



Vitae Annual Report

2010

Executive Summary

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK),
managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation
and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities



CRAC

Executive summary

Vitae works with the UK higher education sector, providing professional and career development for researchers and building international competitiveness through research, innovation and knowledge exchange. Vitae leads improvements in the employability and impact of researchers, to ensure that researchers are equipped to address priority challenges such as food security, energy and climate change, and to enhance our economic, social and cultural capital.

'It is right that as we put research at the heart of our plans for future prosperity, we prioritise the development of excellent researchers able to capitalise on the impact of that research'

David Willetts,
Minister of State for Universities and Science

One of Vitae's key strengths, purposefully developed as part of its core mission, is its proven ability to engage the higher education sector in structured dialogue to influence and respond to policy across the UK. This has been recognised and admired internationally, along with Vitae's excellent resources, as a defining feature of the UK researcher development programme (Hodge report 2010¹).

The review also highlighted that 'Vitae:

- brings together all those with a stake in realising the potential of researchers
- works with research organisations to embed professional and career development in the research environment
- provides resources, advice, information and a forum for individual postgraduate researchers and research staff who are interested in their professional development and careers through a dedicated researchers' portal.

Vitae already delivers essential elements of professional development for researchers to underpin government priorities to support the next generation of researchers and to enable the economy to recover from downturn through our world-class science and research base.

Key successes in 2010

- Vitae **worked with all UK institutions to embed enhanced professional and career development for researchers** and established the use of the Impact and Evaluation Group's Impact Framework. This demonstrates that researcher development is capable of maximising the investment in research, significantly improving employability and improving research outcomes
- Vitae maximised the **efficient use of researcher development funding** within the higher education sector by enabling colleagues in research organisations to share practice and develop collaborative programmes
- Vitae launched the new **Researcher Development Framework** to develop world-class researchers, build our research base and ensure that researchers are prepared for future careers, endorsed by more than 30 key UK organisations
- Vitae provided **high quality learning materials and development programmes** to over 50 UK higher education institutions. The flagship '**Effective Researcher**' programme was a 2010 finalist for the National Training Award; 95% of institutions said it had made a positive impact in delivering the 'Roberts agenda'²
- Vitae published eleven research reports into the careers of researchers, including '**What do Researchers Do? Destinations and impact three years on**', which provides for the first time, comprehensive evidence of the value of doctoral study to the researchers, their employers and society
- Vitae **designed, led and managed a process to enable 23 UK institutions to gain the 'HR Excellence in Research' award from the European Commission**; the UK now has the greatest number of awards of any European country and this is a key aspect of the Concordat implementation strategy
- Vitae's **resources for researchers' personal development and career management**, including induction materials and the popular 'researcher booklet' series, form a key part of researcher support provided by over 150 UK organisations
- Vitae campaigned to **broaden the visibility of employment opportunities** open to researchers and provides opportunities for employers to engage in national discussions about how to develop researchers. In 2010, this included an employer seminar, careers in focus events and new collections of career stories to highlight the wide contribution of researchers to society and the economy

¹ www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/RobertReport2011.pdf

² www.vitae.ac.uk/effectiveresearcher

Researchers' comments on using the new Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

The infographic features a central circular diagram of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) divided into four domains:

- Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities** - The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research.
- Domain B: Personal effectiveness** - The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher.
- Domain C: Research governance and organisation** - The knowledge of the standards, requirements and professionalism to do research.
- Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact** - The knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.

Surrounding the diagram are ten researcher portraits, each with a quote:

- Quote 1:** "I've always thought of myself as being quite ambitious, driven and focused on what I want, but the framework made me realise I can have much larger visions."
- Quote 2:** "It was very good for me to reflect. I realised that nothing is stopping me but myself. The sky is the limit."
- Quote 3:** "The RDF will encourage me to be more proactive about my career development as it provides me with a framework (list of milestones)."
- Quote 4:** "Think about staging the targets; what can I do smarter, what training do I need to request and what do I need someone else to facilitate so that I can move forward"
- Quote 5:** "Read it carefully and be honest about where you are. You don't always have to aim for phase 5 – identify shorter term goals that are more achievable"
- Quote 6:** "I now have a path that I would like to follow"
- Quote 7:** "What we've always tried to do with the postdocs (in Edinburgh) is say 'look this is your career and it's your responsibility'"
- Quote 8:** "I would see this (RDF) as a barometer...to give me a bit more clarity about what areas I could develop and what might be most important. It's something I could keep returning to"
- Quote 9:** "The RDF...identified areas for me that I needed to hone and really made me think about my career development. I've highlighted things now that I know I need to do"
- Quote 10:** "It put career development back into the forefront of my mind as it can often slip back when you're engaged in what you're doing day to day"

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The Vitae programme's vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. We work to four overarching aims:

- **Build human capital** by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development

This includes running an annual conference and policy forum and regional networks that enable the quick and effective development and implementation of new policy

- **Enhance higher education provision** to train and develop researchers through generation of key resources/programmes and regional implementation, e.g. Effective Researcher and CPD for researcher development staff

