with a commitment to the personal, professional and career development of researchers will be held on 8-9 September at the University of Warwick. If you have not yet booked, please come and join us.

This year's conference will address strategic and practical implications of the following themes:

- sustaining the investment in our researchers in order to build research capacity and remain globally competitive
- research and evaluation relating to the impact of researcher development and of researcher careers
- the implementation of the Concordat, including the benchmarking process
- latest developments in policy relating to postgraduate researchers
- practice to support researcher skills and career development.

For further information about the Vitae conference, including workshop details please visit www.vitae.ac.uk/vitaeconference2009.

Understanding law in context

Vitae is currently undertaking a research study designed to explore the implementation of legislation on fixed term employment within research oriented universities. Working with Dr Liz Oliver of the European Law and Policy Research Group (University of Liverpool) the study will examine how universities and researchers themselves have responded to changes in the fixed-term employment legislation. This study has been funded by Vitae under the remit to develop a more comprehensive evidence base. It will contribute to the knowledge base regarding implementing the Concordat principles.

The study aims to:

- extend existing research into the management of researchers within universities in the light of the legislation on fixed-term employees
- develop a more detailed understanding of how universities are implementing the legislation on fixed-term employees through institutional policies
- investigate how the legislation on fixed-term employees and related institutional policies are experienced by researchers and their managers 'on the ground'
- generate examples of policy and practice, key challenges and pitfalls to be shared with policy

makers and those working with researchers across the HE sector

- investigate the relationship between institutional responses to the legislation on fixed-term employees and the researcher development agenda
- interpret the research outcomes in the context of policy and practice in the HE sector.

For further information on the study see: www.liv.ac.uk/law/elprg/Fixed_term_Employment_Project/index.htm.

Researcher development framework update

Vitae has been working with the Rugby Team and two universities (Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Manchester) undertaking similar projects to develop a UK framework of the skills, competencies and attributes of researchers from doctoral level to experienced researcher. This work will provide the next generation of the 'Joint Skills Statement'.

Vitae would love to hear from any institution that is developing or has developed a similar framework for researchers within their institution. An initial version of the framework will be available at the Vitae researcher development conference and will go out to the HE sector and other stakeholders for consultation and discussion in the autumn. Contact janet.metcalfe@vitae.ac.uk.

Careers in academia programme

At the end of this year, Vitae will be making the highly successful 'Careers in academia' programme freely available for use by UK higher education institutions. This will include manuals with all the information needed to organise and deliver the programme as well as a supporting podcast of the presentations from one of the national programmes.

Vitae will be running a national 'careers in academia' event on Monday 12 October in Bristol and further details about this event are available at www.vitae.ac.uk/cif. If you would like any further information about the programme, or would be interested in observing an event, then please contact jonathan.roberts@vitae.ac.uk.



Vitae Roberts policy forum

The annual Vitae Roberts policy forum brings together individuals responsible for institutional researcher development policy and implementing the Roberts recommendations. An informal consultation was carried out following this year's policy forum in January around 4 topics: the future of Roberts funding; reporting on the implementation of the Concordat; assessing impact and evidence building and the language of high level skills.

Vitae has recently published the results of this consultation, which:

- stresses the importance of the Roberts Funding to HEIs
- supports a proportionate reporting process for the Concordat
- recommends an external evaluation of the Roberts agenda (the Rugby Team has subsequently submitted an outline proposal for an external evaluation project to RCUK for consideration)

The full results of the consultation are available now at www.vitae.ac.uk/policyforum.

The 2010 Policy Forum will be held on January 6-7 in Edinburgh.

Vitae Innovate

Vitae has received an excellent response to the new 'Vitae innovate' scheme promoting innovation in the personal, professional and career development of researchers. Over 150 bids have been received to the £100,000 grant fund for a diverse selection of innovative projects by its 31 July deadline. Funding has been requested for pioneering research, creation of new learning materials, application of new technologies and exploration of new paradigms and approaches in the field of researcher development.

The successful proposals will be unveiled at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference at the University of Warwick on Tuesday 8 September 2009.

Survey on employer practice: Attracting and retaining researchers

Vitae, in collaboration with Sheffield University, is inviting employers to share their views of postgraduate researchers through a national survey.

This survey aims to collect information that will help to illustrate the current researcher labour market, recruitment processes and trends, as well as career development of people with doctorates within organisations.

