

# Vitae annual report 2008



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# Vitae annual report 2008

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## 1 Background and context

2008 was an important year for researchers in the UK. As global economic challenges mount, the government remains committed to supporting a knowledge and research based future for the UK:

*'...even in an economic downturn the fundamental case for investing in research and researchers remains the same. Having a supply of highly skilled people is vital for our international competitiveness'*

John Neilson, Director, Research Base, DIUS  
(Vitae Roberts Policy Forum 2009)

A number of developments took place during 2008, including the joint launch of the revised UK Concordat in June, with 20 signatory organisations, and Vitae, a new organisation with a remit to enhance the professional and career development of both postgraduate researchers and research staff.

A major review of higher education was commissioned by John Denham, including a review of issues around researcher careers which was undertaken by Professor Nigel Thrift from Warwick University.

In Europe, the European Council for Doctoral Education was launched, creating a pan-European platform for exploring issues relating to doctoral education and training.

Against this backdrop, Vitae built on the work of the UK GRAD Programme and the UK Higher Education Researcher Development group to create an organisation to embed world-class training and development for researchers in the UK.



## 2 Key achievements for Vitae in 2008

Vitae was formally launched by Ian Pearson MP on 25 June alongside the new 'Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'.

*'...Vitae will play a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the sector to implement aspects of the Concordat.'*

Ian Pearson, formerly Minister of State for Science and Innovation,  
launching Vitae, June 2008

Vitae has built on previous work of both the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD to enable staff working in the area of researcher development to share strategies, approaches and ideas. In 2008, as well as our largest ever annual conference which was attended by over 430 participants, we also ran 34 regional events and saw the number of public entries on the Vitae database of practice<sup>1</sup> top 580.

*'An excellent conference! So well organised it has been a really good use of my time.'*

Participant, Vitae conference 2008

Above all else, the conference made significant strides in exploring the concept of an overall strategy for supporting researcher careers in UK higher education institutions (HEIs).

### Key achievements:

#### Built the Vitae programme

Vitae was launched in June 2008 as the first programme to work on a national level to promote and champion the skills and careers of all researchers in higher education institutions (HEIs), including research staff.

The new programme quickly engaged with stakeholders who had been involved in the previous UK GRAD Programme; and built strong relationships with communities who are involved in working with research staff in HEIs.

Vitae was quick to gain both visibility and credibility with both researchers and staff in institutions; 73% of top 30 research active HEIs were linked to the Vitae website by the end of January 2009.

<sup>1</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/dop](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/dop)

## Influenced policy for enhancing researcher careers

Vitae provided clear input to the Thrift Review (November 2008) and our activities – past and future – were referenced significantly in the report:

*'...it is also important to mention the recently established Vitae (incorporating UK GRAD and UKHERD). Vitae works closely with the sector to support and enhance professional development for researchers... Vitae is championing policy development, sharing practice and building an evidence base... (and) will play a significant role in working with research councils to support universities in implementing the new research Concordat'*

Thrift report, 2008<sup>2</sup>

Vitae provided input to the development of the Concordat and gained clear recognition from research funding bodies and the Concordat Strategy Group of its critical and substantial role to play in the implementation:

*'...the single largest contribution to the implementation of the Concordat will be through the Vitae programme. Vitae champions the personal, professional and career development of researchers in the UK and its activities will support universities and research institutions to achieve the principles of the Concordat. One of the aims of Vitae is building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda. As part of this aim, Vitae will work with the HE sector and other stakeholders to review progress in implementing the Concordat and advising on the definition of the benchmarking study under Principle Seven.'*

Concordat implementation plan, 2008<sup>3</sup>

Vitae enabled important policy discussions to take place between the research councils, HE sector and other funders and stakeholders, particularly in relation to the evaluation of activities to develop researcher careers and future funding and sustainability models for embedding training and development in research programmes.

*'...good to have an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making processes'*

Vitae Roberts Policy Forum participant, January 2009

*'...As someone new to the strategic management of researcher development I found discussion at the Policy Forum informed my thinking about the role of transferable skills training within the wider institutional context, the importance of measuring impact from a variety of different points of view and consideration of ways to develop a sustainable programme for researcher development. Discussions were open, informative and thought provoking. As a result my strategy will engage the research community more fully in development and delivery to embed training more fully within the research environment.'*

Vitae Roberts Policy Forum participant, January 2009



## Developed and launched new training programmes for institutions

Four programme models were developed with and for UK higher education institutions to impact the effectiveness of researchers.

Two 'how to be an effective researcher' programmes, one for research staff and one for postgraduate researchers, were launched for all UK institutions in September 2008; 15 institutions became engaged in 2008 with further regional collaborations planned for running the programmes in 2009.

A collaboration of 19 institutions through the Vitae Midlands Hub piloted and developed a programme of support for part-time researchers.

*'I feel great. This is a good opportunity for me to talk to people who are part-time PhDs. They have the same situation as myself. We can discuss and share the problems and how to make it right.'*

*'Very good! Made some really useful contacts. Some great insights.'*

Participant quotes 2008

<sup>2</sup> [www.dius.gov.uk/higher\\_education/shape\\_and\\_structure/he\\_debate.aspx](http://www.dius.gov.uk/higher_education/shape_and_structure/he_debate.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> [www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/implementation.html](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/implementation.html)

A career management programme for research staff 'Broadening horizons' was developed during 2008 and launched in early 2009.

*'Broadening horizons' enables research staff to take 2 days 'time-out' to really focus on their career development and complements the extensive provision and one-to-one support offered by our Careers Centre. Some research staff prefer to engage with a concentrated programme rather than participate in workshops throughout the year so 'Broadening horizons' can meet the needs of staff who wouldn't usually participate in our central provision. 'Broadening horizons' also helps to raise the profile of the Careers Centre and the support available for research staff and highlights areas for future development and engagement'*

Dr Gill de Calvo, Careers Consultant (PhD students and research staff), Careers Centre University of Warwick, Coventry

*'I enjoyed the course and it was good to take time out to think about my career aspirations.'*

*'Kick started my search for a new direction.'*

*'Provided me with the tools to think about what I want and what I can offer'*

*'Increased my self-confidence.'*

Participants 2008

## Launched a major new website dedicated to researcher careers

Vitae created and launched a major new web portal dedicated to researcher careers including specific sections for research staff and postgraduate researchers and a separate portal for staff in institutions and policymakers who work with researchers:

*'...Vitae's researchers' portal is set to become a key information and dissemination point'*

Thrift report, 2008

*'...a lot of the things on the Vitae website have been useful to many of the post-docs in our department'*

*'...It all looks so professional it is hard to believe that so much has been accomplished in such a relatively short time.'*

Website users, 2008

The database of practice continues to be an important and valuable resource for the sector hosted on the Vitae site. At the end of 2008 it held 583 publicly visible practices, entered by 80 organisations, compared to 460 practices at the end of 2007. Almost 80% of practices were relevant to postgraduate researchers, whilst half were relevant to research staff. 30% of practices were entered or updated during the autumn 2008.

