

Stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae and its activities

A report from
Oxford Research and Policy
by
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Summary

Vitae was launched in 2008 and champions the professional and career development of both doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. Vitae is funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC.

Vitae works with people committed to developing the potential of researchers, including national and international organisations, government, funders of research, universities and other employers of researchers, and researchers themselves.

Vitae's aims to make the UK world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers:

- Building human capital by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development;
- Enhancing higher education provision to train and develop researchers;
- Empowering researchers to make an impact in their careers;
- Evidencing the impact of professional and career development support for researchers.

Regular evaluation is an integral part of Vitae's activities and as such Vitae is currently undertaking a mid-contract evaluation. One aspect of this is to collect a wide range of stakeholders' views of Vitae's activities, visibility and impact.

27 interviews were carried out with stakeholders with an international perspective and 28 interviews were carried out with UK stakeholders.

The International stakeholders were selected on the basis that they had had some contact with Vitae and that they were based outside the UK and/or represented a pan-European body. The UK stakeholders were selected on the basis that they had an interest in or responsibility for researcher development. The majority of all stakeholders were in leadership/senior positions.

The views of stakeholders were collected on range of topics covering their impressions of what Vitae was and what it did, the value of its work, whether Vitae had been successful in raising issues and challenges related to researcher development. International stakeholders were also questioned about Vitae's impact outside the UK, and UK stakeholders were asked about the value of some of Vitae's activities and resources.

The key message is that the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda, including the work that UK GRAD and Vitae has done and continues to do, gives the UK a competitive advantage both in terms of producing better researchers and in terms of improving their employability within and outside higher education.

Stakeholders feel that Vitae is a unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development.

All stakeholders felt that developing researchers beyond their core research skills was important and in particular training researchers in transferable skills and in encouraging them to think more about careers.

Vitae has had a positive impact on the UK's reputation for researcher development, and there was also agreement that Vitae was unique in being a national programme with the purpose of coordinating and supporting researcher development in the UK.

Stakeholders felt that Vitae is doing very valuable and important work: UK stakeholders in particular emphasised Vitae's work around promoting the Roberts' agenda.

The importance of researcher development is increasing in countries outside the UK. The UK is regarded as leading in the field of researcher development, and this was directly ascribed to the work of Vitae and UK GRAD.

The majority of Vitae's activities and resources were regarded as valuable: International stakeholders emphasised Vitae's work in the provision of transferable skills training to researchers and work to make researchers aware of opportunities for employment outside academia whilst UK stakeholders emphasised building the evidence base. The Vitae website was generally well received, and the regional Hubs, and the general work in building the evidence base were praised. Publications such as "What do Researchers do?" were also seen as very valuable. None of the stakeholders felt that Vitae should do less of any of its current activities.

There remains a significant role for Vitae in supporting and coordinating researcher development in the UK, and working in partnership with HEIs to drive and embed culture change.

In considering challenges in researcher development over the next three years or so, stakeholders felt that the biggest issues would be the threat of reduced funding and employment opportunities for researchers due to the economic downturn. Stakeholders said that it was very important that researcher development should continue in times of economic pressure not least because it will make researchers more valuable to employers and because industry and commerce would benefit from better trained, more innovative researchers.

Vitae clearly has a role in building the evidence to make the case for a continuing emphasis on researcher development funded either through earmarked central funding or through HEIs making money available locally.

The evidence from this study is that Vitae does have a lot to shout about: the strong messages gleaned from the International stakeholders about the UK's leading position in researcher development is one which should be spread among UK stakeholders. The UK's international competitors regard the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda as giving the UK a competitive advantage.

Overall stakeholders feel that Vitae is an unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development.

"Vitae is a very important initiative within a EU member state. In fact in many ways it is pioneering in organising on a national level a framework of policy development addressing the future of the training and careers of researchers. There aren't really any parallel bodies of this type in other European countries on this scale." **John Smith, European Universities Association, Brussels**

The following recommendations were based on the feedback from stakeholders:

- Vitae should continue to support researcher development and, with others, drive cultural change in HEIs to maintain its world leading position and the UK's competitive advantage in producing well trained researchers with transferable skills as well as sound research skills;
- Vitae should work to promote the fact that the UK is world leading in researcher development;
- Vitae should continue working to build the evidence base to demonstrate the value of researcher development in improving the performance of researchers inside and outside academia;
- Vitae needs to publicise its role and the value of its activities more amongst all UK stakeholder groups including postgraduate researchers and research staff;
- Vitae should look to work more with groups which can help further the researcher development agenda such as professional bodies and university human resource professionals;
- There is potential for Vitae to expand its remit and increase its funding base by providing services in researcher development and related research and evaluation to the rest of Europe but this would need to be done without jeopardising provision in the UK.

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Sean McWhinnie

Stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae and its activities

1. Introduction

Regular evaluation is an integral part of Vitae's activities and they are currently undertaking a mid-contract evaluation. In order to collect a wide range of stakeholders' views of their work, Vitae therefore commissioned an independent study. The study was based on semi-structured telephone interviews designed to explore stakeholders' views of Vitae's visibility and impact.

1.1 Vitae

Vitae was launched in 2008 and champions the professional and career development of both doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. Vitae is funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC.

Vitae has built on the work of the UK GRAD Programme and the UK Higher Education Researcher Development Group (UKHERD). The UK GRAD Programme ran between 2003 and 2007, while UKHERD was created in 2005 as a network of professionals working with research staff in UK institutions.

Vitae's aims to make the UK world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers by:

- Building human capital by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development;
- Enhancing higher education provision to train and develop researchers;
- Empowering researchers to make an impact in their careers;
- Evidencing the impact of professional and career development support for researchers.

Vitae works with people committed to developing the potential of researchers, including national and international organisations, government, funders of research, universities and other employers of researchers, and researchers themselves

Vitae works with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and research institutes to embed professional and career development in the research environment. The programme develops resources for use by trainers and others working with researchers, and provides opportunities for HEIs to share information and practice; develop ideas and approaches; and work collaboratively. Vitae also encourages HEIs to enhance their provision through review and evaluation.

Specific examples of Vitae's activities supporting HEIs include:

- a network of eight regional Hubs, supporting regional networks through newsletters, events and collaborative activities;

- providing opportunities for the sector to share approaches, including a database of practice hosting over 600 examples of institutions' provision;
- publishing research and reviews including the bulletin for research supervisors 'overVIEW', the 'What Do PhDs Do?' series exploring employment destinations of researchers, and research and evaluation projects around the societal impact of developing researchers.

Vitae provides resources, advice, information and fora for individual postgraduate researchers and members of research staff who are interested in their professional development and careers through activities such as a dedicated researchers' portal with information, news and opportunities and a programme of national courses and activities including; 'GRADschools', three to four day experiential programmes for postgraduate researchers focusing on developing their professional skills and career goals; 'Careers in Focus' programmes; and other activities.

Vitae works at the interfaces between researchers, the higher education sector and employers and actively engages employers in the development of researchers.

Vitae also brings together all those with a stake in realising the potential of researchers: experts, policy makers, employers and those working with researchers to develop policy and practice with a view to making real and positive change.

Another significant development in 2008 was the launch, simultaneously with Vitae, of the revised 'UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'.

1.2 The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. It aims to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK and to improve the quantity, quality and impact of research for the benefit of UK society and the economy.

The aim of the Concordat is to ensure that researchers are nurtured and supported during their career development. By setting out clear expectations for researchers, research managers, research institutions, and funders of research, the Concordat aims to enhance the research workforce and thereby sustain research excellence in the UK.

The Concordat consists of a set of key principles for the future support and management of research careers, and under each principle, an explanation of how it may be embedded into institutional practice.

The Concordat's key principles are:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.

3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.
7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

1.3 The study

Regular evaluation is an integral part of Vitae's activities and they are currently undertaking a mid-contract evaluation. One aspect of this is to collect a wide range of stakeholders' views of Vitae's work. Vitae therefore commissioned Sean McWhinnie of Oxford Research and Policy, to undertake an independent study. The study was based on semi-structured telephone interviews designed to explore stakeholders' views of Vitae's visibility and impact.

The stakeholders were treated as two distinct groups: stakeholders with a UK perspective and stakeholders with an international perspective the majority of whom were based outside the UK. The UK stakeholders were questioned about the impact of Vitae and its activities within the UK and about their views of the value of some specific resources. The International stakeholders were questioned about Vitae's impact outside the UK and about their views of work on researcher development in the UK.

Following the introduction and methodology chapters, chapter 3 presents the findings drawn from the interviews with the International stakeholders, the majority of whom are based in the rest of Europe, and as such much of the discussion centred around how Vitae collaborates with European organisations and interacts with European policy initiatives in the area of researcher development.

Chapter 4 sets out the findings drawn from the interviews with the UK stakeholders. The stakeholders represent a range of organisations including funders of research, employers organisations, universities and a number of other organisations.

Chapter 5 brings together the findings and presents a number of recommendations.

The Appendices show the questionnaires used in the interviews and list the stakeholders interviewed.

2. Methodology

Interviews were carried out with 27 international stakeholders and 28 UK stakeholders who had had some contact with Vitae and/or UK GRAD. International stakeholders were questioned on their views of the impact of Vitae outside the UK and Vitae's impact on policy development within Europe. UK stakeholders were questioned on the impact of Vitae within the UK and the value of a range of Vitae's activities.

Two sets of interview questions were developed through consultation with Vitae, one set for use with International stakeholders and the other for the UK stakeholders. The two questionnaires shared a number of questions: the questions for UK stakeholders delved more deeply into Vitae's activities (see Appendix 1).

Some adjustments were made to the questionnaires once the interviews were underway. The adjustments for the most part involved grouping questions to save some time. Interviews ranged in length but the majority took around 25 to 35 minutes, although some were considerably longer. Interviews were semi-structured based around the questions.

For the International stakeholders the questionnaire examined the stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae outside the UK and, in the case of European based stakeholders, Vitae's impact on policy development within Europe.

The interviews of UK stakeholders examined stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae within the UK and the value of a range of Vitae's activities.

Stakeholders for interview were selected by Vitae on the basis that they had had some contact with Vitae and/or UK GRAD. Stakeholders were approached in a variety of ways but were all asked whether they would be prepared to be interviewed by telephone to give their views on the impact of Vitae's activities. A full list of stakeholders interviewed is presented in Appendix 2.

For the International Stakeholders a total of 27 interviews were held during December 2009, and January and early February 2010. The stakeholders interviewed fell into three groups based on their location: stakeholders based in North America (4); stakeholders based in the UK (4); and stakeholders based in the rest of Europe (19). It proved useful to consider the stakeholders in these three groups for analysis.

For the UK stakeholders a total of 28 interviews were held during February and March 2010. The stakeholders interviewed fell into four groups based on the kind of organisation they worked for or represented: funders (6), employers' organisations (5), university-based stakeholders (7), and other organisations (10).

Interviews were carried out over the telephone and were recorded to facilitate subsequent analysis. Stakeholders were asked in advance and at the beginning of the interview but before the recording started whether they were happy for this to happen. Interviews were recorded as MP3 files using Skype and Pamela for Skype software. The MP3 files were transcribed using an external service. One stakeholder chose to be interviewed together with two colleagues and this interview was carried out as a teleconference.

3. The Views of the International Stakeholders

International stakeholders feel that Vitae is an unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development. The UK's international competitors regard the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda as giving the UK a competitive advantage.

3.1 International stakeholders' perceptions of what Vitae is and what it does

On the whole International stakeholders had a reasonable knowledge of what Vitae was and what it does although virtually none of the International stakeholders were familiar with the details of Vitae's work. The majority of those interviewed had had direct contact with Vitae or had attended meetings at which Vitae was represented or had attended Vitae events and conferences.

All stakeholders had a positive impression of Vitae and a number of stakeholders also spoke highly of the Vitae staff members they had had contact with.

Table 1 presents the areas of work/issues mentioned by stakeholders in answer to the question, "What is Vitae and what does it do?"

The majority of stakeholders specifically mentioned that Vitae was a national organisation although interestingly the UK-based stakeholders tended not to; this probably reflects the fact that they assumed this was taken for granted. The fact that Vitae is a national organisation was highlighted in particular because stakeholders saw this as a strength in contrast to what existed in their home countries and/or in the countries with which they were familiar.

