

How can I use my doctorate in my career?

What you do during your doctorate will be a preparation for your future professional career. It is important to review your career direction. Even if you feel clear about what it is that you want to do, you can still benefit from thinking about how to achieve your aims and also considering what alternatives might be available.

Whether your doctorate is part of a clear career strategy, to change direction or simply seemed like an interesting opportunity, you can use it to enhance your employability. During your doctorate you have the opportunity to undertake a range of activities that will provide you with useful skills and experience and enable you to explore possible career paths.

Think about how you are going to network, raise your profile, gain work-experience and expand your range of skills and experience through extra-curricular activities.

Vitae has the following resources available:

- The '**developing your career**' (www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrcareer) and '**careers**' (www.vitae.ac.uk/careers) sections of the Vitae website
- '**What do researchers do?**' provide a wide range of case studies and employment data of doctoral graduates: www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd
- **GRADschools** are inspirational, challenging and experiential courses in which all participants will learn something new about themselves. You will take away skills, tools or information which will motivate you to complete your studies, further realise your potential, and enable you to make more informed choices about your future career: www.vitae.ac.uk/courses
- **Careers in Academia** If you are planning an academic career, consider attending a Careers in Academia event: www.vitae.ac.uk/courses
- **Leadership in Action** This 3-day residential course allows researchers to explore and develop their leadership skills. You will have the opportunity to look at relevant theory, practice your leadership styles and receive feedback: www.vitae.ac.uk/courses

Schedule for Success – Planning your doctorate was originally inspired by and adapted from The PhD Calendar, School of Graduate Studies at The University of Melbourne, developed by Stella Clark (School of Graduate Studies) and Richard James (Centre for the Study of Higher Education) (2002).

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Schedule for Success

Planning your doctorate and developing your career

Your doctorate

could include:

- Decide on training needs using the Professional Development Planner
- Training
- Begin data collection
- First year report
- Seminars/conferences
- Family, work or other commitments
- Your own milestones

Midway through your doctorate

Milestones could include:

- Meetings with careers advisor to explore career options
- Meetings with your supervisor(s)
- Assess research results and what needs doing
- Keep writing chapters/reports
- Present your research at seminars or conferences
- Family, work or other commitments
- Your own milestones

Schedule for your year: Please use the box

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
check time of meeting with supervisor		Plan seminar presentation	
Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
	Submit Report		
Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16
Week 17	Week 18	Week 19	Week 20
Week 21	Week 22	Week 23	Week 24
Week 25	Week 26	Week 27	Week 28

The creative researcher

Tools and techniques to unleash your creativity



The balanced researcher

Strategies for busy researchers



The engaging researcher

Inspiring people to engage with your research



Sophie Duncan

Starting your doctorate

You are now starting your doctorate. We hope you will enjoy this unique period in your life. Comprehensive planning in the early months of your doctorate will set the stage for successful and timely completion. Together with your supervisors, work out interim goals and note these on the reverse of this Schedule for Success.

The experience and challenges of doing your doctorate will depend on your route into it. What skills and research thinking have you gathered from other jobs, careers and previous qualifications? Doing your doctorate you will use and build on previous experience.

Further into your doctorate

As you progress into your doctorate, the tasks and milestones you set yourself will be different from those you set in your first year. You may want to block out time for writing, whether this is towards your thesis or other writing. Breaking down large writing tasks into smaller chunks (such as chapters or even paragraphs) may make the task feel more achievable. Note deadlines on your Schedule for Success. Set aside time to plan for your future professional career and what you need to do towards achieving it.

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

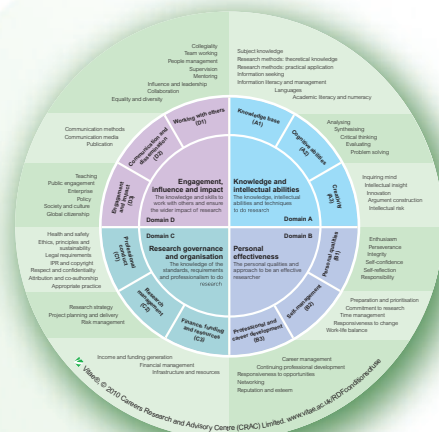
The Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been designed to guide you in your professional development as a researcher. It encourages you to set aspirational goals to become a successful researcher during your doctorate and beyond.

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.

Depicted as a circle (see overleaf), the RDF consists of four domains, 12 subdomains and 63 descriptors, each of which is described by up to five phases (which you can view in the Professional Development Planner). Remember that the Researcher Development Framework is designed to be applicable to all researchers, from those just beginning their research through to world leading experts, so do not get put off by the higher 'phases'. Phase 1 is what you should probably aspire to during your doctorate and you will find that in some areas you already excel beyond this. Get advice from supervisors and peers about which descriptors to concentrate on.

