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Vitae NW Hub Ebulletin

April 2010

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RIN – Peer review: good for all purposes?

Peer review is both a principle and a set of mechanisms at the heart of the arrangements for evaluating and assuring the quality of research. A new guide from the Research Information Network provides for researchers and others an outline of how the peer review system works, and highlights some of the challenges as well as the opportunities it faces in the internet age.

Research Information Network - Press release, 10 March 2010

Peer review: A guide for researchers sets out the processes involved in peer review for both grant applications and publications. It also looks at the issues that have been raised in a series of recent reports on the costs of the system, and how effective and fair it is.

The growth in the size of the research community and of the volumes of research being undertaken in the UK and across the world means that the amount of time and effort put into the peer review system is growing too, and that it is coming under increasing scrutiny. The guide looks at how effective peer review is in selecting the best research proposals, as well as in detecting misconduct and malpractice.

The guide also looks at how fair the system is, and at the different levels of transparency involved in the process: from completely closed systems, where the identities of reviewers and those whose work is being reviewed are kept hidden from each other, and reports are not revealed, to completely transparent systems where identities and reports are openly revealed.

The burdens on researchers as submitters and reviewers are by far the biggest costs in the peer review system, and the guide outlines some of the measures that are being taken to reduce those burdens, or at least to keep them in check. A growing number of researchers are taking the view that they should be paid for the time they spend in reviewing grant applications and draft publications. But there are also concerns that such payment would significantly increase the costs of the system, and also of scholarly publications. A RIN report in 2008 estimated that if reviewers were to be paid in cash for the full economic costs of their time, then UK academic libraries would have to pay 45% more for their subscriptions to scholarly journals.

The internet has speeded up the process of peer review, and widened the pool of reviewers who can be drawn on. It has also provided new channels through which researchers can communicate their findings, and through which other researchers can comment on, annotate and evaluate them. These new opportunities bring new challenges as well. The take-up of the opportunities for open comments, ratings and recommender systems has been patchy to date; and we currently lack clear protocols for the review of findings circulated in multiple formats, including blogs and wikis. The mechanisms for peer review will undoubtedly change in coming years, but the principle will remain central to all those involved in the research community.

Peer review: A guide for researchers is available at www.rin.ac.uk/peer-review-guide. Hard copies are also available to distribute to colleagues and students, email catherine.gray@rin.ac.uk

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Challenges for academic libraries in difficult economic times

A [new guide](#) from the Research Information Network focuses on how academic librarians are experiencing and responding to financial cuts in the current economic climate.

Based upon data gathered in the UK and internationally, and focus groups with senior librarians during late 2009, the guide looks at the financial position of libraries, their strategies for dealing with challenging economic circumstances, and the value of libraries.

After a decade of growth in budgets and services, academic librarians now expect a sustained period of cuts over the next three to five years. The scale of these cuts means librarians are having to reconsider the kinds and levels of service they can provide in support of their universities missions.

This guide shows how librarians are responding to the issues of balancing expenditure between information resources and staffing and how they plan to sustain levels of service, as well as developing new services to meet new needs. It demonstrates that library directors need the support of senior managers across the higher education sector, as well as from publishers and other information providers, to help address the challenges, as well as the opportunities, faced.

Michael Jubb, Director of RIN, said:

“Libraries have for long played a central role in the lives of universities, in supporting learning, teaching and research. Like the rest of the higher education sector, they are now facing a renewed and intensified period of financial stringency. This guide outlines the key issues that

library directors must address, in cooperation with senior managers in the university and information sectors”.

Toby Bainton, SCONUL Secretary, said:

“Higher education institutions in the UK are making some difficult decisions. In planning for financial adversity it’s important for senior managers to recognise how essential libraries are to institutional goals.

“The UK higher education sector enjoys global renown and its steadily improving library services have been at the heart of its growth and development. Now libraries specially need the recognition they deserve.”

