

PGR Tips from the Wilson review on collaboration between businesses and universities

The review by Professor Sir Tim Wilson entitled '[Review of Business-University Collaboration](#)', published last month, gives recommendations to universities and other stakeholders. This issue of PGR Tips extracts some useful tips for you.

Be proactive about gaining work experience

Experience gained in internships is highly valued by employers. Several research councils expect that all doctoral researchers will undertake work experience in an area not directly related to their research. Some opportunities are advertised on the [Vitae website](#). Many companies offer placements/ internships in summer but may have opportunities all year round. Experience in organising conferences or running a researchers network can also be expressed as work experience.

Collaborate

The current competitive environment requires you to work in collaboration. In the report this applies to universities but it is sound advice for researchers, too.

Career development is not just for your final year

It is tempting to concentrate on your research, but it is vital to make the most of your doctorate as a career development opportunity from the start. It is never too early to become informed and pro-active about your career.

Be realistic about your career prospects

A career in higher education is likely to be highly competitive. It is therefore wise to explore alternatives early on. There is a wealth of information on the Vitae website, in terms of [careers destinations](#), [career aspirations](#) and [labour market information](#).

Consider smaller employers and self-employment

Consider corporate businesses as potential employers as an alternative to academia. Again there is intense competition for such places. Consider working for less well known employers, especially in the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector. Alternatively, consider self-employment and find out what support is available in your university.

Use your careers service

You can use your careers service in many different ways: as a source of information, a tool for self-reflection or a partner in exploring possible opportunities. Three quarters of respondents to a [Vitae survey](#) who had used their university careers service as postgraduates had found it very helpful or helpful.

Use the Researcher Development Framework to audit and develop your skills

Use the [Researcher Development Framework](#) to prioritise the development opportunities available to you and to provide evidence of your knowledge, behaviours and attributes when setting up collaborations, in your CV, in job applications and at interviews.