Results will also be shared with higher education institutions to improve current training and development programmes in order to enhance the employability and skills of doctoral graduates www.survey.crac.org.uk/employers.

PGR Issues

Update on the Research Council Funding Assurance Programme

Changes in the reporting practices for those institutions that receive a significant amount of Roberts funding have recently been announced.

The Funding Assurance Programme is coordinated by the RCUK Assurance team, and provides assurance for the Councils that expenditure on Research Council grants is incurred and recorded in accordance with the relevant Council's terms and conditions. The Programme involves site visits to, or desk-based reviews of, institutions in receipt of research grant funding.

Currently at least 20 institutions are being visited each year with visits occurring every 2-3 years per institution. Institutions with lower funding are examined by a 'desk-based' review rather than site visit.

Before the site visits, and as part of the desk-based reviews, questionnaires are sent to the institution. For institutions in receipt of over £10K in Roberts funds, these questionnaires will now include questions on Roberts funds ie specific questions about researcher development such as - 'describe the procedures in place which ensure that expenditure is incurred on programmes/activity relevant to the Roberts' agenda'.

For more information about the Funding Assurance Programme, please go to www.rcuk.ac.uk/aboutrcuk/efficiency/assurance.htm.



Research Staff Issues

Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) update

51 universities participated in the 2009 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) during March - May. The CROS 2009 questionnaire was completely updated to bring the question set in line with the aspirations and principles of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers, launched in June 2008. The UK aggregate results of the survey will be presented at the Vitae Researcher Development conference, 8 - 9 September in Warwick.

European Charter and Code promoters network

The European Commission has brought together a range of its services under the EURAXESS name - including the mobility portals, the Charter and Code implementation, and jobs and vacancies (see <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>).

During 2008 and early 2009 the members of the Charter and Code promoters network created action plans for raising awareness at institutional and national levels. In the UK, our focus has been on embedding the new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers as the key tenet of our national process for good management and development of researchers (alongside the QAA Code of Practice for Research Degrees for postgraduate researchers). The Commission has now signalled that the implementation strategy has moved from improving awareness to sharing strategies, practice and approaches.

The promoters network has been reformed into an 'Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group' and will hold its first meeting on 7 September in Warwick (the day before the Vitae conference). For more information about this group, please contact the Concordat coordinator, Thomas Papworth thomas.papworth@universitiesuk.ac.uk or Ellen Pearce ellen.pearce@vitae.ac.uk from Vitae.

Other News

Association of Research Managers and Administrators

The 19th Annual Conference of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) took place on 1-3 June in Southampton. More than 300 participants reflected on "Reviewing the Future" which was the theme of the conference. Dr Rachel Blanc, London Hub Manager attended on behalf of Vitae and reports:

The focus of the plenary session was on new challenges facing universities and the need to prove the impact of research. It was emphasised that Research Councils were now looking to fund innovative, rigorous, multidisciplinary projects. To allow this cultural change, there would be a need to restructure universities in the next 5 years.

One of the issues will be to address the specific demand for management of these projects. Another issue will be to acknowledge the difference between the business sector and academia. Particular attention to staff career development will be needed in order to fill these new management roles within universities.

There was a good variety of workshop sessions with the common theme of addressing the issues of impact. With the RAE being replaced by REF, there is a clear need to capture and accelerate the impact. There is also a need to influence policy makers. The message sent by the HEFCE delegate was that REF would be about keeping track records of research projects and not so much about the metrics behind them. Moreover, they would be looking for larger quality projects rather than lots of small ones. Everybody seemed to agree that in order to make and measure impact, particular attention must be paid to career development. The mentoring process for new academic staff was perceived as crucial. In line with career development, a strong message was reinforced regarding the need for professionalisation of the research manager's position in order that it be recognised and valued.

In conclusion, this conference highlighted the need to see the bigger picture and to conceptualise research projects from a new angle. For more information on this and other ARMA conferences, visit www.arma.ac.uk.

News from the Research Councils



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have recently announced a co-funded pilot Public Policy Fellowship Scheme. AHRC/ESRC Public Policy Fellowships will provide opportunities for arts and humanities and social science researchers to spend time within partner organisations to undertake policy relevant research, to develop research skills and facilitate knowledge exchange within Government, public sector organisations and across academic networks. Public Policy Fellowships also encourage colleagues from partner organisations to spend time within academic units to work on an agreed project(s) and to increase their research skills. Fellowships will be jointly-funded by the AHRC and/or ESRC as appropriate, and with Public Sector partners while the Fellows will remain employed by their institution or organisation.