Challenges for academic libraries in difficult economic times is available at www.rin.ac.uk/challenges-for-libraries. Hard copies are also available to distribute to colleagues, email catherine.gray@rin.ac.uk

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Research degrees lead to greater employability

As MA and PhD students grow in numbers, a new government scheme is being implemented to emphasise their extensive skills and potential to employers

Harriet Swain

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 16 March 2010 00.00 GMT



All-rounder experience: extra-curricular activities, such as dodgeball being played here at the University of Nottingham, are useful additions to postgrad's CVs Photograph: Fabio De Paola

Any new postgraduate hoping to spend a year or four alone with their subject and emerge with an original thesis had better think again. Ever since the 2002 Roberts review into science careers stated that skills training was vital to a research degree programme, [postgraduates](#) have increasingly been expected to be not only brilliant researchers but team players, communicators, and, above all, employable.

Even before the Roberts review, educators and employers were becoming concerned that not enough attention was being paid to what postgraduates could do other than research. In 2001, the UK Research Councils, in collaboration with what was then the UK Grad Programme, an organisation that champions the career development of researchers, issued a joint statement on skills, setting out the skills that postgraduate researchers would be expected to develop during their research training. They ranged from understanding the processes for the funding and evaluation of research, to the ability to show initiative, respond perceptively to others and write an effective CV.

That statement is now being updated into a new framework of skills due to be published in the next few weeks. Janet Metcalfe, chair of UK Grad's successor, Vitae, says: "The environment in which people are doing research has changed from what it was 10 years ago. Research is broader now. It incorporates more need to have public engagement, to communicate science and to make an impact."

She says the new framework will also acknowledge the changing environment in which research is carried out and the characteristics needed by researchers. "While the joint skills statement looked at what skills and competencies you should have by the end of a doctorate, this is looking at how you develop as a researcher," she says. It starts earlier, going right back to skills developed during a research project for a master's degree.

The aim of the new framework is to enable researchers to trace their progress and identify areas they need to work on, as well as providing them with a basis for discussions with supervisors. Institutions will be able to use it to help them develop postgraduate training programmes and careers services to offer the right kinds of support, and funders will be able to get an idea of where their grants are going. The hope also is that employers inside and outside academia will use the framework to discover what exactly postgraduates can offer them.

This is the latest in a raft of initiatives by institutions, the government and postgraduate organisations aimed at boosting recognition by employers of the generic skills acquired by postgraduates during their degrees.

Last October, Universities UK (UUK), the umbrella group of university vice-chancellors, brought out a report entitled Promoting the UK Doctorate, in which UUK president Steve Smith stressed the need to promote the attractiveness of a PhD from a British institution to employers as well as to students. UUK wants this to form a key part of the postgraduate review announced by business and skills secretary Lord Mandelson and due to report in July.

Earlier this year, Vitae launched its career stories portal, revealing, through case studies, what postgraduate students end up doing and how they get there.

It has also recently surveyed employers in various sectors about their attitudes to employing postgraduates. The survey found that, of the 100 respondents, nearly three-quarters would welcome more applications from doctoral graduates and more than a third were already targeting them.

This focus on employability is partly because there are so many postgraduates now – more than 140,000 studying for [master's degrees](#) and 90,000 for doctorates. There is also a realisation that half of those graduating with postgraduate degrees do not continue into academia, and that many never intended to. The recession has increased the numbers opting for a postgraduate qualification to avoid a tricky jobs market while boosting their CVs.

But it is also because of government emphasis on the "knowledge economy" and the importance of high-level skills in helping the UK out of recession.

Last year, a government report, *Building Britain's Future: New Industry, New Jobs*, highlighted the economic impact of research and encouraged closer ties between researchers and industry, arguing that "Britain is, and will continue to be, an economy driven by the creation and exploitation of knowledge."

Metcalfe says the contents of the new Vitae framework have "definitely been influenced by a change in the environment in terms of researchers being seen as important for the knowledge economy".

While Kyle Wedgwood, who is in his first year of a Phd in mathematical neuroscience at the University of Nottingham, is wary of a tick-box approach to developing skills by simply accumulating credits from training courses, he recognises that reflecting on the skills he has gained will be a valuable way to collect his thoughts when preparing job applications.