The majority of stakeholders also highlighted that Vitae organises activities and provides information to train researchers ready for employment. Stakeholders in the rest of Europe often emphasised that an increasing number of people were gaining PhDs and therefore felt that this activity was of particular importance because only a minority would be able to stay in academia. Some stakeholders also mentioned that in order to achieve the aims of the Lisbon Agenda more researchers would need to be trained and that they would need skills to operate outside the academic environment.

No other issues or areas were specifically mentioned by the majority of stakeholders. More popular areas mentioned included policy work, that Vitae deals with both postgraduate researchers and research staff, and that Vitae was continuing the work of UK GRAD.

A number of stakeholders' contact with Vitae had been through European policy work with, for example, the European Commission or the European Universities Association, which perhaps explained why this issue was mentioned relatively frequently.

The fact that stakeholders mentioned Vitae works with research staff as well as postgraduate researchers suggests that Vitae does a good job in emphasising that its remit does cover more than just postgraduate researchers.

Table 1: Frequency of areas of work mentioned by the 27 International stakeholders in answer to the question, "What is Vitae and what does it do?"

Issue/Area	Frequency Issue Mentioned			
	Total number of mentions	European based Stakeholders	UK based Stakeholders	North American based Stakeholders
National organisation	19	14	1	4
Organises activities and provides information to train researchers ready for employment (career development, transferable skills), and supports early career researchers	15	9	3	3
Does policy work/provides policy advice/stimulates policy debate	10	6	3	1
Deals with postgraduate researchers and research staff	8	5	1	2
Continues the work of UK GRAD	7	3	2	2
Provides information for advice givers/universities/supervisors	6	5	1	
Established following the Roberts' Report	5	4		1
Funded by government/by the research councils	5	2	2	1
Forum for exchange of ideas	3	2		1
Spreads good practice	3	2		1
Developing common descriptors/framework for postgraduate education	3	3		
Delivers courses	2	2		
Works to increase the attractiveness of the research profession	2	1	1	
Has a regional role	2	1		1
Has a coordinating role	2		2	
Provides information on curricula	1	1		
Supports doctoral programmes	1	1		

Although many stakeholders were aware of the change from UK GRAD some stakeholders were not clear on the reasons for the change as they had not appreciated that Vitae's remit is broader than that of UK GRAD and its mode of delivery is different.

Many stakeholders spoke in very positive ways about Vitae:

"Vitae is a very important initiative within a EU member state. In fact in many ways it is pioneering in organising on a national level a framework of policy development addressing the future of the training and careers of researchers. There aren't really any parallel bodies of this type in other European countries on this scale." **John Smith, European Universities Association, Brussels**

Stakeholders emphasised that the UK is leading in the area of researcher development:

"UK is way ahead on this." **Hans Borchgrevink, Research Council of Norway, Oslo**

"And probably due to the role of Vitae(the) UK is at the front of the European movement on these issues." **Jean Chambaz, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris**

A very small number of stakeholders incorrectly believed that Vitae has what is best described as a regulatory role in doctoral education: safeguarding standards.

In a similar vein in particular North American based stakeholders spoke of the UK deciding centrally to do something about careers development and skills training of postgraduate researchers, and contrasted this with the much more devolved systems found in the United States.

Some stakeholders spoke about how Vitae was funded and were aware that funding came from the research funders.

Stakeholders who had not mentioned UK GRAD in their description of what Vitae is and does were specifically asked if they were familiar with UK GRAD. All the North American and UK based stakeholders were familiar with UK GRAD, and all but three of the European based stakeholders. All those who had not heard of UK GRAD were new to the area of researcher development.

Three stakeholders mentioned CRAC and understood that CRAC ran both UK GRAD and Vitae. The majority of stakeholders were unaware of the relationship between CRAC and Vitae.

Overall, stakeholders demonstrated a reasonable grasp of Vitae's function and understood that Vitae had evolved from UK GRAD. Stakeholders had varying knowledge of how Vitae differed from UK GRAD, but the majority knew Vitae was a national organisation and around a third understood that Vitae's remit covered research staff as well as postgraduate researchers.

"I think it is terribly important to look at continuity and the way someone develops, so I think the work of Vitae matters a lot." **Lloyd Anderson, British Council, London**

3.2 International stakeholders' perceptions of the most valuable things that Vitae does to further researcher development

Stakeholders were asked what they thought were the most valuable things that Vitae does. A few stakeholders apologised that they felt their knowledge of Vitae was not great enough to give a full answer but the vast majority did answer.

A number of areas were highlighted and these are listed in Table 2. The majority of areas were only mentioned by one or two stakeholders: this was not surprising given that the question did ask for the most valuable activities.

Table 2: The most valuable things that Vitae does from the viewpoint of International stakeholders

Most frequently mentioned activities
Careers development (skills training) work, raising awareness of career opportunities outside academia
Work on issues concerning the working environment (the Concordat, Charter and Code).
Researcher development framework/Analysis of skills and competencies
Single (National) package/programme
Promoting the value of trained people to employers
Other activities mentioned
Persuading universities, academics, supervisors, human resource professionals of the value of skills training
Policy work/Raising policy debates
Evidence garnering: making the case for broad based training
Work with research staff
Advocacy
Raising the profile of researcher issues in the development of European policy
Networking opportunities for early career researchers, supervisors, etc.
Bringing together postgraduate and research staff training into a single programme
Work on structured PhD programmes
Conferences and the Vitae Policy Forum
Training provision

Just over half the stakeholders mentioned the work that Vitae does on career development of researchers and raising their awareness of career opportunities outside academia. Interestingly all four North American based stakeholders mentioned this area, and often in glowing terms. Clearly there is a great deal of envy that the UK is highlighting issues of transferable skills training and working to raise the awareness amongst researchers that there are career opportunities outside academia.

"And we (Europeans) are quite envious. The French are aware of what Vitae is doing, we are quite jealous also." **Jean Chambaz, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris**

"The thing I appreciate most is that there is no other example in Europe of a national commitment in this direction. And I think this is something that should be brought to the attention of the European community - why apparently is only the UK so sensitive to a researcher's life being so short." **Fulvio Esposito, University of Camerino, Camerino**

"So it's depth and breadth which I think are necessary to get along in today's research world. And this is something which the UK programs have developed to a very, very great degree, which is something you do not find in other parts of Europe." **Susan Kentner, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres**

One issue that was raised by some stakeholders is that the number of researchers is growing and therefore the importance of Vitae's work is growing. Stakeholders in North America and in the rest of Europe who are in academic leadership positions commented that they felt that in general PhD programmes were generally too long and tended to concentrate on producing academic researchers, even though the majority of those undertaking the programmes would not become academics. They contrasted the situation in their countries with that in the UK where they saw that government was treating the flow of researchers into industry as a serious issue:

"The most important thing is really to develop the awareness of all stakeholders of the importance of the skills of PhD students and the need different sectors of society could have for them. And then to emphasise the importance of developing fair and transparent perspectives of career for these young bright people." **Jean Chambaz, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris**

"And this has always been to me a sort of push/pull between the traditional academic approach to the PhD and a more skills-based approach. And Vitae is in a very good position to manage that perfectly in a way that doesn't compromise any of the aspects of the core." **Conor O'Carroll, Irish Universities Association, Dublin**

"And the reality is, they (the postgraduate researchers) actually get brilliant things out of doing a PhD. And they do learn the transferable skills. And they do know how to time manage and project manage and work as a team and all those sorts of things. But they often don't become aware of these abilities until they're embedded into one of these programs.

This is how we make them (the postgraduate researchers) aware of these skills. Which then means that all the money that the government, the community and others have put into their education, is actually of benefit to the community because they're employable when they leave." **Barbara Evans, University of British Columbia, Vancouver**

There was an acknowledgement that it would not necessarily be easy to persuade everyone that the model of doctoral education being developed in the UK was the right one:

"....and from a North American perspective, there is sometimes a feeling that British PhD students are too narrow. That they have done a huge amount of work on a very singular kind of topic in a relatively short period of time and that they don't have the breadth that North America would require in a PhD. Now, that, of course, goes beside the fact

that in North America, particularly in the US, they may take seven, eight or more years to do a PhD, which is just insane." **Barbara Evans, University of British Columbia, Vancouver**

Overall stakeholders believed that the most valuable thing that Vitae does is to provide transferable skills training to researchers and make researchers aware of opportunities for employment outside academia. A number of stakeholders felt that the UK was leading the field in this area and attributed this to the work that UK GRAD and Vitae has done. Some stakeholders also did appreciate that Vitae received central funding and so did feel that the research councils and government should be given credit for their vision:

"And I was particularly impressed by how much attention was being paid in the UK to this issue and how seriously the reforms were being taken. I felt that UK GRAD was at the centre of the action, and was helping to promote it and support it and facilitate it. And I thought that UK GRAD was an playing extremely important leadership role that I envied, if I compared it with how little was happening in the US along these lines." **Alvin Kwiram, University of Washington, Seattle**

3.3 International stakeholders' views of Vitae's impact on the external reputation of the UK and influence on European Policy

All but one stakeholder believed that Vitae's (and UK GRAD's) work had enhanced the external reputation of the UK. The exception was the chair of Eurodoc who was a postgraduate researcher herself; she felt that she did not have the knowledge to comment in detail.

Perhaps the strongest praise came from the North American stakeholders:

"I was fortunate to hear a presentation about Vitae a recent council of Graduate Schools meeting in the United States. Great as the U.K. science is, and its collective contribution to scholarship, I have never seen anything that had the potential in the US to improve the reputation of the U.K science establishment in the UK as Vitae did at the Council of Graduate Schools meeting. It was very impressive. Very, very robust appreciation and applause; it was one of those smash successes with colleagues outside the U.K. You couldn't buy this kind of P.R." **George Walker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland**

"So, I think there is actually considerable awareness, at least in the graduate/post-graduate education network, of the extreme good fortune of PhD students in the UK and the value that involvement in these programs would bring." **Barbara Evans, University of British Columbia, Vancouver**

"From my vantage point - as somebody who was trying to do a comparison of the US and the UK graduate experience - I felt that the UK was a light year ahead of us in terms of having a formal mechanism for supporting, promoting and sustaining these kinds of programs.

I felt that UK GRAD was a focused effort that coordinated across a broad range of institutions and scientific disciplines to really bring a level of coherence and substance to it that we're completely lacking in the US." **Alvin Kirwan, University of Washington, Seattle**

The range of specific examples given of the ways in which Vitae enhanced the UK's external reputation was small. The most frequently mentioned was that Vitae provided a good example or a good role model of a centralised programme for enhancing the researcher experience.

"So, I think something that Vitae can do is simply be a role model for other programs in other countries." **Susan Kentner, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres**

"It's an area of UK strength, an area for the UK which is providing a best practice model, something that others could, and maybe should, get into the business of trying to follow." **Brian Ditcham, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, London**

"And Vitae will now be seen as the benchmark at a European level." **Conor O'Carroll, Irish Universities Association, Dublin**

Mention was also made that Vitae enhanced the visibility of the UK in the field of researcher training and that Vitae seemed to have an ambassadorial role.

"I think they've really made an impact with the Commission and the Commission is very happy. So, I would say they've acted as real ambassadors for the UK within Europe." **Lloyd Anderson, British Council, London**

A couple of stakeholders felt the website was a way in which a positive impact was made. Stakeholders also said that Vitae was unique and progressive.

"It appears that the UK is very progressive in pushing researchers' issues much more than I think any other country in Europe." **Thomas Koch, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum**

More generally a number of stakeholders who had been involved in work in Europe on the Charter and Code said that Vitae's work had made a positive impression because whilst the UK did not adopt the Charter and Code, the work of Vitae, and the existence of the revised Concordat, illustrated that the UK did take issues of researcher training seriously.

When asked what, if any, contribution Vitae has made to effective European policy development stakeholders who felt able to comment (North American based stakeholder were not questioned on this topic) said that Vitae had made a contribution. The two specific areas mentioned were in the development of the European Charter and Code for Researchers and participation in the European Universities' Association's Council for Doctoral Education. In the latter case stakeholders believed that Vitae provided positive examples of implementing researcher development which could be fed into European policy debates.

Other areas mentioned in the European policy context were that Vitae influenced doctoral-related issues generally, that Vitae could help in the push for quality standards in researcher development, that Vitae could help with developing evaluation, and that Vitae could act as a stimulus for the rest of Europe. Another area mentioned was in relation to the Bologna Process: it was suggested that Vitae could provide practical information on improving the training aspects of the doctorate while preserving the core, that is, the research elements.



