

PGR Tips on planning your professional development

[The Researcher Development Framework](#) (RDF) is a comprehensive new approach to enhancing the careers of researchers. It was developed through interviews with successful researchers in a range of disciplines. It encourages you to identify your strengths and prioritise your professional development. It enables you to consider skills and experiences that will enhance your career prospects and articulate your knowledge, behaviours and attributes to employers. The four domains in the researcher development framework cover: A Knowledge and intellectual abilities; B Personal effectiveness; C Research governance and organisation; D Engagement, influence and impact



The Researcher Development Framework has been incorporated into a downloadable ['Professional Development Planner'](#) to allow you to identify the areas you want to develop further, create an action plan and record evidence of your progress.

Preparing for career development reviews

Use the [RDF Professional Development Planner](#) to help you prepare for one-on-one reviews with your supervisor where you will be discussing your professional or career development. It will help you identify your strengths and areas to focus on for development. The RDF can be used in planning for your long term career ambitions but also to make a feasible short term plan.

Using the phases to set aspirational goals

For each descriptor there are up to five phases of development. These do not represent different career stages as it is likely that you will be at a different phase for different descriptors. This will depend on your experience and personal strengths. Looking at the phases ahead of where you place yourself will provide aspirational goals to work towards.

Decide what to concentrate on in your development

Prioritise the areas you might want to develop by considering which skills and experiences will enhance your prospects of success in particular career areas. Match a job advert you might be interested in to the RDF, or some of the [Vitae careers profiles](#). Your local researcher training and careers staff will be also able to guide you and will be familiar with the RDF.

Use the RDF to highlight your strengths

It can be really positive to formulate your strengths and all the skills you already have. These are important for career progression within or outside academia. Talk to others to get their views on your strengths and capabilities.

Prioritise the most appropriate development opportunities

Development opportunities that will allow you to progress through the phases can be formal, such as training within or outside your institution, or informal, such as volunteering for roles within your research or outside. Choose such opportunities to demonstrate your strengths or enhance your development in other areas. Some phases may only be reached through

experience and practice however good self-awareness and professional development planning will aid the process.

Be inspired by how other researchers have used the RDF

The experiences of [others who have used the RDF](#) may provide inspiration or a starting point for your own planning.