

A quick guide to the Rugby Team Impact Framework

'... it is very clear to those involved in researcher training and development, that their efforts do have a significant impact on researchers. In many ways the Impact Framework is about being able to illustrate these, predominantly empirical, outcomes in a clear, accessible and rigorous manner to all interested stakeholders: researchers, academics, HEIs, funders and government.' From 'The Rugby Team Impact Framework'



What is the Rugby Team Impact Framework?

It is an evaluation model specifically tailored for researcher training and development activity that takes into account the perspectives of all stakeholders. It draws upon ideas from the commercial training sector, social sciences research and teaching and learning assessment. At the heart of the impact framework is a logic diagram (see Figure 1) that characterises the progression from initial investment in training and development activity through to final outcomes. The logic diagram defines five levels at which to measure impact.

Aim of the framework:

To foster, support and guide existing and new ways of effectively evaluating researcher training and development across the sector. There will be a major review on evaluation and evidence of impact in the sector presented at the 2010 Vitae conference (www.vitae.ac.uk).

What can the framework be used for?

The Rugby Team Impact Framework can be used as a methodology for evaluation as it stands. It is also valuable in providing a national framework against which evaluation projects using a range of different methodologies can be mapped. This allows comparison of multiple projects at a national level such that a more coherent and better understood evidence base can be collectively built by the sector.

Why evaluate?

The key drivers stated in the Rugby Team Impact Framework report are to:

1. demonstrate the appropriateness of the emphasis on skills development of researchers
2. provide feedback to funding bodies, such as RCUK and the UK Funding Councils, and to government, who need to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their investment and on the economy
3. inform the enhancement of the quality of the experience for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and research staff (RS), both within individual HEIs and across the sector in line with initiatives such as the QAA Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes and the 'Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'
4. assess the impact of recent initiatives, particularly the Roberts Funding, on the employability (and perceived employability) of PGRs and RS.

Who is interested?

The main stakeholders with an interest in the outcomes of researcher training and development activity are commonly considered to be: Researchers, Higher Education Institutions, Government, Funders of Research, Supervisors and Principle Investigators, Employers (HE and Non-HE).

Who are the Rugby Team?

The Rugby Team are a national sector working group looking at how to evaluate the impact of researcher training and development activity. The name simply reflects that the group developed from a forum held in the town of Rugby. The group includes representatives from institutions, funding bodies and national stakeholder organisations. Vitae provides management support and resources to the Rugby Team. For more information on the Rugby Team projects, visit:

www.vitae.ac.uk/rugbyteam

Further information

Download the Rugby Team Impact Framework and the latest update reports on the emerging evidence base from evaluations across the sector at:

www.vitae.ac.uk/rugbyteam

'A Guide to the Evaluation of Training and Development Programmes for Postgraduate and other New Researchers' is available from the Society for Research into Higher Education:

<http://www.srhe.ac.uk/publications.gpi.asp>

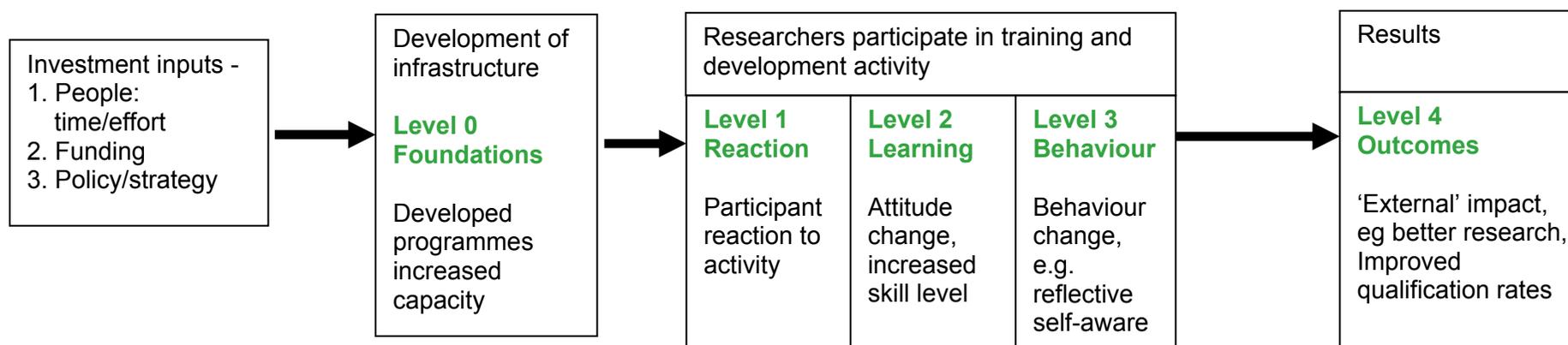


Figure 1: A logic diagram¹ representing the effect of investment in training and development activity from initial investment to final outcomes. The diagram indicates five 'impact levels' (levels 0 - 4) at which the affect of the investment can be 'measured'

¹ Adapted from the Rugby Team Impact Framework; [Source: 'A Guide to the Evaluation of Training and Development Programmes for Postgraduate and other New Researchers' see further information and support for details]