Overall, there was a 40% increase in page views from launch in June through to December, and since the UK GRAD Programme website closed page views have increased by a further 35%.

## Enabled researchers to be more confident in their employability and career options

During 2008, Vitae enabled researchers to be more confident about what they can offer employers, to consider a range of career options and to manage their time more effectively:

■ *I can see the relevance of my skills to different environments – 96%*

■ *I am confident of my employability – 94%*

Participants on GRADschools in 2008

*'Really explained the grey areas – honest and informative and has provoked changes'*

Career in Academia participant 2008

*'(the) time management tips (were) very specific and easy to implement immediately'*

*'The things I've actually changed since being on the course are:*

- knowing what is the most important thing to get done (each) day*
- learning how to say 'no' nicely*
- setting myself realistic targets: (including identifying) what is 'good enough' and what doesn't need to be done.'*

Participants on 'strategies for busy researchers' workshop 2008

## Built evidence of the range, impact and perceptions of researcher careers

In September 2008 the Rugby Team<sup>4</sup> a sector-based working group which is supported by Vitae, published an 'impact framework'.

The 'Rugby Team Impact Framework' (RTIF)<sup>5</sup> is 'an evaluation model for training and development activity specifically tailored to the context of training and development of researchers in higher education (HE)'.

By January 2009, a report highlighting 22 examples of institutional evaluation projects was published.

*'... (The Rugby Team has) hit on an elegant way of building up a comprehensive record of the impact of the Roberts agenda and approaches to evaluation that will be of great value to the sector, and that will also provide much of the evidence needed by RCUK and government.'*

Vitae Roberts Policy Forum participant, January 2009

The Rugby Team and Vitae also developed a framework for collecting career profiles which highlight the impact of researchers' careers and skills in society, culture and the economy.

Vitae will publish the first 'What do researchers do?' publication and a range of illustrative career profiles in summer 2009.

Vitae played a key role in the revisions of the 'Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)' which will be re-launched in March 2009 and will ask research staff for their views on many aspects of their employment, including the principles of the Concordat.

### The UK GRAD Programme ran between 2003-8.

It was well-known for its:

- well established programme of national and regional events to develop strategy and share practice
- targeted publications including 'What do PhDs do?' a series of reports on the destinations of doctoral graduates
- website provision including a major database of over 500 examples of institutional practice in supporting researchers' development
- courses and resources for postgraduate researcher development.

Vitae's key challenge in 2008 was to maintain a level of service and activities which were expected under the UK GRAD Programme, while at the same time undertake major conceptual and practical development to create a new organisation with a wider remit to include research staff as well as postgraduate researchers.

Early in 2008, the Vitae regional Hubs focused on maintaining the activities and profile of the programme through a range of events to share practice and explore the remit of the new Vitae programme. Alongside this, the Vitae national team focused on the programme changes, including developing a name and brand for the new programme, a new website providing information and resources for research staff and the design of the first major conference to bring together the postgraduate researcher and research staff agendas.



CRAC has worked with the research councils and in the area of researcher development since 1968. As well as managing the Vitae contract on behalf of RCUK, we also undertake additional consultancy, research and collaborative projects with institutions and other related organisations. During 2008 we undertook work on enterprise skills for researchers, a policy briefing for Universities UK and ran a range of courses and training events for researchers.

The appointment in October 2008 of Sir Richard Sykes as Chairman of the CRAC Board of Trustees will help profile the aspirations and work of the Vitae programme within higher education and government.

<sup>4</sup> Sector-led working group, which was set up following the UK GRAD Programme Roberts Policy Forum in Rugby in January 2005. Their mission is to propose meaningful and workable ways of evaluating the impact and effectiveness of skills development in early career researchers.

<sup>5</sup> Bromley, T., Metcalfe, J. and Park, C. (2008) 'The Rugby Team Impact Framework' published by Careers Research Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited, ISBN-13: 978-1-906774-00-4 [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Rugby%20Impact%20Framework\\_33.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Rugby%20Impact%20Framework_33.pdf)

## 3 Review of 2008 – achievements and challenges

### 3.1 Programme overview

During 2008 the major challenge for CRAC and our partners was to maintain the services and activities for which the UK GRAD Programme was known, while at the same time undertaking the major conceptual and practical developments involved in the creation of a new organisation with a wider remit and a different emphasis.

**Vitae's vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers**

In order to launch a new programme able to produce a fundamental change in support for researcher careers in the UK, we needed to create a name and identity for the programme that worked for those that had been involved in the UK GRAD Programme or UKHERD and for research staff in higher education institutions (HEIs). We created a new website, launched in June, with areas for postgraduate researchers and for research staff, as well as a portal for staff in HEIs and policy makers involved in this agenda. We made changes to our staff structures, created an External Advisory Board and worked with UKHERD to create a new Vitae Research Staff Development Advisory Group (ReSDAG) from the existing Taskforce.

We reviewed our links with stakeholders and other organisations and undertook a range of activities to build stronger links with organisations relating to the research staff area, including the research councils and other major funders of research. An outline of our strategy to 2012 will be published during 2009, and is outlined in the 'looking forward' section at the end of this report.

**The Vitae website, replacing the UK GRAD Programme website, was launched on 25 June 2008.**

The new site provides a greater range of content (including new material for research staff) and has improved functionality. It now contains searchable databases, a dynamic events listing and has enhanced interactivity.

All user registrations from the previous site were transferred in August 08 giving a total of 3,421 registered users by the end of 2008. We saw a 40% increase in page views on the Vitae site from launch to December and since the final closure of the GRAD site in December the Vitae page views have risen by a further 35%.

### 3.1.1 Our stakeholders

Vitae aims to work with other organisations to enhance research capacity through the development of highly skilled researchers.

During 2008 we undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise to enable us to achieve this aim most effectively. As a result, a stakeholder management plan will be developed during spring 2009.

Vitae has organised much of its activity through five linked stakeholder networks which are supported both nationally and through the regional Hubs. These networks enable the programme to provide targeted activity for each network in order to realise the potential of the UK's researchers.