Stakeholders from Ireland mentioned that they had taken the idea of carrying out a gap analysis on the Charter and Code from Vitae. Norway had subsequently used the gap analyses by UK and Ireland as background documents for their own gap analysis.

Overall international stakeholder feedback is that Vitae affects the external reputation of the UK positively and that Vitae does influence European policy development, in particular in areas related to the Charter and Code.

3.4 International stakeholders' perceptions of Vitae's success

Stakeholders were asked whether they believed that Vitae had been successful in raising the profile of the importance of developing researchers.

Three stakeholders did not feel they were familiar enough with Vitae's activities to comment. Of the remaining stakeholders, 22 said that they believed Vitae had been successful generally including raising issues in Europe, and two felt that Vitae had been successful in the UK but were not sure about success outside the UK.

Once again North American stakeholders were the most forthright in praising Vitae:

"I am aware (and have been a part) of several reform efforts in the US. My opinion is that Vitae ranks with the very best in its success in providing a platform for reform or development of good practice in scholar focussed research development and research related administration." **George Walker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland**

Other European-based stakeholders commented on Vitae's profile in the European Commission's publications:

"And Vitae crops up again and again in Commission publications and documentation and, even when Vitae is not at the table, their views are always put forward because they are seen as an example of good and best practice." **Conor O'Carroll, Irish Universities Association, Dublin**

Vitae was seen as a good model for raising the profile of researcher development:

"What is happening in the Hubs, what has been provided by literature to support all these aspects, all the outreach Vitae is doing: I think it is a really a very, very successful story and I would be very happy if we were to have something like this here in Germany." **Ernst Rank, Technische Universität München, Munich**

And Vitae was seen as instrumental in placing the UK ahead of the game in researcher development:

"Yes, one of the better initiatives, combined with the Concordat. Having been able to network and build this agreement across UK that's impressive, you've (the UK) been on that track for several years and that's why you're ahead." **Hans Borchgrevink, Research Council of Norway, Oslo**

Amongst the stakeholders who felt able to comment, all agreed that Vitae had been successful in raising the profile of the importance of developing researchers.

3.5 Is Vitae unique? Organisations outside the UK dealing with researcher development

Stakeholders were asked whether they were aware of any other organisations leading in the area of researcher development either in their own countries or elsewhere. The consensus was that Vitae is unique in the sense that it is a national organisation which covers a wide remit ranging from the development of postgraduate researchers to research staff. As a group, stakeholders had knowledge of Europe, North America, Australia, and, albeit to a lesser extent, Asia.

Stakeholders did name a number of organisations that had interests in the development of researchers, and the overall feeling was that the issue of researcher development is rising up the agenda and that a number of countries were beginning to take action.

Within Europe the countries that were mentioned as having organisations/activity in the area of researcher development were Germany, France, Norway, Switzerland and Ireland.

In Germany, various stakeholders mentioned the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres,¹ the Max Planck Society/Max Planck International Research Schools,² and the Fraunhofer Society.³ These groupings of institutions and associations all were reported to be taking the issue of researcher development increasingly seriously. The Alexander Humboldt Foundation⁴ was also mentioned as an organisation that was interested in developing researchers. In addition the International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel (INCHER-Kassel) was mentioned.⁵ One German national initiative noted was the Excellence Initiative which has a funding line around graduate schools (similar to the EPSRC's Doctoral Training Centres) and which requires focus on the development of researchers as well as on core research.⁶ Stakeholders also said that the German Rectors' Conference had been considering issues of researcher development.⁷

In France organisations such as the Association Bernard Gregory⁸ were mentioned and a number of stakeholders said that they believed France was making efforts in the area of researcher development without being specific.

Norway, Switzerland and Ireland were all mentioned by more than one stakeholder as having made some efforts. In the case of Ireland the Irish Universities Association: 4th Level Ireland Initiative⁹ was mentioned.

¹ The Helmholtz Association has 28,000 employees in 16 research centres and is Germany's largest scientific organisation. Its annual budget is approximately € 2.8 billion (<http://www.helmholtz.de/en/>).

² The Max Planck Society maintains 80 institutes and research facilities employing approximately 13,300 employees, including 4,800 scientists and 7,000 student assistants. The annual budget is around €1.3 billion (<http://www.mpg.de/english/portal/index.html>).

³ Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, is the largest organisation for applied research in Europe. It includes than 80 research units, including 59 Fraunhofer Institutes. The majority of the 17, 000 staff are qualified scientists and engineers and its annual research budget is about €1.5 billion (<http://www.fraunhofer.de/en/>).

⁴ The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation promotes academic cooperation between excellent scientists and scholars from abroad and from Germany (<http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/home.html>).

⁵ <http://www.incher.uni-kassel.de/index.php?lang=english>

⁶ <http://www.excellence-initiative.com/>

⁷ <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/en/>

⁸ <http://www.abg.asso.fr/?lg=en>

⁹ <http://www.iua.ie/iua-activities/4th-level-ireland/index.html>

More generally in the area of policy organisations such as the European Universities Association (EUA)¹⁰ and the League of European Research Universities (LERU)¹¹ were mentioned. Specifically the EUA's Council for Doctoral Education was seen as having carried out good work. Finally in Europe the European Commission's European Partnership for Researchers was spoken about:

"With the partnership we have a package which is an integrated approach addressing researchers' careers, training and mobility. We can see most Member States are also putting in place action plans or strengthening existing actions. So basically they are catching up with the UK." **Isi Saragossi, Directorate General Research, European Commission, Brussels**

Outside Europe few organisations were identified. Most frequently mentioned was the Council Graduate Schools which had 512 members at the end of 2009 from the United States and Canada.¹² In addition a number of countries have or are establishing associations focussed on graduate education; these are usually organisations for Deans of Graduate Schools in particular countries. Specific mention was made of Australia, Canada, China and South Korea.

All stakeholders agreed that there were no other organisations which had the same remit as Vitae: Vitae was regarded as leading in the field of researcher development. However, the majority of stakeholders felt that other countries were increasing their efforts and it is likely that Vitae will be seen as the example to follow. Most significantly, as the European Charter and Code is gradually implemented by member states through initiatives such as the European Partnership for Researchers, the UK's, and UK trained researchers', competitive advantage in the area of researcher development is likely to be eroded.

"I can't see anybody else doing what Vitae is doing with regard to research and development and leading the field of development in that area in the UK and that's why I think it's very important that they continue to." **Christian Yeomans, Universities UK Higher Education Europe Unit, London**

3.6 International stakeholders' views of what Vitae should do differently

Stakeholders were questioned about whether they thought Vitae should do anything differently, or whether Vitae should do more of anything, or whether there was anything that Vitae currently did not do that it should.

The majority of stakeholders felt that they could not comment on operational details, and six stakeholders felt that they could not comment at all.

Of the stakeholders who did comment none felt that Vitae should do less of anything, and indeed a number felt that Vitae should not do anything differently:

¹⁰ <http://www.eua.be/>

¹¹ <http://www.leru.org/>

¹² The Council of Graduate Schools is an association of universities in the United States and Canada, founded to improve and advance graduate education and research (<http://www.cgsnet.org/>).

"I think they're the leaders in transferable skill training, I don't think I'm positioned to tell them to do anything differently. I think we've lots to learn from them and I think they should just keep doing what they're doing." **Debra Stewart, Council of Graduate Schools, Washington**

This group included the North American stakeholders. The North American group also suggested that Vitae might look to publicise themselves internationally more than they currently do, possibly by inviting more international delegates to the annual conference.

"It is important to get the word out more internationally about Vitae, particularly in the US where we believe that we have invented everything. This would be very useful for attracting and retaining scholars in the UK and for Vitae. I believe we would be well advised to start an imitation or a sister initiative in the US." **George Walker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland**

Speaking about efforts to debate the value of researcher development in the US, Alvin Kwiram commented:

"So, the fact that UK GRAD was concerned about these issues, was addressing them, and was trying to encourage national policy makers and universities to work on them, was enlightened and inspired and I really applauded that." **Alvin Kwiram, University of Washington, Seattle**

Comments varied in regard of what Vitae should do more. The most frequently mentioned topic is best summarised as increasing Vitae's European profile.

A number of stakeholders suggested that Vitae should expand its remit into the rest of Europe given the increasing importance of developing researchers. Stakeholders did recognise that there may be some cultural issues in respect of exporting specific training courses, however, there was a feeling that many European countries would welcome an organisation like Vitae. One caveat to the possible expansion was the need to bring the UK's approach to the development of researchers closer to the approach laid out in the Charter and Code and related documents/initiatives.

The suggestion was also made that perhaps Vitae could take more of an international perspective in some of its documents.

Stakeholders questioned just how well known Vitae was in Europe outside groups such as specific European Commission working groups and the EUA's Council for Doctoral Education, and the suggestion was made that Vitae should raise its profile with other non-UK institutions and organisations with interests in researcher development. A couple of stakeholders also suggested that Vitae should take more of a lead on the UK's behalf on issues related to researcher development.

"I think what would be a good thing for the UK would be for Vitae to take a more of a lead role at a European level. They have to come in on the coattails of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills or the Research Councils whereas it would be far more useful from a national perspective in the UK to have them leading in many areas because they are the experts in these areas". **Conor O'Carroll, Irish Universities Association, Dublin**

Another area that was mentioned in the European context was mobility. Stakeholders suggested that Vitae should consider having more resource to encourage the mobility of UK domiciled researchers. It was recognised that the UK is a popular destination for

researchers but a number of stakeholders argued that, at the research staff level, a researcher's training is enhanced by working in institutions outside of their home country. The suggestion was also made that a comprehensive analysis relating to mobility of researchers in Europe was required and perhaps Vitae could take a role in this.

Other suggestions covered a range of areas. Mention was made of the need for Vitae to be more transparent with respect to its governance and who/where it reports to and that there should also be more information available on how funds are spent. Although Vitae was well known amongst those dealing with researcher development, it was suggested that perhaps Vitae could produce a leaflet outlining their function for policy makers both in the UK and outside.

It was also suggested that more work could be done to engage with employers, and that perhaps Vitae could host a comprehensive database of job opportunities for researchers in the UK.

Overall stakeholders felt that Vitae should not do less of anything and should strongly consider taking a greater role outside of the UK, both in terms of publicising its activities and offering services throughout the rest of Europe. Perhaps it should however be noted that as these are the opinions of the International stakeholders it is perhaps not surprising that they suggested that Vitae should expand outside the UK. On the other hand, the fact that they feel that Vitae could have a role outside the UK, and that they are prepared to recommend that Vitae might do this, illustrates that they have a high regard for Vitae and its work.

3.7 International stakeholders' views of future challenges in researcher development

International stakeholders were asked what they thought would be the main challenges in the training of researchers over the next three years or so, and, depending on their answers, whether they thought that Vitae would have a role in meeting the challenges they identified.

The challenges varied, however, a number focused around the funding issues caused by the economic downturn. Around a third of stakeholders specifically mentioned the threat to the funding of research in general and transferable skills training specifically. However, the majority of challenges identified related to the need to adapt to the changing research environment and to prepare better for careers outside academia. These challenges were directly linked by some stakeholders to issues concerning funding; researchers need to be better trained in order to adapt to different employment scenarios.

Table 3 gives a synthesis of the challenges which are related to the threats to funding and the changing nature of research.

The key message is that training is even more important in time of economic downturn, partly to make the researchers more employable and adaptable, and partly because industry will need better trained, more innovative researchers. This view came from all three groups of stakeholders. For example, from the European-based:

"I think young researchers need to be prepared for many different career paths. You have to give them a solid foundation in their field which allows them to investigate in depth but is broad enough to allow them to move from one research setting to another." **Susan Kentner, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres**

and from North America:

"But what the future will need is more versatile researchers, researchers who are flexible and agile, able to apply their thinking across an array of disciplines, move easily across organisations, across organisational cultures. Researchers of the future will have these characteristics, and as I understand Vitae, that is what they're trying to encourage and foster." **Debra Stewart, Council of Graduate Schools, Washington**

But the message was also that national coordination was needed:

"We, in the USA, need to have some kind of national organisation like Vitae that is involved in supporting and developing new researchers and research administration. It's too important to be left to the hit or miss of an individual institution." **George Walker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland**

Table 3: Issues related to the risk of reduced funding and the changing nature of research

Early career researchers need to be prepared for many different career paths. They need a solid foundation, but need the breadth to move from one research setting to another.

Researchers need to be trained to recognise alternative careers to those in academia.