But more important to his future job prospects, he says, is his involvement in activities outside his study. "On a social level, and purely from a developmental point of view, it gives you an appreciation of where your work fits in and how people perceive what you do."

While his course has boosted his ability to communicate what he does and to work in a team, he argues that it is by organising dodgeball sessions and taking part in other extra-curricula activities that he has really honed the kinds of skills likely to be appealing in the workplace.

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Public engagement with research benefits researchers and provides a majority contribution to society

Date Published: Tuesday 23 Mar 2010
Audience: Postgraduate researchers, Research staff, Staff supporting researchers development
Region: National
Topic: Publications

Research Councils UK (RCUK) has released three new publications that highlight the importance of public engagement activities and celebrate the successes of the increasing number of researchers engaging the public with support from RCUK.

RCUK believes that engaging the public can enhance the quality and impact of research by widening horizons and providing enhanced career progression opportunities.

Professor Alan Thorpe, Chair, Research Councils UK said: 'Public engagement with research can provide substantial benefits to the researchers involved in engaging the public, as well as providing a major contribution to society. If there is ongoing dialogue between the research community and the public about the implications and applications of research then society can benefit more fully.'

'Engaging Young People with Cutting Edge Research: a guide for researchers and teachers' highlights opportunities and support for researchers and schools to work together. It also provides examples of the important skills and attributes which researchers can develop through working with schools and young people. The 'Researcher development framework' (RDF) which the publication refers to has been created in 2009 as a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers (for more information about the RDF, see Vitae's [news update](#)).

All three publications launched, including also 'RCUK Public Engagement with Research Strategy' (outlining RCUK aims, objectives and priorities) and 'What's in it for me? The benefits of public engagement for researchers' (providing examples of the benefits experienced by researchers across the UK from engaging the public in their research) can be downloaded from the [RCUK website](#).

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Brocher Foundation all for proposals for Workshops and Symposia

For full details please click on the article below.

ORGANIZE A ONE DAY AND A HALF PLURIDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM

OR

A TWO OR THREE DAYS PLURIDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP

on the ethical, legal and social implications of the development of new medical technologies

Take advantage of a unique located Conference Room at the Brocher Centre in the middle of a peaceful park on the shores of Lake Geneva

Have the opportunity to invite experts from numerous International Organizations & Non Governmental Organizations based in Geneva (WHO, WTO, WIPO, UNHCR, ILO, WMA, ICRC, ...)



www.brocher.ch

Brocher Summer Academy in Global Population Health / call for applications

BROCHER SUMMER ACADEMY IN GLOBAL POPULATION HEALTH 2010
Geneva, Switzerland, 12th July - 16th July

Measurement and Ethical Evaluation of Health Inequalities

Organized by

**THE BROCHER FOUNDATION,
THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY PROGRAM IN ETHICS & HEALTH,
&
THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL ETHICS**

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The Brocher Summer Academy in Global Population Health aims to introduce graduate students and researchers to population-level bioethics. The Academy hopes to stimulate high-level academic work on ethical issues in population health and global health and to bring ethical dimensions of population and global health to the attention of policy makers and practitioners. The Academy's seminars will draw on the resources of many disciplines to identify the key ethical issues, and to apply a variety of problem-solving strategies to their resolution. Ethical analysis and reasoning thus joins the methods of the social and biological sciences in contributing to the global project of relieving the burden of disease.

The 2010 Academy in Global Population Health will focus on "**Measurement and Ethical Evaluation of health Inequalities**". A substantive focus will be given to the following topics:

- How should we rank distributions of health across populations in order of inequality?
- What are the ethical implications of using different measures of health inequalities?
- Which -if any- of the common measures of economic inequality are informative when applied to health?
- Are all health inequalities morally objectionable or unjust?
- Should we measure health inequalities across groups, across individuals, or both?
- What priority should reduction in health inequalities have among prominent goals of health policy?