The Researcher Development Framework will be useful to decide where to concentrate your developmental efforts, building on your strengths to become a well-rounded, effective and successful researcher.

www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfresearchers



See the full graphic overleaf

How to use this schedule

The purpose of this schedule is for you to record (and stick to) the decisions you have made about managing your doctorate. Block out time for writing and experiments or data gathering, seminars and conferences but also record personal milestones. Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Professional Development Planner to support you whilst going through cycles of planning, doing, reviewing and revising.

The Professional Development Planner

Scheduling for success involves not just planning for your doctoral studies but also planning your professional and career development. Research has shown that people who reflect on, and are more aware of their abilities, reach higher levels of achievement.¹ The RDF has been designed to help you with this process. The RDF has been incorporated into an interactive tool: the Professional Development Planner to allow you to identify the areas for professional development, create an action plan and record evidence of your progress. Use it to help you plan for your long term career ambitions but also to make a feasible short term plan. You could share your action plan with your supervisors, staff developers or careers advisors. Record the deadlines for your actions (and block out time for them) on your schedule overleaf.

For more information about the Researcher Development Framework tailored to postgraduate researchers, and to download the 'Professional Development Planner' see www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfplanner and the Vitae briefing for postgraduate researchers on the Researcher Development Framework.

Supervisory and other supportive relationships and institutional provision

The relationship with your supervisors is key to the success of your doctorate. They are your biggest allies in the completion of your doctorate. Manage this relationship professionally, schedule and prepare for regular supervisory meetings with a clear agenda for each. Supervisors' styles vary so it is important to talk about what you both expect. All doctoral researchers are expected to be proactive, independent and assertive. Even so, if you need support be willing to ask for it. It is best to deal with any problems as they arise.

The 'Supervision and key relationships' section on the Vitae website has further information and advice: www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrsupervisor

Your supervisor is only one of your sources of support. You should aim to build a wider network around your doctoral project. Your network could include other postgraduate researchers, research staff, technicians, librarians, trainers, advisors and career staff.

Make yourself familiar with your institution's requirements for doctoral conduct and completion. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education QAA assures standards and improves the quality of UK higher education: www.qaa.ac.uk

Find out about institutional provision for postgraduate researchers and where to get developmental support. This can include pastoral care, training and development opportunities and careers advice.

To complement institutional provision Vitae has many resources for postgraduate researchers, including those below.

Vitae's community and resources for postgraduate researchers

- **PGR Tips** is our monthly email which offers advice on different aspects of your doctorate. Subscribe at www.vitae.ac.uk/register4pgrtips
- **What's up doc?** is a blog devoted to the experience of doing a doctorate where you'll find a community of fellow postgraduate researchers as well as interesting articles. www.vitae.ac.uk/whatsupdoc
- **The researcher booklets** provide practical and relevant information on time management, creativity, public engagement and leadership. Download from: www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets
- **Vitae national and regional events** Vitae organises high quality (and usually free) events to complement provision in your institution. Check out www.vitae.ac.uk/hubs and www.vitae.ac.uk/courses
- **Resources for disabled researchers:** Vitae has incorporated the work of Premia (resources for disabled researchers) into its website. You will find the resources helpful whether or not you are disabled. www.vitae.ac.uk/premia-pgr

¹ Hartnell-Young, E., Harrison, C., Crook, C., Davies, L., Fisher, T., Pemberton, R. & Smallwood, A. (2007). The Impact of ePortfolios on Learning. Coventry: British Educational Communications Technology Agency. http://partners.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=rh&catcode=_re_rp_02&rid=14007

Starting your doctorate

Milestones could include:

- Inductions(s)
- Meetings with your supervisor(s)
- Agree supervision process with your supervisor(s)
- Write a research plan
- Define methodology
- Start/complete literature review
- Decide on training needs using the Professional Development Planner
- Training
- Begin data collection
- First year report
- Seminars/conferences
- Family, work or other commitments
- Your own milestones

Midway through your doctorate

Milestones could include:

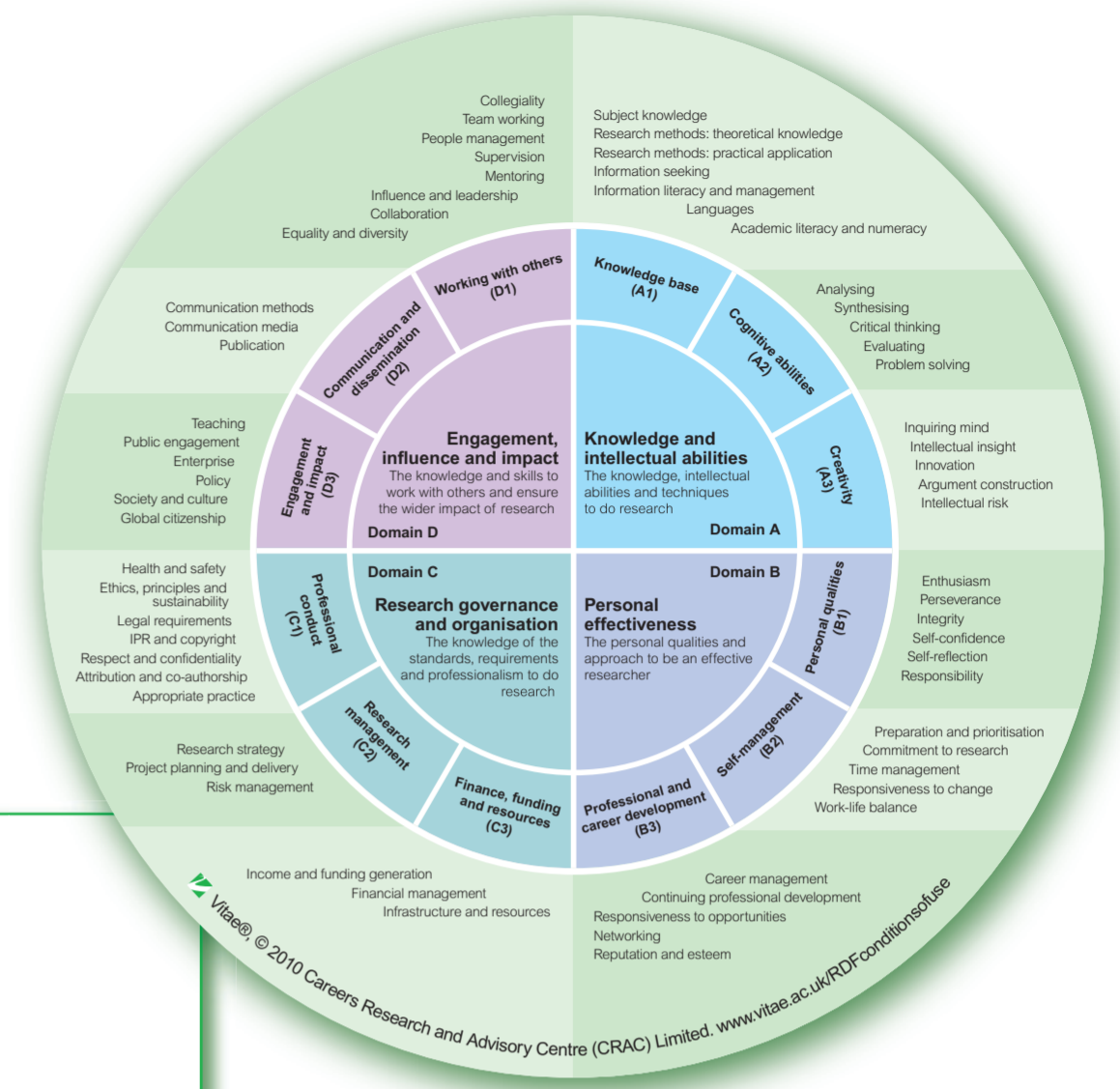
- Meetings with careers advisor to explore career options
- Meetings with your supervisor(s)
- Review your training needs using the Professional Development Planner
- Training
- Assess research results and what needs doing
- Keep writing chapters/reports
- Present your research at seminars or conferences
- Family, work or other commitments
- Your own milestones

Completing your doctorate

Milestones could include:

- Finish data collection
- Draw up a plan to break down writing into manageable pieces
- Completion of chapters or sections and review by supervisor(s)
- First complete draft
- Apply for jobs or funding and update your CV
- Submit your thesis!
- Viva practice
- Viva, corrections and graduation
- Family, work or other commitments
- Your own milestones

Use the Researcher Development Framework to identify your strengths and development opportunities.



Schedule for your year: Please use the boxes to highlight your targets and milestones

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7			
Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	
Week 17	Week 18	Week 19	Week 20	Week 21	Week 22	Week 23	Week 24	Week 25	
Week 26	Week 27	Week 28	Week 29	Week 30	Week 31	Week 32	Week 33	Week 34	
Week 35	Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39	Week 40	Week 41	Week 42	Week 43	
Week 44	Week 45	Week 46	Week 47	Week 48	Week 49	Week 50	Week 51	Week 52	