Ensure that postgraduate researchers have the adaptability to find employment in this challenging economic climate.

More work is needed to define the value of a research training (for employment outside academia).

Advocacy is needed to ensure that transferable skills training is still seen as important even in the economic downturn.

Dialogue with commerce/industry needs to be improved to ensure that skills training is recognised. The connections to industry across Europe need to be improved.

Researchers need to be shown that in future research will be different: the importance of interdisciplinarity will continue to increase; "sustainability" needs to be incorporated into everything we do; researchers need to be trained to be more innovative, and be more risk taking in research; and researchers need to be aware of the societal benefits of research.

The view from stakeholders was that Vitae could have a role in meeting all the challenges summarised in Table 3, at least in the UK context:

"I think Vitae could be a very good intermediary. They could provide the bridge and develop programmes which would impart the necessary complementary skills to students in addition to learning, acquiring the necessary knowledge of a scientific field and the necessary tools and methods, the techniques you need to carry out research." **Susan Kentner, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres**

A number of the UK-based and European-based stakeholders mentioned researcher mobility as a challenge. The view was that working in different countries enriches the research experience but that a number of issues still need to be overcome before Europe has a truly mobile researcher workforce, including issues like social security and pensions, and pressure caused by families who may not want to be separated. A related issue raised concerned the short term nature of research staff contracts and the lack of a clear career path to academia. Stakeholders felt that Vitae did not have a major role in meeting these challenges, except insofar as Vitae could emphasise the value of spending some time abroad. Stakeholders also noted that a number of these issues have already been identified by the European Commission and the hope is that as the Charter and Code are implemented, some of these challenges will be met.

Included among the other challenges mentioned was the need to have better governance structures for doctoral programmes throughout Europe. It was suggested that the model of doctoral education needs to be changed to enable institutions to deal with the organisation and governance of doctoral education, rather than just the research content. The best way forward was felt to be the establishment of graduate schools throughout Europe. It was recognised that this is happening but the feeling was that this needs to be much more widespread.

One interesting challenge raised was the need to look at the training needs of senior researchers. If Europe is to meet its target of spending 3% of GDP on research, a huge increase in the number of researchers will be needed and therefore senior researchers will need to be better utilised. It was suggested that Vitae might have a role here.

One final challenge was related to the transferability of doctoral programmes. The question was raised as to whether this really practicable and, if so, could credits be applied to doctoral programmes.

In summary, the main challenges identified by stakeholders concerned the effects of the economic downturn and the need to better prepare researchers to face the consequences through continued and increased emphasis on transferable skills training.

3.8 International stakeholders' views of the Vitae Website

International stakeholders were asked if they had looked at the Vitae website: only five had not looked at it at all.

The majority of those questioned had spent very little time looking at the website. Over half the stakeholders had looked at the website for a very specific purpose such as finding a document, often having been sent a link, or checking the details of a Vitae conference or event. A few stakeholders had looked at the website in preparation for the interview. A number said that their staff used the website.

Only a small number of stakeholders felt able to express views about the website; too few to draw any firm conclusions.

3.9 International stakeholders' general comments about Vitae

At the end of the interview stakeholders were invited to add any comments on areas that had not been covered in the discussion or to emphasise any specific areas or issue discussed. A number of the stakeholders took the opportunity to comment.

Comments included an appreciation of the ability to learn from Vitae and its work:

"And that is really saying it would be great if Vitae shared its knowledge with other countries, because I do think, in many ways, they've been the benchmark." **Barbara Evans, University of British Columbia, Vancouver**

"One thing that I always appreciated very much was that in contrast to the doctoral programs in Germany, as far as now or until a couple of years ago, the English tradition was broader and Vitae was sustaining this idea of broader skills and competencies not only just focusing on a technical goal. So I really appreciated that." **Maria Rimini-Doering, Robert Bosch GmbH, Stuttgart**

A stronger view was that bringing people together including Vitae would help drive the formation of the European Research Area:

"I would welcome more opportunities to collaborate with Vitae somehow. I feel that it would be very interesting somehow to collaborate more in the European level. Sometimes I think this would be the most effective way to achieve the European Research Area and European integration, that is, by bringing people together. You can throw the programs into the garbage can if you like, because really the best way to do it is just to bring people together and provide opportunities for them to work together and I think that could be very interesting." **Susan Kentner, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres**

A number of stakeholders expressed the view that Vitae should keep doing what it is doing:

"I think that I would wish Vitae to stick to what it's doing, and to keep on raising funds to be able to do what they are doing, because this is always a very big issue. You need to have enough funds to keep on, because if you stop it's very difficult to start again." **Loula Sigala, The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens**

or a sense of envy:

"I came away (from the UK) very impressed with what was being done in there in general in this area and the unique role of UK GRAD in fostering, promoting and even initiating important thinking in this area. So, I came away very impressed and thought that was the kind of thing that we should be doing more in this country (the USA) but we don't have a good mechanism for doing that." **Alwin Kwiram, University of Washington, Seattle**

One or two re-emphasised the positive impression they had of Vitae:

"...it is a brilliant organisation and a brilliant idea." **Jean Chambaz, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris**

3.10 Summary of International stakeholders' views

International stakeholders feel that Vitae is an unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development. The UK's international competitors regard the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda as giving the UK a competitive advantage.

International stakeholders were unanimous in their praise of Vitae and its work. All who felt they had the knowledge to comment felt that Vitae had had a positive impact on the UK's reputation for researcher development, and there was also agreement that Vitae was unique in being a national programme with the purpose of coordinating and supporting researcher development in the UK.

The majority of stakeholders understood that Vitae was a national organisation and that it organises activities and provides information to train researchers ready for employment. Some stakeholders did appreciate how Vitae differed from UK GRAD, but the majority were not clear about this.

Stakeholders had differing views on Vitae's most valuable activities. The most frequently identified activities were: careers development (skills training) work and raising awareness of career opportunities outside academia; work on issues concerning the working environment of researchers; work on the researcher development framework; the fact that Vitae was a single, national programme; and promoting the value of trained people to employers.

None of the stakeholders felt that Vitae should do less of any of its current activities. Stakeholders did feel that Vitae should become more international in its work both in terms of raising its profile and that Vitae should consider offering services to the rest of Europe.

In considering challenges in research development over next three years or so, stakeholders felt that the biggest issues would be the threat of reduced funding and employment opportunities for researchers due to the economic downturn. Stakeholders said that it was very important that researcher development should continue in time of economic pressure not least because it will make researchers more valuable to employers and because industry and commerce would benefit from better trained, more innovative researchers.

International stakeholders felt that Vitae is doing very valuable and important work and that its work must continue as the importance of research development is increasing in countries outside the UK. The UK is regarded as leading in the field of researcher development, and this is ascribed by international stakeholders to the work of Vitae and UK GRAD.

4. The Views of the UK stakeholders

UK stakeholders feel that Vitae fulfils an important role in supporting researcher development and building the evidence base to show the value of doing so. Stakeholders value Vitae's resources and activities, both nationally and regionally, but feel that work still needs to be done by all to achieve long-term the culture change in HEIs in respect of researcher development.

4.1 UK stakeholders' perceptions of what is Vitae and what it does

Prior to discussing the specific issues of what Vitae does, UK stakeholders were asked about their roles and what specific interest their organisations had in training of researcher staff and/or postgraduate researchers. All stakeholders said that they felt the researcher development was important.

Stakeholders' specific interests varied, but the majority were interested in both the development of research staff and postgraduate researchers. A small number of organisations were only interested in postgraduate researchers, e.g., the National Union of Students and the Higher Education Academy, or in research staff, e.g., University and College Union. Two organisations acknowledged that they ought to pay more attention to research staff as well as postgraduate researchers.

It was also noteworthy that a number of the UK stakeholders interviewed were in senior positions and consequently were not able to comment in detail on Vitae's activities, although they were able to discuss more general issues surrounding researcher development.

Another area which was discussed was whether the stakeholders' organisations had explicit policies or strategies which supported researcher development. Organisations like the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK reported that by funding centres they were able to specifically ask recipients of funds to include researcher development in their plans

"What we would hope we're doing is not just sending money down the line to get results back but we're developing the future leaders within the cardio-vascular research field in the UK." **Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation**

Cancer Research UK did expect statements of training provision to be provided when setting up their new institutes, and all funders had an interest in the supply of trained people, in some cases stating that they were interested in developing future leaders.

"Every Centre has a training account. Each Centre makes an annual report to Cancer Research UK detailing the basis of the training and the metrics. They are not in place yet but metrics are being developed which will measure the effectiveness of the programmes." **Herbie Newell, Newcastle University (talking about Cancer Research UK centres).**

In contrast, the Funding Councils, HEFCE, HEFCW and SFC, all said that they supported the development of researchers but said that they did not have specifically requirements for the HEIs that they funded to develop researchers. The funding council

representatives did acknowledge that they could direct HEIs to resource researcher development through the annual grant letters.

None of the funders interviewed felt they had any real powers or sanctions to take if training was not provided, but the non-charity funders did feel that there was sufficient understanding between them and those in receipt of funds. HEFCE did explicitly mention that they expected the QAA code of practice to be followed.

All the UK stakeholders agreed that training researchers in transferable skills and in encouraging them to think more about careers was important.

"What businesses require are researchers who are interdisciplinary, work in teams, show leadership abilities, understand that business problems are not necessarily what their particular interests are, and that they have to pitch in to solve problems which are not necessarily in their specific research areas." **David Doherty, Council for Industry and Higher Education, London**

When stakeholders were asked specifically about their perceptions of what Vitae is and what it does, the majority described Vitae in broad terms as an organisation that was concerned with the development of researchers. Table 4 gives more details of the ways in which these unprompted descriptions broke down. The most frequently mentioned area of work was the career development and career management of researchers, and this was closely matched by mentions of more general skills and professional development of researchers.

Some stakeholders also mentioned that Vitae was continuing the work of UK GRAD, and UK HERD, or that it was continuing the work of earlier bodies. Stakeholders also mentioned that Vitae was a training provider, and in this context grad schools were mentioned. Stakeholders also mentioned that Vitae provides resources and/or enables the sharing of good practice/the exchange of ideas.

Other more commonly mentioned roles and activities were that Vitae provided regional Hubs, and that Vitae was concerned with implementing the "Concordat for Developing the Careers of Researchers" and with promoting the Roberts' agenda, Vitae provided resources for policy and evidence/it builds the evidence base, and that Vitae deals with research staff as well as postgraduate students.

Other areas mentioned by one or two stakeholders were that Vitae takes a strategic lead, it lobbies research councils and government, it runs surveys, it produces publications and that Vitae provides greater cohesion and synergy for those supporting researchers.

When asked about what Vitae is and what it does, a significant number of stakeholders prefaced their answers by explaining that they actually felt that they did not know very much about Vitae's activities, or that they felt that they should know more which in most cases reflected their seniority. Two stakeholders said that they did not really know what Vitae does. In both cases the stakeholders held senior position outside the university sector. One stakeholder was relatively new in their role and the other said that responsibility for direct interaction with Vitae lay with another member of staff in the team.

Unsurprisingly stakeholders' knowledge of Vitae did depend on how close they were to Vitae's work. Those working in universities or who were funders knew much more than those working in employers' organisations.

"I see them (Vitae) as a very critical repository both of purpose and vision that the rest of us with an interest in these matters, whether that's funding councils, other parts of research councils, or universities, can use as a reference, in other words there is knowledge there, and there is work being carried on by Janet (Metcalfe) and her team that is of use to us all." **Stuart Fancey, Scottish Funding Council, Edinburgh**

Table 4: Areas of work mentioned by the 28 UK stakeholders in answer to the question, "What is Vitae and what does it do?"

Issue/Area	Frequency Issue Mentioned				
	Total number of mentions	Funders	Employers	University	Other
Career development of researchers/Career management	9	4	2	1	2
Skills development of researchers/Professional development of researchers/Personal development	9	3		3	3
Continuing the work of UK GRAD & UK HERD/Grown out of earlier bodies	8	2		3	3
Provides training and resources for researchers/Delivering GRADSchools/Training programmes	6	2		2	2
Provide regional Hubs	4	1		2	1
Role in Concordat implementation/Promoting the Roberts' agenda	4	2		1	1
Exchange of information/Sharing good practice/ Provides website of resources/Provision of resources	4	1		1	2
Extended to research staff/Support for research staff and postgraduate researchers	3			2	1
Resource for policy and evidence/Builds the evidence base	3	3			
Takes a strategic lead	2			2	
Lobbies research councils and government	2	1			1
Runs surveys	2			1	1

A few stakeholders, in particular more senior figures working in universities, did acknowledge that they would welcome more information about the detail of Vitae activities, but also felt that efforts should be made to give other senior figures such as vice chancellors more general information on researcher development, and of Vitae's role:

"...perhaps a recommendation (is) that Vitae should do a little bit more work on ensuring that people at senior levels are at least aware of researcher development activities that Vitae are aiming to promote" **Mark Smith, Warwick University**

Stakeholders were also asked if they knew how Vitae was funded. 17 stakeholders knew that the funding came from the research councils, and the majority of those 17 specifically mentioned RCUK.