Vitae network groups:

- Researchers (including both postgraduate researchers and research staff)
- Supervisors and research managers
- Staff supporting researchers' development (including careers advisers, trainers, HR professionals and other related HE roles)
- Employers
- Policy makers (including national organisations and HE senior managers)

The activities for each network have been designed to meet their needs. Examples include:

- the publication of magazines ('GRADBritain', 'overview' and Hubs newsletters) which are designed to enable network members to keep up-to-date and understand policy changes in the area of developing researchers
- organising conferences, events and workshops which enable the Vitae networks to meet, input into policy and share practice in order to enhance support for researchers (for example the Hub good practice events, The 'Balanced Researcher' programmes, the Vitae conference and Roberts Policy Forum)

***'The things I've actually changed since being on the course are:***

- knowing what is the most important thing to get done today, by picking the biggest 'rock' from the list (another of Hugh's analogies)*
- learning how to say 'no' nicely (although I'm still working on this one)*
- setting myself realistic targets: what is 'good enough' and what doesn't need to be done.'*

Strategies for busy researchers workshop participant 2008

- the creation of resources for researchers to enable them to better manage their research (for example 25,000 Vitae doctoral planners were requested by institutions for use in their induction programmes).

## Publications and materials developed for Vitae networks in 2008:

- **'The balanced researcher'** – a booklet containing information to help researchers tackle and juggle the many demands of undertaking research (over 30,000 copies of this popular booklet have been distributed to date). Available at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/Vitae-Balanced-Researcher-June-2008.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/Vitae-Balanced-Researcher-June-2008.pdf)
- **'PGR Tips'** – a monthly e-bulletin containing tips and advice for postgraduate researchers (2,000 regular subscribers). Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrtips](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrtips)
- **'GRADBritain'** – the tri-annual online magazine by and for postgraduate researchers (2,000 regular subscribers). Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/gradbritain](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/gradbritain)
- **Planner for postgraduate researchers** – a calendar and advice on the major stages and milestones in doctoral research (over 25,000 planners distributed in time for inductions in August 08)
- **Completing your doctorate z-cards** – a handy resource of tips on the different aspects of finishing thesis, preparing for viva and thinking of career options
- **'overview'** – the tri-annual Vitae bulletin for supervisors and principal investigators providing news, policy updates and insights into good practice (over 20,000 copies distributed of the Winter 08/09 issue)
- **Vitae Concordat briefing pack to engage stakeholder groups** – a series of briefings produced for higher education professionals involved in implementing the principles of the 2008 Concordat for researchers. Available at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat)

## Other Vitae publications and materials developed in 2008:

- **Vitae brochure** – outlines the vision and aims of Vitae (over 20,000 copies distributed), launched 25 June 2008. Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Vitae\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Vitae_brochure.pdf)
- **UKHERD Members' Survey outcomes from a survey of staff involved in supporting the development of research staff** – highlights key themes for research staff in UK universities and institutes, launched 8 September 2008. Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.UKHERD%20Survey%20Briefing\\_4pp\\_33.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.UKHERD%20Survey%20Briefing_4pp_33.pdf)
- **Rugby Team Impact Framework** – a model specifically tailored to the evaluation of training and development of researchers in HE, launched 8 September 2008 with further update document released at the Vitae Roberts Policy Forum in January 2009. Available respectively at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Rugby%20Impact%20Framework\\_33.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Rugby%20Impact%20Framework_33.pdf) and [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-%20Policy-Forum-Impact-Framework-Update-January2009.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-%20Policy-Forum-Impact-Framework-Update-January2009.pdf)
- **CRAC in collaboration with Vitae: Enterprise at work: Exploring intrapreneurship in researcher development** – the report of a collaborative project with UK higher education institutions, launched 8 September 2008. Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Intra%20Report\\_Final\\_33.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Intra%20Report_Final_33.pdf)
- **Vitae September newsletter** – outlines Vitae activities to support postgraduate researchers, research staff and researchers careers, distributed 8 September. Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Newsletter\\_A4\\_33.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/1.Newsletter_A4_33.pdf)
- **UK GRAD final report 2003-2007** – summarises the UK GRAD Programme (03-07), printed December 2008, distributed at the Vitae Roberts Policy Forum in January 2009. Available to download at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/UK\\_GRAD\\_03-07\\_final%20report.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/UK_GRAD_03-07_final%20report.pdf)
- **Vitae Researcher Development Conference 2008 report** – provides an overview of the keynote presentations, workshop and conference outcomes and next steps. Available online in late December 2008, hard copy distribution to participants completed in January 2009. Available at: [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/VITAE\\_Conference%20Report.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/VITAE_Conference%20Report.pdf)

## 3.2 Championing the development and implementation of effective policy

Vitae supports the development and implementation of policy to embed professional development for researchers into their research experience, and to promote the range and impact of the careers of researchers.

During 2008, Vitae was invited to provide input to a range of strategic debates hosted by other organisations, including the Thrift Review of Research Careers<sup>6</sup>, the Research Information Network 'Mind the Skills Gap'<sup>7</sup> – information-handling training for researchers, the Oxford Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)<sup>8</sup> on academic practice, the UUK International Unit report 2008 on international research students<sup>9</sup> and a range of conferences and related events organised by other organisations.

Our most significant contributions to policy development are through the Vitae annual conference and policy forum, our input to the development, launch and implementation of the Concordat, and our engagement directly with the research councils. All of these areas are outlined further in the report.

### 3.2.1 Concordat development and implementation

Vitae has been integrally involved in the revision, launch and implementation of the revised UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. We were pleased to contribute to the working group that mapped the European Charter and Code against existing UK legislation and practice and the Concordat working group that developed the new UK Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers.



National launch of Concordat in Wales event. L-r: Dr Janet Metcalfe, Chair and Head of Vitae; Prof Phil Gummet, Chief Executive HEFCW; Sue Rossiter Chief Executive, National Foundation for Educational Research; Dr Heather Graham, Associate Director, Wales, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education; Dr Iain Cameron, Head of Research Careers & Diversity Unit, RCUK; Prof Ian Diamond, Chair RCUK Executive Group



Vitae was co-launched with the Concordat and 'the single largest contribution to the implementation of the Concordat will be through the Vitae programme'<sup>10</sup>. Following the launch event the Concordat was a theme at the Vitae conference in September. This was then followed up with Concordat events in the Vitae Midlands and Yorkshire and North East Hubs. The Vitae South West and Wales Hub organised a national launch of the Concordat in Wales with the Welsh Funding Council. The Vitae Roberts Policy Forum (January 2009) provided a further opportunity for the sector to discuss the implementation plans and to define the processes that will be used to benchmark change over time as a result of the Concordat.