Morning lectures: Interdisciplinary approach, Internationally renowned professors, Daily participant discussions &

Afternoon workshops, Daily roundtable discussion, In-depth study of selected issues

SPECIAL EVENT, BROCHER LECTURE

Thursday, July 15th

Measuring health inequality and health inequity

Prof. Tony Atkinson

ORGANISERS

Samia Hurst, University of Geneva

Nir Eyal, Harvard University

Dan Wikler, Harvard University

SPEAKERS

Gustaf Arrhenius, University of Stockholm (*to be confirmed*)

Yukiko Asada, Dalhousie University

Dan Brock, Harvard University

Norman Daniels, Harvard University

Dan Hausman, University of Madison

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, University of Copenhagen

Rafael Lozano, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington

Erik Nord, Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Ole Norheim, University of Bergen

Larry Temkin, Rutgers University

Wlodek Rabinowitz, University of Lund
Shlomi Segall, University of Jerusalem

DURATION

This is a one-week course, from Monday July 12th to Friday July 16th 2010.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Post-doctoral fellows, PhD students, junior faculty, professionals involved in health policy, or international health, interested health care providers from all over the world and from various disciplines: moral and political philosophy, public and international health, bioethics, law, economics, medicine, social sciences, etc.

CREDITS

Participants receive a course certificate. Participation in this program may be accepted for credit by universities.

REGISTRATION

Attendance is limited to 25 participants. Registration includes:

Course documentation
5 Lunches
4 Diner vouchers
1 Gala dinner
5 Nights in Geneva

APPLICATION

Application form is available at :
<http://www.brocher.ch/pages/programme.asp>

Deadline May 7th 2010

Application should include a short CV and one writing sample

PROGRAMME FEE

Normal registration
500 CHF

Scholarships:

The registration fee may be waived on request for junior researchers (up to 5 years post PhD).

A letter of motivation (max. one page) should be sent by May 7th to scientificprog@brocher.ch with the application material

VENUE & CONTACT ADDRESS

Brocher Foundation
Summer Academy in Global Population Health
Rte d'Hermance, 471, CP 70
CH-1248 Hermance
Switzerland

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PGR careers survey

Studying for a Doctorate?

Participate in our careers survey and enter a prize draw!

We'd like to hear from you about your career aspirations and decision-making, as part of a national online survey commissioned by Government, and supported by Vitae which champions the personal, professional and career development of researchers.

We'd like to know (amongst other things):

- why you chose to do your particular research programme
- what sort of job/career you are seeking when you complete
- whether that job/career is related closely to the subject of your research

PRIZE DRAW! By completing this survey, you can enter our draw for a high-spec digital SLR camera or an iPhone 3GS—your choice—each worth around £500.

To have a chance of winning, all you need to do is complete the survey via the link below. It should take you no more than 15 minutes. All responses and information remain confidential.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/doctoralcareerchoices>

The survey is now live and will be open until 23 April.

This survey is being run by CRAC, a careers charity, which is undertaking national research for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on graduates and their careers. CRAC also manages Vitae. The research output will improve the Government's understanding of the factors that influence the supply of graduates and postgraduate researchers into both higher education and the wider workforce.

If you want to find out more about the project, go to: <http://www.crac.org.uk/careerchoices>.

If you have any queries about the survey please contact robin.mellors-bourne@crac.org.uk

Thank you for your help with this important research.

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Postgraduate Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities conference – deadline for Abstracts

Are you a postgraduate researcher?

Is your research in the arts, social sciences or humanities fields?

Then PRASH is for you. PRASH is an established and successful conference showcasing arts, social science and humanities research in the North West and has been designed specifically for postgraduate researchers. The PRASH events provide an excellent opportunity to present work, discuss common issues and meet other researchers working in the ASH* fields. This year's PRASH conference is hosted by Edge Hill University in association with the Vitae NW Hub. The conference has been fully funded therefore there is no cost to delegates.