Overall, UK stakeholders had a fairly good overview of Vitae's role, recognising that it is an organisation to support the career and skills development of researchers. The majority know that Vitae deals with both research staff and postgraduate researchers, and that Vitae's funding comes from the research councils. Many stakeholders did acknowledge that they knew Vitae carried out a wider range of activities than they knew about, and indicated that they would welcome more information.

It is important to note, however, that stakeholders did not specifically mention Vitae's coordinating role nor that it is a national organisation in their answers to the question about what Vitae is and what does it do. This area was raised, however, by UK stakeholders in discussion of the researcher development landscape later in the interviews. Nonetheless given that staff do turn over (some stakeholders had not had any previous contact with UK GRAD or UKHERD) it is a message that Vitae should communicate more strongly.

Another aspect is that in contrast to International stakeholders, most of whom recognised that the UK is unique in having a national organisation concerned with training researchers, only one of the UK stakeholders mentioned that the UK was a leader and that was later in the interview when discussing future challenges.

4.2 UK stakeholders' perceptions of the most valuable things that Vitae does to further researcher development

UK stakeholders were asked what they thought were the most valuable things that Vitae did. A range of activities were mentioned by stakeholders and these are shown in Table 5.

"My feeling is that one of the most valuable things they do is provide a refreshed focus for a very large community of professionals in universities who are passionate about developing staff and passionate about sharing good practice in doing the very best they can for communities of researchers. The existence of Vitae, I think, is important because it provides them with a 'home', mutual support and direct support from Vitae itself."

Stuart Fancey, Scottish Funding Council

The most frequently mentioned area was around building the evidence base. Stakeholders mentioned Vitae's activities around benchmarking, developing frameworks, and collecting evidence. Some specifically mentioned the Rugby Team (now Impact and

evaluation group), but as was apparent from later questions stakeholders were not necessarily aware of the relationship with Vitae.

Table 5: The most valuable things that Vitae does from the viewpoint of the 28 UK stakeholders

Issue/Area	Frequency Issue Mentioned				
	Total number of mentions	Funders	Employers	University	Other
Building the evidence base: Rugby Team/Policy activities/Concordat: provide reference point/Benchmarking/ Development framework	10	3		2	5
Provision of resources to trainers etc./Sharing best practice/Support for practitioners/Provision of skills training resources	6			4	2
National organisation with regional activities	6			4	2
Career development activities	5		4		1
Networking/Bringing people together/Conferences and events	5	1			4
Provide focus for community/National focus	2	1		1	
Act as a pressure group/Lobbying	2	2			
Create awareness/Raise profile of issues	2	1			1
Surveys/Data collection/Reports like "What do PhDs do"	2			1	1
Transferable Skills and personal training	2		2		
Publishes interesting reports	1	1			
Grad Schools	1	1			
Single organisation driving agenda	1			1	

Other more frequently mentioned areas were around the provision of resources for training and the sharing of best practice; the fact that Vitae has a regional structure; career development activities; supporting practitioners; and bringing people together at conferences and events.

"So I think Vitae represents a UK level organisation that facilitates the implementation of good practice at institutional level in the way that we couldn't do if we didn't have the work they're carrying out and the lead that they're providing." **Sheila Gupta, The University of Edinburgh**

"I think one very valuable area is the support for practitioners as at Nottingham, I am the only Careers Adviser who works with research staff, it is helpful to be able to network and share practice with other careers and training practitioners." **Clare Jones, The University of Nottingham**

Given the seniority and national roles of stakeholders, only a minority of stakeholders had had any significant contact with the regional Hubs. However, those who commented on the regional Hubs praised them strongly. When questioned further stakeholders said that they thought the Hubs were useful to develop more local contacts and for networking, and that it was good having events organised which were relatively easy to get to.

"I think the Hub network, with its regional focus where you can meet and deal with people in your area is very useful. Also, for example, having training events that can be put on by the Hubs for research staff so that they do not have to travel too far as they are not always able to attend national events because of the need to spend time away from work. So the two-tier system with the national structure with strategic elements coupled with the strong regional network is a very good system." **Clare Jones, The University of Nottingham**

A number of other activities were mentioned by one or two stakeholders and these can be seen in Table 5.

It is interesting to note that the areas highlighted by the stakeholders representing employers organisations were either around career development of researchers or their transferable skills development. The areas highlighted fitted well with the activities that these stakeholders' organisations undertake.

"There certainly is a need to ensure that our researchers don't just have depth in their subject knowledge, but have a broad range of skills which enable them to perform more productively and effectively as PhD students." **Keith Herrmann, Council for Industry and Higher Education**

It is worth comparing the areas highlighted by UK stakeholders with those highlighted by International stakeholders. The International stakeholders emphasised the provision of transferable skills training to researchers and work to make researchers aware of opportunities for employment outside academia whilst UK stakeholders emphasised building the evidence base. In fact over half the International stakeholders mentioned the careers development work whilst only five UK stakeholders did so, four of whom represented employers organisations.

The differences in emphasis may in part be explained by the differing roles and responsibilities of the two groups of stakeholders, but the differences in the emphasis of the careers development work is particularly telling. It could be that work in the careers development area is taken for granted in the UK: UK universities have significantly better developed careers and advice services than their other European counterparts.



4.3 UK stakeholders' view of whether Vitae has been successfully in raising the importance of developing researchers

Stakeholders were asked whether they thought that Vitae had been successful in raising the profile of the importance of developing researchers. The answers stakeholders gave depended strongly on which constituency they were representing.

Stakeholders based in universities all said that Vitae had been successful, and all but one of the funders group said yes. The exception was of the opinion that it was too early to tell.

In contrast all of the employers group felt that it was too early to tell, and the group made up of other stakeholders were split about 50:50 with half feeling that it was probably too early to tell.

The results are interesting because they do suggest that the message about the importance of developing researchers has been successfully broadcast to universities and funders, and the stakeholders based in universities and funding organisations ascribe Vitae with having, at least in part, spread that message.

The stakeholder groups which are further removed from the universities are less clear as to whether the message about developing researchers has been spread successfully. It should be emphasised that none of the stakeholders suggested that Vitae was failing, rather they suggested that more time was needed.

4.4 UK stakeholders' views of what Vitae should do differently

UK stakeholders were questioned about whether they thought Vitae should do anything differently, or whether they should do more of anything, or whether there was anything that they currently did not do that they should.

Overall stakeholders felt that the balance of Vitae's activities was about right although the majority of stakeholder did make one or two specific suggestions. Only two stakeholders did not feel they had enough knowledge to comment and six others did not make any specific suggestions.

"So we're pleased with the general experience that we've had. We find we get solutions, not problems when we talk to Vitae colleagues. And I'm sure if there were things that we've felt that we wanted, my other colleagues would be saying that to me, but they're not, so I infer from that that we think things are going as well as they reasonably could at the moment." **Phil Gummatt, Higher Education Council for Wales**

A couple of stakeholders emphasised the importance of providing training:

"Vitae should work with universities to help them build capabilities that helps PhD students become 'T-shaped' researchers, i.e. raise their horizons beyond their subject area to explore how their research may have relevance and application, both in other disciplines but also beyond the world of the university." **Keith Herrmann, Council for Industry and Higher Education**

A number of stakeholders made suggestions based on their particular viewpoint. For example, Sheila Gupta, the Director of Human Resources at the University of Edinburgh,



felt that Vitae should work more closely with university Human Resources professionals in particular in work relating to research staff. Similarly Peter Main, Director of Science and Education at the Institute of Physics, felt that Vitae would benefit from working more closely with professional bodies:

"I think one of the great things about professional bodies is that they are genuinely trusted by their members, in a way that almost no other organisations are. In our case, because university staff will often trust us more than they trust their own management, they would probably relate more to us than they would to an external body like Vitae. So, I think if Vitae were able to work with professional bodies a little bit more closely, that would probably be to everyone's benefit." **Peter Main, Institute of Physics**

Jane Butcher, Assistant Director of the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET, felt that more attention should be given to diversity and inclusion, not least when analysing data from, for example, CROS:

"I can see that the approach Vitae seems to be taking is to integrate equality and diversity within a good practice and good management message. I would like to see more specific attention given to difference and diversity, and they may be making a very conscious choice not to focus on different sections of the community or different people with different experiences. While I feel they are trying to address inclusion, I would like to see the recognition of difference made more explicit." **Jane Butcher, UK Resource Centre for Women in SET**

A number of stakeholders commented on the need to raise Vitae's visibility both inside and outside universities. Outside universities stakeholders felt that Vitae needed to raise its profile generally:

"From my perspective you're (Vitae) so invisible; in whatever you plan to do, you will need to show visible benefits to business." **Alison Hodge, QinetiQ and CBI**

The suggestion was made that one way to do this would be to ensure a constant flow of information to all stakeholders, however, it was also acknowledged that it was not easy to provide information that stakeholders will necessarily read.

Within universities it was suggested that although those who hold the Roberts' money purse strings, the training deliverers and the careers professionals may be aware of Vitae, university academics, research staff and postgraduate researchers may not have heard of Vitae.

"So my feeling is that the gap here at the moment is probably one in which translation of ideals and ideas down to awareness amongst graduate students and postgraduates isn't good enough. And it's all very well Vitae doing all these supposedly important and sensible things, but unless at the bottom of the heap people understand that it is happening and why it might be useful to them, it isn't going to get anywhere." **Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation**

Having noted that, it should be recognised that a number of institutions have developed their own training portals for researchers and so in some institutions researchers will have little reason to look at resources available externally. This is clearly a change since UK GRAD with its much larger number of national graduate schools; the model now being used is one of local training provision and in consequence recipients of training are much less likely to have contact with the external national body, i.e. Vitae, although they



gain from UK GRAD's work in the past and from the ongoing support that Vitae provides for HEIs.

There were split opinions on whether Vitae should extend its work with principle investigators/research supervisors. A few stakeholders felt that Vitae should provide more resources for principle investigators/research supervisors as working with permanent staff is a more effective way of driving culture change. As suggested above, even raising awareness of Vitae and its work would have the advantage that supervisors/principle investigators would then be able to direct their postgraduate researchers/research staff to the Vitae website.

On the other hand the view was expressed that Vitae should focus more and that it should not look to train supervisors:

"Well, I think there's always a danger that an organisation set up with one remit can, if it's not careful, allow the focus of its remit to wander. From my perspective, the focus of Vitae should be on the early career researchers rather more than on the training of supervisors, the organisation of institutional policies with regard to how it deals with early career researchers and so on. I can understand why Vitae might want to be involved in that (work with supervisors), because clearly they see that as having a material impact upon early career researchers, which I'm sure they're right in thinking to some degree, but I think there's a danger if they take that remit too broadly, they will achieve less." **Malcolm McCrae, UK Council for Graduate Education**

Among the other suggestions made were that Vitae might look at the needs of masters students both taught and research, and that they might facilitate more on-line networking amongst researchers, and that more training resources for researchers should be available on-line. One stakeholder suggested that Vitae should develop a forum for research staff (Vitae does have a research staff blog¹³).

Two of the funders suggested that Vitae should look to the future more to a time when Roberts' money is no longer provided and work on with universities on helping them embed their development activities.

Overall, the majority of stakeholders felt that Vitae's balance of activities is about right. No suggestions were made of things that Vitae should stop, although a warning was sounded about losing focus. Stakeholders did give a strong message about the need for Vitae to increase its visibility both amongst stakeholders external to higher education and to those within higher education, including postgraduate researchers and research staff. Interestingly this message is in accord with the message from the international stakeholder group which was that Vitae should do more to raise its profile, albeit outside the UK.

Individual stakeholders representing the higher education human resources community and professional bodies respectively suggested that Vitae should also consider working more with human resource professionals in HE and external groups such as professional bodies.