All of Vitae's activity around the research staff agenda aligns closely to a number of principles of the Concordat. The following principles and areas of activity provide a summary of where Vitae is, and will be, most active:

- raising awareness of the Concordat's aims: dissemination and promotion
- practice sharing between different stakeholder groups
- collaborations within and between research organisations
- supporting a number of specific projects to benchmark aspects of career development for researchers since the launch of the Concordat.

<sup>6</sup> [www.dius.gov.uk/policy/research\\_careers.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/research_careers.html)

<sup>7</sup> [www.rin.ac.uk/files/Mind%20the%20skills%20gap%20REPORT%20July%202008.pdf](http://www.rin.ac.uk/files/Mind%20the%20skills%20gap%20REPORT%20July%202008.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [www.clinicalskillscentre.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.clinicalskillscentre.ac.uk/index.php)

<sup>9</sup> available from Universities UK

<sup>10</sup> [www.researchconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk)

To raise the profile of the Concordat by providing targeted information for particular groups of staff within universities, Vitae developed a set of stakeholder briefings which include illustrations, drawn from the database of practice<sup>11</sup>, of how various stakeholder groups can engage in implementing the Concordat principles<sup>12</sup>.

During 2009 Vitae will use these briefings as a key part of its campaigns to increase the awareness of the Concordat and activities will include:

- presentations at research staff related conferences and events
- contributing Concordat-related content to relevant publications and websites
- focusing on research staff and Concordat-related issues on the Vitae website and in Vitae publications ('overview', 'GRADBritain', Hub newsletters)
- ongoing discussion and conversations with HEIs about implementation plans and progress
- supporting the research councils, and other funders, to consider their response to the Concordat
- a national implementation event for the Concordat in Scotland
- an event organised by the London and East of England Hubs to mark the first anniversary of the launch of the Concordat and review progress one year on.

These will be complemented by existing Vitae activities such as Hub events, newsletters, and publications such as 'overview' for supervisors and principal investigators and 'GRADBritain' for postgraduate researchers. Vitae is also working with the Rugby Team and CROS Steering Group to support the evaluation/benchmarking of the Concordat.



### 3.2.2 Working with the research councils

During 2008 Vitae met with all the individual research councils to explore both Vitae and the research councils' current and planned activities for supporting researchers in order to take better advantage of opportunities to embed the importance of personal and career development.

The research councils fund Vitae as part of their strategy to 'attract, train and manage the next generation of world class researchers (in order to make a) major contribution to improving the quantity, quality and impact of research to the benefit of UK society and the economy'<sup>13</sup>.

Their research careers and diversity strategy has three overarching aims:

- to ensure that the best potential researchers are attracted into research careers
- to help universities to improve the quality of their research training and improve the employability of early stage researchers
- to improve the retention of the best researcher by promoting better career development and management of research staff in research organisations.

Two cross-cutting themes underpin these aims:

- to promote diversity within the research workforce at all levels and in the governance of research
- to enhance the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for the best researchers.<sup>14</sup>

In 2008 Vitae worked closely with Research Councils UK as well as all the individual research councils to ensure that both research council and Vitae priorities and activities were understood by all partners so that we can work together effectively to ensure the personal, professional and career development of researchers is improved.

Key outcomes include a communication, agreed with all the research councils, about the opportunities and activities that Vitae provides, a set of key research council and Vitae contacts confirmed and mechanisms for closer working on individual, as well as cross-council, levels agreed.

<sup>11</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/34837/Database-of-practice.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/34837/Database-of-practice.html)

<sup>12</sup> see [www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat)

<sup>13</sup> [www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm)

<sup>14</sup> [www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm)

### 3.2.3 Vitae annual conference and Vitae Roberts Policy Forum

The 'Vitae Researcher Development Conference 2008: realising the potential of researchers' took place on 8-9 September in London.

Over 430 participants from 150 organisations took part in the first Vitae conference which focused on a new era of professional development support for researchers in the UK. Significant and rapid changes in the global environment create both opportunities and challenges for building the skills base of UK researchers during the next five years.

From the discussions and interactions during the conference, five overarching themes emerged to inform practice and developments in the coming years:

- the importance of locating researcher development with the wider environment, for example in improving research capacity and recognising the needs of employers
- sustaining the activities and importance of developing researchers beyond the current spending review period (to 2010/11)
- building further evidence of the value of developing researchers and of the wide impact of researcher skills and careers
- enhancing employability and researchers' contribution to research and in other employment sectors
- empowering researchers to take control of their own development and careers.

*'I think this has been an excellent conference, very well run and a really good mix of people and keynote speakers.'*

*'It was very useful, very inspiring and really helped to clarify my starting point. Provided access to others who I can work with/share ideas with.'*

*'Extremely useful. Lots of ideas to take back to my home institution. Achieved lots of useful networking for taking researcher development forward in the Scotland regional context. Look forward to Warwick next year! And also to a productive year before that.'*

Participant quotes 2008

The next Vitae conference is taking place on **8-9 September 2009 in Warwick.**

### Vitae Roberts Policy Forum

The Vitae Roberts Policy Forum in January 2009 brought together representatives from HEIs, Vitae, the research councils and other key stakeholders to debate the big issues facing the researcher development agenda.

The 2009 Policy Forum had three key aims:

- to explore the sustainability of the Roberts agenda in terms of the funding, remit, and embedding of institutional practice
- to review the new Concordat and the process that is being defined to benchmark progress
- to share institutional approaches to evaluating the impact of our work around researcher skills and careers.

John Neilson, Director of the Research Base at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, suggested that even in an economic downturn the fundamental case for investing in researchers remains the same, and having a supply of highly skilled people is vital for international competitiveness.

The future of the Roberts funding beyond 2011 remains a major concern for institutions. There was a clear consensus that ring-fenced funding is critical to maintaining progress, particularly for the research staff agenda. There was no consensus on whether the Roberts funding should continue to be funded on the basis of research council funded researchers (Thrift recommendation<sup>15</sup>) or on the basis of total researchers (Welling recommendation<sup>16</sup>). Participants recognised that as the Roberts agenda has evolved it may be timely to consider changes in the Roberts reporting template to include more emphasis on outcomes, such as the application of skills (for example in outreach, enterprise and policy making activities) and linkages with the implementation of the Concordat principles.