- **Empower researchers** to make an impact in their careers through UK-wide researcher web resources and support and targeted activities to meet specific needs, e.g. creative industries careers in focus programme with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- **Evidence the impact** of professional and career development support for researchers through implementation of the impact framework and the 'What do Researchers do?', series of publications and research reports

Scale of Vitae activities in 2010



- 70% of HEIs implemented change related to the Concordat
- 23 UK HEIs gained the European Commission 'HR Excellence in Research' badge
- Over 30 key organisations endorse the Researcher Development Statement
- 14/20 Russell Group institutions already reference Research Development Framework on their websites

Champion the development and implementation of effective policy

- 1,900 researchers reached through face to face training, workshops, conferences and seminars
- 11 UK-wide courses and 35 regional events for researchers
- 50 local research staff associations identified
- 20,000 unique users on the Vitae website per month
- 5000 page views a month on the Vitae Research Staff Blog
- Newsletter circulation to over 20,000 supervisors and PIs
 - Almost 47,000 views of 'Researcher Booklet' series
 - 155 organisations requested Vitae materials for researchers



Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers

- Vitae works with 127 UK HEIs
 - 36 regional events to share practice and implement policy
 - 53 UK institutions run Vitae programmes, including the Effective Researcher, Broadening Horizons and Leadership in Action programmes
 - 40 institutions represented in Vitae masterclass programme
 - 900 examples of practice on the Database of Practice
 - 630 staff use the Vitae online workspace

Evidence impact of professional/career development support for researchers

- 35 UK institutions provide impact evidence
- 65 HEIs now undertaken CROS survey
- 11 research reports published
- 11,000 views of 'What do researchers do?'



Impact of Vitae activities in 2010

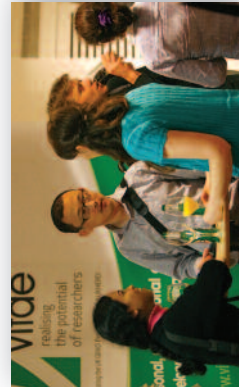


“ Vitae is very important in driving the Concordat forward... I value the momentum they provide and also the support for lots of stakeholders to join up their thinking.”
David Sweeney, HEFCE

“ it is helpful to have a national framework because it is based on wider consultation that could not have been managed by a single institution and it allows us to benchmark ourselves against a national framework.”
HEI during Researcher Development Framework consultation

“ ... what a fantastic gift the Leadership in Action course was. I began a new job last Monday and am managing eight staff and 20 part-time freelancers! The knowledge that I gained on the course is being put to very good use!”
Participant on Leadership in Action

“ [I] left the conference with a whole host of new ideas about how to increase interest/ participation in our Research Staff Association at home.”
Vitae Research Staff conference participant



“ It is right that as we put research at the heart of our plans for future prosperity, we prioritise the development of excellent researchers able to capitalise on the impact of that research.”
David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science announcing the institutions gaining the 'HR Excellence in Research' badge

Champion the development and implementation of effective policy

Empower researchers to make an impact in their careers

“ the best training and careers advice I've had access to in the whole of my three years.”
Participant on Careers in Academia

“ These booklets make a great read while I'm commuting to work – in only 10 minutes of a read I've been left inspired to action some of the tips provided in my day-to-day work, be it to better manage my time or ways to think more creatively in the research environment!”
Researcher UCL



“ GRADSchools are probably the most fulfilling thing I do in my professional life. They're in addition to my normal work in communications and PR, but I always meet amazing people and finish them a better person.”
Louise Turner, Environment Agency

“ We are retaining long standing contacts as well as getting new ones. Over 40 HEIs and other organisations were represented at South West and Wales Vitae Hub events in 2010. The annual good practice conference had the largest ever number of participants.”
South West and Wales Vitae Hub manager

Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers

Evidence impact of professional/ career development support for researchers

“ I found these useful opportunities to learn of approaches at other institutions.”
Meg Tait, Head of Academic Practice group, University of Cambridge on Hub Concordat meetings

“ I have found the database of resources very useful. In particular it provided inspiration when structuring a programme for researchers and helped inform course development. It was helpful to have a wide range of resources focused on different elements of skills development and career management in one place which could be easily accessed.”
Dr John Copleston, Queens University Belfast



“ 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.”
Stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae and its activities Oxford Research & Policy

“ 95% of HEIs said it made a positive impact in delivering against the Roberts agenda and 84% were more confident as researchers.”
2010 Effective researcher evaluation project



“ This new report provides, for the first time, comprehensive evidence of the value of doctoral study to researchers, their employers and society at large. I would recommend this report to policy makers and to employers looking for people who can make a real difference to their organisations.”
Professor Rick Ryance, RCUK Champion for Research Careers on 'What do Researchers do?', doctoral graduate destinations and impact three years on

In 2011, Vitae will:

- Work with institutions, the Research Councils and other stakeholders to put in place **strategies to sustain the Roberts investment** and maintain capacity in researcher development
- Lead the implementation of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** including producing a review of the impact of the Concordat three years after its launch
- Develop a **reporting framework for institutions** that meets the Concordat implementation commitments and the requirements for institutions which have gained the European Commission 'HR Excellence in Research' award
- Lead the implementation of the **Researcher Development Framework** as the key strategy for enhancing the employability of researchers
- Work more closely with businesses to **identify future employability needs**, and support Research Council priorities to embed placements and internships within the research environment
- Create **high quality learning** and **train the trainer programmes** for institutions to meet the need for cost-effective high quality core provision and greater involvement of the academic community in the delivery of training and development
- **Enable efficiencies** in the development and delivery of researcher development through collaborations to meet priority areas
- Consolidate Vitae's work to **enhance the leadership capabilities** of researchers
- Continue to provide the **Vitae online researcher portal** and **resources for researchers** to all UK HEIs
- Lead the process which aims for 70 UK universities to gain the European Commission's 'HR Excellence in Research' badge, **building our reputation internationally**

7. Publications and media list

2010 key publications

A Guide to Research Staff Associations (with UKRSA)

Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2009. Differences between broad disciplinary groups.

Discovering innovation and intrapreneurship. At a glance

The Engaging Researcher

GRADBritain magazine. Spring 2010 and Summer 2010

Hard Times? Building and Sustaining Research Capacity in UK Universities (with ARMA)

How to be an Effective Researcher evaluation report

The impact of researcher training and development two years on

The impact of researcher training and development. Appendix

Introducing the Researcher Development Framework

Overview spring 2010

Overview winter 2010

PGR Tips

- Digital researcher
 - Creating luck in your career
 - Networking
 - On honing your elevator pitch
 - On reading research papers
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Planning your Doctorate 2010 (Wallplanner)

Recruiting researchers employer survey 2009 report

Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and Statement (RDS)

Researcher Development Framework (RDF) Professional Development Planner

Researcher Development Framework (RDF) Researcher profiles

'Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding law in context'

Researchers' Skills and Competencies at a glance – revised

'Stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae and its activities'

Understanding Research Staff Associations and their impact (with UKRSA)

Vitae Annual Report 2009

Vitae News Update: September 2010

Vitae Policy Forum 2010: exploring funding options for researcher development

Vitae Programme of activities for postgraduate researchers 2010

Vitae Programme of activities for research staff 2010

Vitae Research Staff Conference 2009 report

Vitae Strategy Forum 2010 report

What do Researchers do? Career Profiles of Doctoral Entrepreneurs

What do Researchers do? Report on Destinations and Impact Three Years On

What do Researchers do? Report on Destinations and Impact Three Years on Methodology

Vitae in national and international media 2010

Now Hiring First Class Brains, ScienceCareers, 27 January 2010

Employers want more PhDs, says survey, Research Fortnight/ Research Day: UK Issue 3349 21 Jan 10, 21 January 2010

New Report: Recruiting Researchers: Survey of Employer Practice 2009, iCeGS news 21 January 2010

As the battle over postgraduate funding heats up, a group of newer universities has moved to protect its share of the pot, rebuking those who “wrongly assume that postgraduate study is the province of a small number of universities”, THE 4 March 2010

Postgraduate research degrees lead to greater employability, guardian.co.uk, 16 Mar 2010

As MA and PhD students grow in numbers, a new government scheme is being implemented to emphasise their extensive skills and potential to employers

The UK Researcher development framework has received a qualified endorsement from researchers and institutions, THE News in Brief, 27 May 2010

Postdoctoral researchers may one day see an end to the gruelling cycle of applying for new fellowships as they complete each successive contract, a new report suggests, THE News in Brief, 2 September 2010

The time and effort spent gaining a PhD is repaid handsomely in excellent career prospects, according to research presented at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference today, THE 6 September 2010

Nine UK universities have been recognised by the European Commission for their efforts to improve working conditions and career-development opportunities for research staff, THE September 7 2010 (Written before tenth HEI confirmed)

The reputation of the UK PhD could be undermined by too great an expansion of professional doctorates, according to international experts, THE 16 September 2010

Vitae conference told of hard choices ahead over postgraduate development. Hannah Fearn writes, THE 16 September 2010

One of the recurrent themes at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference 2010 was how to better facilitate the movement of researchers throughout the European Union, Euroscientist 9 September 2010

Aarathi Prasad interviews Dr Christian Yeomans, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs Officer, UK HE Europe Unit at the Vitae Conference 2010, Euroscientist podcast 16 September 2010

On the 6th and 7th of September 2010, the historic Midland hotel in central Manchester, UK was filled with nearly 400 participants attending the Vitae Researcher Development Conference, Euroscientist 9 September 2010

Joint sponsorship of the award for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers, THE Awards 2010, THE website



Vitae builds on previous work by the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD. Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities.

The role of Vitae is to work with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed professional and career development in the research environment. Vitae plays a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the higher education sector to provide professional development and training of researchers.

Our vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. Our key aims include:

- championing the development and implementation of effective policy
- enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resources
- providing access to development opportunities and resources
- building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda.

For further information about the range of Vitae activities go to www.vitae.ac.uk or contact enquiries@vitae.ac.uk

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