¹³ Vitae's research staff blog is at; <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/156431/Research-staff-blog.html>

4.5 UK stakeholders' views of Vitae's resources and activities

Stakeholders' views were sought on a number of Vitae's activities and resources. Although the majority of stakeholders were able to comment on Vitae's website, a significant number did not feel able to comment on specific activities or resources. Where it was obvious that a stakeholder could not comment, further questions relating to resources were skipped. A few stakeholders had experience of some resources but not others. In consequence, the views presented in this section are only representative of a self-selecting group of stakeholders who had direct experience of particular activities and/or resources.

Where stakeholders were able to comment they were asked whether Vitae's work in specific areas was very valuable, fairly valuable, a little valuable, or had no value.

Of the four groups of stakeholders, those representing employers groups were least able to comment on specific areas.

4.5.1 The Vitae website

Stakeholders' views about the Vitae website varied. All but four stakeholders had looked at the website although two others felt that they were not able to comment.

Eight stakeholders described the website variously as effective, clear, useful or uncluttered. One stakeholder described the site as engaging and two said that it had value.

One stakeholder said that it was easy to find items on the website but five commented that the website could be organised differently and that things could be organised better. Referring to this point one stakeholder commented that the website would make sense if you knew what you were looking for, and another said that he has found it difficult to find the Rugby Team and specific publications. Another stakeholder said that he could not find information about Vitae's staff.

Interestingly one stakeholder commented that she felt the website was aimed at researchers and employers, whilst another felt that it was not aimed at researchers.

Very few stakeholders had used the website enough to be able to comment on specific resources although one did comment that she found searching the database of practice "*almost impossible*."

Overall very few stakeholders had spent much time looking at the Vitae website. Reactions to the website varied, some finding it clear and well laid out, and others struggling to find what they were looking for. The one comment on the database of practice suggested that better indexing and searching would be helpful.

4.5.2 Vitae's work in championing the development and implementation of effective policy

Stakeholders were questioned about Vitae's contributions to a number of policy areas and activities.

Half the stakeholders felt that Vitae's work in promoting the importance of the Roberts' agenda was very valuable, six thought that Vitae's work was fairly valuable, and eight did not feel able to comment. All funders rated Vitae's work in this area as very valuable:

"Vitae is very important in driving the Concordat forward, doing a lot of the work on implementation so it is very useful. I value the momentum they provide and also the support for lots of stakeholders to join up their thinking. We are on the Concordat Executive Steering Group, so we're also very engaged in that." **David Sweeney, Higher Education Funding Council for England**

"I think that's probably their major claim to success. They came into existence to champion it (the Roberts' agenda) and they got to grips with that." **Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation**

"Yes, I think they do and I think what the activity that Vitae have performed, is keep the Roberts' agenda at fairly high profile. And they have done a good job of attracting attention to what they do in the best possible way." **Phil Gummatt, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales**

Stakeholders were questioned on how valuable they found the Vitae national conference and/or policy forum. Only nine stakeholders were able to answer and of those five felt the events were very valuable and four felt they were fairly valuable.

"I found the conference stimulating. I thought there was a potential for it being very difficult and not managing to address things constructively, given the general difficulty there is in the area at the moment, and I thought it was managed effectively and moved things forward gently." **David Sweeney, Higher Education Funding Council for England**

13 stakeholders commented on the value of Vitae's (UK GRAD's) contribution to the development of the "Concordat to support the career development of researchers". Seven felt Vitae's contribution was very valuable, five that it was fairly valuable and one that it was a little bit valuable. Stakeholders did recognise that Vitae was one of a number of organisations contributing to the Concordat and a number felt that in consequence they could not comment on Vitae's specific contribution.

Stakeholders were asked about Vitae's work as a member of the steering groups of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS). Eight stakeholders felt they had the knowledge to comment: six felt Vitae's work was very valuable and two that Vitae's work was fairly valuable. One stakeholder did comment that she would like data from the surveys to be analysed in terms of equality and diversity indicators:

"...at least some of that information to be disaggregated and analysed in terms of equality and diversity indicators. For us obviously that it the key issue, to know whether men and women feel the same about their career development support and whether there is inequality in participation or outcome" **Jane Butcher, UK Resource Centre for Women in SET**

Only four stakeholders were able to express an opinion on Vitae's working linking to the European Charter and Code and so the information on the value of the work is not representative, other than concluding that this area of work does not have great profile.

4.5.3 Vitae's activities related to providing access to development opportunities and resources, and sharing practice and resources

Stakeholders were questioned about the value of Vitae's regional Hubs. Given the national role of stakeholders, the majority did not feel able to comment.

11 stakeholders commented on the value of the regional Hubs: eight said that they are very valuable and three that they are fairly valuable. Only six stakeholders commented on regional events with four rating them as very valuable and two as fairly valuable. Eight stakeholders expressed an opinion on the value of regional publications and newsletters with one rating them as very valuable and seven as fairly valuable.

Although many stakeholders were not familiar with the activities of Vitae's regional Hubs, a number did express opinions as to the value of regional activities as opposed to national work. Perhaps reflecting their own national roles, in general stakeholders felt that a national coordinating role was more important for Vitae than regional activities.

"I'd much prefer national but then that reflects my bias on all sorts of things. I don't like regional differences appearing in the way in which we do things. That may be a political statement rather than any sensible statement. But I think if you're going to have national standards they should be applied nationally, and although you may need local devolved ways of making sure these things are taken up in the regions, there has to be a central authority." **Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation**

However, stakeholders did see the value of more local activities.

"...that is something that I've not been involved in as yet directly but I know colleagues, particularly those that are involved in providing research skills training, find it extremely useful and they find it a particularly active regional Hub as well. And the links that have been forged through that have been useful for us in putting together our bid for the ESRC Doctoral Training Centre as we're going for a collaborative bid and the fact that networks had already been built up has been very helpful in doing that." **Geraint Johnes, Lancaster University**

Another important aspect of the regional Hubs is that they give those involved in researcher training who sit outside the higher education system a way of making contact with those in their locality who work in universities:

"The London Hub is an excellent way to find the key players for supporting researchers in London and a great forum for sharing ideas and practice as well as finding out about current concerns and needs. Within the sector it can be difficult to find the right people to contact and the Hubs are an effective way of bringing together those with an active interest in postgraduate education so they can come up with solutions. The regional hubs are integral for supporting the work of Vitae and encouraging strong networks." **Sophie Villiers, British Library, London**

Overall the majority of those stakeholders who had had contact with regional Hubs found them very valuable.

4.5.4 The value of Vitae's resources

Very few stakeholders had had direct experience of the resources that Vitae makes available. This was a reflection of the position of the stakeholders in their organisations. The resources are most likely to be used by training professionals and the majority of stakeholders interviewed did not fall into that category.

Among the few concrete comments that were made, a couple of stakeholders did suggest that the database of practice would benefit from more comprehensive information as to the purpose of each resource, and that it would be useful to have some kind of rating system, or perhaps a facility for users to write reviews of particular resources.

4.5.5 Views of Vitae's activities designed to build an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda

Relatively few stakeholders were familiar with detail of Vitae's work to build the evidence base to support researcher development. Ten stakeholders were familiar enough with the work of the Rugby Team to express an opinion, and of these seven felt the work was very valuable and three felt that it was fairly valuable. More detailed questioning about specific areas of work did not elicit any useful views: all but one or two stakeholders were unfamiliar with the Concordat benchmarking project, the details of the Career Researchers On-line Survey (CROS), or the career profiles portal. Eight stakeholders were familiar with publications such as "What do PhDs do?" and "What do Researchers do?" Seven of those eight felt this work was very useful and one that it was fairly useful.

It is important to note that the one stakeholder who was a professional careers advisor and was representing the Association of Graduate Careers Advisors (AGCAS), did rate all the work and resources relating to building the evidence base as very useful.

4.5.6 Overall observations on UK stakeholders' views of Vitae's resources and activities

As noted in the introduction to this section, the majority of stakeholders interviewed were not able to give views on specific resources and areas of work. To some degree this reflects the relatively high level of the majority of stakeholders interviewed, but might also suggest that more effort could be made to publicise the details of Vitae's work. The feedback that was given suggests that those familiar with Vitae's resources do value them, but those at higher levels appear to be unaware of this.

4.6 UK stakeholders' views of the researcher development landscape without Vitae

UK stakeholders were asked what they thought the researcher development landscape would look like today if Vitae or UK GRAD had not existed. The assumption was that Roberts' money would have still been available for higher education institutes (HEIs).



The most popular response given by 15 stakeholders was that there would be less coordination and/or more fragmentation, or that the landscape would be more chaotic. Eight stakeholders also mentioned that there would have been less progress made in developing the Roberts' agenda.

"I think whilst it is important for individual institutions to take this responsibility seriously, there are obvious benefits in having a central pool of people with that focus, a resource that can look at best practice across the sector and promote it. So I think it would have been less effective without that." **Carl Gilleard, Association of Graduate Recruiters**

In a similar vein stakeholders also suggested that good practice in researcher development would be more patchy and that some universities may well have done much less.

"...because I do think Vitae is doing good things, I have to say that in their absence there would be a more patchy landscape of good practice and less ability for that good practice to be shared and promoted in places where it hasn't spontaneously erupted. So I would imagine that we would have a somewhat less supportive environment viewed overall and that there would be some places which perhaps might not be as advanced in their approach to this agenda as they are now." **Stuart Fancey, Scottish Funding Council**

A small number of stakeholders also made other suggestions including that there would be less appreciation of the importance of the researcher development agenda at high level, that there would be lower quality career development for researchers, and that HEIs with fewer researchers and without specialist advisors for researchers would struggle to deliver on the Roberts' agenda.

"Different research communities will always have very different attitudes to career development, but I imagine that well-funded Institutions would do more to enable staff to access wider training courses and professional development activities, whilst more poorly funded areas of the research base would probably attempt very little, hoping that focusing solely on research itself would provide adequate opportunities for personal development" **Stephen Axford, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills**

Overall the fact that the majority of stakeholders agreed that the researcher development landscape would be less coordinated and developed if Vitae or UK GRAD had not existed does strongly imply that this is the main positive outcome that the stakeholders interviewed felt had come from the existence of Vitae and UK GRAD.

4.7 UK stakeholders' views of the future without Vitae

Stakeholders were asked what the consequences for the future would be if Vitae, or an equivalent organisation, did not exist. The question raised a variety of issues.

A number of stakeholders spoke about the ongoing and long-term need to change the culture within HEIs so that the training of researchers becomes part of day to day practice. Achieving such a change in higher education institutions will take time and is a complex process a point borne out as the consensus among the stakeholders was that

the point had not yet been reached where there was a sustainable culture change. The question in these stakeholders' minds was whether once this sustained culture change has been achieved, whenever that might be, would be a need for a national organisation driving or reinforcing this agenda.

"My broad sense is a very positive one at the moment. It seems to me we've got some good things going and the energy levels around this agenda are higher than they were and the experiences we've had of working with Vitae have been good." **Phil Gummett, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales**

In line with the answer to the question about what the researcher development landscape would look like now without Vitae, a number of stakeholders felt that without Vitae or an equivalent organisation in the future the researcher development landscape would become more fragmented and/or there would be less coordination.

"I think Vitae perform an important strategy and policy role, and they provide the opportunity for the researcher development community to perhaps approach this in a more coordinated, high level way." **Sheila Gupta, The University of Edinburgh**

A similar number of stakeholders felt that there would be a loss of momentum without a national organisation and the work would be set back. Ultimately the changes that there had been would wither away.

"I think Vitae provides a useful resource and I think in terms of the direction of postgraduate education it's very useful for the country as a whole, or the sector as a whole, in the UK." **Geraint Johnes, Lancaster University**

"If there wasn't some means of guaranteeing quality and content, I think it would inevitably end up quite rapidly with institutions paying lip service to it. So I think the fact that there is some kind of forum that identifies standards and brings the providers in the institutions together is important for maintaining a reasonable quality of delivery." **John Loughhead, UK Energy Research Centre, London**

A small number of stakeholders highlighted a number of other issues including that there would be less networking, and less high level lobbying. Also, there would not be any organisation to benchmark activities and ensure that universities do actually have some activities to support researchers.