*'Very useful. Starting to ask and raise important and provocative issues around sustainability.'*

*'Good ideas generator. Also good to have an opportunity to contribute to decision-making processes.'*

*'Willingness of colleagues to share good practice is inspirational! Thank you for inviting me.'*

Participant quotes 2009

<sup>15</sup> [www.dius.gov.uk/policy/HE-debate.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/HE-debate.html)

<sup>16</sup> [www.dius.gov.uk/policy/HE-debate.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/HE-debate.html)

### 3.2.4 Vitae's work in Europe

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In 2008 the European Commission developed an implementation strategy for the European Charter and Code, which was launched in November at a French Presidency 'Young Researchers in Europe' conference in Rennes. During the course of the year Vitae worked with RCUK, ReSDAG and UUK to ensure that the implementation strategy was sufficiently flexible to accommodate the UK's implementation strategy for the Concordat. This involved attending a Charter and Code Label Working Group Stakeholders' meeting (in January), meeting with the European Commission (in September), presenting at the Rennes conference and becoming a UK contact for the Charter and Code Promoters network.

Vitae has also been working with the British Council to support the UK mobility portal of EURAXESS and linking activities to implement the European Charter and Code for researchers and the UK Concordat.

Vitae continues to engage in the Bologna Process and was represented at a seminar on the doctoral cycle 'Competences and researcher career' in October in Finland. The seminar covered researcher competences, the internationalisation of doctoral programmes and researcher careers.

Vitae continues to build relationships with the European Universities Association (EUA), and attended the launch of the EUA Council of Doctoral Education in June in Lausanne.

Vitae has also been exploring links with ReMAT<sup>17</sup> which is a programme of research management training for early career researchers developed with EU framework 6 funding. The project aimed to add value to existing bioscience doctoral training programmes across Europe and Vitae is exploring the use of resources in the UK context.

## 3.3 Enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resources

### 3.3.1 Hub activities and events

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The Vitae Hubs continued with an extensive programme of activities, creating opportunities for regional contacts to meet with colleagues and share experiences and ideas. During the early part of 2008 the Hubs extended and re-formed their steering groups and programme of activities to ensure wide representation of both postgraduate and research staff interests.

The Hubs have continued in their role of working with regional networks to disseminate information, raise policy issues, facilitate pilot programmes and make available Vitae publications and resources. They build networks, facilitate opportunities to share practice, work with other regional stakeholders, support related networks and identify specific regional needs.

Quarterly Hub newsletters have kept colleagues up-to-date with national news, discussions and perspectives and examples of practice, including sharing across regions items of general interest. The first Vitae-branded newsletters went out in July and focused on Vitae's role in the implementation of the Concordat's main principles. An average of 400 network members from each region receive quarterly newsletters and additional e-bulletins, with items for wider distribution cascaded through institutional 'key contacts'.

During 2008 Vitae ran (some in collaboration) 34 events to meet the needs of our regional networks: nine good practice sharing events and 25 practical workshops. The majority of the workshops were for staff supporting researchers, with four large regional events for researchers aiming to support career development, raise the regional profile of Vitae and the development agenda, and promote collaboration between institutions in making regional level provision.

Events have been developed both to meet specific needs identified by steering groups and to extend dialogues around issues of national significance to the regional networks. Some examples are 'Focus on evaluation' (SWW Hub; examining the Rugby Team Impact Framework), 'The new Concordat to support the career development of researchers: a requirement of research funding' (YNE Hub annual conference) and 'PRES – sharing practice' (SNI Hub; looking in detail at regional data from the postgraduate researchers experience survey).

<sup>17</sup> [www.remat-project.eu/cms/](http://www.remat-project.eu/cms/)

The South East Hub worked closely with the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET to develop a joint one-day workshop which will be held at the University of Reading in March 2009. Called 'building and sustaining research networks for women in SET', this initiative has engaged new organisation across the region including the Fawcett Society and PepsiCo International.

The North West Hub has supported collaborations across the region including the N8 Enterprise Schools project. Through the Hub Vitae has been able to provide workspace for the group to take forward online discussions to develop a range of enterprise skills courses for researchers.

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Hub has been working with the Scottish Research Pools to provide materials and workshops as part of their induction programmes. Activities run with the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance (SUPA) and the Scottish Imaging Network (SINAPSE).

During this year, the first Midlands Hub Good Practice Takeaway for Staff Supporting Research Staff enjoyed great success and has resulted in two Action Learning Sets forming to coach and mentor these staff implementing the most recent policy changes. Several related events are planned for 2009.

In the East of England the Hub has been successful in facilitating sharing between regional HEIs, for example the UEA Code for researchers was shared with all regional steering group members, course places at UEA have been taken up by research staff from Essex and by PGRs from Bedfordshire at an Essex GRADschool. There have been several instances of the Hub Manager using the regional network to find speakers for institutional events.

A sub-network for London Hub contacts with a specific interest in development for researchers in the humanities and social sciences has been set up through the Hub as the self-sustaining JISC-list with representation from most London institutions. It already has a 'face-to-face' sub-network for those interested in research staff development (the Subo Group) and further possible groupings are under consideration.

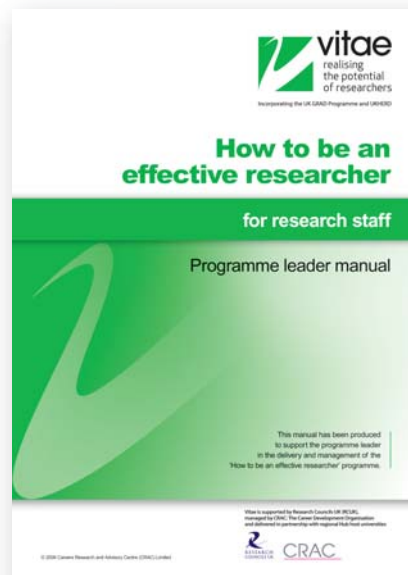
The South West and Wales Hub has been building strong links with partner organisations throughout the regions. This has included maintaining strong links with HERDA-SW, working with HEFCW to plan a seminar for HEIs in Wales to discuss the Concordat, and forging new links with the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Yorkshire and North East Hub has been engaging network members in building an evidence base to support the agenda, including setting up a focused JISCmail group, encouraging contributions to the Policy Forum update on the Rugby Team Impact Framework and collating feedback from the network on Concordat implementation plans.