Public Policy Fellowship opportunities are normally for 3-6 months in duration but placements up to 12 months might be considered. Fellowships can be on a full or part-time basis. Applicants should currently be employed at a university (or have a university willing to manage the award on their behalf), other similar research-based organisations or a recognised Independent Research Organisation. In addition to Public Sector partners, Public Policy Fellowships with business and Third Sector partners are encouraged where the research has a policy focus. For more information on this pilot Scheme please contact j.pollock@ahrc.ac.uk or lesley.lilley@esrc.ac.uk.

North Wyke Research Merger

North Wyke Research, the home of UK grassland systems science based near Oakhampton in Devon, has completed its merger with Rothamsted Research, an institute of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the oldest agricultural research station in the UK.

North Wyke Research has now become a department within the Rothamsted organisation, but will retain its distinctive identity to support its role as an important national capability with connections to the South West research community. North Wyke Research will develop its role as a regional centre for research, training and knowledge exchange, especially through its relationships with University of Exeter and the Peninsular Partnership for the Rural Environment.

2009 International Review of UK Chemistry Research

An International Review of Chemistry Research in the UK was carried out by a panel of international experts in April 2009. This review was part of a series of international reviews organised by EPSRC in partnership with learned societies to provide an independent assessment of the quality and impact of UK research. The report of the review panel was recently published and EPSRC is currently developing an action plan to take forward the issues and recommendations identified in the report.

www.epsrc.ac.uk/AboutEPSRC/IntRevs/2009ChemistryIR/default.htm.

ESRC New Postgraduate Training Framework

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), has announced significant changes to how it supports postgraduate training in the social sciences. The new Postgraduate Training Framework will move the ESRC away from a system of providing training through recognised outlets and individual courses and will instead create a national network of institutional level Doctoral Training Centres (DTC) and Doctoral Training Units (DTU).

It is estimated that twenty-five Doctoral Training Centres will be established along with a potentially greater number of Doctoral Training Units. Institutions will be invited to submit applications for accredited DTC or DTU status from October 2009. Successful applications will be announced in late 2010 ready to host students starting in 2011.

www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/fundingopportunities.



Events for you

Staff Development Conference 2009

Higher Education Futures: Making a Positive Difference, Leadership Development for Higher Education 4 – 6 November, Cardiff

Despite - or perhaps because of - today's cold economic climate, this year's conference in Cardiff challenges staff and organisational developers in higher education to consider how they can make - and demonstrate - a positive difference now and for the future.

The 2009 conference also aims to encourage networking before, during and after the event, making the most of technology as well as face-to-face discussions. It will also encourage an even wider range of contributions, including both the scholarly and the practical, to acknowledge the wealth of experience and knowledge delegates bring as well as recognising the increasing number of developers undertaking research through funded projects or higher degrees.

www.lfhe.ac.uk/membership/sdc2009.

HERDA-SW Annual Conference 5 - 6 November

Renewal & Revival is the theme of this year's HERDA-SW Annual Conference (their 10th Anniversary event) to be held on 5-6 November 2009, at the Imperial Hotel in Torquay.

Confirmed speakers so far include:

David Docherty, Chief Executive of the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)

Sir David Melville, Chair of Lifelong Learning UK

Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive HEFCE

Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of SWRDA

Sean Mackney, Deputy Chief Executive of the HE Academy

The event will also play host to a special Celebratory Dinner & Awards Ceremony in order to showcase some of the successes of HERDA-SW over the last 10 years and reward those who have contributed to its development.

www.herda-sw.ac.uk.

Events and News for Postgraduate Researchers and Research Staff

Online Poster Competition

The innovative networking website for postgraduate researchers and research staff, Graduate Junction, has recently launched an online poster competition which is accepting entries from postgraduates all over the world! The poster competition offers researchers the opportunity to practice key presentation and communication skills as well as the chance to share their research with an international community. On top of this they have the chance to win an iPod as well as a selection of cash prizes. The top 10 posters will also be displayed on the Graduate Junction website.