Call for papers now open:

Deadline for abstract submissions: 30 April 2010

We now invite abstracts for work to be presented either as a 10 minute talk or a poster

- The presentations should focus either on your research or on an aspect of the postgraduate experience.
- Presenters should assume an audience with a *general* understanding of ASH* research and consider how their research may be advanced by support from this audience
- Abstracts should be submitted online, without pictures or figures and should be no more than 150 words.
- Submit your abstract by completing the form [here](#)

For further information please visit : www.vitae.ac.uk/prash2010

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For research staff

Broadening Horizons: Career management for research staff

This interactive and intensive two-day programme will provide you with the opportunity, skills and tools to engage proactively in your own career development. The programme will enable you to gain a clearer self-orientation of where you are within your career and to consider what your next steps might be, whether your aspirations are to remain in research and/or academia or to move into other areas.

Participants will be placed in learning groups to work on a range of activities, supported by an experienced team of facilitators. The programme will enable you to:

- gain a sense of direction and progression
- widen your understanding of career options
- better understand your own career situation
- develop tools and techniques to explore your skills, motivations, values and talents and how you can apply these to your career planning
- consider potential jobs you might like to explore further
- consider what makes an effective CV
- commit to an action plan for your personal and career development.

Who should attend?

Research staff who have an interest in developing skills and tools to help them proactively engage in their own career development.

For more details or to complete the application form for this event click [here](#)

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For staff supporting researcher development

Bridging the skills gap: developing innovative library support for researchers

Please can you circulate the information about this event to the library staff in your HEI

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1752-219641/Bridging-the-skills-gap-developing-innovative-library-support-for-researchers.html#pageInfo>

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RIN – research information, what information?

The RIN's Head of Programmes, Stéphane Goldstein ran a session on researchers' information-handling skills and training at the Annual Good Practice Conference, organised by the [Vitae South West and Wales Hub](#) in Cardiff on 24 February 2010.

The event was attended by 80 people, mainly HEI research office managers, training coordinators and human resources staff.

Entitled *Research information? What information?*, Stéphane's presentation highlighted the lack of a coherent national approach to training for researchers in information-handling skills, referring to the conclusions of RIN's 2008 *Mind the skills gap* report. He outlined Vitae's [Researcher Development Framework](#) (RDF), which will create a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. The RIN coordinated a joint response to the [RDF's consultation](#) late last year, with the aim of ensuring that information literacy has its place in the Framework. He also looked at some of the challenges faced, and ways to overcome, researchers' access to resources (see below for the full presentation)

Participants attending the workshop raised the issue of enhancing and developing the training role of librarians, which was felt could be a good way of helping professionals connect with researchers, as well as establishing a defined role as trainers. Another more intriguing question was the extent to which libraries may be competing with research offices for the provision of certain services, e.g. developing awareness of funding opportunities.

The discussions at the conference will feed into RIN's work taking forward the findings from the 2008 report, particularly in promoting a joined-up and strategic approach to the relevant training provision for researchers. The [RIN-led working group](#) on these issues is currently identifying instances of good practice across the UK in information-handling training and will promote this information to help those involved in researcher development implement effective schemes for researchers, and ensure good information-handling competencies.

<http://www.rin.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/Research-information-vitae-south-west-hub-feb19.pdf>

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Aslib event – supporting researchers

Date: Tuesday, 25th May 2010

Venue: London South Bank University

Organised by the Aslib Engineering and Technology Group

Aslib Engineering and Technology Group is pleased to invite you to this 1-day seminar on Supporting Researchers. This event is aimed at librarians and information professionals working in academic institutions and professional bodies, and anyone who is interested in research support. The sessions will look at:

- a recent research study in international practice in assessing research impact;
- the challenges and opportunities of managing research data;
- the result of a 3-year study on tracking researchers' behaviour by BL/JISC;
- a recent study on how Web 2.0 tools are changing researcher's behaviour and the implications to us;
- the implementation of a current research information system (CRIS), what it is and the benefits it brings to the institution;
- an award winning doctoral training programme; and
- building communities of practice for researchers.

This all day event is an opportunity to examine and discuss issues around supporting researchers with the panel of speakers and fellow attendees. Please see the attached flyer for details of the sessions.