"Well my immediate reaction would be that it would set things back and I don't know how much faith I still have in individual institutions filling the gap that would be created. So I'd see it as a backward step if there wasn't this kind of organisation fulfilling that role." **Carl Gilleard, Association of Graduate Recruiters, Warwick**

In discussion with a number of stakeholders the question arose as to whether a national coordinating body like Vitae added value to the Roberts' agenda. Although some stakeholders said that more explicit evidence was required, stakeholders agreed that national coordination did add value. Putting aside the issue of embedding culture change, stakeholders did see value in facilitating networking, sharing of good practice and providing tools like the Impact Framework.

Another issue raised was that without Vitae questions might be raised in the minds of external funders about what support for researchers is in place in universities:

"And I think without that drive in the future we would then need to think fairly carefully about where we stepped in and perhaps provided some of that training for our own students ourselves. So I think that Vitae's been very useful to us because it's allowed us to concentrate on what we do best which is funding good high quality cancer research."

Simon Vincent, Cancer Research UK. London

One or two stakeholders were more forthright in their views of the consequences of an organisation like Vitae not existing in the future:

"I think the overall quality of postgraduate research education in the UK would be damaged. I think many postgraduate researchers would feel less supported. I think progression into academic careers might be stunted." **Aaron Porter, National Union of Students, London**

So overall stakeholders felt that a national body still had more work to do in terms of embedding culture change in the working practices of HEIs, however, some stakeholders were not clear what role there would be for a national body at some point in the future when that culture change had occurred. In contrast most stakeholders did see a continuing role for a national body in coordinating and sharing good practice, and providing networking opportunities, such as a national conference, for these involved in researcher development.

In looking forward a couple of stakeholders did suggest that funding bodies needed to be explicit about what they expected HEIs to provide in terms of developing researchers.

4.8 Future challenges in researcher development identified by UK stakeholders

UK stakeholders were asked what they thought the main challenges in the training of researchers over the next three year or so would be, and, depending on their answers, whether they thought that Vitae would have a role in meeting the challenges they identified.

The majority of stakeholders mentioned the economic climate and impending cuts to HEI budgets which may well put pressure on training budgets. Also related to the economic climate stakeholders mentioned that the employment market for researchers is getting tougher and that therefore researchers needed to make themselves more employable by increasing and improving the skills that they possess.

In a similar vein some stakeholders mentioned that HEIs need to realise that the majority of postgraduate researchers are not going to be academics and recognise this in the way that those researchers are trained.

A number of other challenges were mentioned by one or two stakeholders and these are listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Challenges related to the training of researchers in the next 3 to 5 years identified by UK stakeholders

More frequently mentioned challenges
<p>General economic environment and funding squeeze on higher education/pressure on funding for training and on short term contract staff.</p> <p>Employment market is getting tougher so need to make researchers more employable and more adaptable/Need to make researchers themselves realise that they need skills above and beyond their subject knowledge/Need to balance generic skills with subject skills in training researchers.*</p> <p>Need to make HEIs understand that the majority of postgraduate researchers are not going to be academics/improve the general career path for researchers.*</p>
Less frequently mentioned challenges
<p>The future of the broad Roberts' agenda.*</p> <p>Diversification of the research population (more part time students, more international students).*</p> <p>Need to recognise globalisation and maintain international competitiveness.</p> <p>Dangers in the (further) concentration of higher degree training.</p> <p>Pressure to demonstrate the impact of research work. Need to train people to do this better.*</p> <p>Need to make the case for the value of research degrees, especially in the arts and humanities.*</p> <p>The nature of research is changing (more interdisciplinary research etc.).</p> <p>Proliferation of models of doctorates.*</p> <p>General pressure on universities has increased.</p>

*Challenges which stakeholders felt that Vitae could have a role in meeting

The whole area of international competitiveness was only mentioned by two stakeholders, perhaps because the focus of the interviews was on the UK researcher development environment:

"So I think if we've got a march on other countries, we need to make sure that we remain ahead of the game. And, you know, organisations like Vitae can ensure, through their work in Europe as well, that we are ahead of the game. So I think that's very important." **Sheila Gupta, The University of Edinburgh**

"The challenge for Vitae is equipping researchers to cope with a global and complex research environment. If companies are increasingly going global and managing their research in a global way, then Vitae needs to reflect on whether or not it is preparing researchers with the required capabilities to compete; to ensure researchers have the adaptability, the innovativeness, the flexibility and commercial acumen to be responsive to these types of environments in which they will be working. I think this is going to be a real challenge." **Keith Herrmann, Council for Industry and Higher Education**

Another area that came up in the general discussion of challenges with stakeholders was the nature of the conventional UK PhD. Some stakeholders felt that there was an over emphasis on postgraduate researchers undertaking doctoral programmes which concentrated too much on the subject skills; programmes which perhaps trained academics rather than researchers for other employment. Providing alternative doctoral programmes which put more emphasis on developing generic and transferable skills, yet maintain a substantial research project, were seen as attractive by a number of stakeholders. Programmes such as EngD do already exist as an alternative to the traditional PhD, and research councils do now provide funds for Doctoral Training Centres which provide a more general first year before students specialise.

The ongoing need to change culture so that supervisors understood the importance of making time for postgraduate researchers and research staff to receive training was also highlighted:

"I think we'll continue to have the vibrant discussions we've had over the years with academics as to whether the researcher's there to do a job for them, or whether they should have time to do (generic) training as part of their development; so there's still a cultural conversion issue within the academic community. I don't think that's going to go away quickly." **Ian Carter, Association of Research Managers and Administrators, Brighton**

Overall, as amongst the International stakeholders, the UK stakeholders identified challenges essentially related to the economic downturn and a number emphasised the need for researchers to improve their employability through the development of transferable skills.

4.9 UK stakeholders' general comments about Vitae

At the end of the interview stakeholders were asked if they wished to make any general or additional comments. Very few choose to add any new material, a few reiterated points that they had already made.

A few stakeholders took the opportunity to make general positive comments about Vitae although sometimes coupled with encouragement to do more:

"I believe it's a valuable organisation and should go on being funded to do what it's trying to do, quite strongly. So that's a positive. But, as I say, the counter-balance to that is that as well as what it's achieving at a high level in terms of steering policy and strategy and making universities think about these things properly, they would do a lot better if they managed to engage all the people at the bottom level to think that Vitae was important for them too. And I don't think they've quite done that yet." **Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation**

Debbie McVitty from the National Union of Students made a plea for more attention to be paid to taught postgraduate students:

"Vitae is for researchers and obviously the research agenda is the big thing but I feel sad for Postgraduate taught students who already have a bit of a tough time just because of the shortness of the course." **Debbie McVitty, National Union of Students**



Other stakeholders wanted to praise Vitae for the work that has been done:

"And I think the way that Vitae works with a range of organisations is to its credit. There aren't many organisations that have got respect right across the sector in the way that they have. I think that needs to be recognised." **Jane Thompson, University and College Union**

4.10 Summary of UK stakeholders' views

All the UK stakeholders agreed that training researchers in transferable skills and in encouraging them to think more about careers was important.

UK stakeholders have a fairly good overview of Vitae's role, recognising that it is an organisation to support the career and skills development of researchers funded by the research councils. The majority know that Vitae deals with both research staff and postgraduate researchers, and that Vitae's funding comes from the research councils. Many stakeholders did acknowledge that they knew Vitae carried out a wider range of activities than they knew about, and indicated that they would welcome more information.

In terms of Vitae's most valuable activities, bearing in mind that many of the UK stakeholders were in senior positions, the most frequently mentioned area was around building the evidence base. Stakeholders also mentioned Vitae's activities around benchmarking, developing frameworks, and collecting evidence. Those who commented on the regional Hubs praised them strongly.

Stakeholders based in universities all said that Vitae had been successful, as did the majority of the funders group. In contrast all of the employers group felt that it was too early to tell, and the group made up of other stakeholders were split with half feeling that it was probably too early to tell.

The majority of stakeholders felt that Vitae's balance of activities is about right. No suggestions were made of things that Vitae should stop, although a warning was sounded about losing focus. Stakeholders did give a strong message about the need for Vitae to increase its visibility both amongst stakeholders external to higher education and to those within higher education, including postgraduate researchers and research staff. Interestingly this message is in accord with the message from the international stakeholder group which was that Vitae should do more to raise its profile, albeit outside the UK.

Stakeholders felt that there was still work to do in terms of embedding culture change in the working practices of HEIs, however, stakeholders were not clear what role there would be for a national body at some point in the future when that culture change had occurred. In contrast stakeholders did see a continuing role for a national body in coordinating and sharing good practice, and providing networking opportunities, such as a national conference, for these involved in researcher development.

Looking at challenges in the future, the majority of stakeholders mentioned the economic climate and impending cuts to HEI budgets which may well put pressure on training budgets. Also related to the economic climate stakeholders mentioned that the employment market for researchers is getting tougher and that therefore researchers

needed to make themselves more employable by increasing and improving their transferable skills.

Stakeholders spoke about the nature of the conventional UK PhD. Some stakeholders felt that there was an over emphasis on postgraduate researchers undertaking doctoral programmes which concentrated too much on the subject skills. Providing alternative doctoral programmes which put more emphasis on developing generic and transferable skills, yet maintain a substantial research project, was seen as attractive by a number of stakeholders.

The general consensus from the UK stakeholders was that Vitae fulfilled an important role in supporting researcher development and building the evidence base to show the value of doing so. Stakeholders valued Vitae's resources and activities, both nationally and regionally, but felt that work still needed to be done by all to achieve long-term the culture change in HEIs in respect of researcher development.

5 Overall conclusions and recommendations

The progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda, including the work that Vitae has done and continues to do, gives the UK a competitive advantage both in terms of producing better researchers and improving their employability both inside and outside higher education.

Overall stakeholders feel that Vitae is a unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development. The UK's international competitors regard the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda as giving the UK a competitive advantage.

All stakeholders felt that developing researchers beyond their core research skills was important and in particular training researchers in transferable skills and in encouraging them to think more about careers.

Stakeholders agreed that Vitae was doing a good job in supporting researcher development, and also that there were no activities that Vitae should do less. Stakeholders also spoke positively about Vitae's staff.

Vitae has had a positive impact on the UK's reputation for researcher development, and there was also agreement that Vitae was unique in being a national programme with the purpose of coordinating and supporting researcher development in the UK.

The majority of stakeholders knew that Vitae deals with both research staff and postgraduate researchers in contrast to UK GRAD, although knowledge of how Vitae and UK GRAD differed was perhaps unsurprisingly lower among the International group. UK Stakeholders were aware that Vitae's funding comes from the research councils.

Stakeholders felt that Vitae is doing very valuable and important work: UK stakeholders in particular emphasised Vitae's work around promoting the Roberts' agenda. Both groups felt that that Vitae's work needed to continue, in the case of the International stakeholders because the importance of researcher development is increasing in countries outside the UK. International stakeholders reported that the UK is regarded as leading in the field of researcher development, and this was directly ascribed to the work of Vitae and UK GRAD.

Looking at Vitae's impact in the UK, a number of stakeholders suggested that Vitae had not been in existence long enough to truly assess its impact. Stakeholders who were familiar with Vitae's resources and the details of its activities found them to be valuable.

Stakeholders talked about Vitae's leadership role in coordinating work in researcher development, although in different contexts. Both International and UK stakeholders emphasised Vitae's coordinating role stressing that the researcher development landscape would be less coordinated and developed if Vitae or UK GRAD had not existed.

The emphasis the two stakeholders groups put on which of Vitae's activities were most valuable differed. The International stakeholders emphasised Vitae's work in the provision of transferable skills training to researchers and work to make researchers aware of opportunities for employment outside academia. Over half the International stakeholders mentioned the careers development work whilst only five UK stakeholders

did so, four of whom represented employers organisations. UK stakeholders generally emphasised Vitae's valuable contribution in building the evidence base.

The differences may in part be explained by the differing roles and responsibilities of the two groups of stakeholders, but the differences in the emphasis of the careers development work is particularly telling. It may be that work in the careers development area is taken for granted in the UK; UK universities have traditionally put more resources into careers and advice services, whilst it is an emerging area for their European counterparts.

Stakeholders felt that Vitae needed to increase its visibility. In the UK stakeholders felt that Vitae would benefit if it was better known among stakeholders external to higher education and to some of those within higher education, including postgraduate researchers and research staff. International stakeholders recommended that Vitae should work to make itself better known outside the UK as its work was so valuable. They felt that Vitae should generally become more international in its work and that Vitae should consider offering services to the rest of Europe.