Institutions are increasingly willing to work together and to contribute to particular projects. Many Hubs have plans for 2009 to support regional workshops such as Effective Researcher which involve trainers from a range of institutions working together, sharing practice and developing expertise.

Vitae continues to develop in the regions as a Hub for sharing practice, with information shared by and links made through regional steering groups being an important addition to formal events for the programme's key contacts. Use of online tools to boost sharing began in earnest during 2008 and plans for 2009 include user-driven online sharing of event and course-places across London.

A prominent theme for all Hubs over the next few months will be meeting the principles of the Concordat, with specific events also planned around evaluating impact. Vitae will also be promoting regional involvement in discussions around a new researcher attributes framework.



### 3.3.2 Database of practice

The database of practice continues to be an important and valuable resource for the sector. At the end of 2008 it held 583 publicly visible practices, entered by 80 organisations, compared to 460 practices at the end of 2007. Almost 80% of practices were relevant to postgraduate researchers, whilst half were relevant to research staff. 30% of practices were entered or updated during the 'Roberts reporting season' in autumn 2008.

Table 6 presents the entries in the database of practice by focus of practice. There has been growth across all areas, but particularly in career management/developing employability (67%), knowledge transfer and outreach activities (58%), internships, placements and consultancy projects (55%) and enterprise and innovation related practices (50%), albeit from a low base for some.

**Table 6: Focus of practices in the Database of Practice\***

Focus of Practice	Practices 2007	Practice in 2008
Interpersonal skills development	204	265
Induction, review and reflective processes	96	130
Generic research skills development	194	249
Wider preparation for academic practice	113	166
Enterprise and innovation related practices	50	75
Internships, placements and consultancy projects	11	17
Knowledge transfer and outreach activities	38	60
Career management/developing employability	129	216
Evaluation, feedback mechanisms and research relating to skills and career development	53	72
Strategic and management approach to practice	81	112

\* The table cannot be summed: a practice may have more than one focus

At the end of 2008 the database of practice was moved to the Vitae website ([www.vitae.ac.uk/dop](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/dop)). As part of this process the format of the database was refined, the search mechanism improved and three additional categories added to map the database of practice more closely with the Concordat principles. These are practices relating to recruitment and selection, equality and diversity and researcher-led activities.

### 3.4 Providing access to development opportunities and resources

During 2008 the activities relating to this area of the programme were very much 'business as usual'. We ran a small programme of activities for researchers, including five nationally run GRADschools, Careers in Focus programmes and new workshops on 'strategies for busy researchers'. In addition Vitae continued the development and support of its two 'Effective researcher' programmes along with a 'Broadening horizons' programme for research staff and a series of workshops for part-time researchers.

#### 3.4.1 Resources for higher education institutions (HEIs)

Vitae continues to promote collaboration and encourage the sharing of resources and expertise within the higher education sector. During 2008 we developed four programme models with and for UK HEIs and launched a redesigned database of resources and a database of trainers and developers.

The 'How to be an effective researcher' programme for postgraduate researchers and for research staff was launched for all UK higher education institutions at the 2008 Vitae conference. The programme for postgraduate researchers is a two-day programme that focuses on building understanding, skills and confidence in communication, planning, time management, problem solving, leadership and assertiveness. The programme was short-listed for a Times Higher Education Award in 2007. It has since attracted significant interest from a number of institutions and more than 1,000 postgraduate researchers have attended a course.

*'I was sceptical but had no reason to be, this course is excellent. It actually gives PhD students the skills they need to help them change certain aspects of their project and leaves them feeling in charge and in control.'*

Participant, 2007

The 'How to be an effective researcher' programme for research staff is a two-day programme that enables participants to explore the practical skills required for successful project management and the further development of intellectual independence. The programme has received extremely positive feedback from institutions and participants.

***'Made me value the skills I have as a researcher and made me want to develop them further'***

***'Novel, creative, useful and applicable!'***

Participant quotes 2008

Throughout 2008 Vitae has made both of these programmes widely available to UK institutions. Trainer and organiser manuals for running the programmes have been produced. A network of trainers who have experience of, or have been trained to deliver, the programme has been established and the regional Hubs have discussed the programme with their steering groups and planned taster events. Around 15 HEIs became engaged in the programme during 2008 and a regional collaboration in Scotland is planning to deliver the programme for research staff in February 2009.

A career development programme for research staff, entitled 'Broadening horizons' was piloted at Warwick University in 2008 and has been developed as a programme for use by UK HEIs. Trainer and organiser manuals for running the programme will be available to institutions in early 2009. A programme of workshops for part-time researchers was run by the Midlands Hub in 2008 and the materials from these workshops are currently being developed for wider use by UK HEIs. These will also be available to institutions in early summer 2009.

Work continued during 2008 on the scope and implementation of two key online databases. Following consultation with the sector, a new database of trainers and developers was launched on the Vitae website at the beginning of 2009. The database has been set up to provide institutions with access to experienced individuals working in the field of researcher training and development. The new database has improved flexibility of search facilities so that institutions can better target individuals with the skills they require. The range of professionals who can enter themselves on the database has also been expanded in order to better meet the needs of the sector and now includes a broader range of individuals who work within researcher training.

The database of resources has also been redesigned and was launched on the Vitae website in December. The new database enables institutions to share resources and learning materials with other institutions, as well as providing access to a range of materials made available by Vitae. The database has new search categories so staff can more accurately locate resources which will meet their requirements. Additional resources will be uploaded during early 2009. Both databases interface with each other as well as with the database of practice, which allows users to navigate more easily between databases in order to upload or locate resources or to find individuals able to deliver specific resources.

## 3.4.2 Programmes for researchers

A programme of five national GRADschools was delivered by Vitae in 2008, attended by 320 postgraduate researchers. Feedback of the programme overall included:

- *I can see the relevance of my skills to different environments – 96%*
- *I am confident of my employability – 94%*
- *I found this course a valuable use of my time – 94%.*

A programme of three national GRADschools has been confirmed for 2009, with a fourth residential course focusing on leadership being developed. During this course we will pilot new resources which will then be made available more widely, enabling us to continue enhancing the GRADschool resources available to HEIs.

In addition, the number of GRADschools run locally by institutions continued to increase with 29 local GRADschools in 2008, three of which were new programmes.

The 'Careers in focus' programme in 2008 reached over 200 postgraduate researchers, and included an investment banking event and two 'Careers in academia' events. During these events participants can find out what life in a particular sector is really like, what is involved and what skills and strengths it will take to succeed, in order to help them decide if this is a career they would like to pursue.

