

PGR Tips on auditing your skills

There are several reasons to take a little bit of time to assess your development. One is to identify strengths and present these effectively in job applications. Another is to identify any weaknesses you may feel you have and rectify these by training or practice. It may also help you to explore which careers or occupations might be most suited and/or exciting to you. This will be covered in a future PGR Tips, but is worth bearing in mind.

Audit your skills

A good place to start taking stock of your strengths and weaknesses is by thinking through what skills you have already which will be useful in your doctorate and identify ones that you need to develop or hone. There is a [skills audit](#) you can take on the Vitae website, based on the [Joint Statement of the UK Research Councils' Training Requirements for Research Students](#) (JSS). In this, the research councils have identified a number of skill areas that they think are particularly important for completing a doctorate and pursuing a research career.

Talk to your peers

By talking with peers and your supervisor(s) you may gain a very different perspective on your strengths: skills which you take for granted may be highly valued by other people. Ask yourself whether there are particular areas where people tend to ask your advice or opinion- there is likely to be a reason for it!

Cognitive bias

When assessing your skill levels, be aware of cognitive bias, where highly skilled people tend to underestimate their skill level, whereas people with lower skill levels tend to overestimate their own ability. Another influence that may lead you to underestimate your own accomplishments is that you will compare yourself with highly educated peers. Bear this in mind when applying for jobs outside academia and don't undersell yourself.

Respond to the consultation on the researcher development framework

The JSS will be extended and replaced with a new Researcher development framework. This framework will span the entire careers of researchers, rather than a snapshot of skills at the end of a doctorate. It is intended to be useful to researchers thinking about their career development. There is currently a [consultation](#) for this new framework and you are encouraged to respond.