It is interesting that both International and UK stakeholders felt that Vitae should publicise itself and its activities more. The evidence from this study is that Vitae does have a lot to shout about: the strong messages from the International stakeholders about the UK's leading position in researcher development and Vitae's role in achieving this should be spread among UK stakeholders. The UK's international competitors regard the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda as giving the UK a competitive advantage and this point needs to be made to UK funders and university managers.

UK stakeholders alone were asked to comment on Vitae's resources. The majority were, however, not able to give views on specific resources and areas of work reflecting the seniority of much of the UK group. The feedback that was given suggests that those familiar with Vitae's resources do find them very valuable. The Vitae website was generally well received, the regional Hubs, and the general work in building the evidence base were praised. Publications such as "What do Researchers do?" were also seen as very valuable.

Many UK stakeholders did acknowledge that they knew Vitae carried out a wider range of activities than they knew about, and indicated that they would welcome more information. None of the stakeholders felt that Vitae should do less of any of its current activities.

UK stakeholders felt that a national body with responsibility for researcher development still has more work to do in partnership with HEIs and funders to embed culture change in the working practices of HEIs. Some stakeholders were not clear what role there would be for a national body once the desired culture change had come about, whenever that may be, however others were clear that there would be an ongoing role for a national body in coordinating and sharing good practice, and providing networking opportunities for those involved in researcher development.

In considering challenges in researcher development over the next three years or so, International stakeholders felt that the biggest issues would be the threat of reduced funding and employment opportunities for researchers due to the economic downturn. Stakeholders said that it was very important that researcher development should

continue in times of economic pressure not least because it will make researchers more valuable to employers and because industry and commerce would benefit from better trained, more innovative researchers. The UK stakeholders also identified challenges essentially related to the economic downturn and a number emphasised the need for researchers to improve their employability through the development of transferable skills.

Two stakeholders who represented specific groups, higher education human resource professionals and professional bodies respectively, suggested that Vitae should also consider working more with other external groups.

There is a danger that at a time of public sector funding cuts that funds for transferable skills training of researchers will diminish or disappear completely, not least because the tendency amongst HEIs maybe to focus on their core business.

While all the UK stakeholders interviewed that funded research agreed that developing the transferable skills of researchers was important none had explicit strategies concerning the training of researchers outside their core subject skills. The British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK both do expect such training to be included in the doctoral programmes offered by the centres they fund.

Given that ring-fenced money for researcher development (Roberts' money) has a limited lifetime, research funders should give much stronger messages concerning their expectations for transferable skills training and thus signal the need for embedding these activities.

Vitae clearly has a role in building the evidence to make the case for a continuing emphasis on researcher development funded either through earmarked central funding or through HEIs making money available locally. To back this up a number of UK stakeholders highlighted Vitae's role in building the evidence base as being valuable.

In conclusion, stakeholders agree that there remains a significant role for Vitae in supporting and coordinating researcher development in the UK, and working in partnership with HEIs to drive and embed culture change. Furthermore, work on building the evidence base about the benefits of researcher development is increasingly important.

Even if the point is reached when researcher development has become part of the normal working practices of UK HEIs stakeholders feel that there will still be a role for a national body facilitating networking and coordinating the sharing of good practice.

Outside the UK there are many opportunities for implementing Vitae's expertise and resources in particular in other European countries and in doing so help support the European Research Area's aims regarding researcher development.

The key message is one provided by the International stakeholders who are in a position to give a more objective assessment of the value of the UK's work on researcher development. As highlighted at the beginning of this section, the progress that has been made in furthering the researcher development agenda, including the work that UK GRAD and Vitae has done and continues to do, gives the UK a competitive advantage both in terms of producing better researchers and improving their employability both inside and outside higher education.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the comments of the stakeholders the following recommendations are made:

- Vitae should continue to support researcher development and, with others, drive cultural change in HEIs to maintain its world leading position and the UK's competitive advantage in producing well trained researchers with transferable skills as well as sound research skills;
- Vitae should work to promote the fact that the UK is world leading in researcher development;
- Vitae should continue working to build the evidence base to demonstrate the value of researcher development in improving the performance of researchers inside and outside academia;
- Vitae needs to publicise its role and the value of its activities more amongst all UK stakeholder groups including postgraduate researchers and research staff;
- Vitae should look to work more with groups which can help further the researcher development agenda such as professional bodies and university human resource professionals;
- There is potential for Vitae to expand its remit and increase its funding base by providing services in researcher development and related research and evaluation to the rest of Europe but this would need to be done without jeopardising provision in the UK.

Appendix 1: The questionnaire for International stakeholders

1	What is your interest in the researcher development agenda? Is your interest in postgraduate researchers and/or research staff, or both?
2	What, from your perspective, is Vitae and what does it do?
3	Were you familiar with Vitae's predecessor the UK GRAD Programme and its work? (If yes, please could you also answer questions with respect to UK GRAD Programme activities)
4	What do you perceive to be the most valuable things Vitae does to further researcher development/cultural change?
5	In your opinion how is Vitae's work impacting on the external reputation of the UK in developing researchers, both doctoral programmes and research staff.
6	What (if any) contribution you feel Vitae has made to effective European policy development/initiatives and subsequent implementation, i.e., influencing the Bologna Process, European Charter and Code, European partnership for researchers.
7	Overall, how successful has Vitae been in raising the profile of the importance of developing researchers?
8	Have you used the Vitae website? If so, which sections? How useful did you find those section(s)?
9	Are there any other organisations that in your opinion are leading in the area of researcher development and careers? In your/any country? Which ones?
10	Is there anything that you like Vitae to do differently? Are there things that you would like Vitae to do more of? And are there any things that Vitae currently does not do that you would like them to do?
11	What challenges can you identify in the training of researchers over the three years? What role do you see Vitae having in meeting these challenges?
12	Are there any other comments that you would like to make about Vitae or its activities?

Appendix 2: The questionnaire for UK stakeholders

1	What is your interest in the researcher development agenda? Is your interest in postgraduate researchers (students) and/or research staff, or both?
2	What, from your perspective, is Vitae and what does it do?
3	What do you perceive to be the most valuable things Vitae does to further researcher development/cultural change?
4	Overall, do you believe that Vitae has been successful in raising the profile of the importance of developing researchers?
5	Is there anything that you would like Vitae to do differently? Are there things that you would like Vitae to do more of? And are there any things that Vitae currently does not do that you would like them to do?
6	Have you used the Vitae website? If so, which sections?
7	Looking in a little more detail at some of Vitae's activities, how valuable do you perceive Vitae's work to be in championing the development of and implementation of effective policy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the importance of the Roberts' agenda • Vitae Conferences and annual policy fora • Development of the Concordat • Membership of Steering groups for PRES (Postgraduate Researchers Experience Survey), CROS (Careers in Research Online Survey) • Links to the European Charter and Code of Practice
8	What about activities related to providing access to development opportunities and resources, and sharing practice and resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vitae Hub network • Vitae workshops and events • Publications/Hub newsletters
9	And, how valuable do you perceive Vitae's resources are? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of practice/sharing of Concordat practice • Vitae programmes • Database of resources • Database of trainers and developers • Innovation and development • GRADschools programme • Careers in Focus
10	What about Vitae's activities designed to support the researcher development agenda? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the Rugby Team • Concordat benchmarking projects • CROS • Career profiles portal • What do PhDs do?
11	If Vitae/UK GRAD had not existed what would the researcher development landscape look like now?
12	And what would be the consequences for the future if Vitae did not exist?
13	Are there any other comments that you would like to make about Vitae or its activities?

Appendix 3: The International Stakeholders

North American-based Stakeholders

Barbara Evans	Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
Alvin Kwiram	Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, University of Washington, Seattle, USA and member of the Advisory Board, American Chemical Society
Debra Stewart	President, Council of Graduate Schools, Washington, USA
George Walker	Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, USA and member of the Executive Committee of NASULGC's Council on Research Policy and Graduate Education.

UK-based Stakeholders

Lloyd Anderson	Director of Science, British Council, London, UK
David Bogle	Head of the Graduate School, University College London, London, UK and League of European Research Universities (LERU)
Brian Ditcham	International Science and Innovation Unit, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, London, UK
Christian Yeomans	Policy Analysis and Public Affairs Officer, Universities UK Higher Education Europe Unit, London, UK

Other European Stakeholders

George Bingen	Head of Unit, Marie Curie Actions - Fellowships, DG Research, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Hans Borchgrevink	Special Advisor, Research Council of Norway, Oslo, Norway and Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM)
Lidia Borell-Damian	Senior Programme Manager, European University Association
Jean Chambaz	Vice President for Research, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France and Chair, Steering committee, Council on Doctoral Education, European University Association
Fulvio Esposito	Director, University of Camerino, Camerino, Italy and chair, Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM)
Andreas Frijdal	Director, Academic Service, European University Institute, Florence, Italy
Susan Kentner	Head of the Brussels Office, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, Brussels, Belgium
Thomas Koch	Head of Office for Research and Young Researchers, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany
Nikola Macharova	President, Eurodoc
Dagmar Meyer	Directorate C - Universities and Researchers, DG Research, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Conor O'Carroll	Director (Research), Irish Universities Association, Dublin, Ireland
Ernst Rank	Vice President, Technische Universität München, München, Germany
Maria Rimini-Doering	Manager, Corporate Sector Research and Advanced Engineering, Human. Machine Interaction, Bosch, Robert Bosch GmbH, Stuttgart, Germany
Isi Saragossi	Director, European Research Area: Knowledge-based economy, Directorate General Research, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Sabine Schneider	Life Sciences Mobility Consultant, European Molecular Biology Organisation, Heidelberg, Germany
Loula Sigala	Administrative Director, The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens, Greece and National Contact Point in Greece for the EU Mobility Programs for Researchers

John Smith	Deputy Secretary General, European University Association, Brussels, Belgium
Peter Van der Hijden	Head of Sector, Policy Officer, Universities and Researchers, DG Research, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Karen Vandavelde	Senior Researcher & Policy Advisor, University of Ghent, Belgium



Appendix 4: The UK stakeholders

Stakeholders representing funders

Stephen Axford	Director, Science and Society, Research Base, Department for Business Innovation and Skills
Stuart Fancey	Assistant Director, Research, Innovation and Global Engagement Group, Scottish Funding Council
Phil Gummett	Chief Executive, Higher Education Council for Wales
Jeremy Pearson	Associate Medical Director, British Heart Foundation
David Sweeney with Davina Madden and Zoe Sanderson	Director (Research, Innovation and Skills), Higher Education Funding Council for England Senior Higher Education Policy Adviser, Higher Education Funding Council for England Higher Education Policy Adviser, Higher Education Funding Council for England
Simon Vincent	Head, Personal Awards and Training, Cancer Research UK

Stakeholders representing employers groups

David Doherty	Chief Executive, Council for Industry and Higher Education
Carl Gilleard	Chief Executive, Association of Graduate Recruiters
Keith Herrmann	Deputy Chief Executive, Council for Industry and Higher Education
Alison Hodge	Chair, Confederation of British Industry's Inter-Company Academic Relations Group (ICARG), and, University Partnerships Director, QinetiQ
John Loughhead	Executive Director, UK Energy Research Centre

Stakeholders based in universities

Ian Carter	Director of Research and Enterprise, University of Sussex, and, Chair, Board of Directors, Association of Research Managers and Administrators
Sheila Gupta	Director, Human Resources, the University of Edinburgh and Universities Human Resources
Geraint Johnes	Dean of Graduate Studies, Lancaster University
Clare Jones	Careers Adviser, Research Staff and Postgraduates, University of Nottingham, and, Chair of AGCAS Task Group for Research Staff, and Impact and evaluation group
Herbie Newell	Professor of Cancer Therapeutics at the Northern Institute for Cancer Research, Newcastle University
Liz Shutt	Senior Policy Advisor, University Alliance
Mark Smith	Pro Vice Chancellor, Research: Faculties of Science and Medicine, Warwick University

Stakeholders based in other organisations

Jane Butcher	Deputy Director, UK Resource Centre for Women in SET
Peter Main	Director, Education and Science, Institute of Physics
Paul Manners	Director, National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
Malcolm McCrae	Chair, UK Council for Graduate Education
Debbie McVitty	Postgraduate Policy Officer, National Union of Students
Joanna Newman	Head of Higher Education, British Library
Aaron Porter	Vice President Higher Education, National Union of Students
Rachel Segal	Assistant Director, Research and Evaluation, Higher Education Academy
Jane Thompson	Higher Education Policy Officer, University and College Union
Sophie Villiers	Higher Education Marketing Manager, British Library

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