***'The tutors inspire me to want to pursue an academic career. They were interesting, informative, knowledgeable, fun, and enthusiastic.'***

Participant 2008

***'Really explained the grey areas – honest and informative and has provoked changes'***

Participant 2008



Outdoor activities

National GRADschool, Bournemouth July 2008

Vitae will run a small programme of 'Careers in focus' events in 2009 which will include the development of a 'Careers in academia' programme for research staff as well as the exploration of a 'Pharmaceutical and biotech' event, which BBSRC have agreed to endorse.

In December Vitae ran two workshops on 'strategies for busy researchers'. They expanded on the techniques outlined in Vitae's 'Balanced Researcher' booklet, and 'The seven secrets of highly successful researchers'<sup>18</sup>. Over 80 postgraduate researchers, 26 research staff and principal investigators participated.

**'Time management tips – very specific and easy to implement immediately'**

**'Finding out that many people in academia, including much more experienced researchers, face the same difficulties that I face daily'**

Participant quotes 2008 when asked 'what did you find most useful about the event?'

### 3.4.3 Development of innovation activities

Vitae is committed to supporting and encouraging innovative practice in personal, professional and career development of researchers. Our aim in this strand of activities is to stimulate, encourage and foster the development of cutting edge innovative tools, programmes and practice with the potential to add value for the wider community of practitioners in this field.

Vitae recognises that innovative ideas may come from beyond our own team and even beyond current researcher development networks and will actively seek to engage people outside of the field in generating new and innovative practice. We will also aim to support emergent practice to develop it for practical application throughout the wider sector.

In 2008, Vitae began scoping a process to both generate and harness new ideas to support researchers' careers and to enable us allocate funding to projects which develop new ideas into practice. Vitae's innovation activities are now primed to launch in 2009 with the aim that from 2010 the researcher development community will be benefiting from the first outputs of this strand of activity.

## 3.5 Building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda

Vitae has recognised the importance of 'building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda' in its strategic aims. During 2008 we have undertaken a series of projects, including working closely with the Rugby Team.

### 3.5.1 The Rugby Team

The Rugby Team<sup>19</sup> is a sector-led working group formed following the January 2005 UK GRAD Programme (now Vitae Roberts Policy Forum). Participants at the forum recognised the need to build an evidence base along with expertise in evaluating the value and impact of skills development for researchers. They believed that this initiative should be driven by the sector with the emphasis on enhancement rather than compliance. Vitae continues to provide support to the Rugby Team, including administration and financial support.

At the 2008 Policy Forum the Rugby Team was given a remit to continue for the length of the Vitae contract. It was agreed that the Rugby Team's mission to '*propose meaningful and workable ways of evaluating the effectiveness of skills development in early career researchers*' was still pertinent.

The terms of reference were revised to cover the period 2008 – 2012. These are to:

- raise the awareness of the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of skills development and the activities of the Rugby Team
- inform national and agency policies and practices relating to the evaluation of skills development of researchers
- provide sector input into shaping a programme to build an evidence base on the effectiveness of developing researchers' skills
- act as a sector 'sounding board' to Vitae with respect to their engagement in helping to build the evidence base.

Membership of the Rugby Team is drawn from a cross-section of HEIs and other stakeholders interested in the personal and career development of researchers.

The Rugby Team reports back on progress and outputs to the Vitae Roberts Policy Forum.

<sup>18</sup> both of which were authored by Hugh Kearns, Staff Development and Training Unit, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

<sup>19</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/rugbyteam](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rugbyteam)

### 3.5.2 Rugby Team Impact Framework

The Rugby Team Impact Framework (RTIF) is an evaluation model developed to inform and provide a framework for evaluation activities, centred around a framework of evaluation impact levels (0 – 4). It was launched at the 2008 Policy Forum and during 2008 the Rugby Team worked to take the RTIF forward and identify how institutions are using the RTIF in their evaluations. Further information on the RTIF, an 'Update on evaluation in the researcher training and development sector and the implementation of the Rugby Team Impact Framework' report and how institutions are using the RTIF, with illustrative examples of evaluation practice, can be found via the Rugby Team website.

During 2009 the sector will be encouraged to make further contributions of examples of practice to the evaluation section of the Vitae Database of Practice, which will contribute to a review of sector evaluation practice during 2010 and will be published at the September 2010 Vitae conference.

### 3.5.3 Career profiles project

The Rugby Team and Vitae have been developing a framework for collecting career profiles that enable researchers and wider stakeholders to explore the breadth of roles that researchers undertake as well as the wider impact of their careers. The Policy Forum participants in 2008 confirmed the importance of this project and during the year the Rugby Team sought further feedback from the sector and key groups as to the usefulness of the proposed framework.

During 2009 Vitae will be creating a web portal linking to existing collections of career profiles and exploring activities to support a growing national database of practice in this area.

### 3.5.4 Framework of researcher attributes

A significant recommendation for the 2008 Policy Forum was that the sector should develop an overarching skills and competencies framework/model of professional learning for researchers, which builds on or relates to the Joint Skills Statement.

It has been agreed that the framework should:

- be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diversity of researchers, paths, learning styles, disciplines and local environments
- include a range of researchers' experience, including postgraduate researchers, research staff and research leaders
- recognise what defines an 'excellent' researcher
- include the breadth of activities within the academic role
- recognise the different entry and exit points in higher education.

A joint Vitae and Rugby Team group will work to take this forward during 2009.

During spring 2009 the group will organise a workshop which will bring together this project with two institutional-based projects in this area to agree a common way forward.

### 3.5.5 Skills Training and Research Supervision Survey (STaRSS)

The Skills Training and Research Supervision Survey (STaRSS) is a survey tool to assess supervisors' views of the skills agenda developed and trialled by the Rugby Team in 2007. This was finalised in 2008 and launched as a generic survey tool on the BOS website freely available to institutions to use as they wish<sup>20</sup>.

### 3.5.6 Part-time researcher research project

Led by the Vitae Midlands Hub, this project examined the experience of part-time researchers to develop resources and knowledge that can be utilised by HEIs in their provision for part-time researchers. The project is made up of the following elements:

- a programme of dedicated face-to-face training for part-time researchers delivered by a consortium of HEIs with support from Vitae
- the development of a training resource pack for use by HEIs with part-time researcher

<sup>20</sup> [www.survey.bris.ac.uk/](http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/)

- the creation of a video resource based on interviews with successful part-time researchers. This resource is designed to be used as part of the training pack, but will also function as stand alone content on the Vitae website
- a research based publication exploring the experience of part-time researchers and looking at how that experience can be enhanced and developed.

