

Vitae Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub

Hello and welcome to the Summer 2009 edition of the Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub newsletter

Welcome to this edition of the Hub Newsletter, containing an interesting mix of articles and news updates from Scotland and Northern Ireland.

If you would like to contribute an article for a future newsletter or want to be added to our mailing list please contact us as we would love to hear from you.

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What Do Researchers Do?

Two new ground-breaking Vitae publications

'What do researchers do? First destinations of doctoral graduates by subject'

For the first time, first destinations of doctoral graduates are presented by subject as well as by broad discipline. The study demonstrates that doctoral graduates continue to be highly employable across the economy in a wide range of occupations within and outside the higher education sector. They fulfil very diverse roles using either their specialist or high level generic skills, or both.

In total 14,500 people gained doctorates in the UK in 2007, including nearly 8000 UK-domiciled. The education sector was the most popular destination for all five disciplines (absorbing half but this varies by subject, from 28% for psychology to 79% of those in modern languages). A third of doctoral graduates went into research as their first destination. Again, this varies by subject from 7% for theology doctoral graduates to over 70% for some biological subjects.

'What do researchers do? Career profiles of doctoral graduates'

A collection of 40 career profiles which provide insights into the paths that doctoral graduates take beyond their first destination. The stories show that the doctoral experience has a significant influence on employability and career decisions of doctoral graduates. They demonstrate the ability to create and seize opportunities, moving between employment sectors and occupations using the confidence, skills and expertise they developed during their doctorate.

Both publications are aimed at doctoral researchers, careers advisors and supervisors as well as at employers and highlight the postgraduate labour market and what doctoral graduates bring. To download your personal copies, visit www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd, for hard copies email orders@vitae.ac.uk.

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A Vitae Roberts Policy Forum 2009 update

The Vitae Roberts Policy Forum is an important event in the Roberts calendar. This annual event brings together individuals responsible for institutional policy with regard to post-graduate researchers and research staff development and implementing the related Roberts recommendations. More recently it has also explored the implications of implementing the revised Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers, which reinforces the messages in the *SET for Success* report through the seven Concordat principles.

At the 2009 Policy Forum a major concern to participants was embedding and sustaining the Roberts agenda, particularly if funding is not sustained beyond 2011. The importance of demonstrating the value and the impact of the Roberts agenda was well recognised. Participants were also interested in how this agenda links with the implementation and the benchmarking of the Concordat. It was noted at the end of the Policy Forum that there were a number of outstanding issues where participants would welcome an opportunity to give more specific comment and feedback. This was provided through an informal consultation, inviting participants to respond on four topics:

the future of Roberts funding

reporting on the implementation of the Concordat

assessing impact and evidence building

the language of high level skills

Vitae has published the results of this consultation, which stress the importance of the Roberts Funding to HEIs, supports a proportionate reporting process for the Concordat and recommends an external evaluation of the Roberts agenda. The Rugby Team has subsequently submitted an outline proposal for an external evaluation project to RCUK for consideration. The results of the consultation are available at www.vitae.ac.uk/policyforum.

Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) update

51 Universities participated in the 2009 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) during March - May. The CROS 2009 questionnaire was completely updated to bring the question set in line with the aspirations and principles of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers, launched in June 2008. The UK aggregate results of the survey will be presented at the Vitae researcher development conference, 8/9 September in Warwick.

ARMA Conference

The 19th Annual Conference of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) took place on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of June 2009 in Southampton. More than 300 participants reflected on "Reviewing the Future" which was the theme of the conference.

The focus of the plenary session was on new challenges facing universities and the need to prove the impact of research. It was emphasised that Research Councils were now looking to fund innovative, rigorous, multi disciplinary projects. To allow this cultural change, there would be a need to restructure Universities in the next 5 years. One of the issues will be to address the specific demand for management of these projects. Another issue will be to acknowledge the difference existing between the business sector and Academia. Particular attention to staff career development will be needed in order to fill these new management roles within Universities.

There was a good variety of workshop sessions but the common theme was to address the impact issues. Indeed, with the RAE being replaced by REF, there will be a clear need to capture and accelerate the impact but there will also be a need to influence policy makers. The message sent by the HEFCE delegate was that REF would be about keeping track records of research projects and not so much about the metrics behind them. Moreover, they would be looking for larger quality projects rather than lots of small ones.

Everybody seemed to agree that in order to make and measure impact, particular attention must be paid to career development. The mentoring process for new academic staff was perceived as crucial.

In line with career development, a strong message was reinforced regarding the need for professionalization of the research manager's position in order that it be recognised and valued.

In conclusion, this conference highlighted the need to see the bigger picture and to conceptualise research projects from a new angle.



Vitae conference 2009 update

The Vitae researcher development conference 2009, the UK's largest event for people with a commitment to the personal, professional and career development of researchers will be held on 8-9 September at the University of Warwick.

If you've not booked yet, please come and join us! The event will focus on meeting the emerging needs defined by the new global context. It has never been more important to focus on the effective development of researchers or to ensure that researchers are able to make a valuable contribution to the wider community and economy.