Speakers include:

- Dr. Jonathan Grant, President, RAND Europe
- Dr. Simon Hodson, Programme Manager - Managing Research Data, JISC
- Education for Change
- Research Information Network
- Anna Clements, Project Manager and University Data Architect, University of St. Andrews
- Dr. Eleanor Loughlin, Graduate Training Officer, University of Durham
- Laura Jeffrey, Researcher Training Librarian, University of Durham
- Melanie Petch, Lecturer in English Language, Library Services, De Montfort University

Venue: Conference Room, The Keyworth Centre, London South Bank University

Date: Tuesday, 25th May 2010 (10am – 4:15pm, registration starts at 9:30am)

Cost: £50 (ASLIB members) or £100 (non-members) (Early bird discount for booking by 16 April 2010: £75)

Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

LSBU is easily accessible by public transport. How to get there: <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about/maps.shtml>

For further information or to book, please contact:

Rachel Daniels

Email: r.j.daniels@cranfield.ac.uk

Tel: 01793 785113

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Vitae innovate 2010 schedule

Date Published:	Wednesday 24 Mar 2010
Audience:	Postgraduate researchers, Research staff, Staff supporting researchers development, Non-HE Employers, Supervisors, Research managers, Policy makers and national stakeholders, All
Region:	National
Topic:	General news and press

Vitae innovate is a scheme to encourage innovation in the personal, professional and career development of researchers.

The schedule for the call of bids, assessment and announcement of Vitae innovate 2010 has now been published. Vitae innovate will invite bids for funding of innovative projects to promote the personal, professional and career development of researchers with funding of up to a total of £100,000 to be allocated to successful bids. The Vitae innovate schedule in 2010 will run as follows:

- Invitation of bids will open 6 April 2010, including announcement of the selection panel, assessment criteria and bidding process
 - Deadline for responses to call 30 June 2010
 - Meeting of selection panel w/c 19 July 2010
 - Public announcement and start of funded projects September 2010
-

For further information and updates, please visit the [Vitae innovate](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/innovate) at www.vitae.ac.uk/innovate.

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The new researcher development framework: next steps

Date Published: Wednesday 24 Mar 2010
Audience: Postgraduate researchers, Research staff, Staff supporting researchers development, Supervisors, Research managers
Region: National
Topic: Development resources, General news and press

The Researcher development framework (RDF) was created during 2009 in response to a range of recommendations to create a UK development framework for postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions.

The RDF was designed to be a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. It describes the knowledge, skills, behaviours and personal qualities of researchers and encourages researchers to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development.

The RDF aims to become the underpinning framework for researcher development in UK institutions. It will replace the Joint Skills Statement which was agreed with the Research Councils in 2001 as the expectation of skills a doctoral researcher should have and is extended to include research staff.

A major consultation with the HE sector, researchers and other stakeholders took place during the Autumn, 2009.

We received over 240 responses to the consultation from 65 universities, key organisations and 75 individual researchers. Organisational responses included the Association of Graduate Careers and Advisory Services, the British Council, the European Commission, the Higher Education Academy, the Institute of Physics, the National Union of Student, the 1994 group, the UK Council for Graduate Education and the Universities and College Union.

Overall between 60% to 80% of respondents to all the consultation questions agreed or mostly agreed that the RDF's proposed purpose, scope and structure were useful. There was strong support that the RDF will be useful for supporting the professional development of researchers. It was thought to have wide relevance and applicability, and the empirical basis was particularly valuable in providing a credible, robust framework. Those that responded were pleased that a postgraduate researcher could see the full trajectory of skills and attributes needed to further their development and that research staff could identify areas for development, compare their capabilities with others and aspire to higher levels.

'The framework is very comprehensive and will be useful for individual researchers to map their career pathway and for managers to support researchers' aspirations.'

'It is helpful to have a national framework because it is based on wider consultation that could not be managed by a single institution and it allows us to benchmark ourselves against a national framework.'

'...the work done in developing the RDF [is] a positive step in recognising the professionalism of research staff working in higher education'

There were also a range of concerns highlighted in the responses. These were predominantly about how the RDF was perceived in relation to policy initiatives including the QAA code of practice, Concordat implementation, Research Council training requirements and other existing frameworks and subsequent expectations of HEI provision. There were concerns that the RDF could be perceived as raising expectations about the likelihood of progression within higher education and requests to make more explicit the transferability of skills and experiences outside HE.

Given the quantity and richness of the feedback the RDF Advisory Group and project team have agreed the following next steps.

Our plan is to publish week commencing 12 April:

- A full report of the consultation responses and subsequent actions
- A revised summary of the RDF [domains and descriptors], for those institutions who are keen to incorporate the high-level framework into their strategic planning etc [Joint Skills Statement equivalent]
- Clarification of the links between the RDF and the QAA Code of Practice and the Concordat
- Update on key stakeholders' reactions to the RDF consultation, including Research Councils UK
- Guidance information will be updated on the RDF section of the Vitae website, ie background to the RDF, how it can be used, what it does and does not do.

The 'reflection' period between April and October will be used to refine the detailed content of the RDF in light of the consultation responses and to seek additional input where appropriate. A timeline for further action will be published with the consultation responses in April.

For more information, please visit the [RDF section](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf) of Vitae website at www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

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Staff supporting researchers masterclasses

Programme overview

Following the success of last year's masterclass series, in 2010 Vitae is offering a programme of five masterclasses focusing on specific areas of training and development within the higher education environment. The masterclasses are aimed at staff supporting researchers who are looking to innovate and develop their training provision.

The five masterclasses will be on the following topics:

- [Training needs analysis and PDP](#) (Friday 30 April, Manchester)
- [Creativity](#) (Thursday 13 May, Birmingham)
- [Neuro linguistic programming \(NLP\) in researcher development programmes](#) (Thursday 29 July, London)
- [Demonstrating impact: evaluation](#) (Tuesday 21 September, London)
- [Coaching and mentoring](#) (Tuesday 19 October, Newcastle)

Each masterclass will be led by an expert in the particular topic area and who has experience within the higher education environment.

Please be aware that each masterclass will be limited to 15 participants, so please book as soon as possible to secure a place.

Entry requirements/cost

The masterclasses are free to attend and are available for staff supporting researchers

Event leaders

Training needs analysis and PDP

This masterclass will be led by Professor [Pam Denicolo](#) and [Paul Toombs](#).

Pam Denicolo has a passion for supporting and developing graduate students and has been invited to provide academic staff development workshops worldwide, most lately on doctoral student training, support and examining and in her appointment as Visiting Professor in several HEIs with a remit to develop their doctoral provision. Her research has been oriented by a commitment to understanding the way participants in learning processes construe their roles, situations and activities, through the use and development of Personal Construct Theory approaches and methods.

Paul Toombs has over 30 years experience in enabling people to be superior performers. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management, Paul has worked with international organizations including, SP Tyres, Siemens, Lufthansa, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Philip Morris, Hewlett Packard, UME Health in North America; Western, Central and Eastern Europe; Russia; Kazakhstan; Asia, and the UAE. In the UK he retains links with universities and works nationally with researchers and their supervisors.

Further [event and booking](#) information.

Creativity

This masterclass will be led by [Dr Kevin Byron](#) - author of the recent 'Creative researcher' booklet for Vitae. Kevin is Enterprise Education Coordinator at Queen Mary, University of London and a freelance trainer specializing in creativity, research skills, personal effectiveness and enterprise skills. Kevin has some 25 years experience in the telecommunications industry and his interest in education and training and in particular creative skills has led to him presenting his research in creativity at several international conferences in Italy, Canada, the USA, South Africa and the UK. He is a co-author of the book 'The Alchemy of Innovation' and also authored two monographs on 'Inventing and Problem-Solving' and 'Counter-intuition' published by the Institute for Cultural Research. His work on creativity has also been published in the Times Education Supplement, The Higher Education supplement, Physics World and Wavelength (The HEA journal for the physical sciences).

Further [event and booking](#) information.

NLP in researcher development programmes

This masterclass will be led by [Dr Caron King](#) - a highly experienced NLP practitioner, licensed trainer for The Coaching Academy, facilitator, change specialist and a Belbin team roles accredited trainer. Caron regularly facilitates for a variety of clients across the public, private and higher education sectors with clients including a number of Higher Education institutions, The Cabinet Office, The Ministry of Defense, Business Link, and The British Council. Caron is currently a Director on the National GRADschools programme and was a co-developer on the 'How to be an effective researcher' programme for research staff.

Further [event and booking](#) information.

Demonstrating impact: evaluation

This masterclass will be led by [Dr Tony Bromley](#) and [Paul Kearns](#).

Tony Bromley is responsible for the Graduate Training and Support Centre (GTSC) at the University of Leeds. He has published research in the Materials Science and Education fields, is lead author of the Rugby Team Impact Framework (RTIF), researcher training and development evaluation model, and the Society for Research into Higher Education Guide, 'A Guide to Evaluating Training and Development Programmes for Postgraduate and Newer Researchers'

Paul Kearns has over 30 years experience in training and development and has written widely on the subject of evaluation and ROI (see "Evaluating the ROI from Learning", CIPD, 2005). His 12-part series on the role of 'Learning Consultants' for Training Journal 2004 was described by its Editor as '*... without doubt one of the best pieces of editorial we have published*'.

Further [event and booking](#) information.

Coaching and mentoring

This masterclass will be led by [Dr Jeremy Mead](#) - a highly successful coach who works with teams and individuals in organisations throughout the world. Jeremy has over 20 years experience as a senior manager in operational and strategic leadership of small and large businesses. Jeremy has previously been a Director on the national GRADschools programme and developed, with Vitae, a collaborative career planning programme which was run at Bristol University in 2007.

Additional speaker (TBC)

Further [event and booking](#) information.

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Integrating technology into researcher training

Registration closes 30 April

Thursday 27 May 2010, Manchester, 10:30-15:30

Do you want to know more about online tools, in particular:

- **How your researchers are using them to communicate and collaborate?**
- **How they can help you reduce the administrative burden of evaluating training?**
- **How to use them to promote your training programmes**
- **How to use them to engage your researchers in the researcher development agenda**

The purpose of this workshop is to share good practice on the use of technology in researcher training and allow participants to enhance their skills in this area.

Audience:

Trainers and other support staff involved with the personal and professional development of early career researchers and academics.

What will the workshop cover?

- Case studies highlighting the uses of technology in training
- A practical session covering the key skills when integrating technology into training
- Group discussions to identify and explore effective use of technology in training

PROGRAMME:

10.00 Registration and refreshments

10:30 Welcome and introduction

Case studies: Uses of technology in researcher training

10:35 It's not about technology it's about a better way to do research: Engaging researchers in the social web through Vitae's Digital Researcher

Dr Tristram Hooley, University of Derby

10:50 Research Students eWriting Programme

Dr Daniel Soule, Glasgow Caledonian University

10:35 11:05 Teaching and Administering Graduate Training in Historical Methods: Using a Ning Network at Edinburgh

Dr Adam Budd, University of Edinburgh

11:20 A shared space for learning about your and other people's research

Ms Cristina Costa, University of Salford

11:35 Blogging for researcher training

Dr Emily Bannister, University of Manchester

Practical demonstration session

11:50 *A chance to practice using relevant tools to help you:*

- *manage the vast amount of information available on the web*
- *deliver and evaluate researcher training programmes*

12:50 Lunch

13.45 Sharing practice session

Group discussions to identify and explore effective use of technology in training programmes

15:30 Finish

To book:

To view more details and to book your place on this free NW Hub workshop, click [here](#). Please note in order to make the workshop interactive we have limited the number of participants to 35. **Deadline for registration is 30 April 2010.**

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Please circulate relevant items within your institution as appropriate. If you have any items you want to feature in the Vitae NW Hub bulletin, please contact us. We welcome any feedback or suggested improvements for this bulletin.