### 3.5.7 'What do researchers do?' scoping

The 'What do PhDs do?' (WDPD) series, analysing first employment destinations of doctoral graduates, was one of the most popular of the UK GRAD Programme's publications. It proved useful to researchers themselves, to a wide range of professionals in HE such as careers advisers and to policy makers with an interest in researchers.

'What do researchers do?' will be the first Vitae issue in the series and will be published in early summer 2009. This publication will be an update of the original WDPD (2004), analysing the 2006/07 first destinations HESA data for doctoral graduates and will contain the trends using data from the last five years. In addition it will give destination details at subject level for the largest subjects using amalgamation of the five years data.

### 3.5.8 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)

The 2008 Policy Forum recognised that 'Careers in Research Online Survey' (CROS) is a useful tool in developing an understanding of the career development support for researchers in higher education and as such has a key role to play in building the evidence base and evaluating the implementation of the Concordat.

Vitae worked with the CROS Steering Group during 2008 to revise 'CROS' to better reflect the main issues relating to the career development of research staff and to give more explicit outcomes related to national initiatives such as the Roberts agenda and the principles of the Concordat. The revised CROS<sup>21</sup> will run March – May 2009. The overall results, which will be analysed by Vitae will form part of the benchmarking process for the Concordat.

## 4 Additional researcher development activities

CRAC has worked with the research councils and in the area of researcher development since 1968. As well as managing the Vitae contract on behalf of RCUK, we also undertake additional consultancy, research and collaborative projects with institutions and other related organisations. During 2008 we undertook work on enterprise skills for researchers, a policy briefing for Universities UK and ran a range of courses and training events for researchers.

The appointment in October 2008 of Sir Richard Sykes as Chairman of the CRAC Board of Trustees will help profile the aspirations and work of the Vitae programme within higher education and government.

### 4.1 Enterprise at work: exploring intrapreneurship in researcher development

The area of entrepreneurship and enterprise education has been growing rapidly in recent years, with a range of specialist activities and agencies. In 2007 EPSRC made available additional funding to a number of institutions for further development of enterprise skills.

A workshop was held in May to explore enterprise activities for researchers with all those institutions in receipt of additional funding for enterprise activities from EPSRC (in 2008). Four strands of potential activity were proposed and the more popular strands, intrapreneurship and social enterprise, were run as workshops at the Vitae conference in September.

In addition, a new report, which investigates the relatively unexplored area of intrapreneurship within the research environment, was published by CRAC and Vitae as the culmination of a collaborative project developed with nine UK higher education institutions.

The project took as its starting point the idea that 'intrapreneurship' has similarities to the more widely known concept of 'entrepreneurship'. The key difference is that 'intrapreneurship' takes place within, and thereby benefits, an existing organisation, whereas 'entrepreneurship' involves creating new entities beyond current structures.

<sup>21</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1700/Initiatives.html#5](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1700/Initiatives.html#5)

The report, 'Enterprise at work – exploring intrapreneurship in researcher development', considers the extent to which existing institutional provision draws out intrapreneurial awareness and learning and considers some of the strategic and practical issues around developing intrapreneurial capabilities with researchers. More specifically, the report highlights commonality in the skills that employers typically look for in researchers with intrapreneurial capabilities. These include taking initiative, the ability to solve problems and remove barriers, commercial awareness, personal enthusiasm and motivation.

A second phase of the project focusing on developing practice and resources to support intrapreneurial capabilities is now underway and will take place during 2009<sup>22</sup>.



## 4.2 UUK policy briefing on postgraduate researchers

Vitae has been commissioned by Universities UK to prepare a high-level policy briefing on postgraduate researchers, identifying the issues and drivers impacting on doctoral degree programmes in UK universities. This will be available in summer 2009.

## 4.3 Courses and development activities

CRAC was contracted to develop and deliver a range of courses during 2008, with amongst others the University of Cambridge, Portsmouth University, Oxford Brookes, University of Oxford, and along with 2 events for the British Council in France and Portugal focusing on international research careers.

## 5 Looking ahead – 2009 and beyond

In 2008 we developed our strategy for Vitae until 2012, including a set of annual strategic themes which will guide our activities. During 2009 the programme will focus on three strategic themes.

Our first priority is to support the implementation of the principles of the Concordat that was launched last June. Vitae will work alongside UUK, the research councils and other funders to facilitate the sharing of strategies, approaches and practice in embedding the Concordat's principles.

Vitae's second major theme is to explore the issues around the sustainability of the Roberts agenda as we start to plan beyond the current spending review period. Vitae will be working with the sector and the research councils over the next year to make recommendations on potential scenarios, including exploring links with the Concordat and other agendas such as enterprise, public engagement and the use of research in policy making.

Finally, Vitae will be focusing on two strands of activities which mark our changing focus – our research and innovation activities in the areas of personal and career development for both postgraduate researchers and researcher staff. Activities include:

- launching the first Vitae 'what do researchers do?' publication
- the research report on the findings of the Vitae Midlands Hub project to explore the needs of part-time researchers
- undertaking a project to explore the impact of the fixed term employee regulations on institutional practice, and how that is perceived by researchers and their managers.

Our new strand of innovation activities aims to foster, develop and pilot new ideas and approaches in the ways that we support and develop researcher skills and careers. A call for ideas will be launched in late spring, with a call for proposals for seed funding in June 2009.

During 2010, we anticipate a major focus on evaluation, both in terms of the sector's progress in implementing the Roberts agenda and the Concordat, but also in terms of the impact and usefulness of Vitae. We will also focus on expanding research and innovation activities that build on 2009, and a focus on the impact of higher level skills particularly the application of skills in a range of settings.

As ever, our thanks go to all the people who have contributed time, energy, enthusiasm, feedback, input and expertise to Vitae's activities during 2008. We aim to meet the needs of our stakeholders and networks; please be in touch if you have any ideas, thoughts or suggestions.

<sup>22</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/intrapreneurship](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/intrapreneurship)



Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

Vitae builds on previous work by the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD. Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities.

The role of Vitae is to work with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed professional and career development in the research environment. Vitae plays a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the higher education sector to provide professional development and training of researchers.

Our vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. Our key aims include:

- championing the development and implementation of effective policy
- enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resources
- providing access to development opportunities and resources
- building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda.

For further information about the range of Vitae activities go to [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk) or contact [enquiries@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@vitae.ac.uk)

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