The competition involves the researchers presenting their research in the form of a digital A1 poster aimed at a non subject- specific audience. The posters will then be judged by a panel of individuals, chaired by Dr Eleanor Loughlin of Durham University Graduate School, from both academic and non academic backgrounds including Dr Tennie Videler from Vitae. A public vote, where members of Graduate Junction will get to vote for their favourite poster, will also help to decide the overall winner.

For more information about this exciting competition please visit www.graduatejunction.com/posters.

Graduate Junction's
International
Online Poster Competition

Step 1) Present your research ideas and findings on an A1 poster aimed at a non-specialist audience.

Step 2) Log in and submit your entry online.

Find out more at
<http://www.graduatejunction.com/posters>

Closing Date is
15th October 2009

Connect with researchers who share your interests worldwide. Register with Graduate Junction NOW! Its free!



Freedom of Information: what's in it for researchers?

14 September

The Lighthouse, Glasgow

The Research Information Network is holding this free event to raise awareness of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) as a tool for researchers and to aid understanding of the new access regime.

The day will cover how to use FOI to access records and information and how to make successful requests. Case studies will be presented to explore how to use FOI in practice, offering strategies for what works well for particular disciplines and types of research and insights will be provided from the Scottish perspective. Key speakers include Professor Duncan Tanner – Director, Welsh Institute for Social and Cultural Affairs, Bangor University.

For a full programme, more information and to book your free place, visit www.rin.ac.uk/foi-scotland.

National Research Training days at the British Library

The British Library is running another series of National Research Training days for postgraduate researchers in the autumn. Topics covered will be English Literature (Medieval - 18th Century) Social Science Art & Design History (19th Century - Present Day) www.bl.uk/HETrainingdays.

Careers in Academia—Bristol

Vitae is holding another Careers In Academia event in Bristol on 12 October.

This one-day event provides participants with an insight into some of the areas that make up a career in academia. Participants have the opportunity to:

- meet with current academics from a range of disciplines to hear about their experiences of an academic career and ask the questions they've always wanted to, but weren't sure who to ask
- explore how to market themselves for a career in academia, both within their department, and at interview
- look at how to write effective grant/paper applications
- discover what life is like as a postdoctoral researcher

- work with fellow researchers and share experiences with other participants.

www.vitae.ac.uk/events.

Research Staff Conference

Booking is now open for Vitae's first Research Staff Conference to be held on November 5 in London.

The conference will discuss ways in which the community of researchers can come together across institutional and disciplinary barriers to work effectively together. It will provide an opportunity for participants to develop networks that enable the voices of researchers to be more effectively heard within institutions and by national policymakers.

Places on the event are free. Participants will need to cover their own travel costs

www.vitae.ac.uk/events.

Creativity in Research—London

On December 7 Vitae will be holding a one day event designed to explore the importance of creativity in a research environment and to provide researchers with tools and techniques that can help with thinking more creativity. www.vitae.ac.uk/events

The Last Word.....

Christian Carter is on holiday. Look out for his next column in November.



Diary Dates:

Upcoming conferences, events and training opportunities

See also www.vitae.ac.uk/events

What's on...?

September 2009

- 8-9 Vitae Annual Researcher Development Conference, Warwick
- 14 Freedom of Information: what's in it for researchers? Glasgow
- 25 The Source event from Naturejobs, London

October 2009

- 12 Careers in focus: Careers in academia, Bristol
- 13 National postgraduate training days—English (Medieval—18th Century), London
- 14 Vitae Staff supporting researchers masterclass—training needs analysis and PDP, Edinburgh
- 20-22 Bangor GRADschool, Bangor
- 27-30 National GRADschool, Windermere

November 2009

- 4-6 LFHE Higher education futures: making a positive difference, Cardiff
- 3 National postgraduate training days—Social Sciences, London
- 5 Vitae National Research Staff Conference, London
- 5-6 HERDA-SW Conference, Torquay
- 11 Vitae Staff supporting researchers masterclass-evaluation and feedback, Manchester
- 11 Vitae Staff supporting researchers masterclass-evaluation and feedback, Manchester
- 24-27 National GRADschool, Windermere

December 2009

- 1 National postgraduate training days—Art & Design. London
- 7 Vitae Creativity in Research - London
- 8 National postgraduate training days—History (19th Century), London

Do you want to join the Vitae South West and Wales Hub network mailing list?

Would you like to contribute an article for *South West and Wales Hub News*?

Email swwhubhub@vitae.ac.uk