[The conference brochure](#) includes latest information on plenary speakers and contributors, workshop sessions and extra features of this event.

For further information about the Vitae conference and to book your place, please visit www.vitae.ac.uk/vitaeconference2009.

Getting involved with Interconnect

We are working with students, colleges, universities, students associations, qualified women and employers to develop the Interconnect network and there are lots of ways to get involved:

Students: Join our facebook group, get involved with or set up an Interconnect group on campus or attend our regional events and meet students from other colleges and universities.

Qualified Women: Become a role model on our website and meet with students at our networking lunches

Colleges & Universities: We'd love to help you set up a local group and publicise the network to your women students.

For more information contact Allison Johnstone:
al.johnstone@napier.ac.uk

The European Charter and Code promoters network update

In 2005 the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for Recruitment were launched at a conference run by Vitae (then the UK GRAD Programme) in London. Since then, a range of European initiatives have aimed to improve the awareness of the principles of the Charter and Code, including in 2008 the creation of a European Charter and Code promoters network. During 2008, the Commission also brought together a range of its services under the EURAXESS name - including the mobility portals, the Charter and Code implementation, and jobs and vacancies (see <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>).

During 2008 and early 2009 the members of the Charter and Code promoters network created action plans for raising awareness of the Charter and Code at institutional and national levels. In the UK, our focus has been on embedding the new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers as the key tenet of our national process for good management and development of researchers (alongside the QAA Code of Practice for Research Degrees for postgraduate researchers).

The Commission has now signalled that the implementation strategy has moved from improving awareness to sharing strategies, practice and approaches. The Promoters network has been reformed into an 'Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group' and will hold its first meeting on 7 September in Warwick (the day before the Vitae conference).

Ellen Pearce, Vitae and Tom Papworth, Concordat Coordinator will both represent the UK on this group and we hope that members of this group will also join us for the Vitae conference. RCUK, UUK and Vitae fully support the new group and the European Charter and Code which the UK is adopting via its national mechanisms. As part of on-going Concordat implementation activities we will be coordinating with this group and other activities relating to the implementation of the European Charter and Code.



‘Careers in academia’ programme

At the end of this year, Vitae will be making the highly successful ‘careers in academia’ programme freely available for use by UK higher education institutions. This will include manuals with all the information needed to organise and deliver the programme as well as a supporting podcast of the presentations from one of the national programmes.

This one-day event for postgraduate researchers forms part of Vitae’s ‘careers in focus’ programme and has been running nationally since 2004. During this time it has developed a reputation as a highly valuable and informative event.

During the event participants are given the chance to find out what life as an academic is really like, what is involved and what skills and strengths it will take to succeed, in order to help them decide if this is a career they would like to pursue.

Specifically, participants have the opportunity to:

meet with current academics from a range of disciplines and hear about their experiences

explore how to market themselves for a career in academia, both within their department, and at interview

look at how to write and win grant applications and discover what life is like as an early career researcher

work with fellow researchers and share experiences with other participants.

Vitae will be running a national ‘careers in academia’ event on Monday 12 October 2009 in Bristol and further details about this event are available at www.vitae.ac.uk/cif.

If you would like any further information about the programme, or would be interested in observing an event, then please contact jonathan.roberts@vitae.ac.uk.

Career stories portal on Vitae website

To coincide with the ‘What do researchers do?’ publications and pilot project in partnership with icould (www.icould.com) of ‘Vitae career stories on film’, we have also launched the first phase of a new career stories portal on the Vitae website. The portal will be a repository for individuals’ stories and career stories projects, provide researchers with an insight into potential careers inside and outside of academia post-doctorate and be a useful resource for those staff working with researchers.

In addition we hope the portal will encourage institutions to collect career stories and help demonstrate the impact of a doctorate on a researcher’s career.

The current format paves the way for a more comprehensive career stories database which will be finalised later in the year. The final phase of the portal will contain a searchable database of researcher career stories with the facility to upload stories and details of career stories projects. It will also include materials and guidance to help the collection of career stories, and a community of practice for those building banks of career stories.

For more information, visit <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/1341/Career-stories-portal.html>

Researcher Development Framework

Vitae has been working with the Rugby Team and two Universities (Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Manchester) undertaking similar projects to develop a UK framework of the skills, competencies and attributes of researchers from doctoral level to experienced researcher. This work will provide the next generation of the ‘Joint Skills Statement’. Vitae would love to hear from any institution that is developing or has developed a similar framework for researchers within their institution.

An initial version of the framework will be available at the Vitae Researcher development Conference and will go out to the HE sector and other stakeholders for consultation and discussion in the autumn.



Vitae staff supporting researchers masterclasses

This year Vitae has been offering a programme of five masterclasses focussing on specific areas of training and development within the higher education environment. The masterclasses have been aimed at staff supporting researchers who are looking to innovate and develop their training provision.

The first three of these masterclasses have been run on the topics of; ‘using coaching techniques within training programmes’, ‘designing effective development programmes for researchers’, and ‘advanced facilitation skills’. Each of the masterclass has received extremely positive feedback from participants.

A participant on the recent ‘advanced facilitation skills’ masterclass commented that: *‘the pace and level of group interactions were well pitched and the opportunity to reflect and assess my own performance as a facilitator was enlightening. I left the day feeling I had made a positive investment in my personal development with some clear pathways to improve my skills’.*

There are two further masterclasses running this year on the following topics:

training needs analysis and PDP (14 October, Edinburgh)

evaluation and feedback (11 November, Manchester)

If you would be interested in attending one of these masterclasses, you can find further details, including a booking form, at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/74201/Staff-supporting-researchers-masterclasses.html>

News for Researchers:

Graduate Junction

Connecting researchers with industry, social enterprise and each other

Graduate Junction: Poster Competition

Graduate Junction www.graduatejunction.org was established to facilitate and increase the engagement of all early-career researchers with the wider context of their research project and provide them with access to relevant opportunities available. With more than 13,000 researchers currently participating in the network, researchers can connect and communicate with others who share similar research interests regardless of department, institution or country.

The two co-founders have worked hard, alongside their own research projects, to create Graduate Junction and there are many major developments planned in the near future, including connecting early-career researchers with industry leaders so that they can showcase their problem solving abilities.

Graduate Junction has also just launched it's first Online International Research Poster Competition allowing researchers to practice vital communication and presentation skills. This is a fantastic opportunity for researchers all over the world. www.graduatejunction.org/posters

Please help to build a global interdisciplinary researcher community by spreading the news amongst research colleagues at your institution either by forwarding this message on to others or by contacting Esther, co-founder of Graduate Junction, at esther@graduatejunction.com to request further information and/or a simple poster. Feedback and suggestions are always very welcome.



News For Researchers :

Researcher careers and recession online discussion space

Join in the discussions at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/careersandrecession>

Anyone with an interest in the potential impacts of the recession on researcher careers is welcome to engage in the discussions.

Vitae has set up an online discussion space on researcher careers and recession. We have dedicated this space on the website to post various articles (commissioned specifically for this space) on the topic of the recession and its potential impact on researcher careers.

Throughout one week (w/c 13 July) we have been posting new articles on a daily basis, and invite you to make comments on any of the articles posted, raise questions and concerns and post up any useful or related web links that you want to share with others.

In this space we have posted the following articles:

'**Research and recession**' by Fiona Christie, Careers coordinator for postgraduate researchers, University of Salford

'**Challenges and perspectives for early career researchers during the current economic climate**' by Professor Sarah O'Hara, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Professor Bob Webb, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Nottingham

'**Impact of the recession on research and research careers**' by Aaron Porter, Vice-President (Higher Education), National Union of Students

'**Universities, researchers and the recession**' by Dr Tristram Hooley

'**Careers and recession – from the perspective of a head of postgraduate career development**' by Elizabeth Wilkinson, Head of Postgraduate Career Development, University of Manchester

'**How do recruiters make shortlisting decisions?**' by Shiona Llewellyn

Please contact researchers and colleagues who could find these articles interesting and encourage them to have a look and add comments!

Freedom of Information: what's in it for researchers?

14 September 2009 – 10:00 to 16:00
The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow, G1 3NU

The Research Information Network is holding this free event to raise awareness of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) as a tool for researchers and to aid understanding of the new access regime.

The day will cover how to use FOI to access records and information and how to make successful requests. Case studies will be presented to explore how to use FOI in practice, offering strategies for what works well for particular disciplines and types of research and insights will be provided from the Scottish perspective.

Key speakers:

- Professor Duncan Tanner – Director, Welsh Institute for Social and Cultural Affairs, Bangor University
- Sarah Hutchinson - Head of Policy and Information, Scottish Information Commissioner
- Bruno Longmore – Head of Government Records, National Archives of Scotland
- Hugh Hagan – Senior Inspecting Officer Government Records Branch, National Archives of Scotland

The workshop is aimed at academic researchers; other research workers, such as journalists; librarians, archivists and other information professionals who provide research services and research training; compliance officers interested in facilitating access and advising requestors and public policy makers in the access to information arena.

For a full programme, more information and to book your free place, visit www.rin.ac.uk/foi-scotland
 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB Tel 020 7412 7946 Email contact@rin.ac.uk



Diary Dates:

Upcoming conferences, events and training opportunities

See also www.vitae.ac.uk/events

What's on...?

August 2009

- 17 SNI Supporting Part-Time Researchers event, University of Strathclyde

September 2009

- 4 HealthQwest Graduate School Research Student Conference, University of Glasgow
- 8-9 Vitae Researcher Development conference, Warwick
- 14 Freedom of Information: what's in it for researchers?, Glasgow, see p 6

October 2009

- 12 Careers in Academia, Bristol
- 14 Vitae Masterclass: TNA and PDP, Edinburgh, see p 5

Future Highlights

- 5 November Vitae Research Staff Conference, London
- 20 November Scottish Resource Centre for Women in SET event, Dundee
- 6-7 January Vitae Policy Forum, Edinburgh

Do you want to join the Vitae Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub network mailing list?

Would you like to contribute an article for Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub News?

Email Amy Cartwright at sandnihub@